

## **Conflict and Perspectives: The Social Construction of Chinese Ethnic Citizens against Natives in Surakarta, Indonesia after the May 1998 Riots**

**Yustia Atsanatrilova Adi<sup>1</sup> & Mohammad Thoriq Bahri<sup>2</sup>**

*Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia*

*University of Szeged, Hungary*

### **Abstract**

*With over 1300 ethnic groups and 700 languages, Indonesia is one of the most varied countries in the world. One of those ethnic is the Chinese, who have lived in Indonesia for almost 500 years due to international trade, which encourages mixed marriages. Since the 1700s, the Chinese and natives are working together to chase away the European colonial, and that relationship is developed into a deeper and more formal relation in this modern day. Although, the national revolution caused by the economic crisis occurred in 1998, the locals are targeting Chinese ethnics, and many of the killing and rape victims are Chinese ethnic. This research analyzes the changes in the social construction from the perspective of Chinese ethnic after the 1998 riots by using the qualitative framework, with the deep interview method. The sample is 11 informants which came from two different generations OF THE CHINESE ETHNIC GROUPS with the purpose to have a more comprehensive analysis, from different perspectives. In general, there are differences in construction between the older and younger generations. As a result, the older generation views natives as an out-group, whilst the younger generation views natives as friends and family, implying that there are no disparities in identity and group between Chinese and indigenous. Differences in access to law enforcement and economic disparities are two of the most influential factors in the social construction of Chinese ethnic perspectives among natives.*

**Keywords :** *Social construction, Chinese ethnics, Indonesia, Identity, Natives ethn*

---

<sup>1</sup> [yustia.adi@gmail.com](mailto:yustia.adi@gmail.com)

## Introduction

Indonesia is one of the most diverse countries in the world, with over 1300 ethnic groups and 700 languages, and growing heterogeneity due to mixed marriage (Ananta et al., 2018). One of those ethnic is the Chinese ethnic, who formally recorded has been in Indonesia since the early 16th century as a result of the trading relationship between Mainland China and the Dutch trading organization, *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC), and many of them worked as intermediaries between the VOC and the native monarchy, such as Majapahit dynasty and continues by the Mataram dynasty before Indonesia as a country was born (Dahana, 2015). Furthermore, the increasing number of Chinese ethnicities encouraged cultural and economic assimilation with the natives. The massive integration of those ethnicities is proved when the huge riots known as "*geger pacinan*" or the Sepanjang war occurred in roughly 1740-1743 when thousands of Batavian Chinese ethnic were slain by the Dutch, caused thousands of locals and Chinese worked together to fight back the Dutch along the coast of Java (Dharmowijono, 2013). This war succeeded in expelling the Dutch who at that time controlled the north Coast of Java Island and important trade routes.

The Sepanjang war 1740-1743, changed how the Dutch treated the Chinese ethnic. The Dutch began to establish a social structure, divided into three main parts, which are the Europeans as the highest, followed by the Chinese, and the lowest natives, with the main purpose being to disintegrate the society, and make them easier to supervise (Putra, 2017). This societal separation has resulted in significant differences in terms of culture and identity, economic activity, and religion, which enhances the possibility of conflict (Heidhues, 2017). Because, as second-class citizens, the Chinese ethnic have the right to own land and rent it to natives ethnic for farming purposes, as well as collect taxes from them. Since then, many natives are now wondering if the Chinese are becoming a Dutch allies, causing the relationship between those two ethnic groups to deteriorate (Ongkhokham, 1989). The economic boundaries between the two ethnicities are established at this moment.

Furthermore, the Java war, which occurred during the 1840s, formed the sentiment of the natives into Chinese ethnic, when many Chinese people were given mandates Customs officers is helping the Dutch to push the native traders for paying more taxes and arrested those who were thought to be spies of Prince Diponegoro, who was a central figure in the Java war (Carey, 2016). The negative sentiment between those two ethnicities is becoming the political tool for the Dutch and Mataram kingdom to maintain their power in the native society (Carey, 2016). However, from 1942 to 1945, the relationship between the Chinese and the natives improved since many Chinese ethnics were participating in the nationalism movement through Japanese colonial formed organizations such as Seinendan, Fujinkai, and Keibodan to support Japan in the face of the allies in World War II (Yang, 1998). However, after Indonesia's independence, between 1966 to 1998, the government initiated assimilation initiatives, which included several discriminatory policies such as the name change policy and the dissolution of Chinese groups, among others. The integration plan had an immediate impact on all aspects of Chinese ethnic life, including social, cultural, and political factors, resulted in Chinese ethnic become more absorbed into the local population (Assidiqi, 2018).

Although, in 1998, because of the economic crises, ethnic violence recurred. The racial riots of 12-15 May 1998 were the third time violence against Chinese ethnic occurred in many Indonesian towns. The Joint Fact Finding Team's (TGPF) conclusions included 1,200 people

killed by fire, 8,500 structures and cars damaged, and 90 additional Chinese ethnic women raped and mistreated (Himawan et al., 2022). Violence against Chinese ethnic in Java was a reenactment of similar violence that occurred numerous times throughout the colonial era, both in Batavia (Jakarta) and elsewhere on Java island, Indonesia. The tragedy of strife and bloodshed endured by Chinese ethnic violated their rights as Indonesian citizens, because since 1958, with the issuance of Law (UU) No.1/1958 Concerning the Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the People's Republic of China about the Dual Citizenship Issue, all Chinese ethnic groups, including immigrant groups, have been granted Indonesian citizenship (Indrajat, 2016). The genesis and development of racism and the anti-China sentiment are because problems of pluralism and multiculturalism remain idealistic.

