

Chapter 5

Harnessing Nationalism: Competition in Chinese Education in the Late-Colonial Dutch East Indies

Kankan Xie
Peking University

The turn of the 20th century is a critical watershed in the history of the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia, DEI hereafter). With the introduction of the Ethical Policy (*Ethische Politiek*) in 1901, Dutch colonial authorities proclaimed that they would shoulder more moral responsibilities by bringing social progress to the colony while improving the living standard of their colonial subjects. To the Indies Chinese minorities, however, the implementation of the Ethical Policy generated rather complex repercussions. With this shift, the colonial government made the Chinese scapegoats of the evil colonial exploitation of the past. In economic domains, the Chinese community started to experience unprecedented hardships due to the colonial authorities' effort to abolish the monopoly concession system. The aim was to end Chinese dominance in profitable businesses such as opium, pawnshops, and money lending.¹ Meanwhile, the Indies Chinese also felt increasingly deprived of opportunities to access benefits enjoyed by the indigenous population under the supposedly benevolent Ethical Policy. While more native elites gained access to public education, Chinese students admitted to public schools remained extremely limited. Frustrated by such treatment, the insecurity of Indies Chinese soon developed into a more vocal demand for equal rights.

Around the same time, the Indies Chinese founded the Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan (中华会馆 or Chinese Chamber, THHK hereafter) in 1900, with a

1. The monopoly concession system started during the Dutch East India Company (VOC) period. The Dutch selected wealthy Chinese merchants to help govern the Chinese community by rewarding them with privileges to run profitable businesses. See James R. Rush, "Social Control and Influence in Nineteenth Century Indonesia: Opium Farms and the Chinese of Java," *Indonesia* 35 (1983): 55.

primary goal of integrating the fragmented Chinese community by promoting a shared Chinese cultural identity. A year later, the THHK established a private school system to educate a new generation of Indies Chinese with a modern curriculum, which would be suitable for the colony's shifting political, economic, and social circumstances. Soon after, THHK schools' popularity galvanized the rapid rise of Chinese nationalistic sentiment, which coincided with the influx of new immigrants (*totok*) from Southern China and the call for "re-Sinicization" within the local-born (*peranakan*) community. Worried about the THHK schools' potentially dangerous ideological impact on the Chinese population, the Dutch colonial government reacted swiftly in 1908 to establish a public school system tailored explicitly for the Indies Chinese to counter the so-called "Pan-Chinese Movement." The private THHK schools and the public Dutch-Chinese schools (*Hollandsche Chineesche School*, or HCS) remained the two most prevalent forms of education available to the Indies Chinese until the abrupt Japanese invasion ended the Dutch colonial rule in 1942. A handful of scholars have written on Chinese education in the late-colonial Dutch East Indies.² However, due to language barriers, researchers' varying thematic foci, and the scarcity and scattered nature of primary materials, existing scholarship often predominantly focuses on only one side of the story. Ming Tien Nio Govaars-Tjia's 2005 monograph is by far the most comprehensive and balanced study on this topic.³ As a *peranakan* Chinese who received her early education in European schools in the Indies and later moved to the Netherlands, Govaars-Tjia's work offers a nuanced understanding of Dutch colonial education and its impact on the Chinese community. Primarily relying on Dutch colonial archives, her work contains detailed discussions of the HCS. The more China-oriented THHK schools, by comparison, primarily serve as a frame of reference. Besides Govaars-Tjia, S.L. van der Wal has compiled a collection of annotated official documents (*bronnenpublicatie*), providing essential sources to understand the colonial

2. Leo Suryadinata, "Indonesian Chinese Education: Past and Present," *Indonesia* 14, no.10 (1972): 49-71; Didi Kwartanada, "Mandarin Comes to the South Seas: The Making of Chinese Education in Early Twentieth Century Java," *Asian Culture* (December 2018): 37-54; Siew-Min Sai, "Mandarin Lessons: Modernity, Colonialism and Chinese Cultural Nationalism in the Dutch East Indies, c.1900s," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 17, no.3 (2016): 375-94.

3. Ming Tien Nio Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education: The Chinese Experience in Indonesia, 1900-1942*, ed. Lorre Lynn Trytten (Singapore: Chinese Heritage Centre, 2005).

state's political motives in dealing with Chinese education.⁴ Oiyang Liu goes further by examining the Indies government's border control and educational policies, pointing out that the Dutch authorities' anxieties towards China escalated rapidly in the late-colonial period. As a result, colonial officials became deeply worried about the rise of Chinese nationalism fueled by the expansion of Chinese-language education across its territories.⁵

In the Sinophone world, by contrast, discussions on Chinese education in the late colonial period have been primarily concentrated on THHK schools, where Chinese is the language of instruction.⁶ According to such narratives, Indies Chinese education derived from—or at least shared many similarities with—that of China and overseas Chinese communities elsewhere.⁷ While such emphases highlight the growing political and cultural interactions between the Indies Chinese and their ancestral homeland, they tend to downplay various tensions within the Chinese population and often portray the diaspora community as a largely monolithic and primarily China-oriented group. Moreover, it is noteworthy that neither the private THHK schools nor the public HCS taught Malay as the primary language. Nevertheless, one should remember that Malay was the lingua franca commonly used in print media and everyday life across the Indonesian Archipelago. Regardless of political orientations, many *peranakan* intellectuals wrote opinion pieces in Malay and published them in various newspapers and magazines to reach a broader audience. Such publications are indispensable sources to understand the dynamics behind the competitions in the field of Chinese education.

4. S. L. van der Wal, *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1940: Een Bronnenpublikatie* [Education Policies in the Netherlands-Indies, 1900-1940] (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1963).

5. Oiyang Liu, "Countering 'Chinese Imperialism': Sinophobia and Border Protection in the Dutch East Indies," *Indonesia*, no.97 (2014): 87-110.

6. Qiguang Yang and Leo Suryadinata, "Yinni Huaren Jiaoyu Shilve," [A Brief History of Chinese Education in Indonesia.] *Dongnanya Yanjiu*, 4 (1986); Xuemin Li and Kunzhang Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi: Gudai Zhi 1949 Nian* [The History of the Indonesian Chinese: From Ancient Time to 1949] (Guangzhou: Guangdong Higher Education Press, 2005); Jiancheng Yang, *Sanshi Niandai Lanling Dongyindu zhi Huaqiao* [The Chinese in the Dutch East Indies in the 1930s] (Taipei: Zhonghua Xueshuyuan Nanyang Yanjiusuo, 1985); Shimu Liu, *Nanyang Heshudongyindu zhi Jiaoyu Zhidu* [The Education System of the Nanyang Dutch East Indies] (Shanghai: Department of Nanyang and American Cultures, National Jinan University, 1930).

