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Multicultural citizenship education in Indonesia: The case of a Chinese Christian school

Chang-Yau Hoon

This study investigates how multicultural citizenship education is taught in a Chinese Christian school in Jakarta, where multiculturalism is not a natural experience. Schoolyard ethnographic research was deployed to explore the reality of a ‘double minority’ — Chinese Christians — and how the citizenship of this marginal group is constructed and contested in national, school, and familial discourses. The article argues that it is necessary for schools to actively implement multicultural citizenship education in order to create a new generation of young adults who are empowered, tolerant, active, participatory citizens of Indonesia. As schools are a microcosm of the nation-state, successful multicultural citizenship education can have real societal implications for it has the potential to render the idealism enshrined in the national motto of ‘Unity in Diversity’ a lived reality.

A primary objective of education in the nation-state is the creation of good and responsible citizens. Indonesian children generally attend school six days a week for nine years of their lives starting at the age of seven. Scholars have hailed education as the single most successful policy for national integration — especially in disseminating the national language, *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian), throughout the archipelago. Yet, this did not come without a cost: the education system and national curriculum under President Suharto’s ‘New Order’ authoritarian regime functioned as a vanguard of national unity, often at the expense of diversity.¹ Lyn Parker writes of how education under the New Order functioned as a tool for the legitimisation and reproduction of a ‘whole paternalistic authority system’, which involved ‘regimes of

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1 Conny Semiawan, ‘The challenge of a multicultural education in a pluralistic society: The Indonesian case’, in *Multicultural education in Indonesia and Southeast Asia: Stepping into the unfamiliar*, ed. Kamanto Sunarto, Russell Hiang-Khng Heng, Achmad Fedyani Saifuddin (Depok: Jurnal Antropologi Indonesia, 2004), pp. 36–46.

obedience and silence, acceptance and questioning'.² Education in the New Order, 1966–98, which aimed at making students conform to the political will of the state, used a highly centralised, teacher-and textbook-focused system.

Democratisation and decentralisation brought about through Reformasi has made significant changes to national education in Indonesia.³ The stated outcome of the new National Education Act of 2003 stipulates that education should produce democratic and responsible citizens who are pious and believe in God, who are highly moral, in good health, knowledgeable, intelligent, creative and independent.⁴ The statement highlights a shift from authoritarian rule to participatory and democratic citizenship where 'civic identity is no longer seen as the integration of citizens' wills in a supreme, personified state'.⁵

The post-Suharto era is also marked by the end to the ideology of cultural assimilation. While previously diversity was sacrificed for national unity, now it is celebrated as a unique characteristic of the nation. Formerly oppressed identities are now free to express themselves in this new liberal space. The post-Suharto education reform appears to precisely address a point made by Tariq Modood that, '[m]ulticulturalism is clearly beyond toleration and state neutrality, for it involves active support for cultural difference, active discouragement against hostility and disapproval and the remaking of the public sphere in order to fully include marginalised identities'.⁶ The National Education Act of 2003 states that 'Education is conducted democratically, equally and non-discriminatorily based on human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national pluralism'.⁷ In 2007 the Department of National Education released a document entitled 'The application of the multicultural education model for the secondary level'. This serves as a guide to schools on the teaching of multicultural education as a means to promote cultural understanding, tolerance and harmonious coexistence.⁸ Schools have been apprised of the fact that they can play an important role in empowering marginalised identities to regain self-confidence as they, of all institutions, 'exercise the most influence on the character formation of young citizens'.⁹

2 Lyn Parker, *From subjects to citizens: Balinese villagers in the Indonesian nation-state* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2003), p. 256.

3 See Raihani, 'Education reforms in Indonesia in the twenty-first century', *International Education Journal* 8, 1 (2007): 172–83.

4 Soedijarto, 'Some notes on the ideals and goals of Indonesia's national education system and the inconsistency of its implementation: A comparative analysis', *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities* 2 (2009): 1–11.

5 Mary Fearnley-Sander and Ella Yulaelawati, 'Citizenship discourse in the context of decentralisation: The case of Indonesia', in *Citizenship curriculum in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. David L. Grossman, Wing On Lee and Kerry J. Kennedy (Berlin: Springer, 2008), p. 113.

6 Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism: A civic idea* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 64.

7 *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* [Act of the Republic of Indonesia, No. 20, Year 2003 on the National Education System], ch. III, art. 4 (1).

8 See Tracey Yani Harjatanaya, 'Chinese Indonesians post-1998: An exploratory study of educational policies and practices in promoting positive relations in Medan, Indonesia', M.Sc. (Education) diss., Oxford University, 2011, pp. 42–4.

9 Daniel Weinstock, 'The problem of civic education in multicultural societies', in *The politics of belonging: Nationalism, liberalism, and pluralism*, ed. Alain Dieckhoff (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), p. 108.

What then is the place of Chinese Christian (Protestant) schools in this regard? Are they sites for the social reproduction of difference, intolerance and segregation? Will Kymlicka argue that segregated religious schools, especially those that are homogenous in their ethnocultural backgrounds and religious beliefs, may be limited in their capacity to provide an adequate citizenship education.¹⁰ In the same vein, Christos Kassimeris and Marios Vryonides argue that 'it becomes apparent that while education is usually perceived as quite an appropriate tool for combating racial discrimination and intolerance, the empirical evidence available supports the exact opposite'.¹¹ However, scholars have also recognised the potential for religious schools to become significant sites of multicultural citizenship education wherein citizenship rights are taught and cultural and religious differences are welcomed and valued.¹² The caveat is that, more often than not, it is the efforts of individual educators, rather than the school as a whole, that promote multicultural and inclusive education on citizenship.¹³ An appreciation of nuanced dynamics within the school is, therefore, important for understanding its contribution to multicultural citizenship education.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates how multicultural citizenship education is taught at a Chinese Christian school in Jakarta. It examines the ways in which students express their national, religious and ethnic identities, and the extent to which education in the school has fostered a culture of tolerance. This study considers whether the school plays a role in empowering its students to integrate into the multicultural society of Indonesia, or merely functions as a 'bubble' that insulates students from the wider community. It also explores the reality of a 'double minority' (i.e. Chinese Christians) in Indonesia whose citizenship has historically been questioned and whose loyalty doubted, and how their citizenship is constructed and contested through national, school, and familial discourses.

Multiculturalism, citizenship and the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia

National unity is a primary agenda of Indonesian nation-building for the population comprises more than three hundred culturally, geographically, and linguistically diverse ethnic groups. Of this, 88 per cent of the population identify as Muslims, around 9 per cent as Protestants and Catholics, and the remaining are Hindus, Buddhists and others. The Javanese (41.7 per cent) and Sundanese (15.41

10 Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the vernacular*, p. 304.

11 Christos Kassimeris and Marios Vryonides, 'Politics and education', in *The politics of education: Challenging multiculturalism*, ed. Christos Kassimeris and Marios Vryonides (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 5–16.

12 See Lyn Parker, 'Religious tolerance and inter-faith education in Indonesia', in *Crises and Opportunities: Proceedings of the 18th Biennial Conference of the ASAA, 2010, Adelaide, Australia*, ed. E. Morrell and M.D. Barr (Canberra: Asian Studies Association of Australia and University of Adelaide, 2010); and Raihani, 'Report on multicultural education in pesantren', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 42, 4 (2012): 585–605.

