ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AND THE NETHERLANDS

(A BRIEF COMPARISON)

Having differences of geographical location, size of territory and character, the two countries being examined in this study, Indonesia dan the Netherlands, have something in common. Both have diverse populations in terms of ethnic background, language and religion. These two countries have different policies in terms of providing and organizing of Islamic religious education. Indonesia requires its procurement and includes it in the curriculum, while the Netherlands does not require it but leaves it entirely to the school management concerned.

In Indonesia there is Nusantara Islam that adopts local wisdom so that Islam can be well received and does not pose a threat to other groups outside of Islam. The writer then views that it is necessary for the Muslims in the Netherlands to develop a European or Dutch Islam that adopts its traditions and culture within the European context as a democratic and multicultural society, not a kind of Islam that adopts and imports Arab culture and traditions. It is necessary that *wasathiyyah* (moderate) Islam be strengthened in the campaign in the Netherlands, one of which is by the teachers who organize Islamic Religious Education in Islamic schools. For both countries mainstreaming *wasathiyyah* Islam is a must in order to create a peaceful and harmonious society around the world.

Prof. Dr. H. Muslih, M.A.

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SEAP

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PREFACE

Alhamdulillah, praise be to Allah SWT, the Almighty God, the creator and ruler of the universe. With His help and will, I have finally been able to complete the writing of this book, which is part of the results of our first international collaborative research from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Keguruan (FITK) of the State Islamic University (UIN) Walisongo Semarang with our colleagues from the Vrij University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands on the implementation of Islamic religious education in the two countries.

What is presented in this book is a narrative of some of the results of our research in Indonesia and the Netherlands. The results of the research that I, and my team, did in Indonesia were obtained from our visits to several Islamic elementary schools, both public and private, in the Semarang and surrounding areas, in addition to literature reviews. As for Islamic elementary schools in the Netherlands, because we were hindered by travel restrictions and did not get the visa to the Netherlands because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and also there was no permit given by the leaders of the UIN Walisongo Semarang during this pandemic time to make a travel abroad, the solution was that we analysed books, documents, literature, review articles and guidebooks from several Islamic elementary schools in the Netherlands through the websites of the schools concerned from 14 August - 14 October 2021. The findings are compiled and presented in this report.

It goes without saying that the completion of this work is possible because of some helps or assistances from many parties. To be honest, to finish writing this book, I found it very difficult due to several conditions. This time, my concentration was really divided, on the one hand I had to always pay attention and monitor the health of my wife who was in the healing process, and at the same time I had to do my routine tasks as a lecturer and vice dean

of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of UIN Walisongo who had to serve regular students. Apart from that, there was still another additional assignment, namely, to serve students of the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) which coincides with regular student lectures. Likewise, I have to attend ceremonial events on campus and off campus, which because of my current position, I am forced to attend and cannot avoid these ceremonies. I must smartly take advantage of every opportunity to write this report. Only then can I finish writing this report. Indeed, it is hard to find free time for serious writings right now.

However, with all the limitations and shortcomings, I was finally able to finish writing this book. Therefore, I would like to express my gratitude to the following parties.

My beloved wife, KarsiAsih, who always encourages me despite her sickness. During her recovery days in Yogyakarta after being hospitalized for 29 days and undergoing surgery in Tugurejo Hospital of Semarang, her enthusiasm for encouraging me never waned. In a sick condition she still gave her attention to her husband, she asked if I had time to write this book. She often reminds me if I have time to write this book in my busy schedule. Every time I called her by phone, at the end of the conversation she always encouraged me. She gave me a message that I should keep the spirit of living this life. O my God, I beg You to grant her a healing and good health so that she can worship You as fervently as before her illness. She deserves thanks for all her sincere dedication.

My daughters, Rahma and Rosyida for their patience and support. As a dentist in Yogyakarta, in between her busy work with patients, in her spare time Rahma often calls his father (me) and still has time to encourage me. She deserves thanks from me. Rosyida, in the midst of her busy schedule in preparing her study to a university in Germany, still took time to call her father (me). It makes my life more vibrant. Dear God, please give Your help to my daughter Rosyida, I wish her success in her studies in Germany now and in the future. Indeed, they (my daughters) are

all life inspiration for me. During the course of the research, they have shown incredible support for me to finish this work.

My team in the research project and colleagues in the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training (FITK) Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Walisongo Semarang for the suggestion and motivation as well as criticism they gave to me in order to improve the quality of this research.

The Dean of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training (FITK) of UIN Walisongo Semarang who supported the researcher to carry out this research and to finish it on time. The Rector of UIN of Walisongo Semarang for giving me permission to leave the campus for a while to conduct this research, and for the motivation given to me. The Head of Institute of Research and Community Service (LPPM) of UIN Walisongo Semarang who supported the researcher to carry out this research and to finish it on time, and who have provided me with financial support.

Dr. Welmoet Boender at the Department of Belief and Practices, Faculty of Religion and Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VUA) for her willingness to be my international collaborator in this research project. She provided me with recommendation and invitation letter and welcomed me in Amsterdam. I really appreciated the help and cooperation she showed to me sincerely. Even though this collaboration has not been maximized due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in the coming year when the situation improves, we will discuss and help each other in conducting further research.

Teachers who teach Islamic religious education lessons in several public and private elementary schools in Semarang and surrounding areas who are willing to be my respondents and are willing to answer my questions about their experiences in teaching Islam to their students. All of these teachers have contributed to adding new insights and knowledge for me in the field of Islamic education. They are all teachers who are professional and responsible for teaching religious moderation and moderate Islam. They all deserve many thanks.

All parties that have supported and assisted me in conducting this research which I, the chief researcher, and the team, cannot mention the name one by one. Apart from those assistances, criticisms and suggestions being given, all what contained in this book is fully my responsibility.

Semarang, 18 December 2021
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CONTENTS

ENCOURAGE A MODERATE RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

This is the opening chapter for the book that is now present before you. In this chapter I discuss several points that form the basic foundation for the discussion in the following chapters. As a background that inspires and provides direction for the study in this book, I first discuss the importance of having a moderate religious understanding that needs to be integrated into learning in elementary schools by teachers. It is important to prevent radical thoughts and ideologies from entering and spreading in the school or education environment, therefore, it is important to encourage the introduction of *wasathiyyah* Islam when providing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to students. After giving a sufficient introduction to *wasathiyyah* Islam, I then consecutively convey points about the discussion in the book, the method of writing the book, the formulation of the problem and the benefits of writing the book, and recommendations for using the book.

A. Integrating moderate Islam in the learning process

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of extremism and radicalism using violence in the name of religion still exists. The

most recent example was the church bombing in Makassar, which killed several congregants who were worshiping at the church. The perpetrators of suicide bombings were Muslims who were indoctrinated by a group that have misunderstood Islam with ideological motivation (Azanella 2021). In order to prevent the spread of wrong understanding of Islam by groups that recruit children to become terrorists, the state must be present and firmly fight against it and prevent it from an early age.

The government can prevent the spread of extremism and radicalism by providing means and facilities as well as providing the correct religious education to the citizen through educational institutions such as schools and universities because the government has the power to control. This can also be done through campaigning for religious moderation (Manshur 2020: 5850). Through religious moderation movement it is intended that people behave moderately in carrying out their religious teachings and are tolerant of others who adhere to the teachings of a different religion. The government has worked hard to socialize and encourage the spirit of moderation in religion, including the inclusion of religious moderation in the education curriculum. At Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Walisongo, an institution called the "*Rumah Moderasi Beragama*" has been established to support the government's campaign and promotion for religious moderation (https://walisongo.ac.id/?p=10000000005007).

Educational institutions ranging from elementary to high levels can be an effective medium and means of teaching religious tolerance and moderation to students. It is important to see if the state is playing its role by providing students with moderate Islamic teaching. As in Indonesia, in the Netherlands there has also been extremism and violence in the name of religion, for example the murder of a Dutch film director named Theo van Gogh by a Dutch citizen, young Muslim radical of Moroccan descent (Buijs 2009: 423, Ter Avest & Rietveld-van Wingerden 2017: 3). Evidently, the radical understanding of Islam has

created a lot of chaos and hostility and damaged the image of Islam itself as a religion that teaches peace. Therefore, it is important to campaign for the teaching of Islam through education with a moderate approach, often called **wasathiyyah** Islam (Fitri 2015).

Defining the concept of wasathiyyah

Before going into further discussion, first we need to understand what Islamic *wasathiyyah* concept is. Actually, the term *wasathiyyah* is taken and developed from the expression *Ummatan Wasathan* mentioned in the Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah verse 143. Furthermore, it is necessary to explain that *Ummatan Wasathan* is "a society that always maintains its balance, not falling into left extremism or right extremism, and not pulled into radicalism and violence" and this type of society is able to witness the truth for others (Kasdi 2019: 181). As a matter of fact, the concept of *wasathiyyah* has existed since the birth of the Islamic faith in this world (Mujani *et al.* 2015: 66).

Etymologically, the word *wasathiyyah* can be translated into middle ground and modest. It originates from the Arabic root word *wasatha* which means middle. Therefore, *wasathiyyah* means to make something to be in the middle (Kasdi 2019:181). It has similarity with *al-tawasuth* or *al-wasath* (moderation), *al-qisth* (justice), *al-tawazun* (balance), and *al-i'tidal* (harmony) (Hilmy 2013: 25), and the derivative word means just or fair, the best, the chosen (in quality), the finest (as an art) and respectable. As an example of this is such an expression as: "the most *wasath* means something which is the best, the most just and the chosen" (Mujani *et al.* 2015: 66).

Mohamed Baianonie, as quoted in Mujani *et al*., states that *wasath* has three meanings, namely, "to be moderate, to be in the middle, and to be the best". Thus, when Allah explains that the Muslims are a *wasath* community, it is meant "moderation,

middle way and the best people". It is stated that moderation in Islam shows that "a Muslim should stabilise as much as possible their affairs and avoid extremist activities which cause disorder or chaos" (Mujani *et al.* 2015: 67). Meanwhile, Ibn Kathir, as quoted in Azis, says that what *Wasathan* meant was choice and the best, Allah made this people the best people. Allah has specified it with the most perfect shari'a and the most straightforward guidelines and the clearest paths (Azis 2020: 6).

It is imperative to emphasize here that the essence of Islamic *wasathiyyah* concept is contained in many places in the Qur'an. The first is the statement in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143 which reads: "And thus We have made you a just community that you will be as witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you". Another statement is in Surah Al-Furqan verse 67 which reads: "And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively and not sparingly, but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate". It is explained that moderation in religion should be implemented in daily life, and it is also believed that if Muslim community practiced moderation then "there would not be severely disturbing violence and extremism, a constraint to peace in the world today" (Mujani *et al.* 2015: 67).

I believe that everyone will agree that Islamic *wasathiyyah* concept is the most suitable paradigm for Indonesia today, as it adopts the middle path and moderate way. As a matter of fact, Indonesia actually has implemented this concept of *wasathiyyah*. The proof of this is, as we have witnessed, the implementation of *Pancasila* (The Five Principles), *Undang-Undang Dasar 1945* (The State Constitution of 1945), *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia/ NKRI* (The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), and the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (united in diversity) in Indonesia whose citizens are very diverse and multi-cultural. Therefore, it is important to promote and practice the Islamic *wasathiyyah* paradigm in building the *ummatan wasathan* that is a just, prosperous, peaceful, inclusive

and harmonious society. One of the best means to empower the *wasathiyyah* paradigm is through the learning process in education, as it becomes one of the agents of social change in society.

Integrating wasathiyyah through learning process in education

Education is the most strategic means of strengthening moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*), which is the main character of Indonesian Islam. Traditionally, Islamic education organized by Indonesian Islamic education institutions definitely teaches its students about moderate Indonesian Islam (Suharto 2017: 156). However, since the beginning of the reform era in 1998 a threat has been emerging as transnational Islam brought by activists from Middle East came into Indonesia (Hasan 2010). They established transnational Islamic education institutions, and with the formula of "Islamization of Indonesia" the proponents are trying to introduce Islam as an ideology to the students. This situation demands the importance of strengthening the role of Islamic education institutions in implementing the "Indonesianization of Islam", so that moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*) can be maintained in the archipelago (Suharto 2017: 156).

Islamic education institutions in Indonesia are required to be able to play a role in strengthening moderate Islam. The role that Islamic education institutions can play in this realm is the installation of moderate Islamic ideology to students in the learning process. There are three aspects that need to be considered in this installation, namely (1) the emphasis of moderate Islam in formulating educational goals, (2) internalizing moderate values in designing hidden curriculum, and (3) filtering teaching materials so that moderate Islamic ideology can be installed on students (Suharto 2017: 175). The process of installing a moderate Islamic ideology is, of course, not an easy task, but it is something that can be worked on.

Why comparing Indonesia and the Netherlands?

Indonesia, as the largest Muslim country in the world which Abdurrahman Wahid (the fourth president of Republic of Indonesia) calls "the country of moderate Muslims" (Wahid 2006: 60), is expected to play a bigger role in spreading *wasaṭhiyyah* Islam (Suharto 2017: 167) to other nations in the world. President Joko Widodo did emphasize the existence of a moderate character for Indonesian Islam in his 26th MTQN (National Qur'anic recitation competition) opening speech in Mataram, in July 30, 2016. According to the President, now is the time for Indonesia to become a source of Islamic thought, as well as a source of Islamic learning for the world. He said, "Other countries must also see and learn Islam from Indonesia, because Islam in Indonesia is like a patent prescription for drugs, namely *wasathiyyah* Islam, moderate Islam. Meanwhile, other countries are still looking for the formula" (President Jokowi, 2016).

In Indonesia, Muslims have majority status, and it is very easy to get Islamic education services both managed by the state and by private institutions with regulation and supervision from the state. On the contrary, Muslims in the Netherlands are acting as a minority and mostly immigrants from Turkey and Morocco (Sunier, 2005: 323). Of course, access to Islamic education services is not easy to obtain from the state, since the Netherlands is secular, except for services obtained from private institutions (organic communities) (Dronkers 2016, Merry 2016). Even though the state has the authority to supervise educational institutions there, there are still limitations in regulating the curricula that these private educational institutions intend to teach their students (Shadid 2006, Ter Avest 2017), as is being done by the Indonesian government here.

Indonesia is a nation in which the state has full authority to determine the curriculum and supervise its implementation. Even so, it has once experienced an oversight. For example, there was Islamic Education (PAI) textbook material for senior high

school students under the Ministry of Education and Culture that used to contain intolerant and radical contents (Hasniati 2017: 119). Then what about the situation in the Netherlands, is it not possible that something like this also happen? This research wants to explore in detail about the ins and outs of learning there and see the similarities and differences and compare them with Indonesia. More than that, this research also wants to see the possibility of adopting good things that might exist there (in the Netherlands) to be applied here (in Indonesia) and vice versa. Thus, the two nations can learn from each other and benefit from what they have. Researchers from the ministry of religious affairs need to carry out this research in order to see the Indonesian nation exist in the arena of politics, economy and socio-culture at the global level.

Notes on previous study

Wasathiyyah is an interesting subject to study, there are several previous scholars who have conducted studies on this theme, for example Abdurrahman Kasdi (2019) who wrote an article entitled "*Wasathiyyah* Islam as the Road to Moderatism in Indonesia". In this article, he alludes to the many issues that arise in the Muslim community which are caused by the actions of radical groups. He suggested the need to answer it immediately, and that moderate Muslims has to eradicate radicalism and those who support extremist movements and use violence in the name of Islam. Even so, he realized that bringing Islam to the way of *wasathiyyah* completely is indeed not an easy task (Kasdi 2019: 180). In his conclusion he emphasized that, "Islam *wasathiyyah* for Indonesia is Islam that is neither extreme nor radical, and do not emphasize on violence or not choose the hard line in implementing Islam". Therefore, according to him "Liberal Islam group, or Islamist group, as long as they do not choose the merciful way, are not considered moderate". Furthermore, he views that moderate Islam is characterized by several

characteristics. These characteristics include "normal (*tawassuth*) behavior in implementing religious teachings; tolerance toward differences in views, avoidance of violence, priority towards dialogue." In addition to that, a moderate Muslim should have willingness to the accommodation towards modern concepts that are beneficial in its substance. Likewise, a moderate Muslim should have "rational thinking based on revelation, contextual interpretation of *nash*, and the use of *ijtihad* in interpreting issues not covered in al-Qur'an or Sunnah" (Kasdi 2019: 189).

Another good study on *wasathiyyah* was written by Mujani *et al.* (2015), entitled "The *Wasathiyyah* (Moderation) Concept: Its Implementation in Malaysia". In this article Mujani *et al.* examine the *wasathiyyah* concept introduced by the fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak in 2010. In their conclusion, Mujani *et al.* said that much effort has been done with the purpose of making Malaysia peaceful and tranquil from all kinds of extremism, and according to them, the concept of *wasathiyyah* established by the Prime Minister of Malaysia is "closely interconnected with efforts of the Malaysian government which desires that all Malaysians live in peace and harmony despite differences in race and faith". In their assessment, "This is compatible with the history of any religion in this world which does not allow hostilities and fighting in living within a country" (Mujani *et al.* 2015: 71).

In addition, there is also the work of Muhammad Hasan (2018), which discusses Islamic *wasathiyyah* in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools, traditional Islamic educational institutions that have existed in Indonesia since the 15th century during the Walisongo era). In this study Hasan highlighted *wasathiyyah* Islamic education that occurred in *pesantren* based on existing literature studies. In his conclusion he stated that Islamic education in the *pesantren* teaches nationalism, as shown by the *kiyai* (*pesantren* leaders) in the formation of the nation and state of Indonesia in the early days of independence. In addition,

education in *pesantren* also teaches tolerance and respect for differences of opinion, teaches moderate Islam, not radical and liberal ones. Furthermore, he concludes that education in *pesantren* respects diversity and teaches Islam that is inclusive, not exclusive (Hasan 2018: 191).

Different from and in addition to these three works, my study examines the application of the *wasathiyyah* concept in the learning process in schools that take place in the most populous Muslim country, namely Indonesia and in a secular country where Muslims are a minority, namely the Netherlands.

This study wants to understand in a real state how the Islamic *wasathiyyah* values are disseminated and practiced in schools. This study deliberately chose the integration of *wasathiyyah* Islam in schools, because school is a place where the souls and brains of students are formed and filled with a set of concepts and knowledge.

This study wants to see and compare the conditions in two countries, namely Indonesia as a representation of a country where Muslims act as the majority and the secular Netherlands where Muslims act as a minority. These two countries are chosen because in both countries there have been several cases of violence against non-Muslims in the name of religion, which is the effect of a radical understanding of religion. To eliminate violence in the name of religion, a moderate understanding of religion (*wasathiyyah* Islam) must be encouraged and integrated into learning process in schools. This study wants to see the differences and similarities in terms of how Islamic *wasathiyyah* values are integrated into the learning process at Islamic schools in Indonesia and the Netherlands.

B. Discussion in the book

This book consists of five chapters, beginning with chapter one, as an introduction, which talks about encouraging a moderate

religious understanding which includes a description of the following points: Integrating moderate Islam in the learning process, Discussion in the book, Methods in writing the book, Problem formulation and benefits of writing the book, Recommendation.

This is, then, followed by chapter two, which discusses the policy and regulation on religious education in Indonesia and the Netherlands, including a discussion of the following points: Indonesia and The Netherlands: nations with diversity, Religious education in the state constitution (the case of Indonesia and the Netherlands), The role of the state in regulating the provision of religious education (comparison between Indonesia and the Netherlands).

Then, it continues the discussion in chapter three, namely Designing and implementing religious learning mainstreaming *wasathiyyah* Islam at schools in Indonesia and The Netherlands which includes an explanation of the following points: Understanding *wasathiyyah* Islam, Designing a religious learning mainstreaming moderation (*wasathiyyah*) Islam at schools, Implementing a religious learning mainstreaming moderation (*wasathiyyah*) Islam.

Furthermore, chapter four of this book presents a discussion of Dynamics of religious instructions at school in Indonesia and the Netherlands. This chapter includes a discussion of the following sub topics: Anticipating the spread of radicalism, The application of moderate Islamic teaching and the factors that support it, Optimizing the role of Islamic religious education teachers, The hindering conditions of the application of moderate Islamic teachings. Finally, the book ends with chapter five, the epilogue, which contains the conclusions of this study. The book also includes a bibliography, author's biography and appendices.

C. Methods in writing the book

This study utilized a combination of library and field research. Documentation method was utilized to get required data in the form of literature relevant to the topic being discussed (Arikunto 1998: 236). This study also involved fieldwork by interviewing some people and doing participatory observation regarding the implementation of Islamic *wasathiyyah* values in the learning process at schools. As the concept of *wasathiyyah* is closely related to religious matters, this study uses a sociological approach to religion (Beyer 2007, 2007b) as well as social movement (Tarrow 2011).