7. Kwartanada, "Mandarin Comes to the South Seas," 44-45; Sai, "Mandarin Lessons," 381.

Using primary materials such as pamphlets, official documents, and newspaper articles in Malay, Chinese, and Dutch, this chapter aims to problematize the often-biased narratives in the existing literature by exploring the competition and intricacies between the two Chinese school systems. This chapter argues that the two systems were neither a natural result of the Dutch Ethical Policy nor merely driven by the Indies Chinese's growing demand for education. Instead, the emergence of the two systems reflects various socio-political tensions within the heterogeneous Chinese community, its complex relationships with different fractions of the Indonesian society, the transforming colonial state, and their ambiguous relationships with their ancestral homeland. On the one hand, the ideological competitions between Dutch colonial authorities and China-oriented community leaders triggered the expansion and improvement of school infrastructures, resulting in the Indies Chinese community gaining better access to education opportunities. On the other hand, however, the two highly politicized education systems also accelerated the divergence—and eventually, the alienation and fragmentation—of the Indies Chinese population.

Moreover, the fierce competition between the two school systems happened when the native Indonesian nationalist movement rose rapidly. While obsessing with embracing modernity from Dutch and pan-Chinese sources, many Indies Chinese missed the golden opportunities to mingle with native intellectuals in classrooms and participate in the native-led revolutionary struggles against Dutch colonialism. Although one could attribute the Indies Chinese alienation from the natives to various political, economic, and historical factors, Chinese education offered a unique perspective to investigate the DEI's social dynamics in the first half of the 20th century. The Indies Chinese pursuit of better education and their condescending attitude towards the natives reflected the diaspora groups' distinct understandings of equality and varying logics for improving social status. As a result, while their politically driven efforts to embrace modern education further intensified the fragmentation of the Chinese community, they also exacerbated the pre-existing ethnic-racial tensions in the Dutch colony.

The THHK Schools and the Pan-Chinese Movement

The emergence of the Pan-Chinese Movement in the DEI at the turn of the 20th century had to do with two concurrent trends: growing hardships in the Indies due to changing colonial policies and unprecedented overtures from

China, which the Indies Chinese deemed as strong moral support.⁸

The introduction of the Ethical Policy created complex repercussions to the Indies Chinese, who found themselves stuck in an increasingly unfavorable socio-economic environment. While tax burdens had grown more significant, abolishing the monopoly concession system further undermined their economic prominence. Against this backdrop, Indies Chinese leaders became increasingly vocal in expressing their discontent with discriminatory colonial policies which deprived the Indies Chinese of legal privileges enjoyed by non-natives while limiting Chinese political rights. Specifically, the colonial authorities categorized the Chinese as “Foreign Orientals” (*Vreemde Oosterlingen*), a legal status above the native population but below the Europeans. The government prohibited the Chinese from moving freely beyond designated quarters, often overcrowded and with poor living conditions, unless they obtained special passes.⁹ Likewise, Dutch authorities subjected the Chinese to native instead of European criminal laws. However, the Indies Chinese regarded such treatment as unfair, as they considered native courts incompetent and arbitrary, and thus inferior to the European ones.

The introduction of the Ethical Policy coincided with the promulgation of the controversial *Japannerwet* (Japanese Law) in 1899, which elevated the legal status of all Japanese living in the colony from the “Foreign Oriental” to “European,” mainly because of the successful Meiji Restoration.¹⁰ The new law outraged the Indies Chinese, who often considered themselves as possessing formidable economic power in the colony, and therefore deserving of treatment at least equal to—if not more favorable than—the Japanese. Nevertheless, such a change made the Indies Chinese realize the prospect of improving their legal status in the colony through China’s modernization. Following a logic similar to that of the Meiji Restoration, if China were to become a respectable modern nation, the diaspora community in the colony would also gain

8. Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 51-52. Also see Lea E. Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism: The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1916* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).

9. Liu, “Countering ‘Chinese Imperialism,’” 91-92.

10. Bart Luttikhuis, “Beyond Race: Constructions of ‘Europeanness’ in Late-Colonial Legal Practice in the Dutch East Indies,” *European Review of History* 20, no.4 (2013): 545-47.

recognition from the colonial powers.¹¹ Alternatively, the Indies Chinese also hoped to obtain European status by actively embracing Western modernity. Either way, more Indies Chinese elites started to regard modern education as an essential prerequisite to achieving such a goal.

Nevertheless, the situation facing the Indies Chinese community was far from ideal. On the one hand, European schools in the colony admitted only a minimal number of Chinese children. On top of that, such schools usually charge Chinese parents higher fees. On the other hand, very few Chinese children attended native schools, although theoretically speaking, they could do so as long as native schools have enough space. In practice, however, the limited government-funded native schools could barely keep up with the demand of the vast indigenous population.¹² Having realized the difficulties in accessing government-funded education, the Indies Chinese sensed the urgency to build schools by relying on the Chinese community. To better accommodate the political objectives of the diaspora groups, Chinese elites envisioned such schools to be inherently “Chinese and characteristically “modern” at the same time, on which I will elaborate in later paragraphs.

Besides local politics, ongoing political transformations outside the Dutch colony also profoundly impacted the Indies Chinese involvement in the Pan-Chinese Movement. After half a century of struggles against Western aggression since the Opium War, Chinese intellectuals had become increasingly vocal in advocating for a thorough reform through modernization, which they deemed critical to the nation’s survival. Despite consensus over the necessity and urgency to embrace modernity, how to carry out such efforts remained controversial and unsettled. Specifically, the reformists advocated for “*shi yi changji yi zhi yi*” (师夷长技以制夷), which literally meant “learning foreigners’ superior technologies to resist them.” Led by prominent reformists such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, the young Guangxu Emperor initiated a reform movement in 1898 to bring radical changes to China, especially in politics, national culture, and education. After only 104 days, however, the conservative ruling elites headed by Empress Dowager Cixi terminated the nascent reforms.¹³ Kang

11. Sai, “Mandarin Lessons,” 382.

12. Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 52.

