

# Strategy For Chinese Ethnic Minority (Social, Economic And Political) In Medan City

Nursapiah Harahap

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Faculty of Social Science,  
Communication Studies Program

*Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to analyze how the survival strategies of ethnic minorities in Medan in the socio-economic and political fields. This type of research is library research Literature study is a type of research that relies on the power to collect secondary data and theoretical data from various literary sources as well as data that can support and strengthen this research. Then analyze the data qualitatively by describing the findings from various literary sources. The results of this study indicate that the Chinese Ethnic has the potential or strength to survive in the socio-economic and political fields by adapting, working hard, and actively participating in political activities. The ethnic Chinese build good communication skills with the community as a form of their readiness to live in an environment of culturalism.*

*Keywords: Ethnic, Minority, Social, Economic, Political*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Historically the whole ethnic assimilation policy was only implemented during Suharto's authoritarian rule (1966-1998). Suharto himself stated clearly that Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent must immediately integrate and assimilate with native Indonesian society (Dwipayana and Hadimadja, 1989). However, in its implementation often assimilation was contradictory and even in some of Soeharto's policies tended to be anti-assimilation due to political considerations.

Tolerance of minority religions and the distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous tend to in fact divide, and not unify, ethnic Chinese and native Indonesians. In other words, ethnic Chinese remain separate from the host community. Nevertheless, it is difficult to deny that the main feature of the policy during the New Order regime was assimilation.

But in 1975 a ban on all socio-political ethnic Chinese organizations was also assimilation because they were only allowed to join organizations dominated by non-Chinese ethnic groups. Chinese ethnic who are interested in joining political activities can only join existing Indonesian political parties (Golkar, PPP, and PDI). Although there are a number

of intermediary organizations such as the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Communication Agency (BAKOM), some of the members are ethnic Chinese.

These organizations are not Chinese organizations in real sense. However, the most effective assimilation policy to change Chinese identity at that time was the renaming policy. In 1966, Soeharto implemented the policy, by pressuring ethnic Chinese to change their Chinese names to Indonesian names. An interesting thing to note is that the names called Indonesian names are actually non-Chinese names.

Changing names is not mandatory, but during the first years of the New Order, most Indonesians of Chinese descent changed their names, because changing names was often seen as evidence of political loyalty to Indonesia or identification with the Indonesian people. The basis of the assimilationist policy can be traced within the concept of the Indonesian nation, which is based on a native population model. The above history still leaves the same conditions in several regions in Indonesia today. Especially in big cities like Medan City. Comparison of the number of Chinese population each year increases. More details can be seen in table 1. following:

No.	Nationality	The Year 1930	The Year 1980	The Year 2000
1.	Jawa	24,9%	29,41%	33,03%
2.	Batak	10,7%	14,11%	--
3.	Tionghoa	35,63%	12,8%	10,65%
4.	Mandailing	6,43%	11,91%	9,36%
5.	Minangkabau	7,3%	10,93%	8,6%
6.	Melayu	7,06%	8,57%	6,59%
7.	Karo	0,12%	3,99%	4,10%
8.	Aceh	-	2,19%	2,78%
9.	Sunda	1,58%	1,90%	--
10.	Lain-lain	16,62%	4,13%	3,95%

Source: 1930 dan 1980; 2000: BPS Sumut

Table 1: Comparison of Ethnic Groups in Medan in 1930, 1980, 2000

Medan City is one of the major metropolitan capitals in North Sumatra Province. The wealth of natural resources and socio-cultural, racial and ethnic diversity in the land of Deli has made the city of Medan as the ideal capital. Plus business centers that continue to grow significantly change the face of the city of Medan to become more advanced. Therefore, it is not surprising that many people migrate to Medan, both internally and internationally. So that with this migration process various ethnicities, tribes and even other nations are able to enter the Medan City area.

Every ethnic group that occupies the city of Medan has a different culture. Ethnic groups in the city of Medan consist of Acehnese, Malay, Batak, Javanese, Minangkabau, and migrants from foreign countries such as India, China, Europe and so on who blend into the inhabitants that make up the city of Medan. The city of Medan, which in the colonial period was part of the East Sumatra region, was home to Karo, Malays, and Simalungun people. Karo and Simalungun tribes occupy the area around the highlands and Malays occupy coastal areas. However, after the influx of Dutch colonial influence, which was marked by land clearing to become a plantation location, there was a huge change in the composition of the people in East Sumatra including the city of Medan.

However, with the wealth and progress of the city of Medan, there is still a problem of ethnicity from the minority and the majority, one of which is the ethnic Chinese minority. The presence of ethnic Chinese in Medan raises various internal and external conflicts for the people of Medan in terms of politics, economy, society, and culture.

