

The Identity Construction of Urban Chinese-Indonesian Christian Youth: A Textual Analysis on GRII Youth Community's Online Activities

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Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk meneliti konstruksi identitas Kristen anak muda urban Tionghoa-Indonesia melalui analisis terhadap aktivitas daring yang dilakukan oleh pemuda Gereja Reformed Injili Indonesia (GRII). Secara spesifik, penelitian yang dilakukan akan menggunakan analisis tekstual terhadap acara-acara sosial di Facebook, website pemuda GRII, serta channel YouTube *Pro Rege*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa identitas religius komunitas ini terkonstruksi dalam ambivalensi. Sikap ambivalen ini ditunjukkan lewat usaha konstruksi identitas yang berusaha untuk mengikuti perkembangan jaman, walau pada saat yang bersamaan diskursus yang digunakan dalam media-media pemuda GRII memiliki tumpuan pada budaya adiluhung “barat”. Pengangkatan diskursus *high culture* pada akhirnya terlihat sebagai sebuah upaya pembedaan identitas yang dibutuhkan oleh sebuah komunitas yang memiliki dua variabel minoritas dalam konteks Indonesia, yaitu ke-Tionghoa-an dan kekristenan. Artikel ini memiliki berkesimpulan bahwa pemuda GRII sebagai representasi dari anak muda urban Kristen Tionghoa-Indonesia berinteraksi dalam siklus konsumsi dan produksi kultural terhadap budaya adiluhung “barat”, dan hal ini berujung pada konstruksi identitas kultural tertentu dalam ranah religiusitas urban.

Kata kunci: Tionghoa-Indonesia, Religiusitas, Identitas, *Youth Culture*, *High Culture*, Kristen

Introduction

High Culture is a form of culture that is strongly related to modernity and the western world (Markus 2014, 127; Epstein 2015). Embodied in the diverse arts from the age of *Renaissance* to *Aufklarung*, the discourse of *high culture* and its history have been perceived as the “true” definition of culture itself. However, an idea that a particular form of culture has become the *crème de la crème* of human civilization is not an unproblematic ideas. Cultural critics have seen many issues related to *high culture* that convey unequal power relations manifested in elitism,

messiah complex, and many problems of the bourgeois society (Williams 1960, 347). According to Markus, for instance, such concept of high culture creates an essential distinction (Gans and Phillips 1979) that, to an extreme, even sees the low, popular “mass” culture as something even threatening (Markus 2013, 128).

“Refined culture was not only in fact the culture of a dominant social elite, it was also understood as solely befitting its members and destined for them. It was a constituent of a way of life deemed appropriate to their position, making them capable of fulfilling their social functions. The larger part of the population was not only in fact excluded – due to the lack of the appropriate economic, social and cultural resources – from refined culture. It was also thought of as being completely unsuitable for them, and as such perhaps even dangerous, creating unfulfillable aspirations and expectations. In early modernity popular culture was conceived both as “low” and legitimate.” (Markus 2014, 132)

With the rise of postcolonialism and postmodern thoughts, however, the elitistic *high culture* is “forced” to gradually move away to the margins of human society. Such gradual movement to the popular taste would of course then be a troublesome notion for those who anchor themselves in *high culture*, seeing this circumstance as something “stupid and worrying” (Epstein 2015). It is quite ironic to see that in a world which is contemporarily very much addicted with relativism, the binary opposition between the “high” and “low” culture still persists even until this day. Such debate, although having already been a complicated one, is basically enacted through the focus on the realm of the “western” world, especially in terms of philosophical notions.

When one considers the idea that culture is something specific and dynamic (Williams 1960, 314), the implication that follows would be that the political and social context of a society would influence how a certain form culture is produced and consumed. This is the case also applies to high culture in many different parts of the world. As any other forms of *cultures*, *high culture* becomes something that is neither aloof nor immune from a particular culture’s social construction. Many researchers have focused on how “western” high culture operates in its own realm, but few have analyzed how it is applied in different societies, especially postcolonial countries. The lack of focus on the contextuality of high culture in

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postcolonial countries itself encourages a research that aims to see how an urban Chinese-Indonesian Christian Youth community uses “western” high culture as their efforts of constructing a particular form of identity.

What is quite challenging on highlighting such topic is that the community itself has a lot of variables. Ethnicity, Religion, Age, and Urban culture continuously interact with one another that it is not a simple matter to discuss a constructed identity. In particular, one may posit a question, *how does a Chinese-Indonesian perceive “western” high culture?* Such question would lead to different answer with question considering the variable of religiosity (*how does a Christian perceive “western” high culture?*)? The same problem would rise in investigating the relation between high culture and youth or high culture and urban life. Before taking a look at the four interconnected variables, it is necessary to investigate how each variable react to western “high” culture.

