

Creating a culture of religious tolerance in an Indonesian school¹

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Abstract: The author describes the importance of school–family relations in establishing a culture of religious tolerance among pupils of a state senior secondary school in the multicultural city of Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan. Palangkaraya is a provincial capital city, and is home to different ethnicities and religions. In 2001, a massive ethnic riot erupted between the local Dayak and emigrant Madurese in Sampit, a district in Central Kalimantan province, and quickly spread to other districts, including Palangkaraya. This conflict was regarded as a national tragedy and took hundreds of lives. In this post-conflict context, the author examines how several related aspects of school – culture, curriculum and instruction, politics and policies, and school–community relations – contribute to the school’s efforts to nurture religious tolerance among students. The data were derived from the author’s ethnographic fieldwork in 2010 employing participant observation, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers and students. The findings suggest that students have acquired an embodied cultural capital of religious diversity and tolerance from families and community, and that this has equipped them to help create a ‘tolerance culture’ in the school, despite the unsupportive school politics and inconsistent school policies related to religious diversity. On their own initiative and, to a lesser extent, inspired by the formal curriculum, religion teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students’ understanding of religious diversity and tolerance through deliberate teaching about some aspects of other religions.

Keywords: religious tolerance; education; cultural capital; multiculturalism; Indonesia

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Indonesia is neither a secular nor an explicitly religious state. Rather it is a *Pancasila*² state where religious practices are strongly endorsed by the state (Mujiburrahman, 2006). Although the Constitution of 1945 states that every citizen has the freedom to profess any religion, this freedom is then restricted by Religious Blasphemy Law 01/1965, which offers a choice of adherence to one of six religions (Islam,

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² *Pancasila* literally means Five Principles. It is the Indonesian state ideology formulated in 1945 by the country’s founding fathers.

Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism or Confucianism). The religious affiliation of each citizen must be shown on their birth certificate, other identity cards and official documents. Religion Class (RC) is compulsory for every school student at each level of education. Education Law 20/2003 reasserts this requirement, and requires schools to provide RC for pupils in accordance with their own faith (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2003). Studies of religious education in Indonesia unfortunately indicate that schools have not been able to teach children religious tolerance through RCs (Listia *et al*, 2007; PPIM, 2008). This is partly because RCs are delivered in confessional and doctrinal ways, with a heavy emphasis on the teaching of the religion's truth claims. Very rarely do RCs incorporate critical thinking about, and reflexive and constructive approaches to, religious doctrines. Another reason is that the curriculum for religion subjects does not direct teachers to, or provide guidelines on how to, teach religious tolerance (Raihani, 2007a). The decentralization of school curricula in 2006 provided new opportunities for teachers to design and teach their own classes (Raihani, 2007b, 2011; Yamin, 2007), but this freedom may also allow the intrusion of teachers' personal beliefs, creating radical or intolerant approaches to religious teaching. In short, the question of whether religious tolerance is being effectively taught in Indonesian schools remains unanswered.

In this paper, I shed light on the above question by looking at an Indonesian school in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan province. This topic of religious tolerance is important because of the area's significant religious diversity, recent communal conflict and local politics, which have often used religions as a 'political commodity'. Since the implementation of regional autonomy laws after 1999, there has been the potential for conflict among religious followers, who have found momentum to express and strengthen both ethnic and religious identities (Aspinall and Fealy, 2003). Also, although religion was not found to have been the trigger for the 2001 conflict between the local Dayaks and the immigrant Madurese in this province (Van Klinken, 2007), the fact that the Dayaks are mostly Christians and the Madurese are Muslims cannot be easily ignored, and has further added to the potential for conflict. In this situation, school serves as a crucial site for the promotion of religious diversity and tolerance. In this paper, I argue that the effectiveness of schools in providing tolerance education depends not only on the school policies and curriculum, but also on teachers' and students' personal experiences. These personal experiences are a kind of embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that they gain from relationships with family and society.

Traditionally, indigenous Dayak people learned to live in and with differences in the longhouse [*rumah betang*] where cohabiting families learned to accept and interact with the diverse personalities of the house members, and often to face spouses' different backgrounds as new members of the big family. Usop, an influential Dayak university professor, said in an interview that the longhouse had become an icon of Dayak cultural revivalism in Central Kalimantan, particularly since the conflict in 2001. There are, however, only a few *rumah betang* left in Central Kalimantan, which may indicate that such a tradition has started to fade.

I begin this paper with a brief review of the literature on education for religious tolerance in a global context. At the end of this section, I briefly discuss Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital to support the argument of the paper. Then I explain and discuss the cultural diversity of Central Kalimantan and the 2001

ethnic conflict to provide a context for the study. I draw on ethnographic observations, interviews and relevant documents to describe how tolerance is being promoted in the studied school.

Review of education for tolerance

Tolerance means having patience with differences. In some instances, it connotes the attitude of passiveness towards something disliked, and often it means putting up with or enduring something disliked (Bretherton, 2004). Tolerance can also encompass values of respect and recognition (Jackson, 2007). Respect refers to a more positive attitude towards differences, whilst recognition is built upon a positive and genuine attitude to diversity, taking seriously the equality of human beings who have different religions and cultural practices. This concept of tolerance contributes to a more positive approach to multiculturalism, by accommodating differences and strengthening common human values (Jackson, 2007). In other words, recognition strengthens equality and accommodates differences. Where tolerance, respect and recognition exist together, we can expect harmonious relationships in societies, characterized by active participation and mutual contributions from each society member. However, it is important to understand that tolerance can occur only where there are unnegotiable differences amongst the society members (Habermas, 2004). In other words, there is no (or little) need for tolerance if the difference is trivial.

