

Journalism and “The Call to Allah”: Teaching Journalism in Indonesia’s Islamic Universities and State Institutes

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There are 18 Islamic universities and institutes in Indonesia, and each offers some sort of journalism education. These courses are not located in the social sciences, but rather in schools of *dakwah*, where they are seen as key elements of Islamic propagation. This article focuses on three aspects of journalism education in Islamic Indonesia: the vision and mission of *dakwah*, the curriculum and course content, and what happens to students upon graduation. It concludes with thoughts on the similarities and differences with what has been called “prophetic journalism” in the United States and a discussion of the overall goals of journalism in an Islamic context.

There are 18 state Islamic universities and institutes in Indonesia, and each of them offers some sort of journalism education.² Many graduates of these programs find work at newspapers and television stations throughout Indonesia, which is the world’s most populous Muslim nation.³ The basic curricula resemble those of journalism programs in the United States, with a combination of courses in theory and practice. Yet unlike the United States and other Western countries, in Indonesian state Islamic institutes

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² For a complete list, see the Indonesian Ministry of Religion’s website (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2012).

³ Approximately 86% of Indonesia’s population of 245,613,043 are Muslim (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

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and universities, courses in journalism and communication studies are located not in the social sciences or independent colleges but rather in faculties or schools of *dakwah*, where they are seen as key elements of Islamic propagation.⁴

Western scholars of journalism know very little about journalism education in Asia (Josephi, 2009, p. 53). Most discussions of journalism education in an international context assume both a Western model of journalistic professionalization and an inviolable relationship between journalism and democracy. Just as press freedom in different countries is rated on the "free, partly free, not free" scale popularized by Freedom House, journalism education is similarly assessed on a scale of how free or government-controlled a country's media system is. An exception to this is the "new cultural paradigm" proposed by de Burgh (2005), which rejects the development model and instead proposes to focus on the norms and values passed along in journalism education.

In Indonesia, university-level training for journalists is still relatively rare, and most learn on the job. Although reliable information is hard to come by, a 2001–2002 survey of 385 journalists from Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and North Sumatra found that one in nine had majored in journalism, 22% had completed tertiary studies in communication or a related field, and an additional 18.8% had completed some sort of professional training (Hanitzsch, 2005, p. 497). The same study found that many editors in chief expressed reluctance to hire graduates of university journalism or communication programs "because they found these students were not well-prepared for the real challenges of the profession" (p. 498).⁵

A study completed by the Center for International Media Assistance in 2007 confirmed these earlier findings and quoted the director of the Broadcast Center Department of Communication at the University of Indonesia as saying "Rich media organizations do their own training. . . . Their complaint is that students from the communications department or journalism school only know about the skill of communication, so they hire alumni from other areas" (Hume, 2007, p. 14).

My own experiences in teaching journalism in Indonesia support the conclusions of both of these studies: be it in public, private, general, or Islamic institutes of higher education, journalism training in Indonesia tends to focus on theory rather than practical skills. Yet even this familiar scholar-versus-practitioner way of thinking about journalism training (Deuze, 2006) ignores something fundamental

⁴ There are also 58 private universities in Indonesia that identify themselves as "Islamic." Examination of their websites showed that, of these, 25 could be identified as offering programs of study in journalism or communication studies. In 5 of these universities, journalism was offered in the *dakwah* faculty; in 11, it was offered in the social and political sciences; and in 6, communication studies stood as an independent faculty. It was situated in literature and humanities in 2 private Islamic universities and in 1 school of education.

⁵ It is possible that this pattern is changing. A 2011 Rockefeller Foundation report (Pintak & Franklin, 2011) cites conflicting findings from a 2009 survey of 600 Indonesian journalists in which two-thirds said they had studied journalism in university.

about journalism education in Indonesia: What is journalism training like in the context of Islam, let alone in the context of Islamic propagation or *dakwah*?⁶

In August 2011, which coincided with the fasting month of Ramadan, I did fieldwork at three Indonesian state Islamic institutes and universities: the Islamic State University (Universitas Islam Negara, or UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, and the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Ampel in Surabaya. In October 2012, I visited a fourth, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati in Bandung. My approach was an ethnographic one, involving formal and informal meetings with faculty, discussions with students, and, in two cases, guest lectures.