From a disputable point of view, the two variables of Chineseness and Youth are apparently having an odd and quite antagonistic relation with “western”, “high” culture. A research, for instance, critically examines how Chineseness and “western culture” has a mutually negating relation to one another, putting Chinese people who practice western culture in a difficult position among fellow Chinese (Ang 1993). Another research indicates that there is a connection between youngsters and working-class, structure-deviating culture⁶ (Bennett, 1999). As for dimension of urban culture, “western” *high culture* has quite a difficult position since different cities would convey different atmosphere, and one municipal culture would be influenced by the (pre)existing socio-political contexts and relations to the “west”. Considering the case of Bangalore, nonetheless, modern urban youth identity can be inferred to be continually constructed through the consumption of western music, albeit a popular and not a “high” one (Saldanha 2010). While chineseness, youth-ness, and urban culture apparently do not get

⁶ Although Bennett (1999) mentions such *subcultural* notion in examining youth culture, the notion is contested with a proposed neo-tribalism perspective, in which the counter-cultural discourses in youth may transform into a consumeristic culture that sustains capitalism.

along with western “high” culture, it seems that only with the sphere of Christianity western “high” culture can have a quite obvious synergical connection. This will be a condition that is to be examined in the case of *Gereja Reformed Injili Indonesia* (GRII)’s youth.

The methodology used in this research is discourse analysis. Examining several examples of “western” high cultures which are used within the youth community’s circulation of activities, this research views such high “art” as texts, which are consequentially to be interpreted. The interpretation of these cultural texts will also cover the question of how these cultural artefacts are used in order to reinforce certain ideologies in the efforts of constructing a particular identity. Such identity is then to be linked with Indonesia’s socio-cultural context, particularly in how Indonesian society creates a relationship between native Indonesians and Chinese Indonesians.

GRII Youth: A Church-Based Chinese-Indonesian Christian Community

GRII Youth’s existence is very much linked to GRII’s stance in the context of Chinese churches in Indonesia. GRII was founded in 1989 by Rev. Dr. Stephen Tong. Although GRII has never proclaimed itself as a church for Chinese, it is undeniable that its congregation is dominated by Chinese descents. According to Chang-Yau Hoon, Tong “prudently combined neo-Calvinist doctrines with evangelical practices in aiming to reactualize the Reformed faith and revitalize the evangelical spirit among Indonesian churches” (Chang-Yau Hoon 2015, 13). Having been moving for several times, the congregation of GRII finally had their own place to perform their religious activities in 2008, and this event was marked by the establishment of Reformed Millennium Center of Indonesia: a large complex consisting of a megachurch (Messiah Cathedral), a concert hall (Aula Simfonia Jakarta), a museum (Sophilia Fine Art Center), and a school (Calvin Christian School). While Chang-Yau Hoon’s research states that the church “entrusts a significant number of non-Chinese in key ministries and leadership positions”, in reality, the majority of pastors and congregations involved in the ministries are still Chinese Indonesians. GRII even becomes a more complicated

place when one considers its infatuation with western high culture. Taking into account the fact that GRII is operating (or at least started) in a Southeast Asian country, the issue is not getting any simpler.

Meanwhile, along with the development of GRII, the youth in the movement also develops its own sphere. Such case is seen with the proliferation of GRII's youth's events and organizations. Over the years, GRII has become a fortress for its youth to organize activities such as National Reformed Evangelical Teen Convention (NRETC), develop a fellowship called *FIRES*, publishing a monthly magazine named *Pillar*, and most recently, forming an orchestra group called Jakarta Christian Youth Orchestra (JCYO). Aside from their regular service, the life of GRII's youth community often involves using Calvinist theology to form a constructed Christian(ized) worldview that will equip the youth to view the world through a particular set of beliefs. In addition to the forementioned activities, GRII's youngsters also have their own Facebook account (Remaja GRII Pusat), a website containing numerous articles and picquotes (pemuda.stemi.id), and a YouTube channel (*Pro Rege*). Bearing the question aiming to investigate what kind of identity is constructed by the youth in this Chinese-Indonesian Christian community and how certain discourses are used in the process of constructing such identity, this paper focuses its textual analysis on the three corpuses of GRII's Youth's online activities: GRII's youth Facebook account, Articles in pemuda.stemi.id, and *Pro Rege* YouTube Channel.

