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## Research Article

# Transformation of Religious Culture in The Tionghoa Ethnic: A Study in The Implementation of Barzanji in Donggala City

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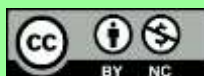
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### Abstract

This research's aims are 1) To Analyze the function of adaptation in the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji; 2) To Analyze the function of achieving goals in the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji; 3) To Analyze the function of integration in the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji ; and 4) To Analyze the function of maintaining patterns in the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji. To answer and analyze the problem formulation, a research with a constructivism paradigm, an approach or a qualitative type of qualitative method is conducted. The unit of analysis is the ethnic Chinese who were determined purposively reinforced by snowball . Research location in Donggala City for 1 (one) year. Types and sources of data consist of; primary data from ethnic Chinese and secondary data from a number of documents, books, references, journals, magazines, and documentation. The technique of collecting data uses interviews, observation and documentation. The results and discussion show: 1) Chinese ethnic groups holding barzanji are a form of adaptation within the framework of religious cultural transformation that starts from knowing, knowing, following, and initiating barzanji implementation; 2) ethnic Chinese hold barzanji because there is a magical and motivated fear of making peace with the social realm; 3) ethnic Chinese held barzanji as a means of social integration; and 4) ethnic Chinese holding barzanji is a reflection of the transformation of religious culture that nurtures and strengthens social solidarity.

**Keywords:** adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance

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### Introduction

Indonesia is classified as the most plural country in the world. Wargahadibrata (2005: 10) emphasized "Indonesian society is a pluralistic society. " Among the various aspects of diversity, ethnic or ethnic aspects are the most prominent. Salim (2006: 6) explained "Indonesia has a number of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups of not less than 1,072." Rahayu (2017: 6) added "Indonesia is one of the most plural societies in terms of ethnicity, language, culture and religion." Based on this reality, it is no exaggeration to say

that Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world.

Ethnic diversity is grateful, but needs to be managed wisely because negligence in empowering ethnic diversity has the potential to cause disharmony which is not impossible to lead to social disintegration. Koentjaraningrat (1993: 3) assessed "the study of ethnicity is more important because some countries in the world are multi-ethnic," and according to Abdullah (2014: 119) "the promotion of identity (something) of a community is increasingly



important to the country." It's a nation like Malaysia, " and of course Indonesia.

One ethnic that needs attention is the Chinese because according to Tan (1981: XIV) "in addition to the large numbers, ethnic Chinese descendants also have a broad economic role." More than that, attention to ethnic Chinese needs to be increased because Koentjaraningrat (1993: 34) recognized "although the Chinese in Indonesia have lived for centuries, they have not yet been able to integrate their lives in ways or systems into Indonesian culture." Burhanuddin *et al.* (1988: 222) found the failure of the Chinese to integrate themselves into Indonesian culture because the Chinese had a feeling of " *chinese culturalism*."

*Chinese culturalism* encourage psychology culturally to think of Chinese culture more than anything else. Abidin (2016: 196) asserted " *Chinese Culturalism* on one hand is positive, that is independence and does not depend on other cultures while on the other hand it has a negative effect that is difficult and hinder the process of cultural identification." Poerwanto (2014: 1) assessed "although Chinese people have Indonesian citizenship status, various symbols of Indonesian national identification are still difficult to absorb in their daily lives."

The failure of the Chinese to enter into the local culture does not seem to apply universally at least in the local context in Donggala City, Central Sulawesi Province, the Chinese succeeded in fusing into the dominant culture of the local community. This qualitative study discovered the fundamental fact that ethnic Chinese in town Donggala held a litany. The Chinese ethnic are not willing to let the newly built house or shop be inhabited, do not want a newly purchased car to be used, and do not sincerely allow a boat or boat that has just been made or purchased to sail across the ocean, before it is offered with the prayer of the Barzanji led by the cleric or the priest.

Some ethnic Chinese families who have held barzanji namely: "1) Ka Cang, 2) family Feng Feng, 3) Ki Cha Hora, 4) Mei Fang, 5) Ang Lang Spot, 6) Mui Mui, 7) Tong Hu, 8) Menga, 9) Ko Ang, and 10) So Sung Guan. The problem (*statement problem*) is that universally Chinese ethnicity is considered to have the attitude and mentality of *Chinese culturalism* so that it fails to build solidarity with the local ethnicity, so logically the ethnic Chinese do not hold barzanji as consistency with *Chinese culturalism*.

