Pluralism and Religious Education In Bali: How lack of implementation of educational reform threatens Indonesian identity in the system used to construct it

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PLURALISM AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN BALI:

How lack of implementation of educational reform threatens Indonesian identity in the system used to construct it

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Arts, Religion and Social Change  
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Bali has impacted me in a way that I could never have dreamed it would, giving me not only an immensely valuable and new perspective and experience, but also the ability to make more out of the cards that I am dealt. With this, I hope to give thanks to the people that made these past four months as memorable as they have been. I hope that I can even come close to doing a justice in giving my thanks to everyone and everything that has been imparted upon me since my arrival.

I am in this incredible place right now because of my parents. It is with their unconditional love and support that I have been able to take part in this journey for the past four months. I cannot say thank you enough for giving me this opportunity.

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Abstract

Indonesia’s education system was developed with the construction of the Indonesian as a cohesive people in mind. In doing so, the system adopted the practice of mandatory religious education as a means of developing the character of the Indonesian student through religion, a component imperative to the nation’s statehood. In the years and decades following, the education system, and subsequently its program of religious education, has been reformed and changed many times. This research attempts to look at how and why this changed system has struggled to implement these changes in the classroom, and why pluralism has been included in theory but not in practice in the education system specific to Bali.
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I. Introduction

Personal Reflection & Objectives

My personal interest in the subject of religious teaching in education has been refined and developed throughout my time in Indonesia. I came to this country with a solid foundation of understanding of Indonesia’s brief history, and its focus on religion as a central component to the national identity. I became fascinated with the silence of Indonesia on my global radar. As a Diplomacy and World Affairs major that has spent three years of college studying foreign relations and the world, I thought it was incredibly interesting that I knew so little about the fourth-most populated country in the world. Given the global attention and scrutiny given to the world’s Muslims and the Islamic faith, I too questioned why so little was paid to the country that hosted more Muslims than any other. However, I noted the distinction that Indonesia made clear, that while it was significantly Muslim-majority nation, it was not a Muslim nation. This in mind, my research moved from Islam to the concept of a pluralist democracy, and how a nation with such a distinct majority can exist, in theory, without dominance, prejudice, discrimination, and harmony between peoples.

Having spent most of my time in Bali, it made sense to focus on the island for my research. The condition of the Balinese Hindu people in the context of their island to their state, being both the vast majority and vast minority, gave me a world within a world, figuratively speaking, to explore through the lens of pluralism in society. Many of the people that I have spoken to throughout my three-and-a-half months on the island have reflected on the harmony and cooperation of all people regardless of religion. However, having spent some time learning about the education system in Bali, I struggled to find places that represented or spoke to anyone that was not Hindu.
Learning about the basics of the education system in Bali, and having been able to juxtapose the system with the one I am familiar with, I wanted to investigate how religion was taught in school, and how the national curriculum developed its students to be the open, tolerant people that everyone seemed to say they were. With this, I hoped to learn about the education system, being the tool with which the state determined the identity of every Indonesian person that went through the system, and evaluate the ways in which Balinese education differed from the rest of Indonesia. By interviewing teachers, students, and officials involved in education policy, I hope to see how Balinese education implicates one’s biases about other religions, and of and how it fosters tolerance and openness to minority religions. By travelling to different parts of Bali, visiting Tabanan, Singaraja, and Denpasar, meeting Hindus and religious minorities alike, I hope to evaluate the differences of the systems and their teachers and students based on region and type of school.

Following are the questions I enlisted to guide my research:

*What does religious education in Balinese SMA (high school) look like?*
*How do students, teachers, and administrators feel religious education benefits students?*
*How does learning about religion in school factor into pluralism in Bali?*
*How does religious education differ in different areas of Bali?*

**Thesis**

The Indonesian identity constructed by the national curriculum for the purpose of unifying the nation threatens the very pluralism with which the nation stands on because of the lack of resources and attention given to other religions in Balinese schools, as it excludes the practice of a pluralistic education.
Methodology

This research began with a question I had: Is tolerance learned? From this foundational question, I compiled resources regarding schooling, teaching, and the education system, as well as religion in Indonesia and in Bali specifically. Looking upon this literature gave me a more solid idea of where it was that I wanted to turn with this concept, and the direction led me to the intersection of national education and religion in Bali. The first week of the research period unfortunately coincided with the *ujian nasional* (UN) or national examinations, and left me unable to visit schools or reach out to teachers or students, obviously busy with administering and taking the exams. During this time, I was able to establish a list of interview questions that would serve me in all of my interviews, to give me a way of administering the same questions to different people.

The second and third weeks were dedicated to visiting the schools and interviewing participants. In week two I visited a SMA in Tabanan, interviewing two teachers at once, and then headed to Singaraja, and did the same at a SMA there. In Singaraja I was able to interview a student and parent as well about their experiences as Muslims, both in school and in society. This interview was less formal and more conversational in nature, as the interview questions implicated the context of teaching. In the third week, I spoke with several teachers and an education official in an informal gathering at the house of Jango Pramartha, with whom I stayed for the remainder of my time. Conversation fluctuated between English and Bahasa Indonesia, and I was able to record some of it with the permission of all parties. Although unable to visit a facility in Denpasar due to time restraints and schedule conflicts, I was able to formally interview both a teacher from a *sekolah menengah kejuruan* (SMK), or vocational high school, as well as a teacher from a SMA. I was able to use the interview questions that I had standardized for both of
these interactions. The last week of the period was used to transcribe interviews, all held in Bahasa Indonesia, as well as spend a significant amount researching and compiling information into a draft.

In terms of the scope of the research, I have limited the level of school to senior high school, as students of high school level have had the most exposure to the educational system and would be most representative of the results of development within it. I have decided to focus on teacher testimonials because of the difficulty, both ethically and in terms of accessibility, of student responses to questions. I attempted to gather information according to a more emic approach, and attempted to compare schools from different regions across Bali to provide a glimpse into a phenomenon that occurs in at least one school in Bali. While the findings of this research do not apply to the entirety of the island, it may that one case can illuminate a larger issue at hand.

Ethics

I was originally concerned about the idea that a foreigner will enter a school environment and report findings based on a small sample size, especially as I was only able to visit one school in an area, if that. I also did not decide to enter active classes in case I interrupt a space of learning and change the way that students feel in terms of comfort in the classroom. I determined that the best motive was using interview responses to build a foundation of learning, and clarify when it is that I am commenting on my own observations as to not assume normality or legitimacy. Careful not to generalize, I compared my findings from case to case, and did not assume one school was representative of one region, or one type of school, but that it may be a
case from which one can draw information. The sample size itself is far too small to draw conclusions, but the schools themselves can be looked at as representative of schools in Bali, and I can determine results from my findings at specific schools.

As an American, where my understanding and belief sees a separation between ‘church and state’, I wanted to make sure that my bias from never having taken a religious class in school did not affect my research. It is for this reason that I shaped my research not on the validity of religious education, but on how the system fails minority students because of lack of implementation, not the religious material itself.

My interviewees were all voluntary, and referred usually by a friend or student. Ni Wayan Ariati referred me to her friend in Tabanan, who then referred me to another teacher at the SMA. In Singaraja, my homestay family put me in contact with teachers at an SMA. In Denpasar, Jango Pramartha hosted friends at this home to talk with me about their experiences. In all cases, written and oral permission was received both for interviewing and recording with my cell phone.

I took the liberty of making all interviewees anonymous; some of the interviewees, as teachers, may be considered at-risk employees. Consequences such as: termination of employment, internal punishment, pension removal, etc., were risks that I was not willing to take with the production of this research. Public school teachers are civil-servants employed by the government, and private school teachers are employed by foundations and I wanted to ensure that neither would be held accountable by their respective institutions for any potential responses.
Brief Statement of Findings

Over the span of two and a half weeks I was able to interview teachers from three regions in Bali: Tabanan, Singaraja, and Denpasar. These teachers were able to enlighten me on the several facets of the education system: the importance of religion in education, the role of the teacher, the function of the system, and what an ideal student looks like. Compounding my results with existing literature on the subject in various capacities, I was able to establish a lens with which I could see fundamental problems in how the national education system was applied on the island of Bali.

