

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND KEPERCAYAAN ADHERENTS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Since its establishment in 2016, the Indonesian government has conducted Pendidikan Kepercayaan (Belief Education) as religious education for indigenous communities and kepercayaan (belief) adherents in Indonesia. Various studies affirm that kepercayaan Education is the Indonesian government's way of eliminating discrimination against indigenous communities and kepercayaan adherents in the educational sphere. Other research on kepercayaan Education targets the challenges of implementation in the school context. This work attempts to examine the interconnectedness of kepercayaan education and the education of indigenous religions and kepercayaan adherents within the community context. The underlying question is does belief education represent the education of indigenous religions within communities? How does the education of indigenous religions in the community context contribute to and be included in the development of kepercayaan education? As a theoretical framework, I employ the concept of indigenization that has developed in the discourse of indigenous education in Canada. The method used in this research is a literature study. The results of this study indicate that belief education does not represent the education of indigenous religions and kepercayaan adherents within the community realm. Kepercayaan education is a service designed unilaterally by the state without recognizing and respecting the diversity and educational needs of indigenous communities in Indonesia. As an alternative, I propose a reconciliation and collaboration-based indigenization approach as a new framework for reconstructing kepercayaan education. The path of reconciliation and collaboration provides a space for children of indigenous communities to achieve the national educational aspiration of learning and practicing the teachings of their 'religion' in accordance with the educational model of their respective communities.

Keywords: Religious Education; Indigenous Communities; Kepercayaan Adherents; Indigenization

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the introduction of *kepercayaan* education in the formal education sector, the practice of indigenous education only took place informally, either

at home or within their communities (Saripudin, 2009). Each adherent of indigenous religions and *kepercayaan* adherents (henceforth indigenous communities) has their own unique methods and educational strategies. For instance, since 2000, the Rimba people – an indigenous community in Jambi – have had an educational practice called the sokola rimba (Rimba school). The founder and teacher at the Sokola Rimba is Butet Manurung. At the Sokola Rimba, children learn about how to survive and protect the forest they love. For the Rimba people, nature is both their home and their teacher (Manurung, 2013, 2019; Manalu, 2023). The Rimba people believe that learning about life and living a good life is true education (Manurung, 2019). The *meto* people of Timor, an indigenous religion of the Timorese community, have a non-formal school known as the lakoat.kujawas. The founder and educator at this school is Dicky Senda. Similar to the Rimba people, the *meto* people possess an eco-pedagogy that is used as a strategy to maintain the harmony between human life and nature (Umbu Deta et al., 2022). Therefore, education within indigenous religious communities has been ongoing for a long time, independently from government intervention.

In 2016, after a long advocacy process, indigenous communities gained their own religious education service called *Kepercayaan* Education. It was established and managed under the authority of the Minister of Education and Culture (now the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology) (Setara Institute, 2022). *Kepercayaan* Education was established through the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 27 of 2016. This education service is an inseparable part of the state's recognition of the citizenship status of indigenous communities in the Constitutional Court Decision No. 97 of 2016 concerning Population Administration Services (*administrasi kependudukan*). However, many other religious communities to date have not received educational services according to their beliefs, such as Ahmadiyah, Orthodox, Baha'i, Buddha Maitreya, and others. Therefore, Amalia (2021) argues that the definition of religion in religious education services is still problematic because many other religious communities have not received educational services according to their religious teachings.

While *Kepercayaan* Education is a step forward as the government has added a new category of religious education, state discrimination against indigenous communities continues (Deta, 2021, 2022; Nenohai, 2023, 2023a). One example is the plan to remove the word 'Belief' in the draft of the 2022 National Education System law (Perempuan, 2022). Various studies on *Kepercayaan* Education to date also show that the government's commitment at the local level to open *Kepercayaan* Education classes in schools is still not apparent

(Noviana, 2023; Siagian, 2022). Various obstacles, such as slow administration and lack of school initiatives to provide textbooks, also remain problematic (Biantoro & Setiawan, 2021; Maulana, 2019; J. Nenohai, 2023; Sholakodin, 2021).