13 See Lyn Parker, 'Teaching religious tolerance', *Inside Indonesia* 102, Oct.–Dec. (2010), <http://www.insideindonesia.org/feature-editions/teaching-religious-tolerance> (last accessed on 4 July 2013); and Raihani, 'Vision is not enough', *Inside Indonesia* 102, Oct.–Dec. (2010), <http://www.insideindonesia.org/feature-editions/vision-is-not-enough> (last accessed on 4 July 2013).

per cent) are the largest ethnic groups.¹⁴ The ethnic Chinese make up approximately 3 per cent.

During the New Order, Indonesia's approach to accommodating ethnic and religious plurality may broadly be described as pretending that diversity did not exist.¹⁵ The national ideology of *Pancasila* — the five principles of belief in one supreme God, humanism, nationalism, popular sovereignty and social justice — was promoted as *the* single basic principle for all mass organisations and sociopolitical forces under the regime.¹⁶ The purpose of education, according to the General Principles of National Policies (GBHN) formulated in 1973, was to cultivate 'people who can realise the ideals of *Pancasila*', which was implemented to support the twin ideologies of anticommunism and economic development.¹⁷ Pancasila Moral Education (*Pendidikan Moral Pancasila*), a compulsory subject for all levels of education, was introduced to replace civic education in the revised national curriculum of 1975. Messages from the state which emphasised the imperative of a stable, orderly and unified society based on *Pancasila* conducive for economic development, and the desirable quality of loyal and good citizens; were presented forcefully and continually in classrooms.¹⁸ Indonesian citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion and class, were assimilated into a constructed homogeneous *Pancasila* national identity. Consequently, internally diverse identities were subsumed and overridden by this imagined national homogeneity. Furthermore, the Suharto administration actively prohibited any public discussion related to the four 'sensitive' topics encapsulated in the acronym, SARA: ethnicity (*suku*), religion (*agama*), race (*ras*) and interclass (*antar golongan*) differences. In short, assimilation was the dominant discourse during the Suharto era. The discourse of multiculturalism was only introduced to Indonesia after the fall of Suharto in 1998.¹⁹

While for most nations, citizenship connotes a legal status that differentiates a citizen from a non-citizen, in postcolonial Indonesia it was internally contestable. Renato Rosaldo's concept of 'cultural citizenship' describes the power inequalities that are 'at play in relation to mechanisms of marginalisation and exclusion' among citizens in a single nation.²⁰ Prior to the post-1998 Reform, the term 'Indonesian citizen' (*Warga Negara Indonesia*, WNI) was artificial and unrealistic: it was commonly understood to refer to the ethnic Chinese, but not other Indonesians. The assumption was that the Chinese are of foreign origin and not indigenous (*asli*). The term 'WNI' was understood to be an abbreviation of WNI *keturunan asing* (Indonesian citizen of *foreign descent*). The use of the word *asing* (foreign)

14 Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia's population: Ethnicity and religion in a changing political landscape* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003).

15 Parker, 'Religious tolerance and inter-faith education in Indonesia'.

16 Michael Morfit, 'Pancasila orthodoxy', in *Central government and local government in Indonesia*, ed. Colin MacAndrews (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 42.

17 Shigeo Nishimura, 'The development of Pancasila moral education in Indonesia', *Southeast Asian Studies* 33, 3 (1995): 303–16.

18 Lyn Parker, 'The quality of schooling in a Balinese village', *Indonesia* 54 (Oct. 1992): 95–116.

19 Chang-Yau Hoon, 'Assimilation, multiculturalism, hybridity: The dilemmas of ethnic Chinese in post-Suharto Indonesia', *Asian Ethnicity* 7, 2 (2006): 149–66.

20 Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), p. 2.

underlined the alienness of Chinese-Indonesians in the eyes of indigenous Indonesians.²¹ Comparing the term 'WNI' with the French designation, '*français de papiers*' (or 'French by virtue of papers'), which means those people who have French citizenship but no other claim to French status, John Bowen argues that the term 'WNI' implied that the Chinese were *merely* citizens and that 'legal citizenship was their only relationship to the Indonesian social and political body'.²²

However, this understanding of the citizenship of ethnic Chinese Indonesians began to shift after 1998. Just before Suharto stepped down as president on 21 May 1998, one of the most devastating anti-Chinese riots in the nation's history took place. Chinese businesses were looted and Chinese women raped. These events demonstrated vividly that Suharto's assimilation policy had failed to accommodate the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. With the consideration of multiculturalism in post-Suharto government policies, as part and parcel of democracy, many minority cultures suppressed during the Suharto era demanded recognition as well as celebration as part of a diverse nation. Ethnic Chinese seized the opportunity to fight for the abolition of discriminatory laws and to defend their rights, as well as to liberate their long-suppressed identity and cultural heritage.²³

The post-Suharto reforms and ethnic Chinese political activism have allowed the Chinese to retrieve considerable cultural and citizenship rights. The most significant has been the endorsement of the new Citizenship Law (No. 12/2006) by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on 1 August 2006. The Clarification of the Constitution has redefined '*asli*' (or indigenous) Indonesian to include all citizens who have never assumed foreign citizenship by their own free will. This signifies the end to the official distinction between '*asli*' and '*non-asli*', as all citizens are now legally equal before the law. More recently, the government enacted the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination Law (No. 40/2008) to further provide protection against discrimination based on race and ethnicity.²⁴

Despite this positive development, the struggles of the ethnic Chinese for equal rights, representation, voice and recognition are still unfinished. 'Multiculturalism', argues Tariq Modood, 'gives political importance to a respect for identities that are important to people, as identified in minority assertiveness, arguing that they should not be disregarded in the name of integration or citizenship'.²⁵ After decades of silencing, oppression and disempowerment, it will take time for the ethnic Chinese to recover their confidence and to assert their rights as full Indonesian citizens. In

21 Charles Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 3.

22 John Bowen, 'Normative pluralism in Indonesia: Regions, religions and ethnicities', in *Multiculturalism in Asia*, ed. Will Kymlicka and Baogang He (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 154.

23 Chang-Yau Hoon, *Chinese identity in post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, politics and media* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2008).

24 However, there are two caveats related to this law: first, religion has been a basis for discrimination under the law; and second, the law may introduce cultural relativism as it states that universal principles of 'equality', 'freedom', 'justice' and 'humanitarian values' are to be implemented in accordance to religious, social, cultural and legal values in Indonesia. See Syamsul Arifin, *Attitudes to human rights and freedom of religion or belief in Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius, 2010).

25 Tariq Modood, 'Multicultural citizenship and Muslim identity politics', *Interventions* 12, 2 (2010): 157-70.

this respect, schools can be an ideal place to empower this minority through multicultural citizenship education. This entails a redefinition of ‘citizenship’ to not just legal rights and a passport, but also as ‘plural, dispersed and dialogical’.²⁶ Furthermore, within the framework of multicultural citizenship education, national identity has to be reimagined as inclusive of multiple elements, and schools should be a place where students have the right to debate who should be recognised as Indonesians and the ‘terms of recognition’.²⁷

Research approach and fieldwork techniques

In a previous study, I surveyed four Chinese Christian schools in Jakarta and presented a macro-analysis that demonstrated how schools can be a site for the construction and maintenance of socially exclusive and segregated religious, ethnic and class identities.²⁸ My findings attest to the theories of Paul Willis and Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron on the role of schools in the reproduction of culture and class.²⁹ The present study builds on the earlier investigation, but provides a micro-analysis of the internal processes in a particular ‘Chinese’ Christian school in Jakarta. Through schoolyard ethnography — a method employed in education research³⁰ — I was able to gain insight into the student dynamics and the multifaceted views and identities of the students in the school under study.

