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Les radios de prosélytisme salafi : une lutte pour l'autorité religieuse

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SUNARWOTO¹

Salafi *Dakwah* Radio: A Contest for Religious Authority

Introduction²

One important phenomenon which has captured the public attention in post-New Order Indonesia is the public prominence of Salafi groups.³ They successfully spread their *dakwah* (Islamic proselytization) by, among other things, extensively using modern technological media like television, radio, books, magazines, and the Internet. A number of studies on Salafism in Indonesia have focused on modern media usage by Salafis. Virtually all of them deal with the role of the Internet in the Salafi movement (for instance, Hefner 2003: 158-179; Bräuchler 2004: 267-285; Lim 2005: 10-27; Nisa 2013: 241-255; Iqbal 2014: 81-105). However, media other than the Internet have been equally crucial in the spread of the Salafi movement. Among those important media are radio, television, and other newer electronic media such as CD/VCD. They need to be studied separately. In this article, I shall particularly concentrate on radio. Two studies, by Hasan (2006; 2010) and Wahid (2014) respectively, have underlined the role of radio in the Salafi movement. In his book, *Laskar Jihad*, Hasan (2006: 201-203) discusses the importance of

1. Tilburg School of Humanities (TSH), Tilburg University, the Netherlands.

2. I would like to thank Prof. Herman Beck of Tilburg University, the Netherlands, and reviewers of *Archipel* in Paris for their valuable comments on the earlier draft of this article. My thanks also goes to Carole C. Fay, former student at Harford Seminary, Harford, CT, USA, for helping me improve the English of this article. Any errors and shortcomings are my sole responsibility.

3. I will explain about these groups in the next section.

media in the dissemination of the *jihad* messages in the Moluccas conflict (1999-2002). Elsewhere, he makes a brief mention of the role of radio in Salafi *dakwah*; according to him, this is because they were unsuccessful in campaigning Salafism door-to-door (2010: 697). Wahid (2014), who wrote a dissertation on Salafi *pesantrens* (traditional Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia, discusses two radio stations in West Java, Rodja in Bogor, and Assunnah FM in Cirebon, very briefly. He asserts that radio is one of the means that Salafis used to get a hold on public thought (Wahid 2014: 102-5).

In this article, I shall discuss Salafi radio stations in Surakarta,⁴ Central Java. I shall focus on three stations, including Suara Quran FM, Al-Madinah FM and Darussalaf FM. While both Hasan and Wahid only very concisely clarify why radio is important for Salafi *dakwah*, I shall specifically investigate the ways in which Salafi radio stations played a role in the (internal) dynamics of the Salafi movement. The central issue I hope to address here is that of religious authority. Some scholars (e.g., Wiktorowicz 2004: 154-177 & 2005: 135-150; Meijer 2011: 375-399; and Wagemakers 2014: 111-125) have discussed this issue at length. Wiktorowicz (2005: 135-150) points out that the religious authority of a Salafi scholar is based on his right knowledge, character, and personality. In contesting authority, Salafi scholars have derived much legitimacy from classical disciplines of the *hadith* sciences such as *al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil* (refutation and rectification) (Meijer 2011: 375-399) and theological labels such as Murji'ah and Khawarij (Wagemakers 2014: 111-125). In this article, I shall analyse how this contestation of religious authority has taken place in Indonesia as represented in the Salafi *dakwah* radio stations. I argue that the establishment of these radio stations is not only for spreading Salafi teaching in society, but also to attain religious authority. Focusing on the internal dynamics of the Salafi movement, I shall demonstrate that the Salafi radio stations play a significant role in the contestation of religious authority among the existing Salafi groups.

A current map of the Salafi movement

I start this section with an explanation of the term "Salafi." Taken from Arabic *salaf* (also pl. *aslaf*), it means "predecessors, forbears, ancestors, forefathers" (Wehr 1976: 423). In this article, the term "Salafi," and thus "Salafism," refers to a specific group and movement characterised by its strict adherence to the *al-Salaf al-Salih* (the pious ancestors of the Muslim community of the first three generations) and to the literal interpretation of the Qur'an and the *hadith*. Salafis aspire to emulate the way of life of the prophet as literally as possible. Salafism in this sense is different from the Salafism established by Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) and Rashid Rida (d. 1935) in Egypt, which gives priority to the rational interpretation of the Qur'an and the

4. Surakarta is the other name of Solo, Central Java.

hadith, and accommodates contemporary needs. The intellectual genealogy of the Salafism discussed here may reach back to Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855) (founder of the Hanbali school) down to Ibn al-Taimiyah (d. 1328), to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah (d. 1350) to Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) (founder of Wahhabism), to contemporary Middle Eastern Muslim scholars like ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Baz (d. 1999), Nasir al-Din al-Albani (d. 1999), Muhammad Salih al-‘Uthaimin (d. 2001), Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi‘i (d. 2001) and others.

Although genealogically similar, Salafism is conceptually and historically different from Wahhabism, the official ideology of Saudi Arabia. Conceptually, Salafism is broader and historically much older than Wahhabism. While the latter emerged in the eighteenth century, the former already existed in early years of Islam. Salafism is applied not only to Wahhabism but also to other Islamic movements whose main aim is to bring Islam back to its origins.

In Indonesia, the Salafi movement emerged in the mid-1980s as a consequence of the transnational Salafi *dakwah* movement, and gained public attention after the fall of the New Order in 1998. Wahid (2014: 39) divides Salafi groups in Indonesia into three: purist (quietist, apolitical), *haraki*, and jihadist. In this article, we are dealing with the purist. (On the history of Salafism in Indonesia, see, i.e., Hasan 2006 [chap. two], 2007, and Wahid 2014 [chap. two]).

The Salafi *dakwah* movement in Indonesia began to grow in the mid-1980s and intensified along with the return of a vast number of LIPIA (Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic) graduates from universities in the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia.⁵ They spread Wahhabism under the banner of the Salafi *dakwah*. Abu Nida⁶ was the first to initiate this Salafi *dakwah* by organising *daurah* (workshop) and *halaqah* (study circles) for university students in Yogyakarta. Like Abu Nida, other Salafi activists developed *dakwah* centres in various places. The flourishing of Salafi *dakwah* led to the emergence of Salafi foundations: As-Sunnah Foundation, As-Sofwa Foundation, Lajnah Khairiyah Musyarakah and

5. LIPIA was initially established as LPBA (Institute of Arabic Teaching) in 1980, and transformed into the current LIPIA since 1986. It is a branch of the Islamic University of Imam Muhammad ibn Saud in Riyadh. For a brief account of LIPIA, see <http://www.lipia.org/index.php/ct-menu-item-3/ct-menu-item-17>; also Hasan (2006: 47-51), and Wahid (2014: 86-88).

6. His real name is Chomsaha Sofwan. He was born in Lamongan, East Java in 1954. After finishing his secondary school at PGA (Teacher Training School) Muhammadiyah in Karangasem, Lamongan, he joined a *dakwah* course held by DDII (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation) in Pesantren Darul Falah in Bogor, West Java, under the transmigration Muslim preachers programme. He was sent to the hinterland of West Kalimantan. Muhammad Natsir, leader of DDII, recommended him for study at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud, Saudi Arabia. For preparation, he studied Arabic at LIPIA Jakarta. Having finished his study in Saudi Arabia, he lived in Yogyakarta to spread Salafi *dakwah* by establishing *halaqahs* and *daurahs* among university students. In 1993, together with other Salafi preachers, he founded the Majelis At-Turots Al-Islamy foundation to serve *dakwah* and other social activities. For further information on him, see http://abunida.atturots.or.id/?page_id=2 and Hasan 2006: 52-53.

others. In addition, Salafi *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) were established everywhere. These *pesantrens* are different from those traditional ones attached to the NU (Nahdlatul Ulama), and resemble the modernist ones organised by organisations like Al-Irsyad, Persis (Islamic Union) and Muhammadiyah. Along with these developments, conflicts and tensions flared up between Salafi leaders, each claiming to be representative of the “true” Salafi.

The Salafi movement entered Indonesia’s political scene when Laskar Jihad was formed in 2000, in response to the failure of the state to end the religious conflicts in Ambon, Moluccas.⁷ This development brought the commander of Laskar Jihad, Ja’far Umar Thalib, to the top rank in the movement’s leadership. Hasan (2006) demonstrated that the increasing influence of Thalib challenged the authority of other Salafi figures like Abu Nida. Thalib was in conflict with his fellow leaders of Pesantren Al-Irsyad Tenganan, Salatiga, Central Java. In 2002, Laskar Jihad was disbanded following the *fatwa* of Rabi’ ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, a respected Salafi scholar in Saudi Arabia. This *fatwa* came at the request of a number of Thalib’s colleagues and students who considered him as having deviated from the true Salafi method. Since that time, the Salafis within Thalib’s network have splintered into factions.