13. The failed reform movement is thus commonly referred to as the “Hundred Days’ Reform.” See S. K. Kwong Luke, “Chinese Politics at the Crossroads: Reflections on the Hundred Days Reform of 1898,” *Modern Asian Studies* 34, no.3 (2000).

Youwei and Liang Qichao fled overseas to work closely with Chinese elites in hopes of eventually turning China into a constitutional monarchy. Meanwhile, the Sun Yat-sen-led revolutionary movement, which aimed to overthrow the Qing dynasty, became increasingly active in mobilizing the diaspora groups across the globe. Despite distinct political objectives, both reformists and revolutionaries attached great importance to cultivating stronger ties with the diaspora communities in Southeast Asia, primarily because of the geographical proximity and the sheer size of the Chinese population. Prominent political figures' overtures to the Indies Chinese community coincided with the latter's painful struggles in colonial politics. Against such backdrops, many Indies Chinese became increasingly involved in the Pan-Chinese Movement, which they hoped would increase their political leverage in the colony. Driven by such prospects, education gained particular significance in the discourse among the Indies Chinese elites.

The earliest institutions of Chinese education in the Indies date back to the late 17th century when much of the colony was still under the control of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Despite such a long history, Chinese elites at the turn of the 20th century considered classic Chinese education to be of low quality and detached from the Indies reality. As of 1900, there only were 439 traditional Chinese schools in the whole Dutch East Indies (257 in Java and 28 in Batavia), which enrolled a mere 7835 students—a meager amount considering the size of the Indies Chinese population.¹⁴

With the establishment of the social organization THHK, the Indies Chinese education experienced a radical transformation after 1900. One of the most visible changes was the emergence of modern THHK schools, whose curriculum and educational philosophy differed significantly from the traditional ones. Such differences also reflected the parallel development of modern education in China and across overseas Chinese communities worldwide during the same period. Founded in Batavia in 1901, the first THHK school *Zhonghua Xuetang* (中华学堂) was modeled after the Chinese schools in Japan.¹⁵ Instead of emphasizing Confucian doctrines through the memorization of classical texts

14. In 1900, the Indies Chinese population was 537,316. See Li and Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi*, 232. The DEI government conducted its first and only comprehensive census in 1930. According to its report, the Indies Chinese population was 1,233,214. See Nijverheid en Handel Departement van Landbouw, *Volkstelling 1930* [The 1930 Census of the Netherlands Indies], vol. 7 (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1933).

15. Kwartanada, "Mandarin Comes to the South Seas," 42-46.

such as the “Four Books and Five Classics” (*Sishu Wujing* 四书五经), THHK schools taught vernacular Chinese, mathematics, general knowledge, music, and English by using simple textbooks published by modern Chinese schools in Japan. The language of instruction was no longer southern dialects but the northern dialect-based Mandarin (*Zhengyin* 正音 or *Guoyu* 国语).¹⁶ In the beginning, some conservatives opposed THHK schools’ modern curriculum. They believed that such unorthodox education would fail to cultivate students’ genuine appreciation for traditional Chinese culture and was thus unable to arouse patriotism for their ancestral homeland. However, such doubt soon disappeared, as respected THHK teachers—usually those trained in both the old and new systems—gave convincing testimonies to explain the merits of the modern curriculum. THHK schools gained greater prestige when their students outperformed their *yixue* (traditional Chinese school) counterparts in joint exams aimed at testing students’ mastery of the Chinese language. As a result, the Chinese Council, which had been in charge of allocating charity funds for traditional *yixue*, started to give substantial support to THHK schools.¹⁷ As THHK schools gained popularity, the traditional *yixue* and *sishu* gradually shut down in the following years.

With their initial success in Batavia, THHK schools soon expanded to other major cities across Java. The school system also drew significant attention from within and beyond the Indies Chinese community. In 1903, the Batavia branch of THHK invited Kang Youwei, the esteemed Chinese reformist in exile, to visit Java. After his trip across the island, Kang expressed his positive impression of modern education’s rapid development spearheaded by THHK schools. In front of the crowd, Kang repeatedly stressed the significance of modern education vis-à-vis cultivating patriotism within the Indies Chinese community.¹⁸ As the number of THHK schools grew, the Qing Court showed profound enthusiasm for overseas Chinese education. Since 1906, the Qing government frequently sent high-level officials to Java to discuss Chinese education matters with prominent leaders of the Indies Chinese community (*Majoor* or *Kapitein*). Such visits stimulated the formation of the Chinese Association for Educational Affairs (*Xuewu Zonghui* 学务总会) in Java, an overarching body aimed at coordinating

16. Loh-Tien, “Dongyindu Huaqiao Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun” in *Jubileum-Nummer—the Special Issue of the 25th Anniversary for the Establishment of Sin Po* (Batavia: Sin Po [Chinese Edition], 1935), 87.

17. Loh-Tien, “Dongyindu Huaqiao Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun,” 88.

18. Yang, *Sanshi Niandai Lanling Dongyindu zhi Huaqiao*, 291.

and supervising the development of the Chinese schools.¹⁹ Specifically, *Xuewu Zonghui* was responsible for hiring teachers, founding new schools, liaising with the Dutch colonial authorities, and applying for funding from the Qing government to facilitate the development of Chinese education in the colony. The THHK schools used to rely on their counterparts in Japan to hire teaching staff.²⁰ Now with the coordination of *Xuewu Zonghui*, the government could dispatch experienced teachers directly from China or the nearby British colonies, which effectively ameliorated the THHK schools' personnel shortages.²¹

In 1906, the Qing government established the *Jinan Xuetang* (暨南学堂) in Nanjing, a secondary school that tailored specifically for Chinese students who completed their primary education overseas. *Jinan Xuetang* covered all students' tuition, accommodation, and other living expenses in China, and prospective students only needed to take care of their travel expenses to Nanjing.²² Upon graduation, many *Jinan* students chose to further their study, at either universities and military academies in China or various schools in Europe and America.²³ Around 200 students from the DEI, mostly graduates of THHK schools, attended *Jinan Xuetang* before it ceased to exist after the fall of the Qing Empire following the 1911 Xinhai Revolution. Despite the political transformation, it is noteworthy that THHK schools kept receiving financial support from the Republican government in the ensuing decades.²⁴

While different Chinese governments consistently provided financial support to Chinese schools overseas, such assistance remained modest, and it couldn't meet the increasing demand for the expansion of Chinese education in the DEI. Unlike European and native schools, which could count on guaranteed funding from the Dutch colonial authorities, the

19. *Xuewu Zonghui* first started in Java, but with the rapid development of Chinese schools in the Outer Islands, the association expanded in 1911 and began to oversee Chinese education across the Dutch East Indies, see Li and Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi*, 368-69.