Based on the development of research on *kepercayaan* education, the discussion surrounding it has revolved around the issues and challenges of its less-than-optimal implementation. Some of these challenges have arisen due to the sluggish response from local governments, as evidenced in cities like Surabaya and Yogyakarta (Maulana, 2019; Noviana, 2023). However, researchers have not yet explored further whether and how *Kepercayaan* Education represents indigenous peoples' education within the community context. In my view, this discussion is crucial to understand the relationship between indigenous education in the formal context, i.e., *Kepercayaan* Education, and indigenous education in the non-formal context that existed before the introduction of *Kepercayaan* Education. Therefore, this research aims to connect and review the implementation of *Kepercayaan* Education through the lens of indigenous education practices within community contexts.

This article raises the research questions: Does *kepercayaan* education represent indigenous education in the community context? How can indigenous education in communities contribute to the development of *kepercayaan* education in the formal context? The concept employed in this article is the idea of indigenization that has developed in the study of indigenous education in Canada, hence the literature study becomes the research method. In indigenous education studies, indigenization is understood as an effort to reactivate all indigenous elements in the public sphere (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Prete, 2018). Indigenization upholds a reconciliation and collaboration approach to provide indigenous education services in the formal education sector (Stein et al., 2022). Reconciliation and collaboration proceed with a commitment to equity and diversity. Through the lens of the indigenization concept, this research shows that *Kepercayaan* Education does not represent indigenous education in the community context because the development of *Kepercayaan* Education is an extension of official religious education in Indonesia. Consequently, *kepercayaan* education does not provide space for the diversity and uniqueness of the education of indigenous communities in Indonesia. The state then equates and demands that children from indigenous religious communities grow to become religious according to the standards and models of world religions' education.

INDIGENIZATION AS A PERSPECTIVE

Indigenization is the process of reactivating indigenous elements into the public sphere (Arrows, 2019; Battiste, 2013; Grafton & Melançon, 2020). Indigenization emphasizes the process of equalizing and repositioning aspects of indigenous communities that were erased by colonizers in the public space, therefore, the concept of indigenization goes hand-in-hand with the concept of decolonization. Grafton and Melançon (2020) emphasize that the spirit of indigenization is decolonization. Decolonization and indigenization essentially work in the same direction: "Decolonization is an emancipatory response to colonial oppression. Indigenization is a process of resurgence, a re-centering of precolonial and colonial indigenous ways of knowing and being that never ceased to exist despite colonialism" (Grafton & Melançon, 2020, p. 135). Emily and Grafton term it the "mutual reinforcement of decolonization and indigenization". In practice, the work of decolonization and indigenization helps first nations detect aspects of colonialism in existing structures, while indigenization helps scholars understand indigenous voices that need to be fought for (Grafton & Melançon, 2020).

In Canada, indigenization has been taking place in the long history of the indigenous movement and studies. Various educators from First Nations¹ backgrounds, for example, uphold the Mi'kmaw concept of Two-Eyed Seeing as a learning method in higher education (Hogue & Bartlett, 2014; Peltier, 2018). Indigenization involving the government and educational institutions massively occurred after the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015 (hereafter TRC 2015) as an inseparable part of the ratification of UNDRIP (Rhea, 2015; Stein et al., 2022). After TRC 2015, Sheila Cote-Meek wrote that "The TRC 2015 calls on post-secondary institutions to engage in the reconciliation process and essentially lead change in education that promotes awareness and understanding and importantly integrates Indigenous histories, knowledges, and pedagogies in the classroom" (Cote-Meek, 2020). The TRC was used to transform the colonial aspects in Canadian education that had severed the relationship between the First Nations of Canada and their teachings, communities, and lands (Lavallo, 2020). For First Nations scholars in Canada, the word 'reconciliation' in the TRC is directly linked to the spirit of decolonization and indigenization. Their efforts aim to ensure that the TRC does not become a dead text but is mobilized for the interests of First Nations.

