

# AL-ALBAB

## CONTENTS

*Being Chinese Christian in the Totok Chinese Churches in Surabaya: Continuity and Change of Identities*

Linda Bustan, Fatimah Husein, Paulus Sugeng Widjaja

*Adat, Islam, and the Idea of Religion in Colonial Indonesia*

Mufdil Tuhri, Samsul Maarif, Rikardo Simarmata

*Religious Consistency and Commitment to Local Tradition Within the Bawakareng Community in Indonesia's South Sulawesi*

Mustaqim Pabbajah

*Modern Religious Counseling Model in The Ancient Manuscript of Lontara Attorioloang Ri Wajo*

Hesty Nur Rahmi, Patmawati Patmawati, Labi Hadji Sarip Riwarung

*Religious Ambience on Social Media: A Case Study in A Pandemic Situation*

Paranjoy Bordoloi

*Suffering of The Righteous People in The Perspective of Religious Phenomenology*

Agustinus Wisnu Dewantara

*The Ingenious Citizenship of The Paguyuban Ngesti Tunggal (PANGESTU) in Indonesia*

Laela Fitriani Sahronie

*Inter-Religious Tolerance in Indonesia From the Perspective of Pancasila Philosophy*

Aufa Fitria, M. Ikhsan Tanggok



## Vol 9, No 2 (2020)
















































### Full Issue

View or download the full issue

[Full Issue](#) [Cover](#)

### Table of Contents

#### Articles

<b>Being Chinese Christian in the Totok Chinese Churches in Surabaya: Continuity and Change of Identities</b>	<a href="#">PDF</a>
 Linda Bustan,  Fatimah Husein,  Paulus Sugeng Widjaja	141-
 10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1828	158
 Citations <input type="text" value="0"/>	
   Abstract views: 724    PDF views: 325	
<b>Adat, Islam, and the Idea of Religion in Colonial Indonesia</b>	<a href="#">PDF</a>
 Muftil Tuhri,  Samsul Maarif,  Rikardo Simarmata	159-
 10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1390	178
 Citations <input type="text" value="?"/>	
   Abstract views: 522    PDF views: 357	
<b>Religious Consistency and Commitment to Local Tradition Within the Bawakareng Community in Indonesia's South Sulawesi</b>	<a href="#">PDF</a>
 Mustaqim Pabbajah	179-
 10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1789	198
 Citations <input type="text" value="0"/>	
   Abstract views: 477    PDF views: 236	
<b>Modern Religious Counseling Model in The Ancient Manuscript of Lontara Attorioloang Ri Wajo</b>	<a href="#">PDF</a>
 Hesty Nur Rahmi,  Patmawati Patmawati,  Labi Hadji Sarip Riwarung	199-
 10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1846	216
 Citations <input type="text" value="0"/>	
   Abstract views: 407    PDF views: 238	
<b>Religious Ambience on Social Media: A Case Study in A Pandemic Situation</b>	<a href="#">PDF</a>
 Paranjoy Bordoloi	217-
 10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1788	230
 Citations <input type="text" value="0"/>	
   Abstract views: 477    PDF views: 238	
<b>Suffering of The Righteous People in The Perspective of Religious Phenomenology</b>	<a href="#">PDF</a>
 Agustinus Wisnu Dewantara	231-
 10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1687	244
 Citations <input type="text" value="0"/>	
   Abstract views: 379    PDF views: 179	
<b>The Ingenious Citizenship of The Paguyuban Ngesti Tunggal (PANGESTU) in Indonesia</b>	<a href="#">PDF</a>
 Laela Fitriani Sahronie	245-
 10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1477	264
 Citations <input type="text" value="?"/>	
   Abstract views: 402    PDF views: 282	
<b>Inter-Religious Tolerance in Indonesia From the Perspective of Pancasila Philosophy</b>	<a href="#">PDF</a>
 Aufa Fitria,  M. Ikhsan Tanggok	265-
 10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1876	274
 Citations <input type="text" value="0"/>	
   Abstract views: 574    PDF views: 291	

[Submit a Proposal](#)

[SCOPUS CITEDNESS](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

[EDITORIAL TEAM](#)

[REVIEWERS](#)

[FOCUS AND SCOPE](#)

[INDEXING](#)

[PEER REVIEW PROCESS](#)

[OPEN ACCESS POLICY](#)

[ARCHIVING](#)

[RIGHTS AND LICENSES](#)

[SCIENTIFIC STATEMENT](#)

[FEES](#)

[PUBLICATION ETHICS](#)

[AUTHOR GUIDELINE](#)

[JOURNAL HISTORY](#)

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 [Stat COUNTER](#)

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[INDEXING](#)

[PEER REVIEW PROCESS](#)

[OPEN ACCESS POLICY](#)

[ARCHIVING](#)

[RIGHTS AND LICENSES](#)

[SCIENTIFIC STATEMENT](#)

[FEES](#)

[PUBLICATION ETHICS](#)

[AUTHOR GUIDELINE](#)

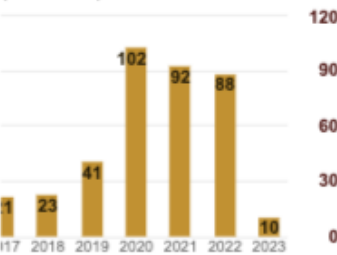
[JOURNAL HISTORY](#)

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# Al-Albab

**Al-Albab** ISSN: 0216-6143 (print) and ISSN: 2502-8340 (online) is an interdisciplinary journal published twice a year in print and online (e-journal) by the Pontianak State Institute of Islamic Studies, Pontianak. Our academic publication concern includes the studies of world religions of Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Chinese religions and other religions. Interdisciplinary studies may include the studies of religion in the fields of anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, education, cultural studies and other social sciences.

Since the journal is published twice a year, special issue would be made available for special condition. The regular issues include June and December editions each year. The journal publishes research-based articles in the area of religious studies. All prospective contributors from various background are welcome to contribute to the journal publication. Contributions in English should be typed single-space and contain minimum of 4.000 and maximum of 8.000 words. The citation should follow APA style with footnotes.

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CONTACT US
EDITORIAL TEAM
REVIEWERS
FOCUS AND SCOPE
INDEXING
PEER REVIEW PROCESS
OPEN ACCESS POLICY
ARCHIVING
RIGHTS AND LICENSES
SCIENTIFIC STATEMENT
FEES
PUBLICATION ETHICS
AUTHOR GUIDELINE
JOURNAL HISTORY



9/22/20, 17:23 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Ok makasih Linda. Nanti saya kasih ke Linda hasil review dari para reviewer utk perbaikan ya.

9/22/20, 17:24 - Linda B: Siap, Mas Jay. 🙏

9/24/20, 09:46 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Pagi Linda

9/24/20, 09:46 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Mohon dikasih daftar pustakanya ya ini please. Makasih sebelumnya

9/24/20, 10:24 - Linda B: Pagi, Mas Jay.

9/24/20, 10:24 - Linda B: Siap, Mas. Akan segera dikirim

9/24/20, 10:25 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: 🙏🙏

9/24/20, 11:46 - Linda B: DOC-20200924-WA0007. (file attached)

Bibliography - Journal - Al-Albab.docx

9/24/20, 11:46 - Linda B: Done, Mas Jay.

9/24/20, 12:12 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Ok makasih Linda

9/24/20, 12:22 - Linda B: Sama2, Mas Jay

10/13/20, 19:49 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Malam Linda

10/13/20, 19:49 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Ini sdh ada hasil review satu. Satunya lagi menyusul ya. Mohon diakomodir masukan dari reviewer

10/13/20, 19:50 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: 1828-5804-1-RV-AI.docx (file attached)

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10/13/20, 19:50 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Terimakasih sebelumnya Linda

10/13/20, 20:08 - Linda B: Wah, terima kasih, Mas Jay. Apakah sebaiknya saya lgsg revisi masukan ini dan kirim balik atau sekalian kirim balik setelah reviewer kedua?

10/13/20, 20:09 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Langsung saja Linda, sambil nunggu yg kedua. Semoga segera ada catatan reviewnya

10/13/20, 20:09 - Linda B: Siap, Mas Jay.

10/13/20, 20:10 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Dikirim ke saya nanti Setelah akomodir yg kedua

10/13/20, 20:10 - Linda B: Baik, Mas Jay. Thanks 🙏

10/13/20, 20:10 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Sekalian aja nanti

10/13/20, 20:10 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: 🙏🙏🙏

10/13/20, 20:11 - Linda B: Siap, Mas 🙏

10/14/20, 21:52 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Malam Linda

10/14/20, 21:52 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Ini review yg kedua. Silahkan

10/14/20, 21:52 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: <Media omitted>

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10/14/20, 21:52 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: <Media omitted>

1828-5804-1-RV-AI.docx

10/14/20, 21:53 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: Ini ternyata ada comments di text. Silahkan

10/14/20, 22:02 - Linda B: Thanks, Mas Jay. Akan revisi. 🙏

10/15/20, 04:53 - Mas Jay Al-Albab UIN Pontianak: 🙏

## Review Notes:

The titles are too big and the concepts are too many and scattered, not organized systematically. The writer is hesitant in placing him/herself into a position in the discourse. Too much on internal dynamic instead of including the external. The problems, methods, and relevant concepts were not clearly formulated. Because this article discusses the changing and continuity of the Chinese Christian in Surabaya, I just wonder where the ‘outsiders’ perspective has been written in this article. By putting the outsiders perspective, it will give you strong points in the identity-making processes. It must be mentioned the macro and micro contexts that make this identity change in various forms and intensities. From the title, it promised at least three dynamic aspects, the things that are still preserved/maintained as they were (including the meaning), some have been changed partially (re-meaning), and some have fully changed (change/reproduce. ). The problem is the writer could not systematically show them explicitly in the text. When discussing contestation, the author is too busy with micro-contexts, abandoning the macro context. This made this article a bit shallow.