20. Kwartanada, "Mandarin Comes to the South Seas," 39-42.

21. Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 56.

22. In the DEI case, the THHK helped their students secure travel expenses to China. See Joe Lan Nio, *Riwajat 40 Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan Batavia (1900-1939)* [40 Years of the History of the Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan in Batavia] (Batavia: Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan, 1940), 101-7.

23. Loh-Tien, "Dongyindu *Huaqiao* Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun," 88.

24. Nio, *Riwajat 40 Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan Batavia (1900-1939)*, 106.

private THHK schools encountered numerous difficulties maintaining their operation from the outset. Besides the handful of subsidies allocated by the Chinese Council, THHK schools had to rely on external funding sources such as donations, gifts, legacies, and membership dues of different Chinese associations.²⁵ The Indies Chinese community generally showed enormous enthusiasm in supporting the THHK schools. Chinese merchants, *peranakan* and *totok* alike, often collectively raised the retail price of certain goods to generate extra profits to fund the struggling Chinese education.²⁶ With such community support, some THHK schools became better off financially, providing free textbooks to students and enrolling students of humble backgrounds who could not afford the tuition.²⁷ While ordinary THHK schools continued to grow despite various financial difficulties, the Indies Chinese community also established hundreds of special schools to offer tailored curriculum to educate poor kids and young people from the working class.

One of the THHK schools' key objectives was to provide affordable and accessible education to the entire Chinese community. Therefore, the THHK schools' success (or a lack thereof) is often closely associated with their quantity and speed of expansion. According to the Malay-Chinese newspaper *Sin Po*, as of 1935, THHK schools across the DEI reached a total of 259.²⁸ Out of these 259 schools, however, only 21 offered secondary education, and most of them were predominantly junior-level middle schools. While the total enrollment of the THHK schools had already exceeded 30,000, the number of middle school students was only 1,251.²⁹ Therefore, the overwhelming majority of the THHK school graduates did not have the opportunity to further their education beyond the elementary level. Moreover, unable to enroll in local government schools for secondary education, a more common route for THHK school graduates was to continue studying abroad. Besides a handful of students who could afford

25. Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 57.

26. Li and Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi*, 381.

27. Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 54.

28. The author acknowledged that the actual amount could be higher, and 259 was just the number of schools with confirmed addresses. According to the statistics of the Dutch colonial government, although there were in total 450 Chinese schools formally registered, many had already ceased to exist due to unstable enrollment and challenging funding situations. See Loh-Tien, "Dongyindu *Huaqiao* Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun," 89.

29. *Ibid.*, 91.

to go to Europe and America, many chose to study in Hong Kong and Singapore, where the education systems were compatible with the THHK schools' Chinese-English curriculum.³⁰

THHK schools taught English, instead of Dutch, as the second language for several reasons. Financially, hiring ethnic Chinese English teachers from nearby British colonies was less costly than finding Dutch teachers locally. The main reason was colonial authorities' requirement to pay higher salaries to certified Dutch teachers while providing them with additional employment benefits.³¹ A *Sin Po* contributor named Loh-Tien published a report on Indies Chinese education in 1935, where he explained the reasons for choosing English as the second language. First, he pointed out that schools across the Sinophone world taught English as the most common foreign language; Therefore, THHK graduates must master English if they plan to study abroad. Second, people in business and academic circles use English more extensively; Thus, learning English would prepare THHK students better for future challenges; Third, the author believed English was more accessible for Chinese students compared with Dutch.³² Although Loh-Tien's explanations could not sufficiently justify THHK schools' exclusion of the Dutch-language curriculum, they were at least reasonable from THHK educators' perspectives. However, such an arrangement caused profound anxieties among Dutch colonial officials, who had already seen THHK activities as posing various threats to the order and stability of the colony. In their view, teaching English did not necessarily constitute opposing the Dutch order. Nevertheless, it signaled a dangerous potential that the Indies Chinese might be driven further away from Dutch control, a tendency the colonial government must avoid at all cost:

Once the Chinese have realized their purpose to teach and use English in this country, then “language [will form] the entire people” (*De taal is gansch het volk*)—the language rather than their origin will serve as the binding force of the people. Such energetic elements among our subjects will increasingly drive them away from us, and as circumstance might lead, even make them hostile to us.³³

30. Yang, *Sanshi Niandai Lanling Dongyindu zhi Huaqiao*, 292.

31. Li and Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi*, 367.

32. Loh-Tien, “Dongyindu Huaqiao Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun,” 88-9.

33. “Advies van de Raad van Nederlands-Indië van 28 April 1905 no. XX,” in *Het*

The colonial government's fear was not groundless. With the proliferation of Chinese schools across the DEI, the THHK went far beyond its initial goal of functioning as a "cultural organization." While the Chinese government made more serious efforts to win overseas Chinese hearts and minds, many Indies Chinese also became increasingly oriented towards China as the Pan-Chinese Movement unfolded. After the Qing Emperor Guangxu died in 1908, the Sun Yat-sen-led revolutionary forces gained unprecedented popularity among the Chinese overseas, who saw Sun's revolution as an exact embodiment of China's struggle for progress and national consciousness.³⁴ THHK educators started to articulate clear goals of cultivating patriotism among the Indies Chinese. In addition to the existing Chinese language and culture curriculum, THHK schools added courses that emphasize China's ongoing revolution against feudalism and imperialism.³⁵ To strengthen the Indies Chinese ties with China, THHK schools worked closely with the China-oriented chamber of commerce *Siang Hwee* (商会) and the highly politicized cultural organization *Soe Po Sia* (书报社, Book and Newspaper Reading Club). Such partnerships also contributed to stimulating the continuous rise of Chinese nationalism within the diaspora community.³⁶

As a result, the colonial government became increasingly worried about the development of the THHK schools. From the Dutch standpoint, THHK schools gave rise to the revolutionary tendency of the *totok* immigrants and galvanized the re-Sinicization of the *peranakan* population. If not handled properly, such schools would result in the convergence—if

Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1940, ed. S. L. van der Wal (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1963), 41-2.

34. Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 49.

35. Li and Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi*, 373-4.

36. *Siang Hwee* aimed to establish closer connections between China and the Indies Chinese business community. Although it did not clearly articulate the objective, it often organized charity events to raise funds for THHK schools. It also served as a semi-official body representing the Chinese government before the formal establishment of the consulate, see Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 58. *Shu Bao She* was closely associated with Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary party *Tong Meng Hui*. Its primary goal was to introduce Chinese revolutionary ideals to overseas Chinese communities and to cultivate mass support beyond China. *Shu Bao She* was particularly appealing to the working class. By cooperating with the THHK, both *Shang Hui* and *Shu Bao She* played crucial roles in promoting Chinese education in the Indies, see Li and Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi*, 368.

not yet the solidarity—of the hitherto fragmented Chinese community.³⁷ To counter the Pan-Chinese Movement, Dutch authorities decided to curb THHK schools' expansion while restricting the flow of Chinese students and teachers between China and the DEI, preventing suspicious "Chinese propagandists" from entering the colony. In the 1920s, the Dutch government protested against the Chinese government's growing intervention in educational affairs in the DEI, especially in assisting the establishment of China-oriented middle schools across the colony's major cities.³⁸ Moreover, the colonial government adopted affirmative policies by establishing a competing Dutch-Chinese school system. The goal was to make part of the Chinese community, especially the pro-Dutch *peranakan*, more Dutch-oriented, on which I will elaborate in the section below.

The Dutch-Chinese Schools and Government Efforts of Desinicization

Just a few years after its establishment, THHK schools completely replaced the traditional intuitions of Chinese education in the DEI. A large number of Indies Chinese gained opportunities to receive modern education. In the meantime, however, their access to formal European education, which was considered more prestigious, remained limited. Although a relatively small proportion of Chinese parents managed to enroll their children in various private and Christian schools, Western education, in general, was still out of the reach of the ordinary Indies Chinese.³⁹

Driven by the Indies Chinese's growing demand for better education and quest for higher social status, THHK schools expanded aggressively in the first decade of the 20th century, catalyzing the rise of the Pan-Chinese Movement. While many *peranakan* groups showed a noticeable tendency of re-Sinicization, the Chinese government also became increasingly enthusiastic about influencing the overseas population by supporting their education. Such interactions contributed to the formation of closer ties between the overseas Chinese community and their ancestral homeland. Dutch authorities soon noticed such dangerous moves, which could lead to the undesired breakaway of the

37. Kwartanada, "Mandarin Comes to the South Seas," 38; Sai, "Mandarin Lessons," 379-81.

38. Liu, "Countering 'Chinese Imperialism,'" 100-4.

39. Leo Suryadinata, *Xianjieduan de Yinni Huazu Yanjiu* [The Current State of Studies on Indonesian Chinese] (Singapore: The Education Press, 1978), 49.

Indies Chinese and destabilize the socio-economic foundations of the colony.⁴⁰ Deeply concerned with the consequence, the Indies Council, an advising organ under the Governor-General, pointed out as early as 1905 that the government should support and guide Chinese education “along the Dutch direction as much as possible” (*in Hollandse richting te steunen en te leiden*). In doing so, the Council suggested that the government should work closely with the “developed and influential” (*ontwikkelde en invloedrijke*) Chinese elites while providing necessary support to teach the Dutch language at Chinese schools. However, the Council was against adding Dutch-language curriculums by subsidizing existing THHK institutions, as they believed that setting such a precedent would significantly increase government spending.⁴¹

In 1906, J.G. Pott, the Director of Education, presented a report to Governor-General J. B. van Heutsz. In this report, Pott suggested that the government should pay close attention to the welfare of their Dutch-Chinese subjects, especially in terms of education.⁴² While existing THHK schools continuously petitioned to receive subsidies from Dutch authorities, other Chinese groups requested that the government establish more schools catered explicitly to the Chinese. Pott was not totally against the idea of subsidizing private Chinese education, as the government was unable to commit to providing sufficient funds to build a new school system from scratch. However, Pott made it clear that the precondition to receiving government funding was to teach Dutch as the primary language regardless of school type.⁴³ The widely circulated newspaper *Soerabayasch Handelsblad* published an article titled “The State of Education among Indies Chinese” (*den toestand van het onderwijs onder de Chineezzen in Ned. Indie*), in which the author sharply criticized the government for ignoring the legitimate demands of the Chinese.⁴⁴ In a mail report to van Heutsz, the Minister of Colonial Affairs Dirk Fock stated that the paper’s accusation

40. Liu, “Countering ‘Chinese Imperialism,’” 93.

41. “Advies van de Raad van Nederlands-Indië van 28 April 1905 no. XX,” 42.

42. “Wd. Directeur Onderwijs, Eredienst en Nijverheid (J. G. Pott) aan Gouverneur-Generaal (Van Heutsz), 11 juli 1906,” in *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1940*, ed. S. L. van der Wal (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1963), 97-8.

43. “Wd. Directeur Onderwijs, Eredienst en Nijverheid (J. G. Pott) aan Gouverneur-Generaal (Van Heutsz), 11 juli 1906,” 98.

44. “Wd. Directeur Onderwijs, Eredienst en Nijverheid (J. G. Pott) aan Gouverneur-Generaal (Van Heutsz), 11 juli 1906,” 99.

was groundless. However, he admitted that the government should treat Chinese education as an urgent issue.⁴⁵

Whether public European and Native schools should provide more space for the Chinese was subjected to constant debate among top colonial officials. In a government report in 1907, the Indies Council advised against making too much effort in opening public European and native schools to the Chinese. Instead, the Council suggested that “In terms of education, the Chinese should no longer be left out, but they must also be guarded against, and they should not be privileged above the Europeans.” To counter the growing influence of the THHK schools, the government decided to establish a separate school system for the Chinese, especially middle-class *peranakan* families who could not afford European schools’ high tuition. In doing so, the Dutch government hoped that many *peranakan* Chinese would distance themselves from the dangerous nationalistic Pan-Chinese Movement.⁴⁶ Additionally, Dutch authorities decided that the Dutch-Chinese schools should only enroll children of naturalized Dutch subjects (*onderdanen*). The goal was to segregate the loyal *peranakan* Chinese from their *totok* counterparts, presumably more enthusiastic in spreading China’s political influence in the colony.⁴⁷ Moreover, while the Council allowed the new Dutch-Chinese schools to enroll Europeans, they considered admitting native kids unnecessary. From their perspective, mixing Chinese and native children in the same classroom would diminish the value of establishing such a separate school system in the eyes of the Indies Chinese.⁴⁸