Between July and August 2010, I conducted fieldwork at two campuses of the Olive Tree Christian School (pseudonym) in two different locations in Jakarta. Both campuses of the same school provide Christian education for students of different social classes (see below). The school offers a national curriculum determined by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and prepares its senior high school students to sit for the National Exams. Besides schoolyard ethnography, I conducted twenty-two individual semi-structured interviews and five focus group discussions (FGDs) with senior school administrators, pastors, teachers, counsellors, students, and parents. From Monday to Friday, I arrived at the school daily at 7 a.m. and left at around 3 p.m. I conducted participant observations of Year 11 classes teaching Citizenship Education, Sociology, History, Religious Education, Character Building, Indonesian and Chinese language. I was also participant-observer at school assemblies, weekly chapel services and I also observed students in the playground and at the canteen. I studied students socialising before and after school, and noted in-class behaviours at both campuses.

26 Modood, ‘Multicultural citizenship’, p. 161.

27 Ibid.; See also H.A.R. Tilaar, *Multikulturalisme: Tantangan-tantangan global masa depan dalam transformasi pendidikan nasional* [Multiculturalism: Future global challenges in the transformation of national education] (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2004).

28 Chang-Yau Hoon, ‘Mapping “Chinese” Christian schools in Indonesia’, *Asia Pacific Education Review* 12, 3 (2011): 403–11. See also, Chang-Yau Hoon, ‘Affirming difference’, *Inside Indonesia* 102, Oct.–Dec. (2010), <http://www.insideindonesia.org/feature-editions/affirming-difference>.

29 Paul Willis, *Learning to labour: How working class kids get working class jobs* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977); Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (London: Sage, 1977).

30 See for example, Christopher Bjork, ‘Reconstructing rituals: Expressions of autonomy and resistance in a Sino-Indonesian school’, *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 33, 4 (2002): 465–91; Christopher Bjork, *Indonesian education: Teachers, schools, and central bureaucracy* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Raihani, ‘Report on multicultural education in pesantren’; and Parker, *From subjects to citizens*.

This research focuses on students enrolled in the Social Science (IPS or *Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*) and the Science (IPA or *Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam*) streams at senior high school (or SMA, *Sekolah Menengah Atas*) level. The students were aged between 16–18 years. There were an equal number of informants drawn from each gender. I targeted this research sample group for their age and level of education which enable them to articulate coherent arguments concerning abstract concepts of citizenship, identity, and rights of belonging. Further, the students in this age group are aware of the values inculcated through the discourses of schools, families and communities. Being at an age when they are considering post-school destinations, students at senior high school are particularly cognisant of community values. I selected a purposive, non-random sample of students for interviews and FGDs in order to enable me to compare and contrast family backgrounds, social class, and religion. My interactions with the informants were conducted in Indonesian; interviews and FGDs were recorded, transcribed, and translated into English. My research design focused on:

- how the school inculcated values and taught understandings of national unity, and shaped attitudes towards ethnic and religious differences;
- how parents and students selected schools; and
- how education in Indonesia articulated the concepts and place of student, family, community and school.

The Olive Tree Christian School: An overview

The Olive Tree Christian School (OTCS) began in 1952 as a kindergarten and primary school, and only started offering lower and upper secondary education in 1958 and 1961 respectively. The school was established by the Olive Tree Christian Church, one of the oldest *Peranakan* (Malay-speaking Chinese) Protestant churches in Jakarta. Today, the OTCS has three campuses: the original campus (OTCS I) is located in the Chinatown area of Jakarta; the second campus (OTCS II), established in 1995, is situated in an exclusive residential estate in West Jakarta with a high concentration of Chinese; and the third campus (OTCS III) was set up in 2003 in a new satellite town on the outskirts of Jakarta.

Private schools in Jakarta are thriving despite a highly competitive private education sector. The business environment has made the schools wary of observers such that gaining access to these schools is difficult. My previous experience with elite Christian schools in Jakarta revealed the opacity of the field, and school administrators' reluctance to provide information on 'trade secrets'. It was only through personal recommendations that I was allowed entry into OTCS.

Although OTCS is one of the oldest Chinese Christian schools in Jakarta, its growth and expansion has been relatively slow compared to that of other Christian schools in the city which were quick to seize the lucrative opportunity of providing private education after 1998.³¹ While other church-established Chinese Christian

31 Several Chinese Christian schools in Jakarta are discussed in Hoon, 'Mapping "Chinese" Christian schools in Indonesia'.

schools are run independently of their synod and parent church, OTCS operates under a stringent hierarchy with the synod directly controlling the church, which in turn oversees the education foundation that runs the school.³² Under this pecking order, any change of school policy requires the school director to acquire approval from the foundation, which in turn requires the approval of the church and the synod. This hierarchy reflects the organisational features of the synod, which can be broadly characterised as stereotypically 'Chinese', i.e. top-down, patriarchal, male-dominated, and seniority-conscious.³³ School administrators themselves contrasted OTCS's 'conservative' and outdated 'Chinese familial management style' with the modern and professional business management model adopted by other Chinese Christian schools in Jakarta, and attributed this as the primary factor hindering the school's growth.³⁴ I perceived that the synod functioned as gatekeeper of the values of the group and that these values were inculcated through the school's curriculum, environment and mission.

Enrolments in OTCS I and II comprise predominantly ethnic Chinese with some students of mixed parentage. Although it is a Protestant Christian school, not all students are Protestants. Catholic and Buddhist students make up about 30 per cent of the school population. At both campuses there are only a handful of non-Chinese students, most of them Protestants: these non-Chinese, together with an even smaller number of non-Christian students, are often presented as an emblem of the multicultural diversity of the school, a clear case of tokenism given the homogeneous student landscape. While most of the teachers in OTCS I and II are non-Chinese, almost all of them are Christians. It was explained to me in interviews with teachers and senior school administrators that few Chinese Indonesians are attracted to the teaching profession owing to the meagre salaries. Apparently, a handful of Muslim teachers were hired at OTCS I in the early days when Christian teachers were scarce. However, the school has now adopted a policy of only recruiting Protestant or Catholic teachers, making its environment even more religiously uniform. This recruitment policy has serious implications for multicultural education, which requires teachers from a diversity of ethnocultural and religious backgrounds to 'ensure a richer tapestry of cultural knowledge and experience'.³⁵ Without such diversity in the OTCS teaching workforce, the implementation of multicultural education falls on the shoulders of individual teachers who are personally committed to such a cause.

The school conducted a survey a few years ago to find out the reasons behind parents' choice of OTCS. My interviews with parents, students and teachers in this study have validated the findings of the school's survey. Distance turned out to be

32 The direct involvement of the education foundation in OTCS can also be contrasted with other foundations of private schools, which only 'play a limited, usually finance-only, role'. Lyn Parker and Raihani, 'Democratising Indonesia through education? Community participation in Islamic schooling', *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 39, 6 (2011): 712–32.

33 For a discussion of the features of 'Chinese familism' in church and business management in Indonesia, see Yahya Wijaya, *Business, family and religion: Public theology in the context of the Chinese-Indonesian business community* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002).

