
Media and Religion: *Rodja TV's* Involvement in the Civil Society Discourse for Community Development

ANDI FAISAL BAKTI
Universitas Pancasila, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

After Soeharto's fall in 1998, a plethora of different types of media discovered ways to grow and expand in Indonesia. After Indonesia accepted the democratic political system, freedom of expression became part of everyday life. As pillars of democracy, the media are the tools *par excellence* for the expression of the people's ideas. Established in 2007, *Rodja TV* started its own discourse amidst civil society. The aim of this paper is to see the involvement of *Rodja TV* in the civil society discourse for community development. To what extent *Rodja TV's* discourse has involved the four civil society spheres - private, public, market, and the state - and how it pursued the creation of the exemplified community it promotes. This paper takes the qualitative approach and uses data gathered from observation, documents, and interviews. Apparently, *Rodja TV* has adopted a safe discourse by showing its propensity for mainstream Sunni Islam rather than taking the jihadi approach to politics that strives for the establishment of an Islamic state. *Rodja TV's* main targets are localism and globalism but it is open to local values and selected expressions of modernism. However, it does not criticise the Indonesian government in fighting terrorism. While the station initially targeted a limited audience, because it broadcasts information about Islamic tenets, its public audience widened and members of Muslim associations, businessmen, and members of the government have become attracted to *Rodja TV's* programs.

Keywords: *Rodja TV, da'wa, umma, civil society, salaf(ism).*

INTRODUCTION

Following Soeharto's fall and as the 1998 reform era started, a wide range of different media mushroomed in Indonesia. According to the Dewan Pers (Indonesian Press Council), over the last 17 years, the number of radio and television stations has increased from one national television and one radio station in 1997, to 1165 and 398 respectively in 2014. Moreover, in the same period, the number of social media users reached a staggering 132.7 million people, out of a population of over 250 million in Indonesia (APJI, 2016).

In present-day Indonesia, the availability of Islamic media is not exceptional; in fact, their number has increased significantly. In addition, streaming now makes it increasingly easier to set up television stations and to make their operations affordable.

As the country is home to a multitude of communities, community radios and television stations have sprung up to serve religious communities, tribes, and social and ethnic groups. Some groups are seen as reformist-radical and run against Indonesian religious practices while others are critical of the government and believed to be un-Islamic (Saether, 2013). Some stations are tolerant towards the government and have adapted their strategy in order to survive undisturbed.

This paper examines *Rodja TV's* discourse in civil society with respect to the private, public, market spheres and the State, and analyses how it adapted its strategy and argumentation *vis-à-vis* these spheres.

LITERATURE REVIEW

On the Concept of Civil Society

According to Cohen and Arato (1992, p. 29-82), civil society is not a major concept in the social sciences and it only became popular in Indonesia in the 1990's. Social science literature has documented at least four meanings of the term. It was first introduced in the 19th century by Hegel and Karl Marx (1976 [1846]) who emphasized that civil society was a non-state sphere of influence and in particular encompassed capitalism, industrialization, and individualism. In their theory, civil society refers to the role of the bourgeoisie and thus to spheres other than those of the family and the state. Hegel and Marx do not — as usual among social scientists— differentiate between the various groups and networks that make up this sphere.

The second meaning was put forward by Antonio Gramsci (1971), among others, who interprets the state's behaviour by both judging it in relation to citizenship and by determining whether the state develops an effective civil mechanism or organization that prevents individuals or a group from becoming tyrannical, victimizing, and abusive in its actions or treatments, and reprimands these individuals or groups when they engage in such actions. For Gramsci, business corporations are at the core of civil society, in addition to industrialization and individualism. The state and public spheres overlap and merge to such an extent that it is difficult to tell where one ends and the other starts. According to Gramsci, it is crucial to understand the mutually reinforcing relationship the two are engaged in. He adopts a normative approach and mainly adopts a negative perspective, for example in elucidating the behaviour of communists and the outcomes of their behaviour. No effort is made to identify the comparative strengths and weaknesses of dominant and peripheral groups. In short, no comparative theory has been proposed (see, for example Taylor, 1990; Seligman, 1992; Gellner, 1994; and Radcliff, 2011, among others).

The third meaning of the concept of civil society is proposed in the works of Lipset (1981), Habermas (1989), and Chambré and Goldnes (Eds., 2008), Gabay (2013), Sales (1991), and others, who stress the interaction between voluntary groups and the market, public, and private spheres. This third meaning, emphasizing non-governmental organizations *vis-à-vis* all spheres other than the state, is common to all social sciences. Cohen and Arato (1992, p.421-491), Baker (2005), Sasaki (2015), Baiocchi, Heler and Silva (2011), however, add a fourth meaning to the concept and are unique in their clear classification of society into four spheres — private, public, market, and state — where each sphere has the same weight and the same power to establish checks and balances for a true civil society at the country level, as believed by Thomas Janoski (1998, p.12). No civil society can exist without the involvement of the state. The present paper adopts this last meaning.