CASE 1: Visuals used in GRII Youth's Facebook Account

As a relatively new form of medium, Facebook is a platform that is used by many youth communities, including GRII's. There are numerous activities that are done through the account, but mostly it involves quotes sharing and event publication. Some older posts revealed that the account was also used for announcement, but it is very likely that the account's activity declines in frequency. Putting aside the issue of activity's intensity, this section focuses on the visuals used for event publication in the social media platform, carving out meaning that is imposed within the production of the visuals and the expected forms of consumptions. In

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particular, the textual analysis will focus on two event publication that uses certain visual containing “western” high culture.

Among many texts shared within the Facebook account, one outstanding event that uses an image of “western” high culture would be the Teen and Youth National Evangelical Convention in 2015 (*Konvensi Injil Nasional Jakarta 2015 Bagi Pemuda dan Mahasiswa*). Originally posted in *Reformed Injili Events* Facebook account and reposted in *Persekutuan Remaja GRII* facebook page, the post gathered around 176 likes. The brochure itself is seen as a combination between a painting of the crucifixion, an image of Bernini’s *David*, and a photo of mass evangelization with hundreds or thousands of people participating. The theme for the convention was “*Pemuda dan Hidup yang Menang*” (literally: “Youth and A Victorious Life”).

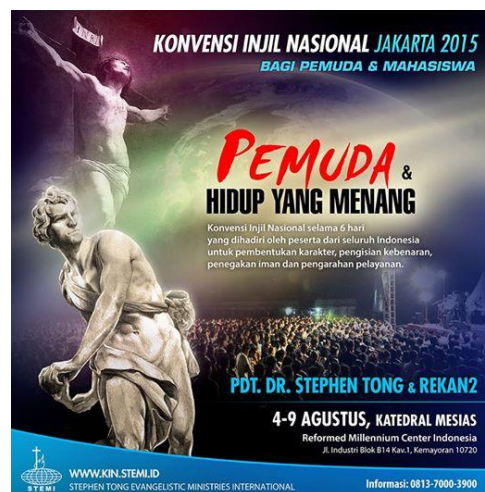


Figure 1. Digital Brochure for Teen and Youth National Evangelical Convention 2015

The most prominent figure that one could notice would be the image of *Bernini’s David*. The image of the sculpture is used not only for this particular youth event, but events such as National Reformed Evangelical Teen Convention (NRETC) and National Reformed Evangelical Youth Convention (NREYC) also use this image in their publication media, especially brochures. David himself is a biblical figure who is famous for defeating a foe depicted to be so strong and huge named Goliath. In the biblical context, David was fighting for Israel (God’s people) against the Philistines. The tale said that David was victorious over Goliath over a

single shot from his slingshot, accompanied with a proclamation that God is with him. This will be related to how youth identity in GRII is constructed.

It is quite unique to see Bernini's David to be associated with GRII's youth identity. First of all, there are many biblical characters (such as Maria, Joseph, Stephen, Rachel, John, Deborah, Abel, Peter, etc.) that can be used for youth events. The position of David as a king and as a victorious hero might be deemed fit to construct a certain youth identity that the community is trying to create. Furthermore, there have been several depictions of *David* throughout the history of high culture, namely Michelangelo's and Verrocchio's. Each of this artwork depicts mildly different time settings. While Michelangelo's *David* is portraying a setting before the battle with Goliath, Verrocchio's *David* depicts the biblical figure's victory in the battle's aftermath ("The Three Davids" n.d.). However, Bernini made his *David* to embody the very exact scene when the biblical figure was going to throw the rock to Goliath using his slingshot (Lubow, 2008 October). Looking upon this context and connecting it with Teen and Youth National Evangelical Convention's use of the sculpture's image, the use of Bernini's *David* seems to signal the ongoing time of battle that is associated with youth identity. As Calvinism is the mainframe of GRII's reformed theology (Chang-Yau Hoon, 2015), the intended battle within the context of a religious community would be a theological warfare, with the underlying assumption "total depravity of man", "limited atonement", and "perseverance of the saints" (Baan, 2009). Putting forward the doctrine of predestination (which is specifically represented in the three theological points), the implication of such Calvinist theology is the construction of "the (chosen) saints" and "the (unchosen) others", a repetition of the concept of *holy* and *unholy*/wretched in other Abrahamic religions. The *holy* is certainly represented by Bernini's *David*, which is specifically put under the image of the crucified Christ. On the other hand, the *unholy* other represented by Goliath in the bible is not depicted in the brochure itself, creating a scene as if David (as the representation of the holy *youth*) is facing an invisible enemy. In a more straightforward expression, the realm of

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GRII youth identity formation uses high culture and (neo)Calvinism to work together in an act of performing identity politics. This is similar to the case of Chinese-American Protestant Christians, whose theology might result in a “separatist form of evangelization” (Tseng 2006, 131).