At the beginning of its planning, the fieldwork was planned to be carried out in two countries: Indonesia and the Netherlands. In Indonesia, interviews were done to some headmasters of schools in Semarang area as well as bureaucrats in charge of education. In addition, observations were carried out to certain schools appointed for this research. While in the Netherlands, at the beginning of its planning, interviews were scheduled to be applied to relevant parties, namely schools in the Amsterdam area and Leiden. There were schools under the management of *Stichting Islamitische Onderwijs* (SIO), *Stichting Islamitisch School Amsterdam* (ISA), *Stichting* Noor, and *Stichting Nederlandse Islamitische Scholen* (SNIS). Boards of management of SIO and managing director of *Stichting* ISA and *Stichting* Noor (who strongly opposed to the SIO (Trouw 2017, NRC 2017), as well as boards of management of SNIS (Nederlands Dagblad 2017) were planned to be interviewed.

Thus, the method adopted in writing this book is based on descriptive qualitative research. Literature studies were conducted on writings in books, articles in journals, newspapers, media reports, policies, websites, and other forms of publications that contain material relevant to the topics discussed. In addition, the writing of this book is also based on field research (especially for schools in Indonesia) where data collection was carried out

using interview techniques, focus group discussions (FGDs), and observations of Islamic Religious Education teachers in several elementary schools in Semarang City. However, for schools in the Netherlands, visit was not possible because we are still in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and it is impossible to get a visa to go there.

D. Problem formulation and benefits of writing the book

The writing of this book departs from one main problem formulation, namely the implementation of Islamic religious education in Indonesia and the Netherlands, which can then be formulated in the following sentences:

(1) How has Islamic Religious Education (PAI) been organized in Indonesia and the Netherlands, and is the state present in the implementation of PAI for its citizens? This problem will be answered in the discussion in chapter two.

(2) Sociologically, the teachings of Islam have been taught and accepted by society with diverse understandings and interpretations. Which type of interpretations of Islam have the respective governments encouraged its teaching to students in schools through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia and the Netherlands? This problem will be answered in the discussion in chapter three.

(3) What can be done by educators in primary schools in Indonesia and the Netherlands in providing moderate Islamic Religious Education for the realization of harmonious relations between groups in society? This problem will be answered in the discussion in chapter four.

Then, by adjusting to the existing problem formulation, the objectives of writing this book are the following. (1) To know how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has been organized in Indonesia and the Netherlands, and to know if the state is present in the implementation of PAI for its citizens. (2) To find out the

type of interpretations of Islam which the respective governments have encouraged its teaching to students in schools through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia and the Netherlands. (3) To uncover what can be done by educators in primary schools in Indonesia and the Netherlands in providing moderate Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for the realization of harmonious relations between groups in society.

The benefits of writing this book are two aspects: theoretical and practical. The theoretical benefit is that the results of this study will enrich the treasures of scientific development, especially in the fields of education and Islamic studies. While the practical benefits are: (a) for the school being studied, the results of the study in this book can be used as guidelines for school leaders in making policies, (b) for teachers, the results of the study in this book can be used as material to increase knowledge and practical skills in conducting learning that implements religious moderation (*wasathiyyah* Islam), and (c) for students, the results of the study in this book can be used as material to improve attitudes and behavior in terms of religious moderation.

E. Recommendation

This book is recommended to be a reference or reading that will benefit the wider community, including: (a) The government to be able to give more serious attention in terms of disseminating the concept of moderate religious understanding (*wasathiyyah* Islam), especially for education at the basic level. (b) School principals should dare to make policies to include a curriculum that supports the concept of moderate religious understanding (*wasathiyyah* Islam) movement in the schools they lead. (c) Teachers in primary level education, especially Islamic religious education teachers to take the initiative and be active in efforts to introduce and instill the concept of moderate religious understanding (*wasathiyyah* Islam) in the classes they teach. (d)

Parents (guardians of students) to understand the current discourse related to the concept of moderate religious understanding (*wasathiyyah* Islam). (e) Researchers to conduct more and serious studies on the importance of moderate religious understanding (*wasathiyyah* Islam) to all levels of society.

REGULATION ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AND THE NETHERLANDS

In this chapter I discuss the policy and regulation on religious education applied by the government of Indonesia and the government of the Netherlands. To get a more comprehensive understanding of the topics being discussed in national and international dimensions, I conducted literature review to elaborate on the context, policies and practices of Islamic Religious Education in these two countries. By reviewing the documents that contain discussions on policies and regulations that have been implemented in the two countries, I hope that I will get valuable information about the conditions in each of these countries. This kind of information is important for us to know the advantages possessed by each policy according to the surrounding context, and then lessons can be drawn to be applied in other contexts. I will begin this study by making a general comparison of the social context related to Islamic Religious Education in the two countries including the population and scope of diversity and policies of the provision of Islamic Religious Education by the state. Also, I make an assessment of the practice of the provision of Islamic Religious Education in both countries.

A. Indonesia and The Netherlands: Nations with Diversity

Indonesia, a country located in Southeast Asia and Oceania between the Indian and Pacific oceans has more than seventeen thousand islands, including the five big islands: Sumatera, Java, Sulawesi, Kalimantan dan Papua. It is the world's largest island country and the 14th largest country in the world by area, it has no less than 1,904,569 square kilometers (https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/indonesia).

Currently, Indonesia becomes the world's fourth most populous country. The population of Indonesia in 2020 is estimated to be 270,203,917 (https://sensus.bps.go.id/main/index/sp2020). It consists of more than 1300 ethnic groups and more than 700 linguistic clusters, with Javanese being the largest. Java is the most crowded island in the country where more than half of the country's people live. Its capital is Jakarta and its national language is Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*). In terms of religion the government of Indonesia officially recognizes six religions: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism. In 2010, there were 207.2 million Muslims (87.18%), 16.5 million Christians (6.96%), 6.9 million Catholics (2.9%), 4.01 million Hindus (1.69%), 1.7 million Buddhists (0.72%), and 117.1 thousand Confucianists (0.05%) (Na'im & Syaputra, 2010: 10). The 2018 census revealed that Islam was adhered by 231 million adherents, and because of that Indonesia becomes "the world's most populous Muslim majority country" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia).

Even though Indonesian people are very diverse in terms of ethnicity, language, religion, and culture they are united as one nation as reflected in the national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). In its history, Indonesia has experienced colonialism from other nations including by the Dutch from 1800 to 1942, and then by Japan during the Second World War (1942-1945) (Purwanta 2017, 1). Indonesia proclaimed its independence

on 17 August 1945. However, the Dutch government only recognized the independence of Indonesia in 1949 under international pressure (https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/indonesia).

Meanwhile, The Netherlands is a country located in Western Europe with territories in the Caribbean. In Europe, the Netherlands consists of twelve provinces. In addition to that, in Caribbean The Netherlands consists of three special municipalities (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands). In terms of ethnicity, the Netherlands is inhabited by people who come from diverse ethnic groups: the Dutch as the majority (75.5%), other Europeans (7.90%), Turkish (2.39%), Moroccan (2.35 %), Indonesian (2.05%), Surinamese (2.05%), Antillean (0.91%), Syrian (0.61%), others (5.99%) The country's official language is Dutch. The capital is Amsterdam. Until the late 20th century, the population of the Netherlands was predominantly Christian.

It is reported that "although significant religious diversity remains, there has been a decline of religious adherence" in the country. Today, the Netherlands claims to be "one of the most secular societies in the world." In 2019, Statistics of the Netherlands reported "that 54.1% of the total population declared itself to be non-religious." Catholics comprised 20.1%, Protestants 14.8 %, Muslims 5.0 %, followers of "other Christian denominations and other religions (Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism) comprised the remaining 5.9 % of the total population." The Netherlands has a population of 17.5 million people, all living within a total area of roughly 41,800 km2. It is "the 16th most densely populated country in the world and the second most densely populated country in the European Union" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands). Historically, the Netherlands was colonized by the Spanish Empire. The Netherlands declared its independence from Spain and free from

being colonized on 26 July 1581 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands).

From the facts above, it is clear that Indonesia and the Netherlands have something in common, namely both are countries whose population is heterogeneous in terms of ethnic background, language, and religion. The only difference lies in the number, where Indonesia is much more diversity than the Netherlands. Another similarity is that both countries have experienced colonialism. Indonesia was colonized by the Dutch, and the Netherlands was colonized by Spain. The facts above show that in Indonesia Islam is embraced by the majority of its citizens, while in the Netherlands Islam is embraced by a minority. Despite having differences in the number of Muslim populations, Islamic religious education exists and is held in both countries. Now, I would like to discuss Islamic Religious Education in relation to its position in the constitution of the country concerned.

B. Religious Education in the State Constitution

In Indonesia, religious education has a strong juridical and philosophical basis because its existence is guaranteed by the state constitution and law. The implementation of education in Indonesia is explicitly regulated in the 1945 Constitution. In chapter XIII, article 31, it is explicitly stated:

> *(1) Setiap warga negara berhak mendapat pendidikan.*
> *(2) Setiap warga negara wajib mengikuti psndidikan dasar dan pemerintah wajib membiayainya.*
> *(3) Pemerintah mengusahakan dan menyelenggarakan satu sistem pendidikan nasional, yang meningkatkan keimanan dan ketakwaan serta ahlak mulia dalam rangka mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa, yang diatur dengan undang-undang.*

[(1) Every citizen has the right to education. (2) Every citizen is obliged to attend basic education and the government is obliged to pay for it. (3) The government shall endeavor and organize a national education system, which enhances faith and piety as well as noble character in the context of the intellectual life of the nation, which is regulated by law] (translation from Indonesian to English by the present author] (*UndangUndang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945*).

In Indonesia, religious education is "an important pillar of the official education system" (Künkler and Lerner 2016, 7). Religious education (including Islamic Religious Education) is central and must be provided at every level of education throughout the territory of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. The state constitution of 1945 and *Pancasila* [five principles] as the foundation of the state are the basis for education in Indonesia.

Clearly, Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (chapter II, article 2) states, "National education is based on *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia." Then, concerning religious education (including Islamic), The law no. 20 of 2003 (chapter V, article 12, verse 1, letter a) explicitly says: "(1) Every student at every level of the Education unit has the right to: a. get religious education in accordance with the religion he adheres to and taught by educators of the same religion; […]" (*Undang-Undang No.20 Tahun 2003*). The aim of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia is "not only to create a religious person, but also making a good citizen" (Abdallah 2016, 625). As the majority, Muslims feel comfortable because the entitlements to obtain religious education for their children is constitutionally guaranteed by the state with existing laws and regulations.

In the Netherlands, to found schools is not only a monopoly of the state, but people or religious groups are given the right to establish their own schools (Franken and Vermeer 2017, 3). The Dutch government guarantees the freedom for every citizen to get an education according to their religious and cultural background. Article 23 §2, of the present Dutch constitution, clearly stated:

> All persons shall be free to provide education, without prejudice to the authorities' right of supervision and, with regard to forms of education designated by law, their right to examine the competence and moral integrity of teachers, to be regulated by Act of Parliament. (The Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands).

This corresponds to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, 2nd article, 1st protocol), that "parents have the right to education in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions." Then, to assure this right, the state can provide religious education through the public schools they operate, one of which, Islamic Religious Education (Franken, 2018).

It is worth noted that schools established by the community also receive subsidies from the state, just like public schools. The article 23, §7, of the present Dutch constitution deliberately stipulates this as follows:

> Private primary schools that satisfy the conditions laid down by Act of Parliament shall be financed from public funds according to the same standards as public-authority schools. The conditions under which private secondary education and pre-university education shall receive contributions from public funds shall be laid down by Act

of Parliament (The Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands).

The freedom of education provided by the state includes "the freedom of establishment of schools," then "freedom of organization of teaching" and also "freedom of conviction" to determine the principles on which they are based (Franken and Vermeer 2017, 4). Thus, it is clear that any resident is entitled to establish schools and to stipulate instruction constructed on religious or ideological beliefs. The constitution safeguards equal public finance for both private and state schools.

The Dutch statutory "freedom of education" suggests religious and non-religious communities the right "to found schools within the state parameters of educational quality and supervision" (Dronkers 2016, 6). Therefore, Muslims also have the rights to have schooling grounded on their beliefs. The constitution clearly and unequivocally guarantees that every citizen in the Netherlands regardless of their religious background or belief has the same rights from the state to receive religious education for their children. Every person is free to practice his or her belief or religion (Van Genugten 2013, 78). In the constitution, the guarantee from the state is very clear, but in practice it was not always smooth and easy (See Driessen and Merry, 2006, 204).

The apparent similarity is that the constitutions and laws in these two countries both provide space for the accomplishment of Islamic Religious Education. The difference is that in Indonesia the law requires the accomplishment of Religious Education (including Islam) for its citizens.

On the other hand, in the Netherlands it is not required, but the Constitution gives freedom to its citizens, including Muslims, to organize Islamic Religious Education. The Netherlands is one of the largest secular countries in the world, so it does not interfere in the religious affairs of its citizens.

Nevertheless, this country guarantees the freedom to organize religious education as desired by its citizens. Now let's see how these two countries make their policies in regulating the implementation of religious education.

C. The role of the state in regulating the provision of religious education

In the case of Indonesia, the state has a strong role and control in the provision of religious education. The state also requires all existing levels of education to provide religious education and include it in its curriculum (See *Undang-Undang No.20 tahun 2003*). The state even initiated the provision of Islamic religious education textbooks. This can be seen, for example, for the 2013 curriculum which is applied in elementary to secondary levels, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture provided textbooks *Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti* [Islamic Religious and Character Education] for elementary to senior high school students (Grade I until XII) (See *Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI*, 2014). This demonstrates that the state's guarantee of the provision on Islamic religious education is not only in rhetoric but also proven through concrete actions.

It is worth noted that the state does interfere further regarding the content that must be given to students. The Ministry of Education and Culture through the assigned committee determine which materials should be included and which one cannot be put in the textbooks they publish in terms of Islamic Religious Education. This textbook must be taught as the main teaching material in all schools (primary to secondary level) in public schools across the country (See *Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI*, 2014). However, there are a small number of schools that use textbooks other than those published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, including the ones published by national publishers, such as *Erlangga* and *Yudhistira*, but still,

the flow of contents must follow the directions and guidelines that have been determined by the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In the case of the Netherlands, on the contrary, the state does not interfere with any content or materials provided by teachers who teach subjects of Islamic religion in educational institutions such as Islamic elementary schools in this country. It is worth mentioning that "[t]he Dutch state does not supervise the way private schools give expression to their religious conviction and accordingly, it does in principle not supervise R[eligious] E[ducation] in these schools" (Franken and Vermeer 2017, 4). However, concerning all other school subjects, private schools including Islamic schools have to "comply with the common educational standards and requirements set by the Dutch government" (Franken and Vermeer 2017, 4).

Consistent with its character as a secular state, the Dutch government does not want to intervene in religious affairs, including the provision of Islamic religious education in schools. Any material given to students in terms of Islamic religious education is handed over to the teachers and managers of the foundation that administers the school.

Nevertheless, a study conducted by Bertram-Troost and Visser reveals that national discussions about the education curriculum as a whole have stimulated Religious Education as a school subject in the Netherlands (Bertram-Troost & Visser 2020, 205). It was said that "the Ministry of Education decided that teachers should have a more prominent role in the process of curriculum revision." The Ministry was also reported to have established Development Teams (for different learning areas) where teachers and specialists were offered many occasions to provide feedback. The teams were expected to formulate their educational advice to the Ministry of Education by 2019. It was also said that the practice of Religious Education in the

Netherlands were focused more on identity formation rather than for knowledge (Bertram-Troost & Visser 2020, 205).

The Dutch government through the Education Inspectorate has a set of strict regulations that must be adhered to by all educational institutions, including Islamic Elementary Schools which currently number around 45 schools (de Koning 2020, 126) throughout the Netherlands. All public and private schools in the Netherlands must comply with these regulations, especially if they want to pass well in terms of accreditation. Although the state cannot interfere which materials must or must not be taught to the children (in terms of contents of Islamic religious education), the state through the Education Inspectorate can determine whether or not an educational institution is allowed to continue its operations (Shadid and van Koningsveld 2006, 85).

From the discussion above it is clear that policies taken by the Indonesian government related to the provision of Islamic Religious Education was requiring all existing levels of education to provide religious education and include it in its curriculum. The state is even involved in providing textbooks and distributing them to students for elementary and secondary school.

On the other hand, the Dutch government does not oblige but gives freedom and allows its implementation. The state also does not interfere with the contents or materials taught to the students. Every material imparted to the students in terms of Islamic religious education is handed over to the teachers and managers of the foundation that runs the school.

In my analysis, the policies in these two different countries (Indonesia and the Netherlands) are understandable and quite reasonable. These differences occur because their government must adapt to the conditions and character of the people. Indonesia is a developing country and recognizes the democratic system at a later time compared to the Netherlands which is a developed country and recognizes and implements the

democratic system earlier. The level of public recognition in these two countries to the democratic system also has differences. Therefore, the treatment given by each government in the two countries to their people in terms of the application of regulations is also different, including in the application of rules and regulations governing Islamic religious education.

In addition, the people of the two countries have different characters. In Indonesia, the people are more collective and often dependent on each other, while in the Netherlands the people are more individualistic and independent in their lives. All of these elements can contribute to differences in the provision of treatment and the application of rules or regulations in each of these countries.

Furthermore, the composition of the population also contributes to this difference in treatment. Indonesia has a majority Muslim population. Therefore, the Government of Indonesia does not hesitate in making decisions regarding the implementation of regulations by requiring the provision of Islamic education throughout the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Meanwhile, in the Netherlands Muslims are a minority, and the character of the society is also secular, so it is quite logical that the government does not require religious education. However, it is still possible for Muslims to manage and provide their own Islamic religious education for their community. Now, let us move to see how the practice of Islamic religious education takes place in these two countries.

DESIGNING RELIGIOUS LEARNING MAINSTREAMING *WASATHIYYAH* ISLAM

In this chapter I present how Islamic religious education that mainstreams *wasathiyyah* Islam has been designed and implemented in schools in Indonesia and the Netherlands. This discussion is considered important to obtain adequate information regarding religious learning in the classroom with the concept of *wasathiyyah* Islam in two different contexts, namely Indonesia and the Netherlands. With this discussion, it is hoped that valuable lessons can be learned from each context, and if possible each context can learn from each other. Apart from that, another benefit to be gained from this discussion is that we get updated information from the learning process from each context. To obtain an adequate and comprehensive understanding of this specific issue, I discuss the following points: Understanding *wasathiyyah* Islam, Designing a religious learning mainstreaming *wasathiyyah* Islam at schools, Implementing a religious learning mainstreaming *wasathiyyah* Islam.

A. Understanding *wasathiyyah*

Before going into further discussion, first we need to understand what Islamic *wasathiyyah* concept is. In fact, the term

wasathiyyah is developed from the expression *ummatan wasathan* stated in the Qur'an (2:143). Furthermore, it is necessary to explain that "*Ummatan Wasathan* is a society that always maintains its balance, not falling into left extremism or right extremism, and not pulled into radicalism and violence" and this kind of society is able to witness the truth for others (Kasdi 2019, 181). As a matter of fact, the concept of *wasathiyyah* has existed since the birth of the Islamic faith in this world (Mujani *et al.* 2015, 66).

Etymologically, the word *wasathiyyah* "can be translated into middle ground and modest." It originates from "the Arabic root word *wasatha* which means middle." Therefore, *wasathiyyah* means "to make something to be in the middle" (Kasdi 2019, 181). It has similarity "with *al-tawasuth* or *al-wasath* (moderation), *al-qisth* (justice), *al-tawazun* (balance), and *al-i'tidal* (harmony)" (Hilmy 2013, 25). The derivative word means "just or fair, the best, the chosen (in quality), the finest (as an art) and respectable." As an example of this is such an expression as: "the most *wasath* means something which is the best, the most just and the chosen" (Mujani *et al.* 2015, 66). There are Arabic terms which have "certain contradictions to *wasathiyyah,* such as *al-Ighāl* (beyond exaggeration), *al-Tashaddud* (exceedingly restrictive), *al-Guluw* (excessiveness, extremism), *al-Taṭarruf* (moving to the farthest point and going the extra mile)" (Dorloh and Yusuf 2015, 62). These terms are the opposite in meaning to *wasathiyyah*.

The term *wasathiyyah* also gets its interpretation as denoting to "the first generation of Islamic community who receives direct prophetic training and education in positioning themselves within a justice and balance community." It is called so because they are considered as the best nation and a moderate model in all respects and attitudes. They are not extreme; not fanatic in their religious beliefs and ethical practices (Bakir and Othman 2017, 23). *Wasathiyyah* in Islam means not exaggerating

and exceeding the limits set by God, and not neglecting and straying from the limits set by God (Yaakub and Othman 2016, 66). It is implied that "the Muslim community by default has been described as a just society, an intermediation in function and always positioned in the middle path in commanding action" (Bakir and Othman 2017, 23). Therefore, it is important that "the Muslim community position themselves in the middle position in any situation." This means that "they should not drift with materialism or physical basis and also not to spiritualism." In other words, "it is a place where the Muslim community become effectively functioning as a model to human being in presenting a balance practices of the spiritual in comparison to physical or material aspects throughout their attitudes and actions" (Bakir and Othman 2017, 23). The characteristics of *wasathiyyah* Islam are moderation, avoiding all forms of violence and at the same time referring to having a fair attitude.