I chose these four universities because of their size, prestige, and location. There are six UIN in Indonesia, four of them located on the Island of Java. UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta is the biggest of all the Islamic universities; UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, located in Central Java, is the nation's oldest and the third largest. UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung is in West Java. IAIN Sunan Ampel is the largest of the state institutes for Islamic studies and is situated in Surabaya, the administrative center of East Java. It also aspires to be accredited as a state Islamic university.

At each university or institute, I began with a brief presentation to the full *dakwah* faculty, explaining my research into the values of journalism and the teachings of Islam. After the presentations, I conducted group discussions in which I asked questions about the curriculum and specific course offerings. In each discussion, I asked about how journalism is taught within the context of *dakwah* and whether (if at all) this differs from the way in which journalism is taught in a more general context.⁷ I followed up these group discussions with guided interviews with individual faculty members and students. At each university I asked for curricular materials, textbooks, and published information on course offerings. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian.

The results of these meetings and interviews suggest a way of understanding journalism that is entirely different from that commonly found in the United States. For the lecturers in the *dakwah* faculties, journalism is seen as one of many means of spreading Islam and of communicating truth to the people. As Yunan Yusuf, a well-known professor of *dakwah* at UIN Jakarta, explained,

⁶ I first became aware of the relationship between journalism and *dakwah* in April 2006, when I spent three days visiting the Faculty of *Dakwah* and Communication at IAIN Ar-Raniry in Banda Aceh and wrote a report for the International Center for Journalists. During that time, I examined the curriculum; interviewed students, faculty, and the dean; and visited a number of classes. Some of my analysis draws upon that visit as well.

⁷ I was careful to avoid the word *secular*. Mowlana (2003) has argued that, whereas religion in the West is seen as divorced from secular life, in Islam, "this separation of the religious from the secular sphere did not materialise, and if attempts were made by the late modernisers to do this, the process was never completed" (p. 309).

Islam is the difference, not only in symbols but also in context. When you add Islam to secular studies, they are accompanied by this difference, so when a person graduates and becomes a journalist, he will take an Islamic approach. (interview, August 24, 2011)

This study focuses on three aspects of journalism education in the context of Islamic Indonesia: the vision and mission of *dakwah*, the curriculum and actual course content, and what happens to students upon graduation. It concludes with some thoughts on the similarities and differences with what has been called "prophetic journalism" in the United States and a discussion of the overall goals of journalism in an Islamic context.

Journalism and Dakwah

Dakwah is the Indonesian term for the Islamic concept of the call or invitation to follow the path of Allah (Ilaihi & Hefni, 2007). A common way of translating *dakwah* is missionary work, or propagation of the faith. Like Harold Lasswell's famous model of communication, *dakwah* has five components: the *da'i*, or the person engaged in *dakwah*; the *mad'u*, or target audience; the channel of communication; the message; and the effect (Ilaihi, 2010). A Muslim preacher giving the Friday sermon in a mosque is engaged in *dakwah*; so is a televangelist. *Dakwah* can occur in a discussion or in a conversation between two friends. It can be verbal, but it can also occur by example, in the everyday activities of a Muslim who seeks to inspire others.

Dakwah is a fundamental activity of Indonesian state Islamic institutes and universities, all of which fall under the direction of the Ministry of Religion. More than a concept, *dakwah* is usually one of several faculties or schools.⁸ In these universities, the study of communication (*ilmu komunikasi*) takes place within the *dakwah* faculty, and journalism courses are taught under the umbrella of *dakwah*. To Indonesian practitioners of *dakwah*, the connection with journalism seems obvious and is, for the most part, unquestioned. As Arief Subhan, the dean of the *Dakwah* and Communication Studies Faculty at UIN Jakarta explained:

Communication is something close to *dakwah*; the meaning of *dakwah* is to give a message to non-Muslims. If you see our curriculum, you will see that nearly 75% is connected with communication. In addition there are Islamic values added in, so if what is studied by our students here is compared with the University of Indonesia, it is communication plus. (interview, August 24, 2011)