At least three groups, or networks, emerged from the conflicts (see fig. 1). I would prefer to call the first group the Luqman Baabduh network, to name it after its most influential leader, Luqman Baabduh, former vice-commander of Laskar Jihad.⁸ Other important figures in this network are Muhammad as-Sewwed and Ayip Syafruddin. The second group can be called the Dzulqarnain network, since its most influential figure is Dzulqarnain, former head of the *fatwa* section of Laskar Jihad.⁹ Both the Luqman Baabduh and Dzulqarnain groups were

7. Laskar Jihad was a paramilitary division of FKAJ (Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah, Communication Forum of the People of the Sunnah and the Islamic Community). FKAJ was established in 1998, while Laskar Jihad was formed in 2000. On Laskar Jihad, see Hasan (2006), Sirozi (2005: 81-120), and Umam (2006: 1-26).

8. Luqman Baabduh was born in Bondowoso, East Java, in 1971. He studied in Pesantren Al-Irsyad, Tenganan, Salatiga, Central Java. He also studied in Ihyaus Sunnah in Yogyakarta led by Ja’far Umar Thalib. In 1994, he was sent to Yemen to study with Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi’i (d. 2001), founder of the Dar al-Hadith school in Dammaj, and a respected Salafi leader (see Hasan 2006: 87). In Yemen, he studied a number of canonical *hadith* books like *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, and *tafsir* (Qur’anic exegesis). In 2000, he returned to Indonesia, and started Salafi *dakwah* activities. In the same year, he joined Laskar Jihad and was appointed as its vice-commander. In 2002, he started his position as a *mudir* (director) of Ma’had As Salafiyah in Jember, East Java. In the same year, he was appointed to the advisory board of a Salafi magazine, *As Syari’ah*. His short biography is available at <http://tukpencarihaq.blogspot.nl/2013/12/biografi-ustluqman-baabduh.html> (accessed 16 April 2015).

9. Dzulqarnain was born in 1976 in Makassar, South Sulawesi. In 1994, he travelled to Java to study Arabic and other Islamic disciplines. Like Baabduh, he was among the students of Ihyaussunnah sent to Yemen (see Hasan 2006: 87). He went to Yemen in 1995. Back in Indonesia in 1999, he began serving as *mudir* (director) of Ma’had As Sunnah Makassar. In 2004, he studied in Saudi Arabia with Salafi scholars including Abd al-Muhsin al-‘Abbad, Rabi

previously categorised by writers (for instance, Hasan 2006; Bulabo et al. 2011) as the Yemeni network. This network consisted of those former students of the Dar al-Hadith school in Dammaj, Yemen. Under its founder, Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i (d. 2001), the school became one of the most important study centres for Salafis throughout the world, including Indonesia. The dynamics of the school saliently affected the development of the Yemeni network in Indonesia. Since the demise of its founder, patronage within the Yemeni network has changed considerably. The absence of such a central figure as al-Wadi'i has resulted in its becoming fractured into groups. The Dar al-Hadith school is now led by Yahya al-Hajuri, whose leadership has been contested by other leading students of al-Wadi'i in Yemen, such as Abd al-Rahman al-Mar'i al-Adeni.¹⁰

From the Yemeni network, there is also a third group, led by Abu Turob al-Jawi, a former member of Laskar Jihad. It consists of those who are loyal to al-Hajuri (Bulabo et al. 2011: 38-44). Some of them are still studying at the Dar al-Hadith school.

Fig. 1 – Current Salafi networks after Laskar Jihad

ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, Salih al-Fauzan, and others. In the *hajj* (pilgrimage) season in 1999, he attended lectures delivered by ‘Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz and Salih al-‘Uthaimin in Saudi Arabia. His short biography is available at <http://jihadbukankenistaan.com/tentang-penulis> (accessed 16 April 2015).

10. Bonnefoy (2009: 325) has noted that there are three main figures after al-Wadi'i, including Muhammad al-Imam in Ma‘bar, Yahya al-Hajuri in Dammaj, and Abu Hasan al-Ma‘ribi in Ma‘rib.

Salafi contest for authority

Contesting religious authority is, no doubt, one of the driving forces behind the internal conflicts of Salafis. Each group tried to be representative of the “true Salafi” as I said earlier. They framed this contest through “crediting” their own legitimacy and “discrediting” the legitimacy of the others (Wiktorowicz 2005: 163). Therefore, it is of importance to discuss some issues instrumental in this contest for religious authority. One of them is the *sururi* issue that played a significant role in the development of the Salafi movement. It refers to an issue aggravated by Ja’far Umar Thalib when confronting his rivals, whom he accused of being followers of Muhammad Surur Zain al-‘Abidin, a Salafi figure critical of the Saudi government (Hasan 2006: 80-4).¹¹ The *sururi* issue also inflamed conflicts between Salafis and other non-Salafi Muslim activists like in PKS (Islamic Party of Justice and Prosperity), HTI (Indonesian Hizbut Tahrir), and others. According to Hasan, Thalib used the *sururi* issue mainly to strengthen his relationship with prominent Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. At the same time, by doing so, Thalib tried to gain support from funding organisations in those countries. However, he failed to realise this ambition fully (Hasan 2006: 80-3). After the dissolution of Laskar Jihad, the *sururi* issue remained significant in Salafi rivalries. The label *sururi* has been applied not only to those rivals of Thalib. Thalib himself faced (and still faces) the accusation of being a *sururi*.

Currently issues other than *sururi* have become prevalent in the rivalry among Salafis of the Yemeni network. Of the most important is *tahdhir*, which refers to a warning given by a Salafi authority (*shaikh*) in the Middle East to those Salafis considered to have gone astray from the right way of the Salaf. Other similar terms are also used, like *jarh* (critique), *hajr* (abandonment, boycott), and *tabdi* (making forbidden innovation [*bid’ah*]). Rabi’ ibn Hadi al-Madkhali is the authority most frequently invoked in a *tahdhir*. This is not without reason. He himself is known to Salafis as *hamil liwa’ al-jarh wa-l ta’dil* (bearer of the banner of [the science] of refutation and rectification [of *hadith* transmitters]). He wrote a book entitled *Manhaj Ahl al-Sunnah fi Naqd al-Rijal wa-l Kutub wa-l Tawa’if* (Method of People of the Sunnah in Criticism of Narrators, Books, and Sects). He is well known for his critical stance toward Salafi rivals such as Sayyid Qutb, Ikhwan al-Muslimin, and *sururis*.¹² For this reason, he received the praise of great Salafi scholars, and many of his followers tried to get his support for excluding their fellow Salafis. He has issued many *tahdhirs* against other Salafi and non-Salafi authorities as well.

11. On Muhammad Surur Zain al-‘Abidin, see further Stéphane Lacroix (2009: 435-36).

12. Roel Meijer has studied the critical stance of al-Madkhali that is rooted in *al-Jarh wa-l Ta’dil*, a branch of *hadith* sciences (*‘ulum al-hadith*), which is concerned with the evaluation of the credibility of a *hadith* transmitter. See Meijer (2011: 375-399).

Because of this, he was accused by other Salafi scholars like Salih al-Fauzan, a respected Salafi scholar in Saudi Arabia, of being preoccupied with *tahdhir*.

A Salafi *shaikh* gives a Salafi teacher a *tahdhir* based on information given to him. It is subject to change after new information (about a Salafi who received a *tahdhir*) is given. The issuance of a *tahdhir* is much dependent on the extent to which an informant can provide a Salafi *shaikh* with sufficient convincing information. Consequently, a *tahdhir* is often contested by those involved in conflicts. Salafi groups of the Yemen network have competed in convincing Salafi *shaikhs* to issue a *tahdhir* against their rivals. A *tahdhir* can take various forms of criticism. Both Luqman Baabduh and Dzulqarnain once received a *tahdhir* from Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali. Baabduh was given a *tahdhir* from three great *ulamas* ('*ulama kibar*'), including Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, Muhammad ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, and Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i. Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali also gave a *tahdhir* to Baabduh, by saying, "I am afraid that this Luqman (Baabduh) is actually an *ikhwani* (a Muslim Brotherhood follower) with the Salafi robe." Muhammad ibn Hadi al-Madkhali suspected Baabduh of being a *sururi*. Al-Wadi'i erased Baabduh's name from the list of his students.

Like Baabduh, Dzulqarnain is also said to have received a *tahdhir* from Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali through a letter sent by Hani ibn Buraik, a Yemeni Salafi teacher, to Salafis in Indonesia. The letter anticipated the planned visit of a number of Yemeni *ulamas* to Indonesia. The context of the incident was that the visit was supposed to be arranged by Dzulqarnain and his colleagues. The letter, however, made it clear that for some reason Dzulqarnain was not considered the right person to accomplish this task. In the letter, Buraik cited Shaikh Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali who said, "Tell *shaikhs* in Yemen not to attend his (Dzulqarnain's) invitation. This man loves much to make fun [of *shaikhs*], and imitates the Halabi ways in making deception (*makar*)." According to the letter, Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali also referred to Dzulqarnain as "*mutalawwin la 'ab*" (a chameleon, and fond of making fun of the Salafi *shaikhs*). Considering all this, Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali recommended that Baabduh and his colleagues, instead of Dzulqarnain and his group, welcome the Yemeni *ulamas*.¹³

In the same way, Luqman Baabduh and his allies also used certain other terms to delegitimise their rivals. In his *daurah* in Balikpapan,¹⁴ Baabduh labelled a Salafi teacher, Asnur, in Kendari, Kalimantan, as *hajuri* or *hajawuri*, meaning follower of al-Hajuri, director of the Dar al-Hadith school in

13. The Arabic text and the translation of the letter are available at <http://tukpencarialhaq.com/2013/12/14/tahdzir-asy-syaikh-robi-bin-hady-al-madkhaly-terhadap-dzulqarnain/> (accessed 24 November 2014).