## Methods

Are you a historian? It is too much historical/diachronic explanation in explaining the contestation and identity (re) making process. This is wonderful, but once again it didn’t show the macro context, so when it is pulled towards a vulnerable position in a multicultural society, it feels like leaping.

## **BEING CHINESE CHRISTIANS IN SURABAYA: Continuity and Change of Identities**

### **ABSTRACT**

*This article discusses the identities of Chinese Christians in the Chinese-speaking churches in Surabaya. The Chinese Christians refer to those who arrived in Surabaya from mainland China as Protestant Christians in the 1900s. In Indonesia, ethnic and religious identities tend to get stronger. Different identities tend to be identified as out-group. One vulnerable group of people to this experience is Chinese Christians. Their two identities, namely the ethnic identity as Chinese and the religious identity as Christian, are often identified as exclusive, homogenous, and monolithic. They are categorized as unchanging totok, economically dominant middle-class, and adhering to a foreign religion. This category might cause contestation from other ethno-religious groups. The fear of Christianization strengthens the action of making them the outsiders who are vulnerable to experience violence.*

*The article focuses on the understanding of change and continuity of the Chinese Christian identities using qualitative research. To collect data was employed interviews, observations, and document analysis. The theory of social identity was applied to analyze Chinese Christians' categorization and identification in the past and present. The researcher argues that Chinese in the Chinese-speaking churches in Surabaya do not fully embrace Chinese cultures in their daily life and church activities anymore. Even though they still identify themselves as Chinese. The Chinese cultures have mixed with Western and Indonesian cultures that eventually form hybrid identities. Nevertheless, some Chinese Christian identities are changing, and some continue to influence their interactions with other groups. With hybrid identities, Chinese Christians are more open to encounters with those out-group members.*

**Keywords:** Chinese-speaking church, *totok* and *peranakan*, social identity

## INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses Chinese Christians *totok* Protestants who came from mainland China to Surabaya in the 1900s. They formed houses of worship that developed into Protestants Chinese-background churches in Surabaya. They are part of the Chinese *totok* group, initially known as the Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee (THKTKH) Surabaya. They have become two independent synods,<sup>1</sup> namely the Church of Christ (Gereja Kristus Tuhan, in this paper, will be termed as GKT) and the Abdiel Christian Church (Gereja Kristen Abdiel, in this paper, will be termed as GKA). The Chinese Christians' existence who influenced the Chinese-speaking churches and vice versa cannot be separated. Therefore, the term of Chinese Christians and the Chinese-speaking churches will be used interchangeably in this paper.

There is not much research about Chinese Christians or the Chinese-speaking Churches. Some scholars who had done researches about Chinese Christians' identities from the historical perspective are Karel Steenbrink and Yusak Soleiman, Markus Dominggus, and Natan Setiabudi (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008; Dominggus, 2017; Setiabudi, 1994). Meanwhile, those who discuss Chinese churches' identities in the global context are Chang-Yau Hoon and Susy Ong (C. Y. Hoon, 2016; Ong, 2008). Darwin Darmawan did research on Chinese Christian by using the theory of hybrid identity (Darmawan, 2014). Chris Hartono, Paulus Sugeng Widjaja, and Sia Kok Sin researched Chinese Christian identities from the church's perspective on church theology and practices (Hartono, 1974, 1999; Sin, 2014; Widjaja, 2010). However, none discusses the identification and categorization in the identity construction of the Chinese Christians that give them choice and action in defining who are the in-group and out-group in their relations

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<sup>1</sup> Synod is a council of the church

with other groups. The categorization and identification process from the past to the present construct the Chinese Christian identities that influence the change and continuity of the identities. For that reason, this paper tries to enrich the currently scarce publications on the subject of Chinese Christians in Surabaya. Who are these Chinese Christians *totok*? How do the identities change and continue from the past to the present? How does the relationship of ethnic identity as Chinese and religious identity as Christians occur? What influences the similarities and differences of identity in their interaction with the in-group and out-group?

To answer the questions, this article will use the theory of social identity. Categorization and identification are the processes that form an identity (Jenkins, 2008). Categorization or the group-category and identification are applied as an “external and internal dialectic” (Jenkins, 2008). These define who becomes a member, their similarity and differences, in-group or out-group relations based on certain norms and expectations that can be accepted as characteristic of groups (Parekh, 2008). Understanding this identity is useful to interpret the present identity and to project it to the future (Jenkins, 2008). The primary data was collected through semi-structured individual interviews, participant observation, magazines published by the Chinese-speaking churches, and Chinese-speaking churches’ documents. The secondary data are books, journals, or literature reviews from previous researchers.

The numbers of Chinese Christians are not many compared to other population groups in the country. Based on the 2010 census, the total of Chinese Indonesians in Indonesia is 2,8 million or 1.20 percent of the total Indonesian population (Arifin et al., 2016). Among the numbers, estimated about 42.8 percent are Christians with 27.04 percent Protestants and 15.76 percent Catholics (Chong, 2019). Surabaya is the second-largest city with the Chinese Indonesian community in Java after Jakarta (Arifin et al., 2016). The number of Chinese Indonesians in Surabaya is 147,047 or 5.19% of the country’s total Chinese Indonesian population (Arifin et al., 2016). They are highly heterogeneous in terms of dialect, culture, and economic backgrounds. Many of them speak Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochiu, and Hakka (Arifin et al., 2016). However, indigenous groups recognize them as homogenous (Suryadinata, 2005). There is a need to represent Chinese Christians to make them recognized by other groups.

In 2019, the number of Surabaya’s citizens were 3.158.943 people (BPS-Statistics of Surabaya Municipality, 2020). The main religion is Islam, adhered to by 2,701,499 (85,5 percent) of the total population. The second-largest religious group is Protestant 280,645 (8,9 percent), along with 123,330 (3,9 percent) of the population being Catholic, Buddhist, Hindus, Confucians, and local beliefs 53,464



(1,7 percent). Houses of worship in Surabaya are mosque (1,739), musholla or prayer room (1,927), Protestant-church (758), Catholic-church (17), vihara (42), and Pura or temple (10). From the religious adherents' perspective, one of ten people in Surabaya is Protestants. It means, religion-wise, the chance for encounters between the Protestants and other religious adherents are unavoidable, Chinese Christians as well.

Recognition towards the identity of religion and ethnicity is essential in building ethno-religious relations. Charles Taylor states that recognition is "a vital human need" (Taylor, 1994). If misrecognition or non-recognition of the identity occurs in a society, it will cause harm, oppression, and imprisonment of someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor, 1994). Misrecognitions did occur in the ethno-religious relations in Indonesia. One of the ethnic groups that are vulnerable to this misrecognition is the Chinese Christian in Indonesian history. The assimilation policy, stereotyping, and negative prejudice that regarded Chinese success in business is seen as a privilege given by the government, and fear of Christianization strengthens the action of making Chinese Christians the outsider (C. Y. Hoon, 2016; Husein, 2005; Mujiburrahman, 2006; Widjaja, 2010).

This article expects to contribute to recognizing the Chinese Christian as one of the ethno-religious groups in multicultural Indonesia. This recognition can hopefully build an ethno-religious understanding of mutual-relations between Chinese Christians and the various ethno-religious communities.

### **WHO ARE CHINESE CHRISTIANS *TOTOK* IN SURABAYA?**

The presence of Chinese Christians in Indonesia is not just because of conversion, as many people think. There are some Chinese who become Christians because of missionaries work in Indonesia. At least, there are three kinds of Chinese convert to Christianity. First, as many people think, that is converted to Christianity by the missionaries' works, such as the Western and Chinese missionaries. Second, those who were obliged to choose one among five religions by the New Order government according to the policy applied after 1965. Third, those who became Christian after going through personal spiritual experiences. Other than conversion, the Chinese were already Christians when they first came from mainland China in 1900 (Dominggus, 2014). They were parts of the third wave of Chinese immigrants who came in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until the 1940s (Handinoto, 2015). The first wave arrived in the early 13<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century till the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>. The second wave came to Surabaya from the period of 18<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were originated from Fujian province speaking

Hokkien and from Guangdong province speaking Cantonese (Dominggus, 2014). This group is considered as *totok* and is distinguished from the *peranakan*.

Chinese Indonesians are categorized in the two main groups, the *totok* and the *peranakan*. The meaning of *totok* and *peranakan* has changed from being based on religion, then based on place of birth and culture. In the early 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term *peranakan* was used by the Dutch for the Chinese Indonesians who were Muslim (Chinese-Muslim) (Ham, 2017). Those who came were all male. They did not bring along wives or women from China due to the difficulties of the trip to the archipelago. Upon arrival, they interacted very well with the locals and even married the local women. They adapted with the local culture so they could not be differentiated anymore from the locals. They are the so-called *Peranakan* (Skinner, 1979). Their numbers dwindled as they became Muslim and indigenous (Ham, 2017). Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the meaning of *peranakan* has also changed as it is now referring to the local-born (Lan, 1961; Suryadinata, 2005; Tan, 2008). *Peranakans* have usually been settled in Java for a long or were born in Java. They have mixed-blood from one side of their ancestors, or their father was from mainland China, and their mother was local Javanese. They thus live with the local tradition (Ham, 2017). They at least have been living for two generations in the Nusantara and cannot speak Chinese anymore (Lan, 1961). They are categorized as *peranakan*. This term was used to culture orientation towards the local, the Chinese, or the Dutch in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Daily language usage became the identification that signifies whether one belongs to the *peranakan* or *totok* group. In other words, *peranakan* are the Chinese-descents who no longer speak Chinese but speak Indonesian or a local language as their lingua-franca at home (Suryadinata, 2005).