The government established the first HCS in Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya in 1908. With a clear political objective of harnessing Chinese nationalism, the HCS adopted the same curriculum of the European Elementary Schools (*Europeesche Lagere School*, or ELS), in which Dutch was the primary language for instruction. Unlike their European counterparts, however, most Chinese pupils had never been exposed to the Dutch language in their daily lives. Additionally, they had minimal opportunities to practice

45. “Minister van Koloniën (Fock) aan Gouverneur-Generaal (Van Heutsz), 21 Jan. 1907, No. 23/157 Minuut,” in *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1940*, ed. S. L. van der Wal (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1963), 43.

46. “Advies van den Raad van Nederlands-Indië van 28 juni 1907 no. XVI,” in *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1940*, ed. S. L. van der Wal (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1963), 99-100.

47. Liu, “Countering ‘Chinese Imperialism,’” 107-8.

48. “Advies van den Raad van Nederlands-Indië van 28 juni 1907 no. XVI,” 103.

Dutch outside of school settings because the language was spoken neither at home nor in the daily life of non-Europeans. As a result, many students went through considerable difficulties in learning the language. Dirk Fock, the Minister of Colonial Affairs, thus suggested that the HCS should teach Malay or Javanese in lower grades and then gradually add instructions in Dutch as the pupils grew older. In response, the Director of Education J.G. Pott insisted that the HCS start teaching Dutch from the very beginning, as the government could only satisfy the Chinese by providing a real *European* education.⁴⁹ By founding the HCS, the Dutch government could achieve two objectives. The first was to appease the taxpaying Chinese by satisfying their legitimate demands for education; The second was to keep the Indies Chinese away from the unfavorable influence of the Pan-Chinese Movement, particularly by cultivating closer connections between the Chinese and Dutch civilization:

From the Dutch point of view, it is desirable that so large a part of our Dutch-Chinese subjects can speak and understand our language, read our books, comprehend our laws, our thinking, our commitment, and our ideals. It is worth some sacrifice to accomplish this.⁵⁰

Therefore, it is crucial, according to Oudendijk, that the Chinese recognize the DEI as their native country and become loyal to the Dutch government. To meet this goal, the HCS must compete with their THHK counterparts. Given the socio-economic development of the colony, Oudendijk was optimistic that the THHK schools' Mandarin-based education had very little "market value (*marktwaarde*)" in the long run: "eventually, with our better and much more solid education, the large majority of Chinese youth would be drawn to our schools, especially the children of *peranakan*." Furthermore, Oudendijk suggested that the HCS must set a primary goal of attracting *peranakan* groups since THHK schools had already been working on "forming the citizens of the Republic of China" with a particular focus on the *peranakan* community.⁵¹

49. Loh-Tien, "Dongyindu *Huaqiao* Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun," 92; Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 85-6.

50. "Regeringsadviseur in Chinese Aangelegenheden (W. J. Oudendijk) aan Gouverneur-Generaal (Idenburg), 2 okt, 1913," in *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1940*, ed. S. L. van der Wal (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1963), 258.

51. "Regeringsadviseur in Chinese Aangelegenheden (W. J. Oudendijk) aan Gouverneur-

Indeed, the legal status of the peranakan Chinese remained ambiguous. The Qing government signed a consular convention with their Dutch counterpart in 1911. The two sides principally agreed that the peranakan Chinese would be recognized as Dutch subjects as long as they resided in Dutch territories. Only a few months later, however, the republicans overthrew the Qing dynasty. As China experienced tumultuous regime changes and various political chaos in the following years, such a preliminary agreement was never effectively enforced. The two sides did not fully resolve the ambiguities surrounding the legal status of the local-born Chinese until Indonesia gained its independence.⁵²

The ambiguities surrounding citizenship further intensified the divergence of the highly fragmented Indies Chinese community. While THHK schools remained popular among *totok* immigrants and China-oriented peranakan groups, many Dutch-oriented peranakan families, especially those affluent ones, chose to send their children to attend the government-funded HCS. Having witnessed the changes, the Dutch government also hoped to utilize the attractive HCS education to secure peranakan loyalty to the colonial state while encouraging more Indies Chinese to become naturalized Dutch subjects.⁵³ In 1913, Oudendijk put forward three suggestions in his report to Governor-General Idenburg:

While focusing on establishing new HCS, the government should let European Elementary Schools (ELS) open more space to children of wealthy and good-natured (*gegoede en welgezind*) peranakan Chinese; The government should take steps to connect HCS to existing European schools such as the Advanced Primary Schools (*Muloscholen*) and Dutch Secondary Schools (*Hogere Burgerscholen*, or HBS) to enable HCS graduates to gain access to more advanced education; To compete with THHK schools, HCS could selectively offer Chinese-language courses in the afternoon hours.

Generaal (Idenburg), 2 okt, 1913," 258-9.

52. The republican government of China promulgated its new citizenship act in 1929, which followed the principle of *jus sanguinis* (right of blood) instead of the DEI's *jus soli* (right of soil). The new law reiterated that overseas Chinese could reclaim their Chinese citizenship. See Donald Earl Willmott, *The National Status of the Chinese in Indonesia, 1900-1958* (Ithaca, NY: Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1961), 29-34.

