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Images of Islam in Taiwan: from Chinese Islam to Global Islam

Imej Islam di Taiwan: Dari Muslim berbangsa Cina kepada Islam Global

Bao Hsiu-Ping*

Abstract

Taipei Grand Mosque looks like a mini global village. Every Friday, the prayer hall is always overcrowded with Muslims from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including local Chinese Muslims (Hui), Arabs, Turks, Africans, Malaysians and Indonesians. They meet each other and exchange ideas after the congregational prayer. However, in the 1970s, there was a different image of Islam in Taiwan. Only Chinese Muslims were included in the congregation. The first generation of Chinese Muslims (around 20 to 50 thousand people) arrived in Taiwan with the National Government in 1949 and early 1950s when the Communist Party took over China. These Chinese Muslims showed distinctive features of 'Chinese Islam' in Taiwan. The elites among these Chinese Muslims were those who played a leading role in the revival of Islam in China during the 1930s and 1940s. When they settled in Taiwan, they resumed work serving Islam as they did the same in China, such as constructing mosques, building Muslim cemeteries and dispatching Muslim students to Middle Eastern countries. However, with the passage of time, their work on the revival of Islam seems to have been unsuccessful. The population of Chinese Muslims stagnated and even declined. Instead, with the open policy for drawing in foreign workers and students by the government in Taiwan during the 1990s, foreign Muslims from various countries began to appear in Taiwan, thereby exhibiting another images of Islam to the public. Nowadays, Chinese Muslims seem to be an invisible community in Taiwan as they and their descendants have become outnumbered by foreign Muslims. This paper aims to describe and analyze the paradigm shift in images of Islam in Taiwan over a half century.

Keywords: Images of Islam, Hui Muslim, Taiwan, Foreign Muslim.

Abstrak

Masjid Besar Taipei seolah-olah seperti sebuah kampung global mini dimana setiap hari Jumaat, dewan solat masjid tersebut akan dipenuhi oleh umat Islam dari pelbagai latar belakang etnik, termasuk orang Cina (Hui), Arab, Turki, Afrika, Malaysia dan Indonesia. Mereka bertemu antara satu sama lain dan bertukar-tukar pendapat usai

* Assistant Professor, Department of History, National Chengchi University, Taiwan.

solat berjemaah. Walau bagaimanapun, pada tahun 1970-an, gambaran imej Islam di Taiwan mengalami perubahan. Hanya orang Cina yang beragama Islam diiktiraf sebagai ahli solat jemaah. Generasi pertama umat Islam di China (sekitar 20 hingga 50 ribu orang) tiba di Taiwan semasa pemerintahan Kerajaan Negara pada tahun 1949 dan pada awal 1950-an ketika Parti Komunis mengambil alih pemerintahan negara China. Ciri-ciri umat Islam Cina yang berasal daripada negara China adalah berbeza dengan orang-orang Islam Cina di Taiwan. Para elit di kalangan umat Islam Cina ini adalah mereka yang memainkan peranan penting dalam pemulihan Islam di China pada tahun 1930-an dan 1940-an. Apabila mereka menetap di Taiwan, mereka meneruskan kerja-kerja untuk Islam sebagaimana yang mereka lakukan di China, seperti membina masjid, membuka tanah perkuburan Islam dan menghantar pelajar Islam ke negara-negara Timur Tengah. Walau bagaimanapun, dengan peredaran masa, usaha-usaha mereka membangunkan Islam tidak berjaya. Bilangan penduduk umat Islam China tidak berubah malah mengalami kemerosotan disebabkan oleh dasar terbuka Taiwan yang menggalakkan kemasukan pekerja dan pelajar asing pada tahun 1990-an, natijahnya, ramai umat Islam dari pelbagai bangsa dan negara mulai muncul di Taiwan yang telah memberi kesan kepada imej Islam yang sebelumnya kepada orang awam. Pada masa kini, kaum Cina Muslim seolah-olah menjadi komuniti yang tidak kelihatan di Taiwan kerana mereka dan keturunan mereka telah menjadi lebih ramai hasil pencampuran daripada umat Islam asing. Makalah ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan dan menganalisa peralihan paradigma terhadap imej Islam di Taiwan setelah separuh abad.

Kata Kunci: Imej Islam, Hui muslim, Taiwan, Muslim asing

Introduction

The public in Taiwan today derives an image of Islam mainly from news coverage on violence within Muslim countries in the Middle East or the long-term Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Islam got a very negative image in the Taiwanese public eye when ISIS declared the establishment of a caliphate in June 2014 and killed westerners, Shia Muslims, Yazidis, and Arab Christians in the name of Islam. Meanwhile, approximately 300,000 Muslims live and study in Taiwan today, presenting a counter narrative to this image. Muslims in Taiwan are multi-ethnic and multi-national, including local Muslims (descendants of Chinese Muslims) and foreign Muslims from diverse regions such as the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. It is common to see Muslim women who wear headscarves on the streets, and Muslims gather together to celebrate Islamic festivals in public.

The presence of Muslims in public remains unfamiliar to many Taiwanese. Hence this paper aims to present a brief history of Chinese Muslims (predominantly Hui) and other foreign Muslims in Taiwan. By comparing how Chinese Muslims and foreign Muslims exhibit images of Islam to the public, I argue that images of Islam in Taiwan are not monolithic but diverse and constantly changing.