Meanwhile, identification of being *totok* refers to the place of birth, which is China-born Chinese, pure-blood, speaking Chinese daily (Chong, 2016). In the finding of this research, some Chinese born in Surabaya identified themselves as *totok* because none of their ancestors had any mixed-blood with the indigenous. For Halim (pseudonym), 64 years, a third-generation<sup>2</sup> of Hinghwa, those identified as *totok* are not only those who can speak Mandarin or have a Chinese name. It is also who still know their Chinese family roots and have Chinese family in mainland China, even though they were born in Indonesia.<sup>3</sup> However, in terms of language, those identified themselves as *totok*, use Javanese or Indonesian language rather than the Chinese language in their daily conversation with their children, as conveyed by Halim and Harianto (pseudonym), 72 years, a

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<sup>2</sup> The first-generation Chinese in this article refers to the migrants from China. The second-generation and so forth are those born in Surabaya.

<sup>3</sup> The interview with Halim in February 11<sup>th</sup> 2020.

second-generation Chinese. Even though his children, who studied in the United States, took a Mandarin course since they were very young, but they prefer to use the Indonesian language when conversing with their parents. Interestingly, a grandchild studied in a Chinese-based international school in Surabaya who can speak Mandarin the best. Benny, 24 years, a fourth-generation, a member of GKT, uses the Indonesian language when conversing with his parents. According to him:

*(Saya) pakai agak formal (Indonesia), karena bahasa Surabaya kan lebih agak bahasa gaul gitu. Jadi saya agak kurang enak kalau ngomong sama orang tua dengan bahasa Jawa.*

([I] use a rather formal (Indonesian) language because my Surabayan Javanese language is rather colloquial. I feel it is not appropriate to use it when conversing with parents)."<sup>4</sup>

Benny masters English better than Mandarin. When his parents asked him to study Mandarin in China, he preferred to study other subject in Singapore. However, his experiences in interacting with international people opened his eyes to studying Mandarin.

The dynamics of the Mandarin language usage from the Chinese Christians show that the Mandarin language is no longer an ethnic identity but needs to build global relations. It shows that the Chinese Christians are not solely influenced by the Chinese, but also the Western and the Indonesian cultures by using English, Mandarin, and Indonesian daily. This is what is called by Homi Bhabha as the hybrid culture in which it "may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of culture, but the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994). Moreover, for Bhabha, it is the in-between spaces that "provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood, that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). It is a "'third space' where the negotiation of differences creates a characteristic of 'neither ... nor,' 'the same but not quite'" (Bhabha, 1994). They cannot eliminate their Chineseness' identity, but cannot fully take the local's or Western identity.

When the first Chinese Christian migrants to Surabaya, they came to work and to trade (Dominggus, 2014). According to Skinner, the southern part of Fujian province where the Hokkien came from is an important region in Chinese foreign trade history.(Skinner, 1979). The Hokkien could trade well, and many succeeded

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<sup>4</sup> The interview with Benny in March 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.



in business. Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hokkien group is the first one who arrived in Nusantara (the Indonesian archipelago) in large numbers. Due to the journey's difficulty, it took more than 20 days to arrive in Nusantara.<sup>5</sup>

When new Chinese Christian immigrants first arrived in Surabaya, they were supported by relatives or friends who first settled. Through their experiences, kinship's meaning is no longer in the traditional understanding of being through a blood relationship. It changes to the broader sense as "the way in which people create similarity or difference between themselves and others" (Lawler, 2014). They were helped to find jobs and places to live. Surya (pseudonym), 70 years, Hinghwa belongs to the second-generation born in Surabaya.<sup>6</sup> His grandmother and parents originated from the Hinghwa region in Fujian province. His family ran away from the Japanese invasion and migrated to Surabaya in the 1930s. They had no family members in terms of blood ties. Their Hinghwa friends helped them. His grandparents started a little grocery store selling daily needs.

Meanwhile, Peter (pseudonym), 81 years, Hokkien was born in Gulangyu island in Fujian province, was helped by his father's family when he migrated to Surabaya with his mother and four siblings in 1949. They looked for a better life based on the information from a relative who visited them in China. This relative who settled in Ambulu village in East Java shared that "over there [in Indonesia] it is safe and enough!"<sup>7</sup> Following the advice from the relative, they decided to migrate to Surabaya. They arrived in Tanjung Perak port in Surabaya. They were accepted by their father's relative in Surabaya. They participated in a Chinese Christian community in a Chinese church located near their temporary hotel that known as the THKTKH. Afterward, they moved to a house in Jalan Baliwerti. The mother opened the coffee house belonged to the previous house owner. She also did some seamstress works and opened a textile stand in the Blauran market.

Fuzhou was another group who came in Nusantara. Twang Peck Yang writes that among the dialects groups, Fuzhou has the highest level of group solidarity (Yang, 2004). Many Fuzhou worked as creditors (*mindring*). They gave textiles credits. Their lower socio-economic situation forced them to live together in groups. One simple room can be filled in by 3 to 30 young men. Many house owners did not want to rent their rooms due to this reason. Many of them work as creditors or usually termed *mindring*. They did *mindring* business but also sell various things by credit or by lending cash money. The royal family in Solo also used their crediting services (T. P. Yang, 2004). They had to sell credited products with high-interest rates

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<sup>5</sup> The interview with Harianto in February 13<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>6</sup> The interview with Surya in February 27<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>7</sup> The interview with Peter in February 24<sup>th</sup> 2020.

because they had to include the risk fees if a buyer passed away, escaped, or was unable to pay. They also calculated the service fees for delivering goods to houses, routine debt collecting, and other facilities given to the clients. This crediting business with such a high interest-rate makes these pedlars nicknamed as “Cina mindring” or “tukang mindring” as they were regarded as leeches and extortionist (Die & Tan, 1979). However, this job made them have the closest relationship to the locals than those from other dialects. Many of them married local women. Nevertheless, many just lived together without an official marriage certificate as they were poor (T. P. Yang, 2004). The solidarity was also shown by those who are economically stronger to those who were weaker economically. Nevertheless, this support just applied to those having the same dialects. Most Hakka opened grocery stalls (warung) or grocery shops (toko kelontong) (T. P. Yang, 2004). According to the informant, the Cantonese were skilled as carpenters.<sup>8</sup> They also worked as gold crafters, in-salons and restaurants, and other jobs around Blauran street (Dominggus, 2017).

The Hinghwa initially worked as becak drivers. They advanced into becak owners and then sold becak spare parts. When bicycles started to be widely used, they started selling bicycles and their spare parts. They mostly do their business around Bongkaran street (Dominggus, 2017). Halim’s father was doing becak business as well.<sup>9</sup> He initially had five becaks but developed into 100 becaks. His business scope even widened to another area (Waru). According to Halim, his father passed away at a young age before 1967 because he was too exhausted, working until late at night every day to collect becak rental money. Some of Hingjwa became textile business owners around Jalan Slompretan. Even though most of the Chinese Christians who came to Surabaya were for trading. However, there were also came for professional occupations like the mother of Harianto.<sup>10</sup> His mother, who graduated from a midwife school in Mei Xian, Guangdong Province, opened a midwife practice in Surabaya, while his father did some trading works.

The informant said that they shared the formula or the tricks to manage a shop with other families within the same clan or dialect group. When there was a successful family in a particular business type, this family would usually help other clan members do similar work types. A type of business undeliberately became a distinctiveness of a clan or marga, though it was not initially their expertise. According to Koning, family ties in Chinese are stronger than local (Koning, 2011).

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<sup>8</sup> The interview with Harianto in February 13<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>9</sup> The interview with Halin in February 11<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>10</sup> The interview with Harianto in February 13<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The Chinese Christians' choices of works were changing across time. The first-arrived Chinese immigrants would just work in any available opportunity. Should they had brought enough cash, they could open a little grocery store in north Surabaya. However, the first-generation born here usually started different jobs than the ones performed by their predecessors. When their parents had succeeded, they would continue the business or start something new, so they had to hand over the business to professionals. The third-generation usually has a better education level, so they usually choose jobs that are in line with their passion. Nevertheless, many of them still work as entrepreneurs.

### **CONTESTATION OF ETHNIC CULTURES IN MAKING RELIGIOUS IDENTITY**

Religion also becomes an identity that supports their ethnic identity. However, this identity of religion and ethnicity can experience contestation when they have different interests. According to Bhikhu Parekh, an identity in multiple identities is not equal in "reach" and "depth" (Parekh, 2008). When the interest of religion and ethnicity clash, one of the identities can overcome the other.

