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Mediating Islam in Post-Suharto Indonesia: performing Dakwah through popular TV shows

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the rise of Islamic propagation (known as *dakwah* in Indonesian) on private TV stations¹ in post-Suharto Indonesia. During Suharto's New Order² regime, Islamic activities such as *dakwah* were closely controlled and monitored by the state. Suharto's policy restricted Muslims' participation in politics by merging Islamic political parties into one, United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* or PPP), but supported their religious activities (Hefner 2000: 15-20). For example, he built 999 mosques throughout the archipelago when he was in power and approved the establishment of Islamic banking (Hefner 2003: 154).³ Due to this policy, Muslims confined their concentration on social, cultural, and economic activities such as *dakwah* and Islamic banking. *Dakwah* activity became popular among urban middle-class Muslims in Indonesia during the 1980s. For example, Muslim university students in West Java held Islamic religious gathering (*pengajian*) on campuses (van Bruinessen 2002: 117). The trend of *dakwah* on campus was triggered by the change of political atmosphere in the mid of 1970s when Suharto began to lose political support from Indonesian military forces. He tried to gain Muslim political support by establishing Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* or MUI) in 1975 and the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* or ICMI) in 1990. Suharto's closest advisor, B. J. Habibie was appointed as its first chairman (van Bruinessen 2002: 135 and Salim 2011: 295-323).

After Suharto's resignation in 1998 due to the economic crisis and mass student-led protests, *dakwah* content increased significantly in media including magazines, books, audio and video cassettes, radio (Sunarwoto 2013), and cinema (Huda 2010 and 2012). *Dakwah* programmes began to

¹ I use the term 'private' and 'commercial' TV station interchangeably to distinguish it from public or state-owned TV and community TV stations, which also increase significantly in 2010.

² Suharto, the second president of the Republic of Indonesia after its independence, named his period as New Order and the previous as Old Order.

³ Alwi Shahab. 2019. "Suharto Membangun 999 Masjid di Indonesia [Suharto Built 999 Mosques in Indonesia]". <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/pw6krm282/soeharto-membangun-999-masjid-di-indonesia>. Last accessed, January 5, 2021.

flourish on TV stations from the beginning of 2000s. There was also *dakwah* content which were uploaded to the internet but were not popular due to poor internet access until 2010. The rise of *dakwah* in media, especially on private TV stations was enabled by the change of press regulation. B. J. Habibie, who replaced Suharto, amended press law number 40/1999. The new act of press drove the country to the proliferation of media platforms (Romano and Seinor 2006: 122). The change of the press regulation was followed by the issuance of broadcasting law no. 32/2002, which provided private TV channels to establish and broadcast all over the country (Royan 2008: 292). As a result, private TV stations like *Surya Citra Televisi* (SCTV) and *Rajawali Citra Televisi* (RCTI) were established and were broadcast to most cities in Java and several cities outside of Java in the late 1990s (Hill and Sen 2005: 27). Today, their broadcast can reach almost all districts in the archipelago.

The increase of *dakwah* broadcasting on TV stations after the fall of Suharto in Indonesia raises questions about commodification of Islam, Islamic resurgence, and religious authority: how are *dakwah* programmes produced on TV stations and distributed to the society? What can the social and education backgrounds of the TV preachers tell us about the transformation of *dakwah* on TV channels? How are *dakwah* programmes on TV debated and competed by various Muslim organisations? How is religious authority formed through *dakwah* broadcasting on TV stations? This study strives to answer these questions throughout its chapters by observing the processes, contents and various parties involved in the production and distribution of the broadcasting of *dakwah*. This includes the producers, preachers, and audiences. In the following section, I will explain the dynamics and changes of *dakwah* activities in Indonesia and, later, the broadcast of *dakwah* during Suharto's regimes to provide the backgrounds of its rise in the aftermath. Afterwards, I will describe the proliferation of private TV channels in post-Suharto periods.

Understanding *dakwah* on TV

Dakwah on TV is perceived as the strategy to disseminate Islamic teachings to reach mass audiences by using TV as one of the media platforms. It aims to intensify Muslims' faith and piety to live based on Islamic teachings. It is also used to persuade non-Muslims to convert to Islam. *Dakwah* for Muslims is part of daily routines as it is an Islamic obligation to do so. It is conducted in mosques, houses, hotels, and so forth and can mostly be heard in public spaces. Public sermons are performed and echoed through microphones in

mosques in Indonesia on Friday where Islamic messages are transferred to the public (Muzakki 2008: 205-206). Cassette sermons are played in mosques to be heard by public dealing with daily matter faced by the society (Hirschkind 2006). The contents of *dakwah* are uploaded in the internet (Nisa 2018). The trend of *dakwah* from conventional strategies to mediated platform is influenced by the development of mass media technology in Indonesia and in the Muslim worlds. This also happens in other Muslim countries such as in Malaysia with the young imam audition (Barendregt and Hudson 2016: 184-187), Egypt with the broadcast of TV preacher, Amr Khalid (Moll 2010 and Wise 2003), in Mali with TV preacher, Cherif Haidara (Schulz 2006 and Soares 2005), and in Turkey with TV preacher, Fetullah Gülen (Yafuz and Esposito 2003). Therefore, the broadcast of *dakwah* on TV is a global trend.

This trend can be seen as part of ‘Islamic resurgence’ (Smith-Hefner 2007: 398) where Islam becomes more visible and dominant in the public sphere. Mediated *dakwah* platforms provide alternative voices of Islam to more established methods, which refer to Muslim organisations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and MUI (Salvatore and Eickelman 2004: xii-xiii). On the other hand, the trend of *dakwah* on TV may also be considered as part of ‘conservative turn’ of Indonesian Islam, which changes the images of Indonesian Islam from ‘tolerant and inclined to compromise during the Suharto’s regimes to intolerant face of Islam marked by violent inter-religious conflict, jihad movement, and a series of simultaneous bombings of churches in 2000, as well as the Bali bombings in 2002 after the fall of Suharto’ (van Bruinessen 2013: 1-2). Furthermore, it may be just part of commodification of Islam for economic purposes (Hasan 2009 and 2013). The trend is also can be viewed as both conservative turn and commodification of Islam. As a result of the proliferation of *dakwah* programmes on TV stations, Islamic religious authorities have been fragmented (Eickelman and Picastori 1996) and contested by various institutions and individuals (Eickelman and Anderson 2003).