Ethnic Categories of Muslims in Taiwan today

Today, the Muslim community in Taiwan is multi-ethnic and multi-national. When the congregational prayer (*salat al-jama'ah*) takes place in Taipei Grand Mosque every Friday, the prayer hall is always overcrowded with Muslims from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including local Chinese Muslims (predominantly Hui), Arabs, Turks, Africans, Malaysians and Indonesians. Taipei Grand Mosque looks like a mini global village. Muslims from different backgrounds and areas meet each other and exchange ideas after the congregational prayer. There is no official statistical information about the total Muslim population in Taiwan. But in Table 1, I attempt to provide my own estimate of it. This estimate is based on my interviews with Muslim representatives in each ethnic background and collections of data from the Ministry of Education,¹ Ministry of the Interior² and other official websites.³

The table shows that Indonesian Muslims are the largest ethnic group, accounting for between 83 % to 96 % of the Muslim population in Taiwan. Indonesian Muslims are thus the most visible Muslims in Taiwan. This is because of the open policy in the 1990s by the Republic of China (ROC) government for drawing in foreign workers and students. Today, Taiwanese often see Indonesian female Muslims who wear headscarves taking care of the elderly in public or celebrating Eid al-Fitr. The majority of Indonesians (around 275,000)⁴ in Taiwan are migrant workers in specific fields, such as construction, manufacture, fishing, house-keeping and caregiving; others (around 5,000)⁵ are students pursuing de-

¹ Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), accessed on 22 November, 2017, <https://ois.moe.gov.tw/fs/html/Statistics.html>.

² "1.03 General Conditions of Religions," *Ministry of the Interior, Republic of China* (Taiwan), accessed on 22 November, 2017, <http://sowf.moi.gov.tw/stat/year/elist.htm>.

³ "Foreign Workers in Productive Industries and Social Welfare by Nationality," *National Statistics, Republic of China (Taiwan)*, accessed on 22 November, 2017, <http://statdb.mol.gov.tw/html/mon/212030.htm>.

⁴ According to the website of National Statistics, ROC. (Taiwan), Indonesian workers number 257,596. In addition to this official statistic, around 26,000 Indonesians are workers without legal status. See "Foreign Workers in Productive industries and Social Welfare," *National Statistics, ROC (Taiwan)*, accessed on 23 November, 2017, <http://statdb.mol.gov.tw/html/mon/212030.htm>; Interview with an Indonesian Muslim in Taipei, 1 September 2017.

⁵ "Newsletter: Statistics of Foreign Students in Universities," *Ministry of Education*, accessed on 23 November, 2017, <http://stats.moe.gov.tw/files/brief/105%E5%B9%B4%E5%A4%A7%E5%B0%88%E6%A0%A1%E9%99%A2%E5%A2%83%E5%A4%96%E5%AD%B8%E7%94%9F%E6%A6%82%E6%B3%81.pdf>.

grees in universities of Taiwan. Indonesian Muslims in Taiwan have created internal networks such as associations and mosques for helping other Indonesian Muslims in material and spiritual need.

Ethnic Categories	Populations	Percentages	
Indonesian Muslims	280,000	96.80%	83.77%
Chinese Muslims (Hui) ⁶	8,000-53,000	2.77 %	15.86%
Pakistani Muslims	300	0.10%	0.09%
Turkic Muslims ⁷	250	0.09%	0.07%
Arab Muslims	200	0.07%	0.06%
African Muslims	200	0.07%	0.06%
Other ethnic Muslims ⁸	300	0.10%	0.09%
Total	289,250-334,250	100%	100%

Table 1: Statistics of Muslim populations in Taiwan based on Ethnic categories

The second largest Muslim ethnic group is Chinese Muslim. Chinese Muslims can be treated as local Muslims, speaking Mandarin as a mother tongue and holding ROC nationality. The population of Chinese Muslims is estimated to be between 8,000 to 53,000, according to different sources.⁹ It is hard to identify the exact numbers since many of their descendants hide their identities or assimilate into the Han-dominated

⁶ The definition of Chinese Muslim in this paper only refers to Chinese-Speaking Muslims who possess ROC nationality.

⁷ Muslims from Central Asia are included in the definition of Turkic Muslims.

⁸ "Other" includes Iranian, Malaysian and African Muslims.

⁹ The Ministry of the Interior indicates nearly 8,000 Chinese Muslims lived in Taiwan in 2010. See "1.03 General Conditions of Religions," *Ministry of the Interior*, accessed on 22 November, 2017, <http://sowf.moi.gov.tw/stat/year/elist.htm>. According to a statistic by U.S Department of State in 2006, around 53,000 Chinese Muslims lived in Taiwan. See Shu-Ching Liu, "The Neglected Diasporas: A Study on the Religious Practice of Indonesian Islamic Domestic Care-Givers in Taiwan" (Master Dissertation., National Chi Nan University, 2012), p.2.

society.¹⁰ The majority of Chinese Muslims in Taiwan can be traced back to the 1950s, when a group of Chinese Muslims (around 20,000 to 40,000 people) came to Taiwan with the National Government after the Communist Party took over China in 1949. These Chinese Muslims showed distinctive features of ‘Chinese Islam’ in Taiwan. The elites among these Chinese Muslims even played a leading role in the revival of Islam in China during the 1930s and the 1940s. When they settled in Taiwan, they resumed work serving Islam as they had in China, such as constructing mosques, building Muslim cemeteries and dispatching Muslim students to Middle Eastern countries.

As for other Muslim groups, such as Arabs, Turks, Pakistanis, Africans, etc., their populations are smaller than those of Indonesian and Chinese Muslims. The population of each ethnic group does not exceed 500. Nevertheless, they have their own social networks, establish organizations and interact with the public in Taiwan.

It should be noted that Muslims in Taiwan cannot be seen as a monolithic bloc. Each of these groups has its own understanding of Islam and demonstrates distinctive images to the public. This paper mainly compares Chinese Muslims and foreign Muslims in a chronological order to see how images of Islam have changed in Taiwan.