One such problem was visible through the lens of pluralism, and its ability to permeate content in the classroom. Pluralism is a quality considered central to the Indonesian character, which with background information and literary sources I establish as a government construct to unite an incredibly diverse people. While national curriculum is required to be implemented in all schools, the government also authorizes the practice of autonomy in various approaches in school. This autonomy allows each individual school to interpret for themselves what the national curriculum means, as well as implement various methods and practices while excluding others. This autonomy has a clear impact on non-Hindu students, who by law are to be instructed according to their own religion by a teacher of that religion in their school. However, some schools do not implement this practice. Some schools may be unable to afford the resources to look after minority religion students, and some schools may choose to allocate funds in different capacities. The education system lacks both the governing structure and funds to respond accurately to the flaws that exist within it, and instead attempt to continue pushing reforms that some schools have yet to even implement.
It is stated by scholars, teachers, and officials alike that one of the main responsibilities of education is the development of its students’ characters. The education system was developed to create a more unified Indonesia with a shared language and set of values, based on the principles of the national ideology, *Pancasila*. The first of these values implicates the presence of religion, which is also one of the key components of the state. However, the education system and the lack of implementation of the laws and policies of the reforms made have resulted in a system that excludes people not of the Hindu faith, altogether creating an environment exclusive to religious pluralism in the setting meant to develop students to be pluralistic and just, traits inherent to the Indonesian identity as declared in *Pancasila*. 
II. Background on Indonesian Education and Religion

*Indonesia, Pancasila, and Identity*

In its first 70 years since its independence, the nation of Indonesia has spent arduous effort and capital attempting to construct an identity for its people. The challenges that the young nation faced in doing so were immense, and the early administrations faced battles on many fronts. Indonesia is the fourth most populated country in the world, and the 258 million-plus people that live on the over 900 inhabited islands can all claim citizenship\(^1\). Not only is serving the massive number of citizens a challenge, but the thousands of islands are home to many different peoples from distinct ethnic groups and demographics. The incredible diversity also stretches to language and religion, with over 700 languages spoken within the confines of the archipelagos territory, and while six religions exist officially, many people maintain traditions and practices unique to their locales and regions. This at the time of independence, left the nation as a separate, yet singular group of peoples, linked by a distant history of unification and a recent history of Dutch colonialism.

This diversity made this construction an immense task for national leaders and policy makers in the early stages of the nation’s history, yet also provided the tools to implement a structure that is fair to all. In theory, the implementation of *Pancasila* allowed the nation’s people to embrace their personal beliefs and subscribe to nationalism without conflict. By embracing its diversity as the foundation of the state, the young country built the essential backbone and ethos ever-present in nation-building strategies globally. As scholars of the world, the Indonesian administration-to-be sought out and implemented such a strategy, and in

The Indonesia 'Country Profile' provided significant data from various censuses going back five years.
Pancasila’s Contemporary Appeal, the national ideology “was formulated in order to provide an ideological thread capable not only of integrating the wide variety of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, social, and religious groups found throughout this vast and diverse archipelago…” This ideology did just so, and picture frames with the recognizable insignia hang in shops, buildings, schools, and homes across the many islands.

Indonesian Education System

In large part, this strategy was successful because of the implementation of a national curriculum aimed at fostering nationalism through education. This curriculum assigned the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, to be taught in all schools, providing students with a means of communication with all other Indonesians. The language not only gave its speakers a way to communicate with each other, but also provided every person in the nation the ability to listen to and speak to their government. This national language was the language used in schools, first by teaching Bahasa Indonesia using local dialects and languages, and then later using it to study all other subjects, effectively making it the language of academia, business, and industry.

Religion cannot be neglected as a key piece working in Indonesia’s ideological machine. Pancasila’s first principle underlines the importance of monotheism to the Indonesian core. The ideology’s stress on religion as a glue for the Indonesian state was also reinforced through its curriculum, as religious material is required in all school levels across the country. It is in this

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O’Shannassy provides the opening essay and statement piece for the journal, which operates as a collection of essays. In reference to the rest of the book, all references made are to the chapter written by Hastangka (single name), which makes up one quarter of the section of the journal titled “Pancasila Values and National Education”. This quote is found on page 52, in a piece titled “(Re)Imagining Community – Pancasila and National Identity in Contemporary Indonesia”.
way, that the practice does not quite follow the theory. Indonesia is over 87 percent Muslim, and while the majority is in no doubt absolute, the 13 percent that constitute all minority religions represents over 33 million people\textsuperscript{3}. Due to the implementation of religion in public life, religion, supposedly understood objectively can be overshadowed by Islamic policy and thought.

*Balinese Identity and Religion*

Alternatively, within the largest Muslim majority nation in the world, there exists a complete outlier to the greater scheme of Indonesia, which represents both a similar yet opposite phenomenon. The island of Bali hosts close to four million people, or under 1.6 percent of Indonesia’s total population, with over 83 percent of the island’s people identifying as Hindu\textsuperscript{4}. The political landscape of Bali operates as a mix of autonomous and within the context of Indonesian national policy, and like the country at large, its social, political and religious majority is as central to Bali’s social landscape as it is Indonesia’s.

Balinese Hinduism, or *Agama* Hindu Bali (AHB) is particularly different than India’s Hinduism for several reasons, chiefly because it exists within the Indonesia’s context and definition of religion. AHB was not recognized by the Indonesian government until 1955 because Hinduism does not have the characteristics of what defines a religion according to the state’s Ministry of Religion: “it must be monotheistic, have a codified system of law for its followers, possess a holy book and a prophet, enjoy international recognition, and further, its congregation should not be limited to a single ethnic group.”\textsuperscript{5} Unofficial status made it

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impossible to receive funding for religious activity from the government, and official recognition of the religion affirmed and institutionalized the practices with history dating back centuries, legitimizing Balinese traditions, rituals, and values.

**Balinese Education System**

In Indonesia, religion often dictates policy; no different is the system in Bali. With somewhat autonomous control of the island, Bali’s government uses Hinduism as guidelines for several aspects of life. One facet in which it is used clearly and directly that affects all Balinese is the education system. In the first few decades of independence, the position of Indonesia’s Ministry of Education on compulsory religious subjects in the classroom was unclear, going back and forth, usually with pressure from religious groups. However, in 1965, that pressure influenced a decision that remains to this day:

“The Ministry of Education abandoned its policy of the non-compulsory religion class and accepted the [Muslim’s] demand for compulsory religious instruction. It changed its attitude from passive involvement in religious instruction into an active commitment to the teaching and promotion of the subject.”

For much of Indonesia, this put religious content heavy in Islamic thought in classrooms, yet in Balinese classrooms, Hindu teaching was implemented across the board. Indonesia’s second President, Suharto, emphasized instruction in the aforementioned *Pancasila*, and declared the essential component of education to be character-building. While regimes have changed,

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leading to *Pancasila*’s diminished relevancy in Indonesian classrooms, some of his legacy of classroom politics remains. Despite the *reformasi* that has taken place in the education system, there still exists a strong reference to the ideological grasp as to what the Suharto-era education system saw as the ideal student. For this reason, religious education remains imperative to the core of learning in all levels of schooling, and in Bali, Hindu education is reflected in all kinds of schools.