34 Interview, OTCS school administrators, 23 July 2010.

35 Neil Guppy and Katherine Lyon, 'Multiculturalism, education practices and colonial legacies: The case of Canada', in *The politics of education: Challenging multiculturalism*, ed. Christos Kassimeris and Marios Vryonides (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), p. 129.

the main consideration; most parents chose OTCS because it is located near their homes. The other reason was the Christian education that the school provided. I was told by several parents that Christian schools are known for their strength of discipline and emphasis on character building.³⁶ Leslie J. Francis notes how Christian schools in the United Kingdom immerse students in a community committed to a way of life based on belief in the Christian God and scriptures.³⁷ One parent at OTCS I argued that it is important for his children to go to a Christian school so that they can build a strong faith foundation. He would not mind if his children later entered a state university because by that time they would have become witnesses for Christ as 'salt and light' and in this way immune to the influences of a non-Christian environment.³⁸

There is generally a lack of parental participation in OTCS. Many parents claim that they are preoccupied with their businesses, and that they have put their trust in the school to shape their children's worldviews and inculcate proper values. The parents said they appreciated the safe environment — which they defined as free from sex and drugs — that the Christian school provided. This perception of a safe environment is further enhanced by the almost exclusively Chinese population of the school, a sentiment affirmed in their discomfit with state schools which they described as places where Chinese and Christians would form minorities. Their unease with state schools was articulated in concerns that included issues of race, religion and class. They also perceived state schools as providing an education with low academic and unclear moral standards. In summary, the OTCS's appeal to Christian as well as non-Christian Chinese parents was based on the exclusive ethnic composition of the student population, the social status of the OTCS students and their parents, and the faith-based discipline that the school represented to the parents. Non-Christian parents did not see Christianity as a threat or an obstacle to their children obtaining a proper moral education; on the contrary, they perceived that the Christian school ethos would inculcate sound values in their children.

Apart from the fact that both OTCS I and II provide a homogeneous ethnic environment, there are notable class differences between the two campuses. Located in the older precinct of Jakarta surrounded by Chinese-owned businesses, OTCS I caters mainly to lower-middle-class students of Chinese descent whose parents usually own a small retail business in the area. Many of these parents originally came from the outer provinces of Indonesia, such as West Kalimantan and North Sumatra, to Jakarta to seek a better life. Running retail activities in the 'rough' environment of Chinatown earned them the stereotype of being unrefined, unsophisticated and loud. The children are believed to have inherited such brusqueness from the Jakarta Chinatown environment and their upbringing.

36 This view is not peculiar to Christian schools in Indonesia; Elizabeth Green's article shows the same perception of Christian schools in the United Kingdom. See Elizabeth Green, 'Discipline and school ethos: Exploring students' reflection upon values, rules and the Bible in a Christian City Technology College', *Ethnography and Education* 4, 2 (2009): 197–209.

37 Leslie J. Francis, 'Independent Christian schools and pupil values: An empirical investigation among 13–15-year-old boys', *British Journal of Religious Education* 27, 2 (2005): 127–41.

38 Focus Group Discussion (FGD), OTCS I, 31 July 2010.

In contrast, parents who send their children to OTCS II come largely from an upper-middle-class white-collar background. The parents are either professionals or medium- to large-scale business owners and most families live in the exclusive residential estates nearby. Living in a gated community with high fences and walls means that the students in OTCS II are more insular and less exposed to people of various backgrounds and ethnicities. While students of OTCS I take various kinds of public transport to school and are usually quite independent and unescorted, their counterparts in OTCS II are sent to school by their chauffeurs or escorted by their maids if they happen to live nearby, and some drive their own motorbikes or cars to school. The accessories that the OTCS II students bring to school, including the latest electronic gadgets and mobile phones, exemplify their status. The class difference between the two campuses is reflected in the fact that OTCS I fees are lower than those for OTCS II.

The two campuses also differ in academic standing. Perhaps surprisingly, OTCS I has a better academic reputation as evidenced in several awards won by its students in national competitions. In contrast, students from OTCS II are better known for sports. This is partly because the campus has a larger compound, equipped with two basketball courts, compared to the small yard, cramped buildings and half-sized multipurpose court of OTCS I. Students from the two campuses also display different attitudes and behaviours. Although they appear loud at first, students in OTCS I are generally better-mannered than their counterparts in OTCS II. For example, students in OTCS I would rise and greet the teachers who entered the classroom while their counterparts in OTCS II tended to ignore their teachers. It was not uncommon for students in OTCS II to talk back to their teachers rudely or play with their mobile phones or other electronic devices while teachers are teaching. The teachers who were interviewed attributed the students' behaviour to their class background. I was told that while students in OTCS II take their education and luxurious accessories for granted, their counterparts in OTCS I understood that upward mobility depended on their academic achievements.

This article demonstrates how the differences in social class between students of the two campuses also marked a difference in their attitude towards multiculturalism. Because students of OTCS I often had to help out in the family retail business in Jakarta's Chinatown, they were exposed to a wider non-Chinese community. This enabled students in OTCS I to better appreciate difference as compared to their OTCS II counterparts. However, neither openness nor closeness to cultural diversity shaped the attitude of students towards citizenship and national belonging. Students from both campuses expressed a feeling of otherness within the community — a general feeling which I believe was shaped at home and reinforced by the homogeneous school environment in contrast with the diversity of Indonesian society.

Teaching multiculturalism in a homogeneous environment

In providing a confessional Christian education in an ethnically homogeneous environment to predominantly Chinese students, the Olive Tree Christian School does not offer multiculturalism as a 'natural' experience. One teacher asked how the students could learn about multiculturalism when, 'the only non-Chinese [they

meet] are teachers, office boys [sic] and security guards'.³⁹ I emphasise that this comment came from a teacher at OTCS I where the students have more exposure to non-Chinese through their daily routines (although such interaction may be shallow and limited) such as taking public transport and interacting with customers in their parents' shops. One could only imagine what the teacher might say of OTCS II students who see non-Chinese in terms of their domestic maids and drivers since OTCS II students live in residential cocoons sequestered away from the majority of Indonesians.

Although the school management espouses the importance of multiculturalism, there is no specialised curriculum that addresses education for multiculturalism and tolerance.⁴⁰ The topic of multiculturalism, however, is covered in Year 11 Sociology and there have also been efforts at promoting multiculturalism and tolerance in subjects such as Religion Education, Citizenship Education and Character Building. The teaching of multiculturalism in these named courses varied, depending on the attitudes of individual teachers on the importance of multiculturalism in Indonesian society.⁴¹ Those who believed in multicultural education shared with me the innovative ideas they had thought out. These methods mostly involved the creation of opportunities for their Chinese students to interact with non-Chinese and non-Christians. Some cited student-exchange programs with *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). There could be excursions to cultural and religious venues outside the Chinese Christian community. Inter-school sports events and joint-school camps with students from state schools could also be organised. However, these ideas remained wishful thinking as none of the teachers had pushed for any of their ideas, perceiving that it would be impossible to get approval from the Education Ministry and the respective school and organisational administrations, not to mention the consent of parents.

