

**Vol. 12, No. 1
April 2025**

p-ISSN: 2407-0556
e-ISSN: 2599-3267

Article History:

Submitted:
7 March 2025

Revised:
13 May 2025

Accepted:
15 May 2025

***Agama Konghucu* is a Religion:
A Critical Discourse Analysis on Confucian
Community Publications During the New
Order**

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DOI

<https://doi.org/10.33550/sd.v12i1.511>

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Abstract

This research examines the formation of *Agama Konghucu* identity during the New Order in the Confucian publications (*Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani*). Given that identity is relational, the construction process involved the identification of the community itself and others' (religions and government) perceptions. Despite the government's control over the press and media during the New Order, *Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani* persistently engaged in the construction of an *Agama Konghucu* identity. Employing the Critical Discourse Analysis from Fairclough for the methodology, this article aims to investigate the construction of *Agama Konghucu* identity discourses in the Confucian community that were published and distributed during the New Order. This thesis uses Bourdieu's perspective on language in power relations, which is integrated into the methodology. Finally, this research concludes that Confucian media play a significant role as an agent and a medium of the construction process by incorporating specific practices of language.

Keywords: Confucian Media, New Order, Critical Discourse Analysis, identity, power relation.

Introduction

During the New Order era, Confucians in Indonesia lived their identity under government scrutiny that prioritized nationalism and uniformity.¹ This is due to the fact that most of the *Agama Konghucu* adherents are Chinese-Indonesians who possess cultural affinities with Chinese culture.² Furthermore, the New Order government also perceives Chinese people as communist and loyal to China.³ Because of their Chinese roots, they are subject to the government's assimilation program.

Under the Soeharto dictatorship, there were attempts to question the religious status of *Agama Konghucu*. The establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1946 brought religion into the realm of political matters that required regulation. This encompassed the act of publicly and legally acknowledging or disregarding religions. For those that were not classified as religions, they were classified as beliefs (*kepercayaan*). Consequently, the implementations of governing religion transformed interreligious relationships into hierarchical structures, categorizing them into recognized beliefs and customs, unofficial religions (whose status as religions is debatable), and officially recognized religions (both majority and minority).⁴

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has constructed a discourse on religion and belief by creating several categories. This categorization will be used by the New Order government to regulate religion in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has been granted the power to regulate religion, including creating categories. The discourse on religion became important during the 1965–1966 Genocide, as someone who was not a believer in a particular religion would be accused of being an Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) follower. This created a difficult situation for believers, as they were not members of any religion. The category of religion in the New Order is based on the definition of religion made by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.⁵ The definition of religion involves a theological understanding of God, prophets, legal systems, and holy books, which is then augmented by teachings about life after death.⁶

¹ This article utilizes the term "Confucian" in various contexts to describe identity, people, community, publications, and teachings that are part of the religious institution *Agama Konghucu*. Therefore, this article uses the term "Agama Konghucu" instead of "Confucianism" to illustrate the *Agama Konghucu* adherents' struggle for recognition as a religion, which is one of the primary issues covered. In addition, the use of "Agama Konghucu" instead of "Konghucu" in this article is to emphasize the distinction between Konghucu as a philosophical teaching and as a religious institution that requires legal recognition from the state. This article also addresses the debate over whether Konghucu qualifies as a religion, which is one of its main discussions. The attachment of the term "agama" in "konghucu" signified the changes of Confucianism in Indonesia and the legal implication that "agama" entails (see page 34). Therefore, the term "Agama Konghucu" is always used to refer to a religious institution. However, "Confucianism" is used in a wider and global context.

² Leo Suryadinata, "Negara dan Minoritas Tionghoa di Indonesia," *Wacana: Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 1, no. 2 (October 1999): 239, <https://doi.org/10.17510/wacana.v1i2.297>.

³ Charles A. Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983), 24–26; Mattias Fibiger, *Suharto's Cold War: Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 114–21, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197667224.001.0001>.

⁴ Ismatu Ropi, *Religion and Regulation in Indonesia* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan Singapore, 2017), 118–29, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2827-4>.

⁵ Anne Schiller, "An 'Old' Religion in 'New Order' Indonesia" Notes on Ethnicity and Religious Affiliation," *Sociology of Religion* 57, no. 4 (1996): 410–16, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3711895>; Ropi, *Religion and Regulation in Indonesia*, 119.

⁶ Samsul Maarif, *Pasang Surut Rekognisi Agama Leluhur dalam Politik Agama di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: CRCS

In the Soekarno era, the Confucian community benefited from having their religion recognized. The situation was not changed in the early years of the New Order through the enactment of Law No. 1/PNPS/1965. However, Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967 (*Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 1967*) introduced a series of discriminatory regulations and policies against the Confucian community by categorizing them as part of Chinese culture. The discrimination escalated to the derecognition of *Agama Konghucu* by Soeharto in 1979. The derecognition served as the community's primary justification for requesting that the state uphold their civil rights. The policies towards Confucianism during the New Order era have changed the identity of the Confucian religion, the relationship of the Confucian community with the state, and their relationship with others.⁷ Therefore, the Confucian community faced two challenges from the governments: to prove their nationalism and to be recognized as religious followers.

At the same time, the New Order governments implemented strict control and censorship over print media and publications.⁸ The New Order strengthened its domination through discourse manipulation. Here, the New Order emphasized the importance of being Indonesian.⁹ Despite the New Order's strict control over the mass media, the Confucian community managed to publish internal publications. The New Order's strict control over the mass media turned the Confucian internal publications into a field of struggle where the community fought to preserve their identity.

During the New Order (1965-1998), more than 75 newspapers were banned, and their staff were arrested for their association with or sympathy for the PKI.¹⁰ The situation was also experienced by activists, journalists, and students who expressively opposed the regime. The press needs to have a permit to publish (*Surat Izin Terbit/SIT*) from the Civil Department of Information and a permit to print (*Surat Izin Cetak/SIC*) from the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib), a military security authority.¹¹ These permits go against the New Order promise of freedom of the press, which is spelled out in Law 11/1966 (chapter 2 article 4 and chapter 4 article 8) as the basic principle of the press: the national press shall not be

UGM, 2017), 34.

⁷ Evi Lina Sutrisno, "Negotiating the Confucian Religion in Indonesia: Invention, Resilience and Revival (1900-2010)" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2018), 96-108, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2085189581?pq-origsite=primo>.

