

Teaching Islamic Studies for Inclusive Citizenship in Indonesia and the United States of America: Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

This research is aimed at investigating the role of Islamic studies in promoting inclusive citizenship in the context of Islamic schools in Indonesia and the United States. Islamic schools have been seen in a rather negative or pessimistic manner due to the sweeping accusation of them being a place for Islamic conservatism. Meanwhile, the currently increasing diversity of society inspires citizenship to be more inclusive, not only does the state impose equality amongst citizens, but also citizens develop respect and solidarity to others. Through this qualitative research conducted in both contexts, this study found that Islamic studies to a larger extent were designed to educate students to become inclusive citizens. Islam introduced in the textbooks in a weekend Islamic school in the US looks more open to a deeper interreligious relationship because, as a minority, Muslims are eager to display a more friendly Islam to respond to social demands and stigmatization. This study confirms anthropological studies that argue for the plurality of Islam in the domains of interpretations and practices bounded in historical, social and political contexts.

Keywords: *inclusive citizenship, Islamic studies, Islamic schools, Indonesia, Islam in America.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki peran studi Islam dalam mempromosikan kewarganegaraan inklusif dalam konteks sekolah -sekolah Islam di Indonesia dan Amerika Serikat. Sekolah -sekolah Islam telah terlihat dengan cara yang agak negatif atau pesimistis karena tuduhan besar mereka menjadi tempat untuk konservatisme Islam. Sementara itu, keanekaragaman masyarakat yang semakin meningkat mengilhami kewarganegaraan untuk menjadi lebih inklusif, negara tidak hanya memaksakan kesetaraan di antara warga negara, tetapi juga warga negara mengembangkan rasa hormat dan solidaritas kepada orang lain. Melalui penelitian kualitatif yang dilakukan dalam kedua konteks ini, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa studi Islam pada tingkat yang lebih besar dirancang untuk mendidik siswa agar menjadi warga negara yang inklusif. Islam yang diperkenalkan dalam buku teks di sekolah Islam akhir pekan di AS terlihat lebih terbuka untuk hubungan antaragama yang lebih dalam karena, sebagai minoritas, Muslim ingin menunjukkan Islam yang lebih ramah untuk menanggapi tuntutan sosial dan

stigmatisasi. Studi ini mengkonfirmasi Studi antropologis yang berargumen untuk pluralitas Islam dalam domain interpretasi dan praktik yang dibatasi dalam konteks historis, sosial dan politik.

Kata Kunci: Kewarganegaraan Inklusif, Studi Islam, Sekolah Islam, Indonesia, Islam di Amerika.

Introduction

This research is aimed at investigating the role of Islamic studies in promoting inclusive citizenship in the context of Islamic schools in Indonesia and the United States. Islamic schools have been seen in a rather negative or pessimistic manner due to the sweeping accusation of them being a place for Islamic conservatism (Driessen & Merry, 2006; Tan, 2014). They are depicted as institutions teaching intolerance, unequal treatment to women, anti-democracy, and anti-modernity. They use traditional teaching approaches emphasizing rote learning as opposed to reasoning-oriented instructions and heavy teacher-centered (Ayoade, 2020; Tan & Ibrahim, 2017). While this may be true for some of the schools, there are Islamic schools that demonstrate a great accommodation to 'foreign' ideas adopting 'secular' curricula, using student-centered approach, teaching democratic citizenship and tolerance, and like other schools, are exposed to external competitions which make them forcedly or voluntarily reform their education system. In Indonesia, for instance, although much still has to be done to improve, many Islamic schools (*pesantren*, *madrasah*, and other Islamic schools) represent a moderate understanding of Islam and teach students to become 'good' citizens of the country (Hefner, 2009; Hefner & Zaman, 2007; Raihani, 2012, 2014). In the US, too, some Islamic schools show fluidity with the mainstream democratic values of America (Brifkani, 2021; El-Atwani, 2015). In short, Islamic schools are a pluralist entity; some lean towards radicalism, but some others demonstrate moderation and accommodation of democratic values.

Citizenship is an important concept and vital component to the nation-state. It describes the complex relationship between subject and state bound in a set of rights and duties and between subject and subject which yield responsibilities as fellow citizens (Kabeer, 2005). The currently increasing diversity of society inspires citizenship to be more inclusive, not only does the state impose equality amongst citizens, but also citizens develop respect and solidarity to others. In inclusive citizenship, citizens also develop awareness of social injustice that they and other citizens may experience and advocate for justice to be actualized in society (Heggart, 2020). In it, everyone is treated equally.

Set against this backdrop, this research explores how Islamic studies help to educate children to become inclusive citizens in the contexts of Indonesia and the United States of America (the US). This study has the following significances. The contestation of state and Islam remains a fiercely debated topic in the literature. The compatibility of Islam with democracy has been examined in various contexts including in Indonesia as the first largest Muslim democratic country. This study will contribute to discussions on how Islam may or may not promote inclusive citizenship through education. The topic of Islamic religious education and inclusive citizenship remains under-represented in research, and even more so with regards to the teachers' perspective and curriculum both in Indonesia and the US, while both countries are of largest democracy representations of the North and South respectively. Also, this study

will contribute to the efforts in refining Islamic education curricula and teaching practices to be more sensitive of social issues and inclusive citizenship.

This qualitative research has two parts. The first part was done in Indonesia which explores the teaching of Islam and its relations with citizenship. There are four Islamic schools selected on purpose and the availability of schools to be part of this research. From these schools, I interviewed at least two teachers of Islamic studies in each school and three principals out of the four schools. I also collected some documents including school profiles and curriculum. However, I did not have permission to observe classroom practices because of the COVID-19 and the teachers only allowed me to conduct fieldwork during their semester break.

The four schools are all private; two of them – JSIT 1 and JSIT 2 – are affiliated to Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu (JSIT) or Integrated School Network popularly described as having relationship with an Islamic political party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera). Another is a Salafi school, and the final one is Ma'arif school. All the four schools are elementary but one – Ma'arif – is junior secondary.

The second part of this research was conducted in the US. Initially, I planned to visit a couple of formal Islamic schools in Boston. However, because of the increasing numbers of COVID-19 infections including among vaccinated people at the time of my visiting program (July to December 2021), the schools I contacted showed reluctance to open doors to my visit. Instead, I had contacted one mosque Imam, Sheikh Idris¹, in Boston and he accepted my interview invitation, and one academic who serves as an academic board of an Islamic school outside Massachusetts, Sister Anna, both of whom I interviewed in November 2021. In addition, I listened regularly Friday sermon delivered by the Imam from about three months from August to October 2021 and observed some Sunday school activities conducted in the mosque.

The above scene of data collection looks indeed quite random for a qualitative study, but this is what I could do in such challenging circumstances. The data I collected is quite rich exemplifying what and how Islam is taught to promote inclusive citizenship. Since this US part is not equal to the Indonesian part of the study in terms of school types, levels, and informants, I tried to complement my empirical study with secondary data readily available from previous researchers on a similar topic. The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) has published important research findings on weekend Islamic schools covering issues of children's character development and curriculum, and on mosques' roles in providing a more inclusive space for different people. I approached the data analysis using guidelines commonly recommended in qualitative methodology, which to step through such stages as data review or checks, coding and categorizing, and interpretation (Creswell, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Treating a school or mosque or community as one case would complicate the data analysis and be faced with unnecessary repetitions of information. However, I always note any contextual uniqueness of each sub-case (school, mosque, or community) to explain the variety of findings.

Islamic education in Indonesia and the United States

Indonesia

Islamic education in Indonesia is characterized with heavy community-based, and therefore the majority of the institutions are private (Kingham, 2008). This is on the contrary to general schools in which private institutions are the minority. Ever being

¹ All informants' names mentioned in this paper are pseudonym to protect their confidentiality.

marginalized in the national education system at least until the end of 1980s, Islamic education gradually develops to sit and stand equally with other schools in that they are funded and accredited according to the same regulations (Raihani, 2018; Zuhdi, 2005). Although issues and problems remain conspicuous particularly with regards to private institutions such as lack of funding, lack of the state's controls, and poor teaching quality, as shown in the statistics below, the contributions of this sector to the national education are significant.

It is a quite recent phenomenon in Indonesia to see Islamic schools – non-*pesantren* and non-*madrasah* – mushrooming since the late 1980s (Hefner, 2009; Tan, 2014). These institutions usually operate under the affiliation with MoEC, adopting its prescribed curriculum but having additional Islamic studies curriculum and programs. Many of these schools attribute themselves as *Sekolah Islam Terpadu* (SIT) or Integrated Islamic Schools, and have an association called *Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu* (JSIT) or Integrated Islamic School Network. This does not necessarily mean, however, that all Islamic schools join this network, as there are *Sekolah Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadiyah Schools), *Ma'arif* Schools, Salafi Schools, and others (Suharto, 2017). These schools are ideological and some even political bringing the missions of organizations they belong to. From the statistics, Islamic schools contribute significantly to the national education system: *pesantren* (33,218)², *madrasah* (82,418)³, *madrasah diniyah* (85,704)⁴, and Islamic schools (13,214 comprising 3,334 Muhammadiyah schools⁵, 7,462 NU's Ma'arif schools⁶, and 2,418 Integrated schools⁷). The total number of Islamic education institutions up to senior secondary level at least reaches 214,554, which is about 51% of the total school population in Indonesia, that is 419,574 in 2020. This figure suggests the role of Islamic schooling in shaping the mind of Indonesian youth, although many private *madrasah* (95% of total 82,418) are faced with educational delivery problems.

However, the private status of these Islamic education institutions benefits the organizations to which they belong. It opens a wide opportunity for the leaders and community to spread and preserve Islamic ideological missions unique to the organizations that the schools belong to (Subhan, 2012; Suharto, 2017). Research has shown that, because of lack of the state's control, Islamic schools offer different currents of Islam. Ma'arif, Muhammadiyah and SIT schools teach a kind of moderate Islam and support the Indonesian nation-state, although SIT schools are inclined towards serving political purposes of *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (PKS) or Justice and Welfare Party, which in its ultimate goal to gain a full control of the state (*orbit daulah*) (Tayeb, 2018, p.185). A tiny number of Islamic schools, particularly Salafi schools, pose different orientation of Islam that is “unsympathetic to nationalism but uninterested in channeling their objectives into efforts to overthrow the Indonesian state” (Hefner, 2009, p.87). My research on citizenship education in two Salafi schools

² <https://ditpdpontren.kemendiknas.go.id/> accessed on October 5, 2021

³ <http://emispendis.kemendiknas.go.id/dashboard/?content=data-statistik> accessed on October 5, 2021

⁴ <https://ditpdpontren.kemendiknas.go.id/> accessed on October 5, 2021

⁵ <https://dikdasmennppmuhammadiyah.org/dapodikmu-jumlah-sekolah/> accessed on October 5, 2021

⁶ <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/qc2dg4430/lp-maarif-nu-inventarisasi-sekolah-dan-madrasah> accessed on October 5, 2021

⁷ <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/ot3za2313/pesat-perkembangan-sekolah-islam-terpadu> accessed on October 5

in Malang confirm that they avoid obeying the government in observing national symbols such as weekly flag raising ceremony and singing the national anthem and songs (Author & Sari, 2023).

The United States

Like other faith communities, being minority in the US for many Muslims is challenging particularly with regards to preserving Islamic culture and religion while also struggling to melt in American society which is described as underpinned on secular and Judeo-Christian values (Esposito, 1998). Muslims realize that education is the only way to teach Islamic religion to children (Haddad & Smith, 1994). Currently, there are currently about 300 full-time Islamic schools across the US (Brifkani, 2021); all are private institutions, and therefore are not eligible for receiving public funds (Berglund, 2015). Islamic schools rely heavily on student tuition, which according to Brifkani (2021) make themselves unaffordable to many Muslim families.

As minority in the country, Muslim immigrants are faced with a situation where they hardly feel at home, and worried about their children's future's culture and (Brifkani, 2021; Haddad & Smith, 1994). However, building Islamic schools for children and teach Islamic values which are often not in line with the American values would create another problem, i.e., alienating Muslim children further from the society because they only learn Islamic values and live within a closed Islamic community (Timani, 2006). The only way to overcome this dilemmatic position, as Timani (2006) recommends, is to reform Islamic education in the US to teach Islam without de-Americanization. In other words, Islam that should be taught to children is Islam that is interpreted to accept America as the melting nation of the Muslims and other communities living in harmony.

Charles L. Glenn (2016), a Boston University professor, with his team, however, conducted a large study on secondary Islamic schools interviewing teachers, students, and parents across the US as part of Moral Foundations of Education. Surprisingly, as he explained, that students do not feel that they have problems of being Muslims as well as American citizens. They are even exposed to American culture and society, not in social studies, but Islamic studies through discussions and reflections with their teachers.

Another place of Islamic education for American Muslims, as also found in many Western countries, is weekend schools, which are often part of, or adjacent to, mosques. This is a part-time system in which parents send their children to learn basic Islam such as reading and memorizing the Quran, learning compulsory and recommended prayers, Islamic history, etc., lessons that they do not have in public schools. According to the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) (2018), around 500 weekend schools might exist across the country. In addition to this non-formal school, in the US and other countries alike, Friday's sermon provides education to Muslims inclusive of almost all ages – children and adults alike. Research on Friday sermons is various, but much fewer than that on mosque issues. One study, for example, focuses on the sermon's duration from one mosque to another reflecting the difference between classical and contemporary Islamic scholars (Usman & Iskandar, 2021), and another is on the content of the sermon (Aasim, Padela, Malik, & Ahmed, 2018; Alper, Bayrak, Us, & Yilmaz, 2020; Errihani, 2011; Hashem, 2010; Millie, 2017; Samuri & Hopkins, 2017; Sbai, 2019; Underabi, 2020; Underwood & Kamhawi, 2014). All these studies reaffirm the pivotal role of the Friday sermon in shaping Muslims' faith, knowledge and awareness of issues contained in the sermons.

Teaching Islam for inclusive citizens in Indonesia

From the data analysis through N-Vivo, I generated a quite long list of nodes which I then categorize into several themes. For the purpose of this paper, I present two themes, namely: teachers' perspective of Islamic studies teaching and their understanding of citizenship.

Teachers' perspectives of Islamic studies

The private status of the studied schools opens wide an opportunity for the teachers focus on what they think is relevant for students. Although there is a set of curriculum guidelines to follow, as the interviewed teachers said, the detailed prescriptions can be adjusted to meet the schools' needs. There are variations across the four schools in terms of curriculum contents, but all the schools develop a specific program of religious practices and habituations for children. The findings suggest that it is common across the schools that students observe recommended morning prayers, mandatory midday and afternoon prayers, morning Quranic recitations before class, and get their behaviors monitored by teachers. A teacher, Ferry, from the Salafi school said that teachers are always alerted with any of misconducts done by students during school time including absence from mandatory worships and activities and misbehaviors. In Ghazalian perspective, habituation is the most beneficial method of religious education (Attaran, 2015). This is the stage in which a child learns to institutionalize religious practices and values into daily life. Understanding at this stage may be limited and will be established during the later period of life. The schools are highly aware of the importance of habituation and make it as an attracting point to parents.

JSIT 1 incorporates more religious contents of the Prophet's companions' biography with the objective to educate students on the life and struggle of early pious Muslims to hold steadfastly to Islam. While the Salafi school and JSIT 2 add to the curriculum load a *tahfidh* (Quranic memorization) program, the Ma'arif school has a specific course on "Aswaja"⁸ and Nahdatul Ulama from ideology to religious rituals. Of course, the ideology is taught in a very simple way, but according to the teacher it covers information about the history and a brief description of both "Aswaja" and NU. The principal said:

For the first graders, we introduce them about Aswaja and NU. Later at the second grade, they learn about Islamic rituals specific to NU, and at the third grade, they learn more about NU as an organization that has structures.

This more complicated content is taught to students at the junior secondary level. In addition, the JSIT and Ma'arif Islamic studies teachers are also concerned with interreligious relationships. They said that students need to learn how to live in harmony with other fellow citizens of other religions. Syamsul, a teacher of JSIT 2 said:

In the curriculum, there is a content on tolerance. This is closely related to the Citizenship Subject. In this teaching, it prescribes how we deal with people of non-Islamic religions. This is what we explain to students.

⁸ Aswaja stands for Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah referring to the Islamic sect of the Muslim majority. It is often placed as the opposite of Shi'i. In Indonesia, although the majority of Muslims follow this sect, NU is the one to claim it formally. In my observation, the term Aswaja has been increasingly used and restated by NU in the last decades after the Salafi groups claim to be the true Aswaja, although the latter prefers to use the term 'Ahlu al-Sunnah'. The Salafi likes to self-categorise as the only followers of the Prophet's Sunnah, and therefore every activity or thing they promote is named after it such as "Kajian Sunnah", "Ustadz Sunnah", "Sunnah Store", etc.

When I dig further about what tolerance means, most of their answers refer to tolerance as a passive attitude towards differences.

The general picture of the curriculum content as depicted by the teachers in the respective schools suggests a heavy religion-oriented instruction to build pious and committed students. Tahfizh, habituation of the rituals, and religious instructions are one-way teaching in which students only follow what teachers prescribe. Reasoning is not a priority, as one Salafi teacher said: "We want our students to receive and understand our lessons. We don't expose them to issues that make them think too hard and drag them from our tahfizh program".

JSIT 1 schoolteacher, Fatima, adds that children at their age are like a white canvas which is subject to teachers' will to draw. One may want to understand that all the schools, but the Ma'arif one, are at elementary level so that reasoning is not a priority. However, autonomous students need to learn to develop critical thinking according to their level. In other words, the complication level of reasoning, particularly with regards to religious teaching that have social implications, can be adjusted to student ages.

Teachers' understanding of citizenship

Following up the above findings on social Islamic values being internalized to students, it is interesting now to explore how teachers conceptualize or at least what they understand about citizenship. They were asked about what good citizen is, and they came up with different responses. Some of them pointed to the fulfilment of citizenry obligations such as obedience in paying taxes, in traffic rules, and voting in the elections. All the interviewed teachers argued strongly for this legal citizenship. Harto, for example, stressed:

For instance, we look at the issues of tax and zakat. Many say that tax is not part of shariah, because what has been prescribed in shariah is zakat. So, we cannot argue against the tax obligation because this is the domain of state. So, tax is state obligation and zakat is religious obligation. Both must be fulfilled equally. If you don't want to pay tax, don't be an Indonesian citizen.

However, some of them also came up with a more participative kind of citizenship, which starts from being good people in the family context. Yuni, a JSIT 1 teacher, argued that one of the state foundations is family. A state will be good if family as a societal unit is good. She further explained children learn how to become good citizens from family like learning to obey parents' instructions, be kind to other people, help others, and feel united. Rafiq, a JSIT 2 teacher, touched this issue in a deeper remark.

We can be good citizens when we have faith in the hereafter. If we believe in it, we are motivated to do good deeds to other people, and hence become good citizens. If we remember what will happen in the hereafter, we will not make damages on earth.

Derry provided another example of preserving environment as one of good citizen characteristics.

The citizenship concepts they suggest cover issues on both vertical and horizontal types of citizenship. They imply that those characteristics are built through education including in the family which is a primary venue for children to learn how to become good citizens. In this concept, personal development of children from early ages has a pivotal position of citizenship education. Referring to the above concept of social transformation that JSIT teachers want to advocate through Islamic education, societal leaders who will inspire changes in society are to be created during childhood through

education in such a primary place followed by good process of education later in their life. They will have obedience to the state, exercise good deeds and benefit society.

From the findings, it is interesting to learn that all the informants do not confront good citizenship against religious teaching and values. They argue that obedience to the state or government does not annihilate religious obedience and commitment. They quote a verse of the Quran 4:59 in which Allah says the translation of which:

O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.

So, they are convinced that being a good citizen is part of the religious commitment, and therefore religion must come first before state. This means that obedience to the state cannot override or be in the contrary to religious obedience. When the government asks citizens to do something that it makes them disobey God, they have to prefer to obey God and ignore the government's command. Rafiq said:

As citizens, we have to be selective in obeying the government. We know that obedience to God is prescribed, so is obedience to the state. As Muslims, we have to obey what is good according to our religion.

While the above statement by Rafiq is theologically justified, some of the teachers were concerned with the current political situation which, according to their observation, has demonstrated a rather hostile attitude towards Islam. This concern emerges from the JSIT school teachers who said that although Muslims are the majority, they are currently powerless. Yuni pointed out:

In my observation, generally there is discrimination towards Muslims. Is this something normal in this country that when Muslims appear to advance, they are targeted to be cornered? If we see the Padang's case of jilbab, it is for me like they want to find something to blame. Why? There might be central government's policies that are not implemented in schools. So, because of this, Muslims who want to show commitment to their religion are scrutinized in such a way. I am personally worried that this situation continues to be like in 1980s when jilbab was prohibited.

Yuni's concern relates to a recent case in West Sumatra where a Chinese non-Muslim parent protested a public school where her child is sent to. Her child in this school was obliged to wear jilbab as her fellow Muslims do at school. The parent talked to the school and media, and it quickly became a nation-wide media attention. Responding to roaring protests by human right activists and public, the government issued a three-ministerial joint decree to prohibit schools to impose any religious uniform in public schools. However, the matter did not stop at this. Muslim groups and individuals protested the government for becoming too harsh and send unfriendly signals to Muslims. Interestingly, this view on this particular event is also shared by all the informants of this study, who try to justify the school's policy in making jilbab compulsory to all female students, Muslim and non-Muslims alike.

So, the informants' conception of citizenship covers both vertical state-subject and horizontal subject-subject relationships. It is not only about rights and duties as subjects, but also has something to do with the very early step of the citizen-making process, namely personal development through family and school education. However, some informants are concerned with the state-Muslim relations which in their subjective assessment appears unfriendly. The following section presents findings about the

informants' perspectives on diversity, tolerance, and justice, going more deeply into issues that might influence their practices in teaching Islam and citizenship.

Teaching Islam for good citizens in the US

Now, this section presents findings from the US context. From the data collected, I present themes that are in a way comparable to the previous data presentation of the Indonesian context. They are Islamic studies through non-formal and formal modes of education based on teachers' perspectives and citizenship issues.

Teachers' perspective of Islamic Studies

Sheikh Idris, the imam of the mosque being studied, confirmed the pivotal role of mosque as he has served leadership in a couple of mosques around the state for decades and observed that the attendance of Muslims to at least weekly Friday prayer is high. He believed that mosque should be used as a center for Muslim community not only to develop Islamic faith and commitment, but also to character development as members of this country citizenship. Therefore, his weekly sermons covered topics on the development of characters that equip Muslims to be able to survive living in a challenging society like the US. He often talked about sincere devotion to Allah, optimism, self-correction, the importance of following the COVID-19 protocols, trustworthiness, parenting/education, and social reforms. For example, he said in one of his sermons:

It is essential for us to understand our responsibility in the upbringing our children. This is the utmost best of society; it is this nurturing that we have to uphold. And we are taught how to do it so that this benefits our society and our nation. This is the foundation of humanity (October 1, 2021).

Here Sheikh Idris believed that parenting serves as the foundation for children development as part of human commitment to benefit both society and the nation. In another sermon, he encouraged parents to educate their children to respect and help others regardless of faith. Also, when there was a general election to vote for a mayor of Boston in early November 2021, Sheikh Idris pushed his congregation to exercise their right to vote as part of civic engagement. He argued:

Sheikh Idris: Because leadership represents the society. If I am Muslim and this is somebody who's going to be a leader, I want to make sure that the leader is someone who is righteous to lead the society in the right path.

Author: Does he or she have to be in the same religion with you?

Sheikh Idris: No, but as long as that they know that they are righteous, that they are good people. If he's a Muslim, great. Alhamdulillah. But if not, then at least that person is the kind of person that has good values. Good social values.

To educate children to become an active member of society, Islamic education according to the informants should use curriculum that contains not only Islamic knowledge and teaching, but also social studies. In Sister Anna's regular Islamic school, Islamic studies are, when possible, taught in a way that integrates other knowledge to practice the concept of whole Muslim child education. Sister Anna explained:

So, basically, I feel like in order for us to succeed in our Islamic school, we have to address the child as a whole being, we have to address their academic, their spiritual, the social and emotional aspects.

To some extent, the curriculum is approached and taught in a thematic way, not specifically focused on Islamic knowledge in separation from other knowledge. However, when full academic integration cannot be done, the incorporation of Islamic values with sciences is made to ensure that children learn knowledge and sciences on

the basis of divine awareness. In a whole-child education, as Sister Anna elaborated, education strategies are not limited to curriculum and instruction per se but involve other components of school starting from the school vision and missions to its culture and environment that are deliberately designed to educate children in a 'correct' way.

The Muslim Leadership Academy (MLA) as reported in ISPU (2018) also sought to cultivate characters by promoting empathy and citizenship among students at weekend Islamic schools with the goal to develop whole-Muslim child education. However, as it has been the case in many weekend Islamic schools, the development of curriculum that offers whole-child approaches is restricted by the duration of schooling hours, which is only up to three hours a week. Therefore, as Sheikh Idris emphasized, the allocated time was usually spent mostly to teach Islamic studies such as ways of worship, Islamic morality, and history. There is almost no time for teachers to teach social studies except that the school occasionally invited external source persons to talk to children about social issues.

Author: Do you think the Islamic Studies here or in other schools also provide information or subjects or topics on how to deal with society?

Sheikh Idris: Well somewhat. We had session where we bring in somebody, an expert in the field, to talk about the social aspects of human behaviors, especially when it comes to terrorism, especially when it comes to segregation or racism. Again, all with the objective to boost the confidence in children so that they can see and accept the differences; that their differences are normal, acceptable.

With such a limited opportunity, it is understandable that weekend Islamic schools are focused on teaching Islamic studies. Sheikh Idris's school, for example, explicitly articulated the education objective as follows: "Sunday school aims to provide students with an Islamic education, so they live according to Islamic teachings and values and be of service to community" (Brochure). This school only offered classes of Quranic recitation and memorization, Arabic reading and writing, and foundations of Islamic studies. However, there seemed to have been aspirations and efforts in weekend Islamic schools to properly cover social studies for children to learn about differences, social justice issues, animal rights, etc. In fact, "weekend schools have an opportunity to play a critical role in building congruency between American and Muslim identities among children. We believe that this can be accomplished through citizenship education, that is, a discussion of how we as Muslims are taught to interact with the world around us" (ISPU, 2018, p.9). In the Islamic textbooks used by Sheikh Idris's school, there are several chapters presenting lessons on how to interact with different people in society. In "We are Muslims" for Grade 4 weekend Islamic school students, for instance, there are topics on community, social solidarity, and interactions with people of other faiths. Some inspiring lessons from the book for Islamic citizenship can be seen among other in the following excerpts.

Outside of our Muslim community, we have our neighborhoods, our towns and cities. Rasulallah taught us that our neighbors have rights. Even if they are non-Muslims we must remember that they are also the sons and daughters of Adam. They too are our brothers and sisters. When it came to treating people fairly and kindly Rasulallah never looked at their religion. He handled all of his neighbors with kindness, whether they were Muslim, Jewish or idol-worshippers (Kindle book, no page).

The text clearly stresses on a relationship that Muslim children to establish that is based on humanity and that sets aside religious sentiments. It invites children to look at the examples of the Prophet in kind handling of neighbors regardless of religions. The book goes on to encourage parents and children to become a volunteer family where each member buys a gift and a “get well” card and distribute to children in hospital. In another chapter, the book discusses the social reality of different religions with a brief introduction of each major religions available to children in society. The introduction emphasizes that each religion commands his followers to respect and care for all human beings. At the end of this chapter, the book encourages children to have family activities that show actual kindness to people of other religions.



Picture 1. A Page on Interreligious Interaction

While I don't know how far the school used the textbooks it recommended to student parents to buy because of the time constraints, several chapters in different grades' Islamic studies textbooks contain lessons to help Muslim children to become 'good' American citizens. This is equally the same case between regular and weekend Islamic schools. Beyond this, as previously depicted, Friday sermons in the mosque I observed provided Islamic guidance for Muslims to be good Muslims who care not only for themselves and their faith, but also for others.

Citizenship Issues: American society and Islamic values

One theme emerged from the interview data is with regards with citizenship issues including the compatibility of Islamic values and American society. Sheikh Idris who arrived in the US more than four decades ago explained that the 9/11 terrorist attack marked the worsening Islamophobia in American society, although he believed it is getting more open now towards Muslims in which acceptance and recognition of Muslimness are better than, as he referred, that in France and Germany. This all depends on how Muslims present themselves before the society, but I felt from the interview that there is a relatively high pressure on them to behave in a manner to comply with American values though with a bold demarcation line. Both Sheikh Idris and Sister Anna argued that there are Islamic principles Muslims must hold on tightly and should not negotiate them for the sake of social integration. Sheikh Idris said:

Now, you co-exist with someone who is non-Muslims, and they will drink alcohol. They will eat pork. They are different in the lifestyle, dressing lifestyle. Women that are non-Muslims in this country and in most of the world dress in a manner that are not according to shariah. So, you are not going to go after them and say: "look, this is haram. This is not acceptable in Islam".

Sister Anna highlighted an issue of why Muslim children should go to Islamic schools, not to public schools. As she observed, it is getting more difficult for Muslim children to be in public schools because of Islamophobia attitudes they see from their friends that also include bullying because of religious differences. Sheikh Idris

confirmed that female Muslim children at school often experienced bullying only because of them wearing *hijab*. It is hard for the children to handle. The ISPU's 2018 research found:

Many of them [students] often face bullying and/or the added burden of having to "represent" Islam for their teachers and peers. In fact, according to ISPU's American Muslim Poll 2017, 42 percent of Muslim families had at least one child (K-12) who had been bullied because of their faith in the past year. These factors have serious implications for American Muslim children's sense of belonging to the United States, their character development, and the roles they envision for themselves in society (p.9).

In fact, the same concern about bullying as described above has also been shared in the research conducted by Pew Research Center in 2017 (Pew Research Center, 2017). Sheikh Idris, therefore, believed that for children who are sent by parents to go to public schools for any reason, a weekend Islamic school can provide a venue for them to socialize and share concerns with Muslim peers about what they experienced during the schooling days (Monday to Friday). Children should understand that they are not alone; there are friends with whom they feel comfortably interact.

In his reflection, Sheikh Idris pointed to ignorance as one source of Islamophobia. He told a story when groups of American society campaigned for anti-shariah laws, while they did not understand that the values underpinning the shariah laws they rallied against are similar to American values. There is an acknowledgement among the research participants of the universal values Islam and American society shared, and therefore there should not be a big problem in making social integration happen. Sister Anna explained:

I think many, many of the American values [are similar to Islamic values]. When I look at it from when I grew up in Iraq, many American values are very Islamic. Like how, you know how to take care of the environment and the cleanliness, how they are respectful and nice, and so a lot of times you can find more Islamic values within the American culture than within my (Iraqi) culture.

In short, as the informants believed, there is a lot to share between both Islamic and American values, and positive interactions that lead to better understanding of each other are necessary to improve the situations. Muslim children in America, as Sister Anna rightly put, do not have another place to call it 'home', and there is a strong willingness to integrate while also holding their religious principles. Although many Muslim parents retain memories of homeland and identify themselves as part of both countries or cultures, Muslim children who were born in the US are proud of being American citizens and eager to melt with the culture.

Discussions of findings

Here this section discusses the findings in the light of the reviewed literature and incorporating reflections of how Islamic studies educate children to become good citizens in both Indonesian and the US contexts.

Islamic studies at both Indonesian and the US Islamic schools are part of the core curriculum taught to students and the main characteristic of such educational institutions. The findings in both contexts confirm that Islamic studies taught to students are focused on nurturing faith and commitment of students to Islam as the only way of life. This reflects a manifestation of a wide use of confessional approach to teaching Islamic religion. In both contexts, this approach corresponds squarely to parents'

aspirations of their children studying and maintaining their faith and culture. As Timani (2006) argued before, Muslim parents in the US want their children to preserve the culture and values of origin including Islamic faith.

In Islamic schools in Indonesia and the US, Islamic character development has become one of the objectives of Islamic studies besides teaching religious worships and rituals. The teachers in both contexts believe that public schools are hardly concerned with the development of Islamic characters and values in students. While the Indonesian teachers blame the government for the neglect of students' morality and prioritizing secular knowledge in the curriculum, the US teachers understand that public schools in this country are neutral from teaching any religion including religious-based morality. As a result, in Indonesian public schools, religion class is run for only two hours per week, while in the US, religion class can only be taught in private schools.

In both contexts, the curriculum of Islamic studies contains also social issues such as how Muslims should interact with fellow citizens from different backgrounds. It shares concerns with teaching tolerance and respect to those from other religions. However, the country contexts were found to have led to different emphasis between Indonesian and the US Islamic schools on the interreligious relationships. In Indonesia, Islamic studies teachers tend to teach students in the majority narratives that Muslims should play dominating roles in society and be respected, while also encouraging passive tolerance. In some cases, Islamic studies in this country are presented in a way that excludes other Muslims who adhere to different interpretations. This refers to Salafi schools' mission to purify Islamic practices deemed to be baseless in the Quran and the Sunnah. In the US, however, the Islamic studies teachers try to strike the balance between Islamic commitment and social integration of Muslim children. Therefore, as I found from the interviews and the textbooks, the level of tolerance taught in the US Islamic studies curriculum looks more active and contributive to social integration. The explicit instruction in the textbook to encourage a Muslim family to cook religious or cultural meals and invite the corresponding religious others to home would be hard to find in the Indonesian Islamic textbooks, even though the practices of serving *halal* meals by Christian minority during Christmas to welcome Muslim guests are commonly found in a more diverse society in Indonesia (Raihani, 2014).

In Indonesian Islamic schools, it is quite common to find a heavy set of the ritual observations by students in several programs. Not only do students observe regular daily compulsory prayers such as the midday and afternoon prayers when they are at school, but they are also habituated to observe recommended morning (*dhuha*) prayer, morning Quranic recitation, and as found in the JSIT schools, to attend *mabit* (sleep-over program) to conduct several religious activities under the oversight and guidance of teachers. This habituation process finds its basis on the pesantren education system except that the studied Islamic schools do not run a boarding system. Pesantren usually runs a full-day education system with additional activities in the evening and early morning before dawn inculcating commitment to the faith and internalizing values in students. The habituation in the Ghazalian perspective manifests the essence of Islamic education that emphasizes not only Islamic knowledge acquisition, but also personal, moral and social development (Attaran, 2015; Halstead, 2004).

The findings in both contexts echo teachers' opinions on what makes a good Muslim citizen, which in most parts confirms Delanty's (1997) post-national model of citizenship or Kiwan's (2008) and Kabeer's (2005) model of inclusive citizenship. There are three common characteristics of Muslim citizenship shared among Islamic

studies teachers in Indonesia and the US, namely: personal characters, social characters, and subject-state relationship characters. While in the first category the teachers in both contexts share common perspectives, in the other two, they have different views. It can be inferred from the interview data that personal characters of students as Muslims are of necessity for effective citizenship. The interviewed teachers identified several personal characters Muslim students need to develop such as pious, optimist, trustworthy, self-reliant, hardworking, and other Islamic personality traits. In this sense, the teachers do not see any conflict between being good Muslims and becoming good citizens, although the articulation of this religion-state relationship in citizenship is interesting to explore later when discussing the third characteristic of citizenship.

The Islamic studies teachers in Indonesia and the US consider social characters of students as another important dimension of citizenship. In other words, to become good citizens, Muslims are required to develop characters that support them in establishing harmonious social relationships. For example, all the teachers agree that the values of respect and tolerance need to be nurtured in students in the context of Indonesian and American multicultural societies. It is interesting also to understand that all the teachers in both countries encourage an active tolerance towards religious differences because they believe that this is an Islamic teaching and value. Active tolerance demonstrates meaningful collaborations among religious citizens to create a society conducive for every citizen to have a peaceful and productive life, whilst passive tolerance means putting up with differences without substantial efforts to build a harmonious relationship to contribute to a better society.

Another perspective of the Islamic studies teachers found in this research informs about another dimension of social characters of citizenship, which is social justice. Social justice is particularly important to the 'rights' concept of citizenship (Delanty, 1997) in that every citizen is entitled to have equal rights, and to Kabeer's (2005) concept of solidarity in the model of inclusive citizenship in which citizens develop the capacity to help those who struggle for justice. In this research, there has been a common feeling by many of the US Muslims as described by the informants and the ISPU (2018) research participants of being a victim of Islamophobia. Therefore, social justice is sounded as an important part of their citizenship concept to reflect their struggles against injustice they have been faced with, although it is intriguing to understand how they would voice justice for other 'marginalized' segments of society. Meanwhile, in the Indonesian context, the teachers demonstrate a feeling of threatened majority that drives them to believe in a concept of justice that should give privileges the religious majority over the minority. The concept of non-Muslims in Indonesia as *ahlu dzimmah* or those who deserve protections from Muslim rulers, which means placing them as inferior to the majority, looks to remain significant in the teachers' minds even though this is never explicitly articulated. As described before, the belief that the minority should follow the majority is well manifested more notably in the teachers' comments on the controversial case of the *jilbabization* of non-Muslim students in West Sumatra. In addition, as also confirmed in the previous research (Hasan, 2008, 2012), Salafi schools are concerned with issues of Islamic purification, which might influence students to become intolerant towards other Muslims who have different understanding and interpretations.

The third characteristic of citizenship according to the research participants is the subject-state relationship, which entails citizens' rights and duties. Both Indonesia and the US promote democratic values among citizens, and there has been a wide

assumption that Islam cannot go side by side with democracy, while there has also been a compelling argument that there is no inherent conflict between the two (United States Institute of Peace, 2002). The Prophet Muhammad was described to have introduced and supported democratic principles and practices among early Muslims in Madinah. In this research, the participants do not see the current government system of democracy un-Islamic. Sheikh Idris even praises democratic and open society in the US as compatible with Islamic teachings. Therefore, all the teachers interviewed in both countries place a great emphasis on the importance of Muslims abiding laws prescribed by the democratic governments such as paying taxes, participating in elections, and complying with COVID-19 protocols. Yet, the Islamic studies teachers in Indonesia particularly set a particular condition for obeying the government, i.e., no obedience to the government for doing Islamically misconducts.

The condition for obedience as stressed by the Indonesian teachers above sources from a Prophetic tradition. In my observation of Muslim community in Indonesia during the pandemic, this *hadith* has been often cited by Muslim preachers to provoke the community to ignore the government's COVID-19 protocols. For instance, in some mosques in the area where I live some preachers continuously framed the government as prohibiting Muslims from properly observing the daily prayers because of instructing them to make distance between the congregation attendants during prayers and no handshaking after prayers. They encouraged Muslims to challenge the 'un-Islamic' regulations by citing such a Prophet's tradition ignoring another dimension of the Islamic *shariah* to provide protection from any harm. On the contrary, as I observed in some mosques in the US, the regular mosque attendants follow the rules making distance between people during prayers, observing no handshakes, and other COVID-19 protocols. In some mosques, the mosque leadership even facilitates the government to use the mosque as a venue for COVID-19 vaccines to the community, and the preachers continuously remind them to obey the related rules.

Conclusions: Does "Islam" teach inclusive citizenship to students?

This study is aimed at exploring whether and how Islam that is taught in Islamic schools in both Indonesia and the US promotes inclusive citizenship among students. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this research was constrained to only use interview data from the teachers and principals in Indonesia and rely on only two perspectives of an *imam/teacher* and a scholar of Islamic education in the US. The plan to conduct classroom observation in both countries and to interview enough teachers in the US could not applied. This leaves an imbalance set of findings between the two contexts, although in the case of the US research the utilization of secondary data was maximized.

Islamic studies in Islamic schools in both contexts are part of the core curriculum taught to students, and in weekend Islamic schools in the US it is the main one. The taught Islam is confessionally oriented inculcating faith and commitment to the religion. The curriculum and programs are designed to educate children to observe the religious rituals in a proper way and to develop Islamic personality. In both contexts, an intensive internalization of Islamic values and cultures is evident in various school curricular programs to help create an integrated personality of Muslim students. A whole-child concept advocated in the US context matches well the concept of integration carried by 'integrated' Islamic schools in Indonesia. Muslims who develop Islamic personal characters and academic intellects are part of the main objectives of the

Islamic schools' education. The informants believe that Islamic personal characters are of important component of citizenship.

The teaching of Islam in the studied Islamic schools is also focused on the development of social characters of students. The teachers realize that students have to survive living in society where diversity becomes a bolder characteristic of it. Islam they are teaching is not insensitive to such a diversity but is translated into socially supportive religion such as to include the teaching of tolerance and respect to differences, and of social solidarity. The textbooks used in the US Islamic schools contain in a large part the teaching of social integration of Muslims in American society. However, in terms of social justice, Islam is perceived by the Indonesia's Islamic school teachers to be a dominating religion because Muslims are the majority. When it is translated into classroom instruction, this perception would challenge the concept of equity and justice that should be taught to students as part of the curriculum. In the US, social justice becomes a core issue in Islamic schools due to the feeling of becoming a victim of social discrimination and prejudice.

Islam that is promoted to students in the Islamic schools in Indonesia and the US teaches obedience by citizens to the government. Participation in the government's programs is recommended, and compliance to the regulations as long as not contradicting to the Islamic principles is commanded. None of the interviewed teachers problematize democracy as the state system, although the practices of Islamic pedagogy in both contexts are in some parts hardly categorically underpinned on democratic principles. Rote learning, which is to some extent understandable to be used in teaching religion, and indoctrination of religious dogmas remain common features of Islamic studies in both contexts. Children's autonomy to some extent is neglected.

In short, Islam that is delivered in Islamic schools in both Indonesia and the US to a larger extent help to promote inclusive citizenship. It emphasizes more on participation as good citizens in the respective context covering more on horizontal types of citizenship. The Islamic studies taught in the schools seem to instruct Muslims to begin with presenting themselves in good behaviors to contribute to the society where they exist, although the concept of social characters of citizenship does not go beyond deeper social justice articulations such as participating in the struggle for the rights of every cultural group. In Indonesia, the wide belief by the teachers that Islam as the majority's religion should have more power and privileges could trigger more intolerant and unjust behaviors.

The findings suggest that socio-political influences are significant in shaping the Islamic studies delivered in both contexts. In Indonesia, the perception of the current government's hostility towards Islam is commonly sounded by most of the teachers. Beside the fact that in Pekanbaru the current government could not win the majority of voters in 2019, the continuous stigmatization of such hostility in the forms of *'ulama* criminalization, COVID-19 handling that has been perceived as disserving Muslims, the perceived accommodation of communists, and several isolated events have affected unfavorable perception towards the government. This evidently influences their teaching of Islamic studies to be more inward looking and heavily confessional. In the US, social behaviors towards Islam and Muslims sound more influential in shaping Islamic studies teachings in a positive way. The teaching of Islam is oriented to educate Muslim children to become good ambassadors of 'smiling' Islam as a counter strategy to the existing prejudices. This means that Muslim children are nurtured to become good Muslims as well as good American citizens.

The capacity of Islamic schools in both countries also influences the way Islamic studies are delivered. In the US, this concerns the limited funding which solely sources from parents and community and a lack of qualified teachers who have competencies in Islamic pedagogical content knowledge. The need for proper teacher education is widely desired. In Indonesia, private Islamic schools receive partial funding from the government through the scheme of BOS (school operational cost) which is calculated on the number of enrolled students. Beside this fund, the schools set certain fees that student parents must meet including building fee, tuition fee, and so forth. Therefore, Islamic studies activities financially run well and are supported by parents. Meanwhile, the teacher capacity in the studied private Indonesian Islamic schools varies from one to another school, but they have to teach according to the ideology of Yayasan (school foundation).

This research has implications as follows: First, Islam is a religion of plurality. This study confirms anthropological studies that argue for the plurality of Islam in the domains of interpretations and practices bounded in historical, social and political contexts. Islam introduced in the textbooks in a weekend Islamic school in the US looks more open to a deeper interreligious relationship because, as a minority, Muslims are eager to display a more friendly Islam to respond to social demands and stigmatization. Therefore, studies of Islam and Muslims need to be underpinned on this plurality assumption and to take into consideration various types of Islam being translated in different communities. Second, in line with this, Islamic education system is not at all monolithic representing different ideologies, contexts, and even personal or collective visions of people involved. The studied Islamic schools in Indonesia are obvious examples of this plurality. This implies that policies and research on Islamic education institutions should not in any way generalize one finding into other unstudied schools, although possible similarities could be found in schools that share most of the characteristics with the studied. Third, the crucial point of Islamic religion class is teacher capacity that understands and teaches Islam to students. The teachers of Islam play a central role in presenting Islam to students, the teachings of which become references of students in their life. They guide students to understand and practice the religion. With the complexity of interplays among many factors that color the process and enactment of Islamic religion class, the teachers should be trained to develop competencies in Islamic studies content and its contextual pedagogy.

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