Indonesian academic H.A.R. Tilaar argues that multicultural education can only be implemented when teachers are themselves living in a multicultural manner.⁴² Indeed such personal (multi)cultural experience is argued as critical to the ability of teachers to transmit this knowledge in schools since teachers bring to the classroom their understandings, ideas, explanations and interpretations, all of which would have been articulated from personal and therefore subjective experience.⁴³ In an interview I conducted with the director of a nongovernmental interfaith organisation in Jogjakarta in 2011, I learned of their retreat workshops for teachers from diverse backgrounds and different schools to come together to network, hold dialogues and to learn about curriculum writing. For many of these teacher-participants, the retreat was the first time they had ever interacted and lived together with people of another faith and ethnicity. After spending a few days together, most participants told the

39 Interview, OTCS I, 20 July 2010.

40 FGD, School Administrators, 23 July 2010.

41 For an analysis of the content of multiculturalism in secondary sociology textbooks, see Harjatanaya, 'Chinese Indonesians post-1998', pp. 45–6.

42 Tilaar, *Multikulturalisme*.

43 James A. Banks, 'The canon debate, knowledge construction, and multicultural education', in *Multicultural education, transformative knowledge, and action*, ed. James A. Banks (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1996).

organisers that they valued the interfaith and interethnic dialogue experience and were inspired to bring the experience back to their respective schools through activities that would promote pluralism and multiculturalism. Unfortunately, many of them later reported to the organisers that they faced obstacles from their school bureaucracies and management as these initiatives were invariably viewed with scepticism and suspicion.⁴⁴

In the absence of a specialised multicultural curriculum, it is individual efforts made by teachers that define multicultural education in OTCS. In this regard, the efforts of Ibu Lisa, the Chinese principal of OTCS I, is exemplary:

Multicultural and tolerance education is important to us in Indonesia. If we don't teach this to our students, they may become an exclusive ethnic group. Their parents are teaching them that as Chinese, they should not socialise with non-Chinese... [But] students see that I teach with an 'Indonesian manner' although I myself am ethnic Chinese. In this way, they gradually get used to the idea that they can also be Indonesian [while still remaining ethnic Chinese].... If we keep on focusing on differences [between Chinese and *pribumi*], we may judge the *pribumi* (indigenous Indonesians) and Muslims in a variety of ways. But I teach students that [when a problem occurs] it is not Islam and not a [particular] ethnicity that causes it. The problem lies with the person, the individual. This way they will value the existence of people who are different from them.⁴⁵

Teaching in the 'Indonesian manner' for Ibu Lisa involves embodying the meaning of living with difference in tolerance and respect. She is a counter-example of the Chinese stereotype — that they are rich, business- and money-oriented, live in exclusive residential areas, and are reluctant to socialise with non-Chinese.⁴⁶ As a lower middle class ethnic Chinese Christian, Ibu Lisa has been living in a Sundanese Muslim majority village in the outskirts of Jakarta for fifteen years. It takes her two to three hours to commute to school by public transport every day. Although there are only three Chinese Christian families in the entire village where she lives, she feels comfortable and safe as 'differences are valued' in the village. According to her, there has never been inter-ethnic or inter-religious conflict in her village. Her family often visits their neighbours during festive seasons, religious celebrations and family events. Inter-ethnic marriage, deemed taboo by most Chinese, is not an issue in her family as her brother married a Javanese Christian woman. Living in a multicultural environment, Ibu Lisa teaches multiculturalism in her Citizenship Education class using her own experience as an example. She is not alone — several teachers in both OTCS I and II come from similar backgrounds, share similar experiences and teach multiculturalism in a similar spirit.

The OTCS is aware of the impact of its exclusive and homogeneous school environment on its students. Recognising that its students may not have much experience in interacting with their fellow non-Chinese citizens, OTCS implements a social program called 'Live in' to allow students to go on a short-term stay with

44 Interview, 16 Sept. 2011.

45 Ibu Lisa, interview, 21 July 2010.

46 See Hoon, *Chinese identity in post-Suharto Indonesia*.

underprivileged Indonesians in rural villages. This one-week program aims at giving students exposure to living with a host family of a different ethnicity and religion and seeks to encourage students to learn about their host family's culture, faith and way of life. In organising this program, the school bears a heavy responsibility with regard to safety concerns. In order to address this concern of potential liability, the home-stay villages are carefully selected based on recommendations from their network of local churches in that area. The school has received positive feedback from students who have experienced the program. For instance, a student in OTCS I shared his experience:

In the program it is the duty of all students to help out their host parents. It happened that my host parents are in the chicken processing line of work.... Having host parents who cut chickens meant that I had to wake up at three o'clock in the morning to remove the feathers of the chickens so that we can cut them. According to me, the 'Live in' program is very good because I get to learn about different cultures and get acquainted with people from different religions and ethnic groups.⁴⁷

Although this program allows students to gain exposure to different communities and lifestyles, it is limited in its success in initiating organic interaction between students and local residents. One teacher in OTCS II revealed that his students still preferred to cluster among themselves and were reluctant to socialise with local youth.⁴⁸ Moreover, the 'Live in' program is not novel or exclusive to OTCS. In fact, the program is so popular in private schools that it risks becoming a clichéd and tokenistic 'cultural immersion program' that only serves a superficial function. For instance, the original objective of placing students with a host family of a different religion has not been followed through as the OTCS mainly cooperates with Christian villages. The school management admits that the villages in Central Java that facilitate such home-stay programs have become increasingly commercialised: 'Instead of allowing students to have hands on experience in their farm, some hosts do everything themselves and students are only required to watch'. The management of OCTS acknowledges this concern and a school administrator said, 'We are cautious about this as we want our students to participate or the program will lose its meaning'.⁴⁹

I hold that tokenism and irrelevance might be the lesser of concerns with regard to the 'Live-in' programs. Even though unintended, the 'Live in' program in fact reinforced class differences between the students and the villagers, and highlight a mutual sense of otherness between host communities and the students of private schools. To show real commitment to integrating students into the larger Indonesian society, programs like 'Live in' need to be more than a once-off event, and should be reinforced with other activities that can encourage multicultural interactions.⁵⁰ Tilaar is right to suggest that multicultural education should be

47 Student interview, 28 July 2010.

48 Student interview, 26 Aug. 2010.

49 FGD, OCTS school administrator, 23 July 2010.

50 Kamanto Sunarto recommended ways for implementing multicultural education in schools. See Kamanto Sunarto, 'Multicultural education in schools: Challenges in its implementation', in *Multicultural education in Indonesia and Southeast Asia: Stepping into the unfamiliar*, ed. Kamanto Sunarto et al. (Depok: Jurnal Antropologi Indonesia, 2004): 47–60.

enshrined in all subjects taught, and integrated into the school culture.⁵¹ In other words, a whole-school approach is needed for multiculturalism to be successfully taught in school.⁵²

During my fieldwork, I asked selected students in both campuses to participate in a creative writing exercise on a topic related to diversity in Indonesia. The students' essays show that they are generally proud of the diversity that exists in the country. For instance, one wrote, 'Although Indonesia is diverse, we should not distinguish ourselves from others nor make enemies with people who are different from us in religion and culture. We must think of them as equals and befriend them. I am proud to be part of the Indonesian nation which is rich in diversity' (OTCS II). Another student viewed diversity as 'colours in life': 'When there is only one colour in life, human beings will not grow... a diverse society is a society with differences but the different elements are all interconnected' (OTCS I). In one essay entitled, 'Diversity = Double Edged Sword', the student wrote, 'So what happened to the diversity in Indonesia? Indonesia became a chaotic country with all sorts of riots, inter-ethnic and inter-religious wars because of differences in understanding and jealousy between ethnic groups' (OTCS I).