Image of Chinese Islam in Taiwan from 1949 to today

Chinese Muslims include various ethnic groups, such as Hui, Salar, Uyghur, Kazakh, Dongxiang, Tajik, etc. However, most of the Chinese Muslims in Taiwan are “Hui” (回). According to Jonathan Lipman and Dru Gladney’s research, the Hui ethnic category was simply the Chinese word for “Muslim”. The Hui are considered as “familiar strangers” by the Han, the majority ethnic group in China. Although they “speak the largely Han Chinese dialects of the peoples across China,”¹¹ and “intermarriage has made them physically similar to their neigh-

¹⁰ For the discussion of the estimation of Chinese Muslim, please see Lin Chang-Kuan, “The Dilemma of Han-Speaking Muslim Hijrah, the Case of Taiwanese Muslim Community,” *New Century Religious Studies*, Vol.12, No.1 (2013), p.24.

¹¹ Dru Gladney, “Clashed Civilizations? Muslim and Chinese identities in the PRC,” in Dru Gladney (ed.), *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.110.

bours,”¹² the Hui have “managed simultaneously to acculturate to local society wherever they live and remain effectively different from their non-Muslim neighbours (with some exceptions in the northwest) and their Islamic practice and collective memory of a separate tradition and history allow them to maintain distinct identities.”¹³

This first generation of Chinese Muslims in Taiwan can be traced to the retreat of the National Government from mainland China in 1949. After the Sino-Japanese War in 1945, another war started between the National Government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1946. During 1949 and 1950, when most of the territories in China were controlled by the CCP, around 20,000-50,000 Chinese Muslims fled to Taiwan with the National Government. It should be noted that these Chinese Muslims didn't form a coherent group and were not from the same place. They were from numerous provinces across China, such as Guangdong, Shandong, Jiangsu, Henan, Hebei, and the northeast and northwest of China. The reasons for Chinese Muslims going to Taiwan were various. Some Chinese Muslims were elites such as intellectuals, politicians, generals, and businessmen who had engaged in an Islamic movement in China during 1930s and 1940s. They were afraid of deprivation of religious freedom and seizure of properties by the Communist Party if they remained in China. Other Chinese Muslims had no choice as they served in the military or as public servants of the National Government.

As Taiwan was unknown to Chinese Muslims prior to their arrival, finding a place to perform the congregational prayer, to eat halal food and even finding a place for a proper burial became an urgent need. Through efforts and coordination by Chinese Muslim elites with the government, the Chinese Muslim population gradually found places to meet and fulfil religious duties.

It can be said of Islamic affairs in Taiwan that from the 1950s to the early 1990s Muslims developed in line with the anti-Communist principle. This principle should be placed in the context of the Cold War. The divide between the Soviet Union and the Western Bloc were clear, and Taiwan was on the side of the Western Bloc. “Anti-Communism” and “Reclaim the Mainland” were two prevalent political slogans in Taiwan, as President Chiang Kai-shek (1949-1975) and his successor

¹² Jonathan Lipman, “White Hats, Oil Cakes, and Common Blood: The Hui in the contemporary Chinese State,” in Morris Rossabi (ed.), *Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), p.21.

¹³ Ibid.

Chiang Ching-kuo (1978-1988) claimed that the ROC government in Taiwan was the only legitimate political entity representing all of China.

Due to this political context, Chinese Muslims in Taiwan were part of this anti-Communism policy. The Chinese Muslim Association (CMA) played a significant role in this regard. Founded in 1938 during the Sino-Japanese War, the CMA was considered the highest Chinese Muslim organization for the purpose of unifying all Muslims across China to defend against the invasion of the imperial Japanese army. After 1949, most high-ranking members from the CMA came to Taiwan and restarted the CMA's function in 1951. Subsequently, the CMA had a great impact on Chinese Muslims in Taiwan. It can be said that the CMA was the main actor that shaped the image of Islam in Taiwan. The construction of the Taipei Grand Mosque in 1960 and Hajj delegations during the Cold War could be considered two representative cases.

Construction of Taipei Grand Mosque in 1960

When the pioneering groups of Chinese Muslims migrated to Taiwan, they found a wooden house in Taipei as a temporary mosque. But as a huge number of Chinese Muslims fled to Taiwan in the early 1950s, it could no longer accommodate enough Muslims for congregational prayers and Eid. So the CMA decided to build a new mosque. With the government's support, Taipei Grand Mosque was finally established on 13 April, 1960. The Mosque served dual purposes. First, it became a diplomatic window for the government to connect with Muslim countries and Muslim figures in Southeast Asia and the Middle East during the Cold War. Many Muslim officials from these regions visited Taipei Grand Mosque. The most famous ones are King Hussein of Jordan and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. In addition, it served the government's anti-Communist policy. For example, Muslim representatives from Japan, Brunei and the Philippines were invited to the Mosque's opening ceremony. These representatives signed a joint statement with a representative of the CMA.¹⁴ The statement was not only aimed at addressing a threat of infiltration of communists in the Southeast Asia, but also at making "attempts to unite Muslims in each country of Southeast Asia, to warn them of the evil of atheism and call Muslims to destroy forces of

¹⁴ "Muslim Representatives from ROC, Brunei and Philippines declared a joint statement," *Bulletin of Chinese Muslim Association*, No.37, April 25, 1960.

atheism” and saving “other Muslims who were deprived of religious freedom under communists’ rule.”¹⁵

The second purpose of the Taipei Grand Mosque was to provide a harbor for Muslims in spiritual and material need. Before coming to Taiwan, most Chinese Muslims dwelt in Muslim neighbourhoods in China, so access to an Islamic environment was easy. They were able to learn Islam, for example, share information and establish a social network. Upon migration to Taiwan, however, they scattered in different places and could not build a unified Muslim community. The Taipei Grand Mosque provided a public place in which Chinese Muslims could know each other and fulfil religious duties together.