After the violence which happened in 1998, the government of Indonesia issued the Presidential Decree Number 6 of 2000 Regarding Revocation of Presidential Instruction Number 14 of 1967 Regarding Religion, Beliefs, and Chinese Customs which gives the Chinese ethnics freedom to enjoy the same rights as other Indonesian citizens in terms of religion, culture, and other essential needs such as security (Hudayah, Nur and Winarni, 2014). Indeed, there has been a change in the recognition of minority rights. Whereas the Chinese ethnic group can breathe a sigh of relief because their Confucian religion and culture are starting to be recognized, many schools have been allowed to teach Mandarin languages in their curricula, the Chinese ethnic identity symbol is allowed to return to use, and Imlek celebrations can now be held on the streets without any restrictions or threats. However, this has not been accompanied by an improvement in the country's justice system (Musa et al., 2022).

Nowadays, in the reform era, the situation of the Chinese ethnic is still not much different, there is no justice on their side (the victims). There are still many Chinese ethnic who are victims of neither receiving compensation nor social security. The existence of bad experiences in the past caused some parties to become traumatized so they (victims) tended to restrict their relationship with the natives (Salim & Wahyuningsih, 2009). The same thing happened to the Chinese people in Singkawang, West Kalimantan Provinces, Indonesia. They are still traumatized by the past conflict in 1967, especially those of the older generation (Wang & Huang, 2020). Self-restrictions imposed as a result of experiences of violence in the past exacerbated social relations between Chinese ethnic and natives.

Notwithstanding the description mentioned above, it is critical that we look at it from the perspective of the Chinese ethnic group who are victims, because then the Chinese ethnic group is not only seen as a silent object whose life is determined by the political climate and the majority group's attitudes toward them. By viewing the Chinese as actors in their daily lives following the 1998 violence, this research objective is to understand the social construction which existed in society. By evaluating Chinese ethnic attitudes toward locals, this research will be able to determine how far the gap has grown between these two groups, and then we may make various steps to prevent the potential of violence from returning, where prevention is the strongest guarantee for peace in cases of violence (Curthoys, 2002). The point of view of the Chinese ethnic in seeing the natives is seen as important to find out the extent of the rise of the Chinese ethnic group in dealing with the trauma of violence in the past. The extent to which their awakening can be judged from their openness and courage in opening themselves

up to outsiders, namely the Javanese natives, can be seen in how far the integration between these two groups has been created.

## **Method**

The research framework in this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research was chosen because this research looked at the behavior and activities of the informants (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012). Using a qualitative method, it produces an in-depth description of the speech, writing, mimicking, and observable behavior of the informants. The author chooses to use a qualitative method because by using a qualitative method past experiences related to discrimination and violence can be well described according to Anselm this method is considered to be able to provide complex details about phenomena that are difficult to reveal by quantitative methods (Goetz & Alien, 1989).

### **1.1. Analytical Framework**

Furthermore, for the analytical framework, this study uses phenomenological analysis. The author uses phenomenology because phenomenology can be used to understand a phenomenon more deeply by looking at the meaning contained in a social phenomenon (Alase, 2017). The author uses the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz as an analytical tool in writing this research because this research objective is to understand the social construction which existed in society. The phenomenological perspective seeks to uncover and enter into the world of the subject under study which begins with silence to reveal something under study. By using this approach, it can be seen that the construction was built by Chinese ethnic residents because the phenomenological approach does not assume that the researcher knows the meaning of something for the people being studied (Goettlich, 2011).

### **1.2. Informants**

This study is being conducted in Surakarta, Indonesia, in the region of Central Java. The researcher picked Surakarta as the research location because, in addition to being a multicultural city, Surakarta has a long history of multiracial conflict, whether based on religion, ethnicity, or politics. Violence appears to be widespread in Surakarta, and it is sometimes directed at a single ethnic group, specifically the Chinese. The frequency of this conflict and violence between indigenous people and Chinese ethnic is allegedly due to economic, social, and historical disparities between the two groups, and the majority of the victims of the 1998 riots are from this city (Hudayah, Nur and Winarni, 2014).

The informant selection approach used in this study was to divide the informants into two separate generations, older and younger generations. The rationale for selecting informants is based on age differences because, according to Berger, time is one of the most important aspects of information possessed by someone in everyday life (J. Berger & Zelditch, 2021). Through the segregation of generations, different periods of their growth and development with various kinds of socialization are different according to the moments that occur. The structure of time also greatly determines the biography of a person's life as a whole because the choices an individual makes are strongly influenced by the events that are happening at that time. For example, Chinese ethnic who experienced the Old Order period experienced acts of discrimination and violence (6

INFORMANTS?) that were different from Chinese citizens who did not experience the Old Order period (5 INFORMANT?), and Chinese citizens who experienced the New Order period, so their knowledge is different from Chinese ethnic citizens who still do not understand events of the new order and grew up during the reform period (after 1998 riots). Based on that conditions, the informants profiles can be seen as follows:

