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Indigenous Peoples, Religious Conversion, and the Politics of Religion in Indonesia

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Abstract:
This study delves into the intricate relationship between political influences and religious conversion in Indonesia, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of Indigenous Peoples such as the Baduy in Banten, the Akur Sunda Wiwitan in West Java, and the Suku Anak Dalam in Jambi. The research adopts a qualitative methodology, incorporating interviews, journalistic reports, government regulations, and detailed case studies to examine how state policies and socio-political pressures contribute to the decision of these communities to convert. The findings indicate that state policies, often rooted in a narrow understanding of religious identity, exert considerable pressure on indigenous groups, prompting conversions that are frequently motivated by the need for social acceptance and political survival. This research highlights the significant role of political dynamics in shaping religious identities in Indonesia and underscores the urgent need for more inclusive and equitable policies that honor and protect the religious diversity of the nation's indigenous populations.

Keywords: *religious conversion, Indigenous People, politics of religion, Indonesia,*

INTRODUCTION

Religious conversion in Indonesia consistently draws public attention, particularly when involving prominent figures such as Deddy Corbuzier, who converted to Islam on 21 June 2019. His conversion video, broadcast on his YouTube channel, was viewed 6.7 million times and garnered over 93,000 comments (YouTube, 2019). In addition to high-profile cases, some YouTube channels are entirely dedicated to religious conversion narratives, such as Dondy Tan's, a former Chinese Christian who converted to Islam after years of studying different faiths. By 16 August 2024, Tan had posted more than 1,100 videos featuring interfaith dialogues and conversion stories (Tan, n.d.). These examples highlight the continued relevance of conversion in Indonesian public discourse.

Research into religious conversion has developed significantly over the past century, with foundational contributions from figures such as William James (1842-1910). In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James defines conversion as "the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self-hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities" (James, 2002, p. 150). His work centres on the psychological and emotional dimensions of conversion, portraying it as a transition from negative to positive mental states. Since the publication of James's work, numerous articles and books have explored conversion from a range of perspectives, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and health (Buckser & Glazier, 2003; Gooren, 2010; Poston, 1992; Thomas et al., 2016; Yee, 2000).

Lewis R. Rambo (1989) suggests that research on religious conversion should examine a wide array of factors, including culture, society, individual psychology, and religion, making it a topic suitable for interdisciplinary exploration. Studies conducted in the West tend to focus on the psychological aspects of conversion, often emphasizing adolescent experiences driven by a need to integrate diverse life experiences into a coherent and rational system. This process is frequently linked to stress or anxiety and supported by interpersonal relationships, with individuals engaging consciously in the process of conversion (Poston, 1992, pp. 154–157).

Despite the comprehensive nature of many Western studies on conversion, these frameworks often overlook the political dimensions of the phenomenon. Gooren (2010) criticizes earlier models of religious conversion for their failure to address the complexities of contemporary religious pluralism, particularly in non-Western contexts such as Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia. He advocates for a more dynamic and comprehensive understanding of conversion, introducing the concept of the "conversion career," which examines an individual's lifelong religious journey, encompassing pre-affiliation, conversion, confession, and potentially disaffiliation. However, like his predecessors, Gooren focuses predominantly on psychological and sociocultural factors, paying little attention to the role of politics in shaping religious conversion.

In contrast to the Western experience, politics plays a significant role in religious conversion in Indonesia. Historical events and state policies have often pressured individuals and communities to convert to one of the six officially recognized religions. For example, the political instability of the 1960s-1970s led to the conversion of approximately two million

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people in Java to Christianity (Willis, 1977, p. 5). Furthermore, marriage laws in Indonesia reinforce religious conversion, as seen in Article 2(1) of Law No.1/1974, which states that a marriage is considered valid only if conducted in accordance with the religious teachings of the couple. This law often compels individuals to convert when marrying someone of a different faith. Brice (2015) highlights how many Westerners who convert to Islam in Indonesia do so primarily to meet the legal requirements for marriage. If the law did not impose such religious stipulations, it is likely that many would not convert.