The TRC 2015 massively encouraged educational institutions in Canada to

¹ First Nations is a term used to identify indigenous people in Canada who are neither Inuit nor Métis.

make the 'theme of indigenization' a variety of educational policies. Many First Nations study centers and courses on indigenous religions such as health and indigenous religions emerged at Canadian universities (Linton & Ducas, 2017). Gaudry and Lorenz, two researchers from the University of Alberta, summarized three spectrums of indigenization in Canada post-TRC 2015: inclusive indigenization, reconciling indigenization, and decolonial indigenization. In order, inclusion indigenization is the process of granting educational rights and services to indigenous religious communities (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Reconciling indigenization is the process of changing the mindset and way of educating Canadians towards students from First Nations backgrounds. Meanwhile, decolonial indigenization is the process of totally transforming the educational structure to make room for the educational paradigm of indigenous religions in initiating educational services (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

Of the three spectrums above - inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization - Gaudry and Lorenz state that the most commonly used form of indigenization taking place in Canada is inclusion indigenization (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 226). Inclusion indigenization has become a new burden for First Nations as they are required to learn things that refer to the European Enlightenment perspective. In Western knowledge, nature and humans are separated and fragmented. Nature is merely positioned as an object of knowledge (Pidgeon, 2016). The Western knowledge model is clearly detrimental to First Nations because for them, nature and humans are unity (Battiste, 2013). For First Nations, the land is not an object. It is a subject that needs to be protected and cared for like humans (Grande, 2015). Therefore, inclusive indigenization still privileges Western knowledge in the educational curriculum and demands that First Nations grow through the Western paradigm.

Samuel Torres (2019) argues that inclusive indigenization is a new colonialism agenda. Inclusive indigenization is a way for educational institutions to demand that First Nations learn about and support the interests of white supremacy in Canada (Torres, 2019). Inclusion indigenization only increases the number of First Nations people in educational spaces but does not provide room for First Nations to be subjects over their own curricula and education systems (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). As a consequence, inclusion indigenization does not realize the aspirations of the TRC 2015 because in practice, the Canadian academia does not respect knowledge and education from First Nations' perspectives (Pidgeon, 2016). Therefore, Pidgeon (2016) categorizes inclusive indigenization as a practice of assimilation: internalizing Western knowledge into the knowledge structures and daily practices of First Nations (Pidgeon,

2016, pp. 80–82).

Moving beyond inclusion indigenization, various researchers in Canada have proposed a decolonization-based indigenization approach. Gaudry and Lorenz refer to this as the spectrum of decolonial indigenization (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Decolonization-based indigenization is the most transformative approach (Debassige et al., 2022; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Stein et al., 2022). Decolonial indigenization encompasses all aspects of inclusive and reconciling indigenization. The decolonial indigenization spectrum transcends the subject-object dimension of educational policymakers in inclusive indigenization. As an approach within the realm of indigenization, decolonial indigenization upholds the projects of decolonization and indigenization simultaneously - by abolishing the old, highly colonial educational services while opening up educational services from the perspective of indigenous religions themselves (Debassige et al., 2022; Stein et al., 2022). Therefore, Debassige refers to decolonial indigenization as a radical approach because it provides space for indigenous religions to be sovereign over education (Debassige et al., 2022).

Moving beyond inclusion indigenization, Sharon Stein proposes decolonization that involves the practices of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI approaches) (Stein et al., 2022). Moreover, EDI is to increase Indigenous peoples' inclusion into these institutions. More critical EDI approaches emphasize that access alone is insufficient. These advocate for additional measures such as the creation of courses focused on Indigenous knowledges, increased funding for Indigenous research, formalized agreements and collaborations with local Indigenous communities, and dedicated spaces and resources to serve and ensure the success of Indigenous students. Thus, this interpretation of decolonization seeks to radically reform and transform institutions through representation, recognition, and redistribution (Stein et al., 2022, pp. 205–206).

The EDI approach is based on the provision of education by involving the active role of First Nations as subjects. First Nations do not appear as service recipients but rather as determinants of educational services (Stein et al., 2022). Parnter (2024) summarizes and brings a commitment to collaboration and reconciliation to the EDI approach. For her, recognition for first nations cannot be done alone by Canadian academia. In accordance with the demands of the 2015 TRC, Canadian academia must involve collaborating with First nations as a form of reconciliation for past crimes committed by colonials and settler colonialism in the past that are still ongoing in the present (Parnter, 2024).