**Table 1.** Informants profiles

| <b>Informants Initials</b> | <b>Ages</b> | <b>Profiles</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hz                         | 26          | Children of mixed marriage parents, between Chinese and Natives ethnics, who grew up in two environments: the Chinese ethnic environment and the Natives people's environment.                                                                                                                        |
| Ve                         | 24          | Children from Chinese couples. Her family's economic situation is classified as being in the lower economy                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Rn                         | 24          | Children of mixed marriage parents, between Chinese and Natives ethnics, who grew up in a heterogeneous environment. Even though he still adheres to and maintains Chinese traditions, he does not refrain from marrying men outside of Chinese ethnic.                                               |
| Ad                         | 27          | Children from a mixed marriage, which is the Chinese and Javanese ethnic marriage. He is a Chinese person who lives and grows up in a plural environment                                                                                                                                              |
| Og                         | 28          | Children from Chinese couples grew up in an upper-middle-class environment. He lives in a luxury housing complex. Much of his daily life is spent managing a family business engaged in the textile sector.                                                                                           |
| Tn                         | 52          | Chinese living in a closed house. He lives with his mother and three children. He and his family are quite close to outsiders.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Sw                         | 66          | Chinese who lived in a native village and married a native woman. He has a daughter who is in junior high school.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Tj                         | 50          | Chinese descent who was a victim of the riots 98. In May 98 his assets did not escape the fury of the masses.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Gk                         | 68          | He was quite a witness to the arbitrary acts that were carried out by the natives against the Chinese. He also found several riots and arsons carried out by masses who were none other than native's people.                                                                                         |
| Ni                         | 56          | She was one of the victims of the rampage of the indigenous mob in 1998. The grocery shop which she started from the start of his marriage was looted by a mob. The mob also burned down the shop which is one with the house.                                                                        |
| Lm                         | 87          | A woman born in Hong Kong in 1936 is a Buddhist. This woman who married a Thai Muslim man decided to live and settle in Indonesia. She was then blessed with 1 son and 3 daughters. In the course of his life in Indonesia, he often witnessed Chinese ethnic in Indonesia being victims of violence. |

Source: Author Primary Data

After understanding the profiles of the informants, who originated from many various living contexts, this research will focus on understanding their perspectives on the indigenous peoples in Surakarta City, Indonesia, following the 1998 riots. The interview data will be evaluated using social construction theory to better understand the interaction boundaries between Chinese ethnicities and natives.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Results Analysis**

Considering Chinese ethnic and the city of Surakarta is inextricably linked to the history of Geger Pacinan in 1740-1743. Geger Pacinan arose from an Chinese ethnic movement in Java that attempted to drive the VOC out of Batavia. This movement arose as a result of the VOC's cruelty and mass slaughter of 10,000 Chinese ethnic in Batavia in 1740 (Purbasari & Suharno, 2019). After the successful attack on the VOC in Batavia, these Chinese troops/arrivals continued to evict the VOC eastward to move on to the VOC possession of Java. This expulsion movement worked with the Mataram monarchy to evict the VOC from various locations, including Kartasura, near Surakarta city which was later captured by the Mataram Kingdom. However, the Chinese Warriors eventually launched an invasion of the Mataram Kingdom in Kartasura because the Mataram Kingdom, led by Pakubuwono II, was regarded pro-Dutch and became a Dutch puppet (Atabik, 2016). The Mataram Kingdom experienced the same thing, believing that the Chinese were servants of the Company (Dharmowijono, 2013).

The Dutch pitting between these two groups likewise yielded good results. The two parties that had previously coexisted and worked together to evict the VOC from Java battled, attacked, and crippled one another. The Chinese Troops from Kartasura also successfully drove out the Mataram Kingdom. Some of the Chinese Warriors elected to remain in Kartasura, while others pursued the Kingdom of Mataram (Santoso & Harianti, 2021). This is the beginning of the growth and development of the City of Surakarta and the Chinese ethnic of Solo as well as the beginning of the conflict between the Chinese and the natives.

Furthermore, the conflict between those two ethnicities continues, the 1998 riots are one of the biggest ethical conflicts which happened in Indonesia, with thousands of victims from the Chinese ethnics. The May 1998 riots were racist disturbances against Chinese ethnic people that took place in Indonesia from May 13 to 15, 1998, primarily in Jakarta but also in other cities. The Asian financial crisis caused these riots, which were sparked by the Trisakti tragedy, in which four Trisakti University students were shot and murdered during a demonstration on May 12, 1998. This also culminated in the resignation of President Suharto and the inauguration of B. J. Habibie. During the riots, many shops and businesses were destroyed by the fury of the mob—especially those owned by Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent with more than 5000 victims dead (Himawan et al., 2022).

Riots were most concentrated in Jakarta, Medan, and Surakarta. Several Indonesian individuals of Chinese ethnicity fled the country during the riots. Not only that, but an 18-year-old high school girl named Ita Martadinata Haryono, a humanitarian volunteer activist working under Father Sandyawan, was raped, tortured, and slain as a result of her activities. This suggests that rapes were committed methodically rather than haphazardly during the disturbances (Rosenthal, 2009). Surakarta, the location where the majority of the victims were born, is crucial in understanding the changes in the social construction of the relationship between Chinese ethnics and indigenious.

The city of Surakarta has 5 sub-districts consisting of Serengan, Pasar Kliwon, Jebres, Banjarsari, and Laweyan sub-districts where Chinese ethnic live in groups in several sub-districts such as Jebres sub-district which is the location of an ancient Chinatown village, Balong. After the elimination of Wijkenstelsel, the Chinese ethnic group began to spread to the area around Pasar Gedhe, then developed in the direction of Coyudan. In the following period,

there were also Chinese ethnic who lived along the Nonongan road to trade, which were included in the Serengan sub-district. The Chinese ethnic group also spread to the Banjarsari sub-district. Only a few Chinese ethnic live in Pasar Kliwon sub-district because historically this place was the location of Wijkenstelsel for Arab immigrants and Lodji Wetan village, Pasar Kliwon sub-district for immigrants from India and Europe. In Laweyan there are very few Chinese ethnic because this place since the reign of the palace has been the residence and factory of indigenous batik traders. Based on the recent data, the number of Chinese ethnics in Surakarta is as follows:

**Table 2.** Number of Chinese Communities in Each District of Surakarta City as of December 2021

| No                                   | District     | Adults |       | Children |       | Total  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------|-------|----------|-------|--------|
|                                      |              | Woman  | Man   | Girls    | Boys  |        |
| 1                                    | Laweyan      | 770    | 708   | 170      | 218   | 1.866  |
| 2                                    | Serengan     | 1.413  | 1.620 | 819      | 763   | 4.615  |
| 3                                    | Pasar Kliwon | 854    | 724   | 426      | 817   | 2.875  |
| 4                                    | Jebres       | 3.080  | 3.335 | 1.237    | 1.395 | 9.047  |
| 5                                    | Banjarsari   | 2.281  | 1.792 | 929      | 1.044 | 6.042  |
| Total Chinese Ethnics in Sample Area |              |        |       |          |       | 24.449 |

Source: District Monograph, 2021

Based on the data analysis from the informants, the results will be divided into three analyses, which are:

### 1.1. Family Social Construction

#### 1.1.1. Old Generation Family

The family is the first agent to socialize individuals. Socialization at this stage is called primary socialization. At this stage, the family has a very large role in forming the basic foundation of individual knowledge about the social world he is in. The starting point of this process is internalization. Families socialize objective events to individuals which are then internalized into something subjectively meaningful. In the older generation, they get socialization about their social world as a hard world. They are socialized as Chinese ethnic and a minority growing up in a hostile environment. During the New Order era, their parents taught them to be kind to native people. At this stage, they get socialization with the role that must be carried out in society.

Through identification with influential people, the child becomes able to identify himself to obtain an identity that is subjectively coherent and reasonable where which is a reflection of the attitude taken by those who influence him (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2016). Through their parents, informants were taught to comply with government regulations at that time so that no disaster would strike them. The experiences of discrimination and violence that Gk, Tn, and Sw's parents had experienced then taught the informants to be careful with natives. They were introduced to their identity as Chinese people who are a minority group and always get discriminatory treatment from the majority group so they better give in if they are treated like that. Experience against the majority group will only

worsen their situation as a minority group. For older generations of informants, growing up in the New Order era was a painful reality.

Informants also said that when they had the choice to move from Indonesia, they chose to move to a country that was able to accept and protect them as citizens. This is what then happened to Tj and Lm. They chose to live with their families in America (Tj) and in Australia (Lm) because those countries were seen as safer than Indonesia at that time. For them, there were quite a lot of things through their family that they could not reveal, why did they have to obey the government, why did the Chinese ethnic at that time have to accept being treated discriminatively, why did the natives treat them that way? The informants then found the puzzle in more detail in the secondary socialization process.

This primary socialization process only gave informants the knowledge that they were a minority group so they had to give in when they were discriminated against. They can only surrender to accept the situation if they want to survive. They are forced to interact with other ethnic groups if they want to be safe because for their parents interacting closely with natives will pose a risk if the informant makes a mistake. The older generation of informants was taught to change their identity to become indigenous people so that they would be more acceptable in society. The reasons why all this happened were then found by the informants through the intersubjective world, namely their social environment.

#### 1.1.2. New Generation Family

The younger generation who grew up during the fall of the New Order era received a different socialization pattern from that of the older generation. The younger generation tends to be given the flexibility to make friends with native people. They were introduced to who the informants were and who were the other people. This generation is always reminded that they are Chinese ethnic who have different identities and traditions from the Indigenous People. In a homogeneous family environment, informants such as Og, Ve, Hz are given limits on how far they are allowed to know natives. In the Og family, the family has a very large role in the selection of playmates and life partners. You are allowed to have native friends, but you are not allowed to get too close because, for this family, natives bring their children bad effects, such as being lazy and easily offended. If he gets too close, he fears that Og will become a victim of his friend's anger. Og's parents prefer to get Og used to hang out with fellow Chinese because that way at least his parents feel safe because Og won't be ostracized and become an object of anger.

The Hz, Ve, ad, and Rn families also applied the same thing to informants. The social world during the New Order era was quite harsh for the Chinese ethnic, so the informant's parents chose to get their children used to socializing with fellow Chinese. They were educated at the Christian foundations Warga (Hz and Ve) and Marsudirini (Ad and Rn). The informant's families were worried that they would be ostracized. As time went on after the fall of the New Order era, things began to improve. The concerns of the informant's family began to diminish. Hz, Ve, Rn, Ad's parents began to dare to decide to teach them about natives. They were educated in public schools which were dominated by indigenous people. It was from here that the younger generation of informants got closer to indigenous figures. Even though the Hz da Ve family allows their children to mingle with the natives, they always socialize that the Chinese are still better than the natives. The intensity of Hz and Ve indeed interacted more with Chinese people because their closest extended family



was Chinese so even though they could interact very well with the natives that there were no boundaries, they still saw the Chinese as better. Unlike the Ad and Rn families. This family gives the freedom to informants to define themselves as natives. This is because they grew up in the upbringing of native women. So that they can blend perfectly with native people. They met their extended Chinese family only on certain occasions. In the next stage, the informant was introduced to the surrounding environment. They begin to know the world outside their family. At this stage, the informants experience secondary socialization, where the informants begin to know their real world. Informants then get to know the real world by interacting with other people outside their families.

## **1.2. Social Environment**

### **1.2.1. Old Generation Social Environment**

The second aspect after the family that adds to the informant's stock of knowledge is the social environment, namely friends and the people around the informant. This intersubjective world presents informants with various kinds of reality and knowledge that are more complex than the knowledge socialized by their families. This social environment has a greater impact on informants in constructing who is native. The older generation of informants saw that the social environment also greatly influenced the formation of their constructions about natives. Indeed, in the New Order era, they found the same reality as their family had socialized. That natives are rough and easily offended. This is evident from the experience of discrimination and violence they have experienced. Sw, Ni, and Tj for example. They prove and believe that the value transferred to them is true. Indigenous people are sensitive and violent, they even have the heart to destroy, rape, and kill. Tj san Sw was even grateful because their assets were only burned, and their family members were still safe from rape and murder. Gk, Lm, and Tn, although they did not directly experience violence, they did witness the incident. Most of his friends, who are Chinese ethnic, also share almost the same values because they also experienced the same experience as Chinese ethnic who were always discriminated against in the New Order era.