⁸ Inge Hutagalung, "Dinamika Sistem Pers di Indonesia," *Interaksi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 2, no. 2 (2013): 53-60, <https://ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/interaksi/article/view/6588>; Rizki Maulana et al., "Rahasia Terungkap: Menganalisis Dinamika Keamanan Pers Pada Masa Orde Baru (1966-1998)," *Al-Ulum: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora* 9, no. 2 (2023): 64, <https://doi.org/10.31602/alsh.v9i2.12664>; Aryo Subarkah Eddyono, "Pers Alternatif pada Era Orde Baru: Dijinakkan hingga Dibungkam," *Komunika: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 8, no. 1 (2021): 53-60, <https://doi.org/10.22236/komunika.v8i1.5672>.

⁹ Tonny Dian Effendi and Mohd Zaini Abubakar, "China Town Magazine and Indonesian-Chinese Identity," *Journal of Politics and Law* 10, no. 2 (2017): 97, <https://doi.org/10.5539/jpl.v10n2p97>.

¹⁰ David T. Hill, "The Press in a Squeeze: Operating Hazards in the Indonesian Print Media," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 20, no. 2 (1992): 2-6, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24491696>; David T. Hill, *The Press in New Order Indonesia* (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2007), 70; Aditia Muara Padiatra, "Ketika Pers Bicara Korupsi: Analisis Tajuk Rencana Harian Pedoman pada Awal Orde Baru 1969 - 1974," *Paradigma, Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 5, no. 2 (2015): 103-6, <https://doi.org/10.17510/paradigma.v5i2.51>.

¹¹ Maulana et al., "Rahasia Terungkap," 69-70; Eddyono, "Pers Alternatif pada Era Orde Baru," 53-56.

censored or restrained, freedom of the press is guaranteed in line with the basic rights of citizens, and there is also no need for publication permits.

In 1982, the issuance permit (SIT), which had been in effect since 1966, was replaced by the press publication enterprise permit (*Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers/SIUPP*). In this context, the government classifies the newspapers as enterprises or corporations that are subject to government control through the editing process. The regulation exemplified the state's manipulative yet authoritarian control of the press.¹² Consequently, journalists are reluctant to submit to company shareholders and downplay critical criticisms that might result in financial losses. The New Order perceives that the press serves two purposes.¹³ The first purpose is to propagate and foster the status quo of hegemony. Secondly, it serves as a tool of repression, suppressing pro-democracy movements. The consequences of government criticism include the loss of journalists' lives, the scrapping of newspapers, and the termination of paper provision. Such action has a significant negative impact on the press, which is considered a middle-class sector within the capital economy.¹⁴

In the mid-1980s, the Indonesian press changed. The press is evolving in tandem with the capitalist system, resulting in the rise of numerous large corporations that have thrived under the New Order regime. Such an outcome is becoming increasingly possible with the New Order's support conditioned on obedience to the regime. The result is a decrease in criticism of the regime, and the press falls into the hands of the government. There is no freedom of the press because the government has a monopoly on public significance, so the public no longer receives actual and factual news but information that is in line with the regime, including propaganda. This includes the obligation to publish and broadcast information or specific events that are supportive of the regime.¹⁵

The research about the Confucian religion is already being done by Evi Sutrisno, with remarks on the strategy negotiation in making the Confucian religion over the past century.¹⁶ By using a phenomenological approach, Lasiyo discussed the emergence of Confucianism as a religion in the Chinese community during the New Order.¹⁷ In addition, Ikhsan Tanggok discusses Confucianism from the perspective of religion in Indonesia.¹⁸ Leo Suryadinata's writings about the conversion of Chinese temples showed how significant religious status was for Confucian religion by pointing to the Confucian community's persistence in maintaining Confucian temples as they are rather than converting them to Tridharma temples.¹⁹ These studies show the continuous

¹² Maulana et al., "Rahasia Terungkap," 69–70.

¹³ Ashadi Siregar, "Media Pers dan Negara: Keluar dari Hegemoni," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 4, no. 2 (2000): 187–92, <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/jsp/article/view/11119>.

¹⁴ Hutagalung, "Dinamika Sistem Pers di Indonesia," 56–57.

¹⁵ Siregar, "Media Pers dan Negara: Keluar dari Hegemoni," 175–82.

¹⁶ Sutrisno, *Negotiating the Confucian Religion in Indonesia: Invention, Resilience and Revival (1900 – 2010)*.

¹⁷ Lasiyo, *Agama Khonghucu: An Emerging Form of Religious Life among the Indonesian Chinese* (Unpublished PhD diss., University of London, 1992).

¹⁸ M. Ikhsan Tanggok, *Mengenal Lebih Dekat "Agama Khonghucu" di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pelita Kebajikan, 2005).

¹⁹ Leo Suryadinata, "Buddhism and Confucianism in Contemporary Indonesia: Recent Developments," in *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*, ed. Timothy Lindsey and Helen Pausacker (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005).

construction of Confucianism as a religion, despite the unfavorable situation of the New Order.

In the meantime, the study about Chinese identity was conducted by Aimee Dawis with a focus on the visual culture of the Chinese during the shifting time between the New Order and the Reformation. She investigated how the young Chinese-Indonesians learn their Chineseness from the movies.²⁰ Ariel Heryanto researched how the New Order government controlled the Chinese community through discourse manipulation. He showed that official discourses about the 1965–66 genocide and Chinese people are the New Order's construction, planted in the Indonesian people's consciousness using popular culture and media.²¹ Leo Suryadinata also investigated the distribution of Chinese newspapers to Chinese communities through illegal shipping in Indonesia during the New Order, which shows the significance of discourses for the Chinese community in Indonesia.²² These researchers encapsulated the entanglement of the Chinese-Indonesian situation with the New Order government.

On the other hand, this research object is community magazines (media) that are exclusively consumed by the Confucian community. This research shows that these magazines are a field where the identity of *Agama Konghucu* was constructed during the New Order. Several important notions of Confucian identity are reflected in the use of particular terms in specific contexts. The in-depth nature of critical discourse analysis, as a methodology, highlights the significance of Confucian community discourses in the construction of Confucian identity, including how the Confucian publications acted as both media and agent.

The Confucian community in Indonesia is engaged in two ongoing struggles within society. First is an external struggle, which encompasses establishing social order, social identity, and collective consciousness in response to government pressure. Secondly, there is an internal struggle within the media to construct and maintain socio-political-cultural discourse within the existing discourse structure. Bourdieu explains that symbolic power is not the ability of words to build social order, but rather the extent to which individuals believe in and acknowledge the validity of words and their power.²³ He draws a power relationship between discourse and practice, which becomes the main reason for using Bourdieu's theory in this research.

Finally, this article aims to answer the question of how the Confucian publications constructed the identity of *Agama Konghucu* during the New Order. This question is

²⁰ Aimee Dawis, *Orang Indonesia Tionghoa: Mencari Identitas* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2013).

²¹ Ariel Heryanto, "Ethnic Identities and Erasure: Chinese Indonesians in Public Culture," in *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*, ed. Joel S. Kahn (Singapore: ISEAS, 2000), 95–114; Ariel Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging* (London: Routledge, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203099827>; Ariel Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1qv1rz>.