Several studies have explored the role of school education as a vehicle for promoting religious tolerance by focusing on the curriculum of RCs and its instructional strategies. Islamic schools/RCs are commonly biased against teaching about other religions (see, for example, Reiss (2004, 2007) on schools in Turkey, Iran, Egypt and Palestine). Kaymakcan (2007), Kaymakcan and Leirvik (2007) and Kabapinar (2007), however, pointed to a more recent development in the promotion of religious tolerance in Turkey. New textbooks convey religious teachings based on shared values such as justice and respect, even though information about Christianity is still underrepresented. In Egypt, new curricula in 2001 introduced a subject entitled 'moral and values education' (Kouchok, 2007), which was developed by a group of Muslim and Christian leaders. Values such as friendship, happiness and responsibility shared by both Islam and Christianity were identified and taught to Muslim and Christian students to bring them together as one Egyptian community.

In some European countries, research and discussions of RCs are concerned with pedagogical approaches or models. There are three main models of religious education: teaching *into* religion, teaching *about* religion, and teaching *from* religion. The last two models are derived from Grimmitt's (1987) 'learning *about* religion' and 'learning *from* religion'. Teaching *into* religion, which is also described as the confessional approach, is when a single tradition is taught in RC curricula by insiders (Jackson, 2007). The main objective of this model is to nurture faith and espouse the teachings of a particular religion. Consequently, this model largely uses indoctrination, which implies 'closing the minds of the students to other options in an uncritical manner' (Tan, 2003, p 1). Teaching *about* religion refers to the religious studies approach, which involves learning to understand the concepts of the world religions. There is no intention to nurture faith in the learners;

instead, students are given opportunities to learn about religions in a neutral and objective fashion. Teaching *from* religion gives students the opportunity to consider different responses to major religious and moral issues, so that they may develop their own views in a reflective way. This model puts the students' experiences at the centre of the learning process, and engages two types of evaluation: impersonal evaluation and personal evaluation. Grimmitt (1987, pp 225–226) explains that impersonal evaluation is making critical judgments about truth claims, beliefs and practices of religions. Personal evaluation refers to the process of learning and making critical judgments about one's own religious beliefs and values – a process of self-evaluation.

In Indonesia, several studies have indicated that the curriculum content does not emphasize tolerance (Listia *et al*, 2007; Raihani, 2007a; Said, 2007). The overwhelming dominance of the indoctrination approach and the monotonous instructional strategies of RCs contribute further to a lack of critical thinking, and therefore, make religion an uninteresting subject to students (Listia *et al*, 2007; Raihani, 2010). Although Parker (2010) and Hoon (2011) have found some promising examples of private schools whose teaching of religious tolerance stressed common and universal values, tolerance education in Indonesia still needs much improvement.

The above review of tolerance education indicates that it has been largely approached through school curricula, religion textbooks and teaching strategies. While curricula and textbooks are important to help develop students' understanding of religious diversity and tolerance, other aspects of school, such as leadership, politics and culture, cannot be ignored. Another pivotal element is school–family/community relations in both formal and informal senses. In a formal sense, many studies on school effectiveness (for example, Caldwell and Harris, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Shatkin and Gershberg, 2007) suggest that meaningful school–family/community relations contribute to the acceleration of achieving educational objectives through mutual understanding and working together with the school and family/community. In an informal sense, the relations are often reflected through the exchange of personal experiences among teachers and students, bringing what they learned from family/community and using school as the exchange place. All these aspects are, in theory, important in helping schools to develop tolerance education.

Bourdieu (1986) provides the term 'cultural capital', which is useful in the consideration of school–family/community relations. Cultural capital refers to students' knowledge, competences, experiences and backgrounds that they acquired through socialization by family and community, and from educational institutions. Cultural capital includes language, bodily deportment and taste for 'clothes, types of food, drinks, sports, friends' (Bourdieu, 1989, p 19). The cultural capital that students have can determine their success in education, particularly when they come from the dominant culture, which is reproduced in school life (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Embodied cultural capital refers to long-lasting dispositions or habits of the mind and body acquired by individuals from the family in both conscious and unconscious ways (Bourdieu, 1986). In the case of tolerance, what a family values with regard to diversity and tolerance is gradually transmitted to children through socialization. Children share these experiences with peers in school where accumulation, accommodation, negotiation and/or

contestation of cultures take place. Those who come from the dominant culture of society will be advantaged since they share similarities and find fewer difficulties in interacting with others; members of minorities often have to give ground to the dominant culture and/or negotiate differences, and often, but not always, experience disadvantage in educational achievement. Therefore, according to this cultural capital theory, the embodied capital of diversity and tolerance that students have learned from family/community can contribute significantly to the formation of a tolerant culture in school. The theory also implies that it is important to establish a harmonious school–family relationship.

Diversity and conflict in Central Kalimantan

The province of Central Kalimantan is inhabited by more than two million people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Kalimantan Tengah, 2009). The Dayak people are believed to have migrated from mainland China in the prehistoric era, and are the main inhabitants of the area (Riwut, 2007; Usop, 1994). The traditional religion of the Dayak is ‘Kaharingan’, a complex belief system characterized by the propitiation of supernatural tutelaries (Schiller, 1997). The Dayak came into contact with Islam and Christianity in the middle of the nineteenth century. Banjarese Muslim people, living mainly in South Kalimantan, came to villages in Central Kalimantan for trade using river transportation. Usop (1994) notes that some Dayak converted voluntarily to Islam because of this intense trade relationship. Christianity was introduced to Kalimantan by Dutch colonial evangelists. Because of strong support from the colonial government, Christianity spread quickly among Dayak people. In 1980, Kaharingan was integrated by the government into Hinduism, and since then has been popularly called ‘Hindu Kaharingan’ (Schiller, 1997; Usop, 1994). In 2009, Muslims constituted the majority (about 71%) of the population of Central Kalimantan, Protestants constituted 16%, Hindus 7%, Catholics 4%, and Buddhists and religious others the remaining 2% (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Kalimantan Tengah, 2009). There is no clear information about the current religious affiliations of the Dayak, but Schiller (1997) maintains that the majority are Christians, and only very few are Muslim or Hindu.