The fall of the New Order government brought changes in the knowledge of the older generation of informants. They started not to see the natives as threatening figures. The informants are no longer afraid of the natives, Gk and Mr. are still limiting themselves to associating and having close contact with the natives. This happened not because of fear anymore but because of the distrust Mr and Gk had in native people. They do this not without cause, the result of their interactions with the natives is that they are disappointed because their beliefs have been betrayed by the natives. They take advantage of the kindness of Gk's parents to enrich themselves. Meanwhile, Tn had experienced bird theft several times. Almost the same as Lm, he has a relatively homogeneous social environment like Mr and Gk. However, the presence of An (a Javanese native) in Lm's family life can change Lm's view of the native figure which has been constructed as a bad person. He met with a reality that was very different from what he had imagined before. Since then, Lm's construction of natives has changed, and not all natives are as previously imagined.

Meanwhile, for the informants Sw and Tj, the collapse of the New Order era had a significant impact on changes in their knowledge of the natives. Entering the reformation era, Tj left for America. There he met people from various groups. He no

longer remembers what happened in May 98 that happened to him. His participation in the PMS organization also gave a very big change to Tj's view of natives. The same thing happened to Sw, his participation in the Perkumpulan Masyarakat Surakarta (PMS) organization seemed to open his eyes to the fact that now the natives have changed a lot. What caused May 98 to happen, Tj and Sw became more aware. From there then they can accept the reality little by little. Sw then decided to marry an indigenous woman, because now natives no longer act as they did in the New Order era. The native people started to respect the Chinese, they could be tolerant of the Chinese.

Almost the same thing happened to Ni, secondary socialization gave a change in Ni's self-knowledge. The kindness of her neighbors and church friends made Ni realize that not all natives are bad. The fact that his Muslim neighbor wants to give Ni's family a place to live. Her church friends who are not only indigenous also want to help Ni in meeting her daily needs. These facts created a shock to Ni, causing a new awareness for Ni that there are good native people too. From here then he no longer holds a racist view in judging someone.

#### 1.2.2. New Generation Social Environment

Hz and Ve, for example, since junior high school, Hz has been accustomed to going to public junior high schools. Ve too, after graduating from junior high school, was then sent to a mixed school, namely at Christian 1 Vocational School. They then got to know the natives more closely. They know that between the Chinese and the natives, there are only differences in traditions like religious differences, but good and bad attitudes are not determined by one's race. Ad and Rn are almost the same, after Ad graduated from junior high school, then he was sent to a public school, so did Rn. After graduating from elementary school, he was sent to a public school. They then get to know and become familiar with the natives. For Rn and Ad it was not difficult to adapt to the public school environment because they were also brought up by indigenous people. They became very familiar and friendly with the Orang Rimbi. Even Rn finally decided to marry a native man because of the trust that was built towards native people. Slightly different things are found in Ad. Ad's experience meeting fanatical groups made him a little close to this group. he views destructive movements in the name of religion as foolish. Because for him, actualizing religion is not accompanied by violence, even though he is a Muslim, he is very much against fanatical groups that act with violence. Ad gets this knowledge through social media and TV which is discussed in the next point.

### 1.3. Media and Literature

#### 1.3.1. Old Generation Media and Literature

For several informants, social media, mass media, and literature have had a major influence on interpreting native figures. Lm found out about native behavior from the news on Television (TV). He always followed the news about May 98 when the crisis happened. It was also from this news that she and her husband decided to flee to their son's house in Aussie before things got worse. Arriving at his son's house, Lm kept up with the news of the riot via the internet. As a result of the behavior of the masses, he was increasingly afraid to deal with native people. Apart from that, there was news that one of the presidential candidates was involved in human rights violations some time ago, which

made Lm not too sympathetic to native people. If TV adds to Lm's stock of indigenous knowledge, then the TV will not only be a source of knowledge for Sw and Tj. Reading books and other information from both print and online media increases their knowledge about indigenous people. Through the media and literature, Tj and Sw were able to be more open to indigenous people. They were presented with facts about why the natives were fighting against the Chinese in Solo. Various causes were explored and studied by Sw and Tj apart from through PMS institutions as well as through literature, which made them understand more about the dynamics of Chinese and Indigenous in Solo.

### 1.3.2. New Generation Media and Literature

In the era of the technological revolution, now knowledge can be easily accessed by the wider community. In later developments, the media and literature have a very large role in the formation of public opinion. The ease of accessing various kinds of information makes people more intelligent and open to seeing various things. Anyone anywhere can freely access various information globally. The dimensions of time and space also disappear, information can penetrate social barriers that have limited the space for each group of people to move. Now, knowledge can be accessed by anyone from any group. During the reform era, young generation informants admitted that they received a lot of information that they did not get from their families and schools. This is like what happened to Ve, he learned more about 98 not from his parents but from the news on TV. As a child, he did not know about the 98 incident, but through TV Ve, he was presented with this event. From there, he later learned how bad the May 98 tragedy had happened. The media has a role in enriching Ve's knowledge about May 98 violence. Through TV media, Ve's knowledge about natives is even richer. He became able to compare the indigenous people who became presidential candidates who were said to have committed human rights violations in 1997 with Ahok, a Chinese who was able to enter the government. He knows Chinese figures who are involved in the world of politics also through TV, Ahok can lead Jakarta very firmly and can make changes regarding the Chinese who have been imaged as apolitical. These two pieces of news made Ve believe that the Chinese were indeed better than the natives who caused a lot of trouble.