The Balinese education system is traditionally split up into three school levels: six years in Elementary level schools or *sekolah dasar* (SD), three years in Junior High school or *sekolah menengah pertama* (SMP) and three years in Senior High school or *sekolah menengah atas* (SMA). While all schools in Indonesia must operate based on standards decided on by the Ministry of Education’s established curriculum, material may vary based on location, classification, and type of school. Two of the most common types of schools are *sekolah negeri* and *sekolah swasta*. *Sekolah negeri*, or government schools, are those that receive all funding from the government, and operate as the state’s form of schooling, while *sekolah swasta* are those that receive government funding, as well as private sponsorship from institutions and foundations. Some *sekolah swasta* consider themselves *sekolah swasta umum* or *sekolah swasta negeri*, meaning that they are both national as well as private schools, and follow closely the national curriculum. Classifications of the schools can be represented by the letters A, B, and C, which denote factors like credibility, resources, facilities, and accessibility with A-level being the highest and most-accredited. While a majority of Balinese students follow this path, there do exist schools outside of this system, including the *sekolah menengah kejuruan* (SMK), which are

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“vocational schools” dedicated to pre-professional development in specific industries. The law states that all students must be in school for 12 years, and while not all Indonesian students make it that far, the average school life expectancy exceeds that by a year, noting that more students go into tertiary education than drop out before graduation. Indonesia’s literacy rate is over 93 percent, and given the incredible task of reaching hundreds of millions of many people across thousands of islands, that is impressive feat, besting several ‘more developed’ nations.

However, the nation invests less than four percent of its GDP in education, which leaves schools significantly underfunded and unable to perform at government-mandated standards, unable to pay teachers proper wages, and deprives students of adequate facilities.

Indonesia, through its education system, has developed a language and an educated citizenry to use it. Its foundational philosophy, Pancasila, represents the backbone for the state and the common link between people, and has been used to effectively create the mold for the ideal Indonesian. While this mold has changed somewhat, specifically in regards to the education reformasi, Indonesia has crafted itself an ideology, a common value system, and overcome tremendous geographical, political, and social difficulties to establish itself as an anomaly in the global scene that counters the status quo of the possibility of religious tolerance and pluralism. While it is in no ways perfect, it certainly requires more attention than it has gotten for its ability to coexist and unify its people.

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III. Literature Review

Indonesia represents a nation with a foundation in pluralism, and it attempts to use that very pluralism to hold it together. With so many different people, languages, and a massive expanse of islands, Pancasila, as a unifying set of principles, brings a diverse plethora of people under the same roof. For this reason, there is ample literature on Pancasila, as it exists as a great resource for anthropologists and foreign relation experts to understand the motives behind the Indonesian value system. Like its role in Indonesia, the ideology has permeated all facets of Indonesian culture, and for that reason, literature on Pancasila exists within many different subjects. Education is one subject with which it collides with often, and as its main implementation strategy, this is one way through which Pancasila is easily interpreted and researched. Intertwined within in the two is the idea of religious education, and how Indonesian education and religion cannot be explained as mutually exclusive; religious education is required through the national curriculum as a means of developing the character of the students it attempts to teach. It is with these themes, education and religion, that previous literature on the topic will be reviewed.

The Indonesian Education System

Pancasila was determined to be the founding ethos of the early nation, and was implemented as a strategy for a baseline for education policy that lasted for thirty years. This was imperative in building a representation of what it meant to be Indonesian in the school, so that it translated into the social and political realm. In “Pancasila Education in Post Reform Era

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10 *op cit.* Hastangka, (2010) pg. 185
Senior High Schools (SMA)”, Hastangka attempts to understand the relevance of the philosophy as it is taught in Indonesian schools. His findings result in his diagnosis that SMA students are less interested in the ideology than in the Suharto Era, and the reformasi has brought about significant change in the education system. He delineates the system of education during the Suharto Era and compares it to the current system, with reference to the 1998 reform as being the main shift. Hastangka makes an important distinction that the school system does not appear singular as an entity, and he makes clear that students and teachers have different values in their ideas regarding education. Teachers, he says, “remain products of the New Order educational system”, which differs from the current trend in Indonesian education moving from “Teacher Centered Learning (TCL) to Student Centered Learning (SCL)”.

He touches on the difficulty of the teacher to implement new strategy when they lack training or knowledge of the new strategy, and the mold of the teacher as an authoritative figure becomes muddled because of the confusion, and results in confusion on the subject of Pancasila. A significant chapter of the paper is centered on the idea of “national character building”, its connection to Pancasila, and why it must be reinterpreted and revitalized. His aim in the paper is to point out the flaws in Pancasila education’s implementation, but not its inherent importance, as it remains the key to character building. He states that because the role of the SMA is to develop futures for their students, character building, aside from the learning of specific subjects, is and should be the emphasis of the school. Hastangka uses the history of implementation to show where Pancasila has intersected in the school system in the past and present, saying that it was used as a political tool to spread government influence during the Suharto Era as opposed to as a means to build a

11 op cit. Hastangka (2010) pg. 165
12 Ibid. pg. 171
13 Ibid. pg. 185
morally strong populous, which is the current strategy\textsuperscript{14}. He makes several recommendations for how to adapt *Pancasila* back into the education system in Indonesia, and his main suggestion is by using a new interpretation of the ideology to reintegrate back into Civics Education courses\textsuperscript{15}.

This research refers to a similar, yet geographically different audience than the one with which this paper interprets. The difference between the schools is not the interpretation of *Pancasila*, but rather the incorporation of another religion in the context of the religious content that an education system designed around *Pancasila* provides to the classroom. Therefore, this work is not insignificant to the research, given that Balinese schools still abide by a national curriculum, that applies to all schools in Indonesia. This source also highlights important information on the research in regards to the role of education in nation-building. Important to note too is the fragmentation of educational styles as a result of different regimes, and how the *reformasi* of the education system struggles in practice while it is successful in theory because of the lack of implementation in teaching styles. The role of the teacher and ideal teaching style have all changed, but without the training necessary for the teacher themselves to change.

In *Teachers’ Work and Schooling in Bali*, author Pam Nilan touches on this exact subject, lamenting the need for educational reform further even than the 1998 *reformasi*. Nilan describes her ideas why Indonesian education struggles to be successful, and lists “a largely underqualified teaching force” as one of the factors\textsuperscript{16}. However, she also details why underqualified teachers must be used, saying, “Classrooms and timetables are overcrowded, resources and teachers get little budgetary support and the curriculum is in need of major reform. Secondary and technical

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\textsuperscript{14} & op cit. Hastangka (2010) pg. 188 \\
\textsuperscript{15} & Ibid. 187 \\
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education has been severely overstretched.” Hastangka laments the incorrect implementation of *Pancasila* in SMA’s across Indonesia, saying that curriculum changes have turned students and teachers into “victims of the Ministry of Education’s policies.” On the other hand, Nilan focuses more on the structural flaws of schools in Bali, specifically in North Bali. She shows how educational reform requires not just a reinvigoration in material and curriculum, but in training, staffing, and overall practical implementation in Bali. Nilan also touches on the importance of the role of teachers, not only in the development of the student, but also as a vital member of the community, imparted with high social status. While Nilan’s work was published in 2003, and may be inapplicable to the current situation, it provides important context to what the Balinese system has come from in the past decade or so. Bearing in mind there have been significant reforms, notably 2006 and 2013, it is important to contextualize the literature together to get an understanding of what happens in the classroom after the reforms. Due to the lack of training and underqualified nature of teachers as mentioned by Nilan, and their connection to a different school system and era of learning as showed by Hastangka, the reforms are unlikely to be implemented effectively into the classrooms.

It is important to note that the two authors’ research represents small sample sizes, and both recognize that they are not necessarily representative of a whole. Hastangka looked at two schools in the Yogyakarta region and found a trend that might occur elsewhere, and used his findings to understand *Pancasila*’s dynamism. Niman looked at schools in North Bali and determined that teachers cannot bear the demand for education there, saying her work “reveals evidence of worrisome trends which may work against attempts at educational reform in the wider frame of Bali and even Indonesia as a whole,” and uses her case study for Bali to apply to

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17 Ibid. 567
18 *op cit.* Hastangka (2010) pg. 173
the nation on a greater scale\textsuperscript{19}. In the context of the research of this paper, we can use both of these resources as a glimpse of what the education system represents to the Indonesian people, as well as who represents the system. While Niman’s article is close to 15 years old now, it shows the important distinction between theory and practice, as well as the human aspect of education that gets lost often in talk about policy.