²² Leo Suryadinata, "State and 'Chinese Religions' in Indonesia: Confucianism, Tridharma, and Buddhism During the Suharto Rule and After," in *After Migration and Religious Affiliation: Religions, Chinese Identities and Transnational Networks*, ed. Chee-Beng Tan (Singapore: World Scientific, 2015), 19–42; Leo Suryadinata, "The Orientation of Chinese Newspapers in Indonesia as China Rises," *Trends in Southeast Asia* 8(2023): 1–23, <https://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg/publication/7852>.

²³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 43–65.

answered by asking what kind of identity is constructed by the Confucian community in the media and how they align with the dominant discourses about religion. The construction of *Agama Konghucu's* identity is evident in community publications. I suggest that community publications have an important role in constructing and preserving *Agama Konghucu's* identity as a *religion* in Indonesia. Therefore, the focus of this article is the media analysis of community publications, which during the New Order were produced and consumed by the community.

This article begins with an introduction that consists of a brief explanation of the background, literature review, research questions, and significance of the study. The article then proceeds to discuss the research methods and theory. The results and discussion will be presented simultaneously according to two different aspects of *Agama Konghucu's* identity. Before that, there is a brief explanation about the context surrounding media in the New Order and how it affects Confucian publications. Lastly, the conclusion will consist of a brief summary of the findings and suggestions for further research.

Theoretical Framework

Theory and structuration by Bourdieu will be used to analyze power relations, power formation, and construction in national identity and religious identity formation. Bourdieu's theory of practice served as the main theoretical framework of this research. Habitus, capital, and field are three concepts involved in Bourdieu's theory of practice. According to Bourdieu,²⁴ there are four types of capital: cultural, symbolic, social, and financial. Some examples of cultural capital include one's knowledge, cultural code, connections, and accent. Status symbols, institutional acknowledgment, and other symbols of power are examples of symbolic capital. One component of social capital that contributes to the formation of social classes is interpersonal connections. Capital in the financial sector is wealth and private property. Finance, on the other hand, is malleable, and capital may be transformed into other forms of capital.

The concept of identity that is used in this thesis refers to the Bourdieu perspective. Identity is self-narration (representation) to be perceived and recognized by others.²⁵ Simultaneously, identity is a social construction in which the struggle over identity encompasses being perceived and recognized by others. Therefore, the term identity construction that I use refers to the relationality of social identity as self-representation and being perceived by others.

Each capital holds the ability to transform into another capital. Thus, identity can be considered symbolic capital when it is related to recognition and cultural capital when it is associated with specific knowledge. As a given aspect's structural position is determined by each capital, there are structural positions of each identity. Those in positions of dominance often feel the need to assert their authority, while those in subordinate positions might aim to disrupt the dominant's strategy. In this way, the

²⁴ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 121; Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford University Press, 1998), 3–30; Eka Ningtyas, "Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power," *Poetika: Jurnal Ilmu Sastra* 3, no. 2 (2015): 154–57, <https://doi.org/10.22146/poetika.v3i2.10437>.

²⁵ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 68.

strategy of production and reproduction transfers power in accordance with the structure. The dominant party would try to defend its position. It is the opposite of the domination position; thus, they would try to change the game that is controlled by the dominant. Consequently, the power is transmitted according to the structure through the strategy of production and reproduction.²⁶

Analyzing the media involves examining the language it uses. Bourdieu perceived that language has the power to construct. It relates to the symbolic power, which is an extension of a symbolic instrument. The structuration of symbolic instruments is ensuring the implementation of certain symbolic systems in society. Ideology functions as domination by the dominant group and develops over time. Thus, domination arises from this system through exercising the power held by the dominant. Symbolic power exists in the relationship between the dominant and those who submit to it, rooted in the belief that discourse may affect transformation. Therefore, symbolic struggle in the media involves the ability of language to change and construct.²⁷

However, symbolic violence also occurs through language. Symbolic violence can be internalized in habitus and makes the system seem to work just like it is, which makes the victim not realize they are a victim.²⁸ Symbolic violence can be preserved through advertisement and the role of the media that produces and nurtures certain discourses. Symbolic violence perpetuates itself as a system embedded in the habitus. It keeps revolving because the logic of domination is accepted by the ruler and the follower.

This article uses theory from Bourdieu to examine the struggles that are behind identity construction. The plurality of the discourse, which will be found in the Confucian text, emphasizes the importance of subordination, which is rooted in the Confucian teaching itself on how to behave toward the government. The internally distributed discourse opposes the domination of official discourses and enriches the habitus by giving independence to the subject. The power held by the community allowed for the construction of religious and national identity amid the urge for self-realization, public order, and state control. Meanwhile, the imagined community not only arises from the stories but also from the process of searching for identity amidst the pressure of cultural conformity. The discourse production, distribution, and consumption by the community lead to the creation of a certain identity.

Bourdieu adds to the analysis by demonstrating the interconnectedness of the media through the discourse's choice relations and chain relations. It is essential to consider a variety of voices, discourses, and genres. As members of the community build their identities through media exposure, the theory of habitus reveals the system's transposable aspect. It further demonstrated how important writer dispositions are for positioning oneself within discourse order (author, reader, editor). Finally, sociocultural practice, as a symbolic system involving ideology and power, entails the relational

²⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction," in *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change: Papers in the Sociology of Education*, ed. Richard Brown (London: Routledge, 1973), 71–112.

²⁷ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 107–16.

²⁸ Bourdieu, 127–38.

dynamics of the social order in the form of structured and structuring structures.²⁹

Research Methods

This study is a qualitative investigation into the process of discourse formation. Considering the production, distribution, and consumption of the discourse taking place, the location of this research was chosen carefully. The data mostly sourced from the Lithang Gerbang Kebajikan library in Solo, which was originally the High Council of Confucian Religion in Indonesia (MATAKIN) center.

The primary source for the data came from Confucian internal publications that were disseminated among the society under the New Order. Two magazines, *Gentrika* (*Genta Tripusaka*) and *Genta Rohani*, will be the primary subjects of the investigation. MATAKIN publishes the monthly *Gentrika*, whereas the Council of Confucian Religion in Indonesia for the Bandung area (MAKIN Bandung) publishes *Genta Rohani*.

Meanwhile, the data analysis will be conducted with a critical analysis of media discourse, a particular application of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Fairclough saw discourse and social practice as interrelated. He emphasizes three dimensions in discourse analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation.³⁰

Particularly in the discourse as text (description), which is written in the text without additional consideration of interpretation or production, description, or text analysis takes center stage. Language analysis (semantics, grammar, and vocabulary) follows. In my opinion, wording, rewording, over-wording, and grammatical alterations are the most effective analysis techniques. The analysis sought to articulate the unique construction of writer and reader identities, the unique construction of the relationship between the writer and reader, and the specific representations and recontextualization of social practice provided in the text through the linguistic features of the text.