The construction of Taipei Grand Mosque also enhanced Islamic education for Muslim children. Traditionally, mosques are the ideal places for transmitting Islamic knowledge. The CMA leadership recognized Islamic education as the key for passing down Islamic faith to the younger generation. The mosque offered basic Islamic courses during summer vacations. The CMA leaders expected children to learn the essence of Islam and to be good Muslims.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that the CMA leadership also instilled a sense of anti-Communism in the younger generation. For example, in a workshop to students who were ready to dispatch to Saudi Arabia, a senior Muslim leader, Omar Bai, addressed the necessity of anti-Communism. He stated: “Our Muslim fellows in China were suffering from the Communist rule. Therefore, we have to stick to the anti-Communism policy led by our President Chiang (Kai-shek) in order to liberate China and save our Muslim fellows.”¹⁷ Another senior Muslim also highlighted the topic of anti-Communism to students. He expected these students to be qualified imams once they completed their studies in Saudi Arabia and be prepared to lead Chinese Muslims in China after its liberation from the CCP.¹⁸

The sentiment of anti-Communism not only appeared in education but also was reflected in religious practices. In the opening ceremony of Taipei Grand Mosque, a Chinese imam made a supplication (*dua*) to Allah. Its content included traditional forms such as praising Allah,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “Summary of the closing ceremony for Islamic courses in Summer,” *Bulletin of Chinese Muslim Association*, No.78, 30 September, 1960.

¹⁷ “Workshop for students who are ready to Saudi Arabia,” *Bulletin of Chinese Muslim Association*, No.86, 30 January, 1962.

¹⁸ “A way of being an Imam,” *Bulletin of Chinese Muslim Association*, No.86, 30 January, 1962.

seeking right guidance from Him and blessing the Prophet Muhammad. The supplication also contained anti-Communism messages, such as: “O Allah! We ask you to bless our leaders, strengthen their power, eliminate superstition and bad guys and destroy the heresy and brutality of Communism in order to save Muslims and other Chinese from the devil.”¹⁹ This supplication reflects Chinese Muslims’ mindset, especially of those who suffered from a series of political movements and “reform of religions” campaigns. Between the 1950s and 70s, they were severely deprived of religious freedom by the Party. At worse times, some famous imams in China were forced to eat pork or were even killed. It is believed that Chinese Muslim elites in Taiwan knew of such atrocities. In this sense, they naturally put their trust in Allah in the supplication.

Hajj delegations

Hajj delegations could be seen as another case in which the CMA exhibited an image of Islam in association with anti-Communism. Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam. Every Muslim who has mental, physical and financial ability is required to fulfil the obligation. Hajj should be treated as a spiritual journey for every Muslim, though it is inevitable that Muslims who perform Hajj are often entangled with politics. During the Cold War, the CMA dispatched annual Hajj delegations to Saudi Arabia from 1954.²⁰ Due to the fact that Hajj delegations were fully sponsored by the government, propagating messages of anti-Communism to Saudi officials and other foreign Muslim representatives was equally important. For example, in 1965, a Hajj delegation consisting of five Chinese Muslims not only performed Hajj, but also sought solidarity with Saudi Arabian officials and representatives from different Muslim countries. One of their missions was to broadcast “an open letter to the Muslim world: through Saudi radio. The letter stated:

We as Chinese Muslims had fifty millions of populations in China (before 1949). But when the Communist Party occupied China, the populations decreased from fifty millions to thirteen millions according a census in 1951. More than thirty-million Muslims either were killed or were forced to abandon Islam, which is the worst tragedy throughout his-

¹⁹ “Opening ceremony of Taipei Mosque,” *Bulletin of Chinese Muslim Association*, No.73, April 25, 1960.

²⁰ The CMA dispatch Hajj delegations almost every year. Only one exception was that a Hajj delegation in 1954 did not go to Saudi Arabia due to an administrative delay.

*tory. As for other Muslims remaining in China, they try hard to keep Islam safe just like our Palestinian brothers. Therefore, we request our brothers around the world to make supplications for our Chinese brothers, alive and deceased.*²¹

Another mission for the Hajj delegation was to meet King Faisal, who had just ascended to the throne the year before. At first, the chief of the Hajj delegation (Kang Yu-shu) sent regards to King Faisal on behalf of President Chiang Kai-shek and then requested King Faisal to make supplications to Allah in order to protect Palestinian brothers to return to their homeland and help Chinese Muslims out of disasters that the Communists created. In reply, King Faisal clearly stated that “communism contradicts Islam in essence. Both could not co-exist. Communism curbs humanity and ruins religion. It will be vanished eventually.”²² King Faisal’s resentment against Communism had a reason: Communist rebel groups in Oman and South Yemen were destabilizing the Arabian Peninsula. In his eyes, the Chinese Communists (People’s Republic of China) were assisting these rebels, which further provoked his anger. According to Makio Yamada’s research, the sentiment of anti-Communism was one of the factors binding Saudi Arabia and ROC.²³ He indicates that Saudi Arabia was the only Arab country voting against UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 in 1971, which ordered the replacement of the ROC with the PRC as the only legitimate state representing China at the UN.