While these works do not touch on religious education in particular, the background of the education system, both theoretical and practical, illuminates the setting in which this research takes place. Pancasila, which can be considered to be the Indonesian parallel to pluralism in the form of institutional ideology, struggles to be implemented and understood correctly by the students of the system. This shows a flaw and a trend in the education sector to not apply the theory in praxis, and connects to the thesis by establishing a precedent and a forum for this misapplication. Likewise, Niman sets the tone for how Balinese schools are incapable of providing adequate education because of the immense pressure on teachers, and this too delineates an issue on the greater scale of Balinese education. It applies to the thesis by showing that Balinese teachers are stretched so thin that they often work double shifts and lack appropriate staff\textsuperscript{20}. While the subject of minority religions is not mentioned in the article, it indirectly implicates the notion that schools cannot afford to provide religious education for their minority religion students because it can barely afford to supply teachers of religion for the Hindu majority. Many of the non-Hindu students must find religious teachers outside of school, and receive school credit for this, despite being stated in law that students will receive education in accordance with their religion\textsuperscript{21}.

\textsuperscript{19} op cit. Nilan, Pam (2003). Pg. 580
\textsuperscript{20} op cit. Nilan, Pam (2003). Pg. 567
Dynamism of Balinese Religion

In understanding religious education in Bali, it is imperative to have a foundation of literature on the history of the institutionalization of Hinduism. There is ample literature on religion in Bali, specifically in regards to Bali’s practiced form of Hinduism, and Michel Picard’s “From Agama Hindu Bali to Agama Hindu and Back” provided significant information as to how the religion has impacted and been impacted by the changing tides of Bali’s political environment. Picard links the religion to Balinese identity, and focuses on the history of the religion, from its inception through colonialism, independence, to the current day, and how dynamic it has been throughout time. During colonialism, Picard says, is when Balinese identity starts to become singular; as it was Western outsiders that identified the Balinese as a single people, while the Balinese themselves organized themselves as members of a village or small group. Picard also notes the incorporation of the language of adat and agama as ways to combat what seemed to be the looming threats of Islam and Christianity as a way of establishing equal footing. These words are now central to the understanding of the core of the Balinese identity, which exists as an extension of those two concepts. The article then provides an extensive history of the work of Hindu religious leaders in the pursuit to get the Indonesian government to acknowledge the religion as an official one. The institutionalization of the religion led to the inception of the governing body of the Balinese Hindu community, the Parisada Dharma Hindu Indonesia (PDHI), and also shaped the religion around the guidelines of the

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Quote taken from Legal Notice from “Law Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System, article 12, paragraph 1 in mandate: ‘Every student at any academic year will receive religious education in accordance with their religion and are taught by teachers of the same religion.’” Pg. 1

op cit. Picard, Michel (2011). Pg. 120

Ibid. pg. 121.
state’s idea of what constitutes a religion. Picard also notes the post-Suharto influx of non-Hindus as a bolstering of the Hindu aspects of the Balinese identity, and how the influence of the institutionalization affected the development of the religion and how Hindus view themselves and Bali.

Similarly, Adrian Vickers’ work “Hinduism and Islam in Indonesia: Bali and the Pasisir World” provides more literature on the concept of the construction of a Balinese identity as a non-Balinese phenomenon. Vickers notes too that Western observers viewed Bali as a Hindu outlier in the context of an Islamic Indonesia and notes religious difference as the “essential distinction” made by writers that separates Bali from Java and the rest of Indonesia, when their histories are significantly more intertwined and complex than they have been made to seem.

Most of Vickers’ piece relays and provides context to the argument that he makes that Western authors have essentially created this separation between the Balinese and the rest of Indonesia in literature based on religious difference without learning about the history, and he continues to note the many times and interactions that happened across the Indonesian archipelago’s islands. This article remains relevant despite being written 30 years ago because it does not attempt to be contemporary. Vickers’ work deals primarily with illuminating the past to determine a present where Balinese tradition can be understood within the context of Indonesia as a whole and not separated based on religion ignoring the many things that connect the islands. In this sense, Vickers was ahead of his time, and provided a new lens with which to view Bali, in the context of Indonesia as whole through its connected history.

24 Ibid. pg. 125. Note, PHDI sometimes also represented in literature as Paripada Hindu Dharma Bali (PHDB). This paper will continue to refer to the organization as PHDI.
While this work served primarily to underline and highlight an Orientalist theme in Balinese visitor’s writings, Vickers’ piece, like Picard’s provides the underlying notions of the conscious construction of the Balinese identity as Hindu, rather than the natural development. This politicization of religion fits within the context of the research by showing that throughout its history, Agama Hindu Bali has changed tremendously, as well as the people that follow it. It also shows that the Balinese identity developed around a negative, as in it became something because it was inherently not something else: not Western or Dutch, and then not Islamic. While Vickers contextualizes his research in the idea of the “Pasisir” world, he connects with the idea that there is a barrier to understanding the history and true identity of the Balinese, as well as the Indonesian, when it is characterized as essentially Hindu or essentially Islamic. This characterization diminishes the role of the non-Hindus in society, and limits involvement and accessibility to the Balinese identity if it is only applicable to Hindus. He also shows the connection of the two faiths throughout history, and aims to diminish the overplayed and fabricated division between the two in literature. This conflicts with pluralism as a whole and within the context of Indonesia; where does a Bali that considers its identity to be Hindu fit in a nation that does not consider itself associated with any specific religion? The self-description of a specific religion on the part of an entire island community plays a role in silencing others.

Seeing the ways that literature on the subject of religion and the education system interact, the next step is to look at literature that implicates the two directly. In this respect, it is important to acknowledge the work that Gavin Jones did for the field, writing Religion and Education in 1976 and opening the field to discovery and discussion, including among Indonesians. While existing works had illuminated the roles of religion in politics, ethnicity and

\[26\] op cit. Vickers, Adrian (1987) pg. 57
\[27\] Ibid. pg. 44
the status of women, Jones points out that “very little quantitative analysis has been done on trends in the religious composition of the Indonesian population or the relationship between religion and education.” In his research, Jones writes about growth trends in the six official religions recognized by the state, geographic representation of different religions, and how it represents itself in the education of Indonesian citizens of different religions in many separate Indonesian regions.

The analysis constitutes of many tables, maps, and notes about religious population distribution from surveys ranging from pre-1900 until the 1970’s, and while the paper aims to focus on all regions within Indonesia, therefore providing very little in terms of the specific context of Bali, the pattern that Bali lagged behind in the education sector was clear. One census that Jones notes shows Bali as the second worst of 24 regions in terms of adult literacy, noting that “feudal social structures” were responsible for the less than 30 percent of adults with elementary education in Bali. A census from 1971 noted that of the educational attainment of people across Indonesia, the category named “Other” which included Hindus ranked worst among the official religions. While this data is not current, and misrepresents Bali, it can be used to note the incredible changes that have occurred in Bali to overcome extreme illiteracy and access to education in the past century, and even the past 40 years. Contextualizing Jones’ research, as it is accredited for its help in establishing a baseline in this line of research, is of paramount importance, and while the data itself is outdated for use in academic material to monitor current trends, using it to show progress and position relative to others at the time can help to show where Bali has stood in the grand scheme of Indonesian education.

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30 Ibid. pg 53 – Important to note: data reflects only those over 10 year olds, by religion, census from 1971
The Intersection of Religion and Education

Of particular importance to this field is the work of Alexandra Landmann, as her extensive dissertation, *Hindu Class and Hindu Education System in Bali*, provided this research with not only information, but direction as well. The focus of the research, which she states aims to investigate the emergence, institutionalization, and organization of religious training in Indonesia, is an incredibly in depth analysis of the case of the Hindu faith and its manifestation into the classroom in Bali. Doing so, Landmann uses the university and high school level classrooms to contextualize the curriculum with school environment to better understand how the education system actualizes itself. Like other authors on the subject, Landmann looks at the history of Indonesia and the Hindu religion to see how the adaptation has allowed the Parisada to implement Hindu teaching in schools, and does so while attempting to determine the effects of Indonesian policy on schools and the students that they enroll. The author used this idea of religious education to conceptualize the practice of pluralism in Bali, implementing an ethnography following an emic approach, as well as an analysis of Bali’s history to develop upon the baseline of previous research she drew from.