Based on the development of indigenization discussions in Canada, I summarize that decolonization and indigenization are the main reference points for the

provision of education services for first nations. The decolonization approach involves reconciliation and collaboration as a concrete form of recognition and fulfillment of the right to education for first nations. Canadian academia does not act as the sole determinant of education services but rather as a facilitator of education services for the first nation. Therefore, first nations play an active role as sovereign communities of knowledge and educational models for the benefit and future of their respective communities. (Battiste, 2013; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Parnter, 2024).

WHY DOES THE STATE REQUIRE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TO STUDY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN FORMAL SCHOOLS?

Before 2016, there was not a single school in Indonesia that provided indigenous education. Education of indigenous communities was only possible outside the realm of formal education. This was because, in Indonesia, religious identity is the basis for providing religious education services (Widyawati, 2012). Therefore, the reason why the state did not provide religious education services for indigenous communities was heavily influenced by the politics of religious recognition.

Various studies show that since the beginning of independence, the Indonesian government has used the world religions paradigm as the definition of an official religion (Abbas, 2021, 2021; Alfian, 2022, 2023). The word *Agama* in Indonesia is a direct translation of 'religion.' The religion that has been understood by the Indonesian government is a copy of the 'world religions paradigm' (Maarif, 2017, p. 14). In the 'world religions paradigm' that developed in the West, religion has been objectified as a concrete noun that has specific elements: doctrine of divinity, a prophet, a sacred scripture, institutions, and is adhered to internationally (Abbas, 2021, 2021; Asad, 2001; W. C. Smith, 1962).

Although the 'world religions paradigm' was not officially established as the definition of religion by the Indonesian government, government policies since independence have perpetuated and tightened the world religions paradigm. The Indonesian government then made 'Islam' the prototype (Maarif, 2019). Other religions that wanted to be recognized had to conform to Islam. Confucianism was recognized later after the Soeharto regime forced them to create the concept of 'God' (Tian) and a sacred scripture, but Confucianism was only consistently served fully by the state during the era of Indonesia's fourth president, Abdurrahman Wahid (Sutrisno, 2018). Therefore, in the independence era, the government only registered and recognized six groups as 'religions': Christianity, Islam, Catholicism, Confucianism, Buddhism,

and Hinduism. No indigenous religions and *kepercayaan* adherents were recognized as 'religions' (Maarif, 2019).

In the early days of independence, indigenous religious communities did not receive educational services because they were categorized as 'indigenous communities' (masyarakat adat). *Adat* was a colonial Dutch viewpoint adopted by the Indonesian state to differentiate indigenous religious communities from world religions (Tuhri et al., 2020). *Adat* was labelled as primitive. It resembled religious elements, but not fully fulfilling requirements to be a religion. It was animistic, psuedo-religion (Maarif, 2019). Then, during the New Order era, indigenous communities were forced to embrace official religions in order to gain recognition and public services, including education (Maarif, 2017). Because they were not recognized as religions, official religious communities made indigenous religious communities 'objects of religious conversion.' Vikri Paais, in his research on the *Huaulu* community, narrates that the Christian community made the *Huaulu* community a target for conversion because *Huaulu* practices were viewed by the Christian community as heretical and infidel (Paais, 2023). The practice of conversion under the influence of the state's official religious policies has also been experienced by many indigenous communities, to this day, in various other regions of Indonesia (Alfian, 2023; Ilahi et al., 2017; Mulyadi, 2019; Nenohai, 2023a).

The restrictive definition of religion in Indonesian politics opens up space for what Maarif and Asfinawati call the politics of official religions. The policy regarding official religions is understood here to refer to the state's political and legal authority to legitimize certain religions as official through regulations and policies (Maarif et al., 2022, p. 206). The politics of official religions becomes a reference for official religious groups to control and even judge certain practices of other groups that are outside the scope of their religious teachings (Perempuan, 2022). Consequently, the politics of official religions also influences the rights, obligations, and relations between religious communities at the grassroots level. In the context of conversion, for example, the standards of official religions are used by certain groups to label other religions as heretical and infidel, for the purpose of religious conversion. Official religious communities feel entitled to judge and justify acts of violence against groups that do not fall into the category of official religions, such as the violence perpetrated by Islamic groups against the *Kejawen* community on the southern coast of Yogyakarta (Wasisto, 2021).