The two cases, construction of Taipei Grand Mosque and the Hajj delegations, show how the image of Islam was highly associated with anti-Communism as prompted by the ROC government. As can be seen in previous analyses, the generation of Chinese Muslims who migrated to Taiwan in the early 1950s had difficulty finding Islamic resources. Thus, they had no opportunities to develop Islamic affairs in Taiwan independently but largely depended on government sponsorship. Furthermore, they did not integrate into Taiwan’s mainstream society. Their wish to return to Mainland China one day might have been a contributing factor, but creating a clear social boundary between themselves and the Han, the majority of Taiwan’s population, was the major one. They rarely interacted with the Han because of their special eating habits, such as

²¹ *Report of ROC Hajj Delegation in 1965*, (unknown publisher: 1965), p.8

²² *Ibid.*, pp.18-19.

²³ Makio Yamada, “Islam, Energy, and Development: Taiwan and China in Saudi Arabia, 1949-2013,” *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, Vol. 22, No.1 (2015), pp.88-89.

prohibitions against eating pork and drinking alcohol. This kind of habit has fostered a strong sense of group identity among Chinese Muslims.²⁴ However, this situation gradually changed in the 1990s. The next generation of Chinese Muslims were more concerned about the localisation of Islam and interacted with non-Muslim individuals and organisations. Meanwhile, the anti-Communism condition was not as strongly emphasized by the ROC government after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Chinese economic reform by the CCP. Since then, the image of Islam as associated with anti-Communist sentiment has faded.

Toward the localisation of Islam and the decline of Chinese Muslim population

From the 1990s onwards, Chinese Muslims in Taiwan were more concerned about interaction with Taiwan's society rather than with highlighting anti-Communist sentiment. The next generation of Chinese Muslims that were born in Taiwan were aware of the necessity of interacting with society; for example, a young Chinese Muslim who was elected chairman of Taipei Grand Mosque outlined several important points during his inauguration in February 2001:

*We have to gradually abandon our narrow-minded thinking, re-think our position, and the role of the mosque (in our society). We need to cultivate ourselves, not only to research Islam in depth but also to understand local cultures in Taiwan and make a comparison with Islam. Thus, we can spread the message of Islam in a good way.*²⁵

The awareness among the second generation of Chinese Muslims about the need to interact in society was strengthened in the aftermath of 9/11. The CMA and the Taipei Grand Mosque frequently engaged in public affairs to correct public misunderstanding of Islam. For example, Muslim representatives participated in religious dialogues with the leaders of other religions; in addition, Taipei Grand Mosque was opened for visits by schools, NGOs, and other religious associations. Although the second-generation Chinese Muslims were working hard to introduce Islam to the public, they were unable to resolve the most pressing problem: the decline of Taiwan's Chinese Muslim population.

²⁴ Barbara Pillsbury, "Cohesion and Cleavage in a Chinese Muslim History," (PhD Dissertation., Columbia University, 1973), p.113

²⁵ "Inauguration for the chairman of Taipei Grand Mosque," *Islam in China*, No.269, 2001, pp.36-38.

In fact, the decline of the Muslim population was a long-term problem for Chinese Muslims that had been noted by the previous generation of Chinese Muslims in the early 1970s. Senior Chinese Muslims were alerted that the number of Muslims attending Taipei Grand Mosque for Friday congregational prayer was gradually decreasing.²⁶ The decline signalled that the descendants of Muslims were in the process of assimilation. It is the most important problem Muslims face as immigrants. In his observation of Muslims migrants in Europe, in fact, prominent scholar Tariq Ramadan indicated that the second-generation Muslims in the continent were facing assimilation problems. Due to a growing Islamophobia across Europe, many descendants of Muslim immigrants were purposefully becoming as invisible as possible so that no Islamic features appeared in their daily lives.²⁷

Ramadan's analysis of the assimilation of Muslims in Europe applies to the second and third generation of Chinese Muslims in Taiwan. Here, the sense of Islamophobia is not as serious as that in Europe, but many descendants of Chinese Muslims have tended to hide their religious belief in public and have gradually adopted the lifestyles of non-Muslims. The features of assimilation for the descendants of Chinese Muslims in Taiwan could be observed in two ways, one of which is marriage. Marriage has the function of continuing the bloodline of Muslims; however, the younger generation have few opportunities to meet other Muslims in Taiwan. From my personal and other young Muslims' experiences, it can be said that in schools and jobs, 99% of the people that Muslims know are non-Muslims. It can thus be difficult to find a spouse who shares their faith. Funerals also indicate the blurring of distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims; senior Muslims often say that when a Muslim elder passes away and is sent to the mosque by their children, their children do not attend the Islamic funeral because their children would say, "My father was Muslim but I am not." The problem of assimilation has a great impact on all Chinese Muslims. The sense is that the Chinese Muslim community seems to have collapsed. Only individual Muslims still preserve the features of Chinese Islam in private. Most of them are unwilling to identify their faith to the public and the Chinese image of Islam becomes invisible.

²⁶ "A sense of eagerness for a discussion of developing Islam" *Islam in China*, No.154, 1973, pp.3-4.

²⁷ Tariq Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context* (Leicester, The Islamic Foundation, 1999), p.113.

Images of Global Islam in Taiwan from 2000 to today

It may be argued that the image of Chinese Islam has not resonated well with Taiwan's society over the last six decades. Although Chinese Muslims have considered how to interact with society by introducing Islam to the public since the 1990s, many local Taiwanese have no idea about the background of Chinese Muslims. The image of Chinese Islam seems invisible in public.²⁸ Meanwhile, the image of Global Islam has seemingly replaced the image of Chinese Islam in Taiwan in recent years. Since the 1990s, the ROC government has regulated policies for attracting foreign workers, businessmen and students; many foreign Muslims from various areas have appeared in Taiwan and the image of Global Islam has become increasingly apparent in Taiwan over time. The way that foreign Muslims in Taiwan exhibit their practices of Islam to the public contrasts with that of Chinese Muslims. In Taiwan, Turks, Pakistanis and Indonesians are three main ethnic groups that exhibit their own image of Islam. I will endeavour to elaborate on how they exhibit Islam to the public and how the public receives their practices.