The Chinese-speaking churches are no longer stated as Chinese church, but have been a mixture of Western culture, Chinese culture, and Indonesian culture. Western culture influences occur when western missionaries do not just bring religious teaching but also the western culture embedded in its. Christianity was categorized as a Western religion, foreign teaching. Chinese Christians were often accused of leaving behind Chinese culture when they became Christian. The saying "one more Christian, one less Chinese" was frequently used to quip converted Chinese-Christians, implying that they are "traitors to the nation" (C.-Y. Hoon, 2013; F. Yang, 1999). Some Chinese Christians commonly experienced such a situation. The Chinese Christians who came to Surabaya founded houses of worship based on their dialects. They chose their leaders based on their respective people (Dominggus, 2017). They also invited preachers from mainland China. After some time, those preachers went back to China and replaced by somebody else. They arranged and paid for these religious meetings. This explains why lay-people leadership is a distinctive characteristic of the Chinese-speaking churches until the present time.<sup>11</sup> They usually came from various denominational backgrounds influenced by the mission organizations that operated in their homeland. Some mission agencies that worked in Fujian and Guangdong province had good cooperation. Their acceptance of those from different denominations showed the width of their identification on membership. The mission organizations that worked in Fujian province, Amoy and Xiamen were the British

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<sup>11</sup> The interview with Harianto in May 18<sup>th</sup> 2019 and February 13<sup>th</sup> 2020.



interdenominational mission, the London Missionary Society (NGO), the mission organizations of the churches of England (Anglican, Baptist) and American (Episcopal Church, Brethren, Presbyterian, and others). They all worked in the same area (Pitcher, 1893). The Northern part of Fujian Province was the United States Episcopal Methodist Church's mission. It was the beginning of the spread of the Methodist church in China. Guangdong Province was ministered by the Baptist mission of the United States, the British Presbyterian, Anglican, and others. Their openness towards those from different denominations was carried along when they arrived in Nusantara. They did not question the doctrine of the missionaries. The doctrine did not become the main issue at that time. It was influenced by the Methodist Church's theology of mission, which is more pragmatic than dogmatic (Daulay, 1996). Presbyterian, Evangelical, and Pentecostal churches were serving together to hold revival services or praying at the houses of different church members.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, the strengthening of group identity in church organizations has caused inter-denominational cooperation rarely again. The churches from the Pentecostal, Evangelical, and Presbyterian emphasize the doctrine that makes disassociate among them.

In 1909, the Hokkien fellowship, which had the largest congregations, joined the Methodist church mission (Daulay, 1996). The other dialect groups that respectively joined were the Canton (1910), Fuzhou, and Hinghwa (1918).<sup>13</sup> In the beginning, the services were held in Hokkien. However, since the number of dialects increased, the services were thus held according to each dialect: Canton (1917), Fuzhou-Hinghwa (1922), and Hinghwa (1939) (Dominggus, 2017).

The Methodist church mission held services for the Chinese *totok* after conducting surveying on the Java island (Daulay, 1996; Soleiman & Steenbrink, 2008). Initially, they planned to serve the Muslims but did not get the permission to do so because the Dutch Colonial government was very cautious about it. They did not allow the evangelization of the Muslims for the reason of maintaining stability in security (Daulay, 1996). Their ministry in Java and Kalimantan ended in 1928, and they changed their focus to Sumatra since then (Daulay, 1996). In Surabaya, they first held their service in a small room located at a small and dirty location in Jalan Kampung Seng (Koentjoro, 2013). However, since the number of

<sup>12</sup> Evangelical is regarded as Fundamentalist that believe Christianity is the true religion, saved through Jesus Christ. The focus on Jesus Christ. Pentecostalism focuses on the work of the Holy Spirit, in particular speaking in tongues. Presbyterian is based on John Calvin's doctrine and governed by elders Paul F. Knitter, *Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002); Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Zondervan, 2010); "What We Believe," *Presbyterian Mission Agency*, accessed November 29, 2019, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/>.

<sup>13</sup> Elyonpedia Magazine.

congregations continued to enlarge, they move several times to bigger new buildings until eventually, they bought an ex-hotel in Jalan Samudera as their new place of service that is still in use until now. The city government of Surabaya decreed this church building as part of the city's heritage in 2009. The services were conducted in various dialects, including Hokkien, Canton, Fuzhou-Kuoyu, and Hinghwa, and held at different hours. Their number, which was initially only ten persons and regarded as probationary<sup>14</sup> members increased into 11 persons (1911), 47 persons (1912), 49 persons (1916), 249 persons (1925), 315 persons (1937), and 434 persons (1939). In 2019, their number was 6,084 persons or about 2 percent of the number of Christians in Surabaya, totaling 280,645 persons.<sup>15</sup>

The increased number of congregations came from the newly arrived Chinese Christians from mainland China and the Chinese living in the surrounding areas. The Chinese male usually did not bring any wife. They were in a great temptation to being involved in prostitution, gambling, or watching inappropriate movies. The Methodist's missionary held film screening event in the church every Tuesday. The program began with a fifteen-minute prayer and sermon on the gospel of salvation about the good news of Jesus Christ. According to the missionary's notes, until 1925, there were 10,125 viewers attended the screening events. Half of them attended church services regularly (Dominggus, 2014).

When the Methodist Mission church ended their working-term in Surabaya, the Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee Foundation (THKTKH) was formed with Deed No. 41 dated February 8, 1928. This foundation bought the church building that used to be owned by the Methodist Mission Church in Jalan Samudera that they are now using. The building's purchase was carried on by collecting funds from the Methodist Church mission funds with a loan from the Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation in Hong Kong (Koentjoro, 2013). In the New Order era, the government obliged them to change their Chinese name, so it became Gereja Kristus Tuhan (GKT) formalized in the 6<sup>th</sup> Indonesian Church Council in Makassar in 1967. Some members of the GKT synod later chose to establish another synod named Gereja Kristus Abdiel (GKA) in 1976 due to internal issues (Dominggus, 2017).

The tension of being identified as Western teaching dissipated when a Chinese preacher, namely, Sung Siong Geh, also known as John Sung, the son of a

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<sup>14</sup> "Probatiobar" is the probational members of the congregation before they were established as full-members after they went through a serial of teaching classes.

<sup>15</sup> Not all Chinese church has complete data of numbers of congregations. These numbers were data of the adult participants collected from the church newsweekly from June 23 until July 2, 2019.

Methodist pastor, came to the archipelago invitation from a Hinghwa community. He did spiritual revivals among the Chinese Christians in Surabaya in January 1939. He was 38 at that time (Sung, 2012).<sup>16</sup> From Surabaya, John Sung went to Madiun, Solo, Bandung, and Jakarta. The attendees who came to his meeting numbered around one thousand to two thousand people. In Surabaya, the meeting was held at the *Stadstuin*, the City Theatre and Gardens (today is known as the Bank of Indonesia's building) (Koentjoro, 2013). John Sung responded to the idea of Christianity being a foreign religion, that synonymous with abandoning the Chinese tradition. In his ministry, Sung used the Mandarin language and wore Chinese clothes. Sung was an example that shows that the Chinese could be Christian and Chinese as well. Undeniably, Western culture was still influential in its liturgy, piano usage, and choir's formation.

The contestation between Chinese traditions and the Christians doctrines can be seen in funeral procession. One of the funeral processions still conducted by the Chinese Christians is breaking watermelon.<sup>17</sup> Nio Joe Lan says that watermelons are one of the main fruits used for praying to the ancestor during the funeral procession (Lan, 1961). After praying to the ancestors is completed and the coffin is ready to be moved, a watermelon should be slammed into pieces. This watermelon is a ransom to be paid by the dead to Yanluo Wang, the king of heaven who enjoys savoring watermelon. For the church leader, the practice of breaking watermelon in a funeral is contradicted the Christian doctrines. However, the church leaders cannot force the congregations to abandon Chinese tradition. They try to give them an understanding of Christian teaching in Sunday sermon or when visiting them in their houses.

Not understanding the Chinese culture can also cause discomfort in accepting Chinese Christians. One of the informants conveyed that a Chinese church invited Chinese people from various religions to celebrate a Chinese New Year. The event was held in a restaurant. There was a drama performance depicting death and the god who gave angpao. The source says he was too embarrassed by this drama performance as the Chinese are fearful of death. During a festive time, only good things are discussed. Talking about bad things, including death, is not wise at all.<sup>18</sup>

Local Indonesian culture also influence the Chinese-speaking churches. In the New Order era, the government forbade Chinese organizations and the use of the

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<sup>16</sup> John Sung continued his study at Ohio University for a doctorate in chemistry. He also studied at the Union Theological Seminary.

<sup>17</sup> The interview with David in 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

<sup>18</sup> The interview with Harianto, February 13<sup>th</sup> 2020.



Chinese language. Chinese schools were forced to be close down in 1966. However, the Chinese church was still allowed to conduct services in Mandarin. The Mandarin service becomes a way for the Chinese to convert into Christianity but still maintain their Chinese identity. They also held a Mandarin course since 1973.<sup>19</sup> An average of 400 participants attended the Mandarin course. The usage of Chinese language is regarded an important in maintaining a Chinese identity. Nevertheless, the ability to speak Chinese by the generations who do not attend Chinese schools is weak. They might speak a dialect, but they have difficulties in understanding official Chinese (Mandarin). The Mandarin services are thus translated into the Indonesian language and become bilingual services.<sup>20</sup> The Indonesian language translation was needed because there were members of the church who could not understand Mandarin. They did not study the language or did not attend a Chinese school. Therefore, the Chinese-speaking churches are no longer stated as Chinese church, but have been a mixture of Western culture, Indonesian culture, and Chinese culture. For example, Chinese New Year has celebrated in the churches, but it has given a new meaning. I participated in the Chinese New Year celebration in one of the Chinese-speaking churches. The worship leader said that it was a welcoming spring celebration in China. However, for them, it was to express the gratitude of God's blessings. Moreover, they were asking God to help them to be faithful Christians in the following year. They also provided empty angpao (red envelopes usually filled with money as a gift). It was not for the congregation, but as an offering to God. How they celebrate Chinese New Year has shown that it “the same but not quite” with authentic Chinese culture. The Chinese-speaking churches are those with hybrid-identity in their religious identity.

At present, the congregations’ composition in terms of ethnicity is mixed. Most of them are Chinese, but there are also Javanese and those from Eastern Indonesia. The clergy team members also vary. Besides the Chinese, originated from Nias, Manado, Java, and West Nusa Tenggara. In daily interaction, the Chinese identity that was once dominant has been shifting to the economic and life values or working styles.

### **STEREOTYPING IN-GROUP AND OUT-GROUP**

Since the Dutch Colonial era until the post-New Order, stereotyping of Chinese Indonesians still occurs (Kuntjara & Hoon, 2020; Setijadi, 2017). The perpetrator can be in-group and out-group of Chinese Christian. The Dutch Colonial government, as an out-group, applied the division of ethnic-based housing settlements. Purnawan Basundoro explains that the division of the settlement

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<sup>19</sup> Elyonpedia Magazine.