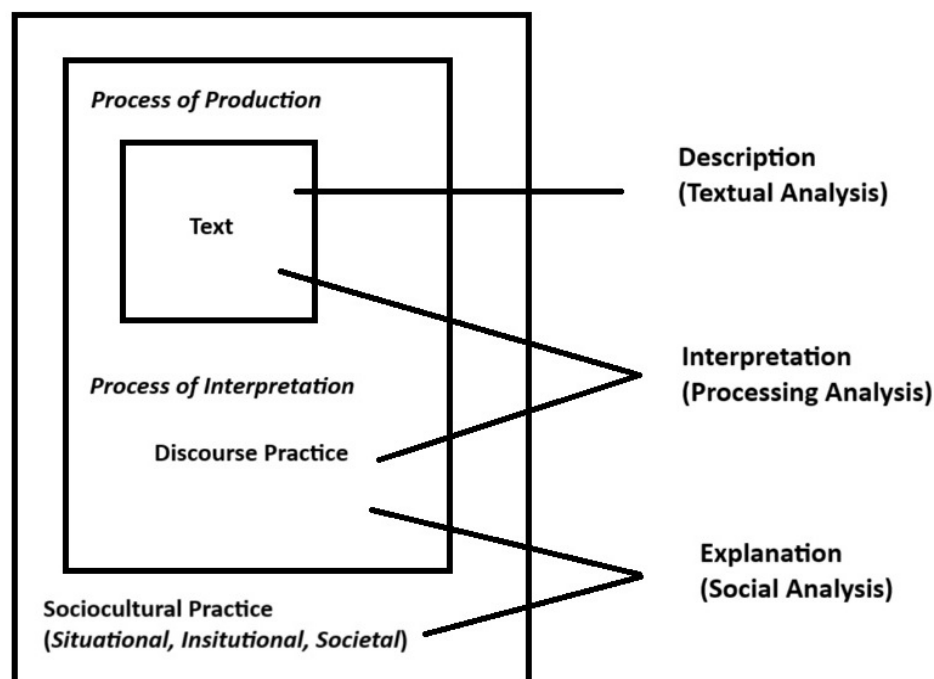
Production, distribution, and consumption of the text are all included in the process of interpretation, or discursive activity. Translation is also included. The production, distribution, and consumption of texts are ingrained and layered within the institutional process of the media, in which the media produce the discourse (writings and editorial process), distribute it to readers, and eventually the discourses are consumed by the readers. Intertextuality (mental model) and interdiscursivity (discourse type) are two techniques that I use. Hybrid texts are widely used to describe them in the media. Various economic, social, political, and spiritual topics can all be included in a single textbook.

As a social practice, explanation or discourse entails meeting specific social conditions necessary to impose changes and effects on society. As a last layer of study, I discuss how the texts' ideologies, power dynamics, cultural values, and social circumstances influence readers' socio-cognitive reactions. By definition, sociocultural practice is concerned with the construction and reconstruction of cultural and social practices. Both in his explanations and his sociocultural practice, Fairclough suggests a

²⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (California: Stanford University Press, 1990), 53–65.

³⁰ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), 53–68; Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Arnold, 1995), 73–100.

dialectical connection between discourse and social order. The knowledge and belief system, social relations, and social identities are all influenced by this relationship, which deals with the reproduction and alteration of social order.



Picture 1. Illustration of CDA³¹

Fairclough distinguishes between what he terms "order of discourse" in his book *Media Discourse* and what he calls "private order of discourse" when discussing the media's position.³² Here, we will take a look at the Confucian community's internal dynamics as well as its external dynamics with the government. There is a gap in the discourse order where these internal and external relations manifest. There are two types of relations: choice relations, which are influenced by social conditioning, and chain relations, which are produced by a series of communicative events that have an impact on each subsequent one. Keeping sociocultural practices in mind is essential for conducting an order of discourse analysis. As a result of their sociocultural setting, I selected literature that dealt with politics (ideology and power), culture (identities and values), and society (community and society). Examining the hierarchy of discourse within the context of social identities is the goal.

The micro (personal), meso (institutional), and macro (global) levels correspond to the dimensions (description, interpretation, and explanation) present at the moment. The discourse at the micro level is centered on the person, as the writers or speakers express themselves independently. The meso level occurs when writers or speakers are

³¹ Adapted from Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995).

³² Fairclough, 62–68.

part of a specific community, such as the Confucian community; in this case, discourse revolves around that particular community or institution. Speaking or writing as an Indonesian citizen or as a member of an international community, the discourse revolves around a global setting and society at the macro level. At each level, the analysis will essentially focus on three dimensions, resulting in a total of nine steps. However, this research particularly presents the important results based on the topics, which are media and Confucian identity.

Results and Discussion

The Confucian Community Publications³³

The Confucian community has a unique interpretation of the word *Genta* (Bell). The Confucian term for *Genta* is full of significance and is frequently used by the community to refer to the presence of the Prophet Confucius, who is represented by a *Genta*. This symbolism reflects the theological contemplation of the Prophet Confucius's life and Confucian faith. The usage of the word *Genta* in the magazine's name reveals its stance and ideology, leading one to assume that all of the articles published therein adhere to a Confucian discourse paradigm. The Confucian community frequently uses the name *Genta* as a media name, with examples such as *Seri Genta Suci Konfusiani*, *Genta Tripusaka*, *Genta Rohani*, *Genta Budaya*, and *Genta Buana*. Community interests lie behind these print media concerns. Embedded in this print medium is the Confucian philosophy that symbolizes the voices of the Confucian community in the field of struggle. Thus, it was in the community's best interest for these print media to contribute to the formation of Confucian and national identities.

There is some textual overlap between the micro and meso levels in the media. There is an editing procedure that the writer's voice must go through to ensure it meets certain standards. Because the media is an institution in and of itself, anything that appears in media publications eventually reflects and has the same voice as those publications.³⁴ Since they are both published by the Confucian community, *Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani* are also the agents of the Confucian Community and simultaneously the field of agents interplay (Confucian agents and government officials). Meanwhile, the macro level appeared in the construction of national identity. Which sometimes overlaps with the meso levels in the discourses that discuss the interrelatedness between Confucian identity and Indonesian identity.