In the context of education, the politics of official religions also serves as the basis for the government to limit educational services for indigenous communities while simultaneously forcing indigenous communities to choose and study the

religious education provided in schools. This demand is unavoidable because religious education is a compulsory subject in Indonesia (Yusuf, 2016). The state requires indigenous communities to practice the teachings of official religions, such as the case of a child of *kepercayaan* adherents in Semarang who was forced to participate in Friday prayers (Amalia Anna, 2021). The child was forced to practice the teachings of another religion because the rules of religious education require every child to practice religious teachings without exception (Suhadi et al., 2015).

For indigenous communities, this becomes a new burden because the religion they learn in school differs from the religion they learn at home (Raihani, 2016). The act of practicing another religion, in fact, reinforces the negative stigma from society towards them. For instance, in the experience of the Marapu community in West Sumba, due to having to attend Catholic education, Marapu children acquired the stigma of being 'Catholic-Marapu.' The term 'Catholic-Marapu' becomes a burden in itself for Marapu children because they are accused of being inauthentic Marapu (Oka Wedasantara & Suarsana, 2019). Consequently, religious education influences the majority religion's perspective towards the religious attitudes of indigenous communities.

In its design, religious education obligates students to practice religious teachings for the interest of civil society (Suhadi et al., 2015). Therefore, religious education also has a strong ethical component. In the public sphere, the government utilizes religious education as a tool to shape the behavior of indigenous communities. As a consequence, indigenous religious communities are prohibited from practicing their own religious teachings in public spaces, and the values of their teachings can only be expressed as culture (Maarif, 2017). Bagir (2020) categorizes the control of public attitudes of indigenous communities as an issue of freedom of religion and belief in Indonesia, as religious teachings and public expression are inseparable.

Because they are not recognized as religious practices, the state limits indigenous communities from practicing their teachings in public spaces (Arianingtyas, 2020). Kabir (2020), for example, narrates the challenges faced by the Kejawen community on the southern coast of Yogyakarta in practicing the tradition of *larung sesajen* (offering ritual). Due to the influence of the politics of official religions, the Islamic community on the southern coast prohibits the practice of *larung sesajen* because it is considered a heretical or polytheistic teaching (Kabir, 2020). Through this example, religious education policies are directly related to freedom of religion and belief because the content of religious education is directly connected to ethics in public spaces. Through the previous explanation, before the introduction of indigenous

kepercayaan education, indigenous communities faced obstacles in obtaining their educational rights and freedom of expression in public spaces. The politics of official religions also underlies these issues. Knowledge of indigenous religions, in each respective context, only took place within the community and sectoral contexts. These restrictions also influenced the relationship between indigenous communities and other religious communities living as their neighbors. Any knowledge of ancestral religions could be displayed by the community to the public, as long as that knowledge was conveyed through cultural expressions. Thus, in my view, religious education—the story about the challenges faced by the Kejawen community in practicing *larung sesajen* and the stigma towards the Marapu community in East Sumba—sends us a message that religious education creates problems for indigenous religions to use their own knowledge as a living practice in public spaces. The issue of religious education is inseparable from the issue of freedom of religion and expression in Indonesian public spaces.

AFTER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: *KEPERCAYAAN* EDUCATION AND ITS CRITICS

The provision of *Kepercayaan* Education marks the state's commitment to eliminating discrimination against indigenous communities in the education sector (Setara Institute, 2022). The management of religious education and education are regulated separately. The official name for religious education services for Christian, Islamic, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian communities is Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama). Religious Education is regulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The official name for religious education for indigenous communities is *Kepercayaan* Education. That is regulated by the Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology. To date, various indigenous communities have received *kepercayaan* education services, such as Marapu, Parmalim, and Sapta Dharma (Amalia, 2021; Nenohai, 2023a; Nenohai, 2024).

As a religious subject for indigenous communities, the model of *Kepercayaan* Education is conducted in a similar manner to religious education. The government provides teachers, teaching materials, and subjects in accordance with the beliefs held by students from indigenous religious backgrounds (Amalia, 2021; Noviana, 2023). Due to its relatively new implementation since 2016, *kepercayaan* education have not yet been enjoyed by all students from indigenous community backgrounds. Many studies show that not all followers of indigenous religions have received *Kepercayaan* Education services due to complicated issues and the tendency of local governments to respond slowly

(Maulana, 2019; Nenohai, 2023; Zakiyah, 2018). Not all *kepercayaan* education classes have teachers and teaching materials (Perdhana, 2023; Siagian, 2022; Febriany, 2020). In addition to administrative reasons, Rosyid advocates for the implementation of *kepercayaan* education at the university level, as that education is also important for followers of indigenous communities in higher education institutions (Rosyid, 2022).