This political pressure is also evident among Indonesia's indigenous populations. As discussed later in this article, thousands of Indigenous People have been compelled to convert to one of the six recognized religions. For instance, between 1979 and the 1990s, more than a thousand Baduy in Banten converted from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam, while about a hundred converted to Christianity (Suryani, 2021). Similarly, thousands of Akur Sunda Wiwitan followers in Kuningan, West Java, converted to Catholicism, Christianity, or Islam because their marriages were not recognized by the government unless they converted (Sukmana, 2014). Such cases illustrate how state regulations not only discriminate against indigenous beliefs but also actively promote conversions that align with major religious groups, thereby supporting Islamic and Christian proselytization efforts.

This article seeks to address a gap in the existing literature on religious conversion by focusing on the political dimensions of the phenomenon in Indonesia. While Western theories on religious conversion tend to emphasize psychological and sociocultural factors, they often neglect the significant role that politics plays in shaping conversion in non-Western contexts. Through an analysis of fieldwork conducted in Banten and Kuningan between 2017 and 2022, as well as interviews from Jambi in 2021, this article demonstrates how Indonesia's religious regulations have led to the systematic conversion of Indigenous Communities. The findings contribute to broader discussions on the intersection of religion, politics, and identity in Indonesia, offering a critical perspective on how state policies impact religious choices.

This research adopts a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating perspectives from anthropology, sociology, and political science to explore the intersections between religion, politics, and identity. Given the complex socio-political environment in Indonesia, a qualitative research design was chosen to capture the nuanced experiences of individuals and communities undergoing religious conversion. Data were collected through fieldwork in Banten and Kuningan, involving participant observation and in-depth interviews with local communities. Additional data from UIN Jambi students' interviews with the *Anak Dalam* community supplement the analysis.

This study relies on a combination of primary and secondary data sources. The primary data include personal narratives and testimonies gathered through interviews, while secondary data consist of journalistic reports and academic studies. A thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes related to the political drivers of conversion. This method enables a systematic exploration of how state policies, legal frameworks, and socio-political pressures shape conversion decisions.

The article proceeds by discussing the political context of religion in Indonesia and its influence on the conversion experiences of the Baduy, Akur Sunda Wiwitan, and *Anak Dalam*

communities. These cases are then linked to broader theoretical discussions on religious conversion, highlighting the unique role of politics in the Indonesian context. The findings contribute to the broader scholarly discourse on religious conversion, particularly in non-Western settings, where political factors are often overlooked.

DISCUSSION

Politics of Religion in Indonesia

Studies on religious conversion have predominantly concentrated on psychological, anthropological, and sociological perspectives, with few addressing the political dimensions. In Indonesia, however, the politics of religion has significantly influenced, and in some cases, compelled the conversion of individuals, particularly those adhering to *kepercayaan*. This section will examine the relevant laws and regulations that have shaped and, at times, enforced religious conversion. By doing so, it will become evident how influential political factors are in driving religious change in Indonesia.

This issue started when the state differenciated between indigenous religions *(kepercayaan)* and major religion *(agama)* in its politics. To manage religious affairs in the newly independent nation, the state established the Department of Religious Affairs on 3 January 1946. Given that religion is managed by a government ministry, it is unsurprising that numerous laws, regulations, and decrees concerning religion have been enacted. For example, Article 29, sections 1 and 2, of the Indonesian Constitution state: "The state is based on the belief in the One and Only God" and "The state guarantees the freedom of every citizen to adhere to their religion and to worship according to their religion and belief" (Saidi (ed.), 2004; Seo, 2013; Suryani, 2021).

The terms *agama* and *kepercayaan* have created ambiguity, raising the question of whether a belief is part of a religion or refers to something distinct. The prevailing interpretation is that "religion" refers to the major religions recognised by law, specifically Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, as outlined in Law No. 1/PNPS/1965. However, this law does not designate official religions in Indonesia but rather addresses the Prevention of the Misuse and/or Religious Blasphemy (Butt, 2020).

The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) issued Provision No. XXVII/MPRS/1966 on Religion, Education, and Culture in 1966. This provision notably refrained from referencing "religions adhered to by most Indonesians," opting instead to use the term "religions recognised by the government" without specifying the names of these religions. Later, Decision No. IV/MPR/1978 further clarified the state's stance by asserting that belief systems are not equivalent to religions, and the government has a duty to prevent them from being treated as such (Seo, 2013; Suryani, 2021, p. 164).