53. Liu, "Countering 'Chinese Imperialism,'" 107.

Such measures, noted Oudendijk, would ultimately contribute to forming a “modern Dutch East Indies Society” (*moderne Nederlandsch-Indische Maatschappij*) where different races could co-exist with one another harmoniously.⁵⁴ Moreover, Oudendijk pointed out that elementary-level HCS were far from enough, as only those who received high school-level education or above would gain the best sense of—and thus become more willing to be absorbed into—Dutch civilization.⁵⁵ The proposal received positive feedback from his superior Governor-General Idenburg, who generally agreed with Oudendijk but expressed his reservations about offering Chinese-language courses in HCS’ afternoon hours. In his letter to T.B. Pleijte, the Minister of Colonial Affairs, Idenburg noted that he had very little to expect from the so-called “competition with the THHK schools” through the Chinese-language courses because the government’s primary concern remained to do business with the Chinese. To introduce the Chinese language, he believed, would not only involve complications such as hiring teachers from China but also undermine HCS pupils’ good learning spirit (*geest*). Therefore, the government must lead the development of the Indies Chinese “with a Western spirit and not that of ancient China.”⁵⁶

Despite the government’s funding support, HCS’ development was not without obstacles. The lack of teachers, for instance, emerged as a critical issue from the outset. As early as 1907, the Indies Council already pointed out that HCS would face enormous difficulties recruiting qualified teachers. While certified European teachers could barely meet the demand of European and native schools, the HCS’ establishment would further exacerbate the shortage. The government tasked the Indies Council with writing an “implementable” proposal to staff the new HCS to counter the Pan-Chinese Movement. Nevertheless, after conducting a rough calculation, the Council concluded that the government’s goal to establish 42 HCS was unrealistic because that would entail hiring at least

54. “Regeringsadviseur in Chinese Aangelegenheden (W. J. Oudendijk) aan Gouverneur-Generaal (Idenburg), 2 okt, 1913,” 258-9.

55. “Regeringsadviseur in Chinese Aangelegenheden (W. J. Oudendijk) aan Gouverneur-Generaal (Idenburg), 2 okt, 1913,” 259.

56. “Gouverneur-Generaal (Idenburg) aan Minister van Koloniën (Pleijte), 5 juni 1914,” in *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1940*, ed. S. L. van der Wal (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1963), 265-6.

126 Dutch teachers (three teachers each).⁵⁷ Dutch authorities found it imperative to train Chinese teachers to supplement HCS' teaching forces to tackle the shortage. In doing so, a question emerged as to whether the Chinese students should attend the existing native teaching academy in Poerworedjo or receive their training at a separate institution tailored explicitly for the Chinese. Understandably, training Chinese teachers at a native teaching academy would significantly lower the cost and open the possibility of unifying the colony's primary education in the future. However, the government was also deeply concerned about potential racial friction between the Chinese and native students, as they believed that these students were "incompatible in nature (*incompatibel van aard*)":

It feels like an insult (to the Chinese) if they are considered equal to the natives, and it often arouses arrogant acts [...] rather than rapprochement. We observed estrangement between the Chinese and the natives.⁵⁸

Given the acute tensions between the two groups, the Council noted that combining teachers' training programs at one school would be infeasible. If the government were to make the Chinese accept such "native" education, the Council warned, the Chinese community would interpret the government's novel intention as a political reactionary measure (*politiek reactionaire maatregel*). As a result, the Indies Council advised against the admission of Chinese students to the native institution. Despite initial difficulties in matriculating qualified HCS graduates to become future teachers, the colonial government eventually founded a separate Dutch-Chinese teaching academy (*Hollands-Chinese Kweekschool*) in 1917, which eventually became the most crucial source of teachers of the HCS system.⁵⁹

With government backing, HCS expanded rapidly after its founding in 1908. Additionally, Christian churches and various private groups also founded their variants of Dutch-Chinese schools. All such schools

57. "Advies van den Raad van Nederlands-Indië van 28 juni 1907 no. XVI," 103-4.

58. "Advies van de raad van Nederlands-Indië van 9 april 1915 no. XXX," in *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1940*, ed. S. L. van der Wal (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1963), 305-6.

59. Dutch authorities set restrictive criteria for attending the teaching academy. Only students who had received seven years of HCS schooling were eligible to apply for admission. "Advies van de raad van Nederlands-Indië van 9 april 1915 no. XXX," p. 306. Also see Liu, "Countering 'Chinese Imperialism,'" 106.

received subsidies from the government. As of 1932, the number of Dutch-Chinese schools reached 117, with 23,353 registered students.⁶⁰ For the Indies Chinese, attending such schools would bring about several apparent benefits. First of all, HCS students could presumably receive a superior education with better curriculum, facilities, and teacher qualifications. Additionally, they would also enjoy more desirable opportunities to advance their studies at higher-level institutions such as HBS, teaching academies, professional schools, and even universities in the Netherlands.⁶¹ Moreover, attending the HCS opens up new prospects, though still distant, of employment opportunities within the colonial system, an essential step towards racial equality that numerous Indies Chinese strove to achieve.⁶² While students enrolled in HCS continued to grow, debates over the pros and cons of such education also emerged inside the Indies Chinese community. As China-oriented intellectuals brought up repeatedly, the HCS education's most notable problem was the students' loss of "national spirit" (*minzuxing*, 民族性). As Loh Tien noted:

The most significant disadvantage of Dutch education is its lack of national ideology. Dutch textbooks are mostly quite negative about the Chinese. National hero Zheng Chenggong, for instance, was depicted as "Pirate Koxinga."⁶³ One example shows the rest. Without proper guidance of the family and society, this will undoubtedly lead to students' contempt for our motherland. The negative impact will be significant.⁶⁴

Some Indies Chinese groups also voiced their discontent with HCS' formalism and elitist outlook. Despite HCS' continuous expansion, their enrollment remained relatively exclusive, as only the middle class or above could afford the tuition. Many peranakan Chinese chose to study at THHK schools simply because they did not have the means to attend

60. Loh-Tien, "Dongyindu *Huaqiao* Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun," 91.

61. Li and Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi*, 375.

62. Liu, "Countering 'Chinese Imperialism,'" 105.

63. Zheng Chenggong was a military leader who defeated the VOC force in Formosa (Taiwan) at the end of the Ming dynasty (1661) and later led the resistance against the conquest of the Manchus (Qing). See Tonio Andrade, "Koxinga's Conquest of Taiwan in Global History: Reflections on the Occasion of the 350th Anniversary," *Late Imperial China* 33, no.1 (June 2012): 125.

