

only practice their faith but also preach it and want others to believe and do as they do. A similar phenomenon has also been observed in Türkiye, Pakistan, and other Muslim countries (Bayat, 2011; Brown, 2019; Howell, 2012; Zencirci, 2020). The Hijrah celebrities are closely linked to the Salafi movement because several celebrity figures joined the Salafi (Dewi & Fata, 2021) and attracted other celebrities to join them. Salafi propagation accelerates the *santrinization* (the making of Islamic students) or *re-santrinization* among middle-class Muslims (Azra, 2019; Fata & Ichwan, 2017; Machmudi, 2008).

The Salafi propagation phenomenon among middle-class Muslims and the Hijrah celebrities' reception toward that propagation is thought-provoking to be further investigated. Therefore, the main problem of this article is "How do hijrah celebrities respond to Salafi propagation?". However, this paper only discusses the Sunnah Islamic Study Club held at hijrah celebrities' houses, such as Meidiana Hutomo, Primus Yustisio, and Teuku Wisnu's houses. The timeline is limited to the period of 2000-2019, as this phenomenon of hijrah celebrities started to appear in public space in 2000. Before 2000, there were several celebrities who studied the religion, such as Gito Rollies, but they had not used the term "hijrah" (Sunesti, Hasan, & Azca, 2018).

Middle-Class Muslims and Propagation

Azra (2017) proposed several indicators or standards for a person to be called middle-class. First, the spending or purchasing power per capita is about \$5 – 20 or 45,000 – 180,000 IDR daily. Those whose income is below this range are categorised as low-class. Second, they have higher education, at least a bachelor's degree. Third, they have a permanent job, fixed income, a house, and vehicles—albeit paid in instalments, and have savings. Fourth, they are able to finance holidays with all of their family members at least once a year.

The phenomenon of the emergence of middle-class Muslims in Indonesia was first discussed by Monash University in 1986 through the publication of a book edited by Richard Tanter and Kenneth Young (1993). In this book, Wahid (1993) insisted that the backbone of the middle-class Muslims in Indonesia was not the businessmen group, such as in many other countries; rather, it was the professionals, government officers, and even the academics. Mahasin (1993) further revealed that the rise of middle-class Muslims in Indonesia was largely due to the opening of access to modern schools, which admitted *santri* from the middle class and facilitated them to climb to the middle class. Mahasin called this phenomenon "bourgeoisization of *santri*" or "*priyayisasi* (nobilization) of *santri*". The middle class consists of two groups: the intellectual Muslim group and the urban Muslim group (Jati, 2017).

The development of Islamic propagation among middle-class Muslims in the urban area emerged almost at the same time as President Soeharto endeared himself to the Islamic groups at the end of the 1980s (Jati, 2017). In the 1970s, the former leaders of the Masyumi Party started to shift their struggle from political practice into propagation, especially toward the middle-class groups. For example, M. Natsir conducted his propagation through the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (DDII), and Buya Hamka conducted his propagation from al-Azhar Mosque, Kebayoran (Fata, 2020; Fauzan, 2023). This step was taken by several alumnae of the Indonesia Muslim Student Association (PII) and Islamic Students' Union (HMI) chaired by Nurcholish Madjid, who established Klub Kajian Agama (KKA/Religious Study Club) Paramadina in 1986. Nurcholish Madjid was one of Hamka's students when he was staying in al-Azhar (Bakti, 2004b). In addition to Paramadina, there was also the Tazkiya Sejati Foundation established by Adyanti Rachmadi, Intensive Course and Networking for Islamic

appearance, showing sincerity in worship, and inviting others to follow the teachings of Islam. Among the hijrah celebrities interviewed were Egi John, Eva Arnaz, Mediana Hutomo, Muhammad Hamzah/Bjah, Primus Yustisio, Shireen Sungkar, Teuku Wisnu, and Yulia Rahman. Meanwhile, some of the Salafi preachers interviewed were Abdullah Sya'roni, Khalid Basalamah, and Oemar Mita. In addition to the primary data from the interview, the present study also critically reviews the literature related to this theme (Spradley, 1979).

As for the term Salafi, it is widely used to refer to the religious reform movement pioneered by Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1791 AD) in the Arabian Peninsula. Originally, this movement was better known as Wahhabi, but in its development, they are more often referred to as Salafi. This change created a misnomer that confused some circles. Previously, the term Salafi has been used in academia to refer to the reform movement spearheaded by Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1838-1897 A.D.) and Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905 A.D.), who had a major influence on various renewal movements in the modern Islamic world (Lauzi`ere, 2010; Pall, 2016; Weismann, 2017). Although both call for the "return to the Qur'an and Sunnah", Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's renewal movement is substantially different from Afghani-'Abduh's reform. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was more oriented towards traditionalism with the desire to replicate the life of the era of the Prophet and *Salaf al-Salih*. Meanwhile, the Afghani-'Abduh movement was oriented more towards modernism, that is, understanding Islam according to the context of modernity (Wagemakers, 2016). In the context of this study, the term Salafi refers to religious figures or preachers who follow or are inspired by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's movement, not by the renewal movement of Afghani-'Abduh.