The conversion of the Dayak from their traditional beliefs to recognized religions has created religious diversity and inter-religious tolerance within the Dayak community. My observations and interviews with many community figures (both Dayak and non-Dayak) show that members of many Dayak families adhere to different faiths because of conversion. It is not uncommon for a husband to adhere to one religion, and his wife to another; or for children to have a different religion from their parents. This religious diversity within families has had a positive impact on inter-religious relations in the Dayak community, encouraging awareness and respect of religious differences. Many informants emphasized the importance of commitment to one’s chosen religion, not which religion is chosen, because all religions equally teach how to become good individuals.

The above-described religious tolerance among the Dayak does not seem to be paralleled in the ethnic relations between the Dayak and the Madurese in Central Kalimantan. The Madurese are a Muslim group who migrated to Kalimantan from

Madura Island, off the north coast of East Java, in the 1930s.³ In February 2001, these two ethnic groups clashed in a bloody conflict, which took over 500 lives and forced hundreds of thousands of Madurese to leave the province (Cahyono *et al*, 2008). The conflict was first sparked in Sampit and quickly spread to other districts, including Palangkaraya. Cultural, political and economic explanations for the conflict emerged. As immigrants, Madurese are often described as failing to respect the local Dayak and their culture (Cahyono *et al*, 2008; Van Klinken, 2007). They are stigmatized as an ethnic group who are quick to use violence as a way to solve problems, and stereotyped as selfish, harsh and temperamental. Indeed, several individual conflicts, which mostly resulted in Dayak people being killed, were caused by the cultural incompatibility of Madurese people living in the host culture. I used to live in Banjarmasin and Palangkaraya, both cities in Kalimantan where Madurese populations are significant, and I witnessed this cultural friction. Another possible key factor for the conflict is the broader political context. During the New Order, the Dayak had been structurally and economically marginalized; after decentralization in 1999, the Dayak were politically empowered as an ethnic group (de Jonge and Nooteboom, 2006; Van Klinken, 2007).

In short, the many factors that triggered the conflict involved cultural, political and economic dimensions of the ethnic relations between Madurese and Dayak people. Religion was not mentioned in the literature or cited by informants during my fieldwork as one of the factors, and inter-religious relations do not seem to have been significantly affected by the conflict. However, recent political events in the province of Central Kalimantan have shown that the politicization of religion by elites was very strong, especially during the political campaigns prior to the election of a new governor in 2010. This does not seem to have been an isolated case: since decentralization in 1999, in which regions gained power, local politics all over Indonesia have been coloured by religious sentiment (Abuza, 2007; Aspinall and Fealy, 2003; Bush, 2008; Crouch, 2010). During the period of the gubernatorial election, I witnessed the increasing heat of the political climate, as represented in local newspapers and on television. Although religion was not a hot issue in the nationally televised debate (covered by a private television station), there was fierce politicization of religion outside the formal debates. Wika, my research assistant, told me that a Christian candidate more or less said: 'If you still want to have pork sold freely, vote for me'. I had an informal conversation with one Islamic religious leader, who confidently said that the current Christian governor had secretly developed a programme to transform Central Kalimantan into a province of a thousand churches. This politicized religious contestation remained obvious even after the gubernatorial election.

³ According to International Crisis Group (ICG) Report No 19 in 2001, the Indonesian government did not include the ethnicities of the population in its censuses (International Crisis Group, 2001, p 1). Therefore, it is difficult to say exactly how many Madurese lived in Central Kalimantan before the conflict. I could not find data about the composition of the population of Central Kalimantan in 2000. However, based on interviews, ICG estimated that before the conflict, the number could have been between 120,000 and 130,000 people. The conflict forced almost all Madurese to flee to East Java and neighbouring provinces such as South Kalimantan. After several years, some Madurese returned to Central Kalimantan. The 2010 census indicated that the number of Madurese amounted to 42,668 people; the population of the province of Central Kalimantan in 2010 was more than 2.1 million (Na'im and Saputra, 2011, p 38).

The study

This paper is based on my ethnographic fieldwork in 2010 in a state senior secondary school (SMAN) in Central Kalimantan. The school was one of the most reputable schools in the province and was quite diverse in terms of its students' religious backgrounds. Out of about 900 students in 2010, most were Christian and Muslim, a handful were Catholic, and Hindus were few in number. The students came from Dayak, Banjarese, Javanese, Batakese and Chinese backgrounds; none of the students was a Madurese. During fieldwork, I was typically on-site from 6.30 to 14.30, Monday to Thursday, and from 6.30 to 12.00, Friday and Saturday. I attended several extra-curricular programmes and school activities outside that regular timetable. With a local research assistant, Wika, who is an alumnus of the school, I carried out observations in formal settings such as regular Monday assemblies, lessons and school-parent meetings, and in informal settings including the schoolyard, canteen and sport courts. I conducted formal interviews with 15 students, 10 teachers of different subjects and 7 parents. I held focus group discussions (FGDs) with two groups of students (with six participants in each group) and two groups of teachers (with four and five participants). It was particularly difficult to gather teachers together at one time for an FGD. In addition to formal interviews, I had numerous informal conversations with students and teachers during breaks. I also collected relevant school documents, including the school profile, subject curricula and plans, and I took pictures of various events in different settings.