But what exactly is Islamic communication? The Islamic revivalism of the late 20th century has prompted some to argue for an Islamic theory of communication. Mowlana suggests that an "Islamic community paradigm" based on revelation rather than information infuses communication in Islamic countries (1993, p. 12). Khiabany takes issue with this view, warning against reductionism and observing

⁸ The others often include *Usul al-Din* [Islamic Theology], *Shariah* [Islamic Law], *Adab* [Arts and Humanities], and *Tarbiyah* [Education] (Meuleman, 2002, p. 284).

that many different kinds of media are consumed by a variety of Muslims in a wide range of countries that may or may not be majority Muslim (2006, pp. 5–7).

In my previous work on journalism and Islam, I have shown that Muslim journalists in Indonesia and Malaysia understand what are arguably universal concepts—truth, balance, verification, and independence—through a local idiom of Islam. When asked to explain the meaning of the work they do, even journalists who work for ostensibly secular news organizations such as *Tempo* magazine in Indonesia or the independent news portal *Malaysiakini* in Malaysia use the language of religion and draw upon stories and examples from either the Qur'an or the *hadits*—the sayings or actions of the prophet Mohammad and his companions (Steele, 2011).⁹

At the Indonesian newspaper *Republika*, which was established in 1993 to serve the Muslim community (Utomo, 2010), the connections between the values of good journalism and the teachings of Islam are made even more explicit. For example, Syahruddin, one of the newspaper's assistant managing editors, teaches new recruits the meaning of "Islamic journalism." In a handout on journalistic ethics and feature writing that includes a list of verses from the Qur'an that are relevant to the work of journalists, Syahruddin concludes that journalism is a "noble" profession and something that is "very much in keeping with Islamic values":

There are many other verses of both the *Qur'an* and the *hadith* of the Prophet that order the Islamic community to behave honestly, not to lie, to help those who are weak, not to take what doesn't belong to them, and other things like that.

Because of this, I believe that truly all writing that's done by journalists is work that is very Islamic. Whatever the media is—just as long as the writing doesn't spread lies, slander, sex, etc. (Syahruddin, 2010)

At the UIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, Saptoni, the head of the Department of Communication Studies of the *dakwah* faculty and an expert on *fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence, took pains to point out that graduates of Islamic institutes and universities such as his do more than simply justify their work in the language of Islam; they are inspired by it. Kalijaga said,

The material that they learn in class isn't just journalism, but also *Qur'an*, *hadits*, *fiqh*, etc. In practice, when they study journalism or when they go into the field and do practical work, what they have learned in class becomes an inspiration for them as they work. (interview, August 3, 2011)

⁹ Arabic terms and phrases such as *hadith* are spelled differently (*hadits*) in the Indonesian language. Although Indonesian transliteration is not always consistent, I am using the spelling that appears in the guide to courses offered by the Faculty of *Dakwah* and *Ilmu Komunikasi* at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung (Panduan, 2012), and that is generally used at the other universities and institutes as well. When quoting from a published text, I keep the original spelling.

At each of the universities and institutes I studied, faculty members have written small books for use in class, and many of these works make explicit the connection between journalism and Islam. One such book (Daulay, Rifa'I, & Musthofa, 2006), used at UIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta and simply titled *Jurnalistik*, defines the mission of Islamic journalism as news "with an important meaning" (p. 64). According to the authors, Islamic journalism has to be interesting, honest, and true. The facts must be credible and consistent with the mission of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, or inviting good and forbidding evil. For the authors, the mission could not be clearer: Islamic journalism should have the characteristics of Islamic teaching.

Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar is a key principle of both Islam and Islamic journalism, obliging Muslims to invite good and "forbid, whether in words, acts, or silent denunciation, any evil which they see being committed" (Kamali, 1998, p. 28). It is a phrase that came up over and over again in my discussions with lecturers at the Islamic universities and institutes as well as with their students and alumni. If the obligation to point out what is wrong is familiar to Western journalists, especially in watchdog journalism, the equal and opposite drive to invite good may be less so. H. M. Kolili, a lecturer of journalism at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, explained the obligation of Muslim journalists to "motivate" their readers and to lead by providing examples of "those who are good":

When we report on the Muslim people, is that we have to look for examples not only those who are bad, but also of those who are good, who have become successful, so they can become examples. With good examples, others will also want to become good. Journalistic principles and duties can't be separated from the values of the journalists themselves, because the journalists are going to influence, to motivate. (interview, August 2, 2011)

"*Amar ma'ruf* [inviting good] should be put in front of *nahi munkar* [forbidding evil]," Kolili concluded. "Right now there's a lot of *nahi munkar*. *Amar ma'ruf* there isn't."

Although U.S. critics often point to a lack of positive news in the news media (Weaver, 1994), what Kolili describes is something different.¹⁰ The idea that news stories should be motivational and propel people to "do what's good" is an indication of an entirely different understanding of the purpose of journalism. Sudaryono, an alumnus of Kolili's department who is now the chief of the Yogyakarta bureau of the Indosiar television network and a part-time instructor on the journalism faculty, explained that he uses his power as a journalist to be a "motivator" (interview, August, 2011).

According to Sudaryono, three concepts guide his work: he must be accurate, inspiring, and participative (or empathetic). Although accuracy is first—"we have to have accurate facts"—the second concept is related to being inspiring, or the quality of being like the prophet, which Sudaryono refers to as

¹⁰ Aristides Katoppo, the former chief editor of the Protestant afternoon daily *Sinar Harapan*, made a point about positive news in his paper that was different enough to be significant. He said that he tells his journalists, "every day there must be one story that's giving hope, or in every story there must be at least one sentence" (interview, October 8, 2011).

journalism *kenabian*, or literally “journalism of the prophet.”¹¹ “I have to give inspiration,” he says. “If I have the capability, I have to do this.” The final concept that Sudaryono adheres to is participation, which he characterizes as “having empathy towards victims.”

Using the example of the October 2010 eruption of Mt. Merapi, which killed more than 300 people and displaced hundreds of thousands, Sudaryono said that he helped take care of victims, establishing his own *posko* or command center. “I gathered money from my rich friends,” he said, “friends who could allocate aid.” Sudaryono’s preference for stories that demonstrate empathy with victims parallels earlier findings from a content analysis of nearly 25 years of the national section of *Tempo* magazine, which revealed a disproportionate number of stories with “victims” as the main actors (Steele, 2005). As Cook (2003) has suggested in his discussion of forbidding wrong in Islam, our anger at wrongdoers and our sympathy for victims “are two sides of the same emotional coin” (p. 165).

Course Content and the Curriculum

In many ways, journalism courses in the faculties of *dakwah* and communication studies at Indonesian Islamic universities and institutes are not unlike those offered in U.S. or other Western universities. At each of the institutions I examined, students are required to complete three sets of competencies: basic, primary, and elective.

At IAIN Sunan Ampel in Surabaya, for example, a student who wishes to major in either Islamic broadcasting and communication (KPI) or communication studies—both of which are situated in the *dakwah* faculty—must first complete 34 hours of required basic credits, including civic education, introduction to Islamic studies, Arabic, English, the study of the Qur'an, *hadits*, and Islamic law (*Panduan*, 2010). Those who wish to pursue a concentration in communication and Islamic broadcasting are then required to take 34 credit hours of primary courses in journalism, interpersonal communication, mass communication, communication media, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods, public relations, and communication theory. Thirty-one credits of electives include specializations in the rhetoric of *dakwah*, print media, or radio and television *dakwah*.

Students who choose to major in communication studies must take a set of primary courses in journalism and mass communication that parallel those required in KPI.¹² Their 31 credit hours of electives consist of courses in advertising, broadcasting, or public relations.

¹¹ An anonymous Indonesian journalist told Australian researcher Angela Romano (2003): “I do not wish to be a fierce watchdog. . . . I wish to be [like] the Prophet Muhammad and to spread a good agenda. Muhammad was not fierce” (as cited in Pintak & Setiyono, 2011, p. 187).