This study employs a cultural approach to investigate the active reception of hijrah

celebrities toward the propagation of messages from Salafi preachers. Hall's encoding-decoding theory is utilised to analyse the nature of the reception: dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, or oppositional (Aligwe, Nwafor, & Alegu, 2018). This theory assumes that the recipient of a message is an active audience and always has their own goals. Audiences use media to search, sort, select, and use information to meet their own needs (Tatum, 2014; Thompson, 1993). As such, the characteristics of an active audience are selective, utilitarianism (they prefer media that they consider beneficial, assuming that is the purpose of the media), intentionality (they use media because of its content, not because of external considerations), involvement or effort (they actively follow and think about media use), and not easily influenced (they are consciously responsible for the use of media) (Bakti, 2004a).

There are five main concepts in this active reception theory: Coerseduction, Panacea, Bullet Effect, Boomerang Effect, and Negotiation. Coerseduction is an effort to directly influence a person, either through coercion or seduction. Meanwhile, Panacea refers to the presumption that communication is a solution to human problems. Within the context of Salafi propagation, the question is whether the celebrities find solutions to their problems from their communication process with the preachers or whether their change of attitude is influenced by other factors. Bullet Effect examines whether their attitudes align with the expectations of the Salafi preachers. The Boomerang Effect refers to when the receiver acts in contradiction to the objectives of the sender. Finally, Negotiation is when a hijrah celebrities receives or rejects the message from the Salafi preacher (Bakti, 2004a).

Results

The Hijrah Process to be Salafi Disciples

The Salafi propagation started to penetrate the celebrity group initially due to

Islamic study club is the remembrance of death, as occurred with Hutomo and Egi John (interview with Hutomo, 13 October 2018 and Egi John, 23 March 2018). A different reason was experienced by Muhammad Hamzah/Bjah, the vocalist of a band named The Fly (Interview, 10 May 2018). He made a hijrah after several business failures and was scammed by his work partners. Eva Arnaz (Interview, 15 April 2019) and Yulia Rahman (Interview, 3 May 2018) decided to make a hijrah to be happier in life. This happiness is not only about worldly happiness but also about afterlife happiness. They considered hijrah as the only way to achieve that happiness.

In many ways, these celebrities can accept the logic behind and religious practices of the Salafi group and try to implement them maximally. They believe these are the answer to their anxiety. During the hijrah process of becoming a Salafi Muslim, the celebrities routinely participate and even host Islamic study clubs. Hutomo called her Islamic study club RJ (*Rawdah al-Jannah*/the garden of heaven), taught mainly by Sya'roni. Meanwhile, Wisnu and Primus did not give a name for their study club. By contrast, the routine Islamic study club managed by Wisnu's wife, Shireen Sungkar and taught by Oemar Mita is called *Shahabiyyah* (taken from the Arabic word that means female companions). In addition to holding the Islamic study club at home, Wisnu also initiated an Islamic study club in public places, such as in mosques and hotels, called the Musyawarah community.

These celebrities who are used to living a hectic life need tranquillity and privacy to enjoy their private times without disturbance from the fans. It is one of the reasons why these celebrities hijrah rarely attend Islamic study clubs in public spaces, such as mosques. The invited *ustadh* are usually those who have gone viral on social media, such as Khalid Basalamah, Oemar Mita, Nuzul Dzikri, Badrus Salam, Abduh Tuasikal, and Subhan Bawazir.

Various Religious Expressions of the Hijrah Celebrities

Response to Democracy

In the political realm, most of the Salafi preachers disagree with democracy as there is no *ayah* or hadiths about it in Islam. Khalid Basalamah sees a democratic election system as problematic as it gives chances for those unfit and incapable of leading due to vote acquisition (Basalamah, 2017b). Sya'roni (Interview, 7 July 2018) explained that if we want to be good, we have to obey the guidance in al-Qur'an, hadiths, and the Salafi generation, including in governance and in selecting leaders. Meanwhile, Mita considered democracy to be contradictory to sunnah. According to him, there are three ways to select a leader according to sunnah: by acclamation, based on the decision of *ahl al-ḥall wa al-'aqd*, and *istikhlâf* (a leader directly selects a person he considers to have the capacity to lead as his successor) (Mita, 2017a).