The culture of tolerance in the school

'Today was the anniversary of the school. Wika and I came to the school to observe several activities held to celebrate the school's birthday. One that attracted our attention was the cooking competition. We came to the basketball court where the food the students had cooked was presented on tables. There was a great variety of traditional foods presented such as Javanese *tumpeng*, Banjarese *sayur asam*, Dayak *juhu*, and so forth, which all reflect a taste of (cosmetic) multiculturalism. A group of Grade XI.3 were looking very busy making a perfect preparation of their food. Though mostly from Banjarese and Dayak backgrounds, they cooked a type of Javanese *tumpeng* completed with *sambel terasi* and fried chicken. Once they finished the preparation, a female student who wore an Islamic scarf invited her team members to pray. They were standing; some of them raised their hands with their palms facing the sky, but some did not, just held both their hands together in front of their body. They closed their eyes, and the female student started to recite an Islamic prayer in Indonesian, while others said "Amen". Once she finished, a male student started his Christian prayer and others said "Amen". Both prayers contained hopes for the best results for their food. We were invited to taste their food after some teachers judged the food, and I had an interesting conversation with the students. I asked why they had offered prayers of two different religions and if they felt comfortable with the prayers of other religions. The female Muslim firmly answered that they have to respect each other's religion, and if there were a Hindu friend in the team, they would make a Hindu prayer. Another

student further explained that essentially, people of different religions worship the same god, but the forms of worship made them different.' (27 October 2010)

This story from my field notes shows how students in the SMAN did not problematize religious differences in social relations with peers and teachers. There were female Muslims who wore the *jilbab* who were seen to 'hang out' with their non-Muslim friends. Many students we interviewed said that their close friends were from different religions. Rita, a Grade XI Muslim student, had a Christian best friend whom she described as being like her sister. Rita said: 'You cannot blame someone who chooses a religion different from what you believe'. I repeatedly heard this understanding of religious diversity from students and teachers I talked to, which indicates inclusive understanding and practice of religious tolerance (Crotty, 2006).

The students of the SMAN regularly said that they learned a great deal about other religions through inter-religious friendships. Inter-religious friendships facilitated the creation of cultures of tolerance, respect and engagement among students and teachers. This process is evident in the above story of the cooking competition, and also in the school's celebration of religious festivities, particularly 'Eid al-Fitr for Muslims, Christmas for Christians and *Galungan* for Hindus. The school provided support for the celebration of each of these festivals, and students helped each other in making each celebration a success. Some Muslim students were on the committee for a Christmas celebration, and Christians were engaged in the 'Eid al-Fitr festival. Outside school, they exchanged visits during these festive seasons, paid warm greetings and enjoyed meals provided by the hosts. The use of technology, such as sending short messages via mobile phones and writing on friends' Facebook walls to express greetings, was another feature of the harmonious inter-religious relations exhibited by the school's students and teachers.

According to some religion teachers, students of different religions were eager to show their religious identities, but they still maintained the school's culture of tolerance and respect. I observed, for example, how students held various religious activities, which gained support from the school and teachers. Willy, a teacher of a Protestant class, maintained that religious activities were intended to support religious culture and welfare in teachers and students, and to help achieve the objectives of religion subjects. From my observations, the main regular religious activities included *Hijas* [Islamic studies circle] for Muslims every Saturday, *Kebaktian* [worship] for Christians and *Dharma* [worship] for Hindus. The source persons for these activities were taken from external religious organizations such as the local university's student religious organization, churches and Hindu organizations. I had concerns about the influence of these external individuals on the development of religious intolerance in students, as another study (Wajidi, 2011) has shown that Islamist organizations have penetrated secondary schools and exerted an influence on students. In my observations and interviews with the external figures, however, I found that Islamic teachings in *Hijas* were mainly about student self-development to become pious as well as tolerant individuals within the multicultural society.

The culture of tolerance demonstrated in the SMAN was also manifested in *doa bersama* [inter-religious communal prayer] prior to the national exam. This event created an opportunity for students to be exposed to different religious practices

and it therefore promoted religious tolerance. Sardi, an Islamic subject teacher, explained:

'Doa bersama was held last year prior to the national exam. We plan to hold it every year. All the religion teachers in turn led the prayers. I recited a special *hajat*⁴ prayer and led invocations for Muslim students. Thank God. One hundred per cent of our students passed the exam.'

Through this activity, students learned how other people offer prayers and what kind of prayers they recite. Above all, they learned how to respect religious others on the basis that everyone deserves equal respect and recognition regardless of religion.

In every interview and FGD with teachers, students and parents, I asked them about the above-mentioned 2001 conflict. Their answers unanimously indicated that religion was not one of the triggers of the conflict. Willy confirmed this: 'How could someone say that it was a religious conflict, if [s/he saw that] among the Dayaks there were Christians, Kaharingans, and even Muslims?' A Muslim parent, Hasan, explained that although religion was not a trigger, after the conflict, the local government demonstrated a high level of concern about inter-religious relations by building on the local wisdom of *rumah betang*. As mentioned previously, *rumah betang* is a cultural symbol of harmony amongst different religions and ethnicities in Central Kalimantan.