She also creates a basic framework for which the Hindu class becomes relevant in different levels of teaching, noting the importance of how religion is to be implemented in the actual instruction in the results. On this topic, she states, “The religion class supports parents and the religious community to put to practice the Hindu value theory in regularly performing religious service,” which recognizes the supportive role and not primary role that religious education plays in the lives of its students. While it plays a major role in the education of

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31 op cit. Landmann, Alexandra (2012). Pg. 1
32 Ibid. Pg. 176
33 Ibid. Pg. 250
Balinese students, Hindu tradition and practice is passed down and learned primarily in a familial and community setting. Religion class aims to apply and introduce these learned principles of Hinduism as a means of overall child development and community engagement.

In the conclusion of her work, Landmann looks to identify whether Indonesia is not only applicable as a blueprint for Southeast Asian states in regards to its promotion and institutionalization of pluralism, but also for Arab and other Muslim-majority states across the globe. She also interprets religious freedom and human rights on a global level, and refers to her newfound understanding of the education system to ask important questions about the intersection of religion, youth, and mandatory learning, and how these subjects apply to the international governing bodies and systems.

Early on, I felt limited by the expanse of Landmann’s work, as it seemed altogether too similar to what I had in mind with my research that I felt I would not be able to provide anything new on the subject. However, the notably gap for me was the specific regard to which minority religions were recognized or acknowledged. As the research worked within the topic of the Hindu education system, the original assumption of her research determined that the system itself was not designed to leave room for minority religions, but rather establish a foundation for the Hindu faith to enter the realm of learning. It should not be difficult to see how this work engages with the field with which I attempt to enter, and in fact this research establishes what I see to be as the next line with which I deal with.

I use Landmann’s definitions to apply many of the terms that I encounter, and utilize a similar approach to information gathering. I decide to move away from the university-level,

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34 *op cit.* Landmann, Alexandra (2012). Pg. 294
35 Ibid. Pp. 50, 58, 309
36 Ibid. Pg. 29
however, because not all students are able to access it, and as I established earlier, it does not represent the national curriculum the same way that high-schools do, and would require an alternative strategy. Landmann’s research employs the idea that education has been impacted by the politicization of the Hindu faith in Indonesia, and how the Hindu community, operatively the PHDI, “must aim at educating a qualified and competitive Hindu human capital capable to answer the challenges of globalization.” With this, Landmann concurs with a majority of the authors aforementioned stating that Indonesia must reform its education system, adding to Jones’ analysis of the lagging literacy of the Hindu faith in regards to the rest of Indonesia’s recognized faiths with the statistic that the literacy rate of the Hindu community is the lowest. This paper brings an incredible amount relevant information, both in terms of original research, Indonesian and Balinese education policy, and mapping of the Hindu educational system, to the research at hand, and also provides the space for which it is necessary to investigate to fulfill different perspectives.

The existing literature on the subjects of religion in Indonesia, the education system, and their engagement, provided this research with a library of knowledge from which to draw on the subjects, some engaged in multiple aspects, others specific in regards to one feature. However, the network of information created a space for which and from which research can be contributed to supplement and complement the field of religious education.

In this way, the information from sources like Hastangka and Pam Nilan show the relevancy and necessity of education reform, not only in policy but in implementation, impacts its students and its teachers. From this, the research gathered the importance of the role of the

38 Ibid. pg. 181: 1980-2000, among faith-based communities, reported by PHDI 2005 Education Operation Scheme
teacher in the Balinese education system, and the focus of the teacher and policy as a means of developing students character as the primary focus. Gavin W. Jones, one of the pioneers of the field of Indonesian education, provided an amalgamation of colonial history and qualitative data as a means of learning about education across the archipelago. By doing so, he effectively scratched at the surface of the impact of faith on education by underlining the difference in literacy and patterns of education across islands and religions.

The work of Adrian Vickers and Michel Picard on the Balinese identity and the politicization of agama in Bali outlined the conscious construction of the Balinese identity, both on the part of outsiders and organizations like the PHDI. While both touch on the idea of Bali in the context of an Islamic Indonesia, Vickers attempts to bring to light the outside delineation of Balinese identity through historical connection of Java and Bali. Alternatively, Picard enlightens on the dynamism of the Hindu faith in Bali first to become recognized by the state, and then as a means of identity construction. Both contribute to place of Bali within the greater scale of Indonesia, as well as the ways that Hinduism has adapted to operate in the grand scheme of an Indonesia where it is a minority.

Lastly, and most importantly to this research, Alexandra Landmann opened a space for the conversation of the Hindu religious education system and its place in Balinese society. Her dissertation brought to light the ways in which the faith entered the classroom and the political scene, how the future direction of the platform determines the future of the Balinese people, and grounds itself in empirical study to see how the theory behind religious education implements itself in practice in high schools and universities. Using these sources, this paper will navigate a space in which the theory and history will be applied to the experiences of school teachers across
Bali to understand how and why the Hindu education system exists, and how it attempts to serve those that do not identify as Hindu.
IV. Case Studies

Site 1: Tabanan

The school that I first visited, SMA Surya Wisata Kediri, was from the Tabanan regency, located just 10 minutes from the Tabanan city center. Tabanan, like the capital Denpasar, exists as a regency, district, and city, and the city hosts the largest population density within the regency\(^\text{39}\). That said, of the high schools that exist within the district, a majority find themselves within the confines of the city center, with many students from less-urbanized areas commuting in from villages and towns. The format of the school is atypical compared to many other Balinese SMA; not only was it *swasta*, it also provided students with the ability to graduate with a vocational certificate, typical of the SMK education program. As a *swasta* school, it also receives funding and support from a foundation, in this case, one with religious affiliation. In their second of three years at the school, students choose between three concentrations: Science, Social Science, and Language, with class sizes ranging from 40 to 46 students per class\(^\text{40}\). While the school describes itself as a foundation of Hindu learning, non-Hindu students are allowed to enroll, and do choose to, making up a very small minority of students.

Once at the school, I interviewed two teachers, further referred to as Teacher 1 and Teacher 2, whom I inquired to illuminate upon their experiences teaching at the SMA. Both have been teaching for over 60 years between the two of them, spending over 20 years, also shared, at this current school. As teachers of the subject of the Hindu religion, Teacher 2 placed significant emphasis on the importance of providing a religious education to students, noting that not only is


\(^{40}\) Teacher 2 (personal communication), 20 April 2017. Tabanan.
it mandatory for teachers to implement in the classroom, it is part of her job to prepare her students for the ujian nasional, or the competency-based national examinations that preceded my visit by a week. Aside from those inside the classroom, her duties include: holding a practice examination for the religious subject for aforementioned exams, taking students to the temple, bringing students to observe ceremonies, and hosting or organizing extracurricular activities like traditional singing, Hindu-Balinese storytelling, and offering making. Like his fellow faculty-member, Teacher 1 commented on his passion for the subject, and saw it as both a dream as well as a personal obligation. He also added that his teaching methods included lecturing, storytelling, and preaching, using texts and other materials. The two made reference to the importance of religious education in developing a way to enhance decision-making skills, and that the ideal student is one that acts based on their faith. On this note, Teacher 1 says, “They trust and comply with their own beliefs and religion and always commit good deeds. They implement their beliefs through their action and in their life.” This school prides itself on its ability to build the character of the students it serves, and requires certain guidelines to be followed from students and teachers alike. These guidelines can be seen on posters hanging from the walls of several rooms within the building, and the teachers both referred to the charts and posters by pointing throughout the interview.