¹² These courses are journalism basics, methods of social research, communication theory, interpersonal communication, cross-cultural communication, political communication, Indonesian system of communication, mass media communication, comparative press systems, communication psychology, and communication sociology.

To an outsider, it is not immediately clear why the *dakwah* faculty would have two separate majors (Islamic broadcasting and communication and communication studies) that look so similar. As Wahidah, who lectures at IAIN Sunan Ampel in Surabaya, explained, "It's like this: communication studies is universal, whereas in Islamic broadcasting and communication they study communication for the purpose of *dakwah*, or to carry the people to God" (interview, August 8, 2011).

Indeed, as Wahidah points out, of the 84 primary credit hours required for a major in Islamic broadcasting and communication, nearly all of the courses that do not deal specifically with communication are related to Islam. These include courses in the philosophy of *dakwah*, the *hadits*, Islam and Javanese culture, the method of *dakwah*, comparative religions, research methods of *dakwah* communication, the history of *dakwah*, the history of Islamic civilizations, and Islamic jurisprudence. These courses do not appear in the communication studies program of study, although students are required to take the same basic courses as those majoring in KPI. As one of the communication faculty at IAIN Sunan Ampel summarized:

KPI is specifically connected with Islam; communication studies are more general. So a student picks one or the other. If a student takes KPI, his profession is to become a *da'i* who engages in *dakwah*. But his *dakwah* can come via different means, newspaper, print media, etc. It's like that. (group discussion, August 8, 2011)

Currently the communication studies program of study at the state Islamic institutes and universities parallels what is taught in the general curriculum of other Indonesian universities and thus falls under the direction of the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Religion. An effort to take this very popular major out of the *dakwah* faculties and place it in the schools of political and social sciences—to be more in line with the national curriculum requirements—has led to some dismay as well as confusion. "It's all connected with politics," Wahidah explained. As of now, she said,

many of the courses in the social sciences offered by the *dakwah* faculties are taught in order to understand how to do *dakwah*. If a general program of study is opened, it would be different. We are still struggling. There are a lot of interests here. (interview, August 8, 2011)

Over the past few years, when I have lectured at Islamic institutes and universities in Indonesia, I have been surprised by how familiar the course offerings were. In each case, the class readings, faculty research interests, and student *skripsi* (or theses) were quite similar to what we would see in journalism or communication studies programs in the United States. Thus, at each of the Islamic institutes and universities I visited, I asked about the specifics of how courses in journalism—reporting, editing, broadcast journalism, and so forth—were taught in the context of Islam. This question seemed to surprise many of the lecturers. After I rephrased it, asking how the teaching of journalism differed from how it would be taught in a "more general" context, my lack of understanding became clear: The material was the same—it's the students and the "atmosphere" that are different. As H. Enjang A.S, the head of the department of communication studies at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, explained, for his faculty,

"there is no difference between religious knowledge and universal knowledge" (interview, October 18, 2012).

Lecturers at the four Islamic institutes and universities I examined agreed as to why a majority of their students had chosen to matriculate at an Islamic university: the price. With tuition considerably lower than at the general universities, IAIN and UIN attract rural students who are often graduates of madrassas or Islamic boarding schools called *pesantren*. As Kolili, who teaches journalism at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, explained, "The students basically come from village families, from strong Muslim families. So at UIN what they will learn is in keeping with their family concerns. And besides that, UIN, our fees are cheaper" (interview, August 3, 2011).