Religious instruction and the school curriculum

The teachers of RCs commonly explained that the objective of teaching religion, as outlined in the curricula, was to produce religiously committed individuals. 'Islam' classes comprise teachings about *al-Quran* and *Sunnah*, theology, ethics, jurisprudence and Islamic history, with the emphasis on the concept of the self and the balanced relationships of human beings with God, with other human beings and with the environment (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2006a). Similarly, the Catholic curriculum teaches the self-concept, Jesus as a model, the Church and how to live in society with guidance from the Bible (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2006b). The Buddhism and Hinduism curricula equally stress their theological teaching and ethics. The Protestant curriculum teaches about the Trinity and Christian values, with explicit emphasis on spreading the message to other human beings (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2006c). The main objective in all the curricula is to nurture religious belief in students and to make these beliefs the basis for their life and for their interactions with others. However, the way this content was imparted in order to develop students' religious commitment varied from one teacher to another.

Willy, the Christian teacher, claimed to place a heavy emphasis on the spreading

⁴ In some Indonesian Muslim communities, there is a practice of offering a special prayer when someone has a special need to be fulfilled. Although the Prophet Muhammad recommended this as an individual prayer, in the Banjarese Muslim community in Kalimantan it has become a communal prayer. They usually offer this prayer at the moment of starting to build a house, at the beginning of a long journey such as the pilgrimage, and at other major events. On the invitation of someone who has a *hajat*, people in the community gather and offer the prayer, recite invocations and some chapters of the *Quran*. At the end, the host usually serves meals for the attendees.

of love in his classroom teachings. Ni Wati, the Hinduism teacher, provided an account of what drives Hindus to be tolerant and build harmonious relationships in society: 'In the Hinduism curriculum we are always taught about *karma*. When you respect others, you will be given back that respect. But when you commit a bad deed to others, you will receive the same thing.' Sardi, the Islam teacher, believed that it was the teacher's responsibility to guide students to be tolerant. Therefore, he said that he sometimes used a comparative approach when teaching Islam, even though it was not outlined in the formal curriculum. He said:

'When discussing the prophets in Islam or the teachings of the prophets before Muhammad, I usually invited students to also look at, for example, the Ten Commandments in the Torah. So, students understand other religions as well.'

The teachers' reason for emphasizing the teaching of tolerance was the multi-religious make-up of Palangkaraya in particular and Central Kalimantan in general. They frequently mentioned *rumah betang* as a source of inspiration for respecting diversity.

It is important to note that truth claims are embedded in each of the religions, which may make the creation of both pious and tolerant individuals problematic. The existence of truth claims to the religion being taught was acknowledged by all the religion teachers in the school. My previous study in other schools also confirmed this (Raihani, 2010). Ni Wati, for example, believed:

'If you want to be religious, you need to be fanatic, but in a positive way. As a Hindu, I believe the truth in Hinduism, but I can't say other religions are wrong. I tell my students that you can't say that to other people because it will incite conflict.'

Sardi and Farhan said that Islam promoted tolerance of religious others. The principle is, as they conveyed by quoting a verse of the *Quran*, that 'yours is your religion and mine is my religion' (*Al-Quran*, the Chapter of Infidels, verse 6). Tolerance should therefore be demonstrated by working together as community members to realize a common good. In the teachers' opinions, scrutinizing theology is not productive because it will only strengthen differences, which may lead to friction.

Besides the RCs, there were some subjects which occasionally taught tolerance – citizenship education (PKn), sociology and anthropology. Whilst citizenship education was taught to students of all grades across the subject streams, sociology and anthropology were taught only to those enrolled in social sciences and language study streams. The current citizenship education curriculum for senior secondary school contains mainly the state political system, human rights and globalization. Topics of religion and/or tolerance are part of the curriculum at lower levels of schooling. Sociology informed students about social structures and interactions. Anthropology taught them about people and cultures, particularly of Indonesia. In an anthropology class I observed, Yati competently directed students to analyse cultural differences they found in day-to-day life around their community, discuss their thoughts with peers, and learn how to respect cultural

diversity. One Dayak student tried hard to explain her own Kaharingan religious practice as her fellow students asked her challenging questions. This kind of cultural and religious dialogue helped students to understand better and to respect cultural and religious differences. Although most of the teachings in these subjects were not directly related to religious tolerance, students were being taught to accept, acknowledge and respect difference.

School politics and policies on religious tolerance

As a state school, the SMAN should, in principle, accommodate all students from different backgrounds as long as they are selected through the entry examination. This exam consists of several stages, including administrative screening (checking and verifying documents), academic tests and an interview. Pak Fathi, a citizenship education teacher, explained that there used to be religious discrimination in student selection, particularly under the previous principal, who was a Christian. He said:

‘When I first moved and worked here, I was involved in PSB [Penerimaan Siswa Baru: New Student Selection]. There were many Muslims from State Junior Islamic Schools (MTsN) applying, but I saw that they were crossed out. At that time, because I was new, I didn’t dare to comment. But, in my second year, I talked to them [other committee members], asking: “what is the difference [between the MTsN graduates and others]?” As long as they passed our selection, they had the right to be accepted here.’

Sardi corroborated Fathi’s account, adding that graduates of the Catholic Junior Secondary School (SMP Katolik) were given preference because they were reputedly smart students. However, with the development of *madrasah* in Palangkaraya, there was no reason, according to Fathi and Sardi, to discriminate between graduates as long as they met the selection criteria. Both were satisfied with the fairness of the current student selection.

These comments indicate the central and delicate position of religion in the decision-making process in the SMAN. Although the discriminatory student selection process had been revised, the teachers still remembered it. These memories might have been contributory causes of the petition from several Muslim teachers to the newly appointed Muslim principal, to push her to assign a Muslim vice-principal along with the three others. They are two Christians and one Hindu. They believed that the principal needed to have a fair composition of school leadership in order to be effective in her job. In their opinion, having religiously ‘proportional’ leadership, the school would be able to make fair and non-discriminatory decisions about students of different religious backgrounds. Fathi, however, regretted that the Muslim vice-principal was less than competent. This criticism was echoed by other teachers, including some of non-Muslim background.