Based on this view, the Salafi preachers and their Sunnah Islamic Study Club members do not participate in a general election as they do not want to be responsible for the leader that has been democratically elected. Nevertheless, for them, it is still obligatory to obey the leader selected from this democratic process. Sya'roni (Interview, 7 July 2018) explains:

"Then people said, how come you guys said the election is *haram*, but you consider the result as *halal*? About the election, the process itself is *haram*, but if it is already the result, then the result becomes *halal*. Revolting or staging a coup against a legitimate ruler is *haram*. But when there is a successful coup, then we are obliged to listen and obey this new ruler. The initial law is different from the event law. For instance, a slave is *haram* to be a leader. However, when a slave is elected as a leader, it is compulsory for us to listen and obey him. Election is forbidden as it is not an Islamic

system. However, when it does happen, and there is an elected leader, then we have to acknowledge and obey him.”

In addition to the election system, the Salafi preachers also do not allow demonstrations as there is no legal basis for this in Islam, especially demonstration that causes public disturbance, and destruction, and involves women. Therefore, the way to correct an oppressive leader in Islam is by saying it directly to him (advise), and not through demonstration (Basalamah, 2017b).

Although those preachers refused democracy and election, not every hijrah celebrity agreed with this attitude. Hutomo's group is considered as the group that strongly upheld the Salafi values. Whereas, Wisnu and Primus group can be categorised as those who are still considering the ideas that are different from their group. Hutomo's group is apolitical, whereas, Wisnu and Primus' group are those who develop political activism. Wisnu's activism is evident when he established an Islamic study club that accommodates celebrities with different ideas on understanding religion called *pengajian* Musyawarah and established a civil society organisation based on Islamic youths. He even participated in Aksi Bela Islam 212. Primus, on the other hand, is active as a member of Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) and was elected as a member of parliament for several periods. It can be said that in relation to politics, Wisnu and Primus tend to negotiate the Salafi teaching with the socio-political condition in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Hutomo and her group tend to fully accept the idea of Salafi. Nevertheless, the Islamic study clubs that they held and participated in have become an instrument for their self-transformation: the tools to receive the messages of Salafi Islam, their internalisation, and use them to make decisions and establish their attitude based on their current reality.

Limited Utilization of Banking Services

Another expression of religious practices of these Salafi celebrities is their belief that bank interest is a form of *Riba* (usury) in the contemporary era that should be abandoned (Suharto, 2018). Even though there are differences among the Fiqh experts on this bank interest issue, in general, the Salafi ustâdh in Indonesia supports the idea that bank interest is a form of *Riba*. Nevertheless, Basalamah and Sya'roni are still allowed to utilisation banking services due to emergency reasons. The use is only to get the easiness of transaction and not take the bank interest for private gains. Conventional bank interest can be utilised for the public interest, such as helping the poor, building roads, etc. (Interview with Sya'roni, 7 July 2018).

On the other hand, Oemar Mita (Interview, 28 August 2018) does not allow for the utilization of conventional banks as the Sharia banks exist. Mita further said that the dirtiest wealth is obtained through *Riba* transactions. *Riba* provides badness in this world and in the afterlife. Even the wealth obtained from *Riba* cannot be utilised or used for the public interest. It can be used only to build something literally bad or dirty, such as building drains (Mita, 2018).

It is not easy for the Islamic ummah to leave the conventional banking services and shift to sharia banks. These hijrah celebrities also believed that the bank interest was *Riba*, but they have yet to totally abandon the services of these conventional banks. Among them, there are some celebrities who closed their accounts in conventional banks, but, most of them, such as Hutomo (Interview, 1 November 2018), still utilise their accounts for money transfer/financial transactions.

Hutomo is a public figure who still exists in the entertainment industry. She is actively involved in the production of films, especially religious films, and she still accepts endorsement jobs for several products on social

media. Such jobs usually involve financial transactions through banks for payments and transfers. In this case, banking services are unavoidable. Sya'roni proposed a more flexible view by allowing the use of the banking system within the context of an emergency. Even though, in Hutomo's case, her need for banking transactions may not be an emergency, she takes this opportunity. She does not use the banking services to save money. She only uses it for transfers.

Wearing a Niqab as Islamic Fashion

Niqab is one of the trends among many hijrah communities. Sya'roni (Interview, 7 July 2018) described that the initial law for niqab is sunnah. He argued that the niqab is not an identity for the Salafi group but rather a part of sharia. Khalid (2016) similarly argued that the niqab is sunnah to avoid fitnah. Citing the view of Imam al-Shafi'i, Khalid Basalamah stated that wearing a niqab for women is preferable.