Civil Society in Indonesian Islam

In Indonesia, scholars who study civil society are divided into five categories (see Baso, 1999). According to Baso, one group is predominantly supported by members of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), a Muslim association established in 1926. It is identified as a traditionalist group that accommodates local values and wisdoms, with a rural-based approach to social development and beliefs (Bakti, 2002b & c). This group translates "civil society" into Indonesian as *masyarakat sipil* (see Hikam, 1996; Baso, 1999). The second group mainly comprises of members of the ICMI (All-Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals' Association), established by B.J. Habibie (who later became the third president of Indonesia who ruled from 1998 to 2000), and members of the Muhammadiyah, a modernist Muslim association established in 1912 that accepts science and technology (Bakti, 2002b) as well as the belief that the Prophet Muhammad's city of Medina in the seventh century was modern beyond its time. This group translates civil society as *masyarakat madani*, meaning the Madina community (see Madjid, 1996; Rahardjo, 1999; TNRMMM, 1999, among others) and sees it as the "main society" (*masyarakat utama*). Schumann (1999) also adopted the term *masyarakat madani*. However, some scholars making up a third group in Indonesia prefer to use the English term "civil society" (Mahfud, 2002; Prasetyo and Munhanif, 2002, among others) as they are influenced by Western scholars. The fourth category uses the less often used translation of *masyarakat tamaddun* (Sufyanto, 2001), 'civilized society'. In their criticism of Madjid's approach to the concept, NU scholars appear to accept the argument presented by "post-modernists" and "hermeneutic theorists" (see Sufyanto, 2001). The last category refers to Ibn Khaldun's 14th century term *ḥaḍāra* (civilization) as opposed to *badawa* (desert nomads).

Nevertheless, the term most commonly used in the Malay World today is *masyarakat madani* (see Ibrahim, 1996; Madjid, 1996), which, for some scholars, has a more normative meaning than either "civil society", *masyarakat sipil*, or *masyarakat tamaddun*.

METHODOLOGY

On Umma, Da'wa and Salafi

Using discourse analysis, the conceptual methodology put forward in this paper analyses *Rodja TV* from the perspective of the *umma* in three different ways:

First, *umma* is treated as an ideal country, using Ferdinand de Tonnies' terms (1964) as either society (*patembayan*) or community (*paguyuban*). This is analysed in this paper by using Janoski's (1998) four spheres of civil society: the state, market, public, and private spheres.

Second, *umma* is a secular civil society organization in the sense of a voluntary group, which is more general in its orientation and uses three approaches to communication with respect to society development. The focus is basically on the public sphere, as in the case of *Rodja TV*, *vis-à-vis* the three other spheres: state, market, and private. In Qur'anic terms, this is called: *takwin al-umma* (society development), that includes: *yad'una ila al-khayr* (promoting doing good deeds), *ya'muruna bi al-ma'ruf* (commanding local wisdoms), and *yanhawna 'an al-munkar* (prohibiting corrupted values and non-productive local wisdom). The orientation of this kind of society development is secular, an approach it shares with developed countries including the West.

Third, the *umma* is seen as a religious civil society organization, based on voluntary association, which is religious in orientation but yet constitutes an open community through four approaches to communication. It is particularly concerned with community development. The Qur'anic term *khayriyyat al-umma* (exemplified community) includes: *ukhrijat li al-nas* (human orientation, outward looking), *ta'muruna bi al-ma'ruf* (commanding local wisdom), *tanhawna 'an al-munkar* (prohibiting corruption), and *tu'minuna bi Allah* (believing in God). In Islam, the ultimate goal of this kind of civil society organization is the establishment of an ideal civil community (*masyarakat madani*), a Malay-Indonesian model of religious civil society.

The last concept would seem appropriate for an analysis of Rodja TV's discourse and its programs in Islamic communication in view of the four spheres of civil society mentioned above. This paper adopts a bottom up strategy and starts from the private spheres of the self, family, and their properties and subsequently moves up to the public spheres (*qawm*): voluntary organizations or groups, or non-governmental organizations, before arriving at the market spheres of corporations, businesses, cooperatives, and economic resources. The final stage will be the state sphere (*sha'bun/qabila*), which includes legislative, judiciary, and executive institutions, as well as the military and the police.

This paper's analysis adopts the four elements of the *ilmu al-da'wa* (Islamic communication science) theory. According to Bakti (2013), the first element is *tabligh* (information, messages, tenets, speeches, reminders, and sermons), which thus does not include propaganda, mission work, proselytization, and conversion. This element is related to oralities and the statements of the senders, the understanding of the receivers, the channels used and the effects communication has, as well as the interactivities (convergence) of both sender and receiver. The second element, *taghyir* (social changes) covers modernization, the dependency and interdependency of the receivers, and the multiplicity approach to social changes between the centre and the periphery, and self-sufficiency. The third element is that of *takwin al-umma* (society development), as mentioned above, in particular in its relation with technological development that consists of the diffusion of innovation, social marketing, participatory development and self-creativity that is congruent with universal values, local wisdoms, and the banning of corrupt ideas that go against human dignity. The last meaning of *da'wa* is *khayriyyat al-umma* (exemplified community) for development, which is an exemplified community or society based on *akhlaq* (morality, character, ethics, civic values), that includes the private, public, market, and state spheres of civil society, in both the general or in a specific context of a civil society organization as a voluntary group.

This last approach to community development is related to the concepts of *nafs* (self), *ahl* (family/member), *jama'at al-salafi al-salih* (the members of the first three generations of Muslims; the reputed exemplary early followers), Sunni (followers of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, as opposed to Shi'i), *Sunna* (the Prophet Muhammad's traditions), *ahl al-sunna wa al-jama'a* (the people of Muhammad's traditions and of his community), *sauq/a'mal/sharika* (business/company), and *uli al-amr* (government). The traditions of the early generations of Muslims contrast with heresy (*bid'a*), superstitions, mythologies, syncretism and their followers (Talibi, 2006). This *sunna/salafi* group consists of three major categories: traditionalists, reformists, and jihadists —the promoters of an Islamic state themselves are divided into two groups according to the means they used to reach their goal: harmony or aggression (Adraou, 2008). However, Salafists have developed

a new meaning for 'following the *salaf*' (*al-ittiba' al-salaf*), that is to totally accept all reputed *salaf* traditions, sometimes uncritically. This total acceptance indicates that the Salafists are strongly committed to community development according to the exemplified community model (*khayriyyat al-umma*).

The data used in this paper includes material obtained from observations, interviews and reviews of documentation from official website (OW), booklets, YouTube videos of *Rodja TV* programs, and literature published and used by *Rodja TV* from March 2016 to July 2017.

CASE STUDY OF THIS RESEARCH

The present case study focuses on *Rodja TV* as one of the mediums Salafists use for *da'wa* in Indonesia. This television station, located on Jalan Pahlawan Kampung Tengah, RT. 003, Cileungsi, behind the Cileungsi police station in Bogor, Indonesia, is experiencing a fairly rapid expansion, despite its infancy. According to its OW, the television station has evolved from a community FM radio station that started broadcasting in early 2005 (OW, October 24, 2013).

Because this community radio generated great public interest, *Radio Rodja* was legalized by the government. Indeed, it previously operated based on an act of the Notary Public (No. 4, 2007), awaiting the formal approval of the national Ministry of Information. The community radio switched to the 756 kHz (AM) frequency in 2007. Pursuing its strong commitment to provide its listeners with the best shows on Islamic information, in 2009, *Rodja* launched *Rodja TV* to communicate Islamic tenets via internet streaming. In 2011, *Rodja TV* started to broadcast via satellite, enabling viewers to enjoy this station on a television set with the help of a parabolic antenna (OW, October 24, 2013). Therefore, it is not surprising that people watch *Rodja TV* shows in rural areas where satellite dishes are used.

Rodja TV is a non-profit television station, with events and programs geared to communicating and lecturing on Islam and Islamic activities. Monologues, dialogues, and talk shows address the study of *aqida* (faith), *shari'a* (law), *akhlaq* (morality), and *tilawat al-Qur'an* (Qu'anic recitation). The content also indicates that this station provides information and messages about Islam in relation to social change and development as well as community development by using a flexible schedule, where guest lectures and new programs can easily be inserted (OW, December 29, 2014).

The Cahaya Sunna (the Light of the Sunna) Foundation is actually the umbrella and the holding company of all *Rodja* Islamic programs and activities (Hasanudin, June 20, 2017). Indeed, *Rodja* is owned by this foundation. In addition to *Rodja TV*, this foundation owns educational institutions, such as an elementary Islamic school, a Pondok Pesantren (boarding school) Tahfiz al-Qur'an al-Syatibi, *Radio Rodja*, and shopping outlets (OW, December 02, 2015). The foundation also offers social services by collecting *zakat* (almsgiving) and the provision of humanitarian help.

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

Rodja TV's Role in Civil Society

This section analyses *Rodja TV* as a civil society organization by using four analytical viewpoints, namely private, public, market, and state. These spheres will be seen in the context of Islamic communication and are relevant to review *Rodja TV*, as it was set up by

the *salafi* community, a still relatively new movement in Indonesia, whose existence has given Islam new dynamics in Indonesia.

a) *Private: Founders, Family, and Donated Wealth*

The individuals involved in the establishment of the Cahaya Sunna Foundation from the onset are Haji Badrusalam (adviser), Agus Hasanudin (head), Dian Sudiana (secretary), Muhammad Iim Muslimin (treasurer), and Nurwan Iskandar (supervisor) (Interview: Muslimin, June 20, 2017). While the adviser is a religious teacher, the other four are businessmen and opinion leaders. Together, all five initially started with broadcasting religious instruction from the Al-Barkah Mosque, a small mosque that could accommodate about 100 persons built on a piece of land donated by Hasanudin (Interview: June 20, 2017).

These individuals decided to establish a community radio, and later a television station. Hasanudin was directly involved in both the initial radio and later television stations and is the general chairman of the group. Information technology specialists, Abu Fawwaz and Abu Fauzan, are among the younger men who took part in its operation (Interview: July 15, 2016). The main teachers of the station include Haji Badrusalam, Abdul Hakim Abdat, Abdul Qadir Jawas and Firanda Andirja (Interview: July 20, 2016). Via Fawwaz and Fauzan, police officers from the Jakarta Police Station like Mujiarto Karuk volunteer to help the station and they provide it with unofficial protection (Interview: July 21, 2016). Indeed, the cooperation between all the above individuals reveals their complementary strengths, including the fact that they have become aware of how important it is to operate a station delivering da'wa messages. The individuals mentioned above together established *Radio Rodja* and *Rodja TV* using the relatively small initial private capital of IDR 3.5 million.

According to Hasanudin, when *Radio Rodja* was first set up, technicians recruited from the listeners to the radio station assembled the required transmission equipment. Individual creativity was needed. For that purpose, one room in the Al-Barkah Mosque was turned into a studio and the broadcast range was a mere 5-kilometer radius. In 2007, a nearby naval radio station, aired on a wider-ranged frequency channel, unintentionally interfered with *Radio Rodja's* broadcasts. As the Islamic shows alternated with a Navy music program (such as dangdut and other popular songs and instrumental music), *Radio Rodja's* audience protested but to no avail because the Navy radio used a larger frequency. Eventually, about 40 *Radio Rodja* listeners took the initiative to gather at the Al-Barkah Mosque in order to solve this problem internally and to protect the station from further intrusion by increasing the frequency of *Radio Rodja* broadcasts from 107.9 FM to 756 AM, using their own devices with the help of a start-up capital of 90 million Rupiah (Interview: Hasanudin, June 20, 2017).

Then the foundation established *Rodja TV*, in addition to *Radio Rodja*. Badrusalam, one of the founders who took the initiative to create both *Radio Rodja* and *Rodja TV*, takes part in the broadcasts as a preacher, as do two other preachers, Nurul Dzikri and Erwandi Tarmidzi (December 10, 2016). They talk about Salafism and related issues including family, social, economic, and community development. Andirja also currently delivers lectures and he preaches on *Rodja TV*. He is from the Nabawi Mosque (the Prophet's mosque) in Madina, Saudi Arabia. Two well-known senior *Rodja TV* preachers, Amir Abdat and Qadir Jawas, are both alumni of LIPIA (the Saudi Arabia Islamic Science Institute), in Jakarta. Because it employs these preachers, *Rodja TV* has been supported by Saudi individuals and

businessmen as well as *ulamas* and *shaykhs* from all over the world (Interview, Fawwaz, December 12, 2016).

b) Public: Rodja TV Salafis as Traditionalist Muslims

Rodja TV is one of the Islamic television stations that is growing in the midst of secular media. Two terms are used for this type of media. One is Islamic TV and Khaled Hroub (2012) used it for 'religious broadcasting'. The second is 'religious television' and is used by Peter Horsfile (1984). As an Islamic media, *Rodja TV* has distinctive features that distinguish it from secular media. Among the most prominent features are the Salafi programs that it airs.

Its leaders structured *Rodja TV* into a medium committed to the Qur'an and the Sunna. Its strength lies in the messages it broadcasts from both sources as well as in the solidarity of its congregation or community (Interview: Badrussalam, September 2, 2016). The reasons why this station stands out are first, *Rodja TV* programs contain or are related to Islamic messages (OW, October 24, 2013). Second, the station persistently broadcasts Islamic information in the Salafi perspective. The audience draws on the power of Salafism and is at the same time tightly knitted through this station (Interview: Badrusalam, October 15, 2016). Indeed, if the popularity of this station is seen as an indication of the development of Salafism in Indonesia, it is clear that adherence to the Salafi orientation is growing steadily. According to Andirja (October 4, 2013; see also Hasan, 2006), as a Salafi station, *Rodja TV* first received assistance to employ human resources from the Ihya al-Turath al-Islami foundation in Kuwait. Moreover, almost every preacher who is invited to the station is from Madina, Saudi Arabia, or is an alumni of LIPIA Jakarta, a branch of the Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (OW, August 25, 2013), the mission of which is to disseminate Salafi messages to other countries. Thus, the above open-minded strategy (*ukhrijat li al-nas*) in spreading Islamic values and tenets is at work.

By totally accepting the Salafi ideology, *Rodja TV* nurtures a strict vision of Islam and does this in particular by emphasizing the prohibition of doing bad deeds (*nahy munkar*), by commanding doing good deeds (*amar ma'ruf*) and by believing in God's Oneness (*tawhid, imanu billah*). In fact, *Rodja TV's* leaders reject any Islamic variant that is incompatible with the Qur'an and the Sunna. For them, the true tenets of Islam consist of the content of these main sources of Islam and what the Salaf generations practiced (Interview: Ihsan and Zainuddin, June 22, 2016). Therefore, it advertises that any new creation (which by nature is heresy), any form of religious syncretism, superstition, and innovation must be rejected, as in the quote from an often used hadith: *Kullu bid'atin dalalah, wakullu dalalatin fi al-nar* (al-Nasai, 1999). Speakers observe this strictness when they declare other Islamic groups to be heretics and untrue Muslims.

This strict attitude in Islamic information, social change, and development for civil society is also observed in the four Islamic communication goals expressed by this group. The first is to restore *khayriyyat al-umma*, the community's correct understanding of Islam according to the Qur'an and the Sunna based on the understanding of the generations of the *sāhaba*, *tabi'in*, and *tabi' al-tabi'in* (*salaf al-salih*). Secondly, to purify Islamic law from all forms of *shirk* (polytheism), heresy, and deviant thought. Third, to encourage Muslims to follow the pure tenets of Islam: to do good deeds, take the right actions, and to give to charities (as implementations of *amar ma'ruf*) through *Rodja TV*. Fourth, to revive the da'wa

method based on the Qur'an and Sunna according to the understanding of *salaf al-salih* (Tim Penulis, 2016).

When *Rodja TV* was first set up, its rejection of the local values and practices in the surrounding community, which it labelled un-Islamic, met with resistance. Indeed, at the time, Islamic learning sessions were held at the Al-Barkah Mosque, a community mosque which used to follow local Islamic traditions (Interview: Abdullah, September 23, 2016). According to Hasanudin (Interview: August 25, 2016), "The Islamic messages that we broadcast and our sermons first met with opposition from the surrounding community. But, the presence and the persistence of *Rodja TV* slowly made the surrounding community understand and accept our mission." For him, the messages were effective.

Although the broadcasts are officially open and accessible to anyone, like all television stations, it already has its own *jama'a* (community), its own faithful audience. It is also not surprising that other mosques, including the Bintaro Al-Sunna Mosque in Banten, directly show *Rodja TV's* programs to their audiences (OW, December 2, 2017). This adhesion is not surprising since a growing number of communities have the feeling that the religious practices in their surroundings go against the Qur'an and the Sunna ('Asy'ari, 2013).

Rodja TV's traditionalist Salafi group differs from the two other traditionalist Salafi groups found elsewhere in Indonesia and the rest of the world: reformist-political Salafists and jihadist Salafists, including those who adhere to ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) and al-Qaidah (Pall, 2013). Salafi traditionalists are apolitical, they discourage rebellion against the state, and are not organized as a political organization (Durie, 2013; see also Wiktorowicz, 29, 2006: 207-239). They do not constitute a civil movement but represent what Van Bruinessen (2003) calls a *jama'a* (congregation) and an *usra* (family), which distinguishes them from civil movements like the NU and the Muhammadiyah.

Rodja TV activities go beyond the Al-Barkah Mosque and the station reaches out to preach in other mosques including the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, the largest mosque in Southeast Asia. In its mission for commanding doing good deeds, *Rodja TV* has repeatedly held preaching sessions and organised Salafist conferences (*dawra*) at the mosque where a salafi speaker, the Medina University Professor, Abd al-Razzaq al-Badr, once explained the nature and the presence of God's saints in Islam. This was an unusual theme for Salafists, but attractive to a wider public. Entitled "Loving the Guardians of God," the event was attended by about 130.000 Muslims from across Indonesia (Andirja, October 4, 2013).

The sermon was effective and significant. First, *Rodja TV* acknowledged the existence of saints and accepted them, their mediation (*tawassul*) and their blessings (*tabarruk*) in worshipping God (al-Badr, 2016), despite its previous rejection of saints. Second, Salafist organizers deliberately held this event at the Istiqlal Mosque to muster public justification. By selecting the largest mosque in the region, Muslims perceived the Salafists in *Rodja TV* as a legitimate Islamic group much like the mainstream NU and Muhammadiyah. Thirdly, the event was broadcast on *Rodja TV*, which was clearly a Salafist effort to portray *Rodja TV* as an outstanding Islamic media that works for the interest of the public and relevant to the tradition of the Istiqlal Mosque.

Rodja TV is a means for Salafi groups to enter the public space (Wahid, 2013: 102-103). Full-time Islamic preaching both in recorded and live form, keeps them in close contact with their communities, in particular as *Rodja TV* can be retrieved via satellite and streamed-YouTube. For this group, this factor is certainly very important. As said, it uses

satellite television to reach people in rural areas, since people living far from urban centres can only access television by using a satellite dish (Tim Penulis, 2016).

c) *Market: An Effort to Market Islamic Communication*

During this research, the broadcasts of this television station appeared to consist solely of Islamic preaching with no advertising (before, during, or after the shows). The questions to be answered are thus, how is the station able to fund its programs? Are programs subsidized or sponsored? If so, by whom? The following will provide some answers.

As an Islamic station, *Rodja TV* focuses on Islamic preaching but it cannot survive without solid and regular funding. To be able to run recorded, live activities (live broadcast), off-air and on-air activities, adequate funding is required. To meet its financial needs, *Rodja TV* is tied to the market, since they chose to be self-sufficient, relying mostly on internal financial support to avoid taking up loans from conventional banks and paying interests (a usury practice). Indeed, while Islamic economic banking is acceptable, the *sunna* rejects usury (Abdat, 2016; Tarmidzi, 2016). *Rodja TV* mainly produces programs it ultimately airs ('sells') to the audiences who are willing to donate funds in return. Because it is linked to the market, *Rodja TV* also delivers programs that meet its audience's needs. To meet its market, *Rodja TV* needs to understand the community's religious needs (Interview: Al-Sundawi, July 24, 2016). According to its promotional booklet, *Rodja TV's* existence is closely related to: first, society's need for pure Islamic tenets sourced from the Qur'an and the Sunna amidst the rise of Islamic liberalism, globalism, and localism. Second, it is related to society's need for spirituality and a form of practical Islam amidst the influence of modernism (Tim Penulis, 2016). In the context of the first, the public looks up to *Rodja TV* and sees it as a purifier of Islamic teachings, while on the second, it is seen as the best substitute or solution to modern society.

In fact, *Rodja TV* not only works for Islamic communication (preaching, realizing change, development, and exemplified society), but also seeks to attract the largest possible audience. At the very least, five elements in society are the objects of *Rodja TV's* Islamic communication: Muslims in general; researchers and observers, students and activists of Islamic communication; foundations and Islamic social institutions; and everyone who believes in enjoying a good life in this world and in the hereafter (Tim Penulis, 2016).

These five elements make up the sources of *Rodja's* funding. Abu Fauzan (Interview: June 5, 2016), the head of *Rodja TV's* media division, said: "*Rodja TV* can expand and is able to run its activities thanks to the financial support of its audience (*jama'a*). The *jama'a* thinks it is important to have knowledge of the *sunna* and does not hesitate to set aside money to sustain *Rodja TV*." Therefore, *Rodja's* existence is closely related to these five elements in society.

Rodja TV's efforts to attract viewers by airing Islamic programs can be seen as a form of Islamic media economic activity (Zaied, 2008). The target is to obtain donations, charity funds, endowments, and alms as manifestations of *amar ma'ruf*, from its viewers. *Rodja TV* does not use external advertisement as a source of funding, except for the sale of its own products, such as books, CD's, USBs, and dish antennas (Interview: Haris, June, 24, 2016). This is clearly different from the practice found in non-religious television stations, where audience size increases ratings, which in turn increases potential advertising revenues. To get funding, *Rodja TV* promotes aspects of the *Sunna* and *al-salaf al-salih* as model examples for the community in all the messages of its programs. The clearest example is the

use of the tagline "*Rodja TV, Spreading the Sunna Light*" (OW, December 23, 2004) which portrays the station as a *Sunna* fighter and a true follower of *al-salaf al-salih*, implying that its broadcasts are worthy of being followed.

In addition to the direct financial involvement of the viewers for *amar ma'ruf* and *muhsin* commands, *Rodja TV* also owns its own business, Rodja Outlet which offers all the equipment needed to access *Rodja TV's* broadcasts (OW, October 6, 2015).

This outlet is one of *Rodja TV* sources of funding as mentioned in one of its brochures: "By purchasing a satellite dish through the official Rodja Outlet, you help the operations of *Radio Rodja* and *Rodja TV*. We say: "thank you and may Allah reward you with plenty of goods" to the men and women who trust us and who ordered and installed their satellite dish through Rodja Outlet" (OW, October 6, 2015). Similarly, viewers are told in Abu Zikri's (June 20, 2016) social media status text: "Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters in the Islamic faith. Realizing that part of *Rodja TV's* financing comes from sales in outlets, we urge those who love the preaching for the *Sunna* to help by buying goods in our outlets." This implies that buying goods from Rodja is seen as a way of supporting *da'wa* of the *Sunna* in that media.

Rodja Outlet is highly instrumental for financing this station. Rodja Outlet has several branches in Indonesia, including in Java and Sumatra. According to *Rodja TV's* advertising section (OW, October 6, 2015), Rodja Outlet opened branches country-wide in order for viewers to not only enjoy access to full Islamic information, but also to financially help the operationalization of *Rodja TV* (Interview: Fauzan, May 20, 2016).

The same purpose is achieved through the display of photographs of *Rodja TV* preachers delivering speeches. It seems that these portraits emblazoned on the Outlet brochure have a sale value, and lure viewers to shop at Rodja outlets.

Another interesting factor at play in *Rodja TV* is its relationship with economic activities in society. The Salafist complex around the station seems to greatly benefit from the station's presence. According to Fauzan, crowds of traders have relocated to the station after its opening, where *Sunna* clothing such as pants, robes, and veils, among others, are sold. Around the complex, religious books may also be purchased, especially those related to the *Salafi manhaj* (the Salafist way), perfume, as well as zam-zam holy water from Mecca, and exotic food, such as, dates, olives and figs (Interview: Fauzan, July 15, 2016) imported from Mecca. *Rodja TV* indeed stands in the centre of market-like activities which clearly shows that its presence does not only encourage the *umma* (Islamic community) to live closer to the way of life of the *Sunna*, but also supports the development of economic activities among the community.

d) State: Assisting the Government in Combatting Terrorism

In performing its duties as an Islamic television station, *Rodja TV* is in a relationship with the state; at least, *Rodja TV* needs to comply with the broadcasting regulations set by the government (Maududi and Taslim, July, 27, 2016). In Indonesia, a television station has to help the government in building and educating the nation and to encourage media literacy. In addition, a television station must be a social controller, among others by keeping an eye on government activities. Rodja, as an actor in the Islamic press, seems to carry out this function in its pursuit of Islamic *da'wa*. The Islamic press should at least be able to play a role in guaranteeing peace and tolerance (Bakti, 2015: 186-203), and to engage in peace journalism, which contributes to peace making, peace building and peace keeping.

At a time when the Indonesian people are engulfed by rampant terrorism and radicalism, *Rodja TV* has chosen to vehemently criticize religious extremism. *Rodja TV* stands behind the government. This is also consistent with the idea of prohibiting doing bad deeds (*nahy munkar*). This move is a radical change, however, as this station was once rumoured to be a centre for *takfir* (the traditional Salafist labelling of others as non-believers) and radicalists. In response to that rumour, *Rodja TV* has been trying to change its image by portraying itself as a *da'wa* movement, as *ahl sunna wa al-jama'a* (the Sunni and community people), as opposed to *jama'a takfir* (people who judge others as non-believers). Andirja (Interview: December 17, 2013), the prominent *Rodja TV* preacher we met above, said: "We have to act and show our opposition to and rejection of these *takfir* groups. Keeping silent about deviants (*takfiri* people, bombers, and terrorists) is very dangerous."

Since then, *Rodja* has been aggressively fighting terrorism and violence through its *da'wa* programs of *nahy munkar*. *Rodja* producers air Islamic programs that aim to reject *jihad* —reframed as holy war against non-Muslims who attack Muslims and people who hinder the establishment of an Islamic state. Thus, in a very loud voice, the preacher, Jawas, asserted during a broadcast break at *Rodja TV*: "*Rodja TV* is convinced that actions that lead to creating anxiety for others, spilling blood, rebelling against rulers, committing suicide bombings, and killing innocent people, are not part of *jihad* and unlawful in Islam," (OW, January 14, 2016; see also Jawas, 2015).

Similarly, *Rodja TV* recently broadcasted a religious sermon delivered by the Sunni scholar from Jordan, al-Halabi, under the title "*Perbedaan antara Ahlusunna wal Jama'a dan Jama'a Takfir*" (Differences between Sunni and the *takfir* people) in the mosque of the state-controlled Jakarta Islamic Center (JIC). In the sermon (July 16, 2017) he said "The strongest people against terrorism are those who hold on to the religion of God and cling to the truth because they are followers of the *ahl al-sunna wa al jama'a*. *Takfir* people are those who are sunk in slander and who easily disbelieve others and engage in terror."

In the latest years, the government closely monitors Wahhabism and suspects it of being politically radical. In his speech on *YouTube* (March 31, 2012) entitled "Dismantling Wahhabi Digression" Badrusalam indicated that *Rodja* actually does not agree with Wahhabism, even though it is Salafist in terms of its desire to purify Islamic culture from local and global influences. While Wahhabism is ideologically political (al-Wahhab, 2012), *Rodja* is ideologically cultural.

Rodja TV's anti-terrorism stance is further reinforced by the group's proximity with law enforcement agencies. Badrusalam often delivers Islamic religious sessions in the Jakarta Police Station which are publically broadcasted to outside audiences. Research also shows that the administrator of the Polda Metro Jaya website is a Salafist. These factors certainly make it easier for Salafist preachers to deliver *da'wa* sermons in the police station. According to Siti Tarawiyah's research (2012, 1485-1500), Salafists also use government mosques for their *da'wa* activities. Apparently, the legal apparatus itself does not see Salafist *Rodja TV* as a threat, as part of an extremist-terrorist movement or an instigator of potential suicide bombers, among others. In 2013, *Radio Rodja* also aired live programs from the police station followed by public discussions but these radio and TV broadcasts were later removed from the official police website following protests by several members of the NU, which accommodates the local traditions *Rodja TV* rejects. This does not,

however, mean that the police banned *Rodja TV* and *Rodja Radio* in the police station, as many policemen still faithfully watch *Rodja TV* programs (Karuk, January 30, 2014).

The intimacy between *Rodja TV* and the police station might translate into either protection or surveillance depending on the level of trust involved. If *Rodja TV* were to be considered an Islamic group that initiates acts of terrorism and radicalism, then these police officers would certainly be the first to rebuke or capture its managers and teachers, and even close the station down. On the reverse, as observed (June 12, 2017 at *Rodja TV*), policemen attend the Friday prayer at the Al-Barkah Mosque and thus, *Rodja TV* may have influenced policemen and they might hesitate to sanction or close the station as the case may be. According to its leaders, as a *da'wa* Salafist group, *Rodja TV* is neither engaged in resisting the state nor does it condone the use of violence (Badrusalam, August 28, 2015).

Proximity with the police was also underlined by another preacher, Andirja (September 23, 2014), in a *pengajian* (religious discussion) held in the Darul Ilmi PTIK (Police Science College) Mosque in Kebayoran in South Jakarta. Andirja addressed the theme: 'The attitude of a Muslim when Facing ISIS.' He said, "Khawarij (a radical theology that emerged in the seventh century) was the first in Islam to use the notion of *takfir* (easily discrediting other Muslims) and easily killing people they see as outsiders." A theology professor of the State Islamic University in Jakarta, Harun Nasution (2013) thought that, although the Khawarij School of theology is marginal in Islam, and rejected by mainstream Muslims, it is still powerful and adopts a radical position in fighting what they define as tyranny: authoritarianism, injustice, corruption, among others.

Thus, *Rodja TV* portrays itself as an institution that belongs to mainstream Sunni Islam and the state. Its leaders say that their Islamic TV station does not threaten the unitary state of Indonesia (NKRI). *Rodja TV* is a traditionalist Salafi vehicle that not only does not plan to criticize the government but even refuses to resist the legitimate government (contrary to ISIS's position). Roy and Putra said, "Indeed Allah Almighty obliges us to obey our leaders (for this is *amar ma'ruf* and *muhsin*); Muslims are not allowed to oppose the government" (March 15, 2016). In fact, this is prohibited, and the prohibition of doing bad deeds (*nahy munkar*) is considered a Salafist way.

On a different issue, in April 2017, the elections for a new Jakarta governor gave rise to heated debates and demonstrations over the possibility of Muslims being led by a non-Muslim leader. Badrusalam said that *ulamas* (Muslim scholars) agreed that it was unlawful for non-Muslims to govern Muslims (Badrusalam, October 14, 2016). While he did not elaborate further, *Rodja TV* was among the few religious groups that did not urge people to join the demonstrations (Taslim, November 6, 2016) against this Non-Muslim leader. Ali Putra (November 25, 2016) also said, "the Qur'an should not be defended through demonstrations." Al-Badr added, "All people and institutions are responsible for national stability and security. Thus, people should keep away from slander and chaos, which lead to destruction and doing bad deeds (*munkar*)" (February 26, 2017).

CONCLUSION

Both as a radio and as a television station, *Rodja* is a civil society organization which has been following the Islamic communication model for a civil society discourse.

Private Sphere

Initially, Rodja TV started broadcasting programs (at the information or *tabligh* level) related to the private sphere through the self-realization of its identity. First its founders promoted the importance that each individual has to be a good, responsible Muslim (*muhsin*), not only in this world but also in the hereafter.

The organization eventually emphasised social change (*taghyir*) and took a second approach to Islamic communication for the civil society discourse by establishing a radio (*Radio Rodja*) and a television (*Rodja TV*) station. Each of their founders (all male) had his own responsibility. Business persons, who are also informal community leaders, supported the initial establishment by donating land for a mosque and after that for the foundation and the radio and television stations. Other leaders are preachers who invite scholars from the Middle-East while members of the young generations are responsible for the stations' technical development and maintenance.

These early activists were proactively responsible for the development of the association and its radio and television programs for community development (*takwin al-umma*) in its discourse for civil society. Then, in order to expand the exemplified community (*salaf al-salih* or *khariyyat al-umma*), Rodja has been using an outward-looking approach (*ukhrijat li al-nas*) to reach its audiences through *Rodja TV's* broadcasting. Peace Journalism (Bakti, 2015) seems at work here.

Market Sphere

Individuals and their families are given information about the importance of *amar ma'ruf* (commanding good) and *amal shalih* (good deeds), donations, charities, endowments, and almsgiving, including buying equipment to access Islamic broadcast programs. In the civil society market sphere, these elements have become Rodja's main source of income.

Rodja TV also directly approaches business people as it broadcasts no commercial programs and advertisement, which is a challenge for the civil society market. Instead, the station relies on the contribution of the Muslims by optimizing its outlets where customized television equipment and services are sold. Without advertisements, indeed, *Rodja TV* has managed to solve the financial problems religious media usually face in Indonesia.

Public Sphere

In the public sphere of civil society, *Rodja TV* promotes the *Sunna* and *Salafi* ideas by adopting the same approach as the main Muslim organizations, Muhammadiyah and NU, who are also active audiences of *Radio Rodja* and *Rodja TV* programs. Although NU members were initially uncomfortable with the programs, they were eventually persuaded to adhere to Rodja's ideas. On the other hand, *Rodja TV* has also shifted its strategy from opposing belief in saints, *tawassul* (mediation to worship God), and *tabarruk* (praying for God's blessing though this mediation) to accepting it and saying that they are also important elements in community development.

State Sphere

Links with the government have also been established for legal and security purposes. In addition to the need to have government-issued operating licences, some *Rodja TV* members are police officers, as *Rodja TV* is located behind the police station and some television programs have been aired directly from the police station. This also contributes to *Rodja TV's* security, stability, and the sustainability of its programs. A shift is being observed from criticising the government for not

putting Islamic values in practice to accommodating the government; this reflects a softening of the discourse of this brand of Salafism and of its new approach to *da'wa*. This mutual strategic adaptation could pave the way for the realisation of true civil society at the national level.

BIODATA

Andi Faisal Bakti is a professor of Islamic broadcasting and communication at State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, and Universitas Pancasila, Indonesia. His research interests focus on religious groups, Islamic media, cross cultural communication, good governance, family welfare and gender analysis. Email: amfabak@gmail.com; andi-faisal@uinjkt.ac.id

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