The assertions of the importance of diversity need to be critically evaluated if they represented regurgitation of state ideals spelt out in textbooks. Similar approval of the 'colourfulness' of Indonesian diversity was found among students of a *pesantren* in Yogyakarta in Raihani's research.⁵³ The students told him that they did not see any problem with being different from others, and asserted that the key to harmonious living in diversity is tolerance. Through the years of textbook-centred education using prescribed texts, many Indonesian students have grown up in a discursive *habitus*⁵⁴ of 'politically correct' thought. Whether Chinese Christians or indigene Muslims, their answers seemed to come right out of the textbook. One is left guessing the extent to which the notion of an ideal society of harmonious multiculturalism had a basis in their real lives.

In order to gain further insight into the 'real' world of the students, I asked the students about their choice of universities after completing high school. More than half of my informants in OTCS I, and not surprisingly, all informants in OTCS II, indicated that they would choose to enter private universities in Jakarta which have a majority of Chinese students — such as Tarumanagara University, Atma Jaya Catholic University, Bina Nusantara University and Pelita Harapan University — rather than state universities. Students from a wealthier background, especially those in OTCS II, said they planned to continue their tertiary education overseas in Singapore, Australia or the United States. The principal of OTCS I affirmed that her students who intended to go on to tertiary study locally preferred a monoethnic university: 'The students are concerned about mixing with people who are different, especially the non-Chinese'. She further explained, 'Not that they don't want to

51 Tilaar, *Multikulturalisme*, p. 229.

52 Raihani, 'A whole-school approach: A proposal for education for tolerance in Indonesia', *Theory and Research in Education* 9, 1 (2011): 23–39.

53 Raihani, 'Report on multicultural education in pesantren'.

54 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a theory of practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

socialise [with the non-Chinese] but they are worried that they won't be accepted [by the non-Chinese]'.⁵⁵ One student said:

In both school and home environments, we are surrounded by mostly Chinese who are Christians, Catholics or Buddhists. Rarely are there Hindus or Muslims. So we have not really experienced real society. If we decide to enter the University of Indonesia [UI]... it will be very complex. So many different people, how can we handle this if we have not experienced [diversity] in school until now?⁵⁶

There are various reasons for the reluctance of Chinese students to consider entering public universities for tertiary education. Memories of the 1998 anti-Chinese riots are ingrained and kept alive in their minds by their parents, for one. Moreover, during the New Order period, the Chinese were the only ethnic group that was restricted by a quota for entrance into public universities. This resulted in Chinese Indonesians forming a minority in these universities. The quota system was lifted after the 1998 Reform, but the minority status and the fear of being marginalised remains. An OTCS I student recounted her sister's reluctance to enter the prestigious University of Indonesia (UI) even though she received an offer upon passing the tertiary entrance exam: 'My sister was reluctant (*kapok*) to enter UI because she was not comfortable with the environment. Eventually, she entered a university with all Chinese students'.⁵⁷ The word '*kapok*', as used by Chinese Indonesians to describe their predicament as members of a resented minority, connotes an emotional response of having 'learnt one's lesson' or 'having had enough' and 'not wanting to go through the same experience again'.⁵⁸

Despite telling of her sister's reluctance to enter UI, this informant, and several of her peers at OTCS I appeared to be open to the idea of studying at a state university. This student told me that she was targeting either the UI or the Institute of Technology, Bandung (ITB), both reputable state universities. By way of an explanation for her choice she said, seemingly with no sense of contradiction: 'In these universities we can learn how to adapt to people who have different religions and different ethnicities. I am really excited about this.' Another student in the same FGD appeared to be more pragmatic. She said:

State universities provide better access to jobs for they have better social networks. Moreover the fees are lower [than at private universities], so we don't have to further burden our parents who have worked so hard for us. I know that in state universities, if you are Chinese, you will have to take a beating (*dikerjain habis*), but luckily I am of mixed race, and that's my chief advantage; I have darker skin.⁵⁹

Two students who were doing well academically at OTCS said they wanted to study medicine at UI. One said, 'Initially I was concerned [about entering a state university], but then I realised that I would not grow if I went to a Christian university. If I am in

55 Interview, 21 July 2010.

56 FGD 2, OTCS I, 30 July 2010.

57 FGD, OTCS I, 23 July 2010.

58 See Chang-Yau Hoon, *Chinese identity in post-Suharto Indonesia*.

59 Ibid.

a state university, I can set an example for my new friends and ultimately get them to accept Christ.⁶⁰ The other student who wanted to do medicine at UI stated: 'I remember participating in a competition with participants from both private and public schools. I did make friends with people of different ethnicity and religions. I believe that if I enter UI, there is a great chance that I can mix well and not be marginalised.'⁶¹

OTCS I school administrators encourage students to consider public universities for their tertiary education, and especially the premier universities such as UI, ITB and Gajah Mada University. The school administrators note the great influence parents have on their children with regard to the choice of university: 'The school may try to bridge racial differences... but we can't do much if parents who are cultural chauvinists instil their racial prejudice in their children.'⁶²

Citizenship education: Between apathy and disillusionment

In an earlier article, I argued that students in elite Chinese Christian schools see citizenship teaching as superfluous for they enjoy high social mobility notwithstanding their minority status.⁶³ One manifestation of their indifference with regard to notions of citizenship is their dismissive attitude to the subject Citizenship Education, which is compulsory in accordance with the curriculum set out by the Ministry of Education and Culture. However, I found that the same generalised finding could not be made for the effectiveness of citizenship education taught at OTCS. I found nuanced differences in student attitudes which appeared to depend on the level of commitment of individual teachers to the belief in the value of multiculturalism.

Considered as a 'source of social capital' and 'democracy in action',⁶⁴ Citizenship Education can play an important role in a democracy such as Indonesia.⁶⁵ Under Suharto, the integralist *Pancasila* ideology defined the model of citizenship which was reinforced through the indoctrination of Pancasila Moral Education. This subject was replaced by Citizenship Education (PKn or *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan*) in 2002 following considerable debate among educators on what citizenship education would be relevant to post-Reformasi Indonesia.⁶⁶ A PKn teacher at OTCS I explained that Pancasila Moral Education focused on the moral element, and encouraged good behaviour in terms of tolerance among different communities; PKn, on the other hand, emphasised public institutions and citizenship rights and responsibilities.⁶⁷

60 Interview, 28 July 2010.

61 Interview, 29 July 2010.

62 FGD, 23 July 2010.

63 Chang-Yau Hoon, 'Mapping "Chinese" Christian schools in Indonesia'.

64 John Potter, *Active citizenship in schools: A good practice guide to developing a whole-school policy* (London: Kogan Page, 2002). 'Social capital' is referred to by John Potter as 'those stocks of social trust, norms and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems', p. 37.

65 Wendy A. Gaylord examines whether civic education has contributed to democratisation or produced democratic citizens in Indonesia in 'Reformasi and teachers' implementation of civic education in West Sumatra, Indonesia' (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2008).

66 Mary Fearnley-Sander, Isnarmi Muis and Nurhizrah Gistituati, 'Muslim views of citizenship in Indonesia during democratisation', in *Citizenship education in Asia and the Pacific: Concepts and issues*, ed. W.O. Lee, D. L. Grossman, K.J. Kennedy and G.P. Fairbrother (Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre and Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), pp. 37–58.