14. The summary of the recordings of Baabduh's question-answer session in the *daurah* is available at <http://forumsalafy.net/?p=119> (accessed 3 December 2014).

Dammaj. Baabduh himself had received a *tahdhir* from al-Hajuri.¹⁵ From this perspective, it is understandable that Luqman Baabduh would be very critical towards al-Hajuri. Indonesian Salafi students who were still in the Dar al-Hadith school opposed the moves by Luqman Baabduh to undermine al-Hajuri.¹⁶ In defence of al-Hajuri, one of his students, Abu Fairuz Abdurrohman bin Sukaya al-Qudsi, wrote a book to uncover the *hizbi* orientation of Luqman Baabduh.¹⁷ Al-Qudsi also wrote two books in defence of al-Hajuri against Abd Allah al-Mar'i al-Adeni and his followers.¹⁸

Luqman Baabduh also used the term *al-halabi* to discredit his rivals. The term refers to Ali Hasan al-Halabi, a Salafi leader in Jordan, student of Nasir al-Din al-Albani (d. 1999), a respected Salafi scholar. It then is used to label those who follow the thinking method of al-Halabi. Al-Lajnah al-Da'imah li-l Buhuth al-'Ilmiyah wa-l Ifta' (Permanent Council of Scientific Research and Fatwa) in Saudi Arabia issued a *fatwa* on al-Halabi's books, regarding them as teaching the Murji'ah ideology. According to this ideology, action on the part of the believer is not among the requirements of Islamic faith.¹⁹ Al-Halabi supported Rodja Radio. He once appeared on Rodja TV and on a national television station, in an interview regarding radicalism in Islam.²⁰ As noted above, Rabi ibn Hadi al-Madkhali had also castigated Dzulqarnain as a follower of the Halabi way.

Salafi radio stations: features and networks

General features

The general features of Salafi radio can be recognised from, among others, its jingles or slogans, which contain such special words as *salaf*

15. The recording of al-Hajuri's *tahdhir* to Baabduh can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=vARVDnM3vIo (accessed 3 December 2014).

16. They established a blog called Ashabul Hadits (the students of hadith) at <https://ashabulhadits.wordpress.com/profile/>

17. The book is entitled *Bangkitnya Kesadaran Penuh dengan Terbongkarnya Hisbiyyah Luqman Baabduh*. Unfortunately I have not yet consulted this book. A small part of it can be found at <http://aloloom.net/vb/showthread.php?t=2730> (accessed 3 December 2014).

18. They are *Kasr Ulwiyat Uli al-Idrar bi Dahr Hujumihim 'ala al-Abrar* and *Tanbih al-Nuqqad al-Abrar 'ala Ittiham al-Muslih bi al-Ghuluw wa-l Idrar*. Both can be downloaded from <https://thaifahalmanshurah.wordpress.com/author/thaifahalmanshurah/page/7/> (accessed 3 December 2014).

19. See the *fatwa* and its Indonesian translation at <http://www.salafybpp.com/index.php/manhaj-salaf/127-fatwa-lajnah-daimah-tentang-buku-karya-ali-hasan-al-halabi> (accessed 3 December 2014).

20. The recording of his advice to the supporters of *takfir* ideology (declaring a person to be an unbeliever) can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo7RWaew8Q> (accessed 3 December 2014); and his interview with a national TV station can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-fnhDGEFoY> (accessed 3 December 2014).

and *sunnah*. Three Salafi radio stations under discussion here have their respective special slogans. Suara Quran FM is known for the phrase ‘*Media Kalam Ilahi*’ (Medium for God’s Words). This refers to a common idea of the Qur’an as *kalam Allah* (verbal Words of Allah) rather than to a specific term related to Salafis. This is different from the slogans of the other two Salafi radio stations, which explicitly display a Salafi character. Darussalaf FM proclaims ‘*Istiqamah memperjuangkan Sunnah di atas manhaj salaful ummah*’ (Consistent in Struggling for the Sunnah based on the Method of the Salaf). Similarly, Al-Madinah FM says: “*Menebar Dakwah Di Atas Sunnah*” (Spreading Dakwah Based on the Sunnah). Both use the word “Sunnah.” This stronger identification with the Sunnah was always emphasised by the Salafi radio activists I interviewed, by adding a phrase such as “*menurut pemahaman salaf*” (in accordance with the understanding of the Salaf). Thus, the next feature is that all programmes played on a Salafi radio are assumed to present Islam as understood by the *salaf*. To keep them in line with the Salaf method, a special team is created in charge of monitoring the programmes being presented.

The third feature is the absence of commercial breaks and advertisements. This is in line with the claim that Salafi radio is purely for *dakwah* purposes. With this in mind, non-commercial breaks called public service announcements (*iklan layanan masyarakat*) are broadcast. Rodja Radio (as well as Rodja TV), for instance, has several segments of non-commercial breaks, containing short pieces on Islamic themes like “Ahmadiyah is not Islam,” “What is *bid’ah*,” and “Suicide bombing is not *jihad*.”²¹

In addition, Salafi radio stations have no music programmes of any kind, religious or non-religious. This is in line with the Salafis’ stance toward music. I have discussed this topic elsewhere (Sunarwoto 2013). Suffice it to say, however, that this excludes Qur’anic recitation in rhythm (*qira’at*), which is permitted. What must be noted in this regard is how the concept of entertainment (*hiburan* in Indonesian language) is formulated. Three radio stations discussed here give no explanation of this concept, but in practice they follow a specific concept they consider to be in line with Islam. A Salafi station in Cirebon, called Assunnah FM (which has now become KITA FM)²² provides us with an interesting concept of entertainment programming, called *program hiburan Qur’ani* (Qur’anic-based entertainment programme), described as follows: “A programme which entertains and calms the heart of listeners with various

21. See, for instance, <http://www.kajiansunnah.net/2011/12/audio-jeda-rodja-download.html> (accessed 17 November 2014).

22. The abbreviation KITA seems to have nothing to do with Islam, since KITA in Indonesian language means ‘we’. However, it stands for *Kajian Islam dan Tilawah Al-Qur’an* (Islamic Study and Recitation of the Qur’an).

forms of *murattal al-Qur'an* (Qur'anic recitation) and *hadith* and prayers...²³ Explicit in this conceptualisation is that the entertainment itself is not forbidden, and that it is the content of the entertainment – in this context, the Qur'an or *hadith* or prayer – which matters. In other words, as long as the entertainment is in accordance with Islam (as understood by the Salaf), it is allowed. In some respects, this is similar to the principle that other non-Salafi radio stations hold. It is nevertheless different from these others as a result of the different interpretations that Salafis ascribe to the meaning of entertainment.

One final characteristic of Salafi radio is the inclusion of *daurah* programmes on all stations. This is very important programming. *Daurah* is a sort of workshop organised at a certain time and place. In a *daurah*, a prominent Salafi teacher is invited to chair the workshop, to help the participants study a certain theme more deeply. It seems to me that it is part of Salafi indoctrination. It is not infrequent that a Middle Eastern Salafi scholar(s) is invited to give a lecture (*muhadarah*). The *daurah* lecture is recorded and distributed on CDs. The *daurah* is also frequently broadcast live on radio, including streaming radio channels. Aired on the radio and the Internet, *daurah* reaches beyond its initial audience.

Three radio stations and their networks

Salafi radio stations have very wide networks throughout Indonesia, characterised by the ideological nexus among different Salafi groups. This networking plays a significant role both in sharing information and in mobilising their *dakwah* activities. Through these networks, Salafi teachers can easily build their careers as religious personalities widely known to Salafis throughout the country. They are often invited to give sermons and talks in such events as *daurah* (workshop) and *kajian ilmiah* (scholarly discussion). These sermons and talks became part of the important broadcasting materials of Salafi radio. "Networking" also has to do with certain media business "networks." The media business here is not confined to electronic media but also includes print (books, magazines, and the like). In short, this media business has become of the utmost importance, both for mobilisation for *dakwah* and for making money.

Referring back to the fracture of the Salafi groups as described above, Salafi radio stations can be classified into three different types in terms of their management and networks (see fig. 2 and table 1). The first type is represented by radio stations managed by non-former members of Laskar Jihad. At the national level, the representative of this type is Rodja Radio based in Bogor, West Java. The two other types are run by former Laskar Jihad members. Some radio stations were established by those affiliated to the Baabduh network,

23. <http://www.radioassunnah.com/profil-radio-sunnah-kita-fm/> (accessed 6 November 2014).

while others are managed by those linked to the Dzulqarnain network.²⁴ In Surakarta, these three types are represented by three radio stations, including Suara Quran FM, Al-Madinah FM, and Darussalaf FM.