The image of Turkish Islam in Taiwan

As shown in Table 1, the population of Turks is approximately 250, accounting for 0.07%-0.09% of Taiwan's total Muslim population. Despite such a small number, some of them are eager to demonstrate a distinctive image of Turkish Islam to the public. Turkish Muslims could be seen in the first foreign Muslims who interacted with Taiwan's society in the 1990s. Around 70 Turkish Muslims²⁹ in Taiwan are affiliated with the Hizmet Movement, which used to be an influential Islamic transnational religious and social movement. Hizmet defines itself as an "apolitical movement" that focuses on serving others. Although Hizmet members in Taiwan are few, the movement is quite organised and coherent. Over twenty years, Hizmet has engaged in many religious, social, cultural and academic activities in Taiwan. It expects to build a bridge between Turkey and Taiwan in terms of interfaith and intercultural dialogue.³⁰

²⁸ Bao Hsiu-Ping, "Hidden Muslims: A history of the development and transition of Muslim communities in Taiwan (1949-2015)," *Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Studies*, No.3 (2016), p.63.

²⁹ Interview with a Turkish Muslim in Taipei, 25 August 2017.

³⁰ Osman Cubuk and Burhan Cakil, "Hizmet Movement in Taiwan: its achievement in intercultural dialogues," in Nabil Chang-Kuan Lin and Ching-ming Lin (ed.), *Living the Peace: Contributions of the Gülen-Hizmet Movement to the World Civilizations* (Taipei: Hope Publishing Ltd, 2014), p.185.

The image of Islam displayed by Hizmet revolves around the ideas of its founder, Fethullah Gülen, who started this movement with his followers in the 1960s.³¹ Initially, Hizmet was based in Turkey, and focused on the revival of Islamic ethics and Islamic education for Turkish Muslims. Gülen's ideas gradually attracted many middle-class businessmen and university students in Turkey. Since the 1990s, Hizmet has morphed into a transnational education movement, and its focus has evolved the religious community in Turkey to a global, faith-inspired educational system with millions of participants and hundreds of foundations and associations around the world.³²

It is believed that the first members of Hizmet in Taiwan appeared in 1994. They learned Chinese language and obtained university degrees. Step-by-step, they set up a language school, a junior high school, and several business and social associations.³³ Hizmet was active in its interactions with local Muslim communities, and different religious groups and universities in Taiwan. It held many interfaith and intercultural activities and academic cooperation activities such as translations of books written by Gülen and his senior followers in Chinese,³⁴ by holding international conferences about Gülen's ideas,³⁵ and by organising trips to Turkey for Taiwanese people. Hizmet's work of spreading Gülen's ideas in Taiwan seemingly inspired some Taiwanese intellectuals. One professor admired Hizmet's enthusiasm for engaging in social services. He indicated that "many local Taiwanese religious groups that do not engage in Taiwan's public spheres could learn from the Gülen movement

³¹ Ibid., p.181. See also Hakan Yavuz, "The Gülen Movement: The Turkish Puritans," in Hakan Yavuz and John Esposito (ed.), *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), p.20

³² Ibid., p.185; Ibid., pp.30-31;

³³ Ibid., p.185.

³⁴ Such as Fetullah Gülen, *Prophet Muhammad: Aspects of His Life* (Taipei: Hope Publishing Ltd, 2004); Fetullah Gülen, *Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism: Emerald Hills of the Heart* (Taipei: Hope Publishing Ltd, 2005); Fetullah Gülen, *Essentials of the Islamic Faith* (Taipei: Hope Publishing Ltd, 2006) and Ali Budak, *Fasting in Islam & The Month of Ramadan* (Taipei: Hope Publishing Ltd, 2006). It can be noted that the translation were done by local Chinese Muslims.

³⁵ An international conference titled "Hizmet Movement and the Thought and Teachings of Fethullah Gülen: Contributions to Multiculturalism and Global Peace" was held in 2012 in National Taiwan University, the most prestigious university in Taiwan.

as religion not only gets rid of sufferings and a form of meditation but also includes social engagement.”³⁶

However, Hizmet has not resonated with Taiwan’s society. It only attracted a handful of Taiwan’s middle class and most Taiwanese still do not know about it. Furthermore, the failed coup in Turkey on 15th July 2016 devastated Hizmet’s global operation as Turkish President Erdogan accused Gülen and his followers of masterminding the coup; he then ordered the arrest of thousands of Turkish citizens affiliated with Hizmet and cut Hizmet’s financial channels. This massive crackdown in Turkey also affected the operation of Hizmet in Taiwan. Hizmet’s official activities were not held in Taiwan after the coup due to financial shortfalls.³⁷

The image of Pakistani Islam in Taiwan

Another major subset of foreign Muslims that exhibit a distinctive image of Islam to Taiwan are Pakistani Muslims. It is estimated that around 300 Pakistani Muslims live in Taiwan and most of them are merchants or restaurant owners. They can speak fluent Chinese and most have Taiwanese spouses.³⁸ There is also a Pakistani association that serves other Pakistani immigrants in need.³⁹ It seems that the Pakistanis in Taiwan have commonalities with other Pakistanis who live in Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea. Most of the Pakistanis in these three places marry locals, speak the local language, and establish small Pakistani communities and associations.