<sup>20</sup> The interview with Peter in February 24<sup>th</sup> 2020.

areas caused an unequal distribution of public facilities (Basundoro, 2009). The Dutch and Europeans mostly lived around Jembatan Merah and Simpang with better facilities such as clean water, good road, electricity, electrical trams, and other things. The Chinese, the Arabs, and the Malay stayed in on the East side of Jembatan Merah. The Chinese lived around the Kembang Jepun, Kapasan, and Pasar Atom. The Arabs usually lived around Masjid Ampel. Meanwhile, the indigenous lived in the so-called *kampung* (village) located behind the tall structure that belonged to the Europeans. The kampung had minimum facilities and crowded neighborhood that caused various urban problems, including diseases and health issues.

This division of ethnic-based settlement was erased in 1917 and changed into areas settlement based on economic status (Basundoro, 2009). The Chinese emerged from the Pecinan and lived in various locations in Surabaya, including in the kampung area. However, the stereotyping and negative prejudice formed during the ethnic segregation has not changed until the post-New Order's early years. The Chinese who live in the kampung are vulnerable to experience ethnic violence. Benny (pseudonym), 29 years, shared his experience when he was ten years old and lived in a central Surabaya kampung. When he passed through some alley to buy things, children at his age called him "Cino" and<sup>21</sup> spat at him. When his parents reported the incident to the spitting boy's parents, they just laughed. Benny's parents' house was bigger compared to other surrounding houses. They rarely interacted with the neighbors. After having this experience, they eventually moved to the housing settlements where most of the dwellers were Chinese. The fear of experiencing violence in the kampung influences the choice to attend the house of worship. The Chinese do not want to go to the kampung church, as Budi (pseudonym), 23 years.<sup>22</sup> David, 62 years, had a different experience.<sup>23</sup> They lived in a kampung in north Surabaya. His mother had a good relationship with the neighbors and was involved in helping the neighbor's needs. He has good memories of experiencing a good relationship with friends from the kampung.

Other groups can accept some groups if the person(s) fulfill the characteristics formed by that group. Those accepted usually show similarities more than differences. When the economic status becomes an identity differentiation, added by the lack of efforts to change with another identity, that person or that group will just be categorized as the out-group and vice versa.

Stereotyping and contestation also take place within the Chinese in-group. A religious leader conveys that in the Chinese church, the economic factor and the

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<sup>22</sup> The interview with Budi in 3<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

<sup>23</sup> The interview with David in 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

dialect might affect someone's possibility of getting the parents' blessing in marriage.<sup>24</sup> A rich Cantonese male will be accepted to marry a Hinghwa female, for instance. While Hokchia (Fuzhou) parents will reject their daughter to marry a Hakka male. According to a different informant, Hakkas are stereotyped as the cunning people who like to take advantage of the others.<sup>25</sup> Skinner writes that the

Hakka used to live in the non-fertile hills in Guangdong's inland areas (Skinner, 1979). During the migration period in 1850-1930, the Hakka was the poorest group among other immigrants (Skinner, 1979). A Hakka informant explains that they had to work hard to survive in a difficult condition, which gave them a bad reputation, whereas not all stereotyping is true.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, when they first came to the archipelago, not all of them were poor. One Hakka informant said that when his mother came to Surabaya, she was a professional midwife who helped many people give birth safely. His father did some trading jobs. This informant himself is currently a very successful entrepreneur who had passed on the business to his children. Stereotyping is a collective identity, not just an individual interaction process but also a collective process (Jenkins, 2008). However, stereotyping is just one aspect of cognition and identification. Understanding the moment when the stereotyping started will help us to understand them (Jenkins, 2008).

## CONCLUSION

Continuity and change of Chinese Christian identities in the Chinese-speaking churches take place. Stereotyping and negative still occur that categorized them as unchanging totok, economically dominant middle-class, and adherents of a foreign religion. They were identified as exclusive, homogenous, and monolithic. At present, those categorizations and identifications cannot be applied anymore to the Chinese Christians. Even though there are continuing identities, some of their former identities have changed.

Chinese Christians in the Chinese-speaking churches still identify themselves as Chinese, but each generation gives a different meaning to it. The second-generation still carries a strong Chinese identity, which is not the case with the third and fourth-generation. The later identify themselves as Chinese Indonesian. Moreover, the fourth-generation does not emphasize their ethnic identity anymore because they have experienced global interactions. It means they no longer have in-depth-meaning towards the Chinese identities among the present generation than the previous ones. However, religious identity is still important to them.

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<sup>24</sup> The interview with Ferdinan in 23<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

<sup>25</sup> The interview with Cornelius in 3<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

<sup>26</sup> The interview with Harianto in 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Even though they are not fully embrace Chinese cultures in their daily life and church activities anymore. However, their Chinese cultures have fused with Western and Indonesian culture. They apply bilingual services using Indonesian and Mandarin language, using a piano as their musical instruments, adopting Western songs, and having a choir that shows the amalgamation of cultures. Therefore, the Chinese Christian identities in the Chinese-speaking churches is the hybrid identity.

The Chinese Christians are a communal group. Nevertheless, those regarded as the in-group are no longer based on blood ties, sub-ethnicity, or race, but those with similar life values such as education, economy, and social class. For instance, the Chinese-speaking churches are not exclusive to Chinese Christians *totok*. Some of their members and clergies are indigenous Indonesians from various ethnicities.

Developing sameness in identity is influential in keeping the interaction going among different ethnics and religious groups. Having a mutual understanding between Chinese Christians and other ethno-religious groups are expected to build mutual relationships that matter in the living together within multicultural Indonesia.

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## **BEING CHINESE CHRISTIAN IN THE TOTOK CHINESE CHURCHES IN SURABAYA: Continuity and Change of Identities**

**Linda Bustan**

*Inter-Religious Studies Program,  
Graduate School of University Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta  
Petra Christian University, Surabaya  
Email: bustan.linda@gmail.com*

**Fatimah Husein**

*Islamic State University Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta  
Email: fatimahhusein@yahoo.com*

**Paulus Sugeng Widjaja**

*Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, Yogyakarta  
E-mail: pauluswidjaja@staff.ukdw.ac.id*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This article explores the identities of Chinese Christians in the totok Chinese churches in Surabaya. The Chinese Christians refer to those who arrived in Surabaya from mainland China as Protestant Christians in the 1900s. They established the first Chinese church - the Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee (THKTKH) in Surabaya. The THKTKH has become two independent synods, namely Gereja Kristus Tuhan (GKT, or the Church of Christ the Lord) and Gereja Kristen Abdiel (GKA, or the Abdiel Christian Church). The totok Chinese churches refer to churches that conduct the church services in the Chinese language or Mandarin (Guoyu). The article examines the culture, language, and origin of the Chinese Christians. After almost a century in Surabaya, there is some continuity and change of the Chinese Christian identity. They still regard themselves as totok, but the meaning of totok has changed. They embrace not only Chinese culture; but also mixed Chinese culture with Western culture and Indonesian culture, which results in the so-called hybrid culture. Mandarin is used in church services, whereas Indonesian language and English are also employed. The originality of the congregations is no longer mono-ethnic, which is Chinese. The Chinese churches have become multi-ethnic churches consisting of various ethnicities in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** Protestant Christianity; totok Chinese; social identity Chinese Christian.

## INTRODUCTION

Chinese Christians have had a long history in Indonesia, existing for more than a century since the Colonial period (Soleiman and Steenbrink, 2008). Indonesia's number of Chinese Christians is relatively small, only 1.2 percent of the total country's population regarded themselves as Chinese descendants in the 2010 census (Arifin et al., 2016). Of this number, it is estimated that about 42.8 percent are Christians, with 27.04 percent Protestants and 15.76 percent Catholics (Chong, 2019). Surabaya is the second-largest city with the Chinese Indonesian community in Java after Jakarta, with approximately 5.19% of the country's total Chinese-Indonesian population (Arifin et al., 2016). There is no official data on how many Chinese-Indonesian Christians are in Surabaya.

Even though they have been living in Indonesia for a long time, Chinese Christians face challenging dis-identification, negative perceptions, and stereotyping about their ethnic identity as Chinese and religious identity as Christians. They are regarded as homogeneous, not heterogeneous (Chong; 2016; Suryadinata, 2005; Widjaja, 2010). Last year, I presented about Chinese Christians heterogeneity in an Islamic university in Surabaya. The participants, mostly Muslim lecturers and students, responded to the presentation by stating that they have previously regarded Chinese Christians as homogeneous. In reality, the Chinese population is highly heterogeneous with diversity in dialect, culture, and economic backgrounds. Many of them speak Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochiu, and Hakka. This anthropological evidence shows the dis-identification of Chinese ethnicity. However, the assumption that Chinese is homogeneous still exists today.

In May 2017, the Indonesia National Survey Project (INSP), sponsored by the Yusof Ishak Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) and the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI), conducted a survey with 1,620 respondents from various ethnics, economic, educational, and religious background from 34 provinces in Indonesia. Charlotte Setijadi (2017) presents the result, showing that ethnic Chinese are still negatively perceived in terms of their economic privilege and national loyalty and are suspected of being Chinese loyalists. They are also perceived as being exclusive and distant with indigenous Indonesians. Most survey respondents stated they do not want ethnic Chinese leaders in governmental positions. After two decades of reformation, stereotyping towards ethnic Chinese still exists (Kuntjara and Hoon, 2020). However, racialization has decreased towards those who are ethnically different compared to the pre-reformation era.