Suara Quran FM

Suara Quran FM belongs to Ma'had Al-Ukhuwah, Sukoharjo. The director (*mudir*) of this Ma'had is Aris Sugiantoro, former student of Muhammad ibn Salih al-'Uthaimin (d. 2001), a leading Salafi figure in Saudi Arabia. The establishment of the Ma'had was funded by a Saudi charitable foundation, Idarat al-Masajid wa-l Mashari' al-Khairiya, based in Unaizah, al-'Uthaimin's hometown.²⁵ Thus, the Ma'had buildings and other facilities are quite luxurious, complete with basketball and volleyball courts. The Ma'had follows the national education system, and conducts education from elementary to senior high schools.

Suara Quran FM was established in 2008, and began broadcasting on 17 February. It was first based in the house of a certain Pak Eko Pramono, alias Abu Ibrahim, and then moved in May 2008 into the complex of Ma'had Al-Ukhuwah. In May 2013, it stopped broadcasting temporarily because of licence issues, until it became SQ Abror FM. Under this new name, it is legally allowed to broadcast only in the area of Karanganyar district.²⁶ The studio is still based in the complex of the Ma'had. The Internet online radio station (www.suaraquran.com), which existed previously, is utilized to deal with this issue of the zone restriction. It is from this online radio station that the religious programmes of Suara Quran FM are currently broadcast in the Karanganyar area. Suara Quran FM is part of the *dakwah* division of Ma'had Al-Ukhuwah. The Ma'had and the radio station have connections with Salafi *pesantrens* and with radio stations organised by non-former Laskar Jihad Salafis. In fact, Rodja Radio is one of the most important Salafi radio stations from which Suara Quran FM imports recordings of sermons.

Suara Quran FM is part of a broad network with other Salafi radio stations within the Rodja network. Its umbrella institution, Ma'had Al-Ukhuwah, owns a local branch of Insan TV. The central Insan TV is under the management of the non-profit Insan Media Dakwah Foundation, based in Jakarta.²⁷ The foundation itself is part of a bigger institution called *Komunitas Pengusaha Muslim Indonesia* (KPMI, Community of Indonesian Muslim Entrepreneurs). This community was born from a mailing list community, Milis Pengusaha

24. It should be added that, to the best of my knowledge, the third network of the former members of Laskar Jihad led by Abu Turob al-Jawi does not have any radio station or streaming radio. For this reason, I do not discuss it here.

25. <http://www.alukhuwah.com/tentang-kami/> (accessed 5 November 2014).

26. <http://www.alukhuwah.com/2014/02/radio-sq-abror-fm/> (accessed 29 October 2014).

27. <http://www.insantv.com/statis-1-profil.html> (accessed 7 November 2014).

Muslim²⁸, from which a foundation named *Yayasan Bina Pengusaha Muslim Indonesia* (Foundation of Indonesian Muslim Entrepreneurs' Management) was also established.

These two institutions emerged from the deep concern of a number of Muslim entrepreneurs about the poor economic conditions of Muslims compared to non-Muslims. KPMI has three aims: (1) to be true in practicing religion, in order to open the doors of God's sustenance and achieve success in the hereafter; (2) to be true in working, in order (for Muslims) to manage their enterprises well, for improving the outcome of the work; and (3) to be true in their social lives, in order not to break Islamic *syariah* law in conducting their affairs.²⁹ KPMI operates in 26 coordinating areas (*Korwil*), one of them in Cairo, Egypt.³⁰ Surakarta (or Solo) is also one of those areas.

Also under KPMI management are other *dakwah* media such as Rodja Radio, Rodja TV, and Yufid TV. The recorded sermons of Salafi teachers within this network are regularly broadcast on Suara Quran FM. We cannot draw a direct connection between Suara Quran FM and this business network in terms of its economic profit. What is clear is that many broadcasting materials aired on Suara Quran FM are derived from this network. A teacher of Ma'had Al-Ukhuwah, Kholid Syamhudi, gives regular sermons on Yufid TV and Rodja TV. *Fatawa Mukhtarah* (Selected *fatwas*) programme at Suara Quran FM originates from Rodja Radio. All these factors certainly imply that Suara Quran FM benefits from the Rodja network.

Al-Madinah FM

Al-Madinah FM belongs to Ma'had Al-Madinah, Surakarta. Neither the head of the *dakwah* division nor the director of the Ma'had I interviewed³¹ could provide an exact date for when Al-Madinah FM was founded. My own experience listening to *dakwah* radio indicates that Al-Madinah FM existed prior to 2010 (but beginning much later than Suara Quran FM). This station is part of the *dakwah* division of Ma'had Al-Madinah, which was established on 30 September 1996, and is instrumental in these endeavours of Ma'had Al-Madinah. The radio station and the Ma'had are led by former members of Laskar Jihad and former students of Ja'far Umar Thalib. Jauhari, one of the key teachers at Al-Madinah, was on the advisory board of Laskar Jihad, and

28. The mailing list address is <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/pengusaha-muslim>.

29. <http://www.kpmi.or.id/tentang-kami.shtml> (accessed 7 November 2014).

30. These 26 coordinating areas are: Jakarta, Depok, Kepulauan Riau, Priatim, Bulukumba, Sumbawa, Pekan Baru, Bogor, Karawang, Solo (Surakarta), Magelang, Surabaya, Palembang, Tangerang Raya, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Balikpapan, Mojokerto, Banyumas, Bekasi, Kalimantan Selatan, Semarang, Makassar, Malang, Medan, and Egypt. <http://www.kpmi.or.id/korwil> (accessed 7 November 2014).

31. Interviews with Mardiyanto, Surakarta, 25 September 2013 and with Abu Ahmad Rahmat, Surakarta, 27 March 2014.

Muhammad Naim was a member. Abu Ahmad Rahmat, the director of Ma'had Al-Madinah, was a student of Thalib, studying with him for three and half years in Pesantren Ihyaussunnah Dogelan, Yogyakarta. Ma'had Al-Madinah is engaged in education and *dakwah*. It operates both formal and informal education, including *ma'had (pesantren)*, schools, and *majlis taklim* (places where public lectures are held).

Al-Madinah FM is quite well managed, as attested by its regular broadcast programmes, despite the fact that it is facing a broadcasting permit issue. According to the director of Ma'had Al-Madinah, effort is being made to follow the procedures to gain legal recognition from the government. This initiative follows the sweeping operation launched by Balai Monitoring (Monitoring Bureau), an agency under the Ministry of Communication and Information in charge of monitoring radio and television airwaves.

Under the management of Ma'had Al-Madinah, Al-Madinah FM has close ties with Salafi radio stations run by the Salafis of the Dzulqarnain network. In 2013, when I visited Ma'had Al-Madinah in Surakarta, a member of the staff advised me to listen to the online radio station An-Nash (www.annashradio.com). This online radio is run by Dzulqarnain, who also owns the website www.dzulqarnain.net. Dzulqarnain himself is one of the important Salafi teachers whose sermons are aired by Al-Madinah FM. In addition, he also teaches at Ma'had Al-Madinah. He is a prolific writer, having already authored many books and articles. He is very active in doing *dakwah*, through the Internet (on his website) and other media. Many of his sermons have been recorded on CDs by some *tasjilat* (audio-recording) enterprises (including Tasjilat As-Sunnah Makassar, Tasjilat Al-Atsariyyah Samarinda, and Tasjilat Al-Madinah Surakarta). It is clear that Ma'had Al-Madinah is one of the important purveyors of Dzulqarnain's sermon recordings. These *tasjilat* are sold commercially, and Al-Madinah FM profits much from them for its sermon programmes.³² Other Salafi radio stations that benefit from the Dzulqarnain network are Radio An-Nashihah (online radio, www.annashihah.com, Makassar), Radio Syiar Tauhid (online radio, www.syiartauhid.info), Radio Adh-Dhiya' FM Cirebon, and Radio Al-Barokah Semarang (online radio).

Darussalaf FM

Darussalaf FM belongs to Ma'had Darussalaf (also called Ma'had Ibnu Taimiyah), Sukoharjo. It already existed before 2010. Its studio was located at the Ibnu Taimiyah mosque (Ciptonegaran, Sanggrahan, Grogol, Cemani, Sukoharjo), and in 2013, it moved, together with the mosque, to Jalan Pandawa (Karang 4/7 Sanggrahan, Sukoharjo). Ma'had Darussalaf was established on

32. As an example, see the catalogue of *tasjilat* with their prices at <http://atsary.wordpress.com/2008/04/02/katalog-tasjilat-al-madinah-surakarta/> (accessed 19 November 2014).

a piece of land voluntarily endowed by a rich local man sympathetic to the Salafi *dakwah* (possibly Ja'far Umar Thalib). Through Thalib, the land was then entrusted to a number of his colleagues, who founded Ma'had Darussalaf, among them Ayip Syafruddin, Idral Harits, Abu Nashim Mukhtar, Abu Almass Al-Ausathi and Abu Sholih Fauzan al-Maidani. Conflicts among Salafis over Thalib's leadership, which occurred after the dissolution of Laskar Jihad, led to the withdrawal of the land endowment by the owner.

Darussalaf FM, and Ma'had Darussalaf, are among the important media for the Luqman Baabduh network. Besides giving lectures, Baabduh often used Ma'had Ibn Taimiyah as a place for criticising his rivals who were associated with the Dzulqarnain network. This is somehow surprising, since Baabduh himself is not directly connected to Ma'had Ibn Taimiyah. He is the director of Ma'had As-Salafy in Jember, East Java. However, this is understandable, since leaders of Ma'had Ibn Taimiyah are former core members of Laskar Jihad and FKAJ (Communication Forum of the Followers of the Prophetic Sunnah and the Muslim Community) who backed him.