The active period of publication, differences in publication management, and purposes of the two publications are the main points of differentiation. While *Genta Rohani* has been going strong since the mid-70s and continues to be published now, *Gentrika* magazine was active from 1975 to 1979. Similarly, the two periodicals are administered by distinct Confucian religious institutions; *Gentrika* is a publication of MATAKIN, the top Confucian religious institution in Indonesia, while *Genta Rohani* is a

³³ This section is mostly taken from the researcher's thesis that was defended on 16 December 2024. Yohanes Babbista Lemuel Christandi, "'Agama Khonghucu Bukan Agama Cina' A Critical Analysis On Media Study Of Confucian Identity During New Order" (Master's thesis, University of Gadjah Mada, 2024), 77–84.

³⁴ Fairclough, *Media Discourse*, 48–50.

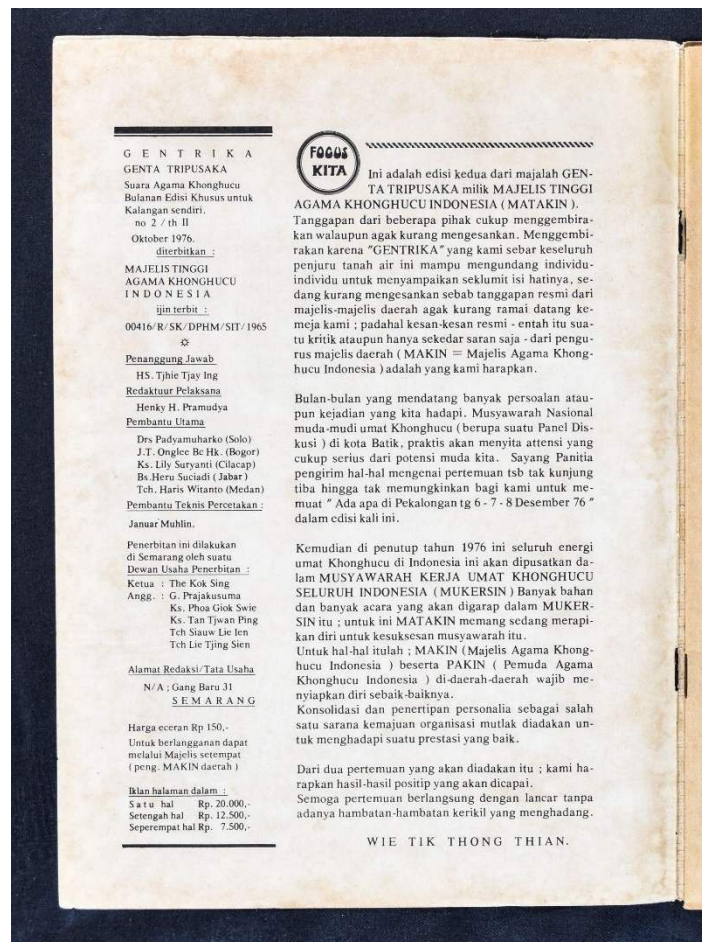
publication of MAKIN Bandung, a Confucian religious institution that operates in the Bandung area.

Gentrika (*Genta Tripusaka*) magazine was first published in Solo in August 1976, with the target audience being members of the Confucian community itself. The magazine *Gentrika* discusses topics related to Confucianism and the Confucian community in Indonesia, including various theological teachings, worship procedures, and updates on the community's and the *Agama Konghucu*'s status in society. In *Gentrika* magazine, there is a section that discusses reports on activities carried out by MATAKIN as well as the situation of the Confucian community from various regions.

The writing in *Gentrika* has been determined according to the themes and problems being faced by the community. The subtitle on the cover of the magazine reads, "Special Magazine in Improving Devotion to God, Country, and Nation."³⁵ Starting from the subtitle, *Gentrika* magazine is specifically intended to answer social-political-cultural-spiritual problems that arise in society related to the *Agama Konghucu*. At least *Gentrika* has 26 editions, although only 23 books have been discovered. The number of average advertisements in *Gentrika* is quite low (around 2), which I found in some publications without any advertisements. Meanwhile, several *Gentrika* readers have not yet paid the subscription fee.³⁶ Based on three factors—four years of active periods, a small number of magazine ads, and many unpaid subscriptions—I thought *Gentrika* had financial difficulties. *Gentrika* is in possession of a government-issued publishing permit (SIT), which certifies the publication's formal and legal recognition.

³⁵ "Majalah Khusus dalam meningkatkan Pengabdian kepada Tuhan, Negara, dan Bangsa"

³⁶ *Gentrika* (*Genta Tripusaka*), 1978, 8.



Picture 2. Illustration of SIT³⁷

The subtitle of *Gentrikan* demonstrates the ideology that structures the discourse order of published texts, as well as the presentation of voices within the social order. The text repeatedly employs the words God, country, and nation in various forms, such as wording, alternative wording, rewording, and over-wording. However, the choice of the word *Tuhan* (God) has its own implication in the media representation of the underlying ideology. The title itself strongly embodies the Confucian ideology, as well as the interests and voices of the Confucian community. Meanwhile, *Agama Konghucu* adopted *Thian* as their own language to symbolize God. The word *Tuhan* did not originate from Confucian teachings, but it became a synonym for *Thian* (God) in the community's vocabulary. In my view, both *Tuhan* and *Thian* serve as practical representations of specific discourse. Therefore, I saw the use of *Tuhan*, while more practical, can also be understood as a strategic action within a broader social order. I would use *Tuhan/Thian* instead of God because the word itself embodies a specific discourse in Indonesia's history.

In my reading of *Genta Rohani*, I identified two phases for *Genta Rohani* up until 1996. The first time frame began with its 1975 initial publication. Following 1987's remodelling, a second period ensued. This rebuild focused on *Genta Rohani*'s administrative and management structure. The rebuilding changed *Genta Rohani*'s numbering system, starting with new numbers. It is difficult to determine the precise

³⁷ *Gentrikan* (Genta Tripusaka), 1976, 2.

number of editions of *Genta Rohani* due to the lack of statistics on those magazines. More than 33 editions, including special editions, of *Genta Rohani* have been released during the first period. Regarding *Genta Rohani*'s second period, I restricted it to 1996, which amounted to around 116 publications. The publication itself continued after the 2000s, which indicated the community and readers had adequate support for it despite the very low number of advertisements (frequently none at all). However, I assumed the Communication Among Believers (*Komunikasi Antar Umat/KAU*) section in *Genta Rohani*, which allows readers to send short and private messages to intended recipients, is popular. Unfortunately, numerous publications by *Genta Rohani* remain undiscovered.