Ad also feels that TV and social media play a role for him in assessing indigenous figures. He told about Muslim people who laughed at the disaster that happened to the pagoda in Magelang. He found this information from his friends on Facebook. He also saw news of religious-based community organizations opposing Ahok without a clear basis. He thinks religion is only used as a justification tool for them in rejecting Ahok as Governor of DKI Jakarta. According to Ad, the news about racism that was once attached to Jokowi was also a very stupid action. Race is still carried around in the current era while the issue of race has long since died along with the collapse of the New Order. If Ad views TV and social media as having a role in enriching his knowledge of the natives, then Rn is different.

Rn is not too interested in finding out who is native through social media and mass media. He prefers to enrich his knowledge about natives by reading books and interacting directly with natives. His pleasure in reading this book was inherited from his father's hobby, who also likes to read books. For him, books can provide more complete knowledge compared to TV, which only presents a small part of reality. These three

aspects then form the identity of the informant about who he is in society. Through this identity, the informant can position himself in society and act as the identity he bears.

From here the informants begin to realize that the reality they have received from their parents is not the only world that exists but has a very special location (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2016), and with secondary socialization, informants can learn more about the world where he is social. Secondary socialization in the form of TV legitimizes by displaying several shows as proof that what was conveyed happened and if necessary they then bring in experts to further strengthen their arguments about an event. In addition, literature also undergoes a process of legitimacy and objectivation through the registration of books such as ISBN and ISSN to legitimize that the knowledge contained in these books is correct and has a basis. Besides that, the existence of a bibliography also convinces the reader that the knowledge he is reading is the knowledge that has a strong basis because it has been said before by other authors. This is very important for Berger. The subworld requires at least the basics of legitimacy devices, which are often accompanied by symbols and materials (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2016).

## **Discussion**

Regarding the identity formed by the Chinese ethnic in Surakarta, most of them identified themselves as Chinese ethnic, but some informants did not want to be called Chinese, they were Ad and Rn. They prefer to identify themselves as Indonesian citizens, with status, residents of Solo. By not highlighting his Chinese identity, he can associate with anyone without certain boundaries including ethnic identity, they also feel more acceptable in society. The identity of the Chinese ethnic informant is closer to the embedded/embedded identity pattern because rooted identity tends to have personal closeness and will color a wide range of social relations (Kibria, 2000). The Chinese ethnic in Surakarta have this type. They build their identity as Chinese because they have a close relationship with fellow Chinese. Experiences of discrimination and violence in the past have made the sense of kinship among fellow Chinese even stronger, even though they are not related biologically, they feel they are brothers because they have the same ancestor origin that came from China. The identity that they maintain is a social identity that is used to maintain the traditions and heritage of their ancestors and to help each other in economic activities.

The formation of an identity based on a history of violence in the past further strengthens the bond of "brotherhood" between them even though they do not have a biological blood relationship, according to Klinken, the identity formed by Chinese ethnic residents in Surakarta has a cognitive basis. This is as stated by Klinken (2007: 113) in his writings which explains that the history of violence helps strengthen Dayak group identities (Kibria, 2000). The Chinese ethnic of Surakarta interpret fellow Chinese ethnic as brothers and sisters because they both experience discrimination and some are victims of violence. The process of forming a social identity that occurs in Chinese ethnic citizens is more fully explained by Turner and Tajfel in their theory that the process of social identity occurs in 3 stages, namely the social categorization stage, the identification stage, and the comparison stage (Myers, 1999). The following is the process of social identity that occurs among Chinese ethnic citizens in Surakarta:

- a) Social categorization. In this process, Chinese ethnic people in their social world begin to realize that there are many identities in society. they (informants) began to categorize what identities exist in society. Among the Surakarta Chinese, they finally realized that they had something in common. They then sort out various things such as similarities in the type of name and ancestral origins. Then a Chinese identity was formed in which prototypes appeared in the group regarding who the members of the group were and they demonstrated these prototypes such as holding routine meetings with fellow Chinese citizens such as family gatherings and holding events typical of Chinese traditions to preserve the traditions of their ancestors. They also help each other economically, such as providing payment relief by loosening billing times, giving gifts, and sending symbols to strengthen brotherhood such as giving kranjang cakes during Chinese New Year, giving Christmas gifts, and so on.
- b) Identification. In this process, there is self-identification of Chinese ethnic in groups of fellow Chinese ethnic with prototypes attached to them. The informant at this stage identifies who he is, then he has similarities with other people, namely based on Chinese names and common ancestry. Thus forming a view of who is included in the group and who is not in the group. This then forms perceptions about ingroup-out groups in group behavior (Sarwono, 2001 in Kusumowardhani, 2013:22) as happened to the older generation of informants, OG, Hz, and Ve where they define and treat natives as an out-group.
- c) In the comparison stage, Chinese ethnic citizens, especially the older generation, carry out a process of comparing their group with the indigenous group. They do this comparison process based on their work ethic which is far superior to the work ethic of the natives. In addition, according to them, Chinese ethnic are more forgiving than natives. This is evident from the discriminatory behavior given to Chinese people, but they never get angry. Whereas native people often get angry and lash out at Chinese people just because of social jealousy and negative stereotypes about Chinese people being considered exclusive. From this, the view emerged that the natives were lazy and easily offended. They (indigenous men) could not enter into Chinese ethnic families, if they entered as household leaders then Chinese blood would be cut off in their families. At this stage, there is a view that other groups are always seen as inferior (Myers, 1999) as happened to the informants.