Akil Sholakudin, in his article '*Posisi Tawar Permendikbud Nomor 27 Dan Urgensi Pendidikan Agama Dalam Satuan Pendidikan*,' proposes merging Indigenous Faith Education (Pendidikan Kepercayaan) and Religious Education into multicultural education. Learning from the experience of violence faced by Saptha Dharma children, instead of maintaining *kepercayaan* education, Sholakudin suggests changing the model of religious education to multicultural education so that students from all religions can learn about 'religion' rather than studying and deepening their respective religions (Sholakudin, 2021). Sholakudin's proposal is not new, as multicultural education materials already exist as one of the topics in religious education classes in Indonesia (Baidhaw, 2005). Therefore, the introduction of a multicultural education subject would argue that merging *Kepercayaan* Education and Religious Education is not an urgent need.

Besides the issue of administrative obstacles, the merging of *kepercayaan* education and religious education, the issue of religiosity is also voiced by researchers of *kepercayaan* education. Maarif and Asfinawati (2022), in their article *Toward a (More) Inclusive FORB: A Framework for the Advocacy for the Rights of Indigenous People*, argue that indigenous *kepercayaan* education is still creating something new for indigenous communities. *Kepercayaan* education, as part of the compulsory course in schools (based on the regulation of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology) is formulated to comply with religious education. Such an articulation on the part of the ministry is equivalent to the state prescribing "how to be religious." In Indonesia, this framework is upheld by the policy regarding official religions (Maarif et al., 2022).

Maarif and Asfinawati's view is affirmed through the research I conducted in the Marapu community, East Sumba. The Marapu community has a way of being religious called *Lipayenu-Lipatembu* (Damai, 2024; Nenohai, 2024). *Lipayenu-Lipatembu* is the teaching of love towards the ancestors (Marapu), humans, and the universe, therefore *Lipayenu-Lipatembu* can be translated into Indonesian as the wisdom of love. To be religious, Marapu children are taught to participate in the community, such as taking part in rituals, hosting guests, respecting nature, not cutting down banyan trees carelessly, and so on.

In contrast, in the classroom setting, through *Kepercayaan* Education, children are required by the government through laws to become religious through a series of teaching materials and assignments (Damai, 2024; Nenohai, 2024). In my view, the Indigenous *Kepercayaan* Education is diametrically opposed to the model and practice of religiosity understood by Marapu children in the community context.

Referring to the various studies above, I argue that *kepercayaan* education is present as a perfect copy of religious education. *Kepercayaan* Education is established by referring to religious education. As a consequence, the state designs and establishes *kepercayaan* Education without providing space for indigenous followers to incorporate aspects of their knowledge and education into the design of the education. Education for indigenous communities follows the complete pattern of education for religions that have been recognized beforehand. Furthermore, followers of indigenous communities then learn two different models of education, namely *kepercayaan* education at school and indigenous education according to their community's version. I categorize *kepercayaan* education as state indigenous education because this education is designed by the state without involving the role of the indigenous communities' paradigm, but rather the paradigm of 'religion' established by the state. As a national education, children from indigenous community backgrounds also bear the responsibility to learn and practice their teachings in public spaces in accordance with the ideals of religious education as a national education. Therefore, once again, I categorize *kepercayaan* education as the state official indigenous education.