The Chinese are one of the non-indigenous groups who migrated to Indonesia. They entered Indonesia through large waves of migration from Malaysia and the Chinese Plain. They were brought in because their energy was needed in the arable plantations which had been opened by the Dutch Colonial Government (Suaryadinata, 1984). The special position of the Chinese in Medan resulted in their lives being separated from the indigenous groups. The existence of ethnic Chinese in the city of Medan poses various problems compared to the presence of other foreigners such as Arabs, Indians, Europeans, and others.

In the city of Medan, there have been several incidents of riots between ethnic Chinese and indigenous ethnic groups. The causes of the riots mostly revolved around economic problems, Sara, and economic problems which showed that indigenous people were dissatisfied with income distribution and business activity distribution. Although with various conflicts and problems that occur in the city of Medan, the

existence of Chinese tribes still survives. Various attempts were made by the Chinese to survive both in the political, socio-cultural and economic fields as a form of commitment to the recognition of the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation. Based on the description, the researcher is interested in studying the strategy of survival of the ethnic Chinese as a minority in the city of Medan.

In support of this research using theory Jonathan Hollerman about survival strategies. Survival strategy theory is a survival-based theory centered on the premise that a person needs to always adapt to his competitive environment in order to survive. or approach to managing an organization or group. It recommends that organizations or community groups should develop survival strategies based on the situations and conditions they experience.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the author uses the type of library research, which is a series of activities relating to the method of collecting library data, reading and recording and processing research material by utilizing library resources to obtain research data. Library research involves a step-by-step process used to gather information to write papers, make presentations, or complete projects. This research process involves, identifying and finding relevant information, concludes what is found, and then develops and expresses the researcher's ideas. The aim is to get a theoretical basis for the problem being examined. According to Moelong, library research is research that uses a way to obtain information data by placing existing facilities in the library, such as books, magazines, documents, secondary data records, statistical data or pure library research related to the object of research.

In this study, researchers used descriptive critical research with more emphasis on the power of analysis of existing sources, and data by relying on existing theories and concepts to be interpreted based on the writings that lead to the discussion. These sources can be obtained from works written by intellectuals in the form of scientific journals, textbooks, and other scientific articles. Besides that, it also collects the results of research experts who are competent in the field of ethnic minorities. Next, do a descriptive analysis. Data collection techniques with documentation, identifying discourses from books, papers or articles, magazines, journals, newspapers, web (internet), or other information related to the title of writing to look for things or variables in the form of notes, transcripts, books, and so on which have links with studies on the survival strategies of ethnic Chinese minorities.

Descriptive analysis methods provide clear, objective, systematic, analytical and critical descriptions and information about the survival strategies of ethnic minorities. The initial steps were taken by collecting the data needed, then carried out classification and description. After the data is collected, the data is analyzed to get a conclusion, the forms in the data analysis technique are using descriptive analysis method, which is an effort to collect and compile a data, then an analysis of the data is carried out. The opinion of the descriptive data analysis is the data collected in the form of words and pictures, not in the form of numbers, this is due to

the application of qualitative methods. In addition, everything collected is key to what has been researched.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF MEDAN CITY

##### a. GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS

Medan is the capital of the Province of North Sumatra with its location in the North Latitude and East Longitude positions with a height of 0-40 meters above sea level. The position and location of the city of Medan is on the eastern coastal plains of Sumatra, right between the Strait of Malacca and mountain ranges stretching from the Southwest to the southeast region of Sumatra Island making the city of Medan a good strategic area to drive the economy to the cultural center, Medan is a place always open to anyone who has competent and able to survive as a city person. The topography is tilted to the north and is at an altitude of 0-40 meters above sea level with relatively high humidity and rainfall. The location of the city of Medan is not far from the Straits of Malacca, so it is very strategic in terms of economy, especially in relation to foreign trade. Medan City has borders with other areas including the following:

- ✓ Westside borders Deli Serdang Regency;
- ✓ East is bordered by Deli Serdang Regency;
- ✓ The South is bordered by the Malacca Strait;
- ✓ North of the border with Langkat Regency of Medan in the Dutch colonial era was part of the residency of East Sumatra, which is famous for its tobacco plantations.

The city of Medan is the capital of the residency of East Sumatra and its territory includes four original Deli villages, namely, Kampung Petisah Hulu, Kampung Petisah Hilir, Kampung Kesawan, Kampung Sungai Rengas. In addition, Medan is surrounded by other villages such as Kampung Kota Maksun, Glugur, Kampung Sungai Mati, Sungai Agul and others, all of which are part of the territory of the Deli Kingdom territory.