It is interesting to note that all radio stations within the Baaduh network have connections with "Miratsul Anbiya Indonesia" (<http://miratsul-anbiya.net/>), a Salafi website formerly called Dammaj Al-Habibah (<http://dammajhabibah.net>). The name Dammaj Al-Habibah (the beloved Dammaj) refers to Dammaj, a small village in Yemen, where Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i opened his study centre named Dar al-Hadith. There are a number of Salafi personalities behind the website "Miratsul Anbiya Indonesia": Qomar Su'aidi, Usamah Mahri, Ayip Syafruddin, Askari bin Jamal, Luqman Baabduh, Muhammad Sarbini, Muhammad Afifuddin As-Sidawi, and Ruwaifi bin Sulaimi. All of them are within the Luqman Baabduh network.

On the website of Miratsul Anbiya Indonesia, it was stated that the name change from Dammaj Habibah to Miratsul Anbiya Indonesia did not alter the essential substance of Dammaj Al-Habibah. However, it is clear that this new name was linked to the Arabic website named "Miraath al-Anbiya" (miraath.net), a Salafi website based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Part of Miraath Publications,³³ this website is an online radio station, broadcasting audio recordings of live sermons and lectures by principal Salafi *ulamas* including Rabi ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, Muhammad ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, Ubaid Abdullah al-Jabiri, Hani ibn Buraik, Zaid ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, Abdullah al-Bukhari, Khalid al-Zhafiri, Muhammad Bazmul, Muhammad al-Anjari, and Khalid Abd al-Rahman.³⁴ Most of them are in Saudi Arabia. This change is related to attempts to broaden the scope of the network. Unlike "Miratsul Anbiya Indonesia", "Miraath Anbiya" does not contain the Dammaj Al-Habibah link.

33. <http://www.miraathpublications.net>.

34. <http://miratsul-anbiya.net/muqaddimah/> (accessed 1 December 2014).

This indicates the changing orientation of Yemeni graduates of the Luqman Baabduh network, from Yemen to Saudi Arabia.

Later on, the website of Miratsul Anbiya Indonesia was changed to Manhajul Anbiya (<http://www.manhajul-anbiya.net/>). A number of Salafi radio stations can be traced back to the Baabduh network and Miratsul Anbiya Indonesia: Darussalaf FM (Surakarta), Radio Bismillah (online radio, Surabaya), Ibnul Qoyyim (online radio, Balikpapan), Radio Al-Manshuroh FM (and online) in Cilacap, Radio Rosyid (online radio), Radio Salafi (www.salafy.or.id) (online radio, Cileungsi, Sorowaka, Makassar, and Magelang). It is on these radio stations that it is possible to find the broadcasting of sermons by the Salafi preachers of the Baabduh network.

Fig. 2 – Salafi radio network in Surakarta

Suara Quran FM	
Director(s)	Abdurrahman, Aris Sugiyantoro
Affiliated institution	Ma'had Al-Ukhuwah Sukoharjo
Programmes	Islamic sermons and lectures, Qur'anic recitation, recorded <i>fatwas</i> , Islamic question-answers through SMS, Islamic remembrance of God (<i>adhkar</i>)
Partners or networks	KPMI (Community of Indonesian Muslim Entrepreneurs), Rodja radio and TV, Yufid TV, Radio Hang FM (Batam), and other stations run by non-former Laskar Jihad
Al-Madinah FM	
Director(s)	Abu Ahmad Rahmat, Jaubari, Muhammad Naim
Affiliated institution	Ma'had Al-Madinah Surakarta
Programmes	Islamic sermons, Quranic recitation, <i>daurah</i>
Partners or networks	All Salafi <i>pesantrens</i> and radio stations within the Dzulqarnain networks, www.dzulqarnain.com , www.annashihah.com , www.syiartauhid.info , www.annashradio.com ; Radio Adh-Dhiya' FM Cirebon, and Radio Al-Barokah Semarang (online radio)
Darussalaf FM	
Director(s)	Ayip Syafruddin, Idrul Harits, Abu Nashim Mukhtar
Affiliated institution	Ma'had Darussalaf (Ibnu Taimiyah)
Programmes	Islamic sermons, Quranic recitation, <i>daurah</i>
Partners or networks	All Salafi <i>pesantrens</i> and radio stations within the Baabduh networks like Radio Bismillah (online radio, Surabaya), Ibnuul Qoyyim (online radio, Balikpapan), Radio Al-Manshuroh FM (and online) in Cilacap, Radio Rosyid (online radio), Radio Salafi (www.salafy.or.id) (online radio, Cileungsi, Sorowaka, Makassar, and Magelang), and others

Table 1 – Profiles of Salafi radio

“Salafi radio” in contest

Let me start with a brief comment made by Abu Ahmad Rahmat, director of Ma'had Al-Madinah, whom I interviewed in 2014.³⁵ I asked him about the position of his radio station (Al-Madinah FM) among the many *dakwah* radio stations present in Surakarta. He mentioned various types of *dakwah* radio stations in the city, including *Sufi*, *khawarij*, and *mu'tazili* or '*aqlani* (rationalist)

35. Personal communication with Abu Ahmad Rahmat, Surakarta, 27 March 2014.

radio stations. The establishment of Al-Madinah FM was aimed at “straightening the *dakwah* (*meluruskan dakwah*) based on the Salafi method (*manhaj*).”

Although he did not mention the actual name of each radio station, it is clear, at least for me, which groups and radio stations he had in mind. By Sufi radio stations, he was probably referring to Al-Hidayah FM, Pitutur Luhur FM, and Assunnah FM, which broadcast *shalawat* songs and the like. By the *Khawarij*, he probably meant those radio stations linked to the Jihadist leaders like Abu Bakar Baasyir. There are at least two stations of this kind, including RDS FM (which became HIZ FM) and Isy Karima FM. Two sons of Baasyir are among the top figures of RDS FM, one as programme director and the other on the *shari’a* board.³⁶ Isy Karima FM belongs to Ma’had Isy Karima, run by former students of Pondok Al-Mukmin Ngruki, led by Baasyir. Finally, by *‘aqlani* or *mu’tazili* he was referring indirectly to MTA FM (which belongs to the MTA foundation). For Salafis in Surakarta, MTA (Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur’an) has an *‘aqlani* (rationalist) or *mu’tazili* orientation, because of its dependence on human reason over the divine text (*dalil*). Such an assessment is clearly found in *Antara Akal Sehat dan Hawa Nafsu (Tinjauan Syar’i Terhadap MTA)* (Between Healthy Reason and Bad Desire: An Islamic Assessment of MTA) (2012), a book by Abu Ibrahim Abdul Malik, a Salafi teacher, particularly criticising MTA.

The above comment by Abu Ahmad Rahmat is a clear example of how *dakwah* radio stations have been identified according to their ideological orientations. In this section, I focus on the ideological differences between Salafi radio stations. In the same way the above described fracture of Salafi groups, Salafi radio stations have also been fragmented in terms of their ideological differences. For Salafi listeners, ideological similarities have become a reason to listen only to particular Salafi radio stations. By contrast, differences have become a reason not to listen to certain stations. This is reflected in a comment made by Tri, a Salafi listener I met in 2013. Asked which of Al-Madinah FM or Darussalaf FM he would recommend me to listen to, he provided a paradoxical answer: Al-Madinah would be okay for me, but he himself would not listen to them. He is a former student of Ma’had Darussalaf. He once received a *tahdhir* from his friends at Ma’had Darussalaf because he befriended Salafis from other groups. Since then, he decided to distance himself from Ma’had Darussalaf, and preferred to listen to Suara Quran FM. He is also a keen listener of Rodja Radio. He did not explain why he himself would not listen to Al-Madinah FM, whereas he recommended me to do so. However, it can be understood that this is because both Darussalaf FM and Al-Madinah FM have some similarities. Both are run by former members

36. See <http://www.radiohizfm.com/2014/05/about-hizfm.html> (accessed 27 January 2015).

of Laskar Jihad. They use such issues as *sururi* and *hizbi* (partisanship) to criticise and attack each other.

In what follows, I shall discuss a number of *fatwas* concerning the existing Salafi radio stations in Indonesia. This is crucial to demonstrate how Salafis have responded to modern media and to locate the points of debate especially on religious authority.

Some fatwas on listening to the Salafi radio

The use of radio broadcasting as a medium for the Salafi *dakwah* is actually less problematic than television. This is because radio only broadcasts sounds and noises. In contrast, television provides both sounds and images. Moving images have been contested by both Salafis and non-Salafis.