Wasathiyyah Islam can be said to be a school of thought that have some principles, such as: (a) being open minded, displayed by tolerance and open approach to other groups. (b) Justice, as all Islamic teachings want to materialise an unprejudiced society. (c) Equality, as Islam is at forefront in fighting for equality in humanity. (d) Tolerance, this manner is built on the fact that dissimilarity is an inevitability. (e) Liberation, as in its essence Islam aims to encourage prosperity. (f) Humanity, for in its mission Islam wants to construct a just society that endorses human principles. (g) Pluralism, as the Qur'an outlooks the variety of creed amongst human being as God's determination. (h) Non-discrimination, as Islam has decisively resisted to tyranny, relegation, and prejudice (Kasdi, 2019).

In the opinion of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin (former Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia) moderate in religion means being able to share the truth as long as it does not deviate and is in accordance with religious

interpretation, remains confident in the essence of the religious teachings adhered to, which teaches about fair and balanced principles (Purbajati 2020, 186).

Religious moderation as explained by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia has the meaning of pluralism and is indispensable in the condition of the pluralistic Indonesian nation. This can be achieved by providing comprehensive religious teaching that can represent everyone through flexible teachings by not leaving the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as the importance of using reason. Religious moderation, of course, does not only bind followers of Islam, but also other religions in Indonesia (Purbajati 2020, 186).

In a nutshell, *wasathiyyah* Islam suggests impartiality, which is ultimate to generating a diverse civil society. After finishing with the elaboration of the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah*, now let us see how urgent it is to be applied in the learning process in the classroom of religious education to counter the teachings of radicalism.

B. Designing a religious learning mainstreaming moderation

In Indonesia, the existence of educational institutions is regulated by law. The Law No. 20 of 2003 on National Education System (chapter XVII, article 62) states that "Every formal and non-formal education unit that is established must obtain a permit from the Government or Regional Government". Furthermore, with regard to the curriculum, Religious Education is included as subject that is mandatory at all levels of education in Indonesia. Religious Education is one of the most important elements in the national education system in Indonesia.

The Law No. 20 of 2003 (chapter X, article 37, verse 1) explicitly mentions and places religious lessons at the first order of the list of subjects that must be included in the primary and

secondary education curriculum. The law states that, "Elementary and secondary education curriculum must contain: a. Religious education; b. Civic education; c. Language; […]". Even at the level of higher education (university), religious education is still required. It is explicitly stated (in chapter X, article 37, verse 2) that "The higher education curriculum must contain: a. Religious education; b. Civic education; and c. Language" (*Undang-Undang No.20 Tahun 2003*). This confirms that the state really appreciates the importance of religious values to be taught to every student, so that they become human beings with noble character to be good citizens.

In Indonesia, the head of the education unit (school principal) is the party that bears responsibility of designing and at the same time implementing the school curriculum including religious education in the institutions it leads. The curriculum of religious instruction in the state schools is developed by the Ministry of Education but it is the Ministry of Religious Affairs that supervises the curriculum as well as the textbooks (Künkler & Lerner 2016, 8). Today, the curriculum being implemented in all schools in Indonesia (elementary and secondary levels) is the 2013 curriculum.

The subject of Islamic Religious Education [*Pendidikan Agama Islam*] applied in the schools automatically follows the signs given in the that curriculum. In the 2013 curriculum, textbooks for the subject of Religious Education have been developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and distributed free of charge to the students across the country (See https://bse.belajar.kemdikbud.go.id). The duty of the head of the education unit (school principal) is to optimize its human resources, the teachers, to explain what is contained in the textbooks to students. In addition, the teachers can enrich or expand the materials already presented in the textbooks with additional materials from other sources if necessary.

In the Netherlands, pertaining to the curriculum or contents for Islamic religious education it can be said that every school has an independence to determine its own, there is no interference from the government. "The curriculum in state and confessional [i.e. Islamic] schools is almost completely the same. The differences lie in the general atmosphere of the schools" (Sunier 2014, 61). This is so because the Dutch government itself is secular in character and does not want to intervene in the contents of Religious Education to be given to the students. This is quite different if compared to what happened in Indonesia where the government interferes in the religious education curriculum (See *Undang-Undang No.20 Tahun 2003*). However, the Dutch government has regulations that must be obeyed by all schools in the country, including Islamic Elementary Schools. These schools must be licensed at the time of establishment and are, therefore, legal to operate and accept students.

Islamic schools also get subsidies from the state in full, just the same as public schools or other private schools under Christian or Catholic foundations. So, because they receive subsidies from the state, they are also obliged to comply with the regulations set by the state, otherwise the state has the right to stop providing subsidies and even to stop their operations, as happened with two Islamic elementary schools which were completely closed down in 2010 and 2013 respectively because they were deemed to be violate the applicable provisions (Maussen and Vermeulen 2015, 90). Designing curriculum for Islamic Religious Education is the responsibility of the teachers who teach these subjects.

In designing the curriculum including Islamic Religious Education, there are differences in the two countries. In Indonesia, the task of designing the curriculum lies with the education unit, in this case the principal and its team are the responsible parties, but the curriculum made must follow the outline of the teaching direction that has been determined by the

central government through the Ministry of Education and Culture. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, the task of designing a curriculum for Islamic religious education rests entirely with the teachers and school managers who run the educational institutions concerned. In the next section, we will look at the dynamics that occur in the practice of Islamic religious education in these two countries.

C. Implementing a religious learning mainstreaming moderation

It is worth noting that the diversity of the Indonesian people can be an "integrating force" that binds society, but it can also be the cause of clashes between cultures, races, ethnicities, religions and between life values (Akhmadi 2019, 45). Diversity is a blessing in itself if it is managed properly, becomes uniqueness and strength, but such plurality can be a challenge if it is not handled wisely, it can become a threat of division and conflict that can tear social security (Akhmadi 2019, 47).

In a multicultural Indonesian society, an exclusive religious attitude that only recognizes truth and salvation unilaterally can certainly cause friction between religious groups. Religious conflicts that often occur in Indonesia are generally triggered by an exclusive religious attitude, as well as the contestation between religious groups in gaining support from the people who are not based on a tolerant attitude, because each uses their strengths to win, thereby triggering conflict (Akhmadi 2019, 49).

Social conflicts and triggers for community disharmony that have occurred in the past came from the extreme left (communism) and the extreme right (Islamism). However, nowadays the threat of disharmony and state threat sometimes comes from globalization and Islamism. In the context of religious fundamentalism, to avoid disharmony, it is necessary to cultivate a moderate religious way, or an inclusive way of Islam

or an open religious attitude, which is called an attitude of religious moderation (Akhmadi 2019, 49). Moderation means moderate, the opposite of extreme, or excessive in addressing differences and diversity

In the context of religion, understanding religious texts currently has a tendency to polarize religious adherents into two extreme poles. One pole too idolizes the text regardless of the ability of reason at all. The text of the scriptures is understood and then practiced without understanding the context. This group is often referred to as the conservative group. The other extreme, on the other hand, often called liberals, has so glorified reason that it ignores the text itself. So being too liberal in understanding the values of religious teachings is equally extreme (Akhmadi 2019, 49).

Moderate in Islamic thought is promoting a tolerance of differences. Openness to accept diversity (inclusivism). Both diverse in sects and diverse in religion. Differences do not prevent cooperation with humanitarian principles (Akhmadi 2019, 49). Believing that Islam is the truest religion does not mean having to insult other people's religions. So that there will be brotherhood and unity between religions, as happened in Medina under the command of the Prophet Muhammad (Akhmadi 2019, 49).

So, in realizing religious moderation in Indonesia, a great effort is needed if we look at the facts of the diversity that exists in Indonesia itself, it can be done with a mental revolution movement with an in-depth understanding of the concepts of religious moderation and religious plurality (Islam 2020, 48). The two concepts must move, spread, and fill the mindset, taste, and belief patterns of the Indonesian people at large.

In the case of Indonesia, with a large number of students being exposed to radicalism (See Afrianty, 2012). I think it is important for the teachers and leaders of education unit to fortify their students from these dangers so that the students do not fall

into radicalism such as intolerance, acts of violence or even terrorism. One of the elegant ways is to provide a correct understanding and giving Islamic Religious Education that is *rahmatan lil alamin* (have a mercy for all universe), applying the concept of moderate (*wasathiyyah*) Islam. The students at schools are young people that are vulnerable to being infiltrated by radicalism which justifies violence in practicing the teachings they believe in (See Tambak 2021). Letting them fall into the hands of radical Islamists is just the same as letting them lose their future. So, it is the duty of teachers of Islamic Religious Education and school leaders to convey *wasathiyyah* Islam which teaches harmony and respect to others who have different beliefs or religions.

Islamic education institutions in Indonesia are required to be able to play a role in strengthening moderate (*wasathiyyah*) Islam. The role that Islamic education institutions can play in this realm is the installation of moderate Islamic ideology to students in the learning process. There are three aspects that need to be considered in this installation, namely (1) the emphasis of moderate Islam in formulating educational goals, (2) internalizing moderate values in designing hidden curriculum, and (3) filtering teaching materials so that moderate Islamic ideology can be installed on students (Suharto 2017, 175). The process of installing a moderate Islamic ideology is, of course, not an easy task, but it is something that can be worked on.

In the case of the Netherlands, after several violent incidents in the name of religion were committed by groups or individuals who practice radical Islam, including one of them, the killing of a Dutch film director, Theo van Gogh by a Dutch citizen radical Muslim of Moroccan descent (Buijs 2009: 423, Ter Avest & Rietveld-van Wingerden 2017: 3), many people in the Netherlands have changed their view of Islam to a negative one.

I need to add here that changes in the global political constellation have changed the opinion and views of the Dutch

community towards Islam and then extended to Islamic schools in this country. Prior to the events of September 11, the Muslim community felt comfortable in practicing their religion and, similarly, Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic Elementary Schools in several big cities felt comfortable in providing educational services to the children.

The perception of the Dutch community in general was also positive about the existence of Islamic schools there. They assumed that Muslims who organize Islamic religious education were only benefitting their "constitutional rights" and only trying to preserve their culture and religion (Verbeek, Entzinger, and Scholten 2015, 223). However, after the events of September 11, the situation changed drastically where the majority of the Dutch population began to be critical of Muslims in the Netherlands, including questioning the existence of Islamic education (See Ter Avest and Rietveld-van Wingerden 2017, 4).

After the murder of Theo van Gogh (on 2 November 2004), "Muslim institutions became the targets of arson and other attacks." It was reported that there were 104 incidents, including attack on a mosque and 14 Islamic schools. "These attacks now became the central focus of political discussions concerning Muslim institutions, including Muslim schools" (Wasif & van Koningsveld 2006, 87). Some segments of the Dutch community considered Islamic school as a place to indoctrinate children with fanatical Islamic teachings, including unwillingness to accept the culture of Western people (Merry and Driessen 2016, 856–857). Besides that, many people also started to query "the integration of Muslim children into Dutch society" (Muslih 2021, 197). Islamic schools were also "under heavy criticism because of poor educational performance and bad results" (Sunier 2014, 61). At a certain stage, there were leaders of political parties who talk to the public about the need to abolish Islamic schools, because they will hinder the integration process of immigrants into the local (See Ter Avest and Rietveld-van Wingerden 2017, 295).

Education and politics are often closely related. Under these circumstances, it can be said that the politics of a country plays a very essential part in shaping the direction of the development of education in a country. There are even experts who argue that education is a means to preserve state power (Purwanto 2008, 2).

So, the prevailing political system in a country is always related to the policies made by the state, including policies in the field of education. Michael W. Apple is reported as explaining that the political culture of a country is channeled through its educational institutions so that in education political will or power systems are channeled in a society (Purwanto 2008, 2). Public education is an arena where framing takes shape because in education the role of the state as "a cultural agent" becomes real (Sunier 2014, 55). It seems that after the tragedy of 9/11 the state began to increase its intervention and supervision of activities in the education sector, thus resulting in a decrease in school autonomy.

I think it is the responsibility of the intellectuals and leaders of the Muslim community in this country to display the face of Islam that is peaceful, tolerant, open minded, non-discriminatory and respects differences. Displaying the peaceful face of Islam (*wasathiyyah*) among the secular Dutch plural society is an elegant manner that will make them give high respect to the noble teachings of Islam that have once been hijacked by irresponsible Muslim radicals. Acts of violence and extremism in the name of religion by the radicals proof to have caused misery for Muslims in general.

Preventing the spread of Islamic radicalism can be carried out with a hard approach (arresting and bringing the perpetrators to justice). In addition, it must also be done through a gentle approach, including through learning in schools by providing a correct understanding of Islam by introducing students to moderate Islamic teachings (*wasathiyyah*). Can this be done in the

education system in the Netherlands? A research conducted by Shadid and van Koningsveld concluded that "[i]n Dutch primary schools, Islamic religious education is presented in three ways." They are (1) in public schools, (2) in Christian schools with many Muslim students, (3) in Islamic primary schools (Wasif & van Koningsveld 2006, 87). I want to emphasize on the last model. As has been mentioned earlier, there existed 45 Islamic primary schools throughout the country. I see the possibility is very high for the teachers of religious education to organize instruction by transferring the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah* in the learning process in the classroom.

The teachers of Religious Education in Islamic elementary schools in the Netherlands can take responsibility for conveying *wasathiyyah* Islam to their students and preparing them both physically and mentally so that they can integrate into the midst of the plural Dutch society. Teachers of Islamic religious education are the right persons to prevent radicalism from entering the minds of students from an early age by conveying the values of moderate Islamic teachings (*wasathiyyah*) to the children during their learning process in school. By doing so the teachers have prepared them to become individuals who are open-minded, tolerant and respectful to differences that exist in the society where they will live in the future and where they will be integrated.

The task of the state or government is to provide a set of laws and regulations that serve as guidelines for its people in carrying out activities in many sectors of life, including the education sector. As we have seen in the discussion above, both Indonesia and the Netherlands have rules that apply formally and legally to the people of both countries related to the implementation of education in general, and specifically about religious education (including Islamic religious education).

It should be noted that no matter how good and complete the regulations and policies are, the final result depends on the

ability of the officers who implement them. The actors who are directly involved in the world of education include teachers, principals or managers of foundations that run schools, students and also interested stakeholders. Now, in the next section let us discuss how these educational regulations have been implemented by looking at the dynamics that occur in the society of the two countries.

CHAPTER FOUR

DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS AT SCHOOL IN INDONESIA AND THE NETHERLANDS

In this chapter I present a discussion on how the dynamics of Islamic religious learning occur in students in schools, both in Indonesia and in the Netherlands. This discussion will start from examining the condition of the world of education, which seems to be worried about getting a bad impact from the spread of Islamic radicalism which is now suspected of also targeting school-age children as targets who will get brainwashed with rigid and fanatical Islamic teachings from the radical groups. This concern is quite reasonable because based on the facts on the ground, terrorist incidents that have occurred several times, have also involved children who are still in school. In addition, some findings of research on several senior high schools in big cities such as Jakarta and Bogor several years ago showed shocking results where most of the students agreed and justified the arguments and actions of radical groups attacking infidels. Therefore, how the concerns of educators and how they anticipate the spread of radicalism will be discussed earlier in this chapter, then continued with the next discussion as a logical action to anticipate the spread of radicalism in the school environment,

namely the application and delivery of Islamic religious teaching with the concept of Moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*) to students in schools and identification of supporting and inhibiting factors and their solutions.

A. Anticipating the spread of radicalism

At first glance, comparing Indonesia and the Netherlands seems inadequate, because the two countries do not look comparable. However, it is worth noting that these two countries have historical ties in the past. During the colonialism era, the Netherlands ruled Indonesia for a long time. Then, since 17 August 1945 Indonesia has become an independent and fully sovereign country. Despite the hostility and differences of opinion during the colonial period, the two countries are now friends and have good relations.

Today, I see there is a similar situation shared by these two countries, namely both of them have experienced disturbances from acts of violence and extremism in the name of religion by radical groups. Indonesia, which was originally dominated by moderate Muslims, underwent a change. With the spread of radicalism ideology and acts of terror in Indonesia, Islamic radicalism becomes a new phenomenon in this country (Muzakki 2014, 4). Many countries in the world are currently facing the threat of radicalism (Tambak 2021, 105). Indonesia has faced this hostile experience several times, including the first Bali bombing on 12 October 2002 in which at least 202 people were reported to be killed (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-19881138), the second Bali bombing on 2 October 2005 which killed 25 people (Lewis *et al*. 2013; Bonner 2021), bombing of three churches in Surabaya on 13 May 2018, in which at least 13 people were reported to be killed (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44101070), and most recently the Makassar bombing on 20 March 2021 which injured 20 people (Satria 2021; Azanella 2021). The Netherlands, on the

other hand, has also suffered from the actions of radicals with the assassination of Theo van Gogh in November 2004 (Buijs 2009, 423; de Koning 2020, 130).

Radicalism means understanding that wants to make changes or changes through violent and revolutionary means. Radicalism is a belief and does not provide tolerance for groups that contradict them through extreme attitudes (Anwar 2021, 2).

The attitude and understanding of extremism and radicalism has also penetrated the world of education. Based on the findings of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Peace (LaKIP) in 2010 in Jakarta Province, 48.9% of students from the regions of Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi (Jabodetabek) were involved in acts of radicalism (Anwar 2021, 3). The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) has informed that several Islamic boarding schools have taught radicalism and have the potential for their students to become terrorists (Anwar 2021, 3). Of course, this is a concern for all of us as members of the community and citizens of Indonesia, a pluralistic and multicultural country.

Among the thoughts that try to launch a discourse on religious moderation education for young people, for example Masdar Hilmy who said: First, the state needs to be present to design deradicalization materials and methods that are relevant to the psychological characteristics of young people. It must be admitted that the deradicalization program in this country does not accommodate methods and materials that are evocative, inspiring, and relevant to the psychological-intellectual needs of young people. This is because the target of the deradicalization program so far is the adult age group. Second, expanding the reach of the deradicalization program to areas that have been considered private, such as families. The deradicalization program by National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) so far has only touched a limited number of adult religious organizations. In this context, the number of young people who

are not involved in deradicalization programs is much higher. Third, overcoming the dislocation and social deprivation of young people through social involvement programs. So far, the cognitive and psychological processes of young people are not properly monitored by the adults around them. They become radical because their social communication with those closest to them is cut off. The solution is that young people should be invited to dialogue and communicate with adults as often as possible (Hilmy, 2015b).

Religious moderation is important to avoid radicalism and extremism in the teachings of Islam. Moderation of religion in Indonesia is an effort to prevent radicalism because moderate Islam is the most suitable for Indonesia, which has diversity. The moderate value or *wasathiyyah* is important to be maintained as the collective consciousness of Muslims in Indonesia. Religious moderation is important for students as the next generation to advance the nation in the future, the cultivation of moderate Islamic values needs to be pursued as an effort to prevent exposure to radicalism (Anwar 2021, 4). A concrete step in providing religious moderation values to the younger generation is through religious education.

Indonesia is a country that has the largest Muslim population in the world, and is often in the spotlight in terms of religious behavior. Muslims in Indonesia currently face at least two challenges; Firstly, the tendency of some Muslims to be extreme and strict in understanding religious texts and try to impose this method in the Muslim community, even using violence in some cases. Secondly, another tendency that is also extreme is to be loose in religion and subject to negative behaviors and thoughts that come from other cultures and civilizations (Fahri and Zainuri 2019, 95).

In Indonesia, Islamic radicalism is said to have spread into the world of education (Abdallah, 2016) and has made students at school the target of recruitment by radical groups to be

brainwashed with certain radical ideologies (Asril 2016, 284). The actions that have been taken by the government to stop radicalism and acts of terrorism in repressive manner so far, which include legal processes, arrests and executions, are felt to be less effective (Botma 2020, 173), a security approach policy like this is unlikely to crush the ideology of radicalism (Hilmy 2015, 418).

To break the chain of recruitment of radical movements and terrorism many strategies can be taken. Involving young people in dialogue activities about Islam and democracy (Fenton 2014, 2) is one of them. Another strategy to be taken is by creating "a moderate education policy which involves collaboration between governments and different religions" (Alam 2020, 500). We need to realize that there are several important institutions that can optimize their role as protectors of the younger generation, one of which is educational institutions (Botma 2020, 173).

Islamic religious education has strategic ability to respond to several problems in religious life, including the issue of radicalism that remains dominating the lives of religious people in Indonesia. Therefore, as an institution, Islamic religious education requires empowering to stop the flow of radicalism (Arifin 2016, 94). Through the role of this educational institution, teachers and lecturers as well as the academic community can actively strengthen national insight, moderate attitudes and tolerance in the younger generation (Botma 2020, 173).

To prevent the ideology of radicalism from entering the world of education, the Indonesian government and society have responded to by, among others, campaigning for religious moderation (Manshur dan Husni 2020, 5851). It is important to campaign for the teaching of Islam through education with a moderate approach, often called *wasatiyyah* (Fitri, 2015). The provision of moderate (*wasatiyyah*) Islamic Religious Education proved to be effective in increasing the understanding of the Muslim community about the importance of *wasatiyyah* Islamic

values, for example changing the understanding of the concept of *jihad* from violence to humanity which involves accepting pluralism, tolerance and increasing welfare (Alam 2020, 497).

Islamic Religious Education not only aims at producing pious people, but also at "making civilized and humane citizens" (Maulana 2017, 396). Since the Islamic Religious Education has functions as a medium of moral formation and character building for students, it can be used as "an alternative solution to prevent the development of radicalism" (Nurhayati and Hamid 2020, 111). Through religious moderation movement it is intended that people behave moderately in carrying out their religious teachings and are tolerant of others who adhere to the teachings of a different religion.

In the Netherlands, after the events of 9/11 and the spread of Islamic radicalism in various parts of the world including the killing of Theo van Gogh, Muslims became the target of anger of the Dutch people. Sharp criticism from a part of Dutch society was also directed at Islamic schools in this country as they were deemed to be "breeding grounds for terrorism" (Muslih 2021, 196), Islam was portrayed as a "potential obstacle" to the progress of immigrants' integration (Buijs 2009, 428), Islamic schools were deemed to have tendencies to "marginalise or radicalise Muslim youth, although so far, no proof for this has been established" (Berglund 2015, 22).

Some managers of Islamic educational institutions in this country have responded to this situation by struggling for moderate Islamic teaching through Islamic Religious Education in the schools they manage and trying to keep their distance from groups that are indicated to have ties with the Salafi (See Nederlands Dagblad 2017; Smit 2017; Trouw 2017). This can also be seen as a response to the current policy which regards Muslims and Islam as "potential dangers to social cohesion" and the so-called Dutch "cultural achievements" (de Koning 2020, 126). This study wants to examine how Islamic Religious

Education in the two countries exists. What position it has in the constitution and laws and what dynamics are going on in practice.

In doing a comparison between Islamic Religious Education that took place in Indonesia and the Netherlands, I have a goal that is similar to the goal of comparative education proposed by Jackson, as quoted in Phillips: "(a) to promote knowledge, (b) to assist reform and development, (c) to improve knowledge about one's own educational system, and (d) to promote international goodwill" (Phillips 2000, 297).

I am in line with a notion that whatever considerations we have when conducting a comparative study there is certain to be a very important benefit to "learning from the experiences of others" (Phillips 2000, 297). This study compares Indonesia and the Netherlands, two nations with distinctive histories. Indonesia, once has been colonised by the Netherlands, is a growing democratic country where Muslims as native citizen are acting as majority. While the Netherlands, an important colonial power that ruled Indonesia in the past, is a liberal democratic country where Muslims, mostly immigrants, occupy a minority position.

By conducting this comparative study of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia and the Netherlands, I would like to provide insight into the metanarratives of liberal democracy and religious education in the local context (See Rust, 1991). To carry out this comparative study I used and utilized available sources relevant to the topic of discussion. This involves the main literature available in both countries, including state constitutions, central government policy documents, research reports, and article reviews on Islamic Religious Education policies and practices in both countries.

The widespread acts of violence, extremism and radicalism that occur not only in Indonesia, but also in various other parts of the world, including in Europe and the Netherlands becomes a fact. There is an anxiety that radicalism will enter and

spread to the mind of young people who are still school students, this concern is also felt by many observers and educators in schools.

Therefore, intellectuals, educators as well as observers suggest that in order to break the chain of radicalism and prevent radicalism from spreading among students, a religious moderation campaign must be carried out, by providing the concept of Islamic teachings that are *rahmatan lil alamin*, and introducing to the students at schools the concept of moderate Islamic teachings (*wasathiyyah*), which is a teaching that respects every difference that exists in society, and encourage the students to be tolerant of other people who do not share the same faith and adhere to a different religion. Many educators or teachers are aware and know the dangers of Islamic radicalism for the psychological development of the students. Therefore, there are also many teachers who are self-aware that they have implemented the provision of moderate Islamic teaching (*wasathiyyah*) to their students in the class. Now let us see how the practice of teaching the *wasathiyyah* Islam occurs in schools.

B. The application of moderate Islamic teaching and the factors that support it

Religious moderation can be interpreted as balanced, in the middle, not excessive, not using extreme theological legitimacy, claiming to be the most correct, neutral and not affiliated with any particular political party. Educational institutions or schools are strategic places to serve as spaces in build for religious moderation. (Purbajati 2020, 184). There are several reasons why religious moderation needs to be built, namely: 1) The resilience and protection of cultural rights tends to weaken; 2) Character education, character, citizenship, and nationality that are still not maximized; 3) Efforts to promote Indonesian culture are not yet optimal; 4) Understanding and practicing religious values in the life of the nation and state are

still minimum; 5) The role of the family in efforts to build the nation's character has not shown good results; and 6) a culture of literacy, innovation and creativity has not been internalized more deeply. (Purbajati 2020, 184).

Religious moderation is very important to be instilled from an early age in the school environment. Therefore, teachers have a very important role in efforts to build religious moderation in the school environment. This is because the teacher is the party who is in direct contact with the students and of course has a certain closeness to them. The teacher is also the party who educates students and directs them in a direction that is in accordance with religious values and national values. Building religious moderation is very important to be applied from an early age starting in the school environment (Purbajati 2020, 185).

Religious moderation is very important to be implemented as early as possible in the school environment. It is not uncommon to find that students have morals that are contrary to religious values. As is the case with racist acts against those of other religions (Purbajati 2020, 187). Students at the developmental stage basically have the power to absorb knowledge faster than the elderly. Moderation of religion from an early age can cause the internalization of values in accordance with religious teachings to become stronger. This will continue to be carried by certain individuals as they age and socialize in the community (Purbajati 2020, 187).

It should be emphasized that teachers of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in public schools are required to have a flexible attitude in interacting with colleagues of different beliefs so as not to cause offence, this attitude must also be instilled in his students at school how to be a moderate Muslim, not liberal and nor is it radical. In line with the statement of Indonesia as a country of moderate Islam, as a role model for other Muslim countries. This statement is based on the sociological reality in the form of the emergence of Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah which

are seen as representatives of Indonesian Moderate Muslims (Karni 2020, 80).

The cultivation of Islamic moderation values in general is a process in the form of activities or efforts that are carried out consciously, planned, and can be accounted for to maintain, train, guide, direct, and improve religious knowledge, social skills, and children's religious practices and attitudes (monotheism, worship and morality) which have the characteristics of *tawassuth*, *tawazun*, and *ta'adul* or can be combined into *wasathiyyah* (balance between two different things), then to be practiced in everyday life (Karni 2020, 81).

The cultivation of Islamic moderation values carried out by teachers of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the classroom broadly has similarities, namely through the teaching process in the classroom based on the syllabus, further developed by the teacher concerned, then applied in interacting in the school environment, from a number of PAI materials that are mostly emphasized on moral material, with basic competencies (Karni 2020, 82).

Educational institutions have a strategic role to break the chain of violence in the name of religion. An educational approach for all students that can be implemented in peace education which is integrated with the school curriculum, constructive conflict resolution exercises, mediation and negotiation by peers is a joint effort so that the Indonesian nation becomes a conciliatory nation. Extensive and not partial religious knowledge must be taught in educational institutions so that students have a non-narrow foundation of religious understanding. The role of teachers is needed in instilling religious moderation in the life of this multicultural nation and state, namely Indonesia (Herawati 2020, 104). Therefore, teachers must be able to sort and choose the right method for students so that understanding the concept of religious

moderation can be embedded in students and then can be implemented in the life of the nation and state.

In the following paragraphs I will describe the application of *wasathiyyah* Islam and its dynamics that occur in several educational institutions (Islamic schools in Indonesia) and also in the Netherlands. I base this presentation on the results of my analysis, in Indonesia, of literary sources related to the topics discussed, as well as the results of my observations and interviews with several teachers of Islamic Religious Education subjects in several elementary schools in the Semarang area and its surroundings. As for the Netherlands, due to not being able to visit there because of restrictions to going abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, I base my review on the available literature that is relevant to the topic of concern.

Based on the results of my interviews with several teachers of Islamic Religious Education subjects in the Semarang and surrounding areas, I can conclude that the concept of Islamic *wasathiyyah* is understood by these teachers as the same thing as religious moderation campaigned by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). There are also those who understand *wasathiyyah* Islam more specifically, which is the same as "religious tolerance" only. So, for them, the term *wasathiyyah* Islam is essentially the same as religious moderation, or more specifically *wasathiyyah* Islam is the same as religious tolerance.

As for how the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah* or religious moderation or more specifically religious tolerance should be applied to children, and why it is important for children to be given knowledge about it, and how to apply the technique in implementing the concept to children, then what habits are carried out by the Islamic Religious Education teachers so that the concept of Islam *wasathiyyah* or religious moderation or religious tolerance can penetrate and be firmly entrenched into the souls and minds of children, then the answer is that there are many

differences between one teacher of religious education in one school with a religious teacher in another school.

Unless otherwise stated, all narratives in this subsection are summaries or results of my interviews with respondents during my fieldwork (in Indonesia). During the fieldwork, my team and I met several respondents. The author has conducted interviews with several respondents by visiting the respondents at the school where they are teaching or by visiting the respondent's house. Interviews were conducted several times from 14 August 2021 to 14 October 2021, where some schools in the Semarang area have been given permission to hold limited face-to-face meetings at schools. In addition to visiting the respondents directly, interviews have also been conducted through WA chat and WA calls. Originally, our interviews with respondents in Semarang were all conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia*. However, for the purpose of this research report (because our research belongs to an international collaborative research cluster, and the committee requires us to write reports in English) all responses from interviews with respondents have been translated into English as well. The translation was done by the author (myself).

For certain reasons and to maintain the privacy of the respondents, in this research report the author deliberately does not mention the full name of the respondents, but only their initials. Likewise, the name of the school where the respondents teach is also intentionally not mentioned publicly, this is solely to maintain the privacy of the school.

(1) Introducing the danger of radicalism

Before entering the discussion about inculcating moderate Islamic teachings or religious moderation to students at school, firstly, the author feels the need to dig up information about the dangers of radicalism which is alleged by many observers have

begun to enter the world of education or is transmitted to school-age children.

As mentioned in the previous section, many observers consider that the notion of radicalism has begun to spread to school-age children, so the author wants to know how the response of the parties involved in the implementation of education, especially teachers who teach Islamic religious education subjects in schools, in responding the phenomenon. What have they been thinking and what have they been doing so far? First of all, the author want to see and to present the context in Indonesia, then tries to compare it with the context in the Netherlands.

The Wahid Foundation in 2016 presented the results of a National survey on the Potential of Intolerance and Socio-Religious Radicalism among Indonesian Muslims. It is found that 108 million Indonesian Muslims are not radical, about 11 million Indonesian Muslims are willing to be radical, and 600 thousand Indonesian Muslims have been involved in radical actions. The potential for socio-religious radicalism is the willingness to participate in events involving violence in the name of religion (Wibowo 2019, 90). Massive radicalism in the name of religion in Indonesia is increasingly widespread and indoctrinates various levels of society. The threat is also spread through various media, both print media, electronic media, and even social media. Therefore, the big idea of religious moderation in Indonesia must be realized by all religious people in Indonesia. All religious people also have the same role to campaign for religious moderation in any media (Wibowo 2019, 99).

One of the big gaps in the emergence of radical behavior in young people is also caused by the weakness of teachers from primary to secondary education. Teachers have hours of interaction with students in large numbers starting from an early age to secondary education. If only a few teachers allow students to have an intolerant understanding when receiving school

education, then this omission will contribute to the further development of intolerant understanding among young people (Haryani 2020, 147).   Regarding the values that should be developed in reducing the number of intolerances, it is necessary to develop *al-wasatiyyah* values as mentioned in the Qur'an surah Al-Baqarah verse 143. The word *al-wasatiyyah* is taken from a root word which originally meant: "middle between two boundaries, or with justice, the middle or the standard or the ordinary". Religious moderation cannot be manifested unless it is compiled into a single unit of four main elements, namely honesty, openness, compassion and flexibility (Haryani 2020, 147).

For the Indonesian context, the author wants to explore how far Islamic Religious Education teachers know and are aware of this situation (the danger of spreading radicalism). When the author asked whether or not it was necessary to fortify students from the dangers of radicalism, Mr. AH, a male teacher of Islamic religious education at a public elementary school in the city of Semarang, said that according to him it is important for a teacher to introduce children to what radicalism is and what the dangers of radicalism are. Because, he argues, as reported by the media, one of the perpetrators of the suicide bombing terrorism in Makassar is still a student at school.

The responsibility of religion teachers in schools is to introduce and teach children about true religious values that can be applied in everyday life. So that there will be no radical understanding of religion without control that gives birth to deviant behavior and assumes that what they are doing is correct. So, this is where the important role of the teacher is to introduce and explain what radicalism is to the children at school age. (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 14, 2021 at 16.00-17.00).

For the context of the Netherlands, because the author was not able to meet directly with the teachers there (due to the fact

that it is now still in the Covid-19 pandemic condition, and the spread of the virus is still high, and also there were many travel restrictions and no permission was granted from the leadership of UIN Walisongo Semarang to go abroad including to the Netherlands), so for the purposes of this research, the author bases the analysis on literature and reading sources that are relevant to the problem being explored. In this case, the author looks for relevant information and tries to correlate it with the current situation.

The events of 9/11 in America in 2001 and several acts of violent and extremism in the years that followed in several places in Europe, such as the London bombings, the bomb attack on the Atocha train station in Madrid, the Paris bomb attacks, as well as the attack or the assassination of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands, which were associated with Islamic radicalism groups, indeed has caused the public to generally be critical of Muslims and Islam. This also applies in the Netherlands. In this country, a critical and hostile attitude is directed towards Islam and Muslims, including also against Islamic Education institutions. In the author's analysis, the parties who have a direct interest in Islamic education in this country are already aware of this.

This is evidenced by several Islamic education managers, both individuals and groups, who are critical of people who are affiliated to the Salafist movement which is considered to be fundamentalist. For example, the advisory board of the *Islamitisch Scholen Amsterdam* (ISA) and Noor Foundation which runs the as-Siddieq Islamic elementary school, categorically refused to accept the presence of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum Islamic secondary school, managed by the *Stichting Islamitisch Onderwijs* (SIO) (De Volkskrant, 6 September 2017; Trouw, 1 August 2017).

According to the author's analysis, the Islamic school of Cornelius Haga Lyceum is little bit controversial. The process of

its establishment has attracted attention of many parties. There is a rejection from the Dutch community itself, which in fact is a secular society. The basis of their refusal is generally because they are not happy with the presence of Islamic-characterized schools because of the fear of the application of Sharia in the Netherlands one day. This can be seen for instance by the reaction of anti-Islam protesters of "Het Identitair Verzet" (The Identitair Resistance). The group opposed the presence of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum Islamic school by unfurling a banner that read: "*Wie islam zaait zal sharia oogsten*" (whoever sows Islam will reap Sharia) (See https://nos.nl/artikel/2191396-twee-keer-het-dak-op-binnen-48-uur-wat-is-het-identitair-verzet).

The refusal of the Muslim group was evidenced by the statement of the leaders of Foundation which manages Islamic elementary schools in Amsterdam, namely *Islamitische Scholen Amsterdam* (ISA) who did not encourage Muslim parents to send their children to this Islamic high schools (Cornelius Haga) for fear of being educated and indoctrinated with fundamentalist or radical Islamic teachings (De Volkskrant, 6 September 2017; Trouw, 1 August 2017).

It was also reported that one of the board members of the *Stichting Islamitische Onderwijs* (SIO), named Abdoe Khoulani, once expressed his sympathy in 2004 for the Islamic States (IS). Unfortunately, the other administrators of SIO did nothing to stop it (De Telegraaf, 7 September 2017; Het Parool, 9 September 2017). So, it is reasonable for outsiders to assume that the foundation has ties to Salafi groups. This can be interpreted that there is possibility at one day schools under the auspices of SIO may be brought to fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. Because of this concern, the leadership of the ISA Foundation rejected the presence of an Islamic school managed by the SIO Foundation, such as Cornelius Haga Lyceum. Leaders of the ISA foundation has struggled to win over the hearts of the Dutch community that the Islam to be taught to the children in the school under its

management is the moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*), which always teach tolerance and respect for differences that exist in society. What some Islamic elementary schools, including those under the ISA foundation, aim to strive for is to teach and prepare their students to become good citizens who wish to actively integrate with the indigenous Dutch community (Muslih 2021, 203).

The phenomenon of Islamic radicalism is believed by many to be a creation of the 20th century in the Muslim world, especially in the Middle East, as a product of an identity crisis that led to reactions and resistance to the West that expanded colonialization in the Muslim world. The division of the Muslim world into various nation-states and the modernization project launched by the new Western-leaning government resulted in Muslims feeling the erosion of religious and moral ties that they had held so strongly. This led to the emergence of radical Islamic movements that called for a return to pure Islamic teachings as a way out (Faiqah 2018, 41).

(2) Introduction of moderate Islam

Moderate Islam or Islamic moderation is one of the many terminologies that has emerged in the world of Islamic thought, especially in the last two decades, it can even be said that Islamic moderation is the issue of this century. This term appears allegedly as the antithesis of the emergence of a radical understanding in understanding and executing religious teachings or messages. Thus, discussing the discourse of Islamic moderation never escapes the discussion of Radicalism in Islam. If we refer to the Qur'an as a reference for religious expression, both at the level of understanding and application, it explicitly emphasizes the existence of moderate people (*Ummatan Wasathan*) as the parent for understanding Islam or a moderate Muslim (Faiqah 2018, 47).

The religious moderation movement promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is now finding its momentum. Framing of religious moderation is very important in managing religious life in a plural and multicultural Indonesian society (Sutrisno 2019, 324). Indonesia must have its own way of thinking so as not to be trapped in the barriers of social spaces. At this point, religious moderation as an integration of core religious teachings and the state of multicultural society in Indonesia can be synergized with social policies taken by the government. This awareness must be raised so that this nation's generation can understand that Indonesia exists for all (Sutrisno 2019, 326).

Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, set 2019 as the Year of Religious Moderation. He called for religious moderation to become the mainstream in the religious style of Indonesian society. The reason is clear and precise, that moderate religion has become a characteristic of religious people in Indonesia and is more suitable for our pluralistic society culture (Sutrisno 2019, 326).

It should be emphasized that the challenge of Islamic educational institutions in promoting the value of tolerance and respect for religious diversity lies not only in curriculum issues, but in the ability of school authorities to manage the school environment and public spaces that encourage freedom and the tradition of critical thinking. School authorities need to understand the material and patterns of spreading radical ideas among young people, especially in the school environment, so that the potential influence of radicalism can be anticipated effectively (Haryani 2020, 148). In addition, there is a thought that one of the best ways to fight radical religious movements in young people is to apply a dual strategy, namely developing critical discussion and building counter discourse, ideas and

narratives, and supporting and developing social relationships and plural networks (Haryani 2020, 148).

Educational institutions have a strategic role to break the chain of violence in the name of religion. An educational approach for all students that can be implemented in peace education which is integrated with the school curriculum, constructive conflict resolution exercises, mediation and negotiation by peers is a joint effort so that the Indonesian nation becomes a conciliatory nation. Extensive and not partial religious knowledge must be taught in educational institutions so that students have a non-narrow foundation of religious understanding. The role of teachers is needed in instilling religious moderation in the life of this multicultural nation and state, namely Indonesia (Herawati 2020, 104). Therefore, teachers must be able to sort and choose the right method for students so that understanding the concept of religious moderation can be embedded in students and then can be implemented in the life of the nation and state.

One of the right methods to see or apply moderate Islamic values is by selecting a democratic learning method. The selection of democratic learning methods in madrasas is the right choice and is one of the keys for teachers to achieve the desired goals. The democratic learning method is one of the bids to create a generation that has moderate Islamic understanding because Islam is understood as "moderate" and "tolerant" and in accordance with the innate democracy (Na'imah 2020, 217).

In the Indonesian context, as many researchers have reviewed, radicalism has entered the realm of education. Therefore, the teachers of Islamic religious education are the people who are at the forefront of saving children from the dangers of radicalism.

When the author asked this question, Mr. AH, a male teacher in Semarang clearly explained the importance of giving

understanding to students. After the children are given an explanation about the dangers of radicalism, the children will have a better understanding and will not follow the notion of radicalism. Mr. AH said that he had indeed introduced moderate Islam or religious moderation to children at the school where he is teaching. He explained to the children that we live in a country that is diverse in character, meaning that we have to live side by side with various differences, these differences should not be used as a material for hostility (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 14, 2021 at 16.00-17.00).

Furthermore, Mr. AH explained that after the students were given an explanation about the dangers of radicalism, especially one that teaches violent methods to achieve its goals, the next step is for students to be introduced to moderate Islamic teachings. Moderate Islam can accept all kinds of differences. Islam teaches that differences are a gift, not enmity. By being introduced to these kinds of values, children will know that terrorism is something that is hated in Islam. So, at school, Mr. AH has introduced the teachings of moderate Islam, namely Islam that is *rahmatan lil alamin*, which means giving goodness to all, not only for Islam itself but also for the followers of other religion (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 14, 2021 at 16.00-17.00).

In the context of the Netherlands, it is not easy to determine whether radicalism has entered the world of education. Therefore, visits to Islamic schools and interviews with teachers who are directly involved in teaching Islamic religious education must be carried out. Unfortunately, in our current study, this cannot be done because of the restrictions imposed by the Health protocol and the reluctance of some people in the Netherlands to accept guests coming from abroad, during this pandemic. This is a force majeure event which is beyond our control.

However, based on the literature available to the author, a common thread can be drawn that since the events of 9/11,

Muslims, as well as Islamic education institutions in the country, have become objects that are monitored by the government. For security reasons, the Dutch state education inspectorate carried out investigations on Islamic schools (Shadid and van Koningsveld 2006, 86). In general, investigations are carried out to find out whether there are violations of the provisions and regulations that exist in the Netherlands in the implementation of education. Because some Islamic educational institutions are reported to have received funds from abroad, such as *al-wakf al-islami* from Saudi Arabia. There is great concern that receiving financial assistance from Saudi Arabia will influence and cause Islamic schools in the Netherlands to import orthodox or Wahhabi Islamic teachings from Saudi Arabia, something that the Dutch government itself did not want it to happen.

(3) How to introduce moderate Islam

Educational institutions are very appropriate to be "religious moderation laboratories". As it has been understood that the Indonesian nation is a nation that has various ethnicities and religions. Indonesia has unique characteristics, but it is full of challenges. Schools as educational institutions can foster a mindset of religious moderation with the condition that exclusive views and acts of violent extremism in religious robes will destroying the joints and weaving of diverse nationalities (Sutrisno 2019, 341).

Educational institutions are the right means to spread the sensitivity of students to various differences. Opening the space for dialogue, the teacher provides an understanding that religion carries messages of love and not hate, and the system in schools is free to accept these differences. Not only that, one of the recommendations issued by the Jakarta Minutes reads that the government must lead a moderate religious strengthening movement as the mainstream, by promoting the importance of

moderate religious life as a spiritual and moral guide (Sutrisno 2019, 341).

In the context of education, a value or ideology can be internalized through several systematic processes or steps in an educational institution, as is the case with Islamic moderation values. By adopting the concept developed by Gerald L. Gutek regarding the ideology of education, the moderate value of Islam can be internalized in three forms, namely (1) through the determination of educational policies and objectives, (2) in the formulation of the curriculum itself, and (3) in conveying the values unseen in the hidden curriculum (Hermawan 2020, 37). One thing that must be considered is that in implementing these three aspects, educational institutions or schools must make the value of Islamic moderation the main value like the educational ideology adopted.

It should be remembered that the content of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum with Islamic moderation values does not only rely on policy makers or curriculum decision makers, but also the central role of the teacher. Therefore, teacher competence and understanding of Islamic moderation values is an important prerequisite in achieving curriculum goals (Hermawan 2020, 38).

It should be emphasized that the process of internalizing the value of Islamic moderation in educational institutions or schools should at least be pursued through two main models, namely the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum (Hermawan 2020, 41).

The moderate context believed by Muslims has led to the idea of creating a curriculum that is in accordance with the goals of religious moderation in Indonesia. Sauqi Futaqi, as quoted in Widodo, gave the idea of a moderate Islamic education curriculum approach using the following approaches: (1) contributive, namely by inserting certain content in subjects such

as Indonesian Muslim figures, who have strict thoughts and attitudes; (2) addictive, namely by adding content, concepts, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing the basic structure, objectives, and characteristics of the curriculum; (3) transformative, namely by changing the basic objectives, structure, and perspectives of the curriculum, so as to enable students to see concepts, issues, themes, and problems from various points of view; (4) social action, which includes all elements of the transformative approach but adds components that require students to make decisions and take actions related to the concepts and problems at hand (Widodo 2019,11).

In the perspective of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2019), the measures of religious moderation are as follows: (1) National commitment. National commitment becomes a benchmark for whether someone falls into a radical or moderate ideology because most radical movements adopt the ideology of the caliphate or the shari'ah state. The concept of the nation state is considered as heresy, *tagut* and infidel which is not based on Islamic teachings. (2) Tolerance. Tolerance is important because most radical groups will never tolerate differences in religious interpretation among Muslims. As soon as there are differences in religious interpretations, the different groups will be considered heretics, infidels (*takfir*), apostates and the like. (3) Anti-violence. Moderates always use peaceful means in carrying out socio-political transformation, not violence. (4) Accommodating to local culture. If moderates accommodate local culture, radical groups consider it as heresy, *shirk* and deviate from the true teachings of Islam (Huda 2021, 288-289).

It should be noted that one of the causes of intolerance in young people is that schools lack control over religious beliefs that develop among students. School is an open space for the dissemination of any understanding. Because the school is too open, religious radicalism groups take advantage of this open

space to actively participate in campaigning for their understanding and expand their network. The religious groups that enter range from extreme to blasphemy against the state and invitations to establish an Islamic state, to Islamist groups who want to fight for the enforcement of Islamic law (Haryani 2020, 147). The roots of radicalism in schools will very likely emerge because schools are a very potential arena. Schools as arenas will find their point of development when there is social capital such as injections from agencies to gain radical religious understanding itself (Haryani 2020, 147).

It should also be noted here the importance of reviving the role of the family in preventing the possibility of young people being exposed to religious radicalism. Parents need to be aware of the negative impact of the internet from the possibility of transnational understanding that harms the harmony of religious relations in Indonesia. Also, parents need to actively invite dignified discussions about various religious thoughts and children are invited to think selectively to various existing social problems. Children are invited to think the best that can be given to the nation (Haryani 2020, 155).

It is necessary to emphasize the need for religious moderation education to be introduced to young people as early as possible. This is important so that as early as possible young Indonesians recognize differences, diversity and are ready to live together. The role of school teachers is very important in introducing religious moderation in schools. Few religious teachers provide opportunities for the development of intolerant understanding, so it will contribute to the development of religious radicalism in society at large (Haryani 2020, 155).

Now let's see how moderate Islam should be introduced and taught to students in the Indonesian context. When the author asked how to introduce moderate Islamic teachings (*wasathiyyah*) to the students, Mr. AH, a male teacher of religious education

subjects in a public elementary school in Semarang explained to the author:

> I know that these children are still in their infancy, so we must give them direction and guidance that what they are looking for is the right thing. So, when I teach Islamic religious education, I really introduce what moderate Islam (*rahmatan lil alamin*) is. It means that Islam is a religion that gives goodness and is not an enemy to other religions. We live in Indonesia whose people are plural and diverse, so that we have to live side by side with people of other religions. Islam is full of grace and love. (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 22, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

So, as Mr. AH pointed out, he hoped that the children will also be a blessing to their environment. Friends of different religions must establish good relationships and have a high sense of tolerance. They must not have a sense of egoism and impose their will on others especially related to beliefs. The children were taught not to justify themselves and blame others. He added that since the school where he is teaching is a public elementary school, the students are not only Muslims but also many students from other religions. So, he always instill to the children to always live in harmony and tolerate each other (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 22, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

In the context of the Netherlands, providing the best Islamic teaching to students is also the determination and commitment of the managers of Islamic education in this country. This can be seen from their educational vision and mission.

Providing education with good quality has become a big concern of the ISA foundation, which is to be implemented in the schools under its management. As-Siddieq school, for instance, in its website claims that it has provided good quality education

to its students in accordance with the requirements in the Netherlands, as mentioned in its quality offering statement:

> *"De As-Siddieqschool heeft als uitgangspunt het verzorgen van goed onderwijs aan de leerlingen volgens de eisen die gesteld zijn in de Wet op het Primair Onderwijs. Ons aanbod met betrekking tot het onderwijs wordt getoetst om aan de normen en standaarden te kunnen voldoen zoals gesteld door het Ministerie van Onderwijs en de Inspectie van het onderwijs"* (www.as-siddieq.nl).

> [As a starting point, the As-Siddieq School is providing good education to students according to the requirements set out in the Primary Education Act. Our offer with regard to education is being tested to meet the norms and standards as set by the Ministry of Education and the Education Inspectorate. Translation, mine].

As-Siddieq primary school has shown its commitment to give only the good quality education to its students. At least, this is what has been written in its website.

In the view of as-Siddieq good quality education is important because it is the key to make children develop well in society. This is also clearly emphasized in its statement:

> *Goed onderwijs is de sleutel voor een goede ontwikkeling van een kind en van de samenleving. Een kind dat goed onderwijs volgt, creëert kansen voor de toekomst en krijgt kennis die kan worden doorgegeven aan de volgende generaties. De As-Siddieqschool kenmerkt zich door kwalitatief goed onderwijs en persoonlijke aandacht voor de leerlingen. De lessen worden gegeven door enthousiaste en bevoegde leerkrachten. Het team van de As-Siddieq ziet elke dag als een nieuwe uitdaging om het talent en ambities van onze leerlingen naar de top te brengen* (www.as-siddieq.nl).

[Good education is the key to the good development of a child and society. A child who follows good education creates opportunities for the future and gets knowledge that can be passed on to the next generations. The As-Siddieq school is characterized by good quality education and personal attention for the students. The lessons are given by enthusiastic and competent teachers. As-Siddieq's team sees every day as a new challenge to bring the talent and ambitions of our students to the top. Translation, mine].

Education is seen as an investment for the future of children, therefore, as-Siddieq insisted to employ only the best teachers to realise that ideals.

In addition, to improve its education quality the schools have been actively involved in any academic competition. For instance, as-Siddieq's students, with three offices in Amsterdam, have participated in debate contest and other projects that are characterized by citizenship. Likewise, to instill discipline for its students the school has specific rules. From group 5, boys and girls are divorced wherever possible and the headscarf is mandatory for girls. Clothing covers the entire body, on hand and face after. From group 4, students must fast during Ramadan. According to Geert Driessen, educationalist at Radboud University Nijmegen and specialising in education for immigrant children, Islamic schools may be positive in certain respects because children go to school in a protected environment. Even though he disagrees with the school's rule to divorce boys from girls in the class (Het Parol, 9 Sep 2017). It is likely that Islamic primary schools in Amsterdam perform well in general. A request of Islamic education is beyond doubt in Amsterdam as the number of students is growing.

(4) Conveying messages of tolerance

In recent years, the tendency of intolerant attitude has strengthened, both internally by religious people and externally. Cases of persecution, burning of houses of worship, and all forms of acts of violence are often commonplace that is put forward, brawls between students become a blurry face for educational institutions in Indonesia (Sutrisno 2019, 341).

The problem of intolerance and radicalism is now a serious problem that must be immediately resolved. Research conducted by the Maarif Institute (2011), Setara Institute (2015), and the Wahid Foundation (2016) shows that radical groups have massively penetrated radical views among the younger generation through educational institutions. Then, reinforced by several surveys which show that students and students tend to have an attitude of intolerance and radicalism that is quite worrying, so do teachers. Symptoms of intolerance and religious-based radicalism will tend to be bigger than issues of ethnicity. Then intolerance and radicalism also occur in social media (Sutrisno 2019, 342).

In a book published by the Maarif Institute, *Menjaga Benteng Kebhinekaan di Sekolah* [Maintaining the Fortress of Diversity in Schools], as quoted in Sutrisno 2019, it is stated that there are three main doors where radical understanding and intolerance penetrates the school environment. First, extracurricular activities. Second, the teacher's role in the teaching and learning process. Third, through weak school policies in controlling the entry of radicalism in schools (Sutrisno 2019, 342).

In the curriculum aspect, Islamic moderation can at least be developed through the formulation of curriculum development principles extracted from the principles of moderation and the use of appropriate approaches in integrating curriculum content. This approach includes four levels of approach, namely the contributory approach, additive approach, transformative approach, and social action approaches (Zuhri 2020, 179). As a comprehensive and integrated approach, Islamic moderation must

also be the identity, vision, style, and main characteristic of Islamic education, not just a particular value. Here, a more constructive step is needed by placing Islamic moderation as the main stream of Islamic education (Zuhri 2020, 170).

In Indonesian context, messages and teachings to respect other people of different faiths and religions are also important to be introduced by teachers teaching Islamic religious education in schools. When the author asked about whether there is specific materials that discusses tolerance in textbook to be taught to the students, Mr. AH stated that there is tolerance material contained in the main textbook published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely the material of Surah al-Kafirun. This material gives an explanation to students about religious tolerance or belief issues between one person and another. He said as follows: "I, as a teacher, must be careful in giving understanding to children regarding the contents of Surat al-Kafirun. Because it is feared that if children understand it wrongly, it will not be in accordance with what is expected by the content of the Surah al-Kafirun itself." Mr. AH further continuous his explanation by stating that he taught the children to always abide in harmony, both among religious people, as well as between people of different religions. It is undeniable that these children will hang out with friends who are not of the same religion, because the school where he is teaching is a public school and those who study here come from different religious backgrounds. So, as he said, he always emphasize to always settle in harmony and strengthen mutual tolerance (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 22, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

Having observed the phenomenon of strong tendencies of intolerance and radicalism in schools, it is believed that this is where the strategic location of mainstreaming religious moderation needs to be done (Sutrisno 2019, 342). There are several strategic steps that the government can take; firstly, religious moderation should be the government's concern in

making the narrative of the national long-term development plan (RPJPN), as the government's seriousness in promoting religious moderation among religious people in Indonesia. Secondly, involving educational institutions: Islamic boarding schools, madrasas and schools as well as universities as well as other non-formal institutions in strengthening human values, values of religious harmony, and religious moderation. Thirdly, develop religious literacy and interfaith education. Fourthly, schools must increase the practice of different religious experiences so that we can establish cooperation between followers of different religions (Sutrisno 2019, 343).

In order to know the dynamics that occur in schools regarding the practice of tolerance by children, I asked about this to the teacher at school. Regarding the tolerance, students often ask whether it is permissible to wish non-Muslim friends a happy holiday, for example wishing them a Merry Christmas. Mr. AH explained to the students that Islamic teachings have introduced religious tolerance. The essence of tolerance is giving the right to others to practice their beliefs. Mr. AH emphasized that Muslims must not prevent people who have other beliefs from performing worship according to their beliefs, because as citizen in Indonesia Muslim live in a pluralistic society. Then there was also a student who asked, "On Eid al-Fitr, some of my non-Muslim friends came and wished me a happy Eid, then what is my attitude towards him, can I also wish him a Merry Christmas?" To this question, Mr. AH responded by saying that Islam is a religion that is *rahmatan lil alamin*, namely giving goodness to all nature. He said as follows: "So give your kindness to others first, but you do not have to follow their worship. So, you can congratulate them, but you don't believe in their beliefs". He explained that Islam is a religion that gives goodness, not hostility. If the students already have a good understanding of tolerance then they will be able to live in harmony and side by side in society (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 22, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

The concept of socio-religious moderation can actually be formulated in its description based on the Qur'an Surah Al-Anbiya verse 107 which reads: "And We did not send you, but to (be) a mercy for the worlds." In the context of life in this world, the word "*rahmat*" (grace) can be interpreted with the moderation of two patterns of relations. First, *rahmatan likulli 'aqilin*. This means that we must always do good and be compassionate to everyone, so the grace is given to everyone. *Rahmat* as an attitude of socio-religious moderation that requires Muslims to be kind to everyone has been exemplified by Prophet Muhammad in the event of the renovation of the Kaaba with the leaders of the Qurays tribe. Second, *rahmatan likulli ghairi 'aqilin*. The point is that in addition to everyone, we must also be merciful to everything. Mercy to anything, because we live not only with humans, but also with the environment around us. Therefore, the understanding of the phrase *rahmatan lil 'alamin* must also reach what is in our environment (Sutrisno 2019, 344).

In the context of the Netherlands, the message of tolerance can be better understood and relevant to the status of Muslims as a minority, who must adapt and integrate with the indigenous people.

Islamic primary schools under the foundations of ISA and Noor (which have been chosen to be discussed in this study) are among the schools in the Netherlands which insist to seek integration into Dutch society. In the following paragraphs I examine, first, schools under the management of ISA foundation and then, schools under the management of Noor foundation consecutively, in terms of their effort in promoting social integration.

Concerning schools under the management of ISA foundation, also referred to as ss-Siddieq school (i.e. al-Jawhara, al-Yaqoet, and al-Maes), I would argue that those schools have done something in terms of promoting social cohesion and

integration into Dutch society. This, for example, can be seen from its vision and mission which say that:

> *Onderwijs en opvoeding zijn beide belangrijke componenten binnen onze school. De opvoeding wordt in belangrijke mate bepaald door de waarden en normen vanuit de Islamitische belevingswereld (zoals die zijn opgeschreven in de Koran en overgeleverd in de Soennah) en de waarden die in het kader van actief burgerschap en sociale integratie zijn geformuleerd* (www.as-siddieq.nl).

> [Education and upbringing are both important components within our school. The upbringing is largely determined by the values and norms of the Islamic experience world (as written in the Qur'an and handed down in the Sunnah) and the values formulated in the context of active citizenship and social integration. Translation, mine].

It is clear that the school has a mission to produce pupils who are growing up under not only the principles of norms and values of Islam derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, but also the values of active citizenship and social integration.

It is also emphasised in the mission statement that the children should be prepared for the world where they will live, as further stated,

> *"Het uiteindelijke leerdoel van het primair onderwijs is, dat het kind zo goed mogelijk wordt voorbereid op het voortgezet onderwijs en de wereld waarin het kind leeft"* (www.as-siddieq.nl). [The primary objective of primary education is that the child is prepared as well as possible for secondary education and the world in which the child lives. Translation, mine].

I think this is a good point for the Islamic education to adapt with the local environment, i.e. the Dutch society, because it is the place where the children are going to live. This mission

statement holds true for all As-Siddieq schools (al-Jawhara, al-Yaqoet, and al-Maes). Making the goal of education to produce and prepare pupils growing up holding Islamic identity and at the same time being active citizen who are willing to integrate and actively participate into Dutch society as schools' mission is a great job.

(5) How to instill tolerance among fellow Muslims

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has designated 2019 as the "Year of Religious Moderation". Religious moderation is used as a jargon and breath in every program and policy made by the Ministry of Religion. Religious moderation which is meant in this context is to bring people into a moderate understanding, not being extreme in religion, and also not deifying the ratio that thinks freely without limits (Hefni 2020, 2).

Ironically, the movement of hard liners who display religious narratives aggressively and emotionally, has actually won sympathy in the hearts of some Muslims. This boisterous sympathy is obtained from the digital space, where the level of distribution is so massive and easy (Hefni 2020, 4). Digital spaces are used by certain groups to foster conflict and revive identity politics. The digital space is now more inclined to be dominated by religious values that lead to exclusivity. Not only that, religious teachings are opposed to state policies (Hefni 2020, 3).

Indonesia is a multicultural country so that in this case indicator of national commitment tolerance is needed. Tolerance is an attitude to provide space that does not interfere with the rights of others to believe, express their beliefs, and express opinions, even though it is different from what we believe. Thus, tolerance refers to an open, airy, voluntary, and gentle attitude in accepting differences. Tolerance is not only related to religious

beliefs, but can be related to differences in race, gender, ethnicity, and culture (Rahayu 2020, 33).

Islamic educational institutions have a great responsibility in spreading Islam which is *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. It is very important to help someone achieve success by having a moderate attitude. Formal educational institutions are very strategic pillars for transferring the values of tolerance, moderation, respect, and empathy as well as for developing non-violent attitudes towards students.

In its implementation tolerance can be against outsiders (toward people of different faiths and religions) and can also be internal (against fellow Muslims who have different thoughts and traditions). Now let's see how this happens in the Indonesian context.

When the author asked on how to instill tolerance among fellow Muslims. Mr. AH explained that the background of the parents of Muslim students at the school where he is teaching was varied. Some are from the Nahdlatul Ulama background, some are from Muhammadiyah, and some are from others. Differences occur, for example, about whether or not it is necessary to read the supplication of *Qunut* in the Fajr prayer. Mr. AH explained to the students that the difference was a blessing, not a split, including in terms of differences in worship procedures. He explained that reading the supplication of *Qunut* is sunnah in the Fajr prayer, therefore students are welcome to read it or not. Even in the reading of *Qunut* supplications itself there are also differences between one and another. In the practice of prayer lessons, Mr. AH and another teacher even had a child who did not want to recite the readings in the prayer but just kept quiet, so the teacher was confused. It was taught to the students that in reading prayers there are still variations, including *Qunut* reading. According to Mr. AH it is necessary to explain to the students that in Islam, what is taught is not only one way or one thing but many things so that students can choose which one they believe in

(Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 22, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

So, the teacher emphasized that the children should practice the worship practices they believe in, and don't blame other people's practices. At first, the teachers were also worried that the children would blame each other. For example, those who read the supplication of *Qunut* say that those who do not recite *Qunut* prayer are invalid and so on. Regarding this *khilafiyah* problem, Mr. AH replied that he explained in detail to the students so that they had a good understanding and would not blame each other or feel the most self-righteous (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on August 22, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

Mr. MRM, a male teacher of Islamic religious education at a private Islamic elementary school in Semarang district, states that the school where is teaching strongly advocates tolerance. Students enrolled in his school are all Muslim but they come from various backgrounds, some are from Nahdlatul Ulama, some are from Muhammadiyah or others. As a form of actualization of moderate Islam, tolerance is highly emphasized and practiced in the classroom. For example, for Islamic religious lessons, when explaining about prayer, teachers of religious subjects first ask the students what their parent practice at home. For example, for the dawn prayer (*shubuh*), are their parents at home reading the *Qunut* supplication or not? Mr. MRM said that he had to explain and teach the reading of the *Qunut* supplication, but then handed it over to the students, if the parents at home do the *Qunut* supplication then he let the students do it, for the students whose parents don't read the *Qunut* supplication at home, then the teacher does not force, but recommends the student listen to the teacher's explanation for his/her knowledge (Interview with Mr. MRM at his school on August 29, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

Regarding the tolerance to non-Muslims, as Mr. MRM pointed out, students usually ask if it is allowed to say Merry Christmas to neighbors who are Christians. Mr. MRM stated that

he usually explained to the students that the ulama differed on this matter. Some say that it is prohibited because it can tarnish the Islamic faith. But there are also scholars who allow it and consider it only as a form of respect for fellow human beings (other people of different religions). But according to Mr. MRM teachers leave it to the students to say it or not. However, to maintain the faith they have, students who want to give greetings are directed to say with the diction such as "Congratulations on your celebration for Christmas". According to him, this has a different meaning from the editorial of "Merry Christmas". The first expression indicates that those who are congratulated are the activities of those who celebrate Christmas. So, it does not enter into the Christmas ritual itself, because some scholars consider it a part of belief (Interview with Mr. MRM at his school on August 29, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

Another real example that happened in the classroom regarding the application of tolerance was expressed by Mrs. NH, a female teacher of Islamic religious education in a public elementary school in Semarang regency. According to her, the students asked about the number of *rakaat* in the Tarawih prayer in the month of Ramadan, which one is correct between 20 *rakaat* and 8 one. So far, what has happened in practice in Muslim communities in Indonesia is that people from the Nahdlatul Ulama group teach their children to pray tarawih as much as 20 *rakaat*, while people from the Muhammadiyah group teach their children to pray tarawih as much as 8 *rakaat*. Because the place where Mrs. NH teaches is a public elementary school, and the students there come from various background such as from NU and Muhammadiyah, so the question arises is that which of the tarawih prayer practices (20 and 8 *rakaat*) is the most correct? To this question, Mrs. NH explained that both practices are correct and permissible, the 20 *rakaat* is correct and the 8 *rakaat* is also true because everyone has their own arguments. What is not true is if the children do not carry out the tarawih at all. Another problem that arose in the class was the question of whether they (Muslim students) could wish their Christian

neighbor, Mrs. NH explained that it was okay, because the purpose was to establish harmony with the neighbors, but she told the children not to believe in it because as a Muslim every children already has his/her own faith. Then, the sixth grader students also asked whether it was okay to celebrate Valentine's Day, Mrs. NH responded that in Islam, the essence in the valentine's day is to celebrate and give care and love to someone else, whereas in Islam love and car is to be shown dan given to those around us every day, not just once in a year (Interview with Mrs. NH at her school on September 12, 2021 at 08.00-10.00). So, from the above description, it is clear that Mrs. NH always tries hard to instill tolerance among her students who have difference perspectives, including in religious practices such as tarawih prayers in the month of Ramadan.

The practice of tolerance in class also taught and emphasized by Mrs. RUS when teaching religion in her class. Regarding the differences in the practice of Fajr prayer between those who recite the *Qunut* prayer and those who do not recite it, the students asked about the validity of those who do not read the *Qunut* supplications. Mrs. RUS explained that *Qunut* is sunnah, if we read it we will get a reward, but if we do not read it our prayer is still valid. Mrs. RUS also explained that apart from the *Qunut* supplication, there are also other differences among children's religious practices, between the students with NU backgrounds and Muhammadiyah backgrounds, namely in terms of reading the "iftitah" in prayer. Students from NU backgrounds read "kabira wal hamdulillah katsira…" to the end, while students from Muhammadiyah backgrounds read "allahumaa baid baini…" until the end. The students asked which of the readings was the most correct and valid. Mrs. RUS explains and teaches that both are allowed and legal because everything has its own argument, students are welcome to choose which one they like. Previously, as he told the writer, Mrs. RUS can only memorize one of them, namely "kabira ...", but after finding the phenomenon of students from a Muhammadiyah background

reading the iftitah prayer "allahumma baid baini ...", she began to study the readings, and now she admits that she has memorized the prayer reading "allahumma baid baini…" (Interview with Mrs. RUS at her school on September 26, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

Mr. NS told the author that tolerance is emphasized and encouraged to the children at school. The children asked the teacher if it is permissible to participate in celebrating Christmas and Vesak Day. Mr. NS explained that the children can wish their friends a merry Christmas, but he advises them not to join the worship, like the Christmas mass. Mr. NS even told his personal experiences to his students. Because he has a Christian family too, he always gets an invitation to Christmas mass every year and gets gifts from the church, but he told his family that he could not attend the Christmas mass at the church because he already has his own Islamic belief. He also has experience in teaching religion lessons in Islamic religious Education in class IV. The children debated which one is the most correct when reading *iftitah* between the readings "kabira..." until the end, and the readings of "allahumma baid baini..." until the end. He explained to the students that both were taught in Islam and both were correct. The children were advised to choose one of the readings which they know by heart (Interview with Mr. NS at his school on October 03, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

For the Dutch context, the literature available to the authors at the time of writing this report is relevant to tolerance for outsiders. One real example that is relevant to this discussion is the event when As-Siddieq participated in a debate competition in Amsterdam in April 2017.

As reported in a Dutch newspaper, *Het Parool,* there was debate contest for elementary school students in Amsterdam, in which As-Siddieq also participated. During the debate, ten and eleven-year-olds discussed statements dealing with multicultural society: whether it is important for children to engage in each other's background. The students proved extremely tolerant. As-

Siddieq's students also defended the statement that it is important for children to grow up among other cultures. During the jury meeting, another performance followed. Children entered the stage to perform dancing, but then As-Siddieq's students left the hall soon. The departure of the children itself went smoothly and was not disturbing (Couzy, 15 April 2017). The As-Siddieq's students leaving the hall before a performance of street dancers began was driven by their faith that the students were not allowed to look at it (Couzy, 16 May 2017).

What followed was a debate about whether the student's departure was a form of integration, or just an example of segregation. The school has withdrawn from a performance that is completely normal in the Netherlands. Governor Simone Kukenheim (Education) was expected to investigate what Islamic school As-Siddieq had done in terms of citizenship and integration (Couzy, 16 May 2017). Is it precisely the ultimate integration that As-Siddieq's students participate in the debate and that others take their faith into consideration? According to Geert Driessen, As-Siddieq participation in the debate competition is positive but walking away when the music is concerned is not nice, as people live in a society with a lot of music. He considered it as a form of segregation (Couzy, 15 April 2017). It is worth noting that music and dance may not fit within fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, but according to the mainstream interpretation of Islam, music is not forbidden.

(6) Habituation in the introduction of moderate Islam

Continuous mainstreaming of religious moderation through dialogue and digital space channels is very important so that Indonesia, as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, can become a laboratory for peace (Hefni 2020, 5). As is known, Indonesia is a plural and multicultural country with various types of ethnicity, religion, language, race, and various

other differences. However, this diversity still brings people to live harmoniously side by side (Hefni 2020, 6).

Wasathiyyah or religious moderation is actually the essence and substance of religious teachings that are not at all excessive, either in perspective or attitude. The principle of religious moderation (*wasathiyyah*) is an attitude and perspective that is full of values of balance and justice. Thus, religious moderation can be understood as a perspective, attitude and behavior that is in the middle position without being excessive in religion, that is, not being extreme (Hefni 2020, 6).

Religious moderation is defined as a religious attitude that is balanced between the practice of one's own religion (exclusive) and respect for the religious practices of others with different beliefs (inclusive). So that this balance or middle way in practicing religion will avoid excessive extreme attitudes, fanaticism and revolutionary attitudes in religion (Rahayu 2020, 33).

In the Indonesian context, to be able to identify how strong a person's religious moderation is and how much vulnerability they have, there are indicators of religious moderation that can be used, namely: (1) national commitment, (2) tolerance, (3) anti-violence and (4) accommodating local culture (Rahayu 2020, 33). Furthermore, it is explained in the book of Religious Moderation, published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019), that the National Commitment Indicator is important in order to see the extent to which a person's perspective, attitudes, and religious practices have an impact on loyalty to the basic consensus of nationality. This is related to the acceptance of *Pancasila* as the state ideology, its attitude towards ideological challenges that are contrary to *Pancasila* and nationalism (Rahayu 2020, 33).

Regarding the habituation carried out by Islamic religious teachers in introducing moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*) or religious

moderation in Indonesian context, it seems that it differs between one school in a certain area and schools in another place. The difference also depends on the type of school, whether it is a public or private school.

Concerning the habituation efforts carried out by schools in the context of introducing moderate Islam to students, Mr. AH, a male teacher of Islamic religious education at a public elementary school in the city of Semarang, explained that what happened at the school where he is teaching was that every day before going into the class in the morning there was an overall refraction, all students were invited to gather in the school yard and then an activity called literacy is carried out by reading certain verses of the Quran for Muslims, and for non-Muslims there is also a separate reading in a special room. (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on September 05, 2021 at 16.00-17.00)

All students are accustomed to have a sense of love for the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The procedure is that early in the morning the students are invited to sing the national anthem, Indonesia Raya under the flagpole, this is done every day. After that, Muslim children were accustomed to reading *al-Asma' al-Husna*, while non-Muslims were also given a separate place in a special room and accompanied by their respective religious teachers. At the time of reading *al-Asma' al-Husna*, an explanation of life related to the *al-Asma' al-Husna* theme is inserted. This kind of habituation has given a lot of enlightenment to children. After this activity was completed, the children were then combined into one, where the children were introduced to literacy, the children were encouraged to read books in the library. In this session the children were explained and given an understanding of how-to live-in harmony and side by side as citizens who respect and appreciate the differences that exist (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on September 05, 2021 at 16.00-17.00).

This habituation is said to be part of the school program that aims to increase faith and love for the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Because the teachers also found cases where there was an understanding that respecting the flag was considered as act of associating with god because it was considered worshiping the flag. The children were given an explanation that respect for the Red and White Flag is part of love for the homeland, and love for the homeland is recommended by our religion.

Mr. MRM, a male teacher of Islamic religious education at a private Islamic elementary school in Semarang district, explained to the author in his interview that in principle the Islam taught to students is moderate Islam that advocates tolerance for diversity. Then he explained that at this school there is also a habituation for students. Habituation that occurs in this school is every morning at 07.30-08.30 the pupils are scheduled to do memorizing the Qur'an. This activity is carried out from Monday to Friday. Meanwhile, every Saturday there is a reading of *al-Asma' al-Husna* at the opening of the Reading and Writing Al-Qur'an (BTQ). For memorizing the Qur'an, the target is for grades 1-2 students to memorize chapter 30, grade 3-4 are targeted to memorize chapter 29, grade 5-6 are targeted to memorize chapter 30. Despite this target, the realization is only around 40% of 6th grade students who can actually memorize 3 chapters (juz 28, 29, 30). In addition, Islamic character is also instilled in the students' personalities. At this school, students are accustomed to the program called Islamic Personal Development (BPI), which is taught every Saturday (07.30-08.30), before the regular lessons begin (Interview with Mr. MRM at his school on August 29, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

Mrs. NH, a female teacher of Islamic religious education at one of public elementary schools in Semarang district, gave information that for the habituation of students at the school where she is teaching is to read *al-Asma' al-Husna* together in the

school yard, held every day (Monday to Saturday) in the morning at 06.45-07.45 before starting regular lessons. In addition, according to Mrs. NH, religious habituation is also carried out during Islamic religious education lessons, namely by *Tadarrus* of readings in prayers as well as reading and writing Al-Qur'an (BTQ) activities (Interview with Mrs. NH at her school on September 12, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

Meanwhile Mrs. UR, a female teacher of Islamic religious education at one of public elementary schools in Semarang district, informed that at the school where she is teaching habituation is only carried out on Thursdays, by reading *al-Asma' al-Husna*, between 06.45-07.00. Mrs. UR added that students from lower grades (1-3) must follow the habit of *Tadarrus* of readings in prayer. Meanwhile, for students from high grades (4-6), they must take *Tadarrus* of short letters of the Qur'an, and after the lesson is over, they must join the Dzuhur prayer in congregation at school. But since the covid-19 pandemic where there is a ban on gathering and no face-to-face meetings, everything has stopped (Interview with Mrs. UR at her school on September 19, 2021 at 08.00-09.30)

Mrs. RUS, a female teacher of Islamic religious education from one of the public elementary schools in Semarang Regency, told the author that at her place, the habit of reading *al-Asma' al-Husna* is carried out only on days where the teacher teaches Islamic religious education materials in the classroom. Mrs. RUS also added that in addition to reciting *al-Asma' al-Husna*, the habituation carried out in her school is for the lower class: memorizing short letters from the Qur'an, and for high class: memorizing the readings in prayer from the intention to the end. This habit is carried out every Friday, and in addition to that, all students from classes 1-6 are required to join the *Dhuha* prayer together in the yard, guided by the assigned imam (Interview with Mrs. RUS at her school on September 26, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

While Mr. NS, a male teacher of Islamic religious education from a public elementary school in Semarang Regency, said that the habituation in his school is carried out every Monday to Saturday. Students in grades 1-6 are required to take part in the morning ceremony at 06.30-07.00 by reading *al-Asma' al-Husna*. Then continued, at 07.00-07.15 for high class (grades 4-6) with *Dhuha* prayer. Then in the afternoon, after finishing the lessons, high-class students were required to join the congregational prayer in the school prayer room (Interview with Mr. NS at his school on October 03, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

Meanwhile Mr. MY, a male teacher of Islamic religious education from a public elementary school in Semarang Regency, said that at his school, habituation is carried out every day at 07.00-07.15 by reading *al-Asma al-Husna* in the classroom led directly by the religion teacher. In addition, there is also an addition for students from high grades who are required to join the *Dhuha* prayer (Interview with Mr. MY at his school on October 10, 2021 at 08.30-12.00).

Based on the interview with the respondents, the writer can conclude that it turns out that for the habituation activity, each school has a different duration, but for public elementary schools, habituation is generally filled with reading *al-Asma al-Husna* and praying *Dhuha*, and for private schools more habituations are given.

(7) How to deal with Takfiri groups

In Indonesia, as many researchers have pointed out, there has been a phenomenon that a group considers itself the most correct in terms of worship while other people outside the group are considered wrong and even considered infidels. This group is often referred to as the *Takfiri* group. It is not impossible that the notion of *takfiri* has also begun to infect and spread to school-age children. To anticipate this, Mr. AH, a male teacher of Islamic

Religious Education at one of the public elementary schools in the city of Semarang, informed that at the school where he is teaching, good morals or behaviors are explained by the religious teacher, and it has also been included in the textbooks (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on October 14, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

Mr. AH added that he introduced commendable morals to children so that their understanding was correct and not deviated, one of which was to consider themselves the most correct. He explained that when a person feels he is the most right, it is wrong because it is an attitude of arrogance. If it is returned to religious teachings, absolute truth belongs only to Allah. Such an arrogant attitude can be removed from children if they have good morals or commendable behavior. So, according to Mr. AH, the children must be given an understanding and taught that living in the world is not alone but side by side with other people. Other people have differences such as ethnicity, race and religion. As a moderate form of Islam, it must be introduced to these children that differences are commonplace and mutual tolerance is needed in order to create a good and harmonious and peaceful life within these differences (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on October 14, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

Furthermore, Mr. AH also introduced the students that Islam is a humanist religion. This means that Islam views other people outside of Islam as being brothers to Muslims. So, it is necessary to introduce children to the concept of brotherhood (*ukhuwah*). In Islam, the terms *ukhwuwah Islamiyah* (brotherhood of fellow Muslims), *ukhuwah wathaniyah* (brotherhood of fellow citizens) and *ukhuwah basyariah* (brotherhood of fellow human beings) are known. The point is that we are all brothers and sisters, so we are not allowed to be hostile to each other. Differences that exist should not be used as a reason or cause for enmity but must be used as a blessing. Moreover, if what happens is only differences in terms of worship among fellow Muslims, then it should not be a cause of division.

Actually, this *Takfiri* group just can't see the difference, where it considers other people who have a way of worship that is not the same as their group are considered infidels (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on October 14, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

Mr. AH said that the principle of moderate Islam is tolerance. He emphasized to the students what good deeds are like, what bad deeds are like, how to respect differences, without hurting each other. In addition, it is also taught to children to be willing to introspect themselves, do not feel that we are the most right and outside of us all are wrong. Islam is a religion that is *rahmatan lil alamin*, which provides tranquility, peace and goodness for all.

Mr. AH introduces students to have a good and correct understanding of commendable morals, and so as not to justify that he/she is the most right and others are wrong. Indeed, there are symptoms that appear that among the students there are those who feel that they are the most self-righteous, and their worship is the most diligent on their own. However, it can be considered as someone who is in the process, and fortunately no one is going to disbelieve others. So, it is important to instill in the students the teachings of commendable and despicable morals and their effects. Mr. AH believes that introducing good morals will eliminate the self-righteous attitude of the students at the school where he is teaching (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on October 14, 2021 at 16.00-17.30).

In the context of the Netherlands, maybe the issue of *Takfiri* is less relevant to discuss given their status as a minority. Leaders of Muslim communities and Islamic schools are more focused on campaigning for social cohesion and integration into local communities.

Now, what about schools under the management of Noor foundation (al-Hambra in Utrecht, al-Ihsaan in Lelystad, al-Iman in Almere, Ayoub in Hilversum, and Er-Risalah in Leiden), did

they do something in terms of enhancing social cohesion and integration? First, let us examine their vision and mission. In the school guidebook of these schools, the vision and mission are clearly presented. Al-Hambra school has the mission of equipping its students as much as possible to realize their talents and the ability to take responsibility for themselves and the environment. They distinguish themselves from other school from an Islamic philosophy and workplace. Its pedagogical vision is that equality between people is an important starting point. It encourages the children learning to bring respect for values and norms of others, distinguishing themselves in race, status, disability, culture or belief (*Schoolgids* Al-Hambra 2016-2017, p.7).

Al-Iman school considers its mission as a goal aimed at children, that the two sources of Muslims, the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah form the basis of their education and their participation in society. The mission of Al-Iman is as follows: "Based on Islamic identity, we help our children in their social and cognitive development by providing them with high quality education so that they are able to contribute in a responsible and respectful way to the society they are part of" (*Schoolgids* Al-Iman 2016-2017, p.7). Preparing the students to be a responsible member of society becomes a concern in al-Iman Islamic primary school.

Al-Ihsaan school, in its vision, emphasizes the right of Muslims to set out the life according to the values and standards of Islam derived from the two sources (the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet) since the laws and regulations in the Netherlands allow Muslim to establish facilities on Islamic basis, and thus allow Muslims to express their identity. Likewise, it is important that, "Muslims make use of all opportunities in the Netherlands so that they can participate optimally. Muslims in the Netherlands have as much responsibility as the other social groups in social processes" (*Schoolgids* Al-Ihsaan 2015-2016, p.10). Here, al-Ihsaan also emphasizes the importance of preparing the students to participate optimally in society. This

means it did promote integration. In this discussion I cannot include the school of Ayoub in Hilversum, its website is not available.

With regard to Er-Riseleh, its *Schoolgids* (2017) stated that, "it is important that Muslims make use of all opportunities in the Netherlands so that they can participate optimally". It gives a statement that, "Muslims in the Netherlands have as much responsibility as the other social groups in social processes. Education should prepare and enable children to fully function and participate in Dutch society, with the emphasis to do this from their own philosophical and cultural backgrounds" (*Schoolgids* Er-Risalah 2017-2018, p.9).

The vision of Er-Riseleh looks similar to that of Al-Ihsaan. *Schoolgids* of these schools confirmed that students learning in those schools are being prepared to participate actively in the Dutch society. All Islamic primary schools under the foundations of ISA and Noor explicitly mentioned in their mission statements to produce students that fit to integrate with the Dutch society. The future will determine if they are successful in integrating themselves in the host society.

C. Optimizing the role of Islamic religious education teachers

I need to emphasize here that Islamic religious education teachers have a very central position in the national education system in Indonesia. In relation to giving, delivering and inculcating religious values or characters into the souls of children, the teacher has a very important and strategic role and function. These roles include, among others, teachers as conservator, innovator, transmitter, transformer, organizer (See Kuswanto 2014).

Teachers have several important roles in the scope of national education. These include (1) the conservator (maintainer)

of the value system which is the source of the norm of maturity, (2) Innovators (developers) of the value system of science, (3) Transmitter (successor) of the existing value system to students, (4) Transformer (translator) of the existing value system through the application in themselves and their behavior, which is then actualized in the interaction process with students, (5) Organizer (coordinator) to create an educational process that can be accounted for answer, both formally and informally (to students, as well as to Allah) (Purbajati 2020, 189). The role of a teacher in building religious moderation in schools can be reflected in his abilities. Ability to parse differences in race, language, skin color, and other differences. As previously stated, the teacher is a role model for students. Thus, a student can imitate the actions taken by the teacher at school. The pilot effort can become a habit that can then be embedded in students (Purbajati 2020, 191).

Now let's see if the roles and functions of the teachers mentioned above can be carried out properly by religious teachers in relation to the introduction and delivery of the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah* or religious moderation or religious tolerance to students in the schools where they are teaching.

(1) Teacher as conservator

In order to instill and apply the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah* or build religious moderation or strengthen religious tolerance in schools, teachers of Islamic Religious Education subjects can play their role as conservators (maintainers). The basic role of a religious teacher is to be a conservator. Given that the concept of Islamic *wasathiyyah* or religious moderation is a new thing to be conveyed to students, teachers are required to be able to understand in advance what and how the concept of Islamic *wasathiyyah* or religious moderation is. The concept of *wasathiyyah* Islam or religious moderation in this aspect of worship should not mix up the understanding of each religion, but

stick to the religious beliefs of each student. In carrying out its role as a conservator who must maintain *wasathiyyah* Islamic values or religious moderation, teachers are not only required to be active in the classroom but are also expected to be active outside of class hours, and teachers must be an example for their students.

Mrs. NH, a female teacher of Islamic religious education at an elementary school in Semarang, said the following:

> In my opinion, *wasathiyyah* Islam is the same as religious moderation, which is currently being widely discussed in the community. For me, the existence of *wasathiyyah* Islam or religious moderation includes all aspects of both *fiqh*, *aqidah*, interpretation, thought and da'wah. As a teacher of Islamic subjects, I am serious about maintaining the Islamic values of *wasathiyyah* or religious moderation. I do that every Monday when the children have a flag ceremony. I always tell the children about the importance of tolerance and respect for other people, even though they have different religions and beliefs. (Interview with Mrs. NH at her school on September 19, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

On another occasion, MW, one of the students of Mrs. NH, said:

> Mrs. NH is a wise and friendly person. She is also a broad-minded person. She never forbade us to make friends with those of different religions (Informal conversation, on September 19, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

This student's confession illustrates that Mrs. NH is able to provide an understanding of moderate Islamic teachings (*wasathiyyah*) that influence her thought and action, where students are not prohibited from associating with those of different religions. It is intended to build values of justice, unity and brotherhood.

Mr. AH, a male teacher of Islamic religious education in a public elementary school in Semarang, stated that as a conservator (custodian) of the value system, he had a great responsibility towards himself and his students. He said as follows:

> In my opinion, as a conservator, the teacher must give an understanding of what the value of *wasathiyyah* Islam or moderate Islam is, so that it can provide understanding to students. In addition, he expressed his opinion that as a conservator, teachers should set an example on how to behave to those of different religions, how to act fairly and not offend them (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on September 05, 2021 at 16.00-17.00).

To put it in another words, in carrying out its role as conservator in maintaining the values of moderate Islamic teachings and in building religious moderation, the teacher has a big responsibility to be a good example to other students and teachers of different religions. The results of my interview with the religious education teacher also stated views that religious moderation was a reinforcement for religious harmony by prioritizing tolerance.

(2) Teacher as innovator

In order to instill and apply the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah* or build religious moderation or strengthen religious tolerance in schools, teachers of Islamic Religious Education subject can play their role as innovators (developers). Teachers should have a role as an innovator, namely being able to provide innovation in instilling *wasathiyyah* Islamic teachings and building religious moderation in schools. The innovation of a religious teacher does not escape his role as a central figure in personality development, especially to build religious moderation.

Mr. MY, a male teacher of Islamic religious education in a public elementary school in Semarang district, gave his response through interviews regarding innovations in instilling the teachings of *wasathiyyah* Islam and building religious moderation, he said the following:

> So, we innovate with programs that are outside of school hours, we practice prayer, we do *Dhuha* in congregation and every PHBI (Islamic Holiday Celebration) we carry out. Even we coordinate when carrying out religious guidance (Interview with Mr. MY at his school on October 10, 2021 at 08.30-12.00).

Innovations made by Islamic religious education teachers can increase students' awareness in understanding moderate Islamic teachings and are able to build values of religious moderation such as increasing a sense of unity and brotherhood through celebrations of Islamic and national holidays involving students from religions other than Islam in their implementation. All of the interviews above show that various kinds of innovations carried out in each elementary school are carried out solely to build religious moderation and introduce *wasathiyyah* Islam in the schools concerned.

The implementation of innovation by Islamic religious education teachers is essentially done by providing an understanding of what religious moderation is, and how to address the strengthening of these values to the students. The results of the interviews above show that teachers have their own innovations, in an effort to build religious moderation in their respective schools, either through learning in the classroom or outside the classroom, whether structured in schoolwork programs or not programmed.

When asked about who should be involved in the efforts of instilling Islamic teachings of *wasathiyyah* and religious moderation into students at school, Mrs. RUS, a female teacher

of Islamic religious education at a public elementary school in Semarang district, said the following: "In my opinion, all teachers should be involved and are called to contribute to the efforts to inculcate the teachings of *wasathiyyah* Islam and build religious moderation." In the 2013 curriculum, as Mrs. RUS pointed out, "it is clear that all of them must carry out efforts to achieve core competencies in the form of social and religious." (Interview with Mrs. RUS at her school on September 26, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

According to Mrs. RUS, not only Islamic religious education teachers that must play an active role, but also all existing teachers must play an active role in carrying out activities to support religious moderation and the mainstreaming of *wasathiyyah* Islam in schools. If Muslim students hold fast boarding (*pesantren kilat*) activities, non-Muslim students also participate in similar activities to improve spiritually. Furthermore, religious moderation is the model of Moderate Islam or *Wasathiyyah* Islam, which can adapt to being in the middle. That is, being able to accept various groups, values such as fairness and balance that was exemplified in class to students who are non-Muslims because of limitations that makes students to participate in fair behavior. There should be no discrimination against friends who have other religions. So, the unity and brotherhood was always emphasized. Then, the simplicity is not exaggerating, being religious according to the teachings, which certainly do not need to be excessive and extreme fanatic was also stressed. (Interview with Mrs. RUS at her school on September 26, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

It can be concluded that the values of religious moderation are the implementation of *wasathiyyah* Islam or moderate Islam which accepts all people with different backgrounds, whether ethnicity, race, or religion without weakening a Muslim's belief in religion by upholding values such as fair, balanced, unity and brotherhood, as well as simplicity in religion and not extreme fanaticism in carrying out their religious teachings.

Regarding factors or conditions that support teachers in instilling the teachings of *wasathiyyah* Islam and building religious moderation in the school environment, Mrs. NH, a female teacher of Islamic religious education at a public elementary school in Semarang district, expressed her opinion as follows:

> The experience I have at my school is that all the teachers always support each other when there is a religious activity. Likewise, the students show their enthusiasm if there is a religious activity they all participate. In addition to the cohesiveness of the teacher, there is also appreciation from parents of the students. This is a factor that makes teachers enthusiastic in carrying out religious activities in which messages and invitations to respect each other are conveyed to others, including friends who have different religions. The surrounding community is also open and supportive of religious activities carried out in schools. (Interview with Mrs. NH at her school on September 12, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

Mr. NS, a male teacher of Islamic religious education in Semarang district, shared his experience that at the school where he is teaching, the principal is very supportive of the religious activities he carries out at school. According to him, this is a good condition for him so that he can convey messages of moderation or *wasathiyyah* Islam to the students smoothly. (Interview with Mr. NS at his school on October 03, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

Based on several interviews that the author conducted, it can be concluded that the factors or conditions that support teachers in building religious moderation or instilling the concept of moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*) are numerous, such as competent Islamic religious education teachers, besides that there is also cooperation between teachers and the local community. However, some of the teachers interviewed by the author also

complained about the lack of infrastructure, such as an inadequate prayer room in the school environment.

(3) Teacher as transmitters

In order to instill and apply the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah* or build religious moderation or strengthen religious tolerance in schools, Islamic Religious Education subject teachers can play their role as Transmitters (successors). Islamic religious education teachers can carry out their role as transmitters, namely continuing the values of *wasathiyyah* Islamic teachings in building religious moderation in schools in several ways, which include motivating students at school.

Responding to this, Mrs. RUS, a female teacher of Islamic religious education at an elementary school in Semarang Regency said as follows:

> Usually, I give inspirational Islamic stories to children. Through Islamic stories at the time of the Prophet and his companions, I included messages of moderation in religion or moderate Islam to children. Sometimes I also share my own experiences with the children to motivate the good things in their lives. The motivation that I give is not only during class hours but also outside hours and sometimes outside of school. (Interview with Mrs. RUS at her school on September 26, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

AM, a male student in Mrs. RUS class, confirmed that it is right, the teacher often uses Islamic and inspirational stories to motivate children. AM added that he liked and enjoyed the inspiring Islamic stories had been conveyed by the teachers, because they could be an inspiration for him (Interview with a student of Mrs. RUS, September 26, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

Motivating students in order to build awareness of religious moderation and instilling the teachings of middle way Islam (*wasathiyyah*) was also carried out by Mr. AH, a male

teacher of Islamic religious education in the city of Semarang. He said the following:

> I personally always motivate children by giving them understanding. Sometimes I also provide motivation through inspirational Islamic stories and stories of the prophets. I usually give these stories when I explain the lessons in class, usually when I explain the lessons I also insert Islamic stories that fit the context. (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on September 05, 2021 at 16.00-17.00).

Mrs. NH, one of the female teachers of Islamic religious education in Semarang district, stated that in motivating her students she sometimes did it directly or indirectly. She did direct motivation verbally through stories, while indirectly by providing good examples (Interview with Mrs. NH at her school on September 12, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

From interviews with teachers and students, the author got information that teachers motivate students not only in class, but also outside of class. I think this is something good that needs to be maintained and even improved. Because the teacher gives motivation to students, especially outside the classroom, it indicates that there is a close teacher-student relationship. This kind of atmosphere is needed in a healthy and dynamic learning process.

It should be noted here that the values of religious moderation or *wasathiyyah* Islam that need to be instilled in students include; tolerance (*tasammuh*), fair *('adl)*, balanced (*tawazun*), simplicity, unity and brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*), upright and firm in religion (*i'tidal*), egalitarian or not discriminating against other religions (*musawah*), and maintaining civility or morals (*tahhadhur*). These values must be built and strengthened, in accordance with the values aspired by

the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia as well.

(4) Teacher as transformers

In order to instill and apply the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah* or build religious moderation or strengthen religious tolerance in schools, teachers of Islamic Religious Education subject can play their role as transformers. The transformation carried out by Islamic religious education teachers in building religious moderation and instilling moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*) can be implemented through the teacher becoming a figure (example or role model). In motivating and providing guidance to students as an effort to continue the value system, it requires the role of the teacher as a transformer which cannot be separated from how the attitude of the teacher sets an example and becomes a figure for each student.

The teacher as an important figure in the class has a great responsibility to his/her students. Therefore, in his/her capacity as a transformer, the teacher must set a good example to his/her students not only in words but also in actions. In response to this, Mr. MY, a male teacher of Islamic religious education at an elementary school in Semarang district said the following:

> I think the teacher should be able to set a good example for the students, if possible, directly through actions, not just verbally. For example, during the clean Friday program, we as teachers do not only order the children, for example by saying "let's get a broom, clean the yard", but it will be more effective if we also sweep the yard together with them. It would be much more effective than just giving orders. If we participate in doing it with them and set an example through direct action, they will easily catch and understand what is suggested by the teacher (Interview with Mr. MY at his school on October 10, 2021 at 08.30-12.00).

Mrs. UR, one of the female teachers of Islamic religious education at an elementary school in Semarang district, expressed her view that in classroom learning practices, as role models, teachers must show fairness to their students. It is not allowed to give different treatment between students with one another, including students of different religions. In public schools, there may be students of other religions. So, those who are non-Muslims must be treated as the same fair as to the Muslim students, there should be no discrimination (Interview with Mrs. UR at her school on September 19, 2021 at 08.00-10.00). In the author's opinion, what was conveyed by Mrs. UR is true. As a teacher, in the classroom she must be fair to all students and must not be favoritism and must be fair in giving assignments and in delivering lessons.

Mr. AH, one of the male teachers of Islamic religious education at an elementary school in the city of Semarang, told the author that the religious moderation or *wasathiyyah* Islam that he advocated at his school was not only focused on students who are Muslim. Mr. AH stated that religious moderation or *wasathiyyah* Islam also needs to be introduced to people of different religions through his attitude as a figure in school. Becoming an important figure at school, according to Mr. AH, a teacher must be able to position himself or herself according to his/ her function. For example, when in a big agenda, such as when commemorating the national day of Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) a teacher must be able to mingle with every student (Interview with Mr. AH at his house on October 14, 2021 at 16.00-17.00). I think what was conveyed by Mr. AH is right, and indeed, a teacher must be able to position himself /herself as a fair role model for his/ her students.

(5) Teacher as organizers

In order to instill and apply the Islamic concept of *wasathiyyah* or build religious moderation or strengthen religious

tolerance in schools, teachers of Islamic Religious Education subject can improve their role as organizers.

Organizing good activities to introduce and instill the teachings of Islam *wasathiyyah* and build awareness of religious moderation in schools is very important so that the planned goals can be achieved. In this regard, Mrs. RUS, a female teacher of Islamic religious education in Semarang district, explained to the author that the introduction of religious moderation or the cultivation of *wasathiyyah* Islamic teachings was carried out through the provision of religious guidance to students for high grades, namely from grade IV to grade VI. The coaching is filled with materials of fiqh, moral, aqidah, qur'an and hadith. Moderate Islamic values or religious moderation for students are built through such a coaching which were given through verbal understanding or through direct exemplary practice. (Interview with Mrs. RUS at her school on September 26, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

After organizing activities to instill moderate Islamic teachings (*wasathiyyah*) and building awareness of religious moderation, the next step is the need for good control. This control is a teacher's role to see how far the achievements to build these values have been fulfilled. One indicator of control is the implementation of a program well and the results can be seen and felt. The hope of the Islamic religious education teachers interviewed by the authors, regarding the cultivation of Islamic teachings of *wasathiyyah* and religious moderation for students in schools, among others, is to be able to further realize religious harmony.

Mr. NS, one of the male teachers of Islamic religious education at an elementary school in Semarang district, told the author that he personally hoped that with the program to strengthen religious moderation or introduce moderate Islam to students at school, the school would be able to maintain religious harmony and avoid inter-religious divisions. He also hopes that

students can use and apply the values of religious moderation in their real lives in society (Interview with Mr. NS at his school on October 03, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

Meanwhile, Mr. MRM, one of the male teachers of Islamic religious education at a private elementary school in Semarang district, expressed his hope that the religious moderation program in the future can further increase religious harmony and piety to Allah SWT for all his students. The introduction of Islamic teachings of *wasathiyyah* and religious moderation allows students to prevent radicalism and foster the value of *musawah* (egalitarian), namely avoiding discrimination against different religions at school (Interview with Mr. MRM at his school on Augustus 29, 2021, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

Then, regarding who should be involved in organizing activities to introduce moderate Islam and build religious moderation in schools, Mr. MRM expressed his opinion that in this program, not only Islamic religious education teachers that must play an active role, but all existing teachers must also play an active role in carrying out activities to support religious moderation in schools such as Islamic boarding schools held by Islamic students (Interview with Mr. MRM at his school on Augustus 29, 2021, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

However, as expressed by Mrs. NH, a female teacher of Islamic religious education at an elementary school in Semarang district, at this moment the school may not be able to involve all teachers yet to play an active role in building religious moderation in schools, but she hopes that in the future all teachers can help. Because building awareness of religious moderation in school, according to her, cannot be successfully implemented without the support of other teachers. (Interview with Mrs. NH at her school on September 12, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

Based on the results of interviews with several Islamic religious education teachers regarding their role as organizers, the

authors can conclude that organizing religious development activities for students is carried out not only at school but also outside school. Generally, Islamic religious education teachers provide this moderation understanding through verbal delivery and also by giving an example with attitude.

D. The hindering conditions of the application of moderate Islamic teachings

Diversity is part of the characteristics of Indonesia that must be addressed by every citizen in the right way so that it can become a color that is able to enrich the treasures of the nation's civilization. Although diversity has become a reality that is realized by all citizens of the nation, the right attitude is still a problem, especially when diversity and differences are related to religious beliefs (Hermawan 2020, 32). Belief in a religion that is embraced by a person often closes the opportunity for the existence of truth in other beliefs. At this stage, a claim to the truth of his religion will be a tool of judgment against "misguidance" in other beliefs (Hermawan 2020, 32).

In recent years, the understanding of radical Islam has become stronger, which is marked by the many cases of intolerance both in the community and in schools. This is of course a problem that must be addressed immediately because it can damage the social construction of Indonesian society which is very multicultural. The problem will be more complicated and worrying when radical understanding and religious intolerance have also infected students in schools, because they are the ones who will determine the future of the nation and state (Hermawan 2020, 32).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a central role in instilling values and practicing Islamic teachings in schools. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are expected to be able to instill values of tolerance in the learning process and

to be able to form a flexible and not rigid attitude in practicing the teachings of their religion but not sacrificing faith. Through a good internalization process, students are expected to be able to articulate religious teachings well, namely Islamic teachings that promote openness, brotherhood, and benefit, not radical Islamic teachings (Karni 2020, 72).

A study conducted by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2017 on students, university students, teachers and lecturers in 34 provinces in Indonesia, as quoted in Hermawan, showed that students and university students have a tendency to intolerant religious views with a percentage of radical opinions of 58.5%, internal intolerance opinion 51.1%, and external intolerance opinion 34.3%. Ironically, according to the study, Islamic Religious Education learning also has the potential to shape students' radicalism, the same as teachers' radical opinions and understandings which also have the potential to spread to students (Hermawan 2020, 32). This data gives us an understanding that the seeds of radicalism and intolerance have really emerged and infect students in schools. The above conditions raise a big question about how the moderate values of Islam, which are the mainstream of understanding Islam in Indonesia, can begin to get a big challenge from radical Islam?

The concepts of moderate Islam Islam are the concepts of a unified concept that is the same and goes hand in hand, namely the model of Islamic religiosity which tends towards a middle way and peace as the universal message of Islam as a religion that is *rahmatan lil alamin*, diversity that can respect different opinions, and rejects extreme and radical religious model (Sumarto 2021, 2). Religious moderation has an inseparable relationship with national commitment, tolerance, anti-radicalism and violence, as well as an accommodative attitude towards culture and local wisdom (Sumarto 2021, 3).

Education is the most effective medium for sowing and spreading an understanding or ideology. In this context, it is very appropriate to say that in order to disseminate and instill the values of Islamic moderation, education is the main choice. Therefore, educational institutions should be able to be at the forefront as a medium to introduce a tolerant, friendly, and moderate Islam (Hermawan 2020, 32).

According to Muhammad Ali, as quoted in Hermawan, moderate Islamic ideology can be propagated through a multiculturalist pluralist education model. Pluralist-multicultural insight in religious education is the basis for students to be able to appreciate differences, respect sincerely, be communicative, open, and not suspicious of each other, in addition to increasing faith and piety. Pluralist-multicultural education does not mean teaching students to practice religion according to their own will, without responsibility and sincerity, but instead teaches them to be religious, without losing their respective religious identities. The face of religion displayed by pluralist-multicultural education is a moderate and friendly religion (Hermawan 2020, 36).

Religious moderation is a very important part of maintaining the unity and integrity of the Republic of Indonesia, in the midst of the many problems caused by differences in ethnicity, religion, taste and ethnicity. Every Indonesian citizen should implement values in religious moderation because it has become the culture of our society (Sumarto 2021, 7).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a central role in instilling values and practicing Islamic teachings in schools. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are expected to be able to instill values of tolerance in the learning process and to be able to form a flexible and not rigid attitude in practicing the teachings of their religion but not sacrificing faith. Through a good internalization process, students are expected to be able to articulate religious teachings well, namely Islamic teachings that

promote openness, brotherhood, and benefit, not radical Islamic teachings (Karni 2020, 72).

Through this framework, the subjects of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) taught in schools can still be used as the main means of instilling the value of Islamic moderation through the construction of pluralist-multiculturalist Islamic education (Hermawan 2020, 36).

When the author asked what obstacles that the school encountered in realizing its vision, namely instilling Islamic values and character and also the introduction of moderate (*wasathiyyah*) Islam to the students, Mr. MRM, a male teacher of Islamic religious education in a private elementary school di Semarang district, responded that the biggest obstacle came from external factors, namely the lack of support from parents at home and the surrounding environment. He gave an example, in the school environment students have been taught to cover their *aurat*, but when students are at home with their families, their parents do not cover their *aurat*, so that what is instilled in students at school is wasted. Then, when the writer asked how the solution was, Mr. MRM added that he and the other teachers at the school couldn't possibly put pressure on the parents because it was outside the school's jurisdiction, so his usual solution was to pressure the children. For example, children were given a message to tell their parents that according to Islamic teachings, as explained by the teacher at school, covering the *aurat* that is correct according to Islamic teaching should be like this. Thus, the parents were not offended, and the mission of the school can work (Interview with Mr. MRM at his school on Augustus 29, 2021, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

As for internal obstacles, according to Mr. MRM, a male teacher of Islamic religious education in an Integrated Islamic elementary school (SDIT) of Semarang district, it is hardly found to be a major obstacle. Because generally, all teachers at the SDIT are united in enforcing the rules and implementing the school's

vision. If there are obstacles, they are mild. For example, in the habituation process when students were having lunch at school, they were instructed to eat while sitting down, in line with Islamic teachings. In reality, however, sometimes there are students who eat while standing, then the response from the teacher of religious education is sometimes not uniform. A teacher could warn the student harshly, but the other teacher reminds such a student gently, and there is also a teacher who ignores it. That was an obstacle that is felt from within. But in general, they have compactness. Usually, the school also often conducts evaluations and trainings to run the school programs according to its vision (Interview with Mr. MRM at his school on Augustus 29, 2021, 2021 at 08.00-12.00).

On the contrary, Mrs. NH, a female teacher of Islamic religious education of elementary school in Semarang district, stated that the supporting factors in building religious moderation or *wasathiyyah* Islamic teachings in her schools are still not visible. The inhibiting factor for efforts to build religious moderation or *wasathiyyah* Islamic teachings currently arises from a society where the majority of Muslims tend to be extreme and inclusive in religion. It seems that one area has different conditions from the other one, and the surrounding community also has a different character. It seems to be the reason why the community around Mrs. NH's school environment is still exclusive in its religion (Interview with Mrs. NH at her school on September 12, 2021 at 08.00-10.00).

Conceptually, the obstacle to the introduction and application of *wasathiyyah* Islam, or often also called moderatism, came also from some groups who criticize the use of the term because of the highly contested concept. Hilmy said that in the context of theological understanding, moderatism is not easy to decipher. The meaning of moderatism varies, depending on the subject and in what background moderatism is understood (Hilmy 2012, 265).

Himly identifies the arguments used by Muslims who reject the nomenclature of moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*). First, moderate Islam is considered as obscurity in religion. Theologically, moderate Islam is a middle way Islam, that is, neither leaning towards the West nor leaning towards the East, in other words, rowing between liberalism and literalism and textualism. Second, moderate Islam signifies a weak religious spirit. Moderate Islamic groups are considered not Islamic groups that reflect true Islam. Third, moderatism is seen as typical of the West, which has no theological roots and traditions of thought in Islam. The West is cramming moderatism with the aim of undermining the solidity of Islam. Because, in the view of the groups who do not agree with moderate Islam, Islam does not want any attributions attached to it, such as "conventional Islam", "liberal Islam", "moderate Islam". For them, there is only one Islam as preached by the Prophet Muhammad (Hilmy 2012, 265).

In the context of the Netherlands, based on the literature available to the author, the condition that hinders the application of *wasathiyyah* (moderate) Islam lies in the diverse backgrounds of the Muslims themselves in the country. Apart from having different levels of education, they are also immigrants from different national backgrounds. Even the Dutch government itself sometimes finds it difficult to talk to representatives of Muslims. Who can truly represent the aspirations of Muslims as a whole is not easy to determine. Then in the internal circles of Muslims themselves there are also many schools of thought. Although many Muslims in the Netherlands are progressive and modern-minded and can accept the values prevailing in Dutch secular society and can apply an attitude of tolerance, many are still rigid in practicing religion and tend to be orthodox in thinking and interpreting Islam. Progressive and moderate-minded Muslim groups have to face their Muslim colleagues who are rigid and orthodox-minded or even fundamentalists or radicals.

THE HOPE FOR A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY (EPILOGUE)

This chapter ends our discussion of the topics covered in this study. After presenting a long and detailed discussion in the previous chapters, I finally have to conclude the discussion with conclusions. In this chapter, I present conclusion of what has been discussed at length in preceding divisions. So, in this chapter, the writer presents conclusions, suggestions, and closing remarks in sequence.

Based on the above discussion I will draw the conclusions as follows.

(1.a) Based on the in-depth study that I conducted, it is concluded that the Indonesian government and the Dutch government both paid serious attention to the issue of Islamic education for their citizens. Although the level of involvement is not the same, the two countries being studied have been present and provide guarantees for each citizen to obtain services from the government related to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) or the right to organize their own Islamic Religious Education for Muslim communities.

(1.b) For Indonesia, its government has proven to have played an active role in providing guarantees through the national education system law that every citizen has the right to receive education, including Islamic Religious Education. Meanwhile, the Dutch government through its Constitution also guarantees the freedom of education. With these provisions, all citizens including Muslim minorities are guaranteed and have the right to organize Islamic Religious Education for Muslim children there.

(2.a) Based on an in-depth study, it is concluded that the teachings of Islam that have been delivered to the community are not a single teaching but a set of teachings that are accepted by the wider community with various interpretations. On the one hand, Islam is understood textually with a narrow and rigid scripturalist approach, for example the teachings of Islam as understood and taught by fundamental or radical groups. On the other hand, Islam is also often understood freely by relying on rational abilities in explaining religious commands by leaving existing religious texts, for example Islamic teachings as understood and interpreted by liberal groups. In addition, Islam can also be understood moderately, where in carrying out religious teachings a person still sees and pays attention to the religious texts that surround the teachings, but also accompanied by the use of ratio in carrying out religious activities. The substance of religious teachings is understood contextually and not merely textually. This is the teaching of Islam as understood and taught by moderate Muslim groups. The teachings of Islam that are understood are *rahmatan lil alamin*, which prioritizes tolerance and respect for other groups that are different from themselves. This moderate interpretation of Islam is often referred to as *wasathiyyah* Islam.

(2b) Based on the study that I have done it can be concluded that in Indonesia there has been a awareness of the spread of Islamic teachings from radical or fundamentalist groups that are violent and often consider groups outside themselves as

wrong because they have interpretations of Islamic teachings that are not the same as their interpretations. This is considered dangerous to the unity and integrity of the plural and multicultural Indonesian nation. Therefore, moderate Islamic teachings (*wasathiyyah*) are Islamic teachings that are in accordance with the conditions and situations of the Indonesian nation which consists of various ethnics, races, religions and beliefs. This moderate Islamic teaching is considered appropriate to be applied in Indonesian society which has a heterogeneous society. Meanwhile, the condition of Muslims in the Netherlands, which is a minority, also experiences the reality of the many interpretations of Islam that develop, ranging from radical, liberal, and moderate Islamic teachings. However, it seems very reasonable that a moderate interpretation of Islam is the most suitable for the Muslim community there, considering that Dutch society is also a pluralistic or heterogeneous society in terms of race, ethnicity, religion and belief. Therefore, the Islamic teachings that should be conveyed to students in elementary schools in the two countries under discussion are moderate Islam. Therefore, a learning design for Islamic education that mainstreams *wasathiyyah* Islam is needed.

(3a) Based on an in-depth study that I have conducted both from the literature and interviews in the field, it is concluded that in Indonesia the teachers have done many things in order to provide Islamic Religious Education learning. The Islamic teachings conveyed to students in the schools where they teach are generally the teachings of moderate (*wasathiyyah*) Islam, which emphasizes tolerance and respect for every difference that exists. The teachers have also conducted customs or habituations at school in accordance with the conditions of each school to realize the embedding of Islamic values that are *rahmatan lil alamin* and love all creatures. Similarly, for the context in the Netherlands, from the in-depth study that I have done on the existing literature, it can be concluded that Muslims in the

Netherlands also prioritize the provision of teaching in the form of moderate Islamic Religious Education considering their position as a minority group that must coexist with other people who have different religious backgrounds and beliefs, also due to the character of society in the Netherlands which is secular, the provision of Islamic Religious Education that prioritizes moderate Islamic teachings is more appropriate to do and more in accordance with their social context.

(3b) In the effort to provide moderate Islamic Religious Education (*wasathiyyah* Islam), it turns out that there are obstacles. For the context in Indonesia, from an in-depth study conducted by the author, it can be concluded that the teachers get obstacles from the surrounding community groups, some of which are still exclusive in understanding the teachings of Islam, so it is necessary to enlighten them on the importance of an inclusive and open attitude in associating with a pluralistic society. In the context of The Netherlands, the obstacles to moderate Islamic Religious Education come from groups that understand Islam exclusively, so interactive dialogue with figures from these groups is needed in order to create harmonious relationships with pluralistic and heterogeneous societies, such as the Netherlands, which has a secular character.

I believe that comparisons like this can provide benefits and advantages for both parties, where one country can learn from the other. Indonesia, as the largest Muslim country in the world which Abdurrahman Wahid (the fourth president of Republic of Indonesia) calls "the country of moderate Muslims" (Wahid 2006, 60), is hoped to play a bigger responsibility in disseminating *wasathiyyah* Islam (Suharto 2017, 167) to other nations in the world. President Joko Widodo did emphasize the existence of a moderate character for Indonesian Islam in his opening speech of the 26th National Qur'anic Recitation Competition (MTQN) in Mataram on July 30, 2016. The President is of the opinion that "now is the time for Indonesia to become a source of Islamic thought, as well as a source of Islamic learning for the world". He

further stated, "Other countries must also see and learn Islam from Indonesia, because Islam in Indonesia is like a patent prescription for drugs, namely *wasathiyyah* Islam, moderate Islam". While Indonesia already has a formula, others are still looking. (Suharto 2017b, 16). I am in line with what the president has said. *Nusantara* (archipelago) Islam which is practiced in Indonesia is a real reflection of *wasathiyyah* Islam which is tolerant, open-minded and respects diversity and differences. Other nations in the world can jointly develop the practice of *wasathiyyah* Islam to help create peace and harmony in society, both locally and globally.

In Indonesia there is *Nusantara* (archipelago) Islam that adopts local wisdom so that Islam can be well received and does not pose a threat to other groups outside of Islam, so in the Netherlands it is necessary to develop a European or Dutch Islam that adopts its traditions and culture within the European context as a democratic and multicultural society, not a kind of Islam that adopt and import Arab culture and traditions. Therefore, it is necessary that *wasathiyyah* (moderate) Islam be strengthened in the campaign in the Netherlands, one of which is by teachers who organize Islamic Religious Education in Islamic schools. For both countries mainstreaming *wasathiyyah* Islam is a must in order to create a peaceful and harmonious society around the world.

I must honestly say that this study has many shortcomings. In terms of data from the field, namely from schools in the Netherlands, we have not been able to reach it optimally. This is so because of travel restrictions during this covid-19 pandemic which prevented us from applying for a visa to the Netherlands, and as a consequence we could not visit there to take a close look at the educational practices in Islamic primary schools in that country. However, it is a fact that the covid-19 pandemic is a global problem, and it is the authority of any government to make travel restrictions. The Indonesian government also prohibits civil servants from going abroad for any reason. We can do nothing

except to respect that policy. So, for collecting the data we rely on data from relevant literature sources related to the problem being discussed in the study. Therefore, we suggest that real visits be made to Islamic schools there in the next research to increase strength and obtain up-to-date data. Of course, it can be carried out provided that travel abroad is allowed. Research in this area is still very much needed, and therefore further research is highly recommended.

Closing remarks

Alhamdulillah, thanks God, praise is due to Allah who has been giving protection and guidance to me so that the writing of this book can be finished on time. I am fully aware that this work is not perfect. Therefore, criticisms and suggestions from anyone are always welcomed. I hope that this work can give contribution to the progress and development of science, specifically the field of Islamic studies.

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Prof. Dr. H. Muslih MZ, M.A. was born in Bojonegoro, East Java, on August 13, 1969. He is a certified professional lecturer with Rank of IV/b, Professor at FITK UIN Walisongo Semarang. He took the Bachelor Program (S.1) in the Department of Islamic Education (PAI), Faculty of Tarbiyah, State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Walisongo Semarang, graduating in 1993 with cum-laude predicate. He continued his studies for his Master (S.2) in Islamic Studies at Faculteit der Letteren (Faculty of Literature) and Facultiet der Godgeleerheid (Faculty of Theology), RijksUniversiteit Leiden, The Netherlands, graduating in 1999. Then, he continued his studies for the Doctoral program (S.3) in Islamic Studies at the Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid (Faculty of Theology), Leiden University, the Netherlands, graduating in 2006. Both his Master's and Doctoral

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The author is a permanent lecturer at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of UIN Walisongo (formerly Faculty of Tarbiyah IAIN Walisongo) since 1996 until present. The author was once the Head of Study Program of English Department (TBI), Faculty of Tarbiyah (2007-2008). He was once the Secretary of the Doctoral Study Program of the Postgraduate Program of IAIN Walisongo Semarang (2008-2011). The author is an assessor for the teacher certification program, LPTK IAIN Walisongo (2007 until now). The author is also an assessor at the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT) Jakarta (2009 to present). The author is also an assessor of the Education Self Accreditation Institute (LAMDIK) (2022 to present). In addition, the author is a member of the Walisongo Mediation Center (WMC) (2009 to 2011) and a member of the editorial board of IAIN Walisongo's Ihya Ulum al-Din journal. The author has been appointed for the second time as the Head of English Education Department (PBI) of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Traninig (FITK) IAIN Walisongo Semarang (2014-2015). The author has been the Head of Study Program (Prodi) S.2 Islamic Education Management (MPI) UIN

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The author has published several scientific articles such as: "The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), USA: A think tank of Muslim Intellectual Movement", (Journal Ihya 'Ulum al-Din, IAIN Walisongo Semarang, Vol.8, No.1, Jun. 2006); "Muhammadiyah Post-Independence: Religious Thought and its Implication in Education" (Journal Ihya 'Ulum al-Din, IAIN Walisongo Semarang, Vol.8, No.2, Dec. 2006); "Mecca Conference: An Effort to Find out Solution to Crises in Islamic Education" (Journal Ihya 'Ulum al-Din, Vol.10, No.1, Jun. 2008, pp. 51-67); "Controversies Surrounding the Idea of Islamization of Science" (Journal of Theology, Faculty of Ushuluddin IAIN Walisongo, Vol.21, No.2, Jul.2010, 219-236); "Initiating the Ideal Islamic University: A Study of Syed Ali Ashraf's Thought", (MIQOT: Journal of Islamic Sciences, IAIN North Sumatra, Medan, Vol.39, No.1, Jan-Jun 2015, 184-198); "Utilization of ICT-Based Learning Media in Non-Formal Education Institutions TPQ", (Dimas: Journal of Religious Thought for Empowerment, Vol.16. No.2, 2016, 215-234); "Empowering Teachers of Religious Education in Multicultural Society", (Walisongo: Journal of socio-religious research, Vol. 25, No.1, 2017, 173-202); "Curriculum Development Efforts of S.2 Study Program. Islamic Education Management (MPI) Study Program at UIN Walisongo Semarang", (NADWA: Journal of Islamic Education, Vol. 12, No.1, 2018, 155-108); "Islamic schooling, migrant Muslims and the problem of integration in The Netherlands", (British Journal of Religious Education, Vol.43, No.2, 2021, 196-205. DOI: 10.1080/ 01416200.2019.1628004 (Indexed in Scopus).

The author has conducted many research activities, some of which are: "Internal Conflict of the National Awakening Party (PKB) in the Nomination of Members of the Central Java DPRD", (Walisongo Mediation Center [WMC] Semarang, 2008);

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program with the title "Training in Making ICT-Based Learning Media for TPQ Teachers in Ngaliyan Sub-district, Semarang City" (DIPA UIN Walisongo 2016).

The author has published several books, such as: "Pengantar Mediasi: Teori dan Praktek" in M. Mukhsin Jamil (Ed.), *Mengelola Konflik Membangun Damai*, (Semarang: Walisongo Mediation Center [WMC], 2007), 105-127; Understanding Islam: English for Islamic Studies, (Semarang: Walisongo Press, 2009); Islamization of Knowledge and Islamic Educational Reform: Understanding of al-Faruqi's Thought, (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2009); Islamic Revivalism in the West: A Study on the Role of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) USA, (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2010); *Sejarah Peradaban Islam* (ISBN: 978-602-9029-24-6. Semarang: Walisongo Press, 2018); *Pendidikan Islam di Negeri Belanda: Sejarah, Tantangan dan Prospek* (ISBN: 978-602-53280-7-7. Semarang: Southeast Asian Publishing, 2019).

The author has taken part in several trainings, such as: Academic and TOEFL Preparation Classes at Yayasan LIA Slipi, Jakarta (June-August 1997); English Language Course I at Inter Consultancy Bureau (ICB) Reijksuniversiteit Leiden, Nederland, (September 17, 1997 - December 11, 1997); English Language Course II at Inter Consultancy Bureau (ICB) Reijksuniversiteit Leiden, Netherlands, (February 4, 1998 - May 20, 1998); English Academic Writing Course at Inter Consultancy Bureau (ICB) Reijksuniversiteit Leiden, Netherlands, (February 4, 1999 - May 27, 1999); Dutch Course at Taal Centrum Universiteit Leiden and Dutch Course at ROC Leiden, The Netherlands (2002); English Language Training at Indonesia Australia Language Foundation (IALF) Surabaya (January-March 2007); Training on Mediation and Conflict Resolution at Wageningen University, The Netherlands (20 April - 28 May 2007); Short-course on Peace Study at European Peace University (EPU), Austria (27 September - 20 December 2009); Research skills program for

international university academics at University of Queensland (7 Oct. - 1 Nov. 2013); Postdoctoral Fellowship Program for Islamic Higher Education (POSFI) at the University of Auckland, New Zealand (15 Sep - 26 Nov 2015).

The author has attended several seminars and conferences both at national and international levels, such as: "International Conference on Muslim Education in Europe" in Bonn, Germany (2002); International Conference (Fifth Annual Conference) on "Defining and Establishing Justice in Muslim Societies", Organized by Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID), held in Wyndham Hotels & Resort, Washington, DC. (May 28-29, 2004); National seminar on "Teacher Certification Between Hope and Reality", as speaker, organized by MAN Magelang, (March 29, 2008); International Conference on "Mediation and its Future in Indonesia" organized by Walisongo Mediation Center [WMC] IAIN Walisongo in cooperation with NUFFIC, The Netherlands, held in Novotel Hotel Semarang on November 30 - December 1, 2010, as moderator; International Conference on "Is Indonesian Islam Different? Islam in Indonesia in a Comparative International Perspective", organized by the Training of Indonesia's Young Leaders Programme (Leiden University) in Cooperation with the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM), UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, held in Novotel Hotel Bogor from 23-26 January 2011, as a speaker. In addition, the author has also given lectures and been a speaker on several occasions. Such as speaker in the seminar on "Islam in Indonesia" at the University of Auckland in November 2015; Speaker at the 16th Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies (AICIS), on November 1-4, 2016 at IAIN Bandar Lampung; Speaker at the International seminar on "Islamic education in multicultural society" at UIN Walisongo Semarang on November 19-20, 2016; Speaker at the 17th Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies (AICIS), on November 20-23, 2017 in Jakarta

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The author has received the *Satyalancana Karya Satya X Year* award in 2010 and *Satyalancana Karya Satya XX Year* award in 2017 from the President of the Republic of Indonesia. The author has once been a guest speaker at the Voice of America (VOA) Washington DC TV program (2004). The author can be contacted via email: muslih@walisongo.ac.id.

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APPPENDICES

Confirmation Letter from my collaborator from Vrije Universteit Amsterdam (Dr. Welmoet Boender)

The author visited an elementary school in Semarang district.

The author conducted interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers from several elementary schools in Semarang district.