67 Interview, 22 July 2010.

The new framework inserts into the ‘civic education model’ principles of democratic systems, civil society and the rule of law, as well as the state ideology and civic values of *Pancasila*. Fearnley-Sander et al. summarise the political values of the new curriculum into three objectives: a commitment to *Pancasila* as the source of national identity, a commitment to civic competency, and a rights-oriented view of citizenship.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this new curriculum in providing ‘social capital’ to create active citizens remains to be seen.

It is widely known that neither Pancasila Moral Education nor Citizenship Education is favoured by students: ‘Boring’; ‘Trifling’; ‘Formal’; ‘Have been memorising since primary school’; ‘Don’t understand the meaning and benefit of it’. These are some of the expressions that have been identified as the ‘trademark’ responses to Pancasila Education by a lecturer who teaches this subject at a Christian university in Surabaya.⁶⁹ A Citizenship Education (PKn) teacher talked about the ‘mental stress’ that the PKn teachers suffer. The teacher told how students perceived PKn teachers as ‘purveyors of accounts of reality that contradicted lived experience’ so that PKn teachers were to them ‘Liar Teacher Number 1’.⁷⁰

Indeed, PKn is a challenging subject to teach because 1) students do not seem to see much relevance in the subject compared to subjects which are deemed more ‘practical’, and 2) students do not believe in what is taught as it does not usually correspond to reality. I have observed apathy towards Citizenship Education among students in both campuses of OTCS. To illustrate this, I have reproduced an extended account of a Year 11 Citizenship Education (PKn) class at OTCS I from my field notes dated 19 July 2010:

Pak Anwar, a PKn teacher who is in his late 20s, was a little late for class. When he arrived, he left the textbook on the desk and taught interactively. He started the lesson by asking, ‘What is politics?’ Before anyone responded, he answered, ‘Politics is all about power.’ He asked, ‘What do we see in Indonesian politics?’, and reminded students that Suharto was dictator for 32 years. ‘KORUPSI!’ (corruption), he emphasised. ‘Corruption is an abuse of power,’ he added. He further explained, ‘If we look at it from the perspective of finance, it is natural to be corrupt. It needs a lot of campaigning to get a seat in the MPR [People’s Consultative Assembly]. Campaigning is costly — it needs money. Politicians need to be rich to run campaigns. Such as...?’, he left it blank for students to fill in. ‘Prabowo... Wiranto... Jusuf Kalla...!’, the students answered. ‘They are all business people. All of them need money,’ said Pak Anwar in a cynical way. He continued, ‘They have invested a lot of capital in order to get a seat in the MPR. Of course they would want to recover the capital. So do not be surprised that Indonesian politicians are corrupt. Corruption has become entrenched in Indonesia.’

Pak Anwar exemplified his point using his friend who is a policeman. He said his friend told him that police officers who are honest take a long time to get promoted.

68 Fearnley-Sander and Yulaelawati, ‘Citizenship discourse in the context of decentralisation: The case of Indonesia’, p. 116.

69 Weilin Han, ‘Mendaratkan ideologi Pancasila dalam pengajaran di kelas’, *CIVIS* 2, 2 (2010), <http://www.leimena.org/id/page/v/196/mendaratkan-ideologi-pancasila-dalam-pengajaran-di-kelas>.

70 Fearnley-Sander, Muis and Gistituati, ‘Muslim views of citizenship in Indonesia during democratisation’, p. 52.

Being honest could be seen as ‘interfering with stability’ (*mengganggu stabilitas*) [or rocking the boat] and an honest policeman could be transferred to isolated places such as Aceh, Papua or the Thousand Islands (Pulau Seribu). The students laughed. Pak Anwar wrote on the board: ‘Lord Acton: Power tends to corrupt. Absolute power corrupts absolutely’. Students quickly copied it down in their notebooks. Pak Anwar continued, ‘Power tends to be misused. Absolute power will certainly be misused. We have seen this in Suharto’s authoritarian rule of the MPR, DPR and military. Ideally, politics is used to build [the nation]. But this is not happening here.’

Moving on to the topic of political culture, the teacher asked, ‘What is political culture?’ A student read the definition straight from the textbook. ‘What about in everyday Indonesia?’, Pak Anwar asked again. ‘KORUPSI!’ the students answered. Pak Anwar seemed pleased with their answer. He reaffirmed them by saying, ‘This is not just my assertion. Even scholars and experts on Indonesia would agree [that it is corrupt]...’ — he looked at me for an affirmation. He concluded the section by saying that corruption is the political culture in Indonesia and emphasised, ‘Corruption is deeply entrenched.... Yet, it can be possible to have an honest government in Indonesia; not impossible, but very difficult... you have to be prepared... it will be difficult’. Pak Anwar now returned to the concepts in the textbook and asked students what are the three components in politics. ‘What is the first component?’ A student answered, ‘Cognitive’. Pak Anwar gave a brief explanation of this and then asked, ‘The second component is...?’, and so on.

The students seemed very indifferent to the Citizenship Education class. Pak Anwar recognised that the students were losing attention. He asked, ‘What did you guys do in PKn class in previous year?’ Students answered in unison, ‘We slept’. Pak Anwar shook his head and asked the students to take out a piece of paper. The students moaned and protested. Pak Anwar wrote an essay question on the board: ‘Compare the political culture between the Reformasi Order and the New Order’. He asked them to write their thoughts freely in any format they want. He then walked around to help students with their queries until the bell rang.

The humour in the account above is one of black comedy. Pak Anwar used the favourite bogeyman of the corrupt politician and the corrupt civil servant to arouse student attention. Playing to the gallery proposed distrust in the leaders of government. He set himself ‘on side’ with the students, which in turn undermines any authority or legitimacy the government might have. But the implication for nationhood is worrying. If the state is undermined, then too would civic pride in citizenship. While I agree that corruption appears to be endemic to Indonesia, what is worrying is the conflation of corruption with government and civic institutions. This must be a well-rehearsed narrative as students appear to be convinced that PKn teaching is the telling of lies, even though Pak Anwar seemed in his PKn lesson to be telling the ‘truth’. In my interviews, the informants seemed unanimous in their belief in the gap between how the government is portrayed in PKn class and how politics is ‘actually’ practised on the ground. ‘State principles only appear in the book and never in practice,’ said one student.⁷¹ One OTCS II student said, ‘Political practices in Indonesia are very

71 FGD 2, OTCS I, 30 July 2010.

different from the theories taught.⁷² Another student opined, 'PKn is boring. The teacher is boring and the material is boring. The material taught in PKn focuses on laws and regulations. We know that in Indonesia most laws and regulations are only formulated but are not implemented.'⁷³ One student more thoughtfully commented, 'PKn keeps repeating itself — laws, political practices, and so on. It is more important to change the mentality, not keep emphasising knowledge of state ideology. Our nation failed because our mentality is wrong, doesn't matter how much we know about the ideology.'⁷⁴

The disgruntled reception of PKn reveals that ethnic Chinese students are not apolitical or disloyal citizens, as the stereotype would have it. Instead, their contempt for PKn classes revealed their disillusionment with the state. Their disappointment was eloquent in their comments. When asked whether they loved Indonesia, the majority of student-informants at both campuses replied affirmatively. However, some OTCS II students from wealthy families who knew that they would be sent overseas for further studies were transparent about their apathy and disillusionment with the state. Having the means to escape, they could confront more openly their sense of being let down. The ambivalence of these students was clear, 'Sometimes the feeling of love towards our country is defeated by our sadness and shame for Indonesia. But what can we do?'⁷⁵ In a PKn class in OTCS II, a student asked the teacher why they needed to learn about political participation if they knew that, 'at the end of the day, politics is about lies and corruption'. The student also asked when Indonesia would become developed and democratic like Western countries. The teacher, whether wishing to align her reply to student sentiment or honestly reflecting personal opinion, replied, 'The day will come'.⁷⁶