The subtitle of *Genta Rohani* is "Information and Communication Media." Rather than suggesting an ideology, the sentence suggests a mental model of how the media work as a medium for communication and information. This demonstrates the role of the media in controlling the publication's discourse order. In fact, the media's positionality is demonstrated by the use of the title *Genta Rohani* with the official *Genta* symbol of *Agama Konghucu*. Instead of overtly attempting to influence or participate in existing power structures and social orders, the media subtly works to disseminate religious and political discourses. However, it also followed a similar order of discourse, with both publications focusing on Confucianism in particular. In this research, I employ *Genta Rohani* to understand the post-derecognition (after 1979) state of the Confucian community. At the same time, I examine the Confucian community's circumstances before derecognition (before 1979) through *Gentrika*.

Community members from across Indonesia submitted manuscripts for both magazines. Publications are delivered directly to buyers' residences as part of the distribution and subscription strategies, ensuring that subscribers receive their copies. Consequently, members of the Confucian community in many places are able to read *Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani*. Those whole processes are the institutional framework of media, encompassing all three stages of discursive practice within the media discourse (production, distribution, and consumption).³⁸

As part of the media's institutional process, each contributor possesses their own area of expertise and philosophy, which they express in their writings. However, these writings must first pass the editorial process. These writers appear to be the go-betweens for many viewpoints and voices in the media. While it may seem that the media dominated the circular discourse at times, the agents' relationship with the media is inherently ambivalent; at other times, it seems that the agents are exclusively responsible for the discourse that they produced.

The Identity Construction of *Agama Konghucu*

In the 1979 Cabinet Meeting, President Soeharto said that *Konghucu* is not a religion.³⁹ Soeharto's statement added an already discriminated perspective in the Presidential Instruction 14/1967, which regarded *Konghucu* as a Chinese philosophy and religion. This regulation stated that;

³⁸ Fairclough, *Media Discourse*, 55–68.

³⁹ Departemen Penerangan RI, *Ajaran Khonghucu*, 1983, 8.

"(1) Without prejudice to the guarantee of freedom of religion and worship, Chinese worship procedures that have aspects of cultural affinity centered on the land of their ancestors must be carried out internally within family or individual relationships. (2) Celebrations of Chinese religious feasts and customs are not conducted inconspicuously in public, but within the family."⁴⁰

However, the government and the Confucian community had different ideas about this matter. The Confucian community firmly holds on to their belief that *Konghucu* is a religion.

There are two categories of struggle in constructing *Agama Konghucu's* identity. First, the practice of word alternation between *Thian* and *Tuhan* indicates a struggle to be regarded as similar to other religions. Their act of distinction in interreligious relations was the second indication of their struggle to be considered distinctive (different) from other religions. Both practices were published and distributed by *Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani*, marking their involvement in managing discourses. Following Bourdieu's perspectives,⁴¹ I consider the alternation of words and the act of distinctions a delineation of the relationship between the dominant (government) and the dominated group Confucian community).

There were also two constructions connected to Confucian identity: how the community identifies their Confucianism and how their Confucian identity is perceived by others. First, members argued that "*Agama Khonghucu* is not a Chinese religion",⁴² which goes against the dominant discourse. Second, the government thought *Agama Konghucu* was a teaching or philosophy, but writers have claimed it is a religion.⁴³

***Thian* and *Tuhan*: the practical power of naming**

Agama Konghucu, like other religions, has its own way of addressing God. *Agama Konghucu* adherents would alternately use *Tuhan* and *Thian* as self-identification and self-representation tools. The alternation can be seen through the way the media displayed religious discourses. Instead of just using one for all situations, these magazines showed different ways of using them. Practically, the Confucian community separates the usage of *Thian* from *Tuhan*. *Tuhan* was used in public for people of all faiths and backgrounds, while *Thian* was used in the community. Also, the *Tuhan* and *Thian* alternation is related to Presidential Instruction 14/1967, which prohibits the appearance of Chinese characteristics in the public space.⁴⁴ Despite their differing uses, both *Thian* and *Tuhan* conveyed their status as Confucians.

The words *Thian* and *Tuhan* differ mostly in the meaning they convey and the way

⁴⁰ "(1) Tanpa mengurangi jaminan keleluasaan memeluk agama dan menunaikan ibadatnya, tata cara ibadah Cina yang memiliki aspek afinitas cultural yang berpusat dari negeri leluhurnya, pelaksanaannya harus dilakukan secara intern dalam hubungan keluarga atau perorangan. (2) Perayaan-perayaan pesta agama dan adat istiadat Cina dilakukan secara tidak menyolok di depan umum, melainkan dilakukan dalam lingkungan keluarga."

⁴¹ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 234.

⁴² Hermawan, "Agama Khonghucu Dan Kesadaran Nasional," *Gentrika (Genta Tripusaka)*, 1978, 17.

⁴³ Suryo Hutomo, "Sambutan Ketua Umum Matakina Pada Peringatan Hari Lahir Nabi Khongcu Ke 2529," *Gentrika (Genta Tripusaka)*, 1978, 7.

⁴⁴ This regulation restricts the use of so-called Chinese culture, religions, and customs in public places. The term "Chinese characteristics" refers to things that are perceived to originate from China.

they are expressed. *Tuhan*, which refers to *Ketuhanan YME*, is the first concept in the Pancasila ideology. The term *Thian* originated from the teachings of the prophet Confucius. I regarded this term as a habitus, a system that had been transmitted through generations since the day of the prophet. Due to its association with Confucius, it is commonly considered to have originated from China. At the same time, the New Order government scrutinized all elements that originated from China. The government's efforts to dissociate itself from China, coupled with the negative views circulating in society, led one writer to go so far as to say that the prophet Confucius's origins in China were purely coincidental.⁴⁵

The word *Tuhan* is used by the state as an official name. The term *Tuhan* refers to the first principle of Pancasila ideology. The significance of the word *Tuhan* for religious communities in Indonesia was related to the history of the 1965-1966 genocide, in which those who did not belong to any (recognized) religious community were categorized as communists and then persecuted.⁴⁶ The practical use of *Tuhan* in public space by the Confucian community reflects the power of naming⁴⁷. Therefore, by using the word *Tuhan*, the Confucian community saved itself from the symbolic struggles in the religious field. This was due to the recognition of the name *Tuhan* by both the state and religious communities.

This practice of alternation represents Confucian identity and its position in the social world as underprivileged. Moreover, the prohibition outlined in Presidential Instruction 14/1967 did not, however, eradicate the Chinese and *Konghucu* in Indonesia. The practice of alternation, on the other hand, highlighted their persistent presence and adapted status within the social world. As a result, the community decided to alternate between *Thian* and *Tuhan* because of the power that the word *Tuhan* embodies.

Agama Konghucu: Negotiating Through Similarity and Distinction

The emergence of the term *Agama Konghucu* was related to discourse about religion defined by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the protection against the blasphemy law (PNPS no. 1/1965). By internalizing and incorporating the meaning of *agama* (religion) into the community's identity, it perpetuates state dominance over the community. However, the naming of the *agama* is in line with the community's interests rather than being seen as a matter of belief. The use of the term *agama Konghucu* in the media indicates the notion to equate *agama Konghucu* with other religions and simultaneously distinguishes *Agama Konghucu* from Chinese religion.