This view does not naively occur in all of the author's informants, Ad and Rn for example, they admit they are Chinese ethnic, but they are uncomfortable when someone defines themselves as Chinese. They prefer to be identified as solo people, Indonesians without clarifying a particular identity which for them is full of differentiating and separating connotations. This identity for Berger and Luckmann (1990:236) is a process of maintaining and modifying. Ad and Rn did maintain their identity as Chinese, but they slightly modified that identity to be more fluid and flexible. They identify themselves as Chinese ethnic Solo, people of Solo, without highlighting their race too much and considering the Chinese more than other groups. This identity emerges from a dialectical process between the externalization of Ad and Rn in a heterogeneous environment where society objectively defines them as Chinese.

The older generation of Chinese ethnic tends to still maintain their ethnicity. There is still an older generation that has a closed view of indigenous people. He is Gk and Mr. They still feel threatened by the existence of indigenous people because they have a homogeneous environment, where they exchange almost the same knowledge about native people with people their age. Unlike what happened to Sw and Lm. They once had an extraordinary fear of natives, but the facts found in the intersubjective world made Sw and Lm open to the presence of natives. Even though natives have traditions and values and norms that are different from the Chinese, they believe that not all natives are evil and lazy as Sw and Lm previously understood. The presence of the natives in the lives of Lm and Sw changed the knowledge they had kept so far. The dialectic of the subjective reality of Lm and Sw with the objective reality of the social world forms a construction that is different from that of Mr and Gk. Informants Tj and Ni have a much more open attitude compared to the 4 previous informants. The experience of violence in the past and the heterogeneous environment make Tj and Ni not justify that natives are criminals. There is no particular group that is higher than the other groups. The experience of violence in the past did not make it racist and closed to native Indonesians. Tj's plural environment in America makes him less racist and views his ethnicity as better than other ethnicities. From his acquaintance with people from various social groups, Tj realized that good and bad people are not divided into certain groups. Her openness in accessing the internet and media allows her to know more about the true background of the May 98 incident which traumatized her. The business cooperation he did with people from various groups also added to his knowledge about the Indonesian government and indigenous people. Even so, the intersubjective world makes him more able to accept reality and opens his insights about natives.

**Table 3.** The social construction of the Chinese Old Generation about the Natives

| <b>Social Constructions</b>                                                                                                   | <b>Informants</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Natives are still a threat to the lives of informants                                                                         | Gk, Tn            |
| Indigenous people are an outgroup, a group that has traditions and ethics that are different from the Chinese                 | Sw, Lm            |
| No group or ethnicity is superior, all are the same, what is different is that people are not fixed on a particular ethnicity | Tj, Ni            |

Source: Data Analysis

On the other hand, in the younger generation, several of the informants still have the same way of thinking. As previously explained, there were 3 construction variations found. In Og's informants, he views the natives as lazy, likes to take advantage of opportunities, and is easily offended. This view is maintained and continuously reproduced because Og has a homogeneous family and social environment. Narratives in the Og environment also tend to be uniform compared to narratives in heterogeneous environments. In a heterogeneous environment, there are various variations of native narratives. The informants Hz, Ve, Ad, and Rn have richer knowledge compared to Og who lives in uniform groups. However, Hz and Ve still view the Chinese as superior because their families are dominated by Chinese people, so pride in their race and ethnicity is still well maintained. It's different with Ad and Rn. Since childhood, they have been accustomed to living in a heterogeneous environment, raised by an indigenous mother, so they feel that there is no prominent difference between the Chinese and the natives. Only factors that distinguish between Chinese and Indigenous. Broadly speaking,

there are indeed differences between the construction of the older and younger generations of Chinese ethnicity. The older generation tends to be more introverted and still tries to maintain their identity as Chinese ethnic. They have higher ethnocentrism than the younger generation.

**Table 4.** Social Construction of the New Generation Chinese Ethnics About the Native

| Social Constructions                                                                                                              | Informants |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Natives are lazy, like to take advantage of opportunities, and are easily offended                                                | Og         |
| Basically, the natives are friends, but the Chinese are superior                                                                  | Hz, Ve     |
| Chinese and natives are the same, there are no racial boundaries and no one is superior. Indigenous people are friends and family | Ad, Rn     |

Source: Data Analysis

## Conclusion

Social construction in society involves a dialectic between subjective and objective reality. Time plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' biographies and their perception of social reality. In the context of the Chinese community, the transition from the Old Order to the New Order era resulted in different experiences and identities. During the New Order era, Chinese citizens were pressured to abandon their Chinese identity and conform to native culture, leading to social jealousy and limited occupational options. This differed from the younger generation, who had access to education and broader job opportunities. Educational institutions, religions, and social organizations contributed to the formation of social constructs regarding the relationship between ethnic Chinese and natives. The processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization interacted to shape these constructs, with adaptations, habituations, and identity formation playing key roles. The construction of ethnic Chinese citizens towards natives varied between the older and younger generations, influenced by family, social environment, and media. The older generation perceived natives as a threat, an out-group, or equal individuals, while the younger generation viewed natives as different groups with limitations, as friends but with Chinese superiority, or as equals without racial boundaries. Overall, there were differences in construction between the older and younger generations, with the older generation perceiving natives as an out-group, while the younger generation saw them as friends and family without differences in identity or group affiliation.

## References

- Alase, A. (2017). The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA): A Guide to a Good Qualitative Research Approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 5(2), 9. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.2p.9>
- Ananta, A., Nurvidya Arifin, E., & Sairi Hasbullah, M. (2018). Demography of Indonesia's Ethnicity. *Demography of Indonesia's Ethnicity*, December. <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814519885>
- Assidiqi, H. (2018). Kebijakan Asimilasi Terhadap Etnis Tionghoa di Jakarta Tahun 1966-1998. *Prodi Ilmu Sejarah*, 3(3), 375–388.
- Atabik, A. (2016). PERCAMPURAN BUDAYA JAWA DAN CINA: Harmoni dan Toleransi Beragama Masyarakat Lasem. *Sabda: Jurnal Kajian Kebudayaan*, 11(1), 1.