Another case would be taken from a smaller-scaled event with another specific form of visual circulating within the Facebook account. The visual has a stronger metaphorical message of *holy* and *unholy* binary opposition. Posted on April 22, 2015 through *Persekutuan Remaja GRII Pusat*’s account, the digital brochure served as announcement to GRII youth. The visual uses an image of Caravaggio’s *The Calling of St. Matthew*, a painting that portrays the scene where Jesus came to Matthew (who was then a tax collector, an occupation culturally condemned and shunned upon by the Jewish community) and called him to be one of the apostles (Worner 2017, Feb 6). The visual is then accompanied with the fellowship’s theme, *It’s a Beautiful Life*.

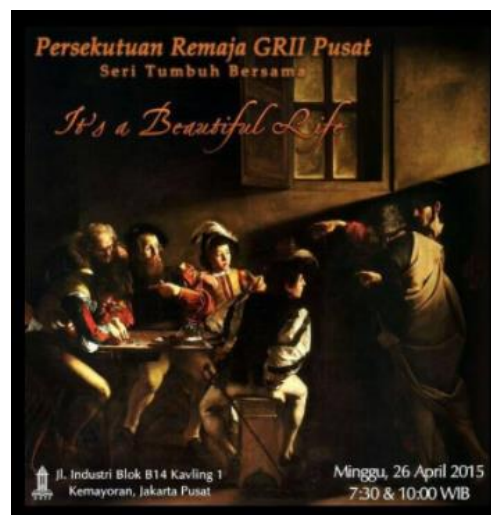


Figure 2. Brochure for GRII Youth Fellowship, *It’s a Beautiful Life*.

Again, there have been plenty of renaissance, baroque, and classical paintings that depict the calling of several biblical figures. For instance, there is Ghirlandaio’s *The Calling of St. Peter and St. Andrew* (Renaissance period) and Sir Joshua Reynold’s *the calling of Samuel* (Classical Period). However, the particular painting chosen for this event would be Caravaggio’s. Compared to the previous

visual used for the National Evangelical Convention event, this painting does not convey the slightest atmosphere of a battle. It evokes a calmer, yet (melo)dramatic atmosphere of an afternoon where light shines down upon Matthew and some of his friends. Such emotion is also emphasized with the written phrase “*Beautiful Life*” put over the head of the tax collectors.

Although there is a difference in theme, identity politics also happens in the use of such painting, albeit through a subtler element. The visual also construct a similar form of youth identity in a bolder symbol of *artistic technique*, which is *chiaroscuro*, a technique that emphasizes the contrast between light and darkness. *Chiaroscuro*'s light and dark is not also used for aesthetical purposes in creating a vibrant atmosphere using light, but the technique is also “a literal and figurative vehicle to mark the distinction between good and evil” (Greenberg 1971, 177). In Caravaggio's painting of *The calling of St. Matthew*, it is noticeable that the room St. Matthew and fellow tax collectors is a dirty one, but the light from outside (and uncoincidentally coming from the same direction that Jesus is standing) shines upon Matthew's face. As this painting is used to emphasize the event *It's A Beautiful Life*, it is possible to infer that being called by Jesus is seen as something beautiful. Adding the element of Caravaggio's *chiaroscuro*, it marks a similar theme of Calvinist theology imposed within Bernini's *David*: that the chosen (or the called) ones are the good ones, and “others” are not represented within the visuals. The use of *high culture*, then, reinforces the element of religiosity more than it does to other variables of ethnicity, age, and urban culture.

CASE 2: Picquotes and Short Essays on STEMI Youth Website

Stephen Tong Evangelical Ministries International (STEMI) was founded in 1978, roughly a decade before the establishment of GRII, and it “equips people for full-time ministry” (Tong 2010). STEMI has been active ever since, and the existence of STEMI is very close t GRII's activities. In many events such as NRETC, STEMI often deploys its youths in order to participate in services as committees. Bearing the name of Stephen Tong within the name, STEMI's youth are members

of GRII who participate in the ministries. The youth of STEMI use pemuda.stemi.id as their official website which records their activities and publishes their thoughts. The site contains picquotes (quotes in a picture), articles, *Pro Rege* channel, and short information about Stephen Tong and his ministries. This section focuses on several picquotes and articles which participate in the construction of youth identity.