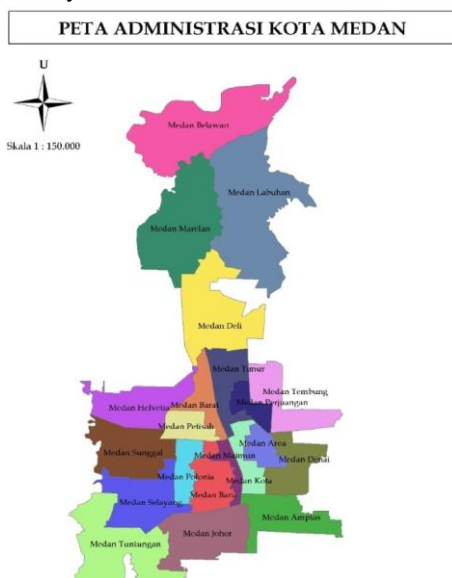


Figure 1: Map of Medan City Administration

But along with its development, Medan City is bordered by areas that are still classified as territorial North Sumatra. The boundaries are east and west bordering Deli Serdang Regency; North is bordered by the Malacca Strait; the south is bordered by Langkat Regency. The area of Medan City can be seen in the following Table 2:

No.	District Name	An area	Percentage
1.	Medan Tuntungan	20,8	7,80
2.	Medan Johor	14,58	5,50
3.	Medan Amplas	11,19	4,22
4.	Medan Denai	9,05	3,41
5.	Medan Area	5,52	2,08
6.	Medan Kota	5,27	1,99
7.	Medan Maimun	2,98	1,13
8.	Medan Polonia	9,01	3,40
9.	Medan Baru	5,84	2,20
10.	Medan Selayang	12,81	4,83
11.	Medan Sunggal	15,44	5,83
12.	Medan Helvetia	13,16	4,97
13.	Medan Petisah	6,82	2,57
14.	Medan Barat	5,33	2,01
15.	Medan Timur	7,76	2,93
16.	Medan Perjuangan	4,09	1,54
17.	Medan Tembung	7,99	3,01
18.	Medan Deli	20,84	7,86
19.	Medan Labuhan	36,67	13,83
20.	Medan Marelan	23,82	8,99
21.	Medan Belawan	26,25	9,90

Source: BPS, 2018

Table 2: Medan City Area by District 2018

Based on the data in table 1 above shows that there are differences in the area of each district in the city of Medan. The sub-district that has the largest area is Medan Labuhan, while the sub-district that has the smallest area is Medan Maimun.

##### a. POPULATION

The population component generally describes various social dynamics that occur in society, both socially and culturally. Decreased birth rates (fertility) and mortality rates increased inter-regional migration and urbanization processes, including shuttle flows, will affect population policies that are applied. The condition of the population of Medan City can be seen in table 3. below:

No.	Name of District	Male	Female	Amount
1.	Medan Tuntungan	42.288	43.325	85.613
2.	Medan Johor	65.207	66.805	132.012
3.	Medan Amplas	61176	62.674	123.850
4.	Medan Denai	72147	73.914	146.061
5.	Medan Area	48.897	50.095	98.992
6.	Medan Kota	36.769	37.670	74.439
7.	Medan Maimun	20.086	20.577	40.663
8.	Medan Polonia	27.636	28.313	55.949
9.	Medan Baru	20.025	20.515	40.540
10.	Medan Selayang	52.433	53.717	106.150
11.	Medan Sunggal	57.192	58.593	115.785
12.	Medan Helvetia	74.448	76.273	150.721
13.	Medan Petisah	31.303	32.071	63.374
14.	Medan Barat	35.902	36.781	72.683

15.	Medan Timur	55.036	56.384	111.420
16.	Medan Perjuangan	47.361	48.521	95.882
17.	Medan Tembung	67.759	69.419	137.178
18.	Medan Deli	89.632	91.828	181.460
19.	Medan Labuhan	58.025	59.447	117.472
20.	Medan Marelan	80.152	82.115	162.267
21.	Medan Belawan	48.463	49.650	98.113