When I asked UIN Sunan Kalijaga department head Saptoni if in his department journalism was specifically integrated with *dakwah*, he explained that "it's up to each student to see it actually." This is perhaps another reason why lecturers in the *dakwah* faculties don't find it incongruous to use books and materials from the West. As Saptoni emphasized, "there is no official text that says this class has to be like that. But discussions in class can emerge that way." Using an example of a class in *tafsir*, or interpretation of verses from the Qur'an, Saptoni said "verses about verification, about truth" could be analyzed,

[S]o that in an indirect way, our students will know directly the *ayat* [verses from the Qur'an] that are connected with journalism. . . . The point of our courses, *fiqih*, *tafsir*, *hadits*, isn't practical journalism, but rather to give to our students the manner of thinking, so that when they become journalists, *fiqih*, *tafsir*, etc. has already entered their thinking. (interview, August 3, 2011)

Despite the fact that most of the materials used in journalism classes in IAIN and UIN are Western in origin, it is clear from discussions with faculty and students that there are concerns that are unique to the study of journalism in a context of *dakwah*. Several of the texts used in class make this explicit; for example, the little book *Jurnalistik* (Daulay et al., 2006) mentions several lessons from the Prophet that a student of journalism should understand:

1. "Don't separate the *dakwah* of your words with the *dakwah* of your actions," or in other words, practice what you preach.
2. "Don't criticize the gods of other groups (non-Muslim)."
3. "Don't make any compromises in matters of religion." When you talk about your faith, there should be no compromise.
4. "Don't take payment [for your *dakwah*]."
5. "Don't engage in social discrimination" or differentiate between social groups.

6. "Don't take bad people as your friends."
7. "Don't report on anything of which you are uncertain" (pp. 64–65).

In previous work, I have analyzed key texts from the Qur'an and *hadits* that are often cited by Muslim journalists in Indonesia and Malaysia to explain the work they do. One is the idea that if you encounter a *fasiq*, or unreliable person bearing news, you should proceed with caution, because otherwise you might regret it. Another is the injunction that if you know only one verse of the Qur'an, you have an obligation to share it. In the *dakwah* faculties, I learned of another Islamic notion that is frequently cited as being important in journalism training, and this has to do with *qual*, or choice of words. Wahidah explained the importance of word choice in *dakwah* and its connection to journalism.

It's like this . . . *dakwah* says we should invite people to follow the road to God and with wisdom, and good discussion, and with advice that's good. How you approach a person depends on the person. . . . If it's an intellectual, we do it with discussion, maybe with regular people, we have to give strong motivation, maybe with young people or are a bit naughty [*nakal*], we do it with firm language. Therefore speak in keeping with their language. (interview, August 8, 2011)

Wahidah's colleague Wahyu Ilaihi has written a book on *dakwah* and communication (2010) and devotes an entire chapter to the importance of choosing the correct approach. Based on the injunction *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, to invite good and forbid evil, she explains the importance of approaching an individual with words that are "effective," "noble," "gentle," "easy to understand," "appropriate," "steady," and "true." For Wahyu Ilaihi, the parallels with journalism are clear: if the teachings of Islam are to be well received, you have to use the appropriate language.

Alumni Networks

As with journalism graduates everywhere, for alumni of Islamic institutes and universities in Indonesia, networking is important. Students get internships, and "if their performance is good, they are recruited by the institutions where they worked" (Wahyu, interview, August 8, 2011). Although numbers are hard to come by, *Republika* journalist Heri Ruslan, a graduate of the *dakwah* faculty at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati in Bandung, estimates that about 15–20% of graduates from his program of study find jobs in Indonesian news organizations (interview, August 23, 2011). Enjang, the chair of the UIN Bandung Communication Studies department, suggests a slightly higher figure of 30%, which also includes jobs in public relations (interview, October 18, 2012). Saptoni of UIN Yogyakarta estimates that about 10–15% of its graduates end up working as journalists (e-mail communication, October 11, 2012). Wahidah of IAIN Sunan Ampel in Surabaya reports that about 30% of alumni find jobs "in media," and about 10% work as journalists (text message, October 10, 2012).