Several picquotes (attached at the end of this paper) are seen within the STEMI youth's website. The pictures contain quotes from various theologians around the world, and some of these pictures also function as archives for important quotations coming from STEMI (and GRII) events. Several quotes are found to be used for the National Evangelical Convention for Teen and Youth in 2015, using the same image of Bernini's *David*. The quotes are mainly (theologically, and discursively) thought-provoking, and it has alarmed sense of intense rigidity in terms of striving for the "true" Christian faith. In proposing discourses of "the true(st)" Christian faith, one would form a binary opposition of what is true and what is false. This is the case that happens within the displays of the picquotes.

In particular, one picquote from James White, a theologian, says "to preach false gospel is to commit eternal murder". White's words imply that there is such thing as "true gospel", and failing to understand it would bring harmful consequences to others. The understanding of the gospel casts aside the possibility of different interpretations within different theological perspectives. In perceiving this quote to be displayed in STEMI's youth's website, the implication of the quote is that the youth identity in STEMI is rooted in understanding and reflecting the "true gospel". Another quote from another (male) theologian Steven J Lawson says "The battle for personal holiness begins with the battle for the Christian mind". The quote represents the construction of a *holy* identity, but one that begins with the change of mind. The theological quote noticeably has a Cartesian sense of identity that starts with one's mind and its thoughts. Displaying the quote on their website, it shows that STEMI's youth believes in the existence of *holy identity* that starts with the understanding of Christian worldview.

It is necessary to note that the website provides no “original” context for many of the quotes. However, it is safe to assume that STEMI and Calvinist theology as the meta-framework can be used as a context to understand the existence of the picquotes. With the emphasis on a clear distinction of what is right (or sinful, worldly, secular) and what is wrong (or holy, heavenly, sacred), the picquotes and the articles finally form another discursive form of “high culture”, which is a “high theology”. The picquotes show tendencies to encourage youth to understand a particular (calvinist) theology that will help them to become better Christians, and such theology is the “true” one that will construct the “true” Christian mind. This notion is specifically to be proposed in the articles, which contain dualistic perspective that separates which are *holy* and which are not.

Written by anonymous authors who provided their mere initials, the website contains several articles which reinforce the binary opposition in theo-cultural discourses. The articles are typically three-paragraph long, and while containing theological perspectives and some (mildly) critical analysis from a christian perspective to the world’s recent conditions and youth “struggles”, the language used within the articles are quite cordial, embodying the (urban) youth culture that rarely articulates formal expressions. Despite the colloquial use of language, the topics are explicitly Christian, particularly a type of christianity influenced by Calvinism.

Most of the articles put Christian faith and the world against one another. One article, for instance, has a title of *Sahabat dan Musuh* (“Friend or Foe”), but the two-paragraph article connects friendship and rivalry to the relation with God and the world, stating that befriending and becoming similar with the world means drifting away and apart from Christ (*Sahabat dan Musuh* 2016, August 18). Another dichotomous article, *Sakral dan Sekuler* (“Sacred or Secular”) has a slightly different argument. In contesting the sacred and secular, the article provides a synthesis between the two, which is actually reverting (or *reforming*) back to the sacred, stating that everything is sacred for a Christian (“*Sakral dan Sekuler*” 2017, May 1). The cynical, pessimistic view on the world is more

explicit in the article *Menyadari akan Dosa* (“Being aware of one’s sin”). The article states that “we live in an age that has no sensitivity on sin” (“*kita hidup di zaman yang tidak memiliki sensitivitas akan dosa*”), blaming the condition on a somewhat simplistic understanding of postmodernism (“Menyadari akan dosa” 2017, May 15; “Doktrin dan Pengajaran, Masih Pentingkah?” 2015, March 2) and calling the youths to be like David⁷ (“Menyadari akan dosa” 2017, May 15).

The articles overall argument display a constant solipsistic rejection to the world’s culture, inviting the youth to revert back to the element of religiosity, with numerous emphasis on having a good relationship with God. These arguments then construct an identity of Christian youth that is not actively involved in the popular culture, but Christian youth is defined as a person who knows the line between good and evil, and eventually chooses goodness over evil. This perspective continues in their YouTube channel, *Pro Rege*.