64. Loh-Tien, "Dongyindu *Huaqiao* Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun," 92.

HCS.⁶⁵ In general, however, peranakan elites increasingly considered the HCS education to be more suitable for the Indies situation. Besides smoother transitions to more advanced school levels, HCS graduates usually enjoyed more appealing career prospects than their THHK school counterparts.⁶⁶ As HCS gained recognition, even prominent THHK figures sent their children to HCS to receive the presumably more prestigious European education.⁶⁷ Having realized HCS' popularity among the Indies Chinese, many started to believe that THHK schools' fateful demise would be inevitable.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, THHK schools' enrollment did not drop sharply as a result of the rising HCS. As of 1935, the number of Chinese-language schools reached 450, with approximately 45,000 registered students. The HCS, by comparison, enrolled only one-quarter of the schools and half of the students.⁶⁹ Given the THHK schools' sheer size and uninterrupted growth, it would be unfair to label them as failures. THHK schools' continuous popularity had to do with the demographic shift of the Indies Chinese population, namely the rapid growth of the *totok* population, driven by the influx of new immigrants from China since the beginning of the republican period. With their closer personal ties to China, the *totok* population's increasing demand for Chinese-language education was discernible. While the new immigrants have all kinds of motives to enroll their children in THHK schools, they were also eager to develop Chinese education and establish new schools beyond the THHK framework. After the mid-1920s, the *totok* population gradually seized control over Chinese-language education by taking over THHK schools while founding new ones. Many *totok* schools even dropped the name of the THHK altogether.⁷⁰ A 1927 case vividly illustrated such changes. The Kian Sing, a China-oriented peranakan leader, proposed to reform THHK schools by adding instructions in Dutch to prepare their students better for future employment in the colony. However, THHK leaders rejected this

65. "Conferentie Hak Boe Tjong Hwee Surabaya," *Sin Po*, January 8, 1919, as quoted in Suryadinata, *Xianjieduan de Yinni Huazu Yanjiu*, 52.

66. Suryadinata, *Xianjieduan de Yinni Huazu Yanjiu*, 52.

67. Tek Hoay Kwee, "Doea Kapala Batoe," *Sin Tit Po* (Surabaya), February 1, 1936, 112-3.

68. Loh-Tien, "Dongyindu Huaqiao Guomin Jiaoyu Gailun," 89.

69. *Ibid.*, 91.

70. Suryadinata, *Xianjieduan de Yinni Huazu Yanjiu*, 56-7.

seemingly “pragmatic” proposal right away and accused him of ignoring the newcomers’ interests to avoid the undesirable “peranakanization.”⁷¹

Conclusion

In sum, THHK schools’ Chinese-language education catalyzed the re-sinicization of the peranakan community, propelling a large number of Indies-born Chinese to become more China-oriented. Meanwhile, the public HCS spearheaded Dutch-language stimulated a paralleled tendency of “desinicization” or “Dutchification” among the Dutch-oriented Chinese, drawing many local-borns into the sphere of more direct Dutch socio-cultural influence. Despite their competition, the two forms of education shared a common logic prevailing among the Indies Chinese, whose primary goal was to improve their socio-political status by gaining more favorable treatment from Dutch colonial authorities. In other words, different Indies Chinese groups aspired to gain recognition equal to the Europeans by embracing different forms of modernity. Modern education, be it Chinese or Dutch, played a critical role in attaining such a goal. Following this logic, although Malay remained the most commonly used language in the colony, many aspirant Indies Chinese leaders regarded the Malay-language education as inferior. They thus failed to establish a corresponding education system to fulfill such needs.⁷²

As peranakan leader Kwee Tek Hoay pointed out, the Indies Chinese community was so diverse that there were at least five different interest groups with disparate demands for education. According to him, the five groups include 1. wealthy peranakan who intended to stay in the Indies and were eager to pursue quality European education; 2. poor peranakan who had every reason to stay in the colony but only required their children to obtain rudimentary literacy; education in the Malay language would be most practical; 3. China-oriented peranakan nationalists intending to send their kids to China, or those who wished to retain their Chinese identity through Chinese education; 4. peranakan and *totok* committed to their Chinese identity but somewhat flexible with the type of education; 5. *totok* Chinese, especially those Hakka and Cantonese

71. “Plan Perobahan Tjong Hoa Hwe Koan dari Toean The Kian Sing,” *Panorama*, March 27, 1927, as quoted in Suryadinata, *Xianjieduan de Yinni Huazu Yanjiu*, 54-5.

72. Govaars-Tjia, *Dutch Colonial Education*, 144-8; Wal, *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië*, 412-21.

sojourners, who just wanted to stay for a short period and planned to go back to China eventually.⁷³ While both public HCS and private THHK schools succeeded in attracting students of particular types, neither could fully accommodate the distinct demand of every group. Therefore, as it was impossible to found an all-inclusive education system, the further fragmentation of the Indies Chinese population was inevitable. As demonstrated above, such fragmentation did not strictly follow the line of the *peranakan-totok* division.

In theory, both the “peranakanization” (当地化, or localization) of the *totok* and the “*totokization*” (*xinkehua* 新客化, or re-sinicization) of the *peranakan* could lead to the confluence of the diaspora community, which would be conducive to the creation of a shared cultural identity for the Indies Chinese.⁷⁴ In reality, however, the two highly politicized education systems catalyzed the polarization of the Chinese population, namely the sinicization of the China-oriented and the Dutchification of their European-minded counterparts. As Chinese nationalism continued to rise against the backdrop of Japanese aggression in China while the Dutch authorities tightened the control of political affairs to maintain “*rust en orde*” (peace and order) in the colony, such polarization further intensified in the 1930s.⁷⁵ As a result, the Indies Chinese became increasingly divided. Ironically, with the absence of the much-needed Malay education, the two school systems’ popularity somehow contributed to the alienation of the Chinese community from the native population when the latter’s nationalist movement was in ascendancy. Further investigation into competition surrounding Indies Chinese education will shed greater light on the shift of diaspora politics *via-a-vis* Indonesia’s arduous struggles for independence, troubled decolonization, and controversial nation-building processes in the following decades.

73. Tek Hoay Kwee, “Onderwijs Hoakiau di Indonesia, IV,” *Panorama*, September, 10, 1931.

74. Suryadinata, *Xianjieduan de Yinni Huazu Yanjiu*, 47.

75. *Rust en orde* policy commonly refers to the colonial government’s tight control during the 1930s. The Dutch authority took various measures to crack down on nationalist movements and other political activities threatening the colony’s stability. As Dutch authorities frequently inspected Chinese schools, expelled suspicious teachers, and censored or banned problematic textbooks, THHK schools’ operation was profoundly affected during this period. See Li and Huang, *Yinni Huaqiao Shi*, 383-5; Wal, *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië*, 364-74.