The phenomenon of ethnic Chinese hold barzanji is a social fact because according to Maliki (2012: 85) "one form of immaterial social facts is religion which can be a source of collective consciousness." Barzanji is a tradition that cannot be separated from the culture of the Islamic community which is then followed by the ethnic Chinese in the city of Donggala. This phenomenon shows the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese even though the activity does not change the form, structure and mechanism

of barzanji because the transformation of religious culture does not always mean a change in the physical form of barzanji but also changes in mental and ethnic Chinese thought to carry out barzanji. Judge (2016: 24) stated "cultural transformation can be understood as a movement of change in one's mindset or ideas." Syamhari (2015: 24) emphasized "cultural transformation can be interpreted as a change of old culture into a new culture without changing the original form."

Chinese ethnics hold barzanji as a social fact and transformation of culture that is religious will be stronger if it is associated with the function of religion as an instrument of social solidarity. Johnson (1988a: 149) is in line with Jones, Liza, and Shaun (2016: 95) substantially asserted "religion is a very important tool for social solidarity and a powerful fortress in the face of anomalous threats." Nottingham (1985: 36) stated "religion has a role in society as a force that unites and preserves." religion is able to build harmony and balance both internally between followers of religion and ethnicity and externally between adherents of religion and ethnicity.

Based on the thoughts and background above, the Chinese ethnic phenomenon that hold barzanji is examined with the paradigm of social facts with the *grand theory* of structural functionalism oriented towards strengthening social solidarity. Theory of Structural Functionalism is used as a reference in line with Hendropuspito (1983: 26) "Theory of Structural Functionalism sees religion as one of the social institutions that holds an important key to answering the basic needs of society." Strengthening the study orientation, then use Durkheim and Malinowski as eksamplar or referral for Durkheim has studied about the *totem* and Malinowski about *kula*, which is then amplified by the offerings of Smith's theory which is relevant to this study.

Based on the background above, the research problems are:

- 1) What is the function of adaptation to the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji?
- 2) What is the function of achieving goals in the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji?
- 3) What is the function of integration in the transformation of religious culture in ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji?
- and 4) What is the function of maintaining the pattern on the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji.?

The purpose of this study is to analyze the function of barzanji social solidarity which is specifically described as covering; 1) To Analyze the function of adaptation to the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji; 2) To Analyze the function of achieving goals in the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji; 3) To Analyze the function of integration in the transformation



of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji ; and 4) To Analyze the function of maintaining patterns in the transformation of religious culture among ethnic Chinese in the implementation of barzanji.

## Research Methods

### Research Paradigm

This research used the "constructivism paradigm." ( Guba & Lincoln, 2009: 129-135 and Densin & Linclon, 2011: 208). Marvasti (2004: 5) explained "*as the name would indicate, constructionists are concerned with how human interaction helps to create social reality.*" The constructivist paradigm was chosen because it corresponds to the contemporary issues identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 213) "one of them is about action and one of the contents of action in the realm of constructivism is social transformation."

### Research Approach

This research approach or method used qualitative. The choice of a qualitative method because barzanji carried out by ethnic Chinese is an issue that needs to be explored in depth and can only be done effectively if it uses qualitative methods as Strauss and Corbin (2009: 5) believe "qualitative methods can provide complex details about phenomena that are difficult to express by methods quantitative."

### Types of Research

This type of qualitative research is descriptive research that seeks to carry out systematic, factual, accurate, and in-depth explanation of data and facts found in the field related to ethnic Chinese to hold barzanji in Donggala city.

### Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this research is the ethnic Chinese who have held barzanji. Research is descriptive qualitative is not me netapkan amount of the unit of analysis, but to define the elements involved in the engineering unit of analysis used *purposive* reinforced with a *snowball*.

### Research Location and Time

This research was conducted in Donggala city, Banawa sub-district, Donggala District, Central Sulawesi Province. The time of research was 6 months, starting ini February 2019 until February 2020.

### Definition of Operational Concepts

The dominant concepts used in this research are: 1) Structural Functionalism, which is a sociological theory that is under the paradigm of social facts that positions society as a system of balance or *social equilibrium*; 2) Social solidarity is a condition of achieving social life, in which ethnic Chinese and local communities are in harmony and social order; 3) Transformation of religious culture is a change of attitude and behavior of ethnic Chinese culture in accepting and carrying out barzan ji processions in the city

of Donggala; and 4) Barzanji or reading barzanji is the culture and tradition of Islamic religion in the form of reading praise and stories of the life of the Prophet Muhammad which were performed at the time of building or moving a new house, buying or owning other valuable objects.

### Data Types and Sources

In general, data types consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data collected directly from ethnic Chinese, first party data and has not been processed or analyzed by other parties according to the interests and research problems. Secondary data is data obtained from the second party and obtained indirectly because it has been processed, analyzed, and presented by other parties according to the interests and research problems.