In August 2013, there was a controversy regarding the cost of inviting a popular TV preacher, Soleh Muhammad, familiarly called Solmed, to Hong Kong. He was asked to preach in front of Indonesian Muslim community in Hong Kong. This event was organised by *Thariqul Jannah* (Way to Heaven), an Indonesia Islamic learning group based in Hong Kong. The chairman of the group, Lifah Khilafah, protested Solmed publicly via YouTube and talked

to the press that the cost asked by Solmed's management was too expensive.⁴ This news raised fierce responses from Indonesian Muslims including scholars. Indonesian Muslim scholars believed that based on the Quran and hadith it is not permitted for preachers to receive payment from their congregation for their sermons. The news was spread and shared by through social media platforms. Lifah Khilafah said that Solmed's management changed their first agreement. She further explained that at first, Solmed agreed that the organiser just provided the airfare and accommodation for him during his stay in Hong Kong. However, when the organiser confirmed their agreement regarding the event to Solmed two weeks before its date, Solmed asked the organiser to talk to his manager. The discussion with his manager, disappointed the organiser because of several changes from the first agreement. According to the manager's calculation, the organiser should pay Solmed for his preaching, cover all the return airfare for him and his family (his wife, children, and parents), his manager, and his close friend, who would join him to Hong Kong. The manager also asked the organiser to pay them for a visit to *Disneyland* in Hong Kong.⁵

Popular TV preachers like Solmed have become common since the early 2000s. They have rhetorical skill and highly charismatic. Abdullah Gymnastiar, known as Aa Gym, was the first TV preacher, who enjoyed his popularity through commercial TV channels after the fall of Suharto. His appearance has been observed by several scholars, for example, Howell (2008: 47), Hoesterey (2016), and Njoto-Feillard (2018: 165-176). Hoesterey asserts that 'he solidified his standing as a national figure during nationally broadcast sermon live from Istiqlal mosque in December 2001 when he was invited before the audience that included ... president Megawati Soekarno Putri' (Hoesterey 2016: 41). There are new preachers appearing on TV channels regularly, such as Arifin Ilham, Yusuf Mansur, Jefri Al-Bukhori, Maulana, Mamah Dedeh, Badrussalam, Arifin Nugroho, and Solmed. These regular TV preachers are distinctive figures because they seem to avoid being affiliated with Muslim organisations or institutions like NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI, most of them do not have Islamic education in Islamic boarding

⁴ "Pengundang Ustad Solmed di Hong Kong Angkat Bicara [The Event Organiser of Preacher Solmed in Hongkong Speak Out to Public]". <https://hot.detik.com/celeb/2330680/pengundang-ustad-solmed-di-hong-kong-angkat-bicara>. Last accessed, December 5, 2014.

⁵ "Soal Tarif Dakwah, Ustad Solmed Akhirnya Minta Maaf [Preacher Solmed Finally Apologised concerning the Cost of His Preaching]". <https://www.liputan6.com/showbiz/read/676402/soal-tarif-dakwah-ustad-solmed-akhirnya-minta-maaf>. Last accessed, December 5, 2014.

schools (*pesantren*), and they have stories considered a redemptive transformation from ‘bad’ to ‘good’ Muslims.

The increase of TV preachers underline ‘the important role of the media and mediation of Islam, Islamic symbols, and religious experiences in society and politics’ in Indonesia and in the world in the 21st century (Heryanto 2014 and Hoover 2016: 2). Democratisation of the media allow TV industry to flourish and fulfil the majority of the audience’s expectations in the country for Islamic products and contents including TV programmes (for example, Jones 2010: 91 and Lukens-Bull 2008: 220). Further, the appearances of TV preachers offer Muslim communities alternative religious authorities shaped through popular and entertainment cultures in the media (Hoover 2016: 3). This type of religious practice is part of global trend of the resurgence of religion, which shows the relationship between media and religious authority, which is complex and multi-layered (Hoover 2016: 2-3).

***Dakwah* broadcasting on TV in Suharto’s New Order era**

During the Suharto era *dakwah* was shown on TVRI, Television of the Republic of Indonesia (*Televisi Republik Indonesia* or TVRI), a state-owned TV station. It was the only TV channel until 1993 which was aired nationally or at least accessible in most cities in the provinces (Sen 1994: 119 and Istanto 1999: 99).⁶ TVRI had regional branches in Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Medan, and Manado (Kitley 2014). There is no evidence about *dakwah* programmes before Suharto took power in 1966. During Suharto’s New Order regime, *dakwah* became part of Islamic programmes, which were broadcast once a week. The format, content, and preacher were monitored by Suharto’s government through the ministry of information. There were three Muslim organisations, which involved to preach on TVRI. The preachers delivering sermons at that time were selected by the government from NU, known as the traditional Muslim organisation in Indonesia and Muhammadiyah, a modernist Muslim organisation in Indonesia. The members of NU and Muhammadiyah, who were appointed by TVRI to give sermons, were likely to be affiliated with government institutions such as Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and MUI (Hasyim 2015: 488) and ICMI. For example, Tuty Alawiyah (d. 2016) was regular preacher on TVRI and a member of MUI and ICMI. TVRI appointed these preachers because they were considered

⁶ The details about the broadcast of TVRI where *dakwah* is included in religious programmes can also be found in the annual reports of TVRI in 1983 and 1985.

qualified to deliver sermons on TVRI based on their Islamic education backgrounds and most importantly the preachers supported the government's agendas. They, for instance, should be in favour of and promote the government's programme of family planning (*Keluarga Berencana* or KB) to limit the growth of birth of Indonesian population (Sirry 2013: 102). Another example of TV preacher during the New Order era was Zainuddin M.Z. (d. 2011) known as 'the preacher with a million followers' (*Da'i Berjuta Ummat*). Before appearing on TVRI, Zainuddin was popular as a preacher throughout Indonesia and his sermons were recorded and sold in the forms of articles in magazines and cassettes (Hadi et al. 1994). He was from NU and was active in PPP, a political party which merged several Islam-based parties including NU.⁷ Although both Tuti and Zainuddin were from NU, it would be misleading to assume that all the members of NU supported the government at that time. The voices within NU regarding support for Suharto's government were varied. It is well-known that NU often criticised New Order government's programmes when Abdurrahman Wahid (popularly known as Gus Dur) became its chairman in (Bush 2009).