CASE 3: Pro Rege Channel

A somewhat participatory form of youth engagement with christian and youth culture outside the community is more visible through YouTube’s *Pro Rege* channel. Having a literal meaning “for the King”, *Pro Rege* channel is STEMI’s youth’s YouTube channel which examines different issues according to christian worldview. The account’s description is quote bold with a somewhat colonialistic tone (“our vision is to declare Christ’s domination over every aspect of human life”⁸) but has not become controversial in the wider public sphere. The videos are

⁷ Who seems to be STEMI’s youth’s favorite symbolical old testament biblical figure.

⁸ Original bahasa Indonesia version: “Pro Rege Channel adalah saluran multimedia dari STEMI yang mengajak kaum muda untuk memikirkan berbagai topik kehidupan berdasarkan cara pandang Kristiani. Kami percaya bahwa agar gereja Tuhan dapat membawa dampak dalam dunia, generasi muda harus menaklukkan segala pikiran di bawah Kristus, yang adalah penakluk maut, penakluk hidup, dan penakluk dunia. **Visi kami adalah menyatakan dominasi Kristus atas seluruh aspek dalam kehidupan manusia** karena “... Allah sangat meninggikan Dia dan mengaruniakan kepada-Nya nama di atas segala nama, supaya dalam nama Yesus bertekuk lutut segala yang ada di langit dan yang ada di atas bumi dan yang ada di bawah bumi, dan segala lidah mengaku: “Yesus Kristus adalah Tuhan,” bagi kemuliaan Allah, Bapa!” (Fil. 2:9 -11)”.

Description retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEZr5qEMfYVy99CY1csj5Tg/about> June 7, 2017, 6:09 AM

mostly presented by the same two youths, one of whom is a female and another is a male. Both of the presenters are Chinese-Indonesians. The YouTube account currently has 559 subscribers with 44,742 views³. This section focuses on three videos in the channel, namely *Musik dalam Ibadah* (Music in congregational service), *Internet and Incarnation*, and *Kebosanan* (Boredom).

The first video, *Musik dalam ibadah*, begins with the importance of music and the powerful effect of music. The whole video is accompanied by a classical piece played with string instruments. The discussion then tackles youth's perception on "modern" and "old" music used in church services. However, the video does not favor the common youth culture (namely in charismatic movement, although was not explicitly mentioned in the video) which often adopts a more modern-styled songs in their act of praise and worship. In fact, the presenter argues that playing one's favorite song in a service is similar to playing *dangdut* in front of the Queen of England, insisting that if a person wants to go for a happy song, the person should go to a karaoke instead and not a church (Pro Rege 2015, Oct 5). The video ends with a quote from a religious, famous Baroque musician Johann Sebastian Bach, declaring that "The Aim and Final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the human soul". This video clearly maintains the distinction between high culture and "low" culture, arguing that music in a church should be something that is worthy to be presented to God, making the Supernatural Being analogous to the Queen of England. The construction that the video is trying to make is that a service, like a royal palace, is a place that should deserve *high culture* while "low" culture such as *dangdut* is an appropriate discourse to be put within a church. Considering that *dangdut* is the music of the common people (Weintraub 2010, 3-6), this construction of youth identity widens the gap between the Chinese(Indonesian) Christian (youth) culture and Indonesian middle-class (youth) culture that exist since colonial times (Dawis 2010, 23), rendering it impossible for low cultures such as *dangdut* to be accepted within the context of church service and this particular youth community.

The second video, titled *Internet and Incarnation*, sees the age of Internet as a time that brings about so many problems due to the nature of the Internet itself.

Instead of addressing the socio-cultural contexts which influence contemporary youth culture to be closely related to the internet, the presenter argues that the whole problem with “the spirit of the internet is a spiritual problem” before finally proceeding to contrast the spirit of Internet (identified as quick, full of information, active and expressive, but losing essence) and the spirit of (Christ’s) Incarnation (Pro Rege 2016, Oct 3). Such argument once again resonates the dichotomy that separates Christian faith and the world, constructing youth identity that does not eagerly participate with the world’s culture. Internet is once again seen as something “low”, while Incarnation (theology) is perceived as something “high”, to the point of extreme elitistic pessimism that is represented by the final quote in the video⁹. The dualistic division is also reinforced once again with the use of music. In the two-minute video, light swing jazzy music is used throughout the first one minute as the video talks about the internet. When the presenter starts to address that the internet signifies a “spiritual problem”, the video then starts to change its music into orchestral (if not classical) music marked with the sound of string instruments.