### Techniques and Instruments of Data Collection

There are three data collection techniques used in research, namely; 1) Interview with the interview guide instrument; 2) Observation with the observation sheet instrument; and 3) Documentation with the instrument check list and various photos and archives relating to the implementation of the Chinese zodiac barzanji.

### Data Analysis Technique

Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation are qualitative data so that the appropriate data analysis is qualitative analysis. Data analysis in this study uses an interactive model recommended by Miles & Huberman (2007: 20) consisting of stages; data collection, condensation, display, and verification or conclusion drawing.

## Results and Discussion

In *methodological research*, this research used constructivism while sociologically use paradgima "social facts" (Durkheim, 1982: 59) which was then operated with the theory of structural functionalism in the scheme AGIL developed Parsons (Ritzer and Goodman, 2016: 257 and Johnson , 1988 : 130). Hoogvelt (1985: 29-30) stated "society as a type of social system can be analyzed from the four functions required, namely the function of maintaining patterns, functions of integration, functions of achieving goals, and functions of adaptation." Therefore, the analysis of results and research discussion follows the AGIL Scheme as follows:

### Adaptation

Chinese ethnic in Donggala City, majority of Hokkien sub-ethnic and some Hakka sub-ethnic. Since the Dutch colonial era, ethnic Chinese have existed in Donggala City. The introduction of local culture has occurred long before independence, one of which is the barzanji tradition. Barzanji performed local ethnicity with a plurality of contexts, such as; marriage, birth, death, entering the holy month of Ramadan, the change of the kalendar of Islam, but



the most dominant externally is when moving to a new home and buying a new vehicle.

Initially, ethnic Chinese were involved by local communities in various barzanji ceremonies as a reflection of the harmonious interaction and social communication of the people of Donggala City. From knowing, knowing, following, and becoming a barzanji initiator shows that the ethnic Chinese in the city of Donggala have transformed religious culture. This transformation also means that the Chinese ethnic adaptation to the dominant cultural tradition of the local Muslim community is interpreted as a "social system for dealing with the environment" (Herabudin, 2015: 199).

Barzanji, which was originally performed by local ethnic groups as a form of praise and praise to the Prophet Muhammad, was later transformed into a prayer of salvation that did not change the shape, structure, and mechanism of barzanji. The transformation of religious culture is spiritual and sacred when the Chinese move to a new house, and when buying new cars and new ships, they are also thankful and celebrated in the form of the Barzanji tradition.

Objective social facts do not change the rhythm of the barzanji ritual as a form of adaptation in the transformation of religious culture because it is in line with Zaeny (2005: 153) "transformation on one hand can mean the process of change or renewal of social structure, while on the other hand it implies the process of changing values." Syamhari (2015: 24) explained "transformation can be interpreted as a change of old culture into a new culture without changing the original form because of the birth of a new culture purely due to a shift in the behavior of each individual." Ashif (2017: 106) agreed that substantial transformation also means changing mindset, preserving, changing behavior from not implementing barzanji to being a barzanji initiator, recognizing culture, and changing meaning or values as well as cultural transformation when barzanji is reading about great figures (prophet) shifted to prayer and salvation orientation.

### **Goal Attainment**

The theory of structural functionalism in the AGIL scheme is also related to the achievement of goals so it is necessary to explore the motives of ethnic Chinese to initiate barzanji. The general view regarding the activities and rhythms of ethnic Chinese has always been linked to economic actions which Weber (2012: 371) rated as rational actions. This study, did not find economic motives in the rituals of Chinese barzanji, because although the Chinese community was involved in business and commerce, ethnic Chinese consumers did not only come from Donggala City but came from the edges of Donggala City and even Pasangkayu City.

The above reality means that the Chinese ethnic barzanji is not intended to proclaim to consumers the City of Donggala

as the closest environment that has the potential to become consumers that they are economically adaptive oriented towards the environment. In-depth interviews were conducted to find a key ethnic Chinese motive for carrying out barzanji because "there was a feeling of fear if inhabiting a new home, driving a new car, and capturing a new ship, sailing through the sea without being preceded by the barzanji ceremony." Barzanji is a religious tradition, as stated Nurdin (2016: 47) "religion is a social reality, it lives and is manifested in society." Barzanji is also a reality - a social fact that cannot be ignored in the context of Islamic society. Kahmad asserted (2009: 119) "human life that stretched throughout history has always been haunted by what is called religion."

The social facts of "fear" having accidents, fear of not surviving, and fear of suffering if not implementing barzanji can be seen as a reflection of the desire to "make peace with the social environment." This fact can also be seen from the perspective of cross-ethnic dialogue and beliefs oriented towards the achievement of goals or *goal attainment*, namely the functional requirements that actions are directed at the goals. The purpose of holding barzanji for ethnic Chinese is in the barzanji ritual itself, which is to ask for safety (wanting to be safe and secure) for all aspects of life to be managed. This is in line with Weber (2012: 371) "One of the paths to salvation is through ritual activities and pure worship ceremonies, whether religious worship or daily behavior. Such pure ritualism is no different from *magic* due to its effect on life behavior."

### **Integration**

Chinese ethnics cannot carry out barzanji independently because barzanji internal regentors are in the Islamic community. Even the Islamic community did not all become the leaders of the barzanji ritual, most of them remained as makmun. But the conductor of barzanji which in this case is a term for a priest or cleric cannot carry out barzanji independently because he needs followers. Bringing together various elements in the barzanji requires a container. This container is played by the Chinese who succeeded in integrating various systems in barzanji. Social harmony that leads to integration is a requirement that arises because of harmonious interaction and communication between members in the social system.

Chinese ethnic can hold barzanji because the local context that provides convenience, namely openness and high tolerance, is played by the local community. On the other hand, Chinese ethnic also has a high adaptive creativity so that the barzanji can be initiated by ethnic Chinese. Sociologically, Chinese ethnic groups hold barzanji which leads to integration because barzanji can only be done if it unites various elements, at least unites barzanji leaders and followers.



I closely related to the emotional bond guarantee requirements willingness for cooperation. It is difficult to imagine the practice of barzanji by ethnic Chinese Buddhists and Kong Hu Cu, without an orientation to integrate society. Scharf (2005: 93) considers "religion to be functional towards unity," and Smith (1994: 49) asserts "religious or religious ceremonies have a social function of integrating society." In the end, all the values of social integration in the barzanji procession must be interpreted as rational elements because for Durkheim (2011: 615) "there is something eternal in religion which is worship and belief. Humans will not hold ceremonies that they think are irrational."

### **Latent Pattern Maintenance**

Barzanji conducted ethnic Chinese worth *latent pattern maintenance* as a form of maintenance patterns. This research found an interesting fact that ethnic Chinese and local communities were not aware that implementing barzanji as a culture and religious tradition initiated by the Chinese ethnic actually presented a harmonious social network. Barzanji opens a space for interaction and active communication full of kinship. Ethnic Chinese and local communities do not realize (latent function) that they promise to give a social effect of Chinese ethnic voluntary behavior using local language, inclusive, and permeating other religious dimensions such as asking for healing prayers from a priest or religious teacher when experiencing pain. The overall social effects obtained by the Chinese are cumulatively assessed as an effort to seek salvation which leads to social solidarity.

Barzanji strengthened solidarity as research findings were very relevant to Durkheim who found *totems* to strengthen social solidarity and Malinowski in his analysis of the *Kula* system in the Western Pacific also found reinforcement of solidarity. Johnson (1988b: 149) claimed "Durkheim and Parsons believe religion is very important to maintain community integration and solidarity." Schaefer (2012: 11) emphasizes the important role of religion as an amplifier of group solidarity shown by Durkheim through "intensive studies of Arunta, a tribe in Australia."

Based on this analysis, barzanji is a culture and tradition of the Islamic community that is carried out by ethnic Chinese in the functional city of Donggala as an effort to make peace with social nature to ensure social solidarity. Barzanji is a religious cultural tradition that was transformed by the Chinese in their lives, thus strengthening solidarity. Jones, Liza, and Shaun (2016: 95) conclude "religion is a very important tool for social solidarity and is a powerful fortress in the face of anomalous threats." Notingham (1985: 36) "religion helps create integrated social systems of value."

Religion not only answers spiritual needs but also sociological needs namely safety and social

solidarity. Susilo (2014: 30) explained "human behavior and cultural activities carried out subject to the will of the environment including the social environment that implements religious rites. Purna (2013: 124) found "in every implementation of barzanji the value contained in it is the value of social glue." This study reaches the affirmation of functional barzanji in ethnic Chinese social life in line with Hendropuspito (1983: 26) "The theory of functionalism places religion as the main key in answering the human need for salvation as one of the basic human needs."

### **Conclusion**

The conclusions of this research are: 1) the social facts of Chinese ethnic groups holding barzanji are a form of adaptation in the context of religious cultural transformation that begins with knowing, knowing, following, and initiating barzanji; 2) ethnic Chinese held barzanji not as an economic act but as an effort to make peace with social nature and magical fear; 3) ethnic Chinese held barzanji as a means of social integration; and 4) the ethnic Chinese held barzanji to reflect the transformation of religious culture which had an impact on strengthening social solidarity.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with present publication.

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