In 1969, a joint regulation was established between the Department of Religious Affairs and the Department of Home Affairs under No. 01/BER/MDN-MAG/1969, which affirmed the state's guarantee of religious freedom. The regulation mandated the government to guide, support, and protect religious development and the practice of worship. Article 1 of this regulation allowed the regent or mayor to permit religious propagation, provided that, as outlined in Article 2, such activities did not cause disintegration among religious adherents, were not conducted with intimidation, inducement, or coercion, and did not violate laws, security, or public order. In these matters, the regent or mayor would be assisted by the head of the local department of religious affairs (Saidi (ed.), 2004; Seo, 2013; Suryani, 2021)

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The Department of Religious Affairs issued two significant decisions in 1978—No. 70/1978 on the Guidelines of Religious Outreach and No. 77/1978 on Religious Aid in Indonesia. These were subsequently consolidated into a new joint regulation, No. 1/BER/MDN-MAG/1979, concerning the Guidelines of Religious Outreach and Foreign Aid to Religious Organisations in Indonesia. Article 1 of this joint regulation delineated its purpose as regulating religious propagation and international aid while promoting religious harmony. Importantly, the regulation was not intended to restrict religious guidance, development, or propagation. Furthermore, Article 4 of the regulation specified that religious proselytisation should not target individuals who were already adherents of a religion. It is notable that the term *kepercayaan* was absent from this decision (Saidi (ed.), 2004; Suryani, 2021). In other words, the followers of *kepercayaan* can be a target of *da'wa* (Islamic outreach)/mission activities.

Lastly, Law No. 6/1974 on the Main Guidelines of Social Welfare assigned the responsibility for religious aspects in resettlement villages, specifically the duty of converting isolated communities to one of the state-recognised religions, to the Department of Religious Affairs. In response, the department published *Metodologi Da'wah Kepada Suku Terasing* (Methodology of Da'wa to the Isolated Societies) in 1978/9, a manual outlining the conduct of da'wa activities among these groups. As part of this initiative, the *Dakwah Kepada Suku Terasing* (Da'wa to Isolated Societies) programme was developed, with one of its objectives being "to develop religious life, which means to transform their belief from dynamism-animism to the belief in one God" (Fathuddien et al., 1979).

Three Cases of Indigenous Peoples' Religious Conversion

To explore how the politics of religion in Indonesia has influenced the followers of *kepercayaan* to convert, this section will first show the conversions of the Baduy in Banten, Akur Sunda Wiwitan in West Java, and Suku Anak Dalam in Jambi to major religions. In the next section we will see more deeply that in Indonesia, based on the experience of these Indigenous People, religious conversion is very much influced by the politics of religion.

The Conversion of the Baduy

The Baduy community, an indigenous group in Banten Province, is divided into two main groups: Baduy Dalam and Baduy Luar. The Baduy Dalam adhere strictly to their ancestral traditions and reject modern technology, while the Baduy Luar have started to embrace technology and adapt to the outside world (Kurnia & Sihabudin, 2010). Research by Suryani (2021) reveals that the Baduy's conversion to recognised religions was influenced by limited access to land and population growth. This led to their participation in resettlement programs initiated by the Indonesian government in the 1950s. Although these programs aimed to provide land, they also had the hidden objective of encouraging the Baduy to convert to state-recognised religions, particularly Islam and Christianity. The government's resettlement efforts, underpinned by Law No. 6/1974, aimed to "civilise" isolated communities by integrating them into the national socio-religious framework, which included promoting religious conversion.

When the resettlement villages of Gunung Tunggal (Cipangembar 1 and 2) were established in 1977, 80 Baduy families relocated there. In 1985, the regent of Lebak, Oman

Sachroni, distributed land certificates in the villages and urged the Baduy to choose one of the five recognised religions. Of the 50 families who remained in the villages, 20 chose Christianity, while the rest converted to Islam. This conversion led to approximately 80 Baduy individuals embracing Christianity (Suryani, 2021, p. 150).

The Baduy religion, Sunda Wiwitan, like other indigenous faiths, is not officially recognised by the Indonesian state. This situation, combined with religious motives, has made the Baduy a target for missionary work by both Muslim and Christian groups. Organisations such as the Lembaga Dakwah Khusus (LDK) of Muhammadiyah and Jamaah Tabligh have been involved in Islamic missionary efforts among the Baduy (Burhanuddin, 1990). Similarly, Christian missionaries, notably Ismail Amaloh and Kharel Budiman Silitonga, were active in converting Baduy individuals in the 1980s, leading to conflicts with local Muslims. These tensions escalated as both religious groups competed for land to secure converts, recognising land access as a key issue (Suryani, 2021).