The third video, titled *Kebosanan* examines the problem of boredom within youth (Pro Rege 2016, May 1). The presenter believes that boredom leads people to seek for sensation, mentioning Facebook, food, and (ironically) YouTube. A scene of the video also depicts several youngsters playing online first-person shooter games. Such activities are then labeled as something that is corrupted and wrong¹⁰; that people seek for the wrong things in the wrong place. The presenter then proceeds to give an answer that boredom can only be resolved by Christ alone, quoting Augustine’s famous remarks: “Our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you.” What is quite interesting to note is that instead of seeing how youth culture might be something that youths can use to express their identity and combat boredom, the video sees that spirituality is a panacea of all boredom.

⁹ “I fear the day technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots. What they sell is not information technology, but information anxiety” (Neil Postman)

¹⁰ Indonesian: “Pencarian yang makin rusak dan makin *nggak beres*.”

The idea of resolving boredom with spirituality forms a somewhat odd but unique identity for youths as this notion takes Christian spirituality (with a certain set of doctrines and ideology, for certain) to the sphere of youth's private lives.

In brief, *Pro Rege channel's* videos are reproducing STEMI youth's articles in audiovisual form of three-minute videos. The use of high culture, the dominant dichotomous ideologies, and the (discursive) separation from the world work altogether to construct a particular identity for this Chinese-Indonesian Christian Youth community. The result of such construction is an identity dominated by ("western") theological discourse and ("western") high culture.

Further Analyses

Thus far, the visuals used in the youth event publication online, the articles and picquotes in STEMI youth's website, and *Pro Rege* YouTube videos have several similar characteristics to be identified. First of all, the discourses used by the youth community proposes an argument that sees the world through a binary opposition with Christian spirituality as the final resolution. Second, the arguments often put forward and use "western" high culture in strengthening the discourses these people believe in. Third, high culture is often depicted as synergical to Christian faith, and this is constructed to be the opposite of the worldly, low cultures. Fourth, the position of the youth community itself is disconnected with other youth communities and popular youth culture, making a somewhat solipsistic form of identity. Fifth, the use of high culture is also used in ambivalence. For instance, in criticizing the internet as a "low" culture, the community still uses YouTube, weblogs, and Facebook account in sharing their opinions.

After identifying how high culture constructs the community's identity, it is necessary to note that the analysis thus far still lacks of investigation on the role of Chineseness. This important element actually serves as one underlying socio-cultural reason for such elitistic identity to exist. According to Dawis (2010, 178), Chinese-Indonesians feel that they are in a constant state of "fake security", in the

sense of they have been the victims of scapegoating in various historical contexts that are often tied with politics. With the existence of prolonging identity politics, it is understandably plausible for a community to form an exclusive form of identity, separating themselves from the oppressing “other”. Such identity formation is then done through multiple ways, with the sole goal of the community’s survival in the quest for meaning.

The Chinese-Indonesian Christian Youth community, in this context, forms a kind of identity that separates them from Christians and non-Christians alike. In terms of facing fellow Christians, Reformed people believe that they are a “minority” in the face of charismatic movement (Marris 2009) and protestants alike (Tong 2010). This is one way to look at the elitistic identity *actively* formed by the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Youth community. On the other hand, Chinese-Indonesian churches are culturally diverse and non-homogeneous, and with different waves of globalization, there has been demarcation between Christian communities as well (Chang-Yau Hoon 2015). The existence of GRII and STEMI’s youth community could be seen as something happens in a *passive* sense in which Chinese-Indonesian Christian communities have already been demarcated when Chinese-Indonesians are caught up in the tension between assimilation, acculturation, or persevering in preserving their own culture (Chang-Yau Hoon 2015, 15).

In terms of Chinese-Indonesian’s stance towards non-Indonesians, what is uniquely done by this community is to imitate the western culture. This is an odd gesture to make since the power relation that is happening in the context of Indonesia is between native Indonesians and Chinese-Indonesians. However, mimicry often happens in the relation of the colonized to the colonizer (Bhabha 1994). Several issues occur when this Chinese-Indonesian youth community uses “western” high culture and adopt it as their own. First of all, the element of the occidental gaze is missing within Indonesia’s context. The Chinese-Indonesian youth community to mimic “western” high culture does not receive approval or at least immediate response from the “western” world itself. With the absence of the