It should be noticed that the rise of *dakwah* programmes on TV in post-Suharto has challenged NU as one of the religious authorities. NU is the largest traditional Muslim organisation in Indonesia, which was established on January 31, 1926. NU follow four schools of Islamic law, the saint's cult, and Sufi brotherhood. They promote themselves as a 'middle path' (Ichwan 2005: 5-26) between extreme rationalists (*aqli*) and literalists (*naqli*). It was formulated by Arab Sunni Muslim theologian, Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ri and Samarkand Sunni Muslim theologian, Abu Mansur Al-Maturidi (Zayd 2006: 43-44, Barton & Fealy 1996, and Feillard 1999). NU approves local traditional practices as long as they are not in contradiction to Islam (Hosen 2004: 5-26). Most NU *dakwah* was conducted in rural areas through *pesantren* (Bush 2009), while today it is also disseminated through cities.

Another Muslim organisation, whose religious authority is challenged by the rise of *dakwah* on TV in post-Suharto Indonesia, is Muhammadiyah, the largest modernist Muslim organisation in the country. Muhammadiyah was also involved in *dakwah* on TVRI during the Suharto era. It was founded on November 18, 1912. In theology, they followed one of the reformist scholars from Egypt, led by Muhammad Abduh, who proposed the

⁷ Petrik Matanasi. 2018. "Zainuddin MZ: Dai Sejuta Umat, Politikus Sejuta Massa [Zainuddin MZ: The Preacher of a Million Followers, the politician of a Million People]". <https://tirto.id/zainuddin-mz-dai-sejuta-umat-politikus-sejuta-massa-cCKz>. Last accessed, October 12, 2017.

purification of the teachings of Islam from non-Islamic practices by the return to the Quran and the prophetic traditions. Therefore, Muhammadiyah is well-known as a reformist organisation, which tries to eradicate the mixing of religious practices between local and Islamic traditions. In Islamic law, Muhammadiyah draws on the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence but in practice they mostly hold the Hanbali's (Anwar 2005: 27-44). It is a reformist socio-religious movement, advocating *ijtihad*, individual interpretation of the Quran and Hadiths, as opposed to *taklid*, the acceptance of the traditional interpretations propounded by leading Muslim scholars.⁸ Since its establishment, Muhammadiyah has adopted a reformist platform mixing religious and secular education, primarily as a way to promote the upward mobility of Muslims toward a 'modern' community and to purify Indonesian Islam of local syncretic practices (Zayd 2006: 43 and Syamsuddin 1995: 35–72). Muhammadiyah *dakwah* activities are performed mostly in cities through universities, schools, mosques and in philanthropic activities.⁹

Both NU and Muhammadiyah are not funded by the government. Since the establishment of MUI in 1975, which was funded by the government during New Order regimes, some members of NU and Muhammadiyah, who supported Suharto's leadership, have become the members of MUI. Despite the fact that it was continuously funded by the government, the MUI is non-governmental institution, whose chairmen are elected by its members. Its central board is settled in Jakarta. It has branches in some provinces and regencies throughout the Indonesian archipelago. In his speech for the opening of the council, Suharto outlined that the MUI should play four roles: it should (1) serve as the 'translator of the concepts and activities of national or local development for the people'; (2) become a form of advisory council that 'gives advices and opinions to the government concerning religious life'; (3) become the 'mediator between the government and the *ulema*'; and (4) function as a place where the Muslim scholars discuss 'the problems related to (their) duties.' (Ichwan 2005: 45-72). These points were later declared as the missions of MUI.

⁸ For more details, see Muhammadiyah. "Anggaran Dasar Muhammadiyah". <http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/id/content-51-det-anggaran-dasar.html>. Last accessed, April 26, 2015.

⁹ For the more discussions on Muhammadiyah, see, for instance, Mitsuo Nakamura. 2015. *The Crescent Arises over the Bayan Tree: A study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town, c. 1910s-2010*. Singapore: ISEA-Yusof Ishak Institute and Howard M. Federspiel. (Oct. 1970). "The Muhammadiyah: a study of an orthodox Islamic movement in Indonesia." *Indonesia* (10): 57-80.

In addition to these roles, van Dijk (2001: 44-66) asserts that Suharto's main aim in establishing the council is to persuade and control devout Muslims in order to support his policies in the government. The position and function of MUI change in line with socio-political condition in the country. The demise of Suharto's regime in 1998 forced MUI to redefine its position and role in the Muslim society and the state. As a result, the council changed its missions to five points: '(1) the heir to the Prophets in spreading Islamic teachings and striving for the construction of an Islamic life; (2) a *fatwa*-provider for the Muslim community 'whether requested or not'; (3) a guide and servant to *ummah* (Muslim community); (4) an agent for 'reform and renewal; and (5) an upholder of the Quranic dictate to enjoin good and avert evil.' (Ichwan 2005: 45-72). The members of MUI often became the preachers of *dakwah* programmes on TVRI.

Based on the list of programmes of TVRI in the weekly tabloid, *Monitor Radio & Televisi* in 1981, *dakwah* programme was aired on TVRI on Thursday evening every week during Suharto's regimes. It began with the recitation of several verses of the Quran and then continued with preaching which was named *Mimbar Agama Islam* (the Pulpit of Islam). It seemed the programme was set to welcome the holy day in Islam, Friday. Based the prophetic traditions, Friday is considered a blessed day in which Muslims perform a Friday prayer and those, who, recite the Quran on this day gain more rewards from God than in the other days.

The term *mimbar* from Arabic *minbar*, the pulpit from which a preacher speaks during Friday prayers, was also used for other religious programmes such as pulpit of Catholicism and Protestantism (*Mimbar Agama Katolik and Kristen Protestan*) and pulpit of Buddhism (*Mimbar Agama Budha*). Only for Hinduism is a different term used term - namely pulpit of belief in the one and only God (*Mimbar Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*). The absorption of Arabic terms into Indonesian is a common phenomenon. It shows the influence of Islam in the national cultural domain. The Suharto government restricted religious ideologies, especially Islam, in terms of their political rights emphasising that *Pancasila*¹⁰ was the only ideology in the country (Kitley 2008).

¹⁰ *Pancasila* is the official philosophical foundation of the state of the Republic of Indonesian which consists of five principles; (1) Belief in the one and only God, (2) Just and civilized humanity, (3) The unity of Indonesia, (4) Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives, (5) Social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia.