<https://doi.org/10.14710/sabda.v11i1.13215>

- Berger, J., & Zelditch, M. (2021). Strategis, Theories, and Models. In *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*, 6(11), 951–952. (No. 6; Issue 100).
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (2016). The social construction of reality. In *Social Theory Re-Wired: New Connections to Classical and Contemporary Perspectives: Second Edition* (pp. 110–122). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315775357>
- Carey, P. (2016). Changing Javanese Perceptions of The Chinese Communities in Central Java 1755-1825. In *East*.
- Curthoys, N. (2002). Hannah Arendt and the politics of narrative. *JNT-Journal of Narrative Theory*, 32(3), 348–370. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jnt.2011.0070>
- Dahana, A. (2015). Kegiatan awal Masyarakat Tionghoa di Indonesia. In *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* (Vol. 2, Issue 1, p. 54). <https://doi.org/10.17510/wjhi.v2i1.271>
- Dharmowijono, W. (2013). Daradjadi, Geger Pacinan 1740-1743: Persekutuan Tionghoa-Jawa melawan VOC. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2013, xliii + 292 pp + 1 loose leaf. ISBN 9789797096878. Price: IDR 63,000.00 (paperback). *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde*, 169(2–3), 375–377. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-12340031>
- Goettlich, A. (2011). Power and powerlessness: Alfred Schutz's theory of relevance and its possible impact on a sociological analysis of power. *Civitas - Revista de Ciências Sociais*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2011.3.10062>
- Goetz, J. P., & Alien, J. (1989). Qualitative research in the human sciences. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 17(3), 273–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926188908250773>
- Heidhues, M. S. (2017). Studying the Chinese in Indonesia: A long half-century. *Sojourn*, 32(3), 601–633. <https://doi.org/10.1355/sj32-3c>
- Himawan, E. M., Pohlman, A., & Louis, W. (2022). Revisiting the May 1998 Riots in Indonesia: Civilians and Their Untold Memories. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 41(2), 240–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034221084320>
- Hudayah, Nur and Winarni, R. (2014). Indonesian Government Policy Influence on the Lives of Ethnic Chinese in the Political, Social Cultural, and Economic in the Jember district the Old Order up to the Reform period 1998-2012. *Publika Budaya*, 2(2), 19–31. <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/190967-ID-pengaruh-kebijakan-pemerintah-indonesia.pdf>
- Indrajat, H. (2016). Demokrasi Terpimpin Sebuah Konsepsi Pemikiran Soekarno Tentang Demokrasi. *SOSIOLOGI: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Ilmu Sosial Dan Budaya*, 18(1), 53–62. <https://jurnalsosiologi.fisip.unila.ac.id/index.php/jurnal/article/view/72>
- Kibria, N. (2000). Race, ethnic options, and ethnic binds: Identity negotiations of second-generation chinese and Korean Americans. *Sociological Perspectives*, 43(1), 77–95. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1389783>
- Musa, M. R. P., Lesmana, A. B., Arthamevia, R. N., Pratama, P. A., & Savitri, N. (2022). Human Rights and Pancasila: A Case of Tionghoa Ethnic Discrimination in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Pancasila and Global Constitutionalism*, 1(1), 119–170. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijpgc.v1i1.56879>
- Myers, D. G. (1999). Close relationships and quality of life. In *Well-being: The foundations*



- of hedonic psychology*. (pp. 374–391). Russell Sage Foundation.
- Onghokham. (1989). Chinese Capitalism in Dutch Java. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 27(2), 156–176.  
<https://www.google.com/%5Cnpapers2://publication/uuid/C2D13B80-EE24-405B-B4AF-4365493BE2CC>
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Leech, N. L., & Collins, K. M. T. (2012). Qualitative analysis techniques for the review of the literature. *Qualitative Report*, 17(28), 1–28.  
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1754>
- Purbasari, V. A., & Suharno, S. (2019). Interaksi Sosial Etnis Cina-Jawa Kota Surakarta. *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Budaya*, 21(1), 1.  
<https://doi.org/10.25077/jantro.v21.n1.p1-9.2019>
- Putra, A. P. (2017). Perubahan Persepsi Masyarakat Jawa Terhadap Masyarakat Cina Tahun 1812. *Sejarah Dan Budaya : Jurnal Sejarah, Budaya, Dan Pengajarannya*, 9(1), 1–7.  
<http://journal2.um.ac.id/index.php/sejarah-dan-budaya/article/view/1548>
- Rosenthal, G. (2009). Economic and Social Council. *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, 10319(December 1998).  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199560103.003.0007>
- Salim, C., & Wahyuningsih, S. (2009). Kristalisasi Persepsi Terhadap Pribumi Pada Perempuan Tradisional Tionghoa: Sebuah Life History. *ANIMA Indonesian ...*, 24(2), 142–161. <http://repository.ubaya.ac.id/id/eprint/33695>
- Santoso, R. G., & Harianti. (2021). Kebijakan Politik dan Sosial-Ekonomi Di Kerajaan Mataram Islam Pada Masa Pemerintahan Amangkurat I (1646-1677 M). *Sejarah Dunia*, 3(1), 1–20.
- Wang, C., & Huang, J. (2020). Desiring homeland: The return of Indonesian Chinese women to Maoist China. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 29(2), 163–185.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0117196820931314>
- Yang, T. E. (1998). The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Ethnic Relations between Chinese and Indigenous People in Malaya and Indonesia in the 1940s. *12th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association in Australia, September*, 1–16.