These same teachers also thought that the appointment of the principal herself was unfair and problematic. The principal had been installed in the office in 2009. She was appointed by the Education Office of Palangkaraya, brought in from another SMAN, and was therefore an outsider. She was viewed as being less than competent for the job, given that she had never even been a vice-principal. Almost all the

teachers I talked to maintained that she had no leadership capabilities and she was appointed solely because of her family's connection with the Mayor of Palangkaraya. During many formal and informal interviews with teachers and students, I heard that in her one year of principalship, she was alleged to have been involved in corruption. During my observations at the weekly assembly every Monday, I heard some students shout at the back '*korupsi, korupsi*' [corruption, corruption] when the principal was speaking. According to John, a sports teacher, the principal collaborated very closely with one Christian vice-principal, but not with the others. He said that they seemed to keep each other's secrets and, therefore, the school decision-making process was limited to these persons, particularly in regard to financial matters. The principal was fully aware of the opposition to her leadership. She said:

'There are always people who like and dislike you when you are in power. To me, it is no problem at all, as long as I can show good performance. [...] Indeed, I appointed a Muslim vice-principal to have a proportional composition of school leadership so that there would not be jealousy.'

It is difficult to know whether the opposition to her leadership was religiously motivated or not, but the obvious resistance came from Christian teachers such as Willy and John. John even said that he would consider resigning if the current principal remained in power. Fathi also outspokenly criticized her leadership, but tried to support her appointment on religious grounds. He said: 'Indeed, the current principal is not competent. But what can you say? She is Muslim, and it is very rare that we have a Muslim principal for this school.' Willy, John and other teachers emphasized that they did not care about religion, and were concerned solely about the principal's leadership competence. Willy told a story about the consultation process for selecting vice-principals.

'At the beginning, the principal selected Mrs Flower to be one of her vice-principals [representing Muslim groups]. But, she [Mrs Flower] was not competent enough; she could not even come every morning to the school. She was then replaced by another Muslim. The principal said to me that one of her vice-principals must come from a Muslim group. I said: "It is up to you. But you should think about competence above religion".'

However, Fathi openly recounted another story:

Fathi: 'In my observation, when I started working here, Christian religious celebrations were much better than Islamic celebrations.'

Raihani: 'What year was that?'

Fathi: '2006. The funding from the school for Christian celebrations was more generous. Then after the current principal was appointed, I asked Mrs Principal to treat Islamic celebrations more equally. Previously, Muslims here didn't dare to celebrate, for example, the Prophet's birthday openly in the front of the school office. I didn't mean to compete with my Christian fellows, but I just wanted equal treatment.'

Now, as Fathi went on, the Muslim celebrations were equal with other celebrations,

and, as also acknowledged by John, the school provided the same amount of funding for religious celebrations regardless of the size of the religious group. It was then up to students to use their creativity to search for complementary funding. Usually, they asked for donations from students and teachers of the same religion, but often students or teachers of other religions provided financial assistance as well.

Again, the above accounts provide a glimpse of the central and sensitive position of religion in the school's politics and, hence, in the school's decision-making process. Although the teachers interviewed used the term 'competition' reluctantly, competition was clearly manifested among the different religions of the school. The appointment of vice-principals representing each religious group was a clear example. In a way, this might undermine the meritocracy system by overlooking the individual's competence. In another, however, this reflects a collective consciousness of religious diversity. Each religion ought to be represented in a position of power in order for the school leaders to make fair decisions, or at least to create the appearance that diversity has been accommodated.

However, was this consciousness of religious diversity also manifest in other school decisions? How did the school treat religious minority students such as Hindus and Catholics? There are at least two issues emerging from the fieldwork concerning the school's treatment of students of different religions: the arrangement of RCs and the provision of places of worship.

As previously mentioned, there were four religious groups of students: namely Muslims, Protestants, Catholics and Hindus. Education Law 20/2003 mandates that each student must be provided with religious education by teachers of the same faith. It is, therefore, the responsibility of both state and private schools to provide qualified teachers for each religion adhered to by students. The SMAN provided appropriately qualified teachers for teaching Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism and Hinduism. All religious lessons were allocated at the same time. If there was more than one religious group in one classroom, the minority group was supposed to leave the classroom for another predetermined location. For Muslims and Protestants, who were the majority, the 'other' classroom was readily available, but for Catholic and Hindu students there was no proper classroom provided where they could comfortably study their respective religious teachings. Sometimes, these minorities had to study in the shared teacher office, which was unsuitable for teaching, since it was crowded with teachers' tables and chairs. When the class was held in this office, many teachers were there having conversations, which distracted the class and made the teaching process ineffective and unenjoyable. On another occasion, they were forced to run the class in the schoolyard sitting on one of the benches under a tree. This might have created a more relaxed and enjoyable learning process, but it was not deliberately chosen by either the teacher or the students for its pedagogical effectiveness.

The other issue was the provision of a place of worship for each religion. There was only one Muslim prayer room or *musolla* in the school. Rina, a Christian teacher, understood that the *musolla* was important for Muslim teachers and students because Muslims are obliged to observe the midday prayer on time. She said it would be hard to imagine hundreds of students looking for places here and there to practise their beliefs and religious obligations. Diana, the Catholic subject teacher, however, maintained that there should be a place of worship for every religious group in the school, as prayer was not an obligation for Muslims only. The principal explained that it

would be very costly to provide a place of worship for every religion. Suta, a Hindu who was also a vice-principal, provided a very lucid response to the issue:

‘We actually tried to provide an appropriate place for every religious group here. At the moment, we can only afford to build a *musolla* and it was done by the support of parents. The funding is the main concern. So, right now, Muslims pray in the *musolla*, for Christians we provide classrooms. They hold services every Friday after school. We also allow Hindu students to use the language laboratory for prayer. But, since they are very few in number, they choose to attend ceremonies in the community where they live.’