Religions, which were officially admitted based on the 1945 Indonesian constitution (*Undang-Undang Dasar* 1945 or UUD 1945) at that time were Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. All the religions were given chances to broadcast their religious programmes on TV once a week to a national audience (TVRI 1982 and 1985). Although all religions had opportunities to broadcast, Islam had more time allocation because it was aired in 40 minutes while other religions had less than that: Buddhism had 25 minutes, Christianity 15 minutes, and Hinduism is 30 minutes (Tabloid Monitor 1987). It reflects how the government favoured Muslims as majority.

Religious programmes on TV during Suharto's government were problematic to religious organisations and communities since they could not accommodate religious diversity. For example, Christianity has more than two groups (Catholicism and Protestantism) in Indonesia. Islam in the archipelago consists of various organisations including NU and Muhammadiyah. Each of these groups and organisations has different agendas, goals, and targeted audience for their *dakwah* activities on TV. Moreover, each of them defines *dakwah* on TV as a means to enhance their religiosity. Based on these facts, simplification in the broadcast of religious programmes on TVRI among the religious groups was unavoidable.

As mentioned above, the New Order government closely monitored the religious broadcasts. *Dakwah* on TVRI was part of government programmes clearly stated in Presidential Decree Number 215 of 1963, article 4. This pertains to the establishment of TVRI as a service of a public function in national development specifically mental or spiritual and physical development, and building Indonesian social personality (Leo 1972). Therefore, the programme was in accordance with the objective of national mental or spiritual development of characteristics (Rakhmani 2013).¹¹

In Quranic recitation programmes, there would normally be two people on screen, sitting next to each other. One would recite some verses of the Quran, and then the other slowly translated them into Indonesian. Generally, the verses read in the programme were related to the topic of the sermon, which was delivered by the preacher in the programme. Therefore, the verses of the Quran they read before the programme, were selected based on the topic of the sermon. Afterwards, the main agenda of the programme of

¹¹ For more information about Suharto's programme of Family Planning, see Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional. (1992). *President Suharto and Family Planning*. Jakarta: National Family Planning Coordinating Board.

propagation of Islam at that time was *Mimbar agama Islam*. It was held on the stage before the camera with two people sat in cosy sofas, one of them, the preacher faced the camera, and the other sat beside him seemingly as a master of ceremony who led the programme. The programme was often recorded live in front of a studio audience consisting of men and women sitting separately in front of the preacher.

On some occasions, the programmes received questions from home audiences related to various social and personal issues, and the preacher would read out and answer them mostly based on their opinions. To Indonesian Muslims, therefore, the programme was not only a medium to learn Islam, but also a means to negotiate problematic issues in their everyday life. For example, the audience would ask about whether or not Muslim women are permitted to work in offices or how to be a good wife and career woman at the same time. This interaction between audience and preacher indirectly provided a space for a religious authority to be formed. The construction of religious authority occurs when the audience as a student seeks a religious answer or advice of a problem to the preacher, who act as a teacher.

Dakwah programmes before the fall of Suharto show that TV stations were used for religious and political agendas. This leads to some questions about what happens to *dakwah* programmes on TV after the democratisation of Indonesia? Do NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI still become the only religious authorities for Indonesian Muslims in the post-Suharto era? Does the government still have control of TV programmes? The next section will elaborate the beginning of the proliferation of private or commercial national TV stations which play an important role in the rise of *dakwah* and Islamic programmes on TV.

The emergence of private TV channels

The rise of *dakwah* programmes broadcast on TV was made possible by the increase of private TV stations in Indonesia in the late 1990s. TV programmes become the centre of the attention in the number of hours spent on a daily basis by Indonesians (Heryanto 2008: 5). This study on TV and Islam is, therefore, significant to understand the complexity of its relation to social, economic, and political circumstances in regard with the diversity of Indonesia's Muslim population. In this study, I focus on commercial TV channels under the Association of Indonesian private TV or ATVSI in which most of private TV stations in the country are members. These commercial

TV channels cover most cities throughout Indonesia. As such, TVRI and community TV channels are not included in this study.

After the fall of Suharto, the owners of private TV stations, which consisted of RCTI, SCTV, ANTV, Indosiar, and TPI established ATVSI on 4th August 2000. ATVSI is an independent association of commercial TV channels to advance TV industry in Indonesia to bring together common interests and platforms based on ethics and responsibility of broadcast. The board of ATVSI are selected from commercial TV stations and, more recently, several other commercial TV stations have joined ATVSI, which include Metro TV, TV ONE, TRANS TV, TRANS 7, and Global TV. TPI has changed its names to MNC TV. The programmes broadcast by the members of ATVSI have many similarities in terms of format and design because to some extent they share similar ideas and agendas.¹² The broadcast of these TV stations covers many cities in the country. They are the most frequent to broadcast the programmes even though some are owned by non-Muslim corporations.

Based on geography and ownership, TV in Indonesia consists of three main categories: state-owned, commercial, and community TV channels. These three categories play central roles in the discussion of this book. The state-owned TV station, TVRI was the only national TV station prior to the reformation era. TVRI was established in 1962 and has branches in all of the provinces of Indonesia (TVRI, 1983). Since the establishment of TVRI, TV in Indonesia has experienced two phases. In the first phase, five commercial TV stations were established between 1990 to 1995, that were broadcast only in particular areas like in Jakarta and Surabaya (Kitley 2003: 93). These included Metro TV, TransTV, Lativi, Global TV, and TV-7. Metro TV is owned by Surya Paloh, a media entrepreneur associated with Media Indonesia, *Televisi Transformasi* (TransTV) is owned by Chairul Tanjung, a banker with Bank Mega, Lativi is owned by Abdul Latief, the *Pasar Raya* tycoon, the owner of TV-7 is the Gramedia Group, and Global TV is owned by Nasir Tamara (Kitley 2003: 105). The second phase happened after reformation when five new commercial TV stations were established between 2000 to 2002, which included *Rajawali Citra Televisi* (RCTI), *Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia* (TPI), *Surya Citra Televisi* (SCTV), *Andalas Televisi* (ANTV), and Indosiar.¹³ Some of these commercial TV stations extended

¹² For more information about ATVSI, see ATVSI “Asosiasi Televisi Swasta Indonesia [Private TV Association of Indonesia].” <http://atvsi.or.id/aboutus.php>. Last accessed, December 5, 2014.