While tremendous effort is made on the parts of the teachers of the religious department to equip their students with an appropriate religious education, the effort placed into the religious class of the Hindu religion by both the professors and the institution does not meet the need of

41 Teacher 2 (personal communication), 20 April 2017. Tabanan.
42 Teacher 2 (personal communication), 20 April 2017. Tabanan.
43 Teacher 1 (personal communication), 20 April 2017. Tabanan.
44 Teacher 1 (personal communication), 20 April 2017. Tabanan.
45 See Appendix A for images of posters.
non-Hindu students. Religious material for those of other faiths is not accessible within the school, despite being required as part of the national curriculum and tested for in the religious subject area of the ujian nasional. For example, a Muslim student attending this school, despite not being taught religious material throughout the year, will still be administered an Islamic competency test at the years-end, and will require credit from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in order to be eligible to graduate. Along these lines, Teacher 1 states, “non-Hindu students are minority here. There are religious tutors that can teach the non-Hindu students outside the school. The students can find their own religious teacher.”\textsuperscript{46} Similarly, Teacher 2 asks non-Hindu students to study on their own in the library during Hindu classes. These students must hire outside tutors to prepare for the test, as well as get credit for the class that they were ineligible to take, but was still required of them, because of their religious background. While the number of students that do not identify as Hindu is relatively small in the school, it is of particular notice that the school is run by a foundation associated with the Hindu faith.

The creation of these foundation-partnered schools was a way to meet the enormous demand for classrooms across Bali, as a significant number of the government schools are already overcrowded in regards to national requirements\textsuperscript{47}. Most of the high schools are in urban or semi-urban areas, and must serve both children from those urban areas as well as suburban and rural areas, which more often than not do not have high school facilities. These foundations provide the funding for the establishment of schools that do not require the full amount of government subsidies, meaning schools can spread the students from the region across several schools, effectively decreasing the number of students per class. However, for foundations with connections to religious organizations, it is uncommon to provide the funds to hire teachers of

\textsuperscript{46} Teacher 1 (personal communication), 20 April 2017. Tabanan.
\textsuperscript{47} op cit. Nilan, Pam (2003) pg. 569
other religions. The budget for the school itself is already stretched thin, and the foundation provides education for an education based exclusively in the Hindu faith. Why as a non-Hindu enroll in a school funded by a Hindu foundation for the purpose of promoting a Hindu education? The answer often comes down to economics, as religious and private institutions provide schooling for students that were priced-out or otherwise excluded from government schools.

For their contributions, these foundations are granted leeway with the national curriculum; while it must still be implemented, the foundation regulates the way with which it is done. For example, this school still abides by the structure of K2006 – the curriculum from 2006 – despite the presence of another slightly more recent reform in K2013. While the two teachers often referred to the national curriculum as the way things should be done and are done at the school, the foundation decides what aspects it wants to implement and does so accordingly, using the name and weight of the national curriculum as justification. Besides the tardiness in updating the curriculum, the school is selective with its interpretation of the laws within the education framework. This can be seen in the mandatory requirement of Hindu religious education, all the while ignoring the mandate from the 2003 Law stating that all students require education in accordance with their religion, by teachers of their religion, regardless of whether the school is public or private. That said, the same statute continues by saying that assistance of funds to provide those resources to students can be provided by the government or regional government. Based on the scarcity of funds within the educational system, it can be determined that the state does not provide adequate funds to provide those resources. For this reason, it is not only the

49 Teacher 1 (personal communication), 20 April 2017. Tabanan.
50 op cit. Setyaman, Davit (2014). Pg 1
school that fails its non-Hindu students, but also the government that does not deliver on the promises to pledge aid to those that require it. Despite the codification of this protection of religious education, some religious schools are still entitled to not provide religious education courses outside of the one with which they identify, creating an awkward understanding of what the law actually means. While pluralism could be understood as making religious education equally accessible to all students regardless of faith, some see it as faith-affiliated schools even just opening their doors to students of other religions\textsuperscript{51}. Both clarity and funds are required on the part of the government to provide the pluralism in education that is promoted as part of the Indonesian identity.

In regards to the teachers at the school, the two whom I interviewed operate within an interesting environment. As members of the Ministry of Religion as well as teachers in the private school, they earn salaries or compensation from the Ministry of Religion, the school, and the foundation. This is not the case for teachers at public schools, considered civil servants, whom rely solely on government salaries provided by the school. They noted casually, too that their incoming pensions were to be compounded as well, from the school and the Ministry of Religion. Their eligibility for the pensions is the result of decades of teaching, which means that both have endured several rounds of education reforms, including the major reformasi in 1998 at the end of the Suharto Era. However, neither made any mention of training programs for the reeducation of teaching professionals in the post-reform era. While the ways that education is understood has changed fundamentally in theory, it is difficult to remove teachers from the context with which they learned to teach\textsuperscript{52}. Coupled with the leniency that private foundational schools receive, and the membership to the Ministry of Religion and not the Ministry of Culture

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid. Pg. 2.
\textsuperscript{52} op cit. Hastangka (2010), pg. 170
and Education, one must wonder if the education system changes that have occurred have changed decades of experience of teaching in a certain way, and if the classroom has evolved at all to include changes made with reference to the inclusion of more pluralistic educational policies.

Despite its operational status as a private SMA under the regulation of both the state and its governing foundation, the school lacks the resources, or at least uses them in other facilities, to provide its minority students with the religious education required both for completion of the diploma, as well as passing of national competency exams. Non-Hindu students are forced to pursue academic exploits in this capacity on their own, requiring the employment of outside tutors or resources, costing both money and time outside of class. The way that schools are able to operate both within and outside the national curriculum makes cohesion of material across an educational platform difficult. Educational reforms are already ineffectively implemented into the classroom as a result of several factors, namely the lack of training for teachers and proper facilities. When the curriculum is not even implemented, it makes reforms irrelevant.

Site 2: Singaraja, Buleleng Regency

The next school I visited was in Singaraja, the largest city and capital of the Buleleng Regency in the northern part of the island. North Bali is an area where interactions between people of different faiths occur more frequently than in Tabanan, as a significant minority population of Muslims and Christians live in the region. The school itself, SMA Negeri 3 Singaraja, was named aptly; as a SMA negeri, or state school, it was established and is maintained solely by the government. While there exists some room to navigate in terms of
applying local and regional influences to the curriculum, the bulk of material and procedure is
taken from the national curriculum. For this reason, teachers at SMA negeri are considered civil-
servants, or government workers, compared to those like Teacher 1 and 2 of Tabanan, whom are
private sector employees. The two teachers that I spoke with at the school, Teachers 3 and 4,
both held over 30 years’ experience as teaching professionals, one spending all 30-odd years at
SMA 3 Negeri Singaraja, and the other spending just over 15 years at the school. From the start, I noticed significant differences in the way that the school taught religion
to its students based on how the teachers responded to my questions. One main difference was
the subject of the class that was taught. While he was responsible for the religious education of
his students, Teacher 3 clarified that the class he taught was not just religious material, but rather
“antropologi, agama dan budaya”, which translates to Anthropology, Religion, and Culture.
The teachers also knew off-hand how many minority students were enrolled in the SMA, noting
that while it was a small minority, the school did its part to take care of everyone equally. This
was represented by another significant feature: religion teachers of different religions were
brought in by the school to teach non-Hindu students when it was time for other students to learn
about Hinduism. On how this practice operates, Teacher 3 elaborates:

“In teaching theory, we use Hindu literature as a guideline, it’s the same as well
with the practice. But for the non-Hindu students, we invite religion teachers to
teach them using their own method, theory, and practices. As an example, for
Muslim students we invite a teacher of Islam to teach them. Our goal is to create
interfaith tolerance in order to preserve the true unity among students.”

The idea of “true unity among students” as Teacher 3 mentions describes along similar lines
what the purpose of Pancasila is in the context of a Balinese classroom. With reference to the

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53 Teachers 3 & 4 (personal communication), 22 April 2017. Singaraja.
54 Teacher 3 (personal communication), 22 April 2017. Singaraja.
55 Teacher 3 (personal communication), 22 April 2017. Singaraja.
56 Teacher 3 (personal communication), 22 April 2017. Singaraja.
national curriculum and the notion that a religious education is immensely meaningful to the
development of all students, this school understands that the school not only provides its students
with the education required by the government, but also prepares its students for a life of
pluralistic interactions. The Indonesian education system maintains that the main role of the
educational institution is the development of the character of its students, and preparing what is
to become the next generation of citizens\textsuperscript{57}. This is even written into Indonesian law, as in
Article 20 of the 2003 Law regarding the \textit{Sistem Pendidikan Nasional} (SISDIKNAS), or national
education system, states that the first goal of religion in education serves to “develop the ability
and character development” of its students\textsuperscript{58}. This law applies to all students, and the school has
implemented this policy and theoretical framework and actualized it.