KEPERCAYAAN EDUCATION AS INDIGENIZATION

Departing from the meaning of indigenization, I categorize *kepercayaan* education as an indigenization for several reasons. The first reason is that *kepercayaan* education provides a space for indigenous knowledge to be present in national education policies in Indonesia. Consequently, the government incorporates aspects of indigenous knowledge and education into public policies. This pattern is precisely what occurs with *kepercayaan* education in Indonesia. The state acknowledges the existence of indigenous knowledge while preserving it within educational laws and regulations. The state also provides support through funding arrangements and providing facilities such as schools to support *kepercayaan* education. The second reason is that in the process of indigenization at the global level, the reference used for the recognition of indigenous knowledge is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In Canada, UNDRIP was ratified as

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (Arrows, 2019; T. Smith, 2016). The TRC became a milestone for indigenization in the context of schools in Canada (Côté et al., 2021). In Indonesia, *kepercayaan* education as a form of state recognition originated from the Constitutional Court Decision No. 97 of 2016. Through this recognition, the citizenship status of indigenous religions has been equalized with other religious communities in Indonesia. The official administrative name for indigenous religions and *kepercayaan* adherents is 'belief' (Wiratraman, 2018). In the practice of indigenous communities in Indonesia, the term 'belief' religiously contains the same elements as other terms such as *adat* (custom) and indigenous communities (Maarif, 2022). Hence, *kepercayaan* should be viewed as knowledge based on indigenous communities' paradigm. Therefore, *kepercayaan* education is an inseparable part of the Indonesian state's recognition of the status and citizenship rights of indigenous communities. As religious education, *kepercayaan* education also supports the ideals of national education.

Kepercayaan education as indigenization has two fundamental objectives. First, *kepercayaan* education breaks the chain of state discrimination against indigenous communities in Indonesia. This educational program emerged with the spirit of state recognition and services received by indigenous communities. The recognition for indigenous communities is supported by two legal regulations, namely the Constitutional Court Decision No. 97 of 2017 and the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 26 of 2016. The state acknowledges its responsibility and provides educational services as a right of indigenous communities in Indonesia. Second, indigenization introduces indigenous knowledge into the education system in Indonesia. *Kepercayaan* education is an inseparable part of state recognition and the fulfillment of the rights of indigenous communities that have been neglected. This recognition is conditional, meaning that indigenous communities are obliged to support state policies on the national education system as stated in Article 3 of the National Education System Law. Third, indigenous communities are allowed to learn the 'content of their own religious knowledge', but the educational structure to support educational practices still follows the standards determined by the state, namely the religious education curriculum. The aim is for *kepercayaan* education to support the ideals of national education as stated in Article 3 of the National Education System Law of 2003. Therefore, *kepercayaan* education is the state's way of restoring the rights of indigenous communities while simultaneously placing aspects of indigenous knowledge for the public interest, as stated in the objectives of religious education in the 2003 National Education System Law.

THE IDEA OF INCLUSION IN *KEPERCAYAAN* EDUCATION AND BEYOND

From the three reasons above, I consider *kepercayaan* education to be an indigenization process occurring within the framework of religious education determined by the state to support the ideals of national education. As an indigenization process, *kepercayaan* education is a form of state's self-criticism: the state is rectifying its flawed religious education policies within the national education system. Unlike the case in Canada, the Indonesian state did not use international recognition such as UNDRIP as a reference for policy changes. Indigenization, in the Indonesian context, is carried out through reforms to the discriminatory national education system. Indigenization in Indonesia is a change in policy at the national level. Therefore, the Indonesian state is expanding the scope of religious education services by introducing *kepercayaan* education for indigenous communities in Indonesia. Indigenization in Indonesia is based on policy changes to eliminate discrimination perpetrated by the state against indigenous communities: *masyarakat adat* and *penghayat kepercayaan*.

Referring to the design and implementation of *kepercayaan* education, I categorize it as an inclusion indigenization. First, *kepercayaan* education is the state's way of equalizing the rights of indigenous communities to receive educational services according to their beliefs. After the *kepercayaan* education, children from indigenous community backgrounds have the same opportunity as groups from the other six recognized religions. They can now learn religious education that contains the teachings of their own religions, such as Marapu, Parmalim, and Sapta Dharma children. Second, *kepercayaan* education is the process of introducing indigenous knowledge in public spaces without involving aspects of reconciliation and collaboration. Reconciliation and collaboration are the fulfillment of educational services through dialogue as a way to recover from the state's previous policy failures (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Parnter, 2024). In Indonesia, the state established *kepercayaan* education without going through a dialogue process. The state designed the education system by referring to the framework of religious education. Therefore, *kepercayaan* education emerged as a complete copy of religious education. *Kepercayaan* education also eliminates collaboration between that education and indigenous education in the community context. As a consequence, the state only established 'one model' of education for 190 indigenous communities in Indonesia. Third, the state acts as the sole determinant of the educational model for all indigenous communities in Indonesia. This aspect is a direct consequence of the absence of a reconciliation and collaboration process in the design and implementation of *kepercayaan* education. As a consequence, the state establishes an educational model by