¹³ For the ownership of these commercial TV channels, see Table 1.2. For further

their broadcast coverage and became accessible almost in all the provinces in Indonesia (Hollander, D’Haenens, & Bardoel 2009: 39–40). Like TVRI, commercial TV stations have branches in several provinces in the country.

The renewal of the Broadcasting Act 1996/1997 in 2002 introduced KPI, an independent regulatory body representing public interest (Hollander, D’Haenens, & Bardoel 2009). After the amendment 2002, the main aim of the KPI was to take over the authority of government to control, censor, and regulate the media in the country (Hollander, D’Haenens, & Bardoel 2009 and KPI 2013). However, Sudiby and Patria (2013) has stated that this authority was short-lived owing to the liberalisation of the Indonesian media which led to the nullification of the Broadcasting Act 2002 by the government and the broadcast media owners for their mutual benefits. The rights of the KPI were taken over by issuing the Governmental Regulations in 2005 allowing the reinstatement of Department of Information to oversee media ownership. This change has significantly affected the diversity of the content of the Indonesian media.

Although commercial TV stations, which were established before reformation, they only became successful in the reformation era. The Governmental Regulations of 2005 has made it possible for five major companies to own ten existing national commercial TV stations (see Table 1.2.).

Media groups	TV
Media Nusantara Citra (MNC) Trans Corp Bakrie and Brothers Group Surya Citra Media Media Group	RCTI, Global TV, MNC TV Trans TV, Trans7 ANTV, TV One SCTV, Indosiar Metro TV

Media Nusantara Citra (MNC) Media is a media company established by Hari Tanoesoedibjo in Jakarta in 1997. This corporation

discussion about the on air of commercial TV channels, see Khrisna Sen and David T. Hill. (2000). *Media, Culture, and Politics in Indonesia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 111 – 119.

¹⁴ This table has been adapted from Sudiby and Patria (2013: 267-270) which maps the ownership of Indonesian media companies by Indonesian conglomerates including TV and radio stations, print and online media.

includes radio, TV, newspapers with its nationwide outreach. Although the owner of the company is a Christian, commercial TVs under MNC media still broadcast a number of Islamic programmes including *dakwah*.¹⁵ Trans Corporation whose previous name was *Para Inti Investindo* is part of CT corporation owned by Chairul Tanjung, a former minister of several departments during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's (SBY's) presidency. Like Hari Tanoesoedibjo, his company operates in TV, radio, and newspapers in Indonesia.

The Bakrie and Brothers group is a large trade company established in 1942 and operates in many sectors including media, coal mining, palm oil plantation, and so forth. In addition to ANTV and TVOne, the Bakrie and Brothers group is involved in mass media business such as newspaper. Their central figure is Aburizal Bakrie, a former general chairman of *Golongan Karya* (Golkar) political party. He is a former minister of Economy and People Welfare during SBY's presidency.

Surya Citra Media is a media company which operates commercial TV shows and is also a screenplay production house. It was founded by Eddy Kusnadi Sariaatmadja in 1999. Last but not least, Media group is a media company established by Surya Paloh, a central figure of Golkar who lost to Aburizal Bakrie in Golkar general chairman election and then established his own party *Nasional Demokrat* (Nasdem).

These owners of TV stations control the programmes of their TVs including news, films, and *dakwah*. A TV programme in one of TV stations mentioned above can only be broadcast with the approval of the owners. The acquisitions of commercial TV channels from Suharto's family and their associates, not to mention the establishment of new commercial TV stations after reformation, have significantly influenced the increase of Islamic teachings broadcast in various forms of programmes including *dakwah*. TV programmes are determined by TV station officials and staff under the control of the owners who focus on income enhancement of the company and they use *dakwah* programmes as a market in which they can gain profit from advertisements, especially when the programmes are led by famous preachers such as Mama Dede and Yusuf Mansur.

Related studies

¹⁵ RCTI is the only station that broadcasts a Christian-focused programme on Sunday mornings.

The rise of programmes with Islamic content after the New Order era has attracted scholarly attention including ranging from reality shows, soap opera, films, talk shows and other forms (Arps and Heeren 2006, Kurnia 2009, Hoesterey and Clark 2012, Barkin 2014, and Ida 2009). *Dakwah* activities in general has been studied by several scholars such as Julian Millie through his extensive study on *dakwah* activities in West Java (Millie 2011 and 2017) and Akh. Muzakki's study on Friday sermons in Surabaya (Muzakki 2008). However, the analysis on *dakwah* on TV stations is absent from their studies. Julia Howell, however, has noticed the rise of *dakwah* on TV in post-Suharto regimes. In her study, Howell (2008) argues that *dakwah* programmes on TV were established to support the urban Sufism movement, which is generated by the rise of middle- and upper-class Muslims in Indonesia, which is evident in urban areas like Jakarta, Malang and others in the post-Suharto regimes.¹⁶ According to her findings, these programmes which propagated Islam on TV is part of that movement, in which Muslims seek to improve their faith and piety and develop their spirituality similar to its Egyptian counterpart. However, Howell limits her analysis on the contents of *dakwah* on TV and pay less attention to the account of commercial TV agendas in the programmes.

Other studies focus on specific TV popular preacher (Hoesterey 2016) or TV preachers and their narratives only (Burhani 2020) but neglect the importance of media technology. Hoesterey argues that Aa Gym's background plays an important role to develop his career as a preacher to the broadcast of his preaching on national private TV stations. Aa Gym is popular among Muslim communities in Bandung, West Java. With his awareness of the importance of media, he spread his propagation of Islam through magazines, books, comics, and radio under the management of MQ to raise his fame among the communities in Bandung. He also owns a modern boarding school, Darut Tauhid which has many sub-divisions including a tour package in the boarding school for his followers. Aa Gym has been able to attract followers from all over Indonesia after he became a TV preacher. He brands himself as a family and loving husband and successful businessperson

¹⁶ Urban Sufism is a phenomenon of Muslims' gathering in urban areas to recite verses and prayers together for the success of their lives led by well-known *ulama* (Muslim scholars). This gathering is mostly attended by Muslim middle and upper class in which they build network based on economic interests. For further discussion, see Julia Day Howell. 2008. "Modulations of Active Piety: Professors and Televangelists as Promoters of Indonesian 'Sufisme.'" In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, eds. Greg Fealy and Sally White, 40-61. Singapore: ISEAS.