Source: BPS, 2015

Table 3: Population Numbers by District and Gender in 2015

## B. SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN THE SOCIAL FIELD

The condition of a society that is very plural both in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, and social status makes an extraordinary contribution to the development and dynamics in society. In the conditions of the community mentioned above, including in Indonesia, the discourse on multicultural education becomes important to equip students to have sensitivity in dealing with social symptoms and problems that are rooted in differences due to ethnicity, race, religion, and values that occur in the community. The same is the case with the multicultural conditions in Medan. The condition of a society that is very plural and multicultural both in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, and social status makes an extraordinary contribution to the development and dynamics in Medan city society. Medan City is a city that has a very diverse composition of the community from the diversity of tribes, religions, customs, and even a variety of typical food wealth. Diversity in the city of Medan becomes something very interesting because of the influence of cultural acculturation of various ethnic groups that inhabit the city of Medan, such as those in the Medan City Government data such as ethnic Malay, Javanese, Karo, Toba, Simalungun, Minang, Pakpak, Tamil and Chinese. Each culture makes Medan City a City of diversity that is so unique. In addition to ethnic groups, religions in Medan also vary from official religions such as Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism to local and non-existent beliefs in Medan, namely Parmalim, Pemena, Ahmadiyah, Witness Jahowa, and others.

However, each ethnic group, religion, and culture has its own way of maintaining its essence in order to be able to survive in an environment of multiculturalism, one of which is the ethnic Chinese minority. Strategy and adjustment in the social environment are often done as an effort to build community trust that ethnic minorities are able to interact across religions. This attitude is manifested in daily life such as attending interfaith forum activities, mutual cooperation and getting involved in maintaining security and public order.

On the other hand, it can also be seen that the adaptation ability of ethnic Chinese makes the potential for conflict muted. In Medan City, conflicts or riots between tribes almost did not occur, one of the reasons was that ethnic Chinese tried to follow the lifestyle of non-indigenous people and even wanted to be very visible from the everyday language they used, namely a mixture of Indonesian.

In line with opinions Woolston explain that an organism or social group and its environment are beneficial to existence and growth, or the process by which unity arises, and continues in, such beneficial relationships as the physical, or

material, and social, or spiritual environment. This adaptation is passive or active. Passive physical adaptation consists of biological evolution and somatic changes, passive spiritual adaptation includes psychological development under the pressure of social institutions or society such as language, law, and education. Active adaptation means that the modification of an organism or group can adapt itself to its environment, or the transformation of the environment to make it profitable for life, such as the development of industry in society.

In other Expert states that the conceptualization of social adaptation is determined by the fact that it is the subject of study by various scientific fields, which in itself is a prerequisite for the application of various approaches. In the context of human adaptability to changes in the social environment, one of the main approaches to study its nature is sociological. A sociological approach to testing adaptation is presented in the works of prominent Western sociologists E.Dyurkem, M.Weber, T.Parsans, and R.Martan. According to E.Dyurkem, adaptation is the adjustment of an individual's internal organization to the existing norms of society.

At the individual level adaptation consists in the adoption by the individual of the dominant public morality, the awareness of his duty to society, which manifests itself in his thoughts, goals, actions. At the community level, adaptation is mainly reflected in the existence of the norm itself. The essence of adaptation is the existence of public morality that is shared by all members of society. Norms are primary, "positive", and the individual and his personal awareness are secondary. Functionally individual adaptation is the process of absorption, "interiorization" of existing norms. Any deviation from the adoption of these norms by individuals is a social pathology. Lack of norms, defects, ambiguity - this is the pathology of society. Although E. Dyurkem does not use the term "adaptation", the scale of "normpathology" is entirely identical to the concept of adaptation to de-adaptation.

Another finding is that the adaptation of individual and group behavior adjusts to fit the norm and value system that applies in a particular society, class, or social group. Social adaptation occurs in the process of socialization and also with the help of social control mechanisms, which include social pressure and state regulation. Social adaptation becomes increasingly significant when the social change affects important aspects of life over a relatively short period of time. These changes include migration, changes in age, rapid industrial development, and large shifts in population from country to city.

In antagonistic societies, individuals may find themselves unable to deal with life, react well to social changes and increasingly complex societal demands or to achieve their goals within prescribed norms. As a result, deviant behavior, including unlawful behavior, often occurs.

With the elimination of class antagonism in socialist society, the process of social adaptation has undergone a fundamental change. The relationship between individuals and groups is characterized primarily by individual obedience and voluntary compliance with social norms, including legal norms, and by rules of morality and socialist community. In the socialist society, the process of social adaptation requires study and concentrated action. The failure of certain individuals to adapt, combined with specific situations that are

not favorable, can adversely affect the behavior of that individual. It is important to study crime from the viewpoint of unsatisfactory social adaptation to understand the causes of crime and to fight crime effectively.