Christianization is the biggest obstacle for other religions' acceptance of Christianity (Husein, 2005; Mujiburrahman, 2006). Furthermore, Christianity

has been viewed as a colonial religion due to the memory of the past that the Dutch colonists were Christians and most Chinese were Christians (Husein 2005). The negative perceptions of ethnic Chinese and Christianity make Chinese Christians vulnerable to violence and ‘othering’ in relations with other ethnic groups and religions. Identification and recognition of ethnic and religious identities are essential to building harmony and equal relationships in the context of multiculturalism like Indonesia.

There are limited studies on Chinese Christians, particularly regarding *totok*<sup>1</sup> Chinese churches. The few existing ones were mainly conducted in Jakarta. The term *Totok* Chinese churches refers to those that still have bilingual (Mandarin/Indonesian) or exclusively Mandarin services (Hoon, 2016). Chang-You Hoon (2016) and Susy Ong (2008) researched Gereja Kristus Yesus (GKY, or Church of Jesus Christ), representing *totok* Chineseness, the largest Chinese church in Jakarta. Hoon’s findings show that most *totok* Chinese churches belong to the Evangelical movement, which regards “the promotion of Christian fellowships and to spread the Gospel” as its objective. Susy Ong notes that in the GKY, services are conducted in the Chinese language for the elderly. Meanwhile, for the younger generations, services are held in the Indonesian language because the youth are not fluent in their cultural language of Chinese.

Susy Ong also studied Chineseness in the Chinese church in Gereja Reformed Injili Indonesia (GRII, or Indonesian Reformed Evangelical Church) in Jakarta. Even though Ong (2008) uses the term ‘Indonesian,’ the church’s orientation is more Chinese than national (Indonesian) as its ministry focuses on Chinese culture and language. Despite Ong’s findings, GRII’s focus is also on nation-building through the establishment of the Reformed Center for Religion and Society (RCRS) in 2006 ([reformed-crs.org](http://reformed-crs.org)).

Meanwhile, Markus Dominggus L. Dawa studied Gereja Kristus Tuhan (GKT, the Church of Christ the Lord) in Surabaya and Malang from a historical perspective (2017). In his opinion, the New Order regime’s assimilation program failed to change the Chineseness of the GKT either towards being local or towards having an Indonesian identity. Chineseness is still well-preserved in GKT. This paper aims to enrich the currently scarce publications on the subject of Chinese Christians, particularly in Surabaya.

The Chinese Christians who originated from mainland China came to Surabaya nearly a century ago. How have they constructed their ethnic and religious identities in the Chinese church in Surabaya? What is continuous and/or changing in their identities? This paper attempts to answer these questions by

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<sup>1</sup> *Totok* refers to China-born Chinese, pure-blood, and speak dialects or Chinese daily (Chong, 2016; Hoon, 2015; Ong, 2017).

examining the culture, language, and origin of the Chinese Christians in the Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee (THKTKH) Surabaya. THKTKH is currently breaking into two independent synods,<sup>2</sup> namely into Gereja Kristus Tuhan (GKT, or the Church of Christ the Lord) and Gereja Kristen Abdiel (GKA, or the Abdiel Christian Church). Some identities of the *totok* Chinese Christians in Surabaya have changed. Others have continued to respond to government policies that have impacted interaction within-group (with other Chinese dialects) and out-group (with Muslims, the biggest population in Surabaya and Indonesia).

It uses the theory of social identity, which is the main idea of Jenkins' 2008 work. It also employs the concept of ethnicity being "with a shared cultural identity, language, and origin" (Kim, 2011). The primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with ten Chinese church leaders and activists who are familiar with the history and activities of their churches. They are the first, second, third, and fourth-generation<sup>3</sup> members in *totok* Chinese churches. The participant-observation method was used to understand the Chinese Christians' social and cultural contexts. It additionally used magazines and documents published by the Chinese churches as primary sources. Secondary data was gathered from books, journals, and literature reviews from previous researchers on *totok* Chinese Christians. The findings will be explained through a historical overview of THKTKH, hybrid culture, language, and origin – regarding first, second, third-generation in *totok* Chinese churches (GKT and GKA) in Surabaya. This paper uses the terms *totok* Chinese churches and *totok* Chinese Christians interchangeably to refer to Chinese Christians of GKT and GKA in Surabaya.

## THE TIONG HOA KIE TOK KAUF HWE (THKTKH) SURABAYA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Chinese Christians in Indonesia are two groups regarding conversion to Christianity. The first group consists of those who became Christian after they arrived in Nusantara, which was later termed Indonesia. This group was evangelized and ministered by Western, Chinese, and local missionaries (Soleiman and Steenbrink, 2008). They founded *peranakan*<sup>4</sup> Chinese churches, such as the Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI, or Indonesian Christian Church)

<sup>2</sup> Synod is a council of the church

<sup>3</sup> The first-generation is the migrants from China. The second-generation and so forth are those born in Surabaya.

<sup>4</sup> *Peranakan* refers to local-born Chinese. They have mixed-blood from one side of their ancestors, or their father was from mainland China, and their mother was local Javanese. They are of Chinese

(Ong, 2008; Setiabudi, 1994). The second group consists of Chinese who were Christian before they arrived in Indonesia, the so-called *totok* Chinese Christians (Daulay, 1996; Dawa, 2017).

The *totok* Chinese Christians from mainland China have been present since the 1900s (Dawa, 2017). They originated from the Fujian and Guangdong provinces as the part of the third wave of Chinese immigrants in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until the 1940s (Handinoto, 2015).<sup>5</sup> This first-generation, China-born Chinese Christians were from various sub-ethnics or dialects and church denominations (Dawa, 2017; Pitcher, 1893). They were Hokkien, Cantonese, Fuzhou, Hinghwa, and Hakka. In their homeland, they were members of Baptist, Presbyterian-Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and other denominations.

Ethnicity and religion are important for migrants because they give meaning, identity, and a sense of belonging (Kim, 2011). Nevertheless, ethnic identity is challenged by their being away from their homeland (Yang, 1999). According to the theory of assimilation (Kim, 2011), the originality of culture declines due to assimilation with the host culture. Ong Hok Ham (2017) identifies that migration in groups or individuals either strengthens or weakens ethnic identity. It explains why the *Chineseness* of Chinese in Java is different from *Chineseness* of Chinese in Sumatra and Kalimantan. Chinese immigrants to Java usually came individually or in small groups. As a result, they greatly interacted with the local people allowing them to fuse more easily with the local culture, which eventually depreciated or even removed their original culture. They lost the ability to speak their ancestors' language as they adopted the local culture and married local women/men. This group is referred to as *peranakan*, unlike the Chinese in North Sumatra, Bangka, Belitung, or Pontianak called the Totok. Their Chineseness is stronger than Chinese in Java. They came to those cities in groups and large numbers to work in the farming or mining industries that belonged to Dutch entrepreneurs. With their arrival, they brought along structure and social organization from their homeland. Due to their large numbers, these communities still practice Chinese culture in their groups.

However, the Chinese Christians from mainland China in Surabaya, even though they came in individual or small groups, maintain and even have strong Chineseness. The reason for this was the Colonial government's policy of *Wijkenstelsel* law (1836-1917) which divided the population by race and residential areas by ethnicities. The Chinese lived on the East side of Jembatan

<sup>5</sup> The first wave of Chinese immigrants arrived in Surabaya in the early 13<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century till the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>. The second wave came from the period of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Handinoto, 2015).



Merah, around Kembang Jepun, Kapasan, and Pasar Atom in the so-called *pecinan* (Basundoro, 2009). The Arabs lived around Masjid Ampel. The Dutch and Europeans mostly lived around Jembatan Merah and Simpang. Meanwhile, the indigenous lived in a *kampung* (village) located behind the tall structures belonging to the Europeans. Thus, their ethnic identity strengthens when they solely interact with members of the same ethnic group.

Instead of losing their religiosity, the first-generation of Chinese Christians in Surabaya founded houses of worship based on their dialects: Hokkien, Cantonese, Fuzhou, and Hinghwa (Dawa, 2017). Bhikhu Parekh (2008) notes while significant life changes are taking place, people turn to religion. For migrants who had undergone many changes in life in this new land, religion became especially important. According to Fenggang Yang (1998, 1999), who studied Chinese Christian migrants in the United States, the Christian fellowships were the place where immigrants found social belonging, psychological, and spiritual peace. These places were similar to *totok* Chinese Christians in Surabaya. Peter (pseudonym) a Hokkien male 81 years old was a first-generation Indonesian, initially born on Gulangyu Island in the Fujian province.<sup>6</sup> He came to Surabaya with his mother and his four brothers in 1949. His family was a member of THKTKH, where he along with his brothers, joined the church choir. The church was a place he could develop his singing talent and leadership skills as a church activist.

The Hokkien's house of worship developed into a church by the United States Episcopal Methodist Church in 1909. Afterward, the other dialect groups joined the church. It was first joined by the Cantonese (1910), followed by the Fuzhou, and Hinghwa (1918). In the beginning, the services were held in Hokkien. As the number of speakers of each dialect increased, services were held in their respective dialects at different hours. The church is located at Samudra Street, North Surabaya where it is still used in services. In 2009, the Surabaya city government decreed the church building part of the city's heritage.

The United States Episcopal Methodist Church ended their working-term in Java, including Surabaya, in 1928. The world economic crisis in the decade of the 20s and early 30s led the Methodist church to reorganize its mission strategies in 1927 (Daulay, 1996). They closed ministries in Java and Kalimantan, focusing only on Sumatra. The Methodist church mission was replaced by the Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap (NZG). Nevertheless, NZG tended to ministry among *peranakan* Chinese churches more than *totok*. The Methodist

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Peter (pseudonym), the first-generation of the Hokkien, a church leader, on February 24, 2020.

church's decision to leave Surabaya was the beginning of the Chinese church's independence. In 1928, the *totok* Chinese church, with the last supporting act from the United States Episcopal Methodist Church, registered the *totok* Chinese church to the Dutch government under the Foundation of Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee (THKTKH) Surabaya. The THKTKH became the first ethnic Chinese church in Surabaya. (Daulay, 1996; Dawa, 2017; Koentjoro, 2013; Soleiman and Steenbrink, 2008).