The intermarriage between Pakistani and Taiwanese means that the Pakistani are considered “Taiwanese new immigrants.” This term refers to foreigners who obtain ROC nationality through intermarriage. The populations of new Taiwanese immigrants have recently become the second largest minority in Taiwan and they contribute to Taiwanese society; Pakistanis are no exception. For example, one Pakistani and his Tai-

³⁶ “Gülen movement engaged in the public spheres. Professor Lee Yeau-Tarn in NCCU: Local religious groups could learn from Gülen movement,” *ETToday*, accessed on 30 November 2017, <https://goo.gl/ZYV3qc>.

³⁷ Interview with a Turkish Muslim in Taipei, 25 August 2017.

³⁸ “Pakistani and Taiwanese couples form an association for serving Pakistani fellows,” *Liberty Times Net*, 20 September 2014, accessed on 1 December 2017, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/life/breakingnews/1111501>.

³⁹ “The first Pakistani social community in Taiwan,” *The Epoch Times*, 22 September 2014, accessed on 1 December 2017, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/14/9/22/n4254697.htm>.

wanese wife do *dawah* in Taiwan in response to the Qur'ānic *ayat*: “Those who believe and do righteous deeds—those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally” (2:82). Thus, they do *dawah* by providing social services for non-Muslims in need. They have chosen Taitung county, the eastern part of Taiwan, as their destination since 2012. Taitung county is where many aborigine people live; most aboriginal people in Taitung lack educational and material resources. The couple run a halal restaurant and engage in social works in Taitung. Every weekend they drive to remote tribes to deliver free homemade pizzas to aborigine children or they provide tutorial-style education to these children after school. They expect to show the true spirit of Islam to local non-Muslims through their action rather than through discourse. The image of Islam that they exhibit is rare in Taiwan as not many Muslims in Taiwan constantly serve non-Muslims in need in the long term.⁴⁰

The image of Indonesian Islam in Taiwan

Taiwan's Indonesian Muslims can be divided into two groups: migrant workers who do household work, construction sites and factories that require an intensive labour force; and students who study in Taiwan's universities with scholarship support. Many Taiwanese receive their image of Islam from Indonesian Muslims more than any other ethnic Muslims. The image of Islam that Indonesian migrant Muslim workers exhibit has limitations: working environments curb their awareness of Islam and Indonesian migrant workers only have the mobility to display an image of Islam on a few occasions, such as the celebration of Eid al-Fitr. However, their celebration of Eid creates huge controversy in Taiwan. An incident in 2013 during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr at Taipei's main railway station is a prominent case.

As Indonesian migrant workers spend most of their time laboring, Eid al-Fitr is a rare occasion when they can enjoy free movement and meet friends. Choosing a suitable place is difficult for Indonesia migrant workers; therefore, Taipei's main station seemed useful for them as they can arrive there from other regions of Taiwan. However, the influx of over thirty thousand Indonesian workers at the station on the day of Eid al-Fitr created a huge debate among Taiwanese. Witnessing big numbers of Indonesian workers around Taipei's main station, one prosecutor

⁴⁰ Regarding the details of how the couple engaged in social services, please refer to a paper by Saleh Yu, “A preliminary research on a Muslim couple's charity work in Taitung,” Taiwan Society for Anthropology and Ethnology conference in 2015.

wrote a post on Facebook: “Taipei’s main station is full of migrant laborers. They have occupied the station and eat, sleep and have a picnic there. If the government does not deal with this situation, it may create a big trouble.”⁴¹ This message sparked a heated debate on social media and in the news. Some agreed with the prosecutor’s opinion, considering that Indonesian workers should not occupy the station and block entrances for other passengers while others criticise that the prosecutor’s message is a form of discrimination, saying that Taiwanese need to be more considerate toward Indonesians.

From my own observation, this incident was a watershed moment when the public started paying attention to the presence of Indonesian Muslims in Taiwan regardless of its positivity or negativity. In fact, the Indonesian migrant workers were voiceless in this incident; no voices were heard from Indonesian migrant workers in mainstream media. An Indonesian student who studied in a master’s program in Taiwan had followed the situation of Indonesian migrant workers for three years (2009-2011); she indicated that Indonesian migrant workers were powerless and have been marginalized at the lower level of the social hierarchy for a long time.⁴² The features of powerlessness for Indonesian workers in Taiwan include difficulty obtaining halal food, denial of religious obligations (prayers and fasting), heavy workloads, spiritual abuse and restriction of movement.

Perhaps due to the incident in 2013, Taiwan’s society has become increasingly receptive to Indonesian workers in recent years. As learned from the incident of the Eid al-Fitr celebration at Taipei’s main station, local and central governments have developed the intention to create Muslim-friendly environments for Indonesian Muslims. For example, the Taipei city government has specifically organised events to celebrate Eid for Indonesian migrant workers since 2015. Mayor Ko Wen-je stated that Taiwan is the friendliest country to Muslims and suggested that the central government should build a big mosque to accommodate Muslims who celebrate Eid.⁴³ Regarding the central government, President Tsai

⁴¹ “Celebration of Eid al-Fitr by Indonesian migrant workers in Taipei main station stir a controversy,” *BBC Chinese*, 12 August, 2013, accessed on 3 December 2017, http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/trad/china/2013/08/130812_taiwan_eid.

⁴² Yuherina Gusman, “*The Spiritual Life of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Taiwan (2009-2011)*” (Master Disteration., National Central University, 2011), p.4.

⁴³ “Ko Wen-je: Taiwan should build a big mosque if Taiwan wants to be a friendly country to Islam,” 2 October 2016, accessed on 3 December 2017, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/50450>.