Referring to the list of the official Salafi *fatwas*, Larsson (2011: 104-5) emphasizes two main points of dispute regarding radio broadcasting and listening to it. One is related to the problem of music, and the other to the presence of female announcers or presenters. Criticism about the use of the radio medium is focused on its impact rather than on the medium itself. Therefore, the Islamic ruling on listening to the radio depends on when and for what purposes the radio is used. As an example, the late Bin Baz (d. 2001), a Saudi *mufti* of the highest ranking in the Lajnah al-Da'imah li al-Buhuth al-'Ilmiyah wa-l Ifta' (the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Fatwa), was asked about the Islamic ruling on listening to the radio "*if there is nothing forbidden (haram) in what is being heard or viewed*" (my emphasis).³⁷ The answer to this question depends on that condition. He answered as follows: "There is no harm in listening to the [radio] programmes that air the Qur'an or the useful *hadiths* or important news. And also there is no harm in recording (the recitation of) the noble Qur'an, the useful *hadiths*, the admonitions and the like..." (al-Musnid 1994/1414: 373-4).

It is of importance to look at *fatwas* or, more precisely, *tahdhirs* related to the existing Salafi radio stations in Indonesia. These *fatwas* were produced by Salafi *ulamas* in the Middle East upon request of a number of Indonesian Salafi teachers. At least three Salafi *ulamas* received such specific questions, including 'Ubaid al-Jabiri, Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, both from Saudi Arabia, and Abdullah Mar'i al-Adeni from Yemen. On 5 May 2012, 'Ubaid al-Jabiri received a question concerning the Islamic ruling on listening to a radio station run by "followers of *Turathiyun* like Abu Hasan 'Ali al-Halabi" (the questioners did not mention a specific radio station). Al-Jabiri's answer included the following two points:

Firstly, it is sufficient for them to listen to "Salafi radio" (*al-idha'ah al-salafiyah*) ... I do not recommend you to listen to "the corrupt radio" (*al-idha'ah al-munharifah*), be it

37. "*Idha kana ma tusmi 'uhu aw tushahiduh laisa fihi amr haram.*"

turathiyah, *halabiyah*, or *ma'ribiyah*. Secondly, there is no problem for those who have the knowledge to listen to the programmes of that [deviating] radio in order to reject them.

It is interesting to note that al-Jabiri makes a distinction between “the Salafi radio” and the “corrupt radio”. This distinction is not based on the contents of the radio programmes, but upon the “ideological differences” pertaining to the owners or managers of the radio stations. Here *Turathiyah* refers to a radio station run by those receiving financial support from Ihya' al-Turath, a charitable foundation based in Kuwait. *Halabiyah* refers to a radio station run by followers of Ali Hasan al-Halabi. *Ma'ribiyah* means that the owner(s) of the radio station is a follower of Abu al-Hasan al-Ma'ribi. In the *tahdhir* above, al-Jabiri does not mention any specific Salafi radio station. Baabduh and his allies interpret this as applicable to other Salafi radio stations characterised by “*turathiyah*”, “*halabiyah*”, and “*ma'ribiyah*”. It is a general *tahdhir*.³⁸ This interpretation is actually a shift from the actual context in which the request for *fatwas* or *tahdhirs* was made. That context was the presence of Rodja Radio, a Salafi radio station based in Cileungsi, Bogor, West Java. It fuelled disputes among Salafis, since it is run by Salafis receiving financial support from Ihya' al-Turath.

In Ramadan 1433 (August 2012), a number of Salafi teachers led by Luqman Baabduh had a meeting with Rabi' ibn al-Hadi al-Madkhali. One of the questions they raised to him was about Rodja Radio. Muqbil ibn Hadi Al-Madkhali answered the question by issuing a *tahdhir*, which contained a number of advices and recommendations. He said, “Whoever honours his *manhaj* [method] and *'aqidah* [faith] should not listen to it, and whoever does not honour his *manhaj* and *'aqidah* are pleased to listen to it.” He also said, “I advised the Salafis (in Indonesia) not to listen to Rodja Radio.” He maintained that it is more important for Salafis to read Salafi books than to listen to Rodja Radio. According to him, Rodja Radio has been at the centre of disputes among Salafis, and therefore he advised them to ignore it. His advices and recommendations are not applicable to Salafis only, but also to other listeners.

In 2012, Abdullah al-Mar'i al-Adeni received a question concerning Rodja Radio and the disputes over it. The question was raised by his Indonesian students who were still studying at his school in Yemen.³⁹ In raising the question, they provided two contrasting opinions concerning Rodja Radio. Some held that preachers of Rodja Radio were *hizbiyin*. For this reason, they maintained that it is not allowed to listen to it. Others were of the opinion that Rodja Radio has more advantages than disadvantages. Al-Adeni gave an

38. <http://www.darussalaf.or.id/audio-tasjilat/rekaman-dan-terjemahan-fatwa-larangan-syaikh-ubaid-untuk-mendengarkan-radio-turotsiyyah-halabiyyah-maribiyyah-semisal-rodja-dll/> (accessed 29 January 2015).

39. <https://syababpetarukan.wordpress.com/2012/02/17/perkataan-syaikh-abdullah-al-mari-ketika-ditanya-tentang-rodja/> (accessed 29 January 2015).

answer (*fatwa*), which is very general and softer than the previous two *fatwas*. He did not point to Rodja Radio specifically. Regarding the contrasting opinions, he stated that proponents of both opinions should respect and have regard for each other. Al-Adeni asserted that if a Salafi radio station calls for “*takfir* (declaring a Muslim infidel) and rebellion against the government and spreading *fitnah* (libel), like *bid‘ah* and deviations, then it is not allowed to promote it (to the public).” He then underlined that the disputes (over Rodja Radio) should not have happened if both sides in conflict had followed “ethics of disputation” (*adab al-ikhtilaf*).

It is important to note that the Indonesian translation of al-Adeni’s *fatwa* was first posted by Ja’far Sholeh on his Facebook account. Ja’far Sholeh is the director of Pesantren Salafiyah in Depok, West Java. He is an opponent of Luqman Baabduh, and is closely related to Dzulqarnain. Baabduh and his allies criticised him for having connections with the Ihya’ al-Turath foundation, and praised the owners of Rodja as “*Salafi murni*” (pristine Salafi).⁴⁰

From the three *fatwas* above, we can see different positions that three Salafi scholars took in regard to Rodja Radio. The first two scholars made negative comments about it, and they were clearly in favour of its opponents. In contrast, the last scholar clearly defended the position of Rodja Radio.

Some important points drawn from the three *fatwas* above can clarify why listening to a particular Salafi radio station is a matter of dispute among Salafis. One point is the question of authority, that is, to whom a listener must refer when searching for religious guidance. For Salafis, the correct knowledge of Islam must be taken from the true authority.⁴¹ After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the true authority is that of the Salafi *ulamas*, since they have the correct knowledge of Islam. In Saudi Arabia, the Salafi authority is hierarchical so that its higher authority has more power than the lower (cf. Meijer 2011: 378). Thus, in order to be representatives of the true Salafi in Indonesia, they compete for support from the highest authority of the Salafi *ulamas* by requesting *fatwas*. Luqman Ba’abduh and his group have claimed to gain support from both al-Jabiri and al-Madkhali. Similarly, Dzulqarnain and his group invited Salafi *ulamas* like Al-‘Umairi to give lectures in Islamic gatherings they organised, including in Ma’had Al-Madinah, Surakarta. The second point is about the Salafi method. Although the above *fatwas* pointed out that Rodja Radio does not use the “right” Salafi method, there was no explanation of why its method was not correct. The *fatwas* only emphasised the necessity to exclude or to stay away from those considered as rivals. Given the absence of explanation, the *fatwas* clearly functioned as a *tahdhir* to Rodja Radio rather

40. The recording of Baabduh’s criticism of Ja’far Sholeh is available at <http://forumsalafy.net/?p=119> (accessed 19 January 2015).

41. This principle refers to several authorities. Among them, Muhammad ibn Sirin (d. 653) said, “look at whom you are taking your religion from” (*unzhuru ‘amman ta’khudhu dinakum*).

than to demonstrate the mistake of its method. Thirdly and most clearly, the *fatwas* supported the interest of their questioners against Rodja Radio.

In the subsection below, I provide an example of how Salafi debates on what constitutes a 'true Salafi' are aired on Salafi radio stations in Surakarta.

An on-air debate about the "true" Salafi

Debates about how is the "true Salafi" were aired on Salafi radio stations in Surakarta. Here I focus on Al-Madinah FM and Darussalaf FM as representatives of, respectively, the Dzulqarnain network and the Luqman Baabduh network which I have described earlier.

Both the Luqman Baabduh and Dzulqarnain factions had already conflicted and competed with each other immediately before the dissolution of Laskar Jihad in 2002. Dzulqarnain, together with his colleague Dzul Akmal, took the initiative of sending a letter to Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali to request a *fatwa* related to the planned dissolution of Laskar Jihad. After the issuance of the *fatwa*, Luqman Baabduh and Usamah Faisal Mahri were sent to meet al-Madkhali personally. As Hasan (2006: 212) notes, the delegation of Baabduh and Mahri was to clarify the situation related to Ja'far Umar Thalib, whom they considered as deviating from the true Salafi method. Unfortunately, Hasan does not explain why they needed to give more clarification to al-Madkhali only after the *fatwa* had been issued. This gives the strong impression that the initiative both Dzulqarnain and Dzul Akmal took was not convincing enough to some members of Laskar Jihad.