Having been able to interview a student and parent of the school that identified as
Muslim, I also learned that non-Hindu students were encouraged, but not required to participate
in rituals and ceremonies held by the school, despite some of the ceremonies implicating
Balinese Hindu religious themes\textsuperscript{59}. This encouragement of collaboration and participation from
people of other religions in Balinese tradition exemplifies the practice of pluralist behavior that
Balinese people pledge to embody. It is important to include also, however, that according to the
school’s dress code, students are prohibited from wearing \textit{jilbabs} at the school\textsuperscript{60}. In terms of how
this relates to pluralism in the context of the school, the school, while still adhering to \textit{negeri}
policy, maintains that its students wear \textit{pakaian adat}, or traditional clothes on certain days,
including Hindu religious holidays and other auspicious days. While \textit{pakaian adat} is not

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{57} See Appendix B for Mission statement
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{op cit.} Setyawan, Davit (2014). Pg. 3: Implementation of Religious Ed, Commission on Child Protection Indonesia (KPAI) referencing to \textit{undang-undang nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang SISDIKNAS}
\textsuperscript{59} Student and Parent of Student (personal communication), 22 April 2017. Sangsit, Buleleng.
\textsuperscript{60} Teacher 4 (personal communication), 22 April 2017. Singaraja.
\textit{jilbab} is another word for \textit{hijab}, a traditional Muslim garment worn by some Muslim women on their head.
\end{footnotesize}
specifically Hindu in nature, it is used specifically for religious traditions and ceremonies in Bali relating to the Hindu faith.

In the case of SMA Negeri 3 Singaraja, the government-mandated education requirement for non-Hindu students to be provided religious teachers was enforced, and the school followed the 2013 curriculum. While the sekolah negeri adhere more strictly to the national curriculum than sekolah swasta, it is important to note that school-specific implementation of such practices is also important in determining the application of religious education to the classroom. This is phenomenon exists nation-wide as a result of the reformasi and new educational development model proposed and adopted by the government. This trend is a fairly procedure, marking what Hastangka describes as the “start of school autonomy”\(^6\). He continues by saying that this autonomy provides schools with the ability to determine their own syllabus and curriculum as adaptations of what is provided by the government, and tested for with the aforementioned competency exams.

Teacher 3 included how the school implements national curriculum in the context of local and regional content\(^5\). Regional decisions, as well as the individual school interpretation of curriculum plays a part in the ways in which material is considered and subjects are taught. This may show that other factors, like the historical presence of a large number of non-Hindus in the region, may also be partly responsible in how SMA in Singaraja operate, and may not apply as a representation of the SMA negeri on a greater scale in this way.

\(^{61}\textit{op cit.} \text{Hastangka (2010)} \text{pg. 172} \\
^{62}\text{Teacher 3 (personal communication), 22 April 2017. Singaraja.}\)
Site 3: Denpasar

It makes sense that as the most densely populated regency in Bali, Denpasar has a great number of schools to service a great number of students. Like Tabanan, Denpasar is too a city, district, and regency, however it also serves as the island’s capital and center of commerce. As so, the capital has an incredibly diverse population, and its location in Bali’s South, frequented often by tourists and foreign business, makes it a hub of globalization. Bali’s central government naturally operates out of the capital, and discourse and policy regarding social, political, and economical aspects about the island converge in Denpasar as well.

While the school that I visited was not an SMA, and therefore is being left out of this research, I was able to interview several teachers of the high school level, as well as speak in somewhat of a roundtable format with several lower-level teachers and a former member of the council that helped to establish the Balinese Hindu curriculum. The two high school level teachers that I spoke with was Teacher 5, a religious studies teacher in a SMA swasta, as well as Teacher 6, a religious studies teacher from a SMK. While the other two sites that I visited, as well as the bulk of my research, was focused on the implementation of religious education in the SMA, it was interesting to see how religion classes factored into the instruction at a vocational school as well.

My interview with Teacher 5 began with echoing the thoughts I had heard from teachers at the other schools, saying that teaching was a “call from my heart”, and implicated the duty to develop his students’ futures. However, this teacher was significantly younger than the others whom I interviewed, with only seven years on the job compared to the decades of teaching the others that I met had practiced. I found that what he saw was his function as a teacher was

63 Teacher 5 SMA (personal communication), 1 May 2017. Denpasar.
different from what I heard from the others. He stated that there existed a “current phenomenon that a teacher is a role-model for students”, something I had not noticed from my trips to Tabanan and Singaraja, but a trend echoed by some of the literature on the subject\textsuperscript{64}. Nilan adds to this, noting that teachers with regards to radical curriculum change are expected to embody the character they wish to impress upon their students\textsuperscript{65}.

This I determined must be the application of new teacher training; as a young teacher, Teacher 5 must have been instructed what the role of the teacher is to be. In the older teachers at the other schools, I saw more of an authoritarian imposition and power dynamic with their students. That said, I was unable to see Teacher 5 in the context of his students, and it may be the case that the power dynamic is similar in the school setting. Another reason may be that it is harder to play the part of role model when the age gap between teacher and student is too large; perhaps it is easier to see a younger teacher as a peer and attempt to personify their behaviors. In any case, Hastangka describes this difference as an association with the Suharto regime’s teaching style, saying that as relics of the New Order educational system, the power dynamics and the enforced authority of the teacher cannot be unlearned\textsuperscript{66}. This provides a significant roadblock to not only the implementation of a new teaching-style, but also provides the issue of replacement: there do not exist enough teachers in the education system even now to even consider a world where teachers can be replaced because of their association with an old teaching regime\textsuperscript{67}.

The teacher also noted the importance of the practice of both religion and pluralism in the classroom, and how the two are not conflictual. He says that when it is time for religious class, “I

\textsuperscript{64} Teacher 5 SMA (personal communication), 1 May 2017. Denpasar.
\textsuperscript{65} op cit. Nilan, Pam (2003) pg. 576
\textsuperscript{66} op cit. Hastangka (2010) pg. 169
\textsuperscript{67} op cit. Nilan, Pam (2003) pg. 567
will be in charge and teach the Hindu students, one ‘Christianity Class’ teacher will teach the Christian students, one ‘Islam class’ teacher will teach the [Muslim] students – and we have different rooms for each class.”

Like the SMA in Singaraja, this school brings outside religious instructors to represent the faiths of their non-Hindu students. However, unlike Singaraja, this school is swasta, and finds itself under the umbrella of a different foundation. Like the other sekolah swasta, this school has yet to transition to the K2013 and still operates within the structure of the curriculum established in 2006. However, it can be seen that there is some crossover between what the curriculums provide for their students. After hearing this, I found that abiding by the framework of a certain curriculum, whether 2006 or 2013, does not decide the implementation of specific policies within the school.

For example, despite lagging behind in terms of the curriculum applied, the school strictly adheres to the national education law that limits classes to a maximum of 30 students per class. Based on my experiences with the other two schools and the size of their classrooms, this was news to me, and showed me more of the impact of individual school autonomy on what laws and policies get implemented in which ways. Schools that are overcrowded, which Nilan mentions extensively, are not uncommon on the island, and can decide not to implement this law in order to serve the demand of more students.