Agama Konghucu went through a number of events in the 1970s and 1980s that challenged its legal position. In the early 1970s, the Directorate General of Hindu-Buddhist Religious Guidance's *Agama Khonghucu* guidance was reviewed by the Ministry of Religion. Following this, the Ministry of Religion identified issues related to *Agama Khonghucu*'s non-religious status. Different articles in *Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani* consistently addressed various issues and external challenges. However, I found that

⁴⁵ Hermawan, "Agama Khonghucu Dan Kesadaran Nasional," 17.

⁴⁶ John Roosa, *Dalih Pembunuhan Massal: Gerakan 30 September dan Kudeta Suharto* (Jakarta: Institut Sejarah Sosial Indonesia dan Hasta Mitra, 2008), 3–52.

⁴⁷ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 239.

Tjhie Tjay Ing's writing in *Genta Rohani* in 1983 discussed the position of *Agama Konghucu* differently from the President's decision in 1979.⁴⁸ He persistently stated that the problem of *Agama Khonghucu* is the problem of faith rather than government recognition.⁴⁹ This was followed by a lack of news regarding the derecognition of the *Agama Konghucu* in *Genta Rohani*.

The first notion focuses on the similarities of *Agama Konghucu* with other religions in Indonesia. These similarities include their status as a religion, which has similar properties to other religions, and equal participation in the state's imposed religious harmony. Here, identity is seen as having a set of similar properties. An author argues that *Agama Konghucu* is one of the world's major religions, and thus, it is similar to other religions.⁵⁰ Another author in *Gentrika* argued that *Agama Konghucu* originated from another country; the teaching is universal and internationally recognized.⁵¹ It was Suryo Hutomo (former head of MATAKIN) who represented *Agama Konghucu* Indonesia at the World Conference on Religion and Peace in Belgium (1974) and New Jersey (1979).⁵² In addition, there are several writings that compare Confucian religion with other religions practiced in Indonesia that include the geographical and sociocultural origins of Indonesia's legitimate religions.

Persistently, the Confucian community uses PNPS No. 1/1965 as their legal foundation of recognition.⁵³ Meanwhile, the equal positions in political hierarchy are endeavored through their participation in social harmony. *Gentrika* captured *Agama Khonghucu*'s role in promoting social harmony. It was their participation in the 10th MTQ. (Musabaqah Tilawatil-Qur'an) Events in Manado, 1977. Before that, in Manado, there was a public celebration of Cap Go Meh/Gwan Siau-w in 1977 with the support of the local government and society. During the event, the Confucian community stated their support for the success of the 10th MTQ. Events in Manado.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Tjhie Tjay Ing (1935-2016) was a Confucian high priest who significantly contributed to the construction of Confucian religion in Indonesia (Evi Lina Sutrisno, *Negotiating the Confucian Religion in Indonesia: Invention, Resilience and Revival (1900-2010)* (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2018), 105-8). He was responsible for the *Gentrika* publications (see Picture 2).

⁴⁹ Tjhie Tjay Ing, "Hari Genta Rohani Hari Kebangkitan Roh Agama Khonghucu," *Genta Rohani*, 1983, 8.

⁵⁰ Bing Sidartanto, "Agama Khonghucu Dan Perkembangannya," *Gentrika (Genta Tripusaka)*, 1977, 15.

⁵¹ Hanny Kilapong, "Confucianisme Agama Dan Sifatnya Universal," *Gentrika (Genta Tripusaka)*, 1978, 30.

⁵² Sutrisno, *Negotiating the Confucian Religion in Indonesia: Invention, Resilience and Revival (1900 - 2010)*, 262.

⁵³ Hutomo, "Sambutan Ketua Umum Matakina Pada Peringatan Hari Lahir Nabi Khongcu Ke 2529," 6.

⁵⁴ Manampiring, "Cap Go Meh/ Gwan Siau-w Di Manado Penuh Hikmat," *Gentrika (Genta Tripusaka)*, 1977, 3-5, 25; "Umat Khonghucu SULUT Turut Mensukseskan M.T.Q. Tingkat Nasional Ke X 1977 Di Manado," *Gentrika (Genta Tripusaka)*, 1977, 2, 20.



Picture 3. The atmosphere of Gwan Siau in Manado City⁵⁵

However, when *Agama Konghucu* was turned down as a religion at the 1979 cabinet meeting, it changed the community participation in interreligious relations. They took a series of actions as a community strategy, manifesting their interest in preserving Confucian identity. Here, the community actively participated in the dynamics of power relations by allying with the dominant group.⁵⁶ The community initiative actively supported the harmony program by being more tolerant of other religions. The community's best interests were served by taking action on this issue. In the *Genta Rohani*,⁵⁷ a writer allowed members to practice other religious traditions to a certain extent as a way of showing religious tolerance. This was an example of the community's limited power in the religious field. However, it was also a demonstration of community interest in harmony. Here are two different things that the community did: the first is the action that comes from social and official recognition, which seeks more legitimacy; the second is leniency on "interrituality",⁵⁸ which raises the threshold

⁵⁵ A sea of people filled the streets along which the Sien Bing procession traveled. Manampiring, "Cap Go Meh/ Gwan Siau Di Manado Penuh Hikmat," 4.

⁵⁶ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 92.

⁵⁷ Aceng Panama, "Agama Khonghucu diantara agama besar Lainnya (Bagian Kedua dari tulisan)," *Genta Rohani*, 1989, 16.

⁵⁸ Interrituality refers to a ritual that intentionally incorporates features from various religions. It happened when a ritual consisted of the integration of an element of a different religion, which was deliberately done by religious practitioners. See Kevin Schilbrack, "A Philosophical Analysis of Interrituality," in *Interreligious Relations and the Negotiation of Ritual Boundaries: Interreligious Studies in Theory and Practice*, ed. Marianne Moyaert (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 271-89, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05701-5_22.

of tolerance.

The second point is that *Agama Konghucu* is distinct from other religions. From Bourdieu's perspective, distinction is symbolic capital; it has the property of being known and recognized.⁵⁹ Thus, by considering *Agama Konghucu* as distinct from other religions, the Confucian identity also possesses a set of distinctive and related social traits.