Professor H. Moh. Ali Aziz, also of the Department of Communication and Islamic Broadcasting at IAIN Sunan Ampel in Surabaya, agrees with Wahidah that a significant number of graduates from his department find jobs in the national media, but points out an additional obstacle:

We have a list of our alumni who have already become national television reporters, and also in print media. Now those who work in national broadcasting have higher wages, and many of them like to have their faces on television. And from the aspect of quality, from the results of the [recruitment] test, they do well. But at several stations they don't want to receive our students because they wear *jilbab* [head scarves]. This becomes a problem. (interview, August 8, 2011)

Significantly, despite their grounding in Islam, most of the alumni of Islamic institutes and universities do not work for what might be called "Islamic media." In general terms, faculty and students at UIN and IAIN are resigned to what they see as a lack of "Islamic journalism" in Indonesia, with the Jakarta-based newspaper *Republika* being the exception that proves the rule. This comes up in general discussions of "materialism" and the overall Indonesian media landscape, as well in more practical talk of how students find jobs. The faculties of three of the four universities and institutes I studied were in agreement that in Indonesia you can't have a commercially viable Islamic newspaper. Saptoni, the head of the Department of Communication Studies at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, was especially eloquent on this point:

Why didn't an Islamic press develop in Indonesia? The reasons are that the Indonesian people want [news that is] more open, more vulgar, and that satisfies their appetite for information. And this cannot be done by an Islamic press. . . . An Islamic press cannot touch on all topics. And there are some things that cannot be published. Topics [such as sexual impropriety] cannot be published or discussed endlessly until there is proof. Thus publication of information by an Islamic press would be slower, not as deep. Meanwhile, it can be done by other media that doesn't need to implement Islamic theory. Second, [there is the issue of] advertising. Money is very important. The Islamic press doesn't have strong financial support. (interview, August 2, 2011)

In discussions of the difficulty of establishing Islamic media in Indonesia, one name that comes up repeatedly is that of Dahlan Iskan, the brilliant media entrepreneur and CEO of the Jawa Pos Group. A former *Tempo* journalist, Dahlan was born in Magetan, East Java. He studied at the Islamic boarding school Pesantren Sabilil Muttaqien and graduated from IAIN Sunan Ampel with a law degree. In 1982, Dahlan bought the *Jawa Pos* and in five years increased its circulation from 6,000 to 300,000 (*Jawa Pos*, 2012). His media network consists of more than 150 local newspapers, magazines, and television stations, including several Islamic ones that often hire graduates of Islamic institutes and universities. As Professor Aziz of IAIN Sunan Ampel said,

In print media, at the *Jawa Pos*, there are many [of our alumni], and their performance has been very high. In the Jawa Pos Group, *Nurani* [a "Muslim family tabloid"] has

maybe 90% of our alumni. There is also *Bangsa* [a "nationalist religious" daily], which is nearly all of our students." (interview, August 8, 2011)

Of course the fact that the Jawa Pos Group is owned by a Muslim doesn't make it "Islamic media." Dhimam Abror, a one-time editor of the *Jawa Pos*, confirmed that Dahlan has been a great friend to the graduates of IAIN Sunan Ampel, employing many of them at his Jawa Pos Group. "Here in Surabaya," he said, "there are a lot of journalists, good journalists, who graduated from IAIN. In my generation, a lot graduated from IAIN." Dhimam went on to say, however, that "they are wrong" to portray Dahlan as someone "who had a mission to have an Islamic newspaper" (interview, August 8, 2011).

"At the very beginning of the *Jawa Pos*, Dahlan identified himself with Muslim society," he added, "but he is just a businessman, so they are wrong."

Saptoni of UIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta agreed, saying:

Dahlan is a religious person, but his media is not Islamic. There is a paradox in Indonesia, where the Indonesian people are Islamic and religious, but Islamic media hasn't developed. So if Dahlan Iskan tries to develop Islamic media, I am pretty pessimistic that he will be successful. (interview, August 3, 2011)

Regardless of the ambivalence of many toward Dahlan Iskan, the Jawa Pos Group does hire a number of alumni of IAIN and UIN. Heri Ruslan of *Republika* newspaper explained,

There are many from UIN Bandung who work for the Jawa Pos Group in the local *Radar* newspapers. They come from the *kampung* [villages] and, after graduating, go back to the *kampung* and work, for example, at *Radar Sukabumi*, *Radar Bogor*, *Radar Priyangan*, etc. Therefore they go back to the region and become journalists for local media. (interview, August 23, 2011)