The teacher was the first of the teachers I interviewed to comment on the flaws of the educational system. He claimed that one of the signs that proves its imperfection is the constant changing of curriculum, saying, “it is really confusing as every 10 years the current curriculum must be changed.” While he is uncomfortable with the current system, he also applauds the

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68 Teacher 5 SMA (personal communication), 1 May 2017. Denpasar.
70 Teacher 5 SMA (personal communication), 1 May 2017. Denpasar.
efforts done by education agencies in Bali to instruct teachers, and sees positive development in the nation’s private and state schools for the future. In conversation, the education official also noted the importance of implementation of policy, saying that he and others in what he describes as the *pemerinta pusat*, or central government, of education, attempt to make policy to benefit the system but it does not matter unless it applies to the “*dunia yang real*”, or the real world.\(^71\)

\(^71\) Education Official (personal communication), 24 April 2017. Denpasar.
V. Conclusion

While schools in the three regions, Tabanan, Singaraja, and Denpasar, all have different features and teaching strategies, there do exist some similarities. One significant one is the reason for which teachers decided to take up the profession. The low wages, long hours and overcrowded classrooms are clearly not alluring, however teachers in the three regions commented on their desire to teach, and each one referred to the profession as a calling\textsuperscript{72}. While the reasons why the teachers with whom I interviewed is remarkably similar, the ways in which they teach – the style, the subject, and the material, among other factors – differs in an equally remarkable fashion. Whether the school is \textit{swasta} or \textit{umum}, religion enters the classroom in a variety of ways. Religious education is utilized by all schools in Bali, and nationally in Indonesia, with the goal and promise of the development of the character of each and every student.

National education was a government strategy to enforce the ideals of what an Indonesian should look like, and the consolidation of language and content was intended to give all Indonesians a way to access and tap into this constructed identity. In the New Era of Suharto, education was used as a means of using \textit{Pancasila} as a political doctrine. The \textit{reformasi} that began in 1998 and has continued through today has developed new curriculums for implementation across Indonesia with less reference to the national ideology and more reference to the student development\textsuperscript{73}. However, as evident by the difference of ideas of what national curriculum means to different teachers, and as a result different school programs, implementation often differs based on a number of factors. First, the fact that the most recent curriculum is not

\textsuperscript{72} op cit. Nilan, Pam (2003) pg 567, information from Interviews with Teachers 1-6
\textsuperscript{73} op cit. Hastangka (2010) pg. 169
required to be implemented is a factor. As I found out in my interviews, both of the SMA swasta applied the K2006, which is not the most updated curriculum. The *reformasi* has introduced over six new curriculums in just two decades, which Teacher 5 said can confuse teachers and students alike.\(^{74}\) Second, the implementation of the curriculum differs depending on the school, as schools are able to take liberty with their own interpretations of the curriculum based on the government allowed policy of school autonomy. The schools all took a different approach to teaching religious education, a staple of the curriculum and the state, because schools are encouraged to develop their own syllabus based on what it determines the national curriculum to mean.\(^{75}\) Schools are also unable to implement the curriculum to the fullest because of the economic state of many of the schools in Bali. Understaffed and overenrolled, classes serve students over capacity of what the government mandates. However, because of the semi-autonomous control, schools are allowed to do so, and whether based on a lack of funding or school choice, schools can decide to implement laws that the school sees fit.

One such decision implicates students of minority religions more than Hindu students that make up the majority of students in Bali. The government requires by law that all students are to receive religious education, which will be tested in national competency tests, from teachers of their own religion, regardless of the school that they are in.\(^{76}\) In theory, this would mean, for example, that a Muslim student could have a Muslim teacher providing his education without having to leave the school or pay for their services out of pocket. However, in the case of SMA Surya Wisata Kediri Tabanan, this is not so, and students of minority religions must find religious education outside the classroom, with their own resources.\(^{77}\) While some schools in

\(^{74}\) Teacher 5 SMA (personal communication), 1 May 2017. Denpasar.

\(^{75}\) *op cit.* Hastangka (2010) pg. 172

\(^{76}\) *op cit.* Setyawan, Davit (2014). Pg. 4

\(^{77}\) Teacher 2 (personal communication), 20 April 2017. Tabanan.
Bali, like those where the other teachers are employed, do implement this practice, it is not a given that minority students are accounted for in religious education. Despite the presence of national education law and special provisions, the independence with which schools are able to determine what national laws are to be included in school curriculum results in an uneven and unequal decision to exclude minority religion students from the right to learn about their faith in the classroom. Coupled with the fact that competency-based exams are required by the school for the students that must account for their own education, this creates an imbalance and injustice in the education system.

The national education system aims to develop the character of all of its students, and has implemented a religious education program as a means of doing just so 78. As religion is part of the foundation of the state, as part of its ideology, Pancasila, it also makes up part of the identity that the Indonesian state has built. The motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, meaning ‘unity in diversity’, encapsulates the Indonesian government’s desire to unite its people of different faith and background with the common themes that they share, namely religion. However, through the introduction of religious education and the lack of proper implementation of national curriculum, in Bali students of minority religions can be excluded from this practice. The national education system, which was designed in an attempt to unite all Indonesians, as a result of the lack of putting theory into practice, has created a system where pluralism cannot exist in the place meant to maintain it. While some schools provide resources to non-Hindu students, they can be let down in other ways, like the banning of religious clothing. In this sense, the Balinese education system’s inability to implement national curriculum threatens the balance of pluralism with which the Indonesian state was founded because it does not represent people equally based on

78 op cit. Hastangka (2010) pg. 185
faith across the island. In the future, it must find ways to implement the policies it creates, rather than creating newer curriculums, which causes confusion and deepens differences across schools, endangering the concept of a national education system that is unequally implemented.

Recommendations for Further Study

The practice of implementation of national curriculum and the impact of autonomous school governing in Indonesia is a topic that deserves research in itself, and not just with the context of religious education. One could look at the ways too that schools differ based on region with more breadth, truly exploring all the regencies and comparing findings in a more qualitative matter. Another could look at the proportion of schools that have implemented the most recent curriculum to the rest of Bali and interpret performance levels based on competency exam scores and other factors.

The differences between sekolah swasta and sekolah negeri both in Bali and in greater Indonesia need to be looked at in more detail as well. Within this, one could also determine how teachers are impacted by curriculum, both in the aspect of whether age impacts a teacher’s style and how teachers are compensated in different schools across Bali. An interesting quantitative finding could be estimating the amount spent on outside religious instruction from non-Hindu students and seeing whether that impacts families and their students’ abilities to perform on national competency exams.

While this research attempts to highlight the insufficiencies of provision of religious education, it could also be helped with testimony from more non-Hindu students, teachers, and education officials, and focuses on Hindus and the ability to provide religious education, and not
on those whom actually require non-Hindu education. This would fulfill another aspect of the research that could be beneficial in providing a broader and more inclusive scope.
VI. Bibliography

Primary Resources

Teacher 1. Personal communication, 20 April 2017. Tabanan.

Teacher 2. Personal communication, 20 April 2017. Tabanan.


Teacher 4. Personal communication, 22 April 2017. Singaraja.

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Parent of Student. Personal communication, 22 April 2017. Sangsit, Buleleng.


Teacher 5 SMA. Personal communication, 1 May 2017. Denpasar.

Teacher 6 SMK. Personal communication, 27 April 2017. Denpasar.

Secondary Resources


VII. Appendix

Appendix B: Vision and Mission Statement – SMA Negeri 3 Singaraja
Picture by Nikolai Birch, via SMA Negeri 3 Singaraja Website

Vision and mission

VISION AND MISSION
SMA NEGERI 3 SINGARAJA

VISION
THE HIGHER RESOURCES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES, RESPONDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL FALSFAH.

MISSION
1. DEVELOPING THE RECOGNITION AND RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS TEACHING IS AS FOLLOWED AS A SOURCE OF WISDOM.
2. GROWING THE SOCIAL INTERFACE SOCIAL DELIVERY AND INTERPRETING SCHOOL PRINCIPLES.
3. IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE LEARNING AND LEARNING PROCESS PROGRAMS, SO EVERYONE STUDENTS CAN DEVELOP OPTIMALLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POTENTIAL OWNED.
4. GROWING SPIRITUALITY INTENSIVE INTO THE WHOLE SCHOOL PRICE.
5. IMPLEMENTING PROGRAM FOR INCREASING EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCY AND EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT.
6. IMPLEMENTING COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM WITH EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY INSTITUTIONS.
7. IMPLEMENTING THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE MANAGEMENT, MINIMUM IN ACCORDANCE TO THE NATIONAL STANDARD ON EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT.
8. DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM BASED ON TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.
9. IMPLEMENTING PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL FRIENDLY AND FRIENDLY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.