The distinction between *Agama Konghucu* and other religions can be seen in the relationship between *Agama Konghucu* and Buddhism in Indonesia. The New Order government proposed that *Agama Konghucu* be classified as a Buddhist sect.⁶⁰ Ironically, *Agama Konghucu* was also rejected as a belief by the Directorate of Beliefs of the Directorate General of the Ministry of Education and Culture because it lacked a concept of lessons pertaining to the afterlife.⁶¹ After the *Agama Konghucu* were no longer recognized, the Indonesian government offered *Agama Konghucu* to integrate into Buddhist sects. *Agama Konghucu*, however, opposed it.⁶² In addition, the New Order government put Buddhism in a more favorable position than *Agama Konghucu*. The state's support and recognition of Buddhism implied that it held a privileged position among dominated (marginalized) groups (Chinese religions, indigenous religions, and other unrecognized religions during the New Order). From the government's perspective, Buddhism has already assimilated into society, unlike *Agama Konghucu*, which was seen as a Chinese religion.⁶³

During the New Order, the term "Chinese religion (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism)"⁶⁴ was considered a detrimental label, which in the Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967 stated that Chinese religion should be practiced in private instead of in public. The term "Chinese religion" also implied that certain religions were connected to China. This approach relegated those religions to an outsider status and pushed them to the edges of society. Therefore, an assimilation program emerged to sever those connections with Chineseness, which were seen as an obstacle,⁶⁵ and bring them closer to Indonesians. Furthermore, the word "China," when attached to religion, carries an impact that implies it works as an undesired symbolic capital in the New Order. Consequently, a statement that "*Agama Khonghucu* is not a Chinese Religion" by a writer in *Gentrika* reflects the urgency to construct a religious identity as desired by the government.⁶⁶

In this Confucian identity construction process, the role of the media (*Gentrika* & *Genta Rohani*) is in regulating the Confucian discourse through censorship and imposition (as agent rather than field). What was censored is the cultural affinity of

⁵⁹ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 238.

⁶⁰ Departemen Penerangan RI, *Ajaran Khonghucu*, 8.

⁶¹ Departemen Penerangan RI, 9.

⁶² Suryadinata, "Buddhism and Confucianism in Contemporary Indonesia Recent Developments," 83–84.

⁶³ Martin Ramstedt, "Hinduism and Buddhism," in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (London: Routledge, 2018), 267–83.

⁶⁴ Charles A. Coppel, "The Origins of Confucianism as an Organized Religion in Java, 1900–1923," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 12, no. 1 (1981): 191–94, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463400005063>.

⁶⁵ "Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 1967 Tentang Agama Kepercayaan Dan Adat Istiadat Cina," 1967.

⁶⁶ Hermawan, "Agama Khonghucu Dan Kesadaran Nasional," 17.

Konghucu (the word China), which makes it considered a philosophy; what was imposed is *Konghucu* as a religion, including their alteration practice of using Thian and Tuhan. Meanwhile, the government discourse on Pancasila, nationalism, and harmony was perpetuated in the media as an imposition. Exceptions occur when the media tries to limit the impact of changes in the social position of *Agama Konghucu*. In my opinion, the lack of information on *Agama Konghucu's* derecognition showed their affiliation with the Confucian community and suggested that the media was trying to diminish the influence of official discourse on *Agama Konghucu's* religious status. Therefore, the media's actions were also inseparable from the interests of the Confucian community.

***Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani* as an Agent**

Agama Konghucu voices can be classified into four categories of agents. First of all, MATAKIN was a legally institutionalized form of community that was empowered to speak for the Confucian community directly to the government (political field). Second, a Confucian religious leader oversees the community's religious life and represents *Agama Konghucu* at interreligious events. Third, members of the community follow and practice Confucian teachings in their daily lives. Fourth, the publications of the Confucian community, which represent the community's interests while actively reproducing discourse.

The widespread use of the word *Konghucu* in Confucian media demonstrates the media's attempts to impose the religious status of *Konghucu*, thereby suppressing viewpoints that suggest *Konghucu* is not a religion. *Gentrika* also appeared in this case as an institutional agent from the Confucian community. The media's representation of harmony, then, reflects the Confucian community's active reaction to the official harmony discourse. Consequently, the publications transform the discourse on harmony and give *Konghucu's* religious position some legitimacy.

Lastly, the way that religious discourse (the Confucian society) and political discourse (the government) are entangled in the media shows how symbolic struggle is related to other things. In Confucian community publications, both the dominant and the dominated groups tried to accumulate more power while constructing the social world. The difference in effects reflected how powerful the dominant group was compared to the dominated group. According to Confucian publications, the Confucian community that dominated groups aimed to use its limited power to change the social status of the *Konghucu* and suppress their cultural affinities. In addition, according to their magazines, the Confucian community's actions were motivated by their shared interest in *Konghucu's* religious status and the *habitus* embedded in it, even though they were also supporting the dominant group. The actions of the New Order government (the dominant) were meant to implement Pancasila and nationalism in the religious lives of its people. The media also spread these ideas to be consumed by the Confucian community. In the social world, both interest-based actions showed up in the media as interrelated practices that came from the alliance between the dominant and the dominated group, which was constantly changing.

Conclusion

In the New Order, the Confucian community experienced several challenges regarding

their identity. Unfavorable regulations and social perceptions posed several challenges for the Confucian community. These challenges were social, cultural, and political. At the same time, the New Order government preserved total control over Indonesian societies not only through armed forces but also at the discourse level. For many years, print media have become a tool that transposes knowledge and discourse. Realizing this, the New Order government established an institution that strictly controlled these media to prevent the production and distribution of opposing discourse. *Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani* appear in the midst of New Order attempts to control discourse as Confucian community publications that preserve and strategically respond to the situation.

Language can be utilized for dominance and resistance. The struggle between preserving one's Confucian identity and conforming to official government policy was always present in the responses to social change. Here, the media actively resisted power dominance, which formed alliances with the government and included both the government's and the Confucian community's interests in the reproduction of discourse. As the New Order manipulated the social world by altering the discourse and censoring media, this research shows the role of the Confucian publication in transforming discourses to an alternate social reality. The Confucian publication strategy relied on the practice of alteration, the persistent use of agama, and comparisons with other religions to construct Confucian identity. Therefore, *Gentrika* and *Genta Rohani* emerged as both agents and a field, representing the interests of the Confucian community and manipulating the circulating discourses to shape the social reality. However, many Confucian publications have not yet been discovered and recovered, opening up opportunities for research related to the subject.

Acknowledgement

This article forms part of the researcher's master's thesis at the Centre for Religion and Cross-Cultural Studies (CRCS), University of Gadjah Mada. The data compilation has been gathered from Lithang Gerbang Kebajikan in Solo and the MEAP project (Modern Endangered Archives Program) by CRCS. My sincere gratitude extends to Evi Lina Sutrisno, Phd (project manager and researcher's supervisor), Professor Frans Wijzen (researcher's supervisor and methodology advisor), and other members of the MEAP project for including me in it.

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