Yati (a Christian teacher of anthropology), Willy and Rina said that the decision was made on the basis of urgency. Non-Muslim students such as Christians and Hindus do not need to pray at specific times as Muslims must. They would put the provision of a place of worship for these students far below other school priorities, such as learning facilities and teacher professional development.

It is clear that the position of religious minorities in school politics is not as strong as that of the majority. The minority felt powerless in political interactions with the majority. Suta said: ‘Anywhere in Indonesia, the majority is prioritized. In Bali, the case is even worse. Non-Hindu teachers will not be promoted to be a school leader like me here.’ There seemed to be a collective expectation that the minority should accept the rules supported by the majority. Yet, to say that this was a tyranny of the majority is putting it too strongly, because there remained a communication system established to accommodate teachers’ and students’ voices within the newly decentralized education arena.

School–family/community relations and tolerance

Palangkaraya’s multiculturalism is a product of economic relations, religious missionaries and migration. The Dayak community itself is not monocultural, and is now multi-religious since the introduction of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and other faiths. There are also diasporic societies including Banjarese, Javanese, Madurese, Chinese and Batak, which make the social and cultural relations in this area colourful and dynamic. In an interview in his office, the Head of the Education Office put forward the view that:

‘We term [religious diversity] “*satu atap*” or one roof. If you look at Bukit Hindu [a suburb] and other places in this city, there are mosques, churches and *pura* [temples] built side by side. This reflects our attitudes toward diversity. Also [it reflects] the Dayak philosophy of “*rumah betang*” where Muslims, Kaharingan, Catholics and Protestants live together.’

The school’s multi-religious culture is a microcosm of the diversity of the Palangkaraya community. Unlike the situation in more mono-religious contexts, students in this school cannot ignore other religions, and are faced daily with the diversity in their community. Their experiences from their immediate and extended families, their neighbourhood and their society as a whole have taught them about other people with different cultural and religious identities, as an em-

bodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The students brought this lesson to the school; each of them shared experiences and values, and negotiated and contributed to the creation of the school's culture of tolerance. However, tolerance and diversity were of little concern to the formal locus of school–community relations, the school committee, which is a bridging board for the school, parents and other community members. This committee, as interviews with the head and some of its members revealed, was mainly concerned with the collection of money from parents and the physical development of the school.

However, in informal settings I found it inspiring to hear some comments from students' parents about their belief in religious diversity and tolerance. Mr and Mrs Aban are from Dayak Christian backgrounds. Their son was in Grade XI at the school. Before they were married, after finishing secondary school in Palangkaraya, they went to Malang, East Java, to pursue tertiary education. They went to two different Islamic universities where they learned a great deal about Islam.

Mr Aban: 'Until now, I still have a copy of the *Quran*. I used to learn it [reading the translation] at the university. I am confident in saying that I know Islamic teachings. I even know some different sects of Islam because the university I went to is from the Muhammadiyah organization, while my wife went to an NU [Nahdatul Ulama, one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia] university.'

Mrs Aban: 'Yes, we frequently had discussions about Islam with Muslim friends. They were very open. As non-Muslims, we felt respected, no differentiation in friendship.'

Raihani: 'Do you think your son has learned that kind of diversity?'

Mr Aban: 'I always said to my son not to make friends based on religion or ethnicity. Everyone is inherently good, so you don't have to worry, as long as we respect each other. In my office, I have many Muslim friends and we make jokes about religions. So, [there is] no problem.'

Mr Hamid, whose son was in Grade XII, provided similar accounts of how he and his wife educated their children on the basis of respecting difference. Born and brought up in Aceh as a Muslim Javanese, he has travelled to several parts of Indonesia for his duties as a government official, and has encountered great cultural and religious diversity. He and his family interacted positively within their multi-religious neighbourhood and with his non-Muslim staff and colleagues in the office. The key to the success of interacting with people, according to him, was to respect others as you wish to be respected. He quoted an Indonesian proverb: *di mana bumi dipijak di situ langit dijunjung* [holding up the sky wherever the feet touch the ground], which means adapting flexibly to the culture of the society in which one lives.

Concluding remarks

Confirming previous findings (for example, Van Klinken, 2007), this paper concludes that the 2001 conflict between Madurese and Dayaks was not a religious conflict. It was an ethnic conflict, which resulted in many casualties and caused

almost all Madurese to flee. However, after the conflict, there was a sense of Dayak cultural revivalism, which is based on the Dayak philosophy of *rumah betang*. This philosophy advocates religious diversity and tolerance, which has been a strong characteristic of people in Central Kalimantan. Yet I could not see this philosophy manifested in *deliberate* programmes in the studied school initiated by either the government or the school.

The promotion of religious tolerance in the school is mainly sporadic and entails the following issues: the concept of religious tolerance; cultural capital and its contribution to the creation of school culture; teachers' competence in teaching for tolerance; and the sense of religious politicization by political and religious elites.