(Farida 2009, Hoesterey 2008 and 2016 and Watson 2005). Burhani (2020) focuses his analysis on TV preachers' narratives about 'dark' lived experiences before they become preachers. He calls the transformation of the preachers' deeds from bad to good by becoming preachers as conversion which forms their religious authority. The background of Yusuf Mansur and Mamah Dedeh, two of the popular TV preachers in post-Suharto is misleading by identifying them not to have Islamic education background. He also overlooks the role of narratives in shaping religious authority, but neglect the important role of TV stations, producers, and distributions of the preachers' *dakwah*. This study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the process of selecting the preachers, the role of TV crews, the background of the preachers, the formats of the programmes, contents, discourses, and debates of *dakwah* programmes on national private TV stations.

Theoretical framework

The study in this book uses the concepts of commodification of Islam, remediation, religious authority, and audience to understand the trend of *dakwah* on TV in the post authoritarian Indonesia.

1. Dakwah on TV as a commodity

I will use Greg Fealy's definition of commodification of Islam as 'the commercialisation of Islam or the turning of faith and its symbols into a commodity capable of being bought and sold for profit' (Fealy 2008: 16-17). The intention of commercial TV industry to broadcast *dakwah* turns its activity into a 'commodity,' which, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is defined as something which (1) has the equality of being wanted or useful; (2) is 'an article of commerce' or 'object of trade' (Fealy 2008: 16). The broadcast of *dakwah* programmes, which are designed by the producers and their teams with creativity to compete with other programmes made by other TV channels, are offered or sold for profit to the sponsor or audiences for profit (Fealy 2008: 17). This process is considered as commodification of Islam.

We cannot neglect, however, religious motivation and intention of Muslims in the broadcast of *dakwah* on TV. It can be viewed as the continuation of what Smith-Hefner refers to as 'Islamic resurgence' which has happened since the 1970s (Smith-Hefner 2007). She witnessed the increase of visibility of Islamic symbols and practices in Yogyakarta during her eight months ethnographic fieldwork in between 1999 and 2003. *Dakwah*

programmes on TV is part of this trend. Islamic resurgence, in this book, is seen as the motivation and intention of Muslims to express their piety in public places to persuade others to follow their attitudes (*dakwah*). The result of this expression is contentious as discussed in Chapter 5 of this book.

2. Religious authority

The daily broadcasts of *dakwah* through popular TV shows provide a number of choices of preachers for Muslims in Indonesia. In Islam, preachers are considered as leaders of their communities. They lead prayers, give advice and guidance, and solve problems or give answers for questions from their communities. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Islamic leadership is open to every Muslim through routinely offering advice and interpretation of the Quran. Authority can be achieved through schools, media, and websites, and is not limited by gender. The openness of Islamic leadership produces diverse religious authorities which are contested among Muslims in Indonesia. In regards to preachers in the media, Bryan S. Turner in his article “Religious Authority and New Media” illustrates that:

Their authority is essentially the authority of a good teacher who comes to earn the respect of his students and followers because he offers what is regarded as sound advice on matters that have some spiritual import, such as diet, marriage, sexual behaviour, domestic management of the household or interaction with strangers. (Turner 2007: 119).

Although Turner’s focus of the study was religious authority on the internet, his concept of religious authority can also be used to analyse religious authority on TV. Criticising ‘Weber’s three forms of legitimacy (tradition, charisma, and legal rational norms of authority) in his *Economy and Society* (1968) [which] do not adequately describe the emerging norms of legitimacy in web-based system [and on TV]’, Turner (2007: 120) further defines religious authority in the contemporary Muslim world as one which is ‘local, popular, and customary’ within Muslim societies. The concept of customary is relevant to Weber’s (1968) ‘routinisation of charisma’ which means that authority can be conducted through repetitive forms of learning (Turner 2007: 118).

Authority is different from power, which is defined as ‘the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests’ (Weber 1964: 152). While power may make use of force and coercion,

authority emphasizes voluntary submission. The submission to religious authority, as Gaborieau (2010: 1) explains, is based on the ‘common values and rules of conduct’ between the two parties: those who hold authority and people who submit to it.

Weber’s definition of authority is, to some extent, in contradiction to that of Islamic authority in contemporary Indonesia. Before the reformation era, Islamic authority referred to Muslim scholars, such as leading figures of the NU, Muhammadiyah and the MUI, or religious teachers in Islamic boarding schools. The Islamisation and democratisation of Indonesia since reformation contribute to new emerging religious authorities. The proliferation of commercial TVs, which regularly broadcast the programmes of the propagation of Islam, provides a big impact on the formation of a religious authority and ideology in Indonesian public sphere. A preacher can reach recognition, popularity, and charisma through routine appearances and sermons through TV shows. In this respect, Turner advocates that:

New technologies have contradictory ideological effects. They provide alternative, deregulated, devolved and local opportunities for debate and discussion, and hence they make an indispensable contribution to a democratic civil society. The new media (such as internet and TV) are important politically and sociologically, because they have the unintended effect of corroding traditional forms of authority that are either based on oral transmission or print-based forms of textual learning that is linear, hierarchical, imitative, and repetitive (Turner 2007: 118).

The mushrooming of the preachers in the *dakwah* programmes on Indonesian TV has offered Muslim audiences in Indonesia choices of religious authority. In short, Muslim audiences do not have to come or ask questions to the MUI or Islamic boarding schools to ask for advice or answers about their religious matters because TV has provided the alternatives, which can easily be reached via telephone, electronic mail (email), and Internet. They can watch, listen, and interact with the preachers from their homes, offices, and other places either private or public.

The discussion of the media, Islam, and authority concentrates on the effects of information technology (such as TV). The role of media in shaping an emerging authority is critical because media interest of the market steers the preachers on TV to get as many audiences as possible from whom the media can benefit. As a result, the important character of preachers on TV is

their attractiveness, more than their insight into Islam. As Turner (2007: 119) suggests that ‘in the contemporary world (Indonesia), the traditional authority of the *imams* is often rejected and unqualified, but (Muslim) popular leaders (such as preachers on TV) feel confident to issue legal judgement’ (Turner 2007: 119).

In addition to Turner’s concept of religious authority, the performance of *dakwah* on television is also relevant to Kaptein’s concept of religious authority that the preachers in the programmes perform as Muslim scholars (*ulama*), who give their religious opinions based on their interpretations of Islamic sources (the Quran and Hadiths) to answer the questions delivered to them from their audiences (*mustafti*).¹⁷ According to Kaptein’s concepts, religious authority is not only related to fatwa, an opinion based on Islamic law concerning particular issues given by Muslim scholars or organisations (Kaptein 2004: 549), but also religious advices and recommendations from them (Kaptein 2004: 122).