The THKTKH church leaders were chosen based on their respective ethnic groups (Dawa, 2017). They also invited preachers from mainland China. After some time, those preachers went back to China and were replaced by others. They arranged and paid for these religious meetings. This explains why lay-people leadership is still a distinctive characteristic of Chinese-speaking churches today.<sup>7</sup>

The teachings that prohibit the practicing of Chinese traditions, such as ancestor worship, have made Christianity categorized as a Western religion by the Chinese. The saying “one more Christian, one less Chinese” was frequently used to quip converted Chinese-Christians, implying that they are “traitors to the nation” (Hoon, 2013; Yang, 1999). In the United States, tension that regarded Christianity as a Western religion was overcome by many Chinese-Americans through integrating Confucianism into Christianity (Hoon, 2013). Confucian values align with the Weber concept of Protestant ethics or a worldly asceticism, such as success, hard work, being thrifty, and delayed gratification.

In Surabaya, the tension of being identified as Western teaching dissipated when a Chinese preacher, a 38-year-old Hingwa man by the name of John Sung and the son of a Methodist pastor in mainland China, came to the archipelago after receiving an invitation from a local Hingwa community. In 1939, Sung undertook spiritual revivals among the Chinese Christians in Surabaya and several other cities (Batavia, Bandung, Medan, Makassar, and many others) (Sung, 2012). He came to Surabaya four times, with the first visit in 1937. The subsequent visits were in January, September, and November 1939. The attendees who came to these meetings numbered between one to two thousand people. Chinese people were willing to close their shops to attend to the service every day. Bibles in Surabaya were out of stock, and 5000 hymn books were sold out and reprinted. On his next visit, he held a Bible Study Conference and many Chinese converted to Christianity. The numbers of Chinese Christians increased significantly, with about 700 Chinese converts

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<sup>7</sup> The interview with Harianto (pseudonym), the second-generation of the Hakka, a church leader, on May 18, 2019, and February 13, 2020.

to Christianity (Gunawan, 1989). The meetings were held at the *Stadstuin*, the City Theatre and Gardens (today is known as the Bank of Indonesia's building). In his ministry, Sung used the Chinese language and wore Chinese clothes. Sung was an example of the Chinese being Christian while incorporating elements of Chinese culture as well.

Today, the THKTKH has become two independent synods, namely Gereja Kristus Tuhan (GKT, or the Church of Christ the Lord) and Gereja Kristen Abdiel (GKA, or the Abdiel Christian Church). The GKT synod currently consists of ten churches; meanwhile, the GKA synod has five churches in Surabaya. Their number, which was initially only ten people (1909) regarded as probationary<sup>8</sup> members, increased to 11 people (1911), 47 people (1912), 49 people (1916), 249 people (1925), 315 people (1937), and 434 people (1939). In 1970, adult members of GKT in Malang and Surabaya were 3,399. The data was collected by Indonesian churches in cooperation with the Research and Study Institute of the Indonesia Council of Churches (Cooley, 1977). Not all the *totok* Chinese churches have complete data of numbers of congregations. From the church newsweekly of ten churches of GKT and five churches of GKA in Surabaya, collected on June 23 until July 2, 2019, the adult participants were 6,084.

## HYBRID CULTURE

The *totok* Chinese Churches in Surabaya have been influenced by Western culture, Indonesian culture, and Chinese culture. The mixture of cultures has made “in the between spaces... that initiate new signs of identity,” which Homi Bhabha (1994) called a hybrid. Chang-Yau Hoon quoted Laclau (2006) saying, “hybridization does not necessarily mean decline through the loss of identity. It can also mean empowering existing identities through the opening of new possibilities. The negotiation of different cultures creates a characteristic of “neither... nor”, “the same but not quite” (Bhabha, 1994).

Western culture influences occurred when Western missionaries embedded Western culture in addition to bringing religious teaching. The clothing style, musical instruments (piano), and the liturgy of worship, including the choir's formation, adopted a Western-style after being exposed. The hymnbook used is a Western hymn, which is translated into Chinese and Indonesian languages. The hybrid culture can also be seen in church buildings with several former church buildings belonging to Western missionaries (Dutch, Armenian). The Western-style was retained, but Chinese style was added, such as the church's

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<sup>8</sup> ‘Probationer’ is the internal policy of the Methodist church before people could be a full member. The people went through a series of teaching classes, such as discipleship training and being baptized to be a full member (Daulay, 1996).

name “Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee” written in Chinese characters. The building’s inauguration plaque was also written in Indonesian and Chinese language. The church bell’s loud chiming can be heard surrounding the first Chinese church at Samudra Street, indicating the service hour started. Church bells chimed as a sign of the service hour are practiced by many churches in the West. In some churches, pictures of Western missionaries with quotes in English are displayed to encourage the congregation regarding the mission.

Celebration of the Chinese New Year in *totok* Chinese churches showed the hybrid culture. Chinese New Year has been celebrated openly again in churches post-1998 when Abdurrahman Wahid was president (1999-2001). I had a chance to participate in a Chinese New Year celebration in one of the Chinese churches in Surabaya. The service was bilingual in which the Chinese language was translated into the Indonesian language. The worship leader said it was a welcoming spring celebration in China. However, as Chinese descent, they do not fully embrace Chinese tradition. The celebration of Chinese New Year was to express the gratitude of God’s blessings. They asked God to help them be faithful Christians in the following year. They provided empty angpao (red envelopes usually filled with money as a gift). The congregation filled the angpao with money. It was given to the church as a thanksgiving, an offering to God. Most of the congregation wore red clothes. It was not connected to the gods as in Chinese beliefs but as a symbol of happiness. The way they celebrate Chinese New Year has shown that it is “the same but not quite” with authentic Chinese culture.

### **DIALECTS, CHINESE LANGUAGE AND BILINGUAL**

As previously mentioned, the *totok* Chinese Christians in Surabaya founded houses of worship based on Hokkien, Cantonese, Fuzhou, and Hinghwa dialects. They did not understand other dialects, only their own. For *totok* Chinese, other Chinese dialects were like a foreign language (Nio, 1961). They preferred to use Malay or Indonesian language to communicate with other dialect groups. Further, the Chinese generation born in Surabaya did not fully understand their families’ dialects anymore. For instance, most of the Cantonese children could neither read nor write Cantonese. The Cantonese raised funds to assist Cantonese schools in 1921. However, the school was eventually closed after four years due to the lack of teachers since most of them returned to China (Dawa, 2014).

According to Nio Joe Lan (1961), after the second-generation of Chinese Indonesians, Chinese descendants would lose their ability to speak Chinese. However, the Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan (THHK) that was established in Surabaya,

in 1903, helped the Chinese to maintain the Chinese language. The *totok* Chinese mostly studied at THHK. Meanwhile, the *peranakan* Chinese studied at the Hollands Chinese School (HCS) established by the Dutch colonial government (Sai, 2016). When the Chinese language or Mandarin (*Guoyu*) became the “national language” accepted as a lingua franca - a commonly used as a medium language to communicate among Chinese, church services changed the usage of dialects to the Chinese language.

In the New-Order era, the government initiated an assimilation program that forbade the use of the Chinese language in public. Chinese schools were forced to close down in 1966. These policies affected Chinese Christians’ ability to achieve fluency in the Chinese language - especially those born after the 1960s who did not have the chance to study in Chinese schools. As a result, some Chinese Christians continued to study in Indonesian schools. Some of them discontinued their studies hoping Chinese schools would reopen. Usually, the generation who did not studied in a Chinese school could not speak Chinese anymore, as experienced by Maria (pseudonym), a member of GKA.<sup>9</sup> Afterward, the church services were not only conducted in Chinese, but also translated into Indonesian (Mandarin/Indonesian) post 1970s. The number of Indonesian-speaking congregations increased compared to the Chinese-speaking congregations. Later on, the Chinese churches added fully Indonesian-language services.

Even though the Chinese language was prohibited from being spoken in public, it was still allowed in Chinese churches.<sup>10</sup> To preserve the ability to gain fluency with the Chinese language, one of the Chinese branches, GKA started a Mandarin course in 1973 (Elyonpedia Magazine, 2017). The highest number of attendees in the Mandarin course was 400 participants, consisting of both Chinese and non-Chinese, and Christian and non-Christian backgrounds. Those interested in learning the Chinese language were not only of Chinese descent but various ethnic groups and religions.<sup>11</sup> Anybody could learn and speak the Chinese language by taking Mandarin courses. The ability to speak Chinese was no longer exclusive to those of Chinese descent. Even though “language is the most visible marker of identity” (SAI, 2016), however, nowadays, speaking Chinese daily cannot identify ethnic identity as *totok* Chinese anymore. Therefore, for Halim, a *totok* is a person who still knows his Chinese family roots and has a Chinese family in mainland China even

<sup>9</sup> Conversation with Maria (pseudonym), the second-generation, activist in GKA, on June 28, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> The interview with Surya (pseudonym), 70 years, the second-generation of the Hing-hwa, a church leader, on February 27, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> The interview with Halim (pseudonym), 64 years, the third-generation of the Hing-hwa, a Mandarin teacher, on February 11, 2020.

though he or she is born in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup>

Male Harianto (pseudonym) is 73 years old and a second-generation leader in GKA, who is fluent in Chinese. He stated that even though his children took Mandarin courses since they were young, the children preferred to use the Indonesian language when conversing with him. Benny, 24 years, the fourth-generation, a member of GKT, experienced similar. He uses the Indonesian language when conversing with his parents. He stated:

*[Saya] pakai agak formal [Indonesia], karena bahasa Surabaya kan lebih agak bahasa gaul gitu. Jadi saya agak kurang enak kalau ngomong sama orang tua dengan bahasa Jawa.*

*([I] use rather formal (Indonesian) language because my Surabayan Javanese language is somewhat colloquial. I feel it is not appropriate to use when conversing with parents).<sup>13</sup>*

Benny has mastered English better than Mandarin. His parents asked him to study Mandarin in China, but he preferred to study another subject in Singapore. However, his interactions with international people opened his eyes to the importance of fluently speaking the Chinese language, so it motivated him to study Mandarin. Halim (pseudonym) a 64-year old man, and third-generation of Hinghwa conveyed the same thing. Even though he is a Mandarin teacher, he and his children use the Javanese or Indonesian language rather than the Chinese language in daily conversation. Furthermore, he said that having a Chinese name or speaking Chinese after taking Chinese language courses cannot identify someone as *totok*. Instead, a person who still knows his Chinese family roots and has a Chinese family in mainland China even though they were born in Indonesia can be categorized as *totok*. For this reason, he regards himself as *totok* although he was born in Surabaya.