Whatever the reason, the fact was that Baabduh (together with Mahri and others) was (and is still) in conflict with Dzulqarnain and his allies. Both formed their own groups. According to a source, in 2003 Baabduh sent a *tahdhir* to a number of Salafi teachers living in Riau (Sumatra), Makassar (South Sulawesi), and Solo or Surakarta (Central Java). Baabduh and his group labelled them as RMS, an abbreviation for Riau, Makassar, and Solo. The label was intended to equate those teachers with exponents of the Indonesian separatist movement RMS (Republic of South Maluku). Riau was represented by Dzul Akmal, Makassar by Dzulqarnain, and Solo by Jauhari and Muhammad Naim (both teachers at Ma'had Al-Madinah).⁴²

In 2005, both the Dzulqarnain and Luqman Baabduh factions made an agreement of reconciliation (*islah*). This agreement was written in Arabic, dated 26 Jumada al-Ula 1426 (2 July 2005). Some points of the agreement were specifically related to Ma'had Al-Madinah Surakarta.⁴³ However, it could not stop the conflicts between the two sides. This can be vividly seen from various

42. <http://luqmanbaabduh.blogspot.nl/2013/12/kejahatan-luqman-baabduh-di-dunia.html> (accessed 17 April 2015).

43. The text of the agreement is available at <http://pelita-sunnah.blogspot.nl/2013/12/naskah-ishlah-dai2-salaf-tahun-2005-m.html> (accessed 20 November 2014).

religious gatherings, blogs, Facebook discussions, and radio programmes. A number of religious lectures organised by both sides are mentioned here as examples. In a *daurah* (Salafi workshop) held in Balikpapan, Kalimantan, Luqman Baabduh was asked if it was allowed to send children to study at Ma'had Al-Madinah Solo. His answer was in the negative. He did not give the reason explicitly. Instead, he warned the audience about the danger of a teacher attending a *daurah* organised by *sururis*. The recording of Baabduh's lecture was aired by the Salafi radio stations within his network, one of which was Darussalaf FM.⁴⁴ In his *daurah* lecture broadcast on Darussalaf FM, Muhammad Afifuddin As-Sidawi was asked about the *hukm* (Islamic ruling) of learning with a Salafi teacher who teaches '*ilm al-kalam* (Islamic theology). In reply, he said that this was forbidden.⁴⁵ Abu Nashim Mukhtar, one of the important teachers of Ma'had Darussalaf, strongly criticised Al-Madinah schools in his lecture delivered on 27 September 2014 in Banyumas, Central Java. In a lecture entitled "Romantika Muda-Mudi dalam Thalabul Ilmi" (Various Challenges Facing Youth in Pursuit of knowledge),⁴⁶ Mukhtar presented considerable (or "much") evidence regarding the deviations from the true Salafi *manhaj* by Al-Madinah schools.

So far, I have never heard a direct response from Ma'had Al-Madinah to the critique of Ma'had Darussalaf which was broadcast on Al-Madinah FM. During my visit to Ma'had Al-Madinah, one teacher explained that the conflicts between Salafis should not be made known to the public. That is why Al-Madinah FM did not air a special sermon in order to counteract those critiques. This was also the answer given by the head of the communication and *dakwah* division of Ma'had Al-Madinah, and the director of the Ma'had.

However, this does not mean that there was no reaction. On 15-16 July 2009, a *daurah* held in Masjid Jajar Surakarta, in which Ma'had Al-Madinah organised most of its religious lectures, featured Dzulqarnain. The theme of the *daurah* was *zakat* (Islamic obligatory charity), and it was aired by Al-Madinah FM.

On the first day, Jauhari, one of the main leaders of Ma'had Al-Madinah, held a special session to deliver religious advices to the participants of the *daurah*. He used this session to speak especially about critiques of the formal schools of Ma'had Al-Madinah, an issue heatedly debated by Salafis, in

44. Baabduh's sermons broadcast on Darussalaf FM at its website, <http://www.darussalafsolo.com/kajian-ustadz-luqman-baabduh> (accessed 20 November 2014).

45. The *daurah* was held on 26-27 January 2013 at the Ibnu Taimiyah mosque, Ma'had Darussalaf, Sukoharjo, and broadcast on Darussalaf FM. The recording of As-Sidawi's lecture can be downloaded from its website: <http://www.darussalafsolo.com/kajian-ustadz-afifuddin-as-sidawy/> (accessed 20 November 2014).

46. The recording of this lecture can be downloaded from <http://www.mahad-alfaruq.com/audio-kajian-islam-ilmiah-romantika-muda-mudi-dalam-tholabul-ilmi/> (accessed 24 November 2014).

Surakarta in particular and in other cities. To explore the issue, he started by reading a tiny treatise entitled *Al-Farq bain al-Nasihah wa-l Ta'yir* (The Difference between Advice and Blaming) (1988) by Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d. 1393). As its title suggests, the book deals with how to give advices to Muslims based on Islamic teaching. He tried to contextualise the book in terms of the criticism facing Ma'had Al-Madinah and its public schools. He avoided mentioning the names of those criticising the formal education provided by Ma'had Al-Madinah. However, from his talk it is clear that he was pointing to, among other things, the critical sermons broadcast on Darussalaf FM. This became clearer in his further explanation of *Al-Farq*. In *Al-Farq*, Ibn Rajab refers to the explanation of al-Fudail (ibn 'Iyyad) about the signs of *nasihah* (advice) and *ta'yir* (blaming). According to al-Fudail, an advice is accompanied with *sitr* (covering the shames of others), while *ta'yir* is accompanied with *i'lan* (uncovering or publicising the mistakes of others) (al-Hanbali 1988: 17). Contextualising this explanation, Jauhari reminded his audience of the broken agreement of the 2005 reconciliation. According to the agreement, the Salafis involved in conflict were not allowed to publicise the past matters of disputes through media such as magazines, radio stations and the Internet. The agreement urged them to stop making *tahdhir* against their fellow Salafis. Jauhari commented further as follows:

Every time a conflict occurs, it is publicised through the radio. As a consequence, common people ... wonder whose radio station it is. Maybe they hear *announcements in Sundanese language, for instance, and in Javanese, and perhaps in Indonesian...* (Italic is mine).

As we can see from the above quotation, Jauhari mentioned a certain FM radio station without giving its exact name. As I highlighted in italic, he also mentioned three languages (Sundanese, Javanese, and Indonesian) used in announcements. To the best of my knowledge, no Salafi radio station in Surakarta has such kind of public service announcement (*iklan layanan masyarakat*) in several languages other than Darussalaf FM. From this, we can understand that the station Jauhari was talking about must be Darussalaf FM.

In some *kajians* (lectures) that Ma'had Al-Madinah organised and broadcast on Al-Madinah FM, tacit answers to the criticism appeared. A most recent *kajian*, for instance, dealing with acquiring honor by pursuing Islamic knowledge, was delivered by Abdul Mu'thi al-Maidany. It was broadcast on Al-Madinah FM, on 23 November 2014. The last part of the *kajian* was a question and answer session. Before this session, al-Maidany explained ten ethical rules for the pursuit of knowledge according to Salih al-'Uthaimin, a Saudi Salafi scholar. The seventh of these rules is to teach the knowledge by way of *hikmah* (wisdom). To explain this, al-Maidany cited Q. 16: 125.⁴⁷ He then said, "Do not cause others

47. It says, "Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious..." The Quranic translation is from Ali (2001).

to go away from the prophet's Sunnah. Many of our *ikhwan* (friends) met a new friend, and they talked to him about *fitnah* (libel)."

To explain this point further, Al-Maidany narrated the story of a Hindu in Kalimantan who wanted to become Muslim but failed. The Hindu became increasingly interested in Islam as he often listened to a *dakwah* radio station. The station was not purely *ahl al-sunnah*. Some founders or managers of the station were criticised for this. The Hindu then consulted a religious teacher (*ustadh*) about his intention to become a Muslim. The Hindu, a company boss, had an employee who claimed to be a true Salafi (*Salafi sejati*). Knowing that his boss wanted to become Muslim by the fact that he listened to that "not-true" Salafi radio, this Salafi employee explained the deviations of this radio station to him. Thereafter the Hindu failed to convert to Islam.

This story is important as it relates to the situation Ma'had Al-Madinah is facing presently: *fitnah*. The questions raised and the answers given in the session were linked to this situation. Among the questions were how to be consistent in the pursuit of religious knowledge and how to behave toward those preoccupied with making *fitnah*. To these questions, al-Maidany advised his audiences to stay away from *fitnah* and to focus on study. He encouraged them to invite these *fitnah* makers to *pengajian* sessions. Another question concerned the Islamic ruling about the pursuit of an academic degree from a university in order to fulfil the requirements for a higher career if the individual is already academically qualified even without that degree. Answering the question, al-Maidany emphasised the intention and method of pursuing a diploma or academic degree. According to him, this is a worldly matter (*masalah duniawi*). Therefore, as long as the intention and method are good, there is no problem with such pursuit of an academic degree. This question was linked to the fact that some teachers of Ma'had Al-Madinah were pursuing higher academic degrees to advance their careers. Abu Ahmad Rahmat, for instance, is pursuing a bachelor's degree to fulfil the requirement for teaching by attending courses at *Universitas Terbuka* (UT, Open University).⁴⁸ UT was established following the presidential decree No. 41 of 1984. One of its purposes is "to provide higher education services for those who, because of their work or due to other reasons, are not able to further their studies in face-to-face prominent higher education institutions."⁴⁹ The UT provides distance and open learning systems, meaning that learning is not held face-to-face and that no age limitation is applied.