3. Remediation: immediacy and hypermediacy

Most of the TV programme producers set up their programmes of *dakwah* live on TV stations. This is intended to provide the audiences real experience and ‘immediacy’ (Bolter and Grusin 1999). Moreover, some of them are broadcast in the historical sites that are relevant to Islam and the preachers talk about the importance of these sites for Muslims to make the audience as if they were there. This form of broadcast is recognised as ‘hypermediacy’ (Bolter and Grusin 1999). The two processes of mediation were acknowledged by Bolter and Grusin as ‘remediation’. It is a concept in the theory of media that appeared in the last decade of the twentieth century ‘because of the rapid development of new digital media and the nearly as rapid response by traditional media.’ (Bolter and Grusin 1999: 5). In respect of this study, remediation of *dakwah* programmes on TV provides efficacy, and authority by ‘repurposing’ older media forms such as printing and radio (Bolter and Grusin 1999: 68). It happens through delivering sermons and discussion in the programmes.

4. Audience as an agent

Audience of *dakwah* programmes on TV plays a vital role in the construction of religious authority in the society. The preachers attain their

¹⁷ *Mustafti* is understood as Muslims, who come to Muslim scholars to ask for fatwa, advice, or recommendation concerning socio-religious matters they encounter in their lives.

popularity among national audiences through the programmes. The audiences of *dakwah* programmes on TV can be passive and active. A passive audience just receives what they watch without argument or criticism, while active one make their stance to what they watch through their response or criticism (Kitley 2008: 208 and McQuail 1997). Before reformation, the government controlled TVRI. As mentioned above, the control over the TV station before reformation was to support the government agendas of nation building and promote *Pancasila*¹⁸ as the sole ideology in the country (Kitley 2008).

According to Kitley's findings, the attitude of TV audience has shifted from passive to active along with the socio-political change in the country after reformation (Kitley 2008: 208). This shift of audience's attitude is marked by their participation and commentaries on TV programmes, which in turn become public debate (Kitley 2008: 208). In post-authoritarian Indonesia, the forms of their participation vary from requests to protests against of a particular TV programme which frequently occur. In respect of *dakwah* programmes on TV, the audiences also involve in the commentaries and debates concerning the programmes in private and public sphere (discussed in details in Chapter 5).

To analyse the audience of the programmes of *dakwah* through TV in Indonesia, I use Webster's three basic models of audience in his article 'the audience' (1998). These three basic models of audience consist of *audience as mass*, *audience as outcome*, and *audience as agent*. Further Webster (1998: 191) states that 'occasionally, these basic models intersect, implying more complicated concepts of the audience'. Although Webster's three basic models are not specifically addressed to TV audience, they are relevant to analyse the programmes.

The concept of audience as mass describes that the study on TV media audience should emphasise what is watched and consumed by the audience including all its controversies regardless of their understanding of it.

Under this model, the audience is seen as a large collection of people scattered across time and space who act autonomously and have little or no immediate knowledge of one another. They are defined as an entity by their common exposure to media. Certainly, if we include research done by and for media industries, and the many

¹⁸ *Pancasila* is the official philosophical foundation of the state of the republic of Indonesian which consists of five principles; (1) belief in the one and only god, (2) just and civilized humanity, (3) the unity of Indonesia, (4) democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives, (5) social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia.

social institutions that have a stake in the audience, a case can be made that this is the "dominant model" of the audience. (Webster 1998: 192).

The production quality and style of TV programmes is more important than the content of TV programmes. Indonesian Muslim audience expect the programmes of the propagation of Islam through TV, which are not merely educating and guiding, but also entertaining them. The TV preachers, who are able to intermingle their preaching with humour likely have more followers than those who only deliver their ideas and advice about the teachings of Islam.

The second basic model is 'audience as outcome'. This model shows the power of media to influence people as their audience. Webster states that:

This way of thinking about the audience sees people as being acted upon by media. Typically, it reflects a concern about the power of media to produce detrimental effects on individuals, and by implication on society as a whole. Less frequently, it speaks to the pro-social potential of the media. When the action is taken for the audience's "own good" it has been referred to as an audience-as-public model. When the action is taken for some corporate purpose it has been labelled an audience-as-market model (Ang, 1991). Whether for good or ill, all such models position individuals in a fairly reactive role. (Webster 1998: 193).

As noted earlier that the programmes of *dakwah* through TV is an invitation, which is by implication a propaganda delivered by preachers to call for their audience to follow their advice. The concept of audience as outcome is, therefore, relevant to investigate the audience of the programmes, how the programmes influence audience's attitude in their lives.

In the last basic model, the audience is seen as having agency, which implies 'what media they will consume, bringing their own interpretive skills to the texts they encounter, making their own meanings, and generally using media to suit themselves' (Webster 1998: 194). Webster further asserts that:

Under this model, the audience acts upon the media, not vice versa. This way of thinking about the audience takes as its central concern the question "What do people do with media?" One should hasten to add that this positioning of the audience does not mean that people are free of outside influences. Proponents of this model typically recognize that audience actions are somehow determined by their social and cultural milieu. In fact, in many applications of

this model audience actions are deemed to be uninterpretable without reference to some broader structure. But in the interface between audience and media, it is the individual viewer who has the upper hand. Controlling this engagement is one way in which audiences are thought to exercise power. (Webster 1998: 193).

Given the fact that the programmes of *dakwah* on TV is numerous in the aftermath of authoritarian regime, the audience have space to choose what kind of the programmes they want or what kind of preachers they like on TV. Audience is the core of the production of the programmes of the propagation of Islam through TV. TV industries have an imagination of what kind of audience the programmes are provided for and what benefit they will receive by producing the programmes. On the other hand, audience has the liberty to choose what TV channels and programmes they are eager to watch during their leisure time. These facts, therefore, encourage TV industry to provide the programmes that can accommodate the interest of the audience.