The Baduy have long sought state recognition for their land and religious rights, particularly concerning Sunda Wiwitan. Their efforts include challenging government land claims and advocating for the inclusion of Sunda Wiwitan on identity cards. Although some legal protections exist for their land and customs, the government only recognises six official religions, excluding Sunda Wiwitan. In 2011, the listing of Sunda Wiwitan on identity cards was discontinued, frustrating the Baduy community. The village head, Daenah, raised concerns, citing Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom. On 23 November 2017, Baduy representatives visited the Ministry of Home Affairs to demand Sunda Wiwitan's inclusion on electronic ID cards, as approximately 4,000 Baduy are unable to list their religion due to current regulations (Suryani, 2021, pp. 218–227).

The Conversion of the Akur Sunda Wiwitan

Akur Sunda Wiwitan is an indigenous religion practiced mainly by Sundanese people in Cigugur, West Java. Founded by Pangeran Madrais (1833-1940), the religion emerged after he, a Muslim educated in a pesantren, experienced a divine voice and embarked on a quest for truth between 1845 and 1849. His journey ended in Cigugur, where he understood the dualities of existence as manifestations of divine mercy from the Creator (Sukmana, 2011, 2014). Madrais spread his teachings, establishing Cigugur as the centre of Akur Sunda Wiwitan. His influence reached areas including Kuningan, Indramayu, and Bandung. His advocacy for indigenous beliefs and freedom led to his arrest by Dutch authorities, though he was released due to insufficient evidence. Madrais is considered a spiritual guide, known for his novel teachings (Sukmana, 2014).

In 1964, the government declared Akur Sunda Wiwitan a forbidden religion under decision No.001/KPTS/DM/1964, prohibiting its followers from conducting marriages based on its teachings. Subsequently, followers were monitored by the Community Belief Supervisor (PAKEM). This decision led to confusion, prompting Tedja Buana, the religion's leader, to seek assistance from the Catholic Church of Cirebon. He then advised followers to convert to one of the five recognised religions, with around 5,000 converting to Catholicism (Sukmana, 2011, 2014).

Dewi Kanti, a practitioner from Cigugur, highlighted the challenges faced due to the lack of official recognition for Sunda Wiwitan. This has led to administrative issues such as

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identity card fields being marked with a dash, prompting many to convert to recognised religions to avoid these hurdles, reducing the number of Sunda Wiwitan followers in West Java (https://tirto.id/pindah-agama-karena-tragedi-1965-cvve).

The Kuningan Regency Government's refusal to recognise the Akur Sunda Wiwitan as an indigenous legal community threatens their living space and ancestral land, crucial for their sustenance and environmental preservation. Despite their application for recognition in April 2020, the request was denied based on not meeting Ministerial Regulation No. 52 of 2014 criteria. Djuwita Djatikusumah, leader of Akur Sunda Wiwitan, views this denial as discriminatory and a threat to their living space. They argue that the regulations used are outdated and do not reflect the current realities of Indigenous Communities, echoing historical pressures against Sunda Wiwitan.

An instance of discrimination involved halting the construction of their cemetery due to an absent Building Permit (IMB) and concerns it might be used for worship. Despite being on private land, local authorities, supported by Islamic mass organisations, sealed the site. The SETARA Institute condemned this as bureaucratic discrimination, noting that the IMB application was rejected due to lack of community support and objections from the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). SETARA Institute's Halili Hasan warned that such discrimination, particularly in West Java, could have broader implications for national security if unchecked.

The Conversion of Suku Anak Dalam

The *Suku Anak Dalam*, also known as "*Orang Rimba*", is an indigenous group in Jambi Province. They face significant challenges in preserving their traditional nomadic lifestyle and animist beliefs. Modernisation and deforestation, which have led to the conversion of forests into palm oil plantations, have compelled them to convert to Islam in order to survive. The need for official identification, such as an identity card (KTP), to access basic services like education and healthcare also plays a role in this decision (https://kumparan.com/yayan-hidayat/harapan-palsu-negara-dan-problem-pindah-keyakinan-suku-anak-dalam-sad/full).