Ing-wen posted a video on the date of the Eid al-Fitr in 2017. Tsai said Eid al-Fitr “was a significant holiday for Muslims and a celebration of bonds among families and friends” and “thanks Muslim immigrants for their contribution to Taiwan’s economy and said Muslim culture had enriched Taiwanese society.”⁴⁴ She also added that the government has been working to establish a halal certification system and has been advocating the establishment of Muslim prayer rooms in public places.⁴⁵ This is the first time that a President of the ROC has expressed gratitude to Muslim migrant workers.

In addition to support from the government, increased numbers of social welfare organisations, human right groups and journalists were becoming more aware of Indonesian migrant workers’ situations. They started cooperating with workers; for example, they implemented the ‘Taiwan Literature Award for Migrants’ which has been held since 2014. The literature competition is for Indonesians and other foreign migrant workers from Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand. Through writing, Indonesian Muslims can enjoy a moment of freedom and express their feelings of how they struggle with life in a non-Muslim environment and how Islam sustains their spiritual life during hard times.⁴⁶

Compared to Indonesian migrant workers, Indonesian students exhibit a more vibrant image of Islam because they have greater ability to express their thoughts and they are willing to introduce Islam to the public. It is estimated that around five thousand Indonesian Muslim students currently study in Taiwan, which is the third largest foreign population of students. Most of them pursue science and technology degrees at local universities.

The image of Islam that Indonesian students evoke is as follows. First, they create Muslim student associations with other foreign students at several universities in Taiwan.⁴⁷ When they have difficulties on cam-

⁴⁴ “Tsai thanks Muslims in post to mark Eid al-Fitr,” *Taipei Times*, 26 June 2017, accessed on 3 December 2017,

<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/06/26/2003673325>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See Nanik Riyati, “Honesty and Obedience,” *The News Lens*, accessed on 4 December 2017, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/10084> ; Abdul Mubarok, “LIR ILIR,” *Independent Opinion@ Common Wealth*, 30 August 2016, accessed on 4 December 2017, <http://opinion.cw.com.tw/blog/profile/52/article/4717>.

⁴⁷ See NTUST-IMSA, accessed on 22 November 2017, https://www.facebook.com/ntustimsa/about/?ref=page_internal; Muslim Students Association in NCKU, accessed on 22 November 2017,

pus such as how to get halal foods or find proper spaces for prayers, school administrators are willing to help to create Muslim-friendly environments. Cooperation between Muslim student associations and school administrators has led to an opening of halal canteens and several prayer rooms on campuses of several universities.⁴⁸ Second, Indonesian Muslims affiliated with Muslim student associations have actively engaged in introducing the messages of Islam to the public. For example, the Muslim association in the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology has organized annual lectures and Islamic exhibitions. Indonesian Muslim students cooperate with other foreign Muslims and mosques to introduce the general concepts of Islam, and Muslim foods and clothing to the general public. Furthermore, as Indonesian students are concerned about the poor working conditions of Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan, they are dedicated to helping their fellows with spiritual and material needs. Indonesian Muslim students introduce Islam to the public arguably more than any other foreign Muslim groups or Chinese Muslims.

Conclusion

The analysis above shows that the images of Islam as presented by Chinese, Turkish, Pakistani and Indonesian Muslims are varied and each has distinctive characteristics. Although Islam highlights *tawhid* (oneness of God) and the unity of Muslims, Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds have different understandings of practicing Islam in Taiwan. Over sixty years, images of Islam have not been monolithic but have changed constantly. The image of Chinese Islam was dominant from 1949 to 2000. Chinese Muslims who fled from the oppression of the CCP developed Islamic affairs in Taiwan related to a sense of anti-Communism during the Cold War; the construction of Taipei Grand Mosque and Hajj delegations were vivid examples. However, as time has passed, the subsequent generation of Chinese Muslims became concerned with issues of localisation instead of anti-Communism in the late 1990s. Despite their efforts, the process of assimilation didn't stop, as the majority of descendants of Chinese Muslims have chosen to leave Islam and adopt a non-Muslim lifestyle. Today Chinese Muslims seem to be an

<http://msancku15.wixsite.com/msancku>; Muslim Students Club in NCTU, accessed on 22 November 2017,

https://www.facebook.com/pg/MSCTaiwan/about/?ref=page_internal.

⁴⁸ "Halal Canteen at NTUST", accessed on 4 December 2017,

http://www.oia.ntust.edu.tw/ezfiles/17/1017/img/1596/Halal_Canteen_at_NTUST.pdf.

invisible community in Taiwan, as they and their descendants have become outnumbered by foreign Muslims. The image of Chinese Islam has seemingly disappeared in public and has been replaced by images of Global Islam.

From 2000 onwards, Global Islamic images have been gradually appearing in public. Foreign Muslims from different places come to Taiwan to live and study. Turkish, Pakistani and Indonesian Muslims are the main ethnic groups who present their own versions of Islamic practices. Turkish Muslims affiliated with the ideas of Fethullah Gülen intentionally display the image of Islam to middle-class Taiwanese, while Pakistani Muslims married to local Taiwanese wives have become “Taiwanese new immigrants” and contribute to the society. Regarding Indonesian Muslims, migrant workers struggle with poor working conditions and get help from Indonesian Muslim students and Taiwanese NGOs. Eid al-Fitr has become a rare occasion in which Indonesian migrant workers are free to demonstrate their Islamic awareness. Indonesian Muslim students advocate Islamic affairs to the public and resonate well with Taiwan’s society. It seems that images of Islam are more vibrant in this pluralist society than ever before. Taiwanese people are becoming increasingly receptive to the presence of Muslims and appreciate their cultures and faith.

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