In general, the Salafi followers insisted on wearing a niqab for women. However, not all hijrah celebrities wear it. Indadari is an example of a Salafi celebrity who wears a niqab (S, 2015). Meanwhile, Hutomo and Shireen Sungkar do not wear niqab. In relation to this, Hutomo (Interview, 1 November 2018) stated, "About wearing a niqab, not all the people wear it because it is sunnah. Because the Jamaah Tabligh women also wear it. It is ok to wear or not to wear it. And it seems to me, I have yet to wear it. There are many things that I have to improve."

In this statement, there are several arguments as to why she has yet to follow this advice to wear a niqab. Hutomo's statement above is a form of rejection and states why, in her fashion, she has yet to wear a niqab. Her statement, "It is ok to wear or not to wear it" is an explanation as to why Hutomo does not wear a niqab even after four years of holding a Salafi Islamic study club at her house.

Response to the Music and Acting Activities

The preachers who actively teach in Salafi Islamic study clubs for the hijrah celebrities are in full consensus that music is haram. There is no other solution than to leave it. For those who work in the music industry/musicians, they have to leave the job and find other halal jobs. Music is haram based on the Surah Luqman: 6, "And there are some who employ theatrics, only to lead others away from Allah's way...". Khalid Basalamah and Oemar Mita agreed this is an affirm ayah within the Qur'an on the haram of music. They referred to the opinion of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, who insisted that the ayah refers to music. The haram of music is also mentioned in many hadiths of the Prophet PBUH; among them is narrated by al-Bukhârî, in which the Prophet PBUH said, "There would be among my followers those who said that adultery, silk, alcoholic beverage, and music is halal (al-Bukhari)". The Salafi preachers often give a reminder that if one wants to be closer to the Qur'an, one should never listen to music as music, and the Qur'an will never mix (Basalamah, 2017a; Mita, 2019).

Even though some ulama allow music with some notes, Mita (Interview, 14 March 2018) argued that those who allow music also agree that listening to Qur'an recitation is far better than listening to music. In an almost-death condition (*sakarah al-mawt*), for instance, all people must want to listen to or recite the Qur'an. No one who is dying asks to listen to music. This shows that the Qur'an is appropriate for human *fitrah* and conscience.

Mita (2017b) judged all music as haram, including religious music. Religious music is part of the *kâfir* tradition practised and followed by the Muslim community. This is called *tashabbuh* (resemblance), which should be avoided. Mita argued, "There is no need to get close to Allah using incorrect way. Allah does not agree with that. The sign of the end of time is when al-Qur'an is being sung. One of the indicators of the era of *fitnah*

is when people sing the Qur'an using musical instruments. Music nurtures hypocrisy. Allah will disassociate the Qur'an from the people who love music."

Meanwhile, Sya'roni (Interview, 7 July 2018) has a different view on this. He explained that in the Arabic language, there are two terms that should be differentiated: *al-ghinâ* and *al-ma'âzif*. *Al-ghinâ* means singing, whereas *al-ma'âzif* means playing music. *Al-ghinâ* is a beautified voice and arranged tones, such as poems and rhymes. "Each sentence uttered with rhythmic voice, without a musical instrument, is *al-ghinâ*," said Sya'roni. There are two rulings in *al-ghinâ*: if the content of the poetry or rhymes is positive, urging people to do good deeds and increase their piety, then this is allowed in Islamic law. However, if the content of the poetry rhymes or lyrics is negative, leading people to do negative things and decrease piety, then it is haram. However, among the ulama, there are different opinions regarding the law of the flute: there are some who allow it, and some forbid it. Similarly, for the tambourine, some ulama allowed it to be played during the Eid days. Apart from flute and tambourine, other musical instruments are considered haram.

Due to its haram status, the Salafi preachers asked the participants of their study club to stay away from all kinds of music, listen to it or even stay away from jobs related to music. Even though music is considered to have a positive impact, it is still considered haram. Muhammad Hamzah (Interview, 20 October 2018), popularly known as Bjah, left his profession as a musician following his study with the Salafi on the haram status of music. Shireen Sungkar (Interview, 7 November 2019) also left her profession as a singer and tried not to listen to music after learning that music is haram in Mita's forum. Likewise, Hutomo (Interview, 1 November 2018) gave up her musical instruments and stopped listening to music. Primus (Interview, 2 November 2018) and Egi John (Interview, 23 March 2018) admitted that they have gradually left music. Egi John admitted that, "Even though

music has a positive impact, it is still not allowed. I have to come clean. I started smoking and drinking alcohol due to music. Even music can also make people become drug addicts."