One reason the alumni of Islamic institutes and universities end up at local media owned by the Jawa Pos Group is the strength of alumni networks, which in many cases build on established networks of alumni among *pesantren*, or Islamic boarding schools (Dhofier, 1999). Yet Heri alluded to another reason for the fact that so many alumni end up at smaller, local papers: the "limited facilities" and lack of practical training at the Islamic universities and institutes. Although Heri says that he personally overcame this lack of practical training by joining any workshops or short courses he could find, this was on his own initiative. For the others, it was harder. As he said,

For many of the graduates of UIN Bandung, their quality is still low. They have trouble finding jobs . . . they generally come from villages in West Java; they come to study with qualifications that aren't too great. Then with facilities that are minimal, no laboratory, too little practical training, teachers that are not so good . . . maybe a lot of

the alumni of the IAIN journalism programs don't find work in the media, or only work whenever they can, also because of these factors. The quality isn't good.

Gun Gun Heryanto, a young lecturer at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta who is working on a doctorate in political communication at the prestigious University of Padjajaran in Bandung, said something similar, pointing out that among the 120 lecturers on the *dakwah* faculty at UIN Jakarta, only about 10% have any background in journalism or communication at all. Thus, "the capacity of the teachers is different," he said, along with the social and cultural backgrounds of the students. Upon graduating from the University of Indonesia in 2001, Gun Gun himself worked at *Radar Depok*, a local paper owned by the Jawa Pos Group. Because he had one of the strongest educational backgrounds, he was given the job of straightening out several rubrics at the paper. "After that," he said, "I was put in charge of revising and handling all the *Radar* papers. Because they were local papers, the competition wasn't too strong" (interview, August 24, 2011).

Significantly, Heri Ruslan is the only graduate from any of the state Islamic universities or institutes on the staff at *Republika* newspaper. Even at Indonesia's one mainstream daily established with a mission to serve the Muslim community, there is still a perception that graduates of the Islamic universities and institutes are weaker in terms of academic background and preparation.

Comment on Islam, *Dakwah*, and Prophetic Journalism

Although both communication studies and Islamic broadcasting and communication seem at the moment to be firmly rooted in the faculties of *dakwah*, this fact is not without contestation. As previously mentioned, there is an effort at several of the Islamic institutes and universities to move communication studies out of the *dakwah* faculties and into the schools of social and political science, presumably to make it more in keeping with the course of study offered at the state universities such as the University of Indonesia and the University of Padjajaran.¹³ Even now, the curriculum requirements parallel those of these other programs and are governed by guidelines from the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Religion. Although faculty at the schools of *dakwah* I studied insisted that the connection between *dakwah* and communication is both natural and obvious, one might also see the number of books they publish on the topic as an *apologia*, or defense of the status quo. As Gun Gun Heryanto, a representative of the younger generation of lecturers with non-Islamic educations, said:

In our *dakwah* faculty there are professional preachers; [they] go from one mosque to another. There is another group, usually the younger group, they are from a new profession, and they wanted to leave the *dakwah* faculty. Because in the past, *dakwah* was seen as Islamic studies, and the study of broadcasting Islam was seen in the

¹³ It is entirely possible that this initiative stems from a desire to parallel the structure and organization of departments of journalism and communication studies in the West. Initiatives such as the U.S.-Indonesia Joint Council on Higher Education Partnership have drawn attention to the location of these departments in schools of *dakwah*.

context of *tabligh* [spreading the faith]. And now there is a new generation [that focuses on] communication studies. So up until now there is a split like that between communication studies and *dakwah*. (interview, August 24, 2011)

Confessing that "yes, I am included in the group that wanted to move communication studies to the school of social and political sciences," Gun Gun added that, for now, at least, the decision to keep communication studies in the *dakwah* faculty was final. Islamic broadcasting is one of the biggest departments in the *dakwah* faculty, and its loss would be significant. As departments of communication studies in the United States often handle cultural differences between the scholars and practitioners, or even differing academic traditions such as political science versus mass communication, in Indonesian institutes of Islamic studies, there are divisions not only between the scholars and the largely part-time faculty who teach skills courses but also between the missionaries and those who teach communication studies. "We are now in a process