disregarding the fact of the diversity and unique pedagogies of each indigenous group in Indonesia. Indigenous communities are then required to grow 'in religious ways' according to the standards and ways of the officially recognized religions in Indonesia.

The three mentioned reasons indicate why *kepercayaan* education is taking place through the idea of inclusion indigenization. The education is an educational service used by the state to equalize indigenous communities with the other six recognized religions. This equalization, following Stein's EID approach, results in a lack of equity and diversity in the context of national education. The state makes 'religious education' the standard and way for indigenous communities to grow to be religious. In other words, the state provides educational services by limiting the space for the diversity of ways in which indigenous communities grow to be religious through the assistance of educational models in each community. As a result, the state requires children from indigenous community backgrounds to learn and practice their religious teachings in the manner of world religions.

Up to this point, the two guiding questions of this article have been answered. First, *kepercayaan* education does not represent the educational needs and models of indigenous communities in Indonesia. Kepercayaan education is the state's version of indigenous education. More specifically, the education is religious education in a new guise. The state did not design and establish *kepercayaan* education through a process of dialogue and collaboration with indigenous communities. Kepercayaan education emerged as the state's way of determining the standards of religious education as a reference and the means for children of indigenous communities to achieve the national education goal of practicing their religious teachings for the public. Second, as a state education, *kepercayaan* education is completely disconnected from the indigenous education of indigenous peoples in Indonesia. In their respective contexts, indigenous communities have their own unique educational models, such as the cultural education of the Boti indigenous community (Wardany et al., 2023), cultural revitalization of *meto* people in Timor (Crisp, 2021; Krisharyanto Umbu Deta dan Jear Nenohai, 2022), nature-based education of *Orang Rimba* in Jambi, (Manurung, 2019), and so on. Therefore, *kepercayaan* education is a policy formed on the initiative and preference of the state for religious education. In other words, the state does not recognize and accommodate the diversity of indigenous education as a way of being religious. Taking religious education as the primary reference, the state makes the model of official religious education the sole medium of education for all religions in Indonesia.

For indigenous education in the community context to contribute to the development of Indigenous Faith Education, a reconciliation and collaboration approach needs to be incorporated in the implementation of *kepercayaan* education. Reconciliation and collaboration become important because Indigenous *kepercayaan* education only represents religious education for the issues, needs, and uniqueness of the indigenous education of Indonesian indigenous peoples are not represented in policy development. Through reconciliation and collaboration, indigenous communities are present as subjects of educational services. The state plays a role as a service provider to meet the educational needs of indigenous communities. Therefore, *kepercayaan* education is not based on the ways of world religions but rather follows and adapts to the ways children of indigenous communities grow to be religious according to their respective community traditions.

CONCLUSION

Kepercayaan education is the state's version of indigenous education. More precisely, *kepercayaan* education is the religious education of official religions. The state has made religious education the reference and model for the education of followers of indigenous communities in Indonesia. Therefore, *kepercayaan* education does not represent the variations and uniqueness of the indigenous education of indigenous peoples in Indonesia. This occurs because the state employs an indigenous inclusion approach in designing and implementing educational services for indigenous communities. As a consequence, the state regards indigenous communities as objects of policy. Indigenous communities do not have the opportunity and right to develop through educational models that align with their community's educational paradigms in the formal education setting.

And as a form of development, this article offers the path of reconciliation and collaboration as an effort by the government to connect and develop an educational model that is relevant and appropriate to the educational needs of each indigenous community. This would provide space for children from indigenous community backgrounds to develop in accordance with their community's educational paradigm as their way of fulfilling the national education goal: to learn and practice the teachings of their 'religion' for the benefit of the Indonesian people. This model of belief education is an alternative of initiative that departs from the perspective of those doing the education as it is supposed to be based on their needs.

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