Data collection

To look at texts and practices of the broadcast of *dakwah* through TV, I employ ethnography as an approach. This approach works to observe the whole process of the practices of the broadcasting, ranging from the production to the reception, and from the producers to the audiences. It includes structured interview, which I prepare before going to the field, and also unstructured interview based on my curiosity during the interview. I also visit traditional markets, cassette stores, bookstores, coffee shops, and *warung* (food stalls) where people eat and talks about their daily lives and watch TV while eating to capture the nuance of religiosity and understand the act of watching TV and what they watch. I also observe one family in each city to deeply understand the activity of watching *dakwah* on TV in the society. Islamic jurisprudence is used as a method to compare the criteria of preachers based on the teachings of Islam and producers.

The data are drawn from ethnographic notes combined with the written sources including books, periodicals, reports, pamphlets, Internet, and audio-visual materials such as recordings and videos. The investigation of the written sources serves to give additional and information in details related to the background of the broadcasting of *dakwah* on TV. The texts of *dakwah* on TV are approached as a social construction, by putting them into their social contexts. For these purposes, the database of *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (The Committee of Indonesia's Broadcasting or KPI) and the

recordings of *dakwah* programmes on TV, which are uploaded to YouTube are relevant. Ethnographic notes are analysed to construct the discourses related to the modes of production, circulation and responses concerning the broadcast of the propagation of Islam through TV.

Fieldwork was conducted in Jakarta, Medan, and Bali (Denpasar and Kuta) for one year from November 2014 to April 2015 and from May to October 2016. These three locations is hoped to provide a big picture of the audiences of *dakwah* programmes on TV. Jakarta is relevant because all private TV companies are located in the city of Jakarta. Besides, it pictures the audience from Java Island. In Jakarta, I investigated the background of the preachers, the production and the audience of the programmes by interviewing the preachers, producers, and some people, who watch the programmes. Medan is used as a case study from Sumatra. More importantly, the number of Muslims and non-Muslims are almost equal based on the census in 2015.¹⁹ It is intriguing to see how Muslims in Medan respond to the *dakwah* programmes on TV. I interview some people with various backgrounds from students, lecturers, to drivers of *Becak Montor* (taxi of motorcycles or Bentor). I lived with a lecturer's small family during my fieldwork in Medan. In Bali, Muslims live as minority among a Hindu majority. I investigated whether Muslims in Bali watch the programmes of *dakwah* by attending Muslim congregation in Denpasar and Kuta to know their activity and meet informants of this research. I live with and intensively interview the owner of Muslim travel, a tourism agent with special offer to visit *Wali* (Muslim saints), whose tombs are believed by some Muslims are in Bali, to know more about Muslims in Bali.

In-depth interviews and focus group discussion were conducted with preachers, producers, and members of the creative teams of *dakwah* programmes, audiences both live and at home with different backgrounds in terms of gender, occupation, age, and ethnicity. I also interview Muslim leaders and scholars from NU, Muhammadiyah, MUI to know their opinions about the broadcast of *dakwah* on TV.

Watching programmes of propagation of Islam on television is analysed based on social class and gender (Burke 2005: 68). During the fieldwork, I

¹⁹ For more information about Medan, see Badan Pusat Statistik. January 2017. "Luas Wilayah, Jumlah Penduduk, dan Kepadatan Penduduk menurut Kabupaten Kota di Sumatera Utara [Width of Areas and Population Density in accordance with Distict Cities in North Sumatera Province]." <https://medankota.bps.go.id/statictable/2017/01/18/87/luas-wilayah-jumlah-penduduk-dan-kepadatan-penduduk-menurut-kabupaten-kota-di-provinsi-sumatera-utara-2015.html>. Last accessed, April 18, 2018.

collected the data in three areas: Jakarta, Medan, and Bali in twelve months. I conducted ethnographic data collection based on Morley's insight that 'the basic unit of consumption of television should be the family/household rather than the individual viewer' (Morley 1992: 138, Gillespie 1995, and Nilan 2001: 85). Morley's statement is relevant to the case of watching programmes of *dakwah* because Muslims in Jakarta and Medan watched programmes of propagation of Islam with other Muslims, with members of their own household, neighbours, relatives, and friends in their houses, small restaurants, stalls and so forth. Most of the ethnographic data came from my observations in the houses of the respondents. I usually interviewed them and their family members soon after they watched a particular programme of propagation of Islam. I also conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 120 respondents. These respondents include those who attended the live programmes of propagation of Islam in the studio, mosques, and other shooting locations in Jakarta.

Structure of the dissertation

This book consists of six chapters including the introduction and conclusion. In Chapter 1 of this book, I discuss *dakwah* programmes on TV in the New Order period to understand the trend of *dakwah* activities in the society. I also elucidate the impact of the emergence of commercial TV stations in the twenty-first century to the proliferation of *dakwah* programmes on TV. Moreover, I discuss the institutions participate in the production and discourse of the broadcast of *dakwah* on TV.

Chapter 2 deals with the production of *dakwah* programmes on TV including the selection process of the preachers, themes and format. Afterwards, I analyse the process of remediation, and circulation of the programmes. These lead us to the findings how *dakwah* programmes on TV negotiated between commodity and piety and how charisma and leadership of TV preachers were shaped through the programmes.

Chapter 3 discuss the background of the preachers, who preached on private Indonesian TV channels. It includes their career, network, and affiliation to Muslim organisations, which are important to capture the shift of the categorisation of the preachers in *dakwah* programmes and beyond. I begin Chapter 3 with the terminology used to call the preachers in the programmes to shed light on the role they have to the audiences. Subsequently, I discuss the influences of TV and other media to make the preachers become celebrities for the audiences in the country. With their

popularity, some take their role in the political participation in the country with their social and economic capital.

Chapter 4 explores the contestation between Muslim organisations to dominate TV sphere with their ideology and political goals. In this chapter, this contestation is pictured by the protests against and debates about the programmes of the propagation of Islam on a particular private TV, which are organised by Salafi leaders and followers. They disseminated their Salafi ideology and political goals to persuade national audiences to follow and support their agendas. In some episodes, this dissemination anger other institutions. I analyse several events where the heated debates between Salafi and other Muslim organisations concerning several issues took place to discern the contestation.

Chapter 5 expounds watching practice of the audiences including their attitude and responses to the *dakwah* programmes through popular TV shows in Jakarta, Medan, and Bali. The findings of this chapter 1 indicate how *dakwah* programmes on TV provide alternative voices of Islam for the audiences, which result in the fragmentation of religious authorities and stimulate Islamic public discourses and debates.

Chapter 6 presents the findings to answer the questions raised in the dissertation.