#### C. SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN THE POLITICAL FIELD

The ethnic Chinese in Medan are more dominant as traders and entrepreneurs. Not infrequently the ethnic Chinese population domiciled in Medan City are usually large traders and entrepreneurs and have a middle to upper economic level because most of the traders in the market and along the main road in Medan City are controlled by ethnic Chinese. However, there are no social gaps arising in the community because the Chinese are able to compete in a healthy price with indigenous traders without any party being disadvantaged. This makes one of the factors of the survival of the Chinese in the economic field. Another Chinese ethnic strategy in Medan City is to be driven by the primordial culture of China as a force that drives their success that emphasizes traditional ethos such as diligent, thrifty, kinship and cultural heritage to develop the business. Plus the ability to build and work hard. The success factor of the Chinese entrepreneurs is supported by the willingness to move forward and be independent based on having ambitious, creative, systematic planning, good at seeing opportunities and being careful in making decisions.

Build a broad network because of the support to continue the family heritage that is based on customer orientation, being flexible and able to adjust in relationships with others. While the hard worker factor is supported because of the desire to escape poverty, which is based on working hard, optimistic and persistent in working. The principle of "generation to generation" regulates the pattern of family relations in every sphere of ethnic Chinese families. Within that principle, there is a system called the inner circle which refers to the involvement of family members in business planning and business. Chinese ethnics have high independence, perseverance, thrifty and dare to speculate by investing their resources. Aside from making as much money as possible, the most prominent characteristic is hard work.

#### D. SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN THE POLITICAL FIELD

Recognition of ethnic Chinese in the Political Field began with the leadership of Abdurrachman Wahid as president, the Chinese community increasingly dared to actively participate in politics. The ethnic Chinese community became active participants, nominating themselves as elected candidates. Participation in the field of ethnic Chinese politics actually had long existed in the city of Medan, but because of ethnic minorities, it became invisible. The state provides equal opportunities for Chinese ethnicity in politics. Proven that more and more ethnic Chinese became legislative members in 2019. There is no ethnic minority discrimination by the ethnic majority. The reference used is the Citizenship Act on July 11, 2006. This law gives freedom for descendants to participate in politics.

In addition, the Government of Indonesia has also established the Office of National Unity, Community and

Political Protection based on PP No. 38/2007 concerning the Sharing of Government Affairs, Provincial Governments and Regency / City Governments. Birth of Law No. 12 of 2006 concerning Citizenship, and Law No. 40 of 2008 concerning the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination is the cornerstone of the government's efforts and commitments to provide protection, certainty, and equality in the law for all citizens to live free from racial and ethnic discrimination.

The promulgation of the Law is a guarantee for the ethnic Chinese and is getting bigger and more involved in various fields in society especially in political participation. Thus, the influence of power and politics in organizations presents a political analysis of intra-organizational relations in which power and political games are normal. In any organization and any group, definitely looking for human resource support. This explains the inevitability of organizational politics and the power game. An understanding of organizational politics requires an analysis of power, coalition and bargaining. Power relations are contests for political action, and cover the most fundamental issues that underlie organizational politics. In fact, survival in an organization or group is a political act.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

A survival strategy is an action carried out by everyone to be able to maintain his life through whatever work he does. Because economic, social and political problems are problems that concern the welfare and fulfillment of people's needs. Chinese ethnics have the potential or strength to survive in the socio-economic and political fields by adapting, working hard, and actively participating in political activities. The Chinese are able to communicate well with the community as a form of their readiness to live in an environment of multiculturalism.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] BPS.go.id
- [2] Hollerman, J. 2018. E-Book Survival Theory: A Preparedness Guide. America. Apoc Publishing
- [3] Suryadinata, L. 2018. Kebijakan Negara Indonesia terhadap Etnik Tionghoa: Dari Asimilasi ke Multikulturalisme. *Jurnal Antropologi Indonesia*. 7 (1), hal.1-12
- [4] Kartini Kartono. 1998. *Pengantar Metodologi Research*. Bandung: Alumni
- [5] Moeleong, J.L. 2008. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya
- [6] Omisore, O.B & Nweke, N.A. 2014. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. Vol. 4, No. 7. DOI: 10.6007/IJARBS/v4-i7/997
- [7] Surachman, W. 1990. *Pengantar Penelitian Ilmiah: Dasar, Metode, Teknik*. Bandung: Tarsita
- [8] Venelin Terziev. 2019. *Conceptual Framework Of Social Adaptation Proceedings of INTCESS 2019- 6th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences*, 4-6 February 2019- Dubai, U.A.E.

- [8] Woolston, H. 1917. Social Adaptation. The American Journal of Theology, 21(2), Retrieved March 5, 2020, from [www.jstor.org/stable/3155443](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3155443)

IJIRAS