In recent years, Islamic groups such as the Front Pembela Islam (FPI) and Hidayatullah have been involved in facilitating the conversion of the Orang Rimba to Islam. This process often begins with children, who are considered more amenable to religious instruction. Orang Rimba tribal leader Muhammad Yusuf acknowledges that the decision to convert to Islam is driven by practical needs for survival in a world governed by external societal norms. The decision to convert also reflects the Orang Rimba's inability to protect their forests from extensive burning and encroachment. The palm oil plantations that have replaced the tropical forests have destroyed local ecosystems and forced the Orang Rimba to abandon their traditional way of life. This massive deforestation, among the fastest in the world, has resulted in the loss of access to the natural resources that have long sustained their lives (https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah-41937911).

Some Orang Rimba have settled in new communities and adopted more modern lifestyles. Although they yearn for the forest and their traditional way of life—where the forest is central to their spirituality and culture—many have yet to obtain the necessary identity cards. Approximately 200 of the 3,500 members of the Orang Rimba in Jambi have converted from animism to Islam in hopes of securing a better life and access to official identity (https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah-40304342). While some Orang Rimba view

urbanisation and religious conversion as solutions, many believe these changes threaten the sustainability of their culture. Some tribe members, such as the tribal leader Mail, resist conversion due to its clash with their traditions and fear of misfortune, such as tiger attacks (https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah-41937911).

In Sungai Abang Village, Kecamatan VII Koto, Tebo Regency, Jambi, about 40 individuals from the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community have embraced Islam. The conversion process, including the recitation of the *shahada* and mass circumcision, was guided by Ustadz Imaduddin and Ustadz Muhajirin from Pesantren Al-Inayah Rimbo Bujang. This pesantren is committed to supporting the SAD community in their Islamic education and providing economic assistance, particularly since newly circumcised SAD men are unable to work (https://www.nu.or.id/daerah/40-orang-suku-anak-dalam-di-jambi-masuk-islam-S9xJa).

The government aims to integrate the SAD into the dominant social structure by resettling them in permanent settlements, which eradicates their nomadic identity. Hasbullah Al Banjary from the Ministry of Social Affairs emphasises the importance of preserving traditions despite changes, whereas Rukka Sombolinggi from the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (AMAN) criticises the government's failure to provide adequate protection. This approach often prioritises economic and political interests over protecting indigenous rights and community welfare (Muntholib & Nugroho (eds.), 2014).

Politics of Religion and Religious Conversion in Indonesia

Although several studies have explored the phenomenon of religious conversion in Indonesia, most tend to emphasise personal, spiritual, and sociological factors. These studies focus on theological, psychological, or social aspects, such as individual reasons for conversion, profound religious experiences, or pressure from local religious communities. However, the political dimension of conversion has received insufficient attention. In Indonesia, where politics is closely tied to religion, decisions to convert are often shaped by power dynamics, government policies, and identity politics. This lack of focus on the political aspect creates a gap in the existing literature, which this research seeks to address. By highlighting the role of politics in religious conversion, it aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics influencing religion in Indonesia.

The religious conversion experienced by the Indigenous Peoples of Akur Sunda Wiwitan in West Java, Sunda Wiwitan in Banten, and Suku Anak Dalam in Jambi illustrates that religious conversion in Indonesia is deeply intertwined with political dynamics. These dynamics encompass the state's hegemony (Gramsci, 2012), major demographic politics (Yadgar, 2020), national identity politics (Pool, 2020), and politics of exclusion (Nollert & Sheikhzadegan, 2023). These cases reveal how political structures and pressures shape the pathways of conversion, often forcing marginalised groups to align with state-recognised religions to secure legal rights and social inclusion.

One theoretical framework that can help explain the dynamics of religious conversion in Indonesia is Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony. This theory proposes that power is not maintained solely through physical domination or coercion but also through ideological leadership, which leads subordinate groups to accept the values and norms of the dominant group as natural. In the Indonesian context, religion often serves as a field where political hegemony is enacted, particularly given the close relationship between the state and the majority religion (Gramsci, 2012).

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As shown in fieldwork conducted in Banten, Kuningan, and Jambi, individual or group decisions to convert are often influenced by political pressure or local power dynamics. For instance, in some cases, indigenous communities whose religions are not recognised by the state choose to convert to one of the six official religions acknowledged by the government to gain full access to citizenship rights. This phenomenon reflects how the state uses its political authority to create boundaries that compel individuals to conform, not only as a result of physical pressure but also through the ideological constructs widely accepted by society.

Within the framework of Gramsci's hegemony theory, the decision to convert can be seen as a form of "consent" to the social order dominated by the majority political power. The state, through its official religion recognition policies, effectively positions certain religions as "more legitimate" than others, creating a situation where minority communities feel the need to conform in order to gain recognition and security. Here, the state's hegemony not only influences religious choices but also controls access to social and political rights, thereby reinforcing the dominance of the majority group.

Furthermore, the politics of majority hegemony in Indonesia, particularly among Muslims and Christians, pressures indigenous groups to convert, intertwining religion with power dynamics. The exclusion of traditional religions from official recognition reinforces the dominance of recognised faiths, marginalising indigenous beliefs. Over 1,000 Baduy people, for instance, converted to access land and livelihoods. Similarly, the Anak Suku Dalam converted to gain official identity and public services, illustrating how national identity politics shape religious conversion. This mirrors Israel's demographic strategies, where conversions maintain a Jewish majority. In both cases, state policies privilege recognised religions, and indigenous groups are excluded from civil rights unless they conform to these hegemonic frameworks (Yadgar: 2020).

Identity politics theory also helps explain why religion becomes a contested field in Indonesia's political context. As part of identity politics, religion is often used by political groups to strengthen group loyalty and pursue particular political interests. This is evident in various political events in Indonesia, where religious identity is utilised as a tool for political mobilisation. In such circumstances, an individual's decision to convert cannot be separated from the broader political context, where religion and political identity are intertwined, affecting both personal and collective decisions.

Pool's (2020) conceptualisation of conversion as an ethical transformation influenced by identity politics is relevant here. Indigenous peoples are often compelled to adopt recognised religions like Islam or Christianity to align themselves with the dominant political and religious narratives in Indonesia. Their conversions are often responses to state-imposed identity politics, where their non-recognised beliefs exclude them from basic rights and social services. In the case of the Akur Sunda Wiwitan community, their conversion to Catholicism or Islam reflects a broader political strategy to ensure their survival within a state that does not recognise their traditional beliefs.

The conversion of Indigenous People in Indonesia reflects the state's politics of exclusion, pressuring groups like the Anak Suku Dalam to convert to Islam or Christianity for state recognition and access to public services. This mirrors Reformation-era fragmentation politics, where political shifts shaped religious identities. In Indonesia, the state's prioritisation of recognised religions forces indigenous groups to choose between

traditional beliefs and survival. Nollert & Sheikhzadegan (2023) findings on Muslim converts in Switzerland facing exclusion politics resonate here, as indigenous communities like the Baduy and Akur Sunda Wiwitan struggle to access rights without conversion. Conversion becomes a survival strategy, reflecting the intersection of integration and assimilation politics within a socio-political system that excludes their beliefs.

In short, the politics of religious conversion in Indonesia are deeply rooted in the state's historical and political frameworks. Indigenous groups are marginalised by the state's hegemony, major demographic politics, national identity politics, and politics of exclusion, forcing them to convert to survive in a system that privileges recognised religions. These political dynamics shape the conversion experiences of communities like the Baduy, Akur Sunda Wiwitan, and Anak Suku Dalam, demonstrating that conversion in Indonesia is often driven by political, rather than spiritual, imperatives.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that political factors play a crucial role in influencing religious conversion in Indonesia, particularly through state policies and political pressure. The analysis revealed that individuals are more likely to convert when faced with political discrimination, and that state policies favoring certain religions exacerbate these trends. These findings suggest that political interventions in religious matters can have profound effects on religious identity and community dynamics, raising important questions about the role of the state in religious life. However, this study was limited by its focus on the Baduy, the Akur Sunda Wiwitan, and the Anak Suku Dalam. Further research is needed to generalise these findings to other indiginous groups in Indonesia and to get a deeper understanding on how politics affects Indigenous People to convert. Ultimately, rediscussing the definition of '*kepercayaan'* and *'agama'* and insisting the state to be impartial to different faiths embraced by all Indonesian citizens are essential for fostering religious freedom, diversity, social harmony in Indonesia. Lastly, I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this article. Their comments enabled me to make this article better.

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