The first issue is the concept of religious tolerance as defined by students and teachers of the school. Throughout the paper, we have learned that students and teachers put forward a model of religious tolerance with three provisions. First, all students and teachers acknowledged that there were obvious and unnegotiable differences between religions. This is in line with Habermas's (2004) argument, as presented before, that tolerance is only needed if there are unnegotiable differences in opinions and attitudes. Second, there could be a positive engagement with religious others without sacrificing one's own belief. This means that students and teachers are happy to promote religious tolerance and to engage with people of other religions, as long as they are not required to sacrifice or compromise their own beliefs. Such engagement will result in better understanding of the differences between religions, and closer cooperation in order to pursue common goals. This study suggests that respondents are reluctant to have open discussions about their theological beliefs because it would be fruitless and the theological differences must be acknowledged and respected. This confirms my previous findings on the concept of religious tolerance as defined by several teachers of RCs in Yogyakarta and Palangkaraya (Raihani, 2010). The term 'positive fanaticism' (Raihani, 2010, p 6), which refers to being both pious – often marked by intense, uncritical devotion – and tolerant, was used by one respondent to explain the concept of religious tolerance. Third, religious tolerance is partly dependent on the absence of disturbing behaviour by religious individuals or groups towards others in the name of religion. My respondents agreed that actions that were unsupportive of tolerance should not be tolerated (Appiah, 2006).

The second issue is cultural capital and its contribution to the creation of a tolerant school culture. Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital, as indicated previously, helps to explain the formation of a tolerant culture in the school. Children brought and shared their embodied cultural capital of tolerance with their peers, and together they formed and strengthened it in the school. There are two main sources from which students inherited beliefs and values of religious diversity and tolerance: that is, family and society. Family is the primary education institution from which children learn fundamental concepts, beliefs, values, traditions and habits. Family ties in Central Kalimantan are not generally built on religion, and are not disturbed by differences in religion amongst the members. Family members respect religious diversity and demonstrate a tolerant attitude towards it. In a broader context, Palangkaraya's society also provides a significant venue for students to understand diversity and how to live with and within it. In short, family serves as the first school for students to learn and nurture tolerant

culture in themselves, and society plays a role as the second school where they evaluate and strengthen what they have learned from family. The 'real' school is then a nexus that represents the interests of family and society, and perhaps of other parties. In the case of the creation of a tolerant culture, the school studied demonstrated strong willingness to accommodate and further strengthen students' cultural capital of tolerance through the facilitations of students' interactions and activities.

The third issue is concerned with the religion teachers' competence and awareness of religious diversity and the importance of religious tolerance. This awareness is a prerequisite for establishing conscious education for tolerance. 'Conscious' here means systematically planned strategies to teach for tolerance, as opposed to a sporadic and unplanned approach (Thornberg, 2008). Teachers showed that they had the necessary awareness, but their ability to translate this into teaching strategies was limited by several constraints. *First*, the curriculum of RCs gives no attention to tolerance teaching. Teachers needed to exercise creativity to incorporate these important additional lessons. I interviewed one of the officials in the Office of Religious Affairs in regard to RCs in schools, as these subjects are under the Office's administration. He said that the Central Office had developed a new Islamic RC curriculum oriented towards multiculturalism. However, it was still at a preliminary stage, and needed more trials before being nationally implemented. As noted by some observers (Kailani, 2009; Wajidi, 2011), religious activism that might be infiltrated by radical elements has aggressively penetrated schools to exert influence on students. The role of RC teachers is therefore extremely important to help counter this penetration.

The *second* constraint to the implementation of tolerance teaching is the school policy on class sizes and classroom settings. The traditional classroom facilities are inflexible, with barely movable chairs and tables. The school policy, which seemed to have half-heartedly provided classrooms for religious minority groups, has constrained Hindu and Catholic teachers in their instructional strategies in RCs. This constraint was added to the particular challenge of the small number of students the teachers were faced with, which requires particular teaching strategies that are different from those normally used: that is, lecturing. Also, from my observation, teachers needed stronger motivation to teach such a small class. The *third* constraint is the lack of professional development (PD) of religion teachers on how to teach religion within the multicultural Indonesian society. Sardi attended one PD session of this kind in Palangkaraya, conducted by the Office of Religious Affairs, but in his view, it was not beneficial for tolerance education; during the interview, he revealed that he was unimpressed by this PD. Although the strategies and methods used in teaching were quite varied, teachers were unable to move beyond indoctrination or teaching *into* religion. There was only a limited endorsement of critical thinking (Jackson, 2007; Tan, 2003).

The *final* issue relates to the central role of religion in the school's politics. Some teachers tried to convince me that religious motivation did not come into play in their objections to the appointment of the principal. However, the stories of past religious discrimination told to me by Fathi and Sardi suggest that religion has long played a role in school politics. This situation to some extent resembles the local political constellation in Palangkaraya, and in Central Kalimantan in general. As explained earlier, the politicization of religion by political elites was

very strong, especially during the political campaigns prior to the gubernatorial election in 2010. At the grass roots, however, social interactions were harmonious, and most people did not seem to think in the same way that political and religious leaders did. This was also the case in the school, where students demonstrated remarkably tolerant behaviour, while the school leaders often used religion as a political tool to gain and contest power.

In summary, the promotion of religious tolerance in the SMAN is quite promising, particularly as the cultural capital that enables student tolerance is firmly established, the religion teachers' interest in teaching for tolerance is quite high, and the tolerance culture at student level is strong. This grass-roots tolerance culture ought not to be undermined by political leaders, especially by using religious sentiment. The lack of explicit promotion of religious tolerance in the RC curricula and the lack of teachers' PD need to be addressed, with more serious programmes to increase teachers' capacity to educate for tolerance. Despite these limitations, this school has a tolerant culture. It remains to be seen whether such a tolerant student milieu can be replicated across Indonesia in order to build a multi-religious and tolerant nation.

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