One lone student who, by his exception, proved the rule of gloom said, 'There is certainly the feeling of shame when we think of the corruption and backwardness [of Indonesia]. But my Religion Education teacher taught me that everything happens for a purpose. It is not a coincidence that I was born in Indonesia and became an Indonesian citizen. My role is to be a good citizen and to build Indonesia.' The student said that PKn lessons were self-affirmative: 'We are taught that even we, a double minority, Chinese and Christian, have the same rights as other ethnic and religious groups. I don't have to feel inferior.'⁷⁷

The post-1998 national education reform and decentralisation have given rise to a new governance model called School-Based Management (SBM), which gives teachers more authority to develop their curriculum and decide learning approaches and materials.⁷⁸ This new model notwithstanding, the usual pattern of Indonesian education is still textbook-and-teacher-centric.⁷⁹ In the field notes of the

72 FGD 2, 30 Aug. 2010.

73 Interview, OTCS I, 29 July 2010.

74 FGD 2, OTCS II, 30 Aug. 2010.

75 FGD 2, OTCS I, 30 July 2010.

76 Field notes, 24 Aug. 2010.

77 Interview, OTCS I, 29 July 2010.

78 For details of SBM, see Raihani, 'Education reforms in Indonesia in the twenty-first century', *International Education Journal* 8, 1 (2007): 172–83; and Parker and Raihani, 'Democratising Indonesia through education?'

79 Teuku Zulfikar, 'The making of Indonesian education: An overview on empowering Indonesian teachers', *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities* 2 (2009): 13–39.

Citizenship Education class in OTCS I reproduced above, although Pak Anwar attempted to depart from the usual pattern of Indonesian classroom interaction, he nonetheless returned to the textbook for concepts that students had to learn. This textbook-centric teaching reflects the reality of the National Exams which require the regurgitation of standard ideas. Between his teaching about the ‘reality’ of corruption and the idealised ‘proper’ textbook knowledge, Pak Anwar’s PKn lesson was a cynical lesson in citizenship.

Although Pak Anwar attempted to engage with the new, critical approach to knowledge, which is now encouraged, he did not try to provide an alternative framework for the students to consider. The effect of his approach could be to reinforce the system which he attempts to mock. Students’ response can be profoundly disturbing. For example, a student I interviewed after Pak Anwar’s PKn class said:

Pak Anwar once asked, ‘If you are in a wealthy position, would you be corrupt?’ The thing is, he told us that a businessperson who is not corrupt can only earn enough to buy a car and a small house. Honestly, if I am going to be a businessman I will certainly be corrupt because I want the money, I want glamour.⁸⁰

H.A.R Tilaar argues that, ‘Education is a process of internalisation of morals of young generation; therefore it is a means in deterring corruption in a society’ (English in original).⁸¹ In fact, he is optimistic that the new Education Law of 2003 could function to combat corruption by promoting discipline and good morals in its civic and multicultural curriculum. Again, the key lies in having dedicated teachers to inculcate such values. As such, I recall the words of Ibu Lisa, the Chinese principal of OTCS I, who also teaches PKn, and who attempts to teach her Chinese students a belief in the rights of citizenship:

I always stress to my students that you are Indonesian. If someone asks whether you are Chinese, answer them ‘Yes’, and what is wrong with being Chinese? When you are not treated as an Indonesian [i.e. if you are discriminated against], you have to exercise your rights as an Indonesian.⁸²

Would the ethnic Chinese students see themselves in the model of Ibu Lisa who is quietly assertive of her rights as an Indonesian citizen, or in the figure of Pak Anwar, who makes it clear that PKn is all just a farce and nobody is going to be fooled?

Conclusion

Reformasi, the democratisation and decentralisation process that took place after Suharto’s downfall in 1998, has opened new possibilities for the promotion of multiculturalism. The post-Suharto education reform has spawned the new Education Act of 2003 and the 2007 Guide to ‘The application of the multicultural education model for the secondary level’, among other policies. Pancasila Moral Education, a top-down ideology, was also replaced with a more accessible Citizenship Education course. But according to Raihani, there is little substance to the new rhetoric: he argued that the

80 Interview, OTCS I, 22 July 2010.

81 Tilaar, *Multikulturalisme*, p. 235.

82 Interview, 21 July 2010.

Indonesian government does not have a 'clear vision for multicultural education in the school curriculum'.⁸³ It appears that most teachers are still not familiar with the concept of 'multicultural education', and thus have not incorporated the notion into their teaching. Teachers who are accustomed to teaching a state-dictated curriculum are now expected to act autonomously with limited support from central governments.⁸⁴

Although the difference between *asli* and *non-asli* has been dissolved so that the ethnic Chinese are no longer just Indonesians 'by virtue of papers', psychologically, it will take longer for them to be confident enough to exercise their full citizenship rights. Schools play an important role in instilling a sense of an imagined community in young minds. This micro-analysis of Olive Tree Christian School's pedagogy demonstrates Will Kymlicka's proposition that education for citizenship needs to go beyond civics classes and must include teaching in the family, in neighbourhoods, churches and in civil society.⁸⁵ In other words, a whole-school approach is needed for multiculturalism to be successfully implemented. As schools are a microcosm of the nation-state, successful multicultural education can have real societal implications given its potential to bring to life the idealism enshrined in the national motto 'Unity in Diversity'.

Multiculturalism is not a natural experience in many religious and private schools and so it has to be taught. No matter how valiant the effort of a religious school, with apathetic parents and students cocooned in their own ethnic and religious 'bubbles', teaching multiculturalism can be an insurmountable task. High schools may be seen by wealthier Chinese parents as a transition time, when their children are merely being prepared for an education overseas. How else can we judge programs like the 'Live in' program? At best it is naïve to expect a week-long program to dismantle long-standing socially constructed differences — in race and class — between the Chinese and non-Chinese. At worst it is a tool for the reproduction of class and ethnic inequalities, for on the contrary, such artificially-managed interactions are not innocent of consequences. When people across ethnic, religious and social boundaries are brought together in transient meetings that do not allow time for true understanding, what might be left could be surface impressions that reinforce stereotypes and reify difference.

It is perhaps helpful to be reminded of that lone optimist in the midst of the disillusioned student body: he took away lessons from PKn and Religion Education classes to 'be a good citizen and to build Indonesia', in spite of the multitude of problems and corruption in the country. He also learned to embrace his 'double minority' status of being Chinese and Christian, and to know his citizenship rights. The example of such a student brings hope and reminds us of the potential of multicultural education to empower young people. Multiculturalism is not only about understanding and tolerance, it is about moving away from passivity to take charge as actors. It is necessary for schools to actively implement multicultural citizenship education in order to create a new generation of young adults who are empowered, tolerant, active, participatory citizens of Indonesia.

83 Raihani, 'Report on multicultural education in pesantren'.

84 Tracey Yani Harjatanaya, 'Chinese Indonesians post-1998'.

85 Kymlicka, *Politics in the vernacular*, p. 293.