It is interesting to note the attempts of Ma'had Al-Madinah to gain support from the high Salafi authorities in the Middle East. One of these attempts was through invitations to come to Ma'had Al-Madinah. In June 2013, two *ulamas* from Yemen, Abdullah al-Mar'i (al-Adeni) and 'Uthman al-Salimi,

48. Interview with Abu Ahmad Rahmat, Surakarta, 27 March 2014.

49. <http://www.ut.ac.id/en/ut-in-brief.html> (accessed 24 November 2014).

gave lectures in the programme *Daurah Ulama Yaman*, broadcast live on Al-Madinah FM. Al-Salimi gave some advices to Salafi preachers related to how to confront enemies of the Salafi *dakwah*.⁵⁰ He once gave a *tahdhir* to Baabduh, who was then defended by Hani ibn Buraik. Hanik ibn Buraik himself received a *tahdhir* from a number of *ulamas* in Yemen, including al-Salimi.⁵¹ In June 2014, Sayyaf al-Radda'i attended *Tabligh Akbar Bersama Ulama Timur Tengah* (Great Preaching with the Middle Eastern Ulama). Al-Radda'i is the director of the Dar al-Hadith school, Dhammar, Yemen. Their presence can be interpreted as a way to strengthen the legitimacy of Ma'had Al-Madinah vis-à-vis its rivals. On a previous occasion, Ma'had Al-Madinah had failed to receive a visit from them. One of the reasons for this failure was, as mentioned above, the warning (*tahdhir*) by Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, who discouraged the Yemeni *ulamas* from coming to Indonesia at the invitation of Dzulqarnain and his colleagues. Luqman Baabduh and his group then used this *tahdhir* to delegitimise Dzulqarnain and his group.

Two later *daurahs* organised by Ma'had Al-Madinah and Ma'had Darussalaf show more clearly how the contest for authority has been taking place. On 18 January 2015, Abd al-Hadi al-'Umaili, a Salafi *shaikh* from Saudi Arabia, gave a lecture in a *daurah* held by Dzulqarnain and his allies at Ma'had Al-Madinah. The lecture was broadcast live on Al-Madinah FM.⁵² Al-'Umaili has been criticised by Luqman Baabduh who labelled him as *majhul* (unknown). On the same day, Baabduh and his allies organised a *muhadarah* (lecture) on *Kajian Islam Ilmiyyah* (scientific discussion of Islam) at Ma'had Darussalaf. The topic was "Menyingkap Kedustaan dan Kebohongan Sang Pengusung Fitnah" (unveiling the falsehood of the libel maker).⁵³ Baabduh gave a lecture entitled "Sekelumit Mengenal Pemateri Dauroh di Masjid Karanganyar Abdul Hadi al-Umaili" (A brief profile of the speaker at *daurah* at the mosque of Karanganyar, Abdul Hadi al-'Umaili). He was specifically speaking about the falsehood of al-'Umaili and his followers in Indonesia.⁵⁴ Two other Salafi teachers, Abu Nashim Mukhtar and Ayip Syafruddin

50. The summarised advices are available in Indonesian translation at <http://almdinah.or.id/572-ringkasan-nasihat-akhir-dauroh-asatidzah-duat-ahlus-sunnah-bersama-asy-syaikh-utsman-as-saalimi-hafizhahullah.html> (accessed 22 January 2015).

51. The letter of *tahdhir* to him is available at <http://www.sh-emam.com/uploads/books/167.jpg> (accessed 24 January 2015).

52. <http://almdinah.or.id/654-daurah-syaikh-di-karanganyar-18-januari-2015.html> (accessed 23 January 2015).

53. <http://salafy.or.id/blog/2015/01/14/kajian-ilmiyah-islamiyah-menyingkap-kedustaan-dan-kebohohan-sang-pengusung-fitnah-18012015/> (accessed 23 January 2015).

54. The recordings of Baabduh's lecture are available at https://archive.org/details/Sesi1.MenyingkapKedustaanDanKebodohanPengusungFitnah_201501 (accessed 23 January 2015); and https://archive.org/details/04.Sesi2.MenyingkapKedustaanDanPengusungFitnah_201501 (accessed 23 January 2015).

of Ma'had Darussalaf, also gave lectures during this *daurah*.⁵⁵ Mukhtar recounted the story of a meeting between Abdullah al-Bukhari, a Salafi *shaikh* from Saudi Arabia, with representatives of both Ma'had Darussalaf (Mukhtar himself and Idral Harits) and Ma'had Al-Madinah (Jauhari and Muhammad Na'im). Mukhtar specifically pointed out a piece of writing by Abd al-Hadi al-'Umairi on Baabduh's *dakwah* in Indonesia.⁵⁶ Syafruddin presented the story of the fracture of Salafi preachers in Surakarta into several groups. In defence of Luqman Baabduh, Syafruddin maintained that Baabduh was not to blame for it, as claimed by other Salafis associated with Ma'had Al-Madinah.

The whole story of the competition between Luqman Baabduh and Dzulqarnain is not over yet. However, a teleconference with Abd al-Hadi al-'Umairi, organised by teachers of Ma'had Al-Madinah, gives clearer evidence of how the struggle for authority will be finally validated. The teleconference presented a clarification by al-'Umairi about several issues. One of them concerned his relations with Indonesian Salafis of the Dzulqarnain network. Al-'Umairi tried to convince al-Madkhali about their true Salafi *manhaj*. More importantly, the case of Ma'had Al-Madinah has been sent to the al-Lajnah al-Da'imah li-l Buhuth al-'Ilmiyah wa-l Ifta' in order to decide its position within the Salafi *dakwah* in Indonesia. This is an important step for Ma'had al-Madinah to obtain legitimacy from the highest authority of the Salafi movement. While "Miratsul Anbiya Indonesia" became "Manhaj al-Anbiya," an Indonesian version of Salih al-Fauzan's website (www.alfawzan.net) was officially launched in December together with the handwritten welcoming statement of al-Fauzan. The website is managed by Dzulqarnain and his group. This seems to be a sign of victory in a struggle for legitimacy.

Concluding remarks

There is no central authority in Islam, and thus no single person or group may claim universal hegemony over Islam. Similarly, there is no single authority for Salafis. Their movement has never been homogeneous. They have been constantly fractured into groups. I have described how they have been divided into groups and how three Salafi radio stations in Surakarta represent each group. Suara Quran FM is linked to Salafis outside the circle of former Laskar Jihad members. Both Al-Madinah FM and Darussalaf FM belong to former members of Laskar Jihad. I have demonstrated that three major Salafi networks played a significant role in the current Salafi movement, including

55. The recordings of the lectures of both Mukhtar and Syafruddin are available at <https://archive.org/details/PenjelasanUstadzAyipSyafrudinTentangPerjalanDakwahSalafiyahDiSolo> (accessed 23 January 2015).

56. Its Indonesian translation is available at <http://almaidani.net/dakwah-luqman-baabduh-di-indonesia/> (accessed 23 January 2015).

the Rodja network, the Baabduh network, and the Dzulqarnain network. From these networks, we can see that such dichotomies as *sururi* and non-*sururi*, Yemeni and *haraki*, as offered by previous studies (Hasan 2006; Bulabo et al. 2011; Wahid 2014) need some modification. Within the Yemeni network, two groups (the Baabduh network and the Dzulqarnain network) are competing. Both groups criticised other groups of non-former Laskar Jihad members. Apparently, the Dzulqarnain network became closer to these non-former Laskar Jihad members, who were more cooperative. This can be seen in their willingness to adopt the national curriculum, something that never happened before. As Wahid (2014: 209) has analysed, former members of Laskar Jihad are 'rejectionist'. They rejected, among other things, adopting the national curriculum. However, as shown in this article, Ma'had Al-Madinah is open to the national curriculum, and it is cooperative with others.

The Salafi fracture was fuelled partly by their competition for authority. In its attempts to become representative of the "true Salafi", each group used strategies for delegitimising and discrediting other fellow Salafis. Recently, the use of *tahdhir* has been an important device to attack each other. Deriving its legitimacy from the *hadith* science, *tahdhir* acquires a religious power. I have tried to show how Salafi radio stations played a role in the dispute. Their emergence has become the subject of debates among Salafis. As in the case of Rodja Radio, *fatwas* played a significant role in the dispute. Both proponents and opponents requested *fatwas* from Salafi authorities in the Middle East related to listening to Salafi radio stations. Although the case has been specific to Rodja Radio in Bogor, the scope of those *fatwas* covers all the existing Salafi radio stations. The case study of two Salafi radio stations, Al-Madinah FM and Darussalaf FM, gives an example of how religious authority has been contested on air by two opposing Salafi groups. We can see in the example that both stations attacked each other through their Islamic programmes. As it is clear, the contest was driven not only by different interpretations of Islam but was also motivated by their attempts to influence society, and, to a certain extent, to sustain economic interests connected with media broadcasting and educational institutions. In this article, I hope I have provided a vivid example of the important role of such modern media as radio, both in religious practices and in Islamic movements or Islamic activism such as Salafism.

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