The dynamics of Chinese language usage indicate that mastering the Chinese language is no longer a representation of ethnic identity. The importance of the Chinese language is related to globalization, not solely to ethnicity. Albeit, Chinese church services have been conducted in the Chinese language for almost a century; the younger generations are not motivated to master the language. They prefer to perfect English skills instead. English songs are sung in the youth services frequently. Thus, the languages that are used are a mixture of Chinese, Indonesian, and English. The need to learn Chinese

<sup>12</sup> Idem.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Benny (pseudonym), 24 years, the fourth-generation of the Hokkien, on March 20, 2020.



has risen when facing the need to use Chinese to communicate in the global community.

### MONO-ETHNIC CHURCHES TO MULTI-ETHNIC CHURCHES

The origin of *totok* Chinese churches (GKT and GKA) was mono-ethnic – Chinese – that consist of various sub-ethnics or dialects. They were mostly Hokkien, Cantonese, Fuzhou, and Hinghwa. Other dialects were Hakka and Teochiu. Among dialect groups, there was a dynamic relationship, stereotyping, and contestation. Stereotyping is not just an individual interaction process, but also a collective process that results in a collective identity (Jenkins, 2008). For instance, Hokkien were regarded with the highest status and non-Hokkien were second in the community (Salmon, 2009). The Hokkien's first-generation brought financial capital to trade. They could trade well, and many succeeded in business. According to Skinner (1979), the southern part of the Fujian province where the Hokkien came from is an important region in China's foreign trade history. However, not all Hokkien were wealthy people, like Peter an 81-year-old Hokkien church adherent. He came to Surabaya with his mother and four brothers at age ten looking for a better life. His relative, who settled in Ambulu village in East Java, encouraged his family to migrate to Indonesia. They were helped by his father's family when they first arrived in Surabaya, as they were not materially wealthy.

Another example is Hakkas are stereotyped as cunning people who like to take advantage of others.<sup>14</sup> Skinner (1979) writes that the Hakka used to live in the non-fertile hills in Guangdong's inland areas. A Hakka informant explained that Hakkas had to work hard to be able to survive in a difficult condition which gave them a bad reputation. Nevertheless, when they first came to the archipelago, not all of them were poor. Harianto's mother was a professional midwife when she came to Surabaya and helped many people give birth safely. His father did some trading jobs. Harianto is currently a very successful entrepreneur who passed on the business to his children. He is an activist in the Chinese Christian community and supports the church and the community in many ways. Stereotyping is just one aspect of cognition and identification. Understanding the moment when the stereotyping started will help us understand them (Jenkins, 2008).

For first-generation Chinese, kinship matters because it helps them survive in a foreign land. Chinese Christian first-generations were helped by their families, who settled in Surabaya first. According to Steph Lawler (2014), the identity of the non-West is based on kinship ties. Consequently, a family name

<sup>14</sup> The interview with Cornelius (pseudonym), a church leader, on June 3, 2019.

is important for *totok* Chinese as it provides a sense of belonging and even passing down business is preferable to those who are related by blood. Lawler quotes David Schneider (2014) saying kinship can go through “the order by blood (children and parents, siblings, cousins)” or “the order by law (spouse, in-laws).”

Nevertheless, for Chinese Christian first-generation Indonesians, the meaning of kinship was not limited to the traditional concept through blood ties, but also tied to people who have given a significant contribution to their life. For those who did not have a family by blood ties in the new land, they were helped by the same dialect group. Surya’s grandparent, the Hinghwa’s first-generation, ran away from the Japanese invasion. His grandparents migrated to Surabaya in the 1930s. They did not have a family or blood ties in Surabaya. His grandfather was helped by the Hinghw and he opened a little grocery store. For Surya and his family, the unfamiliar Hinghwa who helped them became akin to new family.

Furthermore, the first-generation could have two family names, their father’s family name and the given name belonging to the host who adopted them in the new land. During the Dutch rule many hosts accepted newly-arrived immigrants into their families to ease administrative requirements (Oei and Sari, 2012; Wu and Ngo, 2015). The kinship changed in a broader sense to how “people create similarity or difference between themselves and others” (Lawler, 2014) like the first-generation experienced.

Afterward, the congregations of mono-ethnic churches were no longer based on the same dialect groups as they were first founded. The usage of the Mandarin, not dialects, allows interactions among different dialect groups. The inter-dialect group marriages caused the existence of mixed dialect groups in Chinese churches. Not many still belong to pure dialect groups. When the Indonesian language was used in the church services, Chinese churches become more accessible to other ethnic groups.

The church leaders of GKT and GKA estimate their congregations and pastors are 90% from Chinese descent, and ten percent from various ethnicities, such as Batak, Javanese, Manado, Nias, and Sumbawa. The non-Chinese congregations joined the Chinese churches for pragmatic reasons- either living near the church buildings, working at the church, or with encouragement from their Chinese friends.

In Chinese churches, identification of similarity is not by ethnicity but by occupation and roles in the community. Chinese and non-Chinese Christians get along well when they have the same business or the same social status,

regardless of ethnicity.<sup>15</sup> Non-Chinese Christians, although their number is small, do not feel inferior. They can be accepted very well by the Chinese Christians, as stated by Yusuf (pseudonym), a 51-year old Manadonese.<sup>16</sup> Yusuf and his family were members of the Chinese church for more than ten years. A similar experience was shared by 48-year old Sumbawan Ruben (pseudonym)<sup>17</sup> who married a Chinese church member. Ruben experienced that acceptance into the Chinese Christian group is not by ethnicity, but by the same value of life, such as hard work, or politeness toward the elders.

## CONCLUSION

Understanding the identities of Chinese Christians in Surabaya cannot be separated from the process of identification they experienced in history. Identity is the result of social construction that never ends, but also by everyday life experiences. For the older generation, ethnic identity is more dominant than religious identity. On the contrary, religious identity is more dominant for the younger generation. It can be known from the election of a wife or husband. The same ethnicity or dialect matters for the older generation. However, for the younger generation, the similarity of religion is more important than ethnicity.

Moreover, they still perceive themselves as Chinese, but each generation gives a different meaning to it. The older generation still carries a strong Chinese identity which is not the case with the younger ones. Their identities are embedded in being Chinese-Indonesian. It can be seen in badminton games between China and Indonesia. The older generation supports China's team, but the younger generation takes side with the Indonesian's. The younger generation no longer emphasizes their ethnic identity because they already experienced global cultural exchanges. This means there is no more depth in meaning regarding Chinese identity among the present generation compared with the previous ones. However, religious identity is still important to them.

There have been continuity and changes of Chinese Christian identities in the Chinese churches, namely the meaning of *totok* Chinese. These are seen from the way they carry out Chinese culture, the usage of Chinese language, and their originality of ethnicity. The meaning of *totok* Chinese is constantly changing, not identified by the place of birth in mainland China, the Chinese

<sup>15</sup> The interview with Simon (pseudonym), 61 years, the third-generation of the Fuzhou, a church leader, on May 18, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> The conversation with Yusuf (pseudonym), 51 years, a Manadonese, a church leader, on May 18, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> The interview with Ruben (pseudonym), 48 years, a Sumbawa born, a church leader, on May 23, 2019.

language they speak daily, or a Chinese name, like Chinese in Manado. A person who knows their Chinese roots, and still has relations with their family in mainland China without a mixed-ethnic marriage, can be considered as *totok*. As an institution, the Chinese churches, though they conduct services in Mandarin, due to the mixed-ethnic congregations and some services usage fully of the Indonesian language, are more appropriately referred to as Mandarin-speaking churches or Chinese-speaking churches rather than the Chinese churches.

The culture embraced by the Chinese churches is not only Chinese culture, but is mixture of Western culture, Chinese culture, and Indonesian culture – a so-called hybrid culture. The process of becoming a hybrid culture cannot be separated from the influence of the Western missionaries who ministered among Chinese Christians. The interaction of Chinese Christians with congregations from other ethnic groups in Indonesia also affect the richness of hybrid cultural development within the Chinese churches.

Languages used in the Chinese churches are no longer based on dialects, but a combination of languages – Mandarin, Indonesian, and English. Likewise, the congregations of the Chinese churches are not only mono-ethnic groups - the Chinese, but various ethnics in Indonesia. Henceforth, the Chinese churches change to be multi-ethnic churches, even though mostly the congregations are Chinese descent.

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