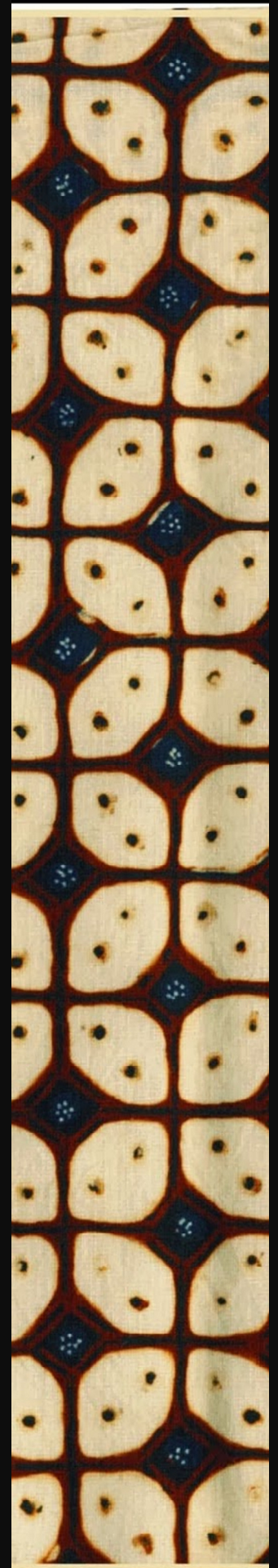




REPORT

PCINU 2ND BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Radboud University, 19 June 2019, ' Seeking the middle path (Al-wasatiyya): articulations of moderate Islam



About This Report

PROGRAM

Opening Remarks @09-10.00hrs

- Dr. Daniel Wigboldus, Executive President of Radboud University
- Ibnu Fikri, chairman of PCINU The Netherlands
- HE. I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, the Indonesian Ambassador to the Netherlands

Keynotes @10-12.30hrs

- Honorary Drs. H. Lukman H. Saifuddin, Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia
- Dr. Timothy Winter (Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad)/ Aziz Foundation Professor in Islamic Studies & Dean, Cambridge Muslim College
- Dr. Carol Kersten / Reader in the Study of Islam & the Muslim World at King's College London

Panel Session I @13.30-17.00hrs

1. Globalization and the reality between respecting tradition and living in, also contributing to the modern world – In the Context of Islam in Europe; Muslim integration, Citizenship, and Human Rights
2. The relevance of 'Islam Nusantara' in the Manifestation of Al-wasatiyya
3. The Identification of Al-wasatiyya – In the implementation of curbing and combating Radicalism
4. Al-wasatiyya – In the Context of Ethical Behaviour and related issues within the financial sector and economies (Sharia Banking)
5. Al-wasatiyya – In the Context of Science and Technology, Halal-Toyyib (fair) food, and Environmental Exploitation
6. Al-wasatiyya – In the Context of Promoting Moderation and Understanding on Women's Role and Status

Closing Remarks and Q&A @17-19.00hrs

- Yahya Cholil Staqf, General Secretary, NU Supreme Council & Director of Religious Affairs, Bayt ar-Rahmah.
- Prof.dr. Frans Wijse, Vice Dean of Faculty Philosophy, Theology and religious studies of Radboud University, Nijmegen

This report is a summary of PCINU The Netherlands 2nd Biennial International Conference which was held on 19 June 2019 at Radboud University, Nijmegen.

The conference was organized by PCINU The Netherlands in cooperation with the Indonesian Embassy in the Netherlands, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Radboud University. The event was also supported by Netherlands Indonesia Consortium on Muslim Christian Relations (NICMCR) and Stichting Interreligieuze Dialogo (SID).

PCINU the Netherlands organises biennially the International Conference. The very aim of this effort is to promote and spread the understanding of Moderate Islam to the Dutch and European audience. This year theme was 'Seeking the middle path (Al-wasatiyya): articulations of moderate Islam'.

The conference sought to define and understand the concept of al-wasatiyya and attempting to illustrate where it can find the concept of moderation in the people's daily lives as well as in the state's affairs; how moderation is defined and the way in which the centrality of the Islamic message relies upon the correct interpretation and practice of moderation.

The event has managed to bring together scholars, researchers, and activists to discuss relevant ideas, in addition to the discussion pertaining to religious affairs, it had addressed the following issues: Civic duty, Radicalism, Integration, Social Ecology, Economy, Media, Security and Gender role.

Furthermore, the purpose of the conference was also to examine the possibility of:

- ❖ Exploring innovative schemes and approaches to strengthen development cooperation between East (Indonesia) and West (Europe) in the scene of Higher Islamic Education, as well as the Pesantren.

- ❖ Increasing regular interaction between the Universities in both regions by, among other things, creating networks and focal points to exchange experiences and best practices; and
- ❖ Jointly mobilizing resources and capacities to support efforts for closer cooperation

This report will be kept for PCINU The Netherlands future reference and it will be sent to all benefactors, partners, the interested parties and it will be available online. Other reports of PCINU 2nd biennial series events (e.g Exhibition) can be obtained upon request.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of PCINU The Netherlands, we would like to thank all our partners and benefactors, The Indonesian Embassy in The Hague, The Ministry of Religious Affairs, Radboud University, NICMCR, SID, Sormani fonds, Alif.id, The Ministry of Education, Darulfatwa-Islamic High Council of Australia, IACP United Kingdom, Bronbeek Museum, Al Hikmah Mosque and Tombo Ati. The presenters, conveners of the panel session and attendees who came all the way from Indonesia and elsewhere to be in Nijmegen to participated at the conference, all PPI Nijmegen, MSV Nijmegen and PCINU members who helped organize the event, with a special mention of PCINU Committee who worked tirelessly before the event and for the entire 2nd Biennial week. We commend them for their enthusiasm and smiles despite the heavy workload.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to *HE I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja*, the Indonesian Ambassador for the Netherlands, *Mr Din Wahid*, the Attaché of Education and culture and all the Indonesian embassy staffs. Prof. Dr Frans Wijzen and KH Nur Hasyim Subadi, with all their unwavering dedication, indispensable guidance and time. *Drs H. Lukman H. Saifuddin, Dr Timothy Winter, Dr Carol Kersten, Prof. Syaifiq A. Mughni* and *KH Yahya Cholil Staquf* who came and not only taught us about the subjects of their lecture but also for making us realise and promote the preponderance of Islamic Moderation.

Summary

The International Conference 19 June 2019

Opening Ceremony

The performance of Ki Ageng Ganjur with its Gamelan assembles set forth the opening of PCINU 2nd Biennial International Conference. It followed with welcoming speeches, first by Dr Daniel Wigboldus, Executive President of Radboud University, second Ibnu Fikri, chairman of PCINU The Netherlands and third speech by HE. I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, the Indonesian Ambassador to the Netherlands

Keynote I by Drs. H. Lukman H. Saifuddin, Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

Title: *Religious Moderation: Indonesian Experience*
The lecture was given in Bahasa Indonesia.
The English script translation of the minister speech was handed out to the audience.

Summary:

- The Ministry of Religious Affairs has been working hard to formulate the mission, objectives, targets and religious moderation indicators, to ensure that it can be integrated into the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024. The indicator is needed to concretize cultural progress in human resources development.
- The Indonesian government has launched a Sharia Economic Masterplan and the President has also signed a Halal Product Guarantee regulation.
- The Ministry of Religious Affairs held a meeting between religious and cultural leaders to further inculcate religious moderation values. The *first* meeting resulted in “the Consensus of Yogyakarta”, which re-actualized religious and cultural relations for the nation. The *second* meeting resulted in “the Risalah Jakarta” which contained formulations on the results of interfaith dialogue
- Embracing the dynamic communication of the

millennial generation through the digital platform which has recently become a source of information as well as a means of contemporary interaction. It is no longer the time for the moderate to become the “silent majority”, but it should be at the forefront of the campaigning effort for religious moderation

I truly hope that the vision of religious moderation, or Islamic wasathiyah, can become an entrance point for Indonesia to lead and inspire global religious communities

Drs. H. Lukman H. Saifuddin

The full manuscript of the minister’s speech can be obtained upon request

Keynote II by Dr. Timothy Winter

Title: *‘Khilafa and Fitra as principles of balance’*

Dr. Timothy Winter, also known as Sheikh Abdal Hakim Murad is a Professor at Aziz Foundation in Islamic Studies & Dean, Cambridge Muslim College (CMC). He is also the initiator and the Imam of the first Eco Mosque in Europe, The Cambridge Mosque.

Summary:

- Prof Winter argued that the figure the Green Man that resides in a startling number of European historic churches has a relation with Islam. The re-emergence of this figure coincides with the emergence of the Gothic style. In much of its form and, partly, in its sacral logic, this style, ironically perhaps the only fully Christian style of building in the West, was enabled by the Crusades, during which Muslim and Eastern Christian masons and master-craftsmen were brought to the West to catalyse the sudden aesthetic and engineering breakthrough which we identify with the Gothic genius.
- He maintained that the reading of Al Quran should be guided by the principle what Ibn Arabi calls the Breath of the Compassionate, or *nafas al-Rahman*, in which it will allow the commentator, the jurist, and the ethical philosopher, to ground his or her interpretation in the ontology of the text and not only its *zahir*, its plain sense. It is, therefore, a shield against fundamentalism, and also against reductionist

- philological and historicising reasons
- He reasoned further that Fundamentalism and all other deviant impositions on God's book flow from superficial contamination of the reader by ego and other psychic residues.
- Islam is grossly misunderstood in Europe, as Imam Ali pointed out, 'man is the enemy of what he does not understand'. To overcome this he argued that we as Muslim need to state, more clearly than we have been able to do, that there is a normative Islam, which is indeed the beautiful *din al-fitra*, exemplified, for instance, by the heritage of the *Nadhlatul Ulama*, and the mainstream library-rooted, mysticism-friendly, nature-loving heritage of our civilization.
- He gave advises that we must turn again to the spirit, to the *ahsani taqwim*, we must green ourselves by bathing in the light of nature, we must demonstrate the beauty of our worship and our beliefs; we must be the cupbearers who bring the Zamzam water of Ishmael to the thirsty throats of a Europe which has been materialistic for too long. In our greening of Europe is hope for reconciliation, blessing and the victory of true religion

Islam of the middle way cannot be achieved by exoteric tampering with scriptures or forced and unrealistic new jihads
 Sheikh Abdal Hakim Murad

The full manuscript of sheikh's speech can be obtained upon request

Keynote III by Dr. Carool Kersten

Title: *The circulation of an idea: Wasatiyya in the modern Muslim world.*

Reader in the Study of Islam & the Muslim World at King's College London.

Summary:

- The community of the middle or moderation is not uniquely Islamic. The similar idea is also found in moral philosophies of other civilizations and religious traditions. Think of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, the mild asceticism preached by the Buddha, and the even more pragmatic ethics of Confucius.
- One remarkable alternative found across the Muslim world is the emergence of Muslim political parties that put less emphasis on the religious aspects of their programmes. Instead,

they opt for highlighting the generic value of justice, or *adl* in Arabic. *Adl* is also the root for that other term so closely associated with *wasatiyya* or *tawassut*, namely *i'tidal*— meaning balance, but also temperance

The advocacy of *wasatiyya* has become a key element in finding a way out of the tight spot in which the Muslim world finds itself on the world stage today

Dr Carool Kersten

- He stated that NU leaders are careful to note that *Islam Nusantara* is not an export commodity to be copied elsewhere in the Muslim world. Beyond Indonesia, its purpose is to stimulate and encourage Muslims to develop their own culturally sensitive interpretations of Islam. On a global level, *Islam Nusantara* is instructive in demonstrating that a culturally embedded interpretation of religion goes together with moderatism, with *wasatiyya* thinking
- One consequence of polarization on standing between the extremist and Islamophobia is that *wasatiyya* or moderate Islam is now also claimed—hijacked—on both the individual and state level, by figures and countries whose backgrounds or histories make it difficult to find them convincing as proponents of moderation.
- As an example of how to avert the danger and safeguard the integrity of notions of moderate Islam and ensure that the term *wasatiyya* remains meaningful, it is instructive to consider the experiences in Indonesia. Dr. Kersten suggested two things:
 1. The first one is that Indonesian interpretations of *wasatiyya* must be considered in the context of the ways in which Indonesia has defined the role and significance of Islam in postcolonial times.
 2. Secondly, these interpretations are read in conjunction with the adoption of another notion, that of *Islam Nusantara*.

"Indonesia bukan negara agama tapi Indonesia adalah negara beragama" (Indonesia is not an Islamic state, but a country capable of accommodating religion)

KH. Said Aqil Siradj

Dr. Kersten' full script can be obtained upon request

REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The center of activity of the whole series of events during 2nd biennial from 12-20 June 2019 was the International Conference. This was the event where scholars, researchers, and activists came together to discuss the selected topic.

REMARKS:

- The announcement of the Call for papers of PCINU International conference with the theme of 'Seeking the middle path (Al-wasatīyya): articulations of moderate Islam' was circulated in Europe and Indonesia at the beginning of September 2018.
- The committee received a total of 105 abstracts as of 18 February 2019. There were a couple of requests to submit an abstract after 18 February but unfortunately, we had declined the request.
- The selection was made by the committee with advice from the panel conveners. The categories of selection were based on creativity, originality/novelty, and methodology. Above all, quality and its contribution to the conference topic were prerequisites.
- 54 papers were selected to present at the main conference. 29 came
- 33 papers were selected to present at the pre-conference. 11 came
- Due to lack of its contribution to the topic, research quality and language proficiency, regrettably 18 papers were rejected.
- The papers will be compiled into PCINU 2nd biennial International conference proceedings; however, excellent papers will be nominated onto known academic publications.
- Several articles about the conference were found at the Dutch and Indonesian media. Please find the news link at our website.
- A protest by an unknown individual was reported during the conference. It was manifested in a slander graffiti at the outside wall of the Aula building. The graffiti was removed immediately, and no further action was needed by the security team.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The call for papers should be sent earlier, for instance, 18 months prior to the event
- Considering that presenter needs an ample time to procure a grant, the announcement for the paper selection should be done 10 to 12 months prior to the event

- Actively promoting the conference at Pesantren thought out Indonesia in order to attract Santri.
- Actively seeking partners in The Netherlands and the European soil for Int conference event.
- The conference event is a huge task to manage by a handful of volunteers. If it is feasible, hiring a professional EO (event organiser) can be a better solution to lessen loads of the conference committee.

SUMMARY PANEL SESSION

Panel 1: Globalization and the reality between respecting tradition and living in, also contributing to the modern world – In the Context of Islam in Europe; Muslim integration, Citizenship, and Human Rights
Convener: **Dr. Martijn de Koning, RU Nijmegen**

Summary:

The panel brought forth diverse topics. The 6 presentations covered topics on the Indonesian and Turkish Muslims in the Netherlands; LGBT and the Dutch colonialism and Muslim society in Aceh;

- For many immigrants, religion is an important identity marker and foundation of their social networks. In the Dutch debate on dealing with Islam in the public arena, Indonesian diaspora tends to be neglected as the debate usually concentrates on Muslim immigrants from Morocco and Turkey. This research found that in term of adapting local culture in Europe the Indonesian diaspora is facing an inner contradiction which is mainly about morality. However, some maintain to choose Islamic moral values and at the same time try to adapt to local culture.
- The Muslim community in Europe is divided into several voices in seeing their identity. Some are extreme and many are moderate. The two parties tried to dominate Islamic discourse in Europe. However, there is always an effort to prove the commitment of the Muslim community to integrate with plural Dutch society. But also labels such as extreme, moderate and radical were questioned by panellists and members in the audience.
- For centuries, Muslim countries and Europe have engaged one another through theological dialogues, trade and diplomatic missions, and power struggles. Over the last thirty years, however, and to a large extent as

a result of globalization and migration, the debate ceased to be a debate of remote and isolated communities, endogenous, face-to-face cultural, and often about Islam incompatibility with secular society in Europe.

- The existence of the NU Banser is claimed as a manifestation of the love of the Islamic community in maintaining the democratic state. Despite facing many challenges from Islamist groups in Indonesia, the NU Banser even though without the state support seems to be consistently fighting for minority rights in Indonesia
- The influence of globalization that is contrary to the value of Islamic morality such as the LGBT community often meets with difficulties to be tolerated and accepted. Efforts to criminalize LGBT community who were initiated by Islamists and in the subsequence, this action is opposed by nationalists. This phenomenon has proven that this issue is still very much contested.
- The historical context of the conquest of the Sultanate of Aceh and its strategy by the Dutch-Indies government in late 19th century at the recommendation of the Dutch Islamologist, Snouck Hurgronje left quite an impression on the collective memory of the Indonesian Muslim Ummah and it influenced their view on Islamic scholars from the West.

Panel 2: The relevance of 'Islam Nusantara' in the Manifestation of Al-wasatiyya

Convener: **Dr. Roel Meijer, RU Nijmegen**

Summary:

The debate on Islam Nusantara is as lively as ever been since its inception and introduction in 2015. This panel dealt with the varied articulations of moderate Islam in the multiple contexts of local Indonesia and analyses the attempts that are being made by the Indonesian government and other religious-based organisations in rebranding Indonesian Islam.

- The panel was started with a presentation on moderate Islam in Islamic higher education. The presenters noted that Muslim educators in certain university promote their view on moderation under reference not only to strengthen the foundational Islamic concepts such as human dignity, equality, and social justice but also to regard the Pancasila concept as the multi-religious framework that

has shaped national identity since independence.

- The panel also included several presentations that brought up the central role of local traditional ulama whose religious views and teaching are supportive of moderate Islam, namely Kyai Shaleh Darat Semarang, Kyai Ahmad Sanusi, and Ashabal Jawiyyin. It is concluded that their theological views are relevant to be transformed into present times.
- The panel concluded with a presentation on the significance of wasatiyya Islam in Indonesian public diplomacy. The presenter noted that the Indonesian government has started to use "people-to-people" diplomacy by the means of cooperating with Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in order to forge a consolidated effort to re-brand Indonesian Islam world-wide.

Panel 3: The Identification of Al-wasatiyya – In the implementation of curbing and combating Radicalism

Convener: **Dr. Robert Setio, UKDW Yogyakarta**

Summary:

The panel showed some positive values from the religious teaching that can be useful for tackling the influence of Islamic radicalism.

- Sufism could play a bigger part by disseminating more humanist and inclusive Islam to Indonesian Muslims. one paper argues that the Sufi teaching of al-Ghazali in some Islamic boarding schools has proven to be a huge part in cultivating the humanist character to its students.
- Social media platforms such as LINE could be instrumental in spreading the narratives of moderate Islam among college students.
- Qur'anic interpretation is needed to be revisited by conducting a more comprehensive understanding of the verses to prevent radicalism.
- Deradicalisation can be started by increasing a healthier social life. A healthy social life requires a healthy family, neighbourhood, community, and cross-community life.

Panel 4: Al-wasatiyya – In the Context of Ethical Behaviour and related issues within the financial sector and economies (Sharia Banking)

Convener: **Ahmad Mansur, UINSA-Surabaya**

Summary:

- The statement that 'interest' in the conventional banking system which is often interest-based is Haram and the call to the Muslim employees to resign from working in the conventional banking system, could be categorised as a piece of excessive advice by some Islamic jurist. The fact that first, banking interest is still debatable of its halal and haram category. The second, by using this maxim of “al-Darurat Tubih al-Mahdurat”, and combining with the maxim of “Maslahah Mursalah”, it means public interest or for the benefits of public interest, it is permissible to deal with the interest banking system in a financial transaction to a certain point, since it is deemed as a necessity.
- If the banking system can contribute to help establish just social and socio-economic order which can be measured by the existence of economic equitable distribution of income and wealth as well as moral and economic well-being, it is nothing to worry about to work with the conventional banking system.
- The issue of Islamic economics as well as Islamic banking are not the issue of individual behaviour, but also social, cultural and encompasses the whole sphere of life as human beings. However, the issue of individual behaviour may occupy the central concern. This probably because justice starts with the individual as a single entity. As long as the individual is virtuous, just, honest, respectful, so is the behaviour and the act of that individual will follow. If the individual possesses those virtuous characteristics, then it will lead him to achieve balance and equilibrium act. And if this kind of virtuous individual works in the banking system, he will try his best to direct that banking and financial institutions maintain balance and equilibrium practice as well.
- The concept of justice that is balance and equilibrium call for us to question of whether profit is only the goal of financial transactions and banking businesses or there are other goals in addition to the profit. What profit is good for, if it is generated at the expense of others, or if it will only lead to disequilibrium and injustice - such as to enrich himself while neglecting the purpose of the establishment of Islamic banking that is to help establish just social order and socio-economic justice. -, then what is good for generating profit. This kind of question and

many more questions which must be addressed to become a virtuous individual in the economy.

Panel 5: Al-wasatiyya – In the Context of Science and Technology, Halal-Toyyib (fair) food, and Environmental Exploitation

Convener: **Dr. Zainal Abidin Bagir, CRCS-UGM, Yogyakarta and Dr. Thijl Sunier, VU Amsterdam**

Summary:

- Religions may be part of the solution of ecological crisis or part of the problem. The panel saw the potential of religions to respond to the ecological crisis. But at the same time, the religions themselves are challenged. Whether in Islam (NU, Muhammadiyah) or Christianity, there need to attempt to develop or re-invent concepts from within the religious traditions that can deal with the problem.
- “Wasatiyyah” may be understood in this context of response to the environmental crisis, and in this regard, the idea is also present in other religions (such as keugaharian, which is developed by the Christian churches of Indonesia).
- Religions may contribute not only in terms of concepts but also practices—reinventing religious practice (e.g. sadaqa or charity) into one which helps the environment (“garbage charity”).
- In the Panel, the issue of indigenous religions came up as an issue which needs special attention. May world religions work together with communities of indigenous religion? Since in the past (to some extent, until today) they are regarded as “having no religion” and as such became the object of proselytization. partly because of the lack of direct communication with the speaker.

Panel 6: Al-wasatiyya – In the Context of Promoting Moderation and Understanding on Women's Role and Status

Convener: **Dr. Karin van Nieuwkerk, RU Nijmegen**

Summary:

The panel particularly looked into three important themes: hijab, polygamy, and female ‘ulama’. The first paper discussed the community of Tuneeca Lovers, which constitutes a new (media) sphere in which women articulate their ideas about Islam through discussing forms of fashionable veiling. The second paper discussed the problem of polygamous

marriages particularly among women who marry within radical groups as a second wife. The final paper discussed the important role of the increasing number and influence of female 'ulama' as a way to create gender justice. The papers and ensuing discussions foregrounded the great importance of gender issues and the role of women for the study of Islam in contemporary Indonesia.

- Tuneeca Lover Community (TLC) is one of the Muslim communities where a group of Muslimah articulate their ideas about Islam through several activities such as religious gathering, hijab tutorial class, fashion show, and charity activities. Hijab is increasingly visible in Indonesia. For TLC, hijab is not only to cover the nakedness of the body, but also to show aesthetic values and to some extent a lifestyle. Consequently, the members are not only committed to the traditional spiritual meaning of hijab but are also embraced it as part of modern lifestyle. Participation in the TLC enables them to reach both goals simultaneously.
- Even though Polygamy is not widely accepted by the social norm in Indonesia, the practice of it is not uncommon. The biggest problem on how the victims fall into bad practice of Polygamy is largely attributed to their ignorance and poverty.
- The Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama or KUPI may be a part of the solution for Female ulama (Muslimah) role crisis. Often Muslimah scholars are less appreciated by the public and have a little or no access to teach both male and female santri. Through KUPI Muslimah scholars are given a chance to have the same role and influence in pesantren where the absence of female ulama has been going for many years

CLOSING REMARKS

The event was finalized with a lecture by Yahya Cholil Staquf, General Secretary, NU Supreme Council & Director of Religious Affairs, Bayt ar-Rahmah.

Summary:

- Gus Yahya highlighted the preponderance of understanding AlWasatiyya in seeking for the solution of poverty, inequality, gender issues, injustice and other problematic issues that face Muslim around the globe.

As well as the problem of extremism, radicalism, terrorism.

- Moderate Muslim doesn't mean that Muslim who believes in a middle way is a half-Muslim or 50% Islam. It means that one who balances its life between the two-opposite pole of extreme, e.g. ideologies.
- Gus Yahya noted that we the Muslim should inward-looking on our imperfections and shortcomings. We must acknowledge that there is a big problem within the Muslim community around the world. One of the problems he stated was a death sentence for an apostate. The practice is still conducted in some Muslim countries. "*How can Muslim cries out about Islamophobia when the death sentence is still being practised?*". The equality between Muslim and Non-Muslim in the majority Muslim population is still problematic as well.
- He reiterated that we need to go together in fighting extremism, radicalism and terrorism. He mentioned that in 2016 Nahdlatul Ulama held The International Summit of Moderate Islamic Leaders (ISOMIL) in Jakarta. At the end of the summit, the attendees published a "Jakarta Declaration" calling for an international coalition of religious groups and governments to dismantle the distorted religious ideology in fuelling extremism and terrorism.
- Second declaration on a similar subject was announced at the 2017 Gerakan pemuda ansor (Youth Movement of Ansor) in Jombang, East Java, it declared a so-called 'Humanitarian Islam'. Mainly it accentuates on how Islam can be truly beneficent to all humanity, not only favorable among Muslim but for the whole humanity; the religion of 'rahmatan Lil Alamin'.

The idea of a Political system—a caliphate—that is an ultimate aspiration of Muslim, is false. In the case of Indonesia, Islamic states would be a catastrophe while I believe that Pancasila state is enough to unify the hundreds of different ethnicities, cultures and believes

KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf

- Lastly, he mentioned key elements of the strategy to combat problematic issues of society, it includes the identification and deterrence of threats, conflict resolution,

new theological discourse on the re-contextualization of Islamic teachings for the modern era, developing and adopting educational curricula throughout the Islamic world, and grassroots movements to build social consensus and political will to resolve conflicts

The closing remarks were given by Prof. dr. Frans Wijzen, Vice Dean of Faculty Philosophy, Theology and religious studies of Radboud University, Nijmegen.

Dr Wijzen noted seven dilemmas from Al Wasatiyya:

1. Balancing local and global Islam

Islam Nusantara is local Islam, but it positions itself within the worldwide Muslim community which is dominated by Arabs. However, the overwhelming majority of Muslim does not live in the Arab world.

The characteristic of Islam Nusantara is based on balancing revelation and reason, Sunni jurisprudence and Sufism. This makes it unique in the global Muslim Community scene, and distinct from other fields of Islamic cultures, such as Arabia, Persia (Iran), Turkey, the Indian Subcontinent, Sino-Islamic, Africa, and the Western World.

We see the dilemma between local and global issues in combating radicalism (panel 3). Radicalism does not stop at the border but is transpired globally. The same applies to ecology (panel 5). Environmental issues are local and yet global, and we cannot solve them only at the local level.

We see this dilemma also in Indonesian soft power diplomacy, promoting moderate Islam externally to the outside world in foreign policy, and safeguarding the rights of minorities (Shi'a, Ahmadiyah, LGTB) internally in domestic policy.

But also the dilemma between authoritarian and democratic rule, top-down versus bottom-up, central and decentralized policy in the war on radicalism (panel 3).

Interestingly, as one of the papers noted (panel 1), this dilemma occurred already during the Dutch colonial era, when Indonesians went to Mecca for pilgrimage

and the Dutch colonial government was alarmed about Muslims returning from Mecca with more pan-Islamic ideas. What a striking parallel with the debated that we have today with radicalized Syria goes.

2. Balancing religious & secular domain

Islam Nusantara is an Islam that respects Pancasila as a philosophy of national unity, and evidently embraces nationalism.

But, how to deal with this in education? Is Pancasila to be taught as a secular nationalistic ideal, or as a multi-religious ideal?

We see this dilemma in papers about de-radicalization (panel 3). Is de-radicalisation a government 'project' primarily promoting more Pancasila, or is it a task of faith-based organizations, promoting and offer a different interpretation of contentious Text? We note a balancing of state and non-state actors also on environmental issues (panel 5). Is environment degradation the government responsibility, or a religious issue? Further, religious versus cultural or aesthetic interpretations of wearing the veil: Is the veil a sign of Islamic identity, or a sign of lifestyle, fashion or social class. Possibly it has all of this.

3. Balancing dilemmas within Islam

There are intra-religious dilemma's within Islam, between moderate and radical Islam, between reason and revelation, between mysticism and jurisprudence, between literal and hermeneutic understanding of Al Qur'an, between apolitical and active into the political sphere.

We see a balancing between legalistic and spiritual interpretations of Islamic banking (panel 4) and halal food (panel 5).

We see a balancing between spreading Islam Nusantara in traditional (visual Wayang) style or dogmatic (rational) style.

We see balancing between the old tradition of pluralism based on the multicultural view, or new cosmopolitan view (universalism) in promoting tolerance

And finally, we see a balancing between moderate and progressive Islam, NU and Muhammadiyah, between modernity and tradition.

4. Balancing between Islam and other religions

For example, inter-faith marriages (panel 2) and inter-faith actions for ecological change (panel 5) are good practices, but also challenging.

There is also a dilemma between Islam and indigenous religions, as we saw in the ecological challenges (panel 5).

There is also the dilemma between majority and minority religion, Sunni and Shi'a, not to speak about Ahmadiyya, as a human rights issue (panel 1).

5. Balancing individual and collective responsibilities

With respect to the banking system: Do we go for individual profit or the common good; is the bank primarily guided by economic or philosophical (ethical) principles (panel 4).

And concerning environment: Some papers say, if you want a clean world, start with yourself, with your behaviour. But, on the other hand, we cannot change the world without institutional change, eco-mosques (panel 5).

6. Balancing Masculine and Feminine values

We see this in a paper on arguments pro and contra LGTB, as human rights issue (panel 1).

Is gender equality to be based on traditional values, stressing the balance between male and female identities in Javanese culture, or on modern values of liberalism and emancipation?

We see a balancing between male and female identities in Islamic family law (panel 6) and polygamy as a poverty-driven practice: poverty drives a woman to polygamy (panel 6).

But we also noted a dilemma in masculine and feminine values in environmental care (panel 5): rational control versus respect for Mother Earth, and basically, the dilemma between Islam and indigenous religion comes back: Can Islam go hand in hand with indigenous religion in respecting for Mother Earth?

7. Balancing revelation and reason

Here again, balancing between moderate and progressive Islam.

Balancing technocracy and preservation in preventing climate change (panel 5); going back to nature versus innovation in science

and technology. But also, balancing philosophical and economic thinking in banking (panel 5).

And finally, and possibly underlying all dilemmas: The dilemma between our understanding of God and human being: Balancing the understanding of God as all-powerful and merciful, and balancing the understanding of the human beings as submissive to God and responsible for their own lives.

So, let us end this conference with words of hope, hope in a peaceful society & moderate Islam, words of solidarity between Indonesia and The Netherlands, as two democratic societies with long-standing historical ties, and the task ahead of us to show that moderate Islam is the mainline both in Indonesia and Europe.

Prof. dr. Frans Wijzen

CONCLUSION

Alhamdulillah, PCINU 2nd International Conference was a success. The continuation of this effort of promoting Moderate Islam in Europe and The Netherlands should be maintained and nurtured in the years to come. After all, contributing to the effort to erode the stigma against Islam is one of the visions of PCINU The Netherlands in the West. The working committee gives the following suggestions for future events:

- The next international conference event could be held in other countries in Europe so that the network and echoes of the Moderate Islam *a la* Islam Nusantara can be increasingly presented in Europe.
- The presence of Islam Nusantara will give a new colour and understanding to the West that it could benefit and influence the local policies in treating Muslims in its respective countries.
- Seeking a close partnership with universities and institutions in The Netherlands and other European countries should be in the centre agenda for the coming PCINU committee.

May God bless with our effort and aid our future endeavour. Amin ya Rabbal 'alamin