Meanwhile, in relation to acting as a profession, Khalid (Interview, 12 October 2018 and 3 December 2019) suggested leaving this profession as it has more *mudarat* (negative effects) than benefits. In relation to the law regarding the acting profession, Khalid described that men are allowed to become actors as long as the storyline is true and it has religious messages in it; there are no lies in it, such as fake marriage. Meanwhile for women, the rule is stricter as they are not allowed to become actresses at all. Sya'roni (Interview, 7 July 2018) also said that the acting profession is haram due to the inherent falseness within this profession.

Even though the original law is haram, Sya'roni allows one to become an actor or actress within an emergency situation, that is when there are no other jobs available except to become an actor or actress to earn money and fulfil necessities. In such a condition, it is allowed to become an actor or actress while looking for other more suitable jobs. On the other hand, Mita (Interview, 14 March 2018) has a more open view that allows a person to become an actor or actress as long as the Islamic rules are observed.

In relation to acting, the Salafi celebrities have different views; some have left and rejected offers to act in films. For instance, Wisnu (Interview, 2 August 2018), who is no longer accepting offers to act in films after hijrah, stated, "I am still thinking about acting in a film, especially if I have to be paired with others as my spouse," he said. Wisnu gradually stepped back from his acting profession. He started to reject offers to act in films and only accept offers as presenters. Retiring from the entertainment industry in Indonesia is a religious expression of the Salafi celebrities (Kurniawan, 2018; Noviarina, 2015).

Unlike other celebrities, when this paper was being written, Hutomo still appeared on TV and acted in a film broadcast on one of the national television channels. She also still accepts endorsement requests/advertisements for beauty products on her social media account, which suggests that she has a different view.

Discussion

The Sunnah Islamic Study Club, as an educational forum, has been part of the process of sustainable hijrah. As a phenomenon of religious conversion, there are stages in the hijrah process: self-crisis, quest, discovery, encounter, interaction, and effect. The Sunnah Islamic Study Club is within the “encounter” process, where the celebrities who want to make a hijrah encounter a reference group and individuals. The Sunnah Islamic Study Club that takes place within the celebrities’ private houses is suitable for their situation, needs, intentions, and purposes.

In Bourdieu’s subjective structuralism, the Islamic study club is an expression room (field) for these hijrah celebrities. Salafism itself is a cognitive instrument from outside of these hijrah celebrities, ingrained through a series of mechanisms and habituation, then became an attitude-making tool (*habitus*). Meanwhile, the Sunnah Islamic Study Club is a tool for the Salafi preachers to implement coerseduction to indoctrinate the religious teachings, which served as a panacea for their restlessness.

Lack of religious knowledge made these celebrities eagerly accept the ideas and materials delivered by the preachers. Based on the audience typology in Hall’s (1973) model, acceptance of the Sunnah Islamic Study Club is classified into dominant-hegemonic typology. This means the intention of the messenger is accepted within the same frequency by these hijrah celebrities. In this case, the celebrities are in subordinate positions and, thus, demonstrate the success of communication carried out by

these Salafi preachers. The communication is effective and transparent as indicated by the message that is well and fully accepted by the audience, measured through the sender-receiver symmetrical perception. In the case of the Sunnah Islamic Study Club, the communication is within the corridor of the bullet effect. There is almost no boomerang effect response.

However, the hijrah celebrities did not immediately accept the messages conveyed by their background and needs. Their religious expression makes a difference, at least in the issues of democracy, banking, niqab, and music or artistry.

In the democracy and political issue, Wisnu and Primus have immunity and negotiation ability against the coerseduction from Salafi. This is, in a way, a boomerang effect. Their attitude is a portrayal of message negotiation where the receiver, in general, agrees with the sender; however, in certain cases or contexts, they opt to disagree and develop contradicting attitudes. However, topically, Primus and Wisnu’s cases are opposition positions in the form of rejection. This is clearly different from Hutomo and her group, who have a high level of obedience in a political context. This clearly describes the dominant-hegemonic message position.

The attitudes of Wisnu and Primus cannot be separated from their backgrounds, as they are actively involved in political activities. This circumstance leads them to negotiate with the message of the Salafi preachers. During the encoding process (interpreting the meaning), they still consider the demands of their situation and environment. Their ability to resist the indoctrination of the Salafi preachers is an important aspect to be investigated as it indicates immunity among these hijrah celebrities. This also demonstrates that the religious messages delivered by the Salafi preachers are not always a panacea for the spiritual anxieties among these celebrities.

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