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western observer, the only logical explanation for this act of mimicry would be in facing the gaze of native Indonesians. Second, even if the western gaze is present, the act of mimicry from Chinese communities are often shunned upon by the Occident, and this is proven within the context of classical music in Chinese-American communities. Asian musicians are often judged to be performers who play *with* technicalities but *without* soul (Yang 2007). This affirms the mimicry that happens in Bhabha's original term, "almost the same, *but not quite*" (1994, 86). In other words, even if the mimicry is successful, it would be something that is deemed inauthentic, an entity no more than a fake replica of the original culture. This leads to the conclusion that, although Bhabha believe that mimicry could be "disruptive to [the occident's] authority" (Bhabha 1994), there would be some difficulties in facing rejection from the strive for authenticity. Third, if the Chinese-Indonesian youth community is facing threats from (Moslem) native Indonesians (Chang-Yau Hoon 2015), it would be logical for the mimicry to imitate the dominant culture of the existing contextual structure (in the sense of the Chinese-Indonesian youth community tries to imitate Moslem native Indonesian culture). However, such is apparently not the case. The separation of identity is done by the Chinese-Indonesian community's relation to western culture, and identity politics persists.

In looking at this complicated issue, the explanation for these problems might be a slight shift in Bhabha's concept of mimicry. Bhabha states that "the menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence in the colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (1994, 88). Bhabha's concept of mimicry is a diatonic relation between the orientalized colonized and its occidental colonizer. The mentioned quotation looks at the possibility for one party to shift the power relation with another. However, when one considers the element of Chinese-Indonesians, they become a minority within a postcolonial country. The power relation interacts between Western, Indonesian, and Chinese cultures in which Chinese-Indonesians are arguably the minority of minorities. In looking at GRII and STEMI's youth culture, apparently the Chinese-Indonesian youth community

imitates “*western*” high culture *as a resistance* towards discrimination that Chinese-Indonesian has faced by native Indonesians. As both native Indonesians and Chinese-Indonesians are both formerly colonized by western people, western people could be used by Chinese-Indonesians as a sort of cultural capital that strengthens their position amidst the complicated, noisy issue of identity politics between native Indonesians and Chinese-Indonesians.

Conclusion

GRII and STEMI’s youth culture adopts “western” high culture and theologies in order to construct a particular form of identity. Although the youth community itself consists of multiple complex variables (Chinese-Indonesian, Youth, Christian, Urban), the dominant identity that is articulated is the element of christianity. Using “western” high culture (particularly images of sculpture, calvinism, and classical music) as a discourse to support their christian identity, the construction often involves a repetitive binary opposition in examining the world and its multiple issues. The construction of such identity then results in a form of exclusive elitism that separates themselves from Christians and non-Christians alike. Nevertheless, their efforts in mimicking “western” high culture is a part of identity politics that can be explained through examining the position of Chinese-Indonesians in the context of postcolonial Indonesia. While their mimicry is quite problematic in theory, the gesture of adopting “western” high culture is a political strategy which strengthens their position as a Chinese-Indonesian youth community with their own space and cultural identity that is rooted in Christian worldviews.

Due to this paper’s limitations, there would be possibilities for future researches to investigate overlooked aspects that may have played role in identity construction using “western” high cultures. This research paper also has not examined the historicity of high culture in different postcolonial countries. Interreferencing subjects with the same matter would also contribute to the complexity of discussion about “western” high culture’s prolonged life in

countries which have had a foretaste of them in the past. Comprehension on native Indonesian's views on this community would also be an important research niche that, if to be explored by other researches, would enhance the understanding on "western" high culture's multilayered positions within the context of Indonesia.

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Attachment: Sample picquotes from Pemuda.Stemi.id

One leak
WILL SINK A SHIP;
ONE SIN
WILL DESTROY A
sinner.

JOHN BUNYAN

4-9 AGT

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PDT. DR. STEPHEN TONG & REKAN-REKAN

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3 MORE DAYS

THE BATTLE FOR PERSONAL
Holiness
BEGINS WITH THE BATTLE FOR
THE CHRISTIAN MIND

Steven Lawson

SPIK 2016 SABTU, 14 MEI, 9.00-16.00

PDT. DR. STEPHEN TONG
PDT. AGUS MARJANTO
PDT. ANTONIUS LIN
PDT. BILLY KRISTANTO

PDT. IVAN KRISTIONO
PDT. MICHAEL DENSHOOK

KRISTUS
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WORLDLINESS
IS WHATEVER MAKES
Sin LOOK **NORMAL**
&
RIGHTEOUSNESS
LOOK
Strange.

David Wells

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REMAJA: 24-28 JUNI
PEMUDA & MHS: 4-9 AGUSTUS

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6 MORE DAYS

TO PREACH
A FALSE GOSPEL
IS TO COMMIT
ETERNAL MURDER

James White

SPIK 2016 • SABTU, 5 NOV 09.00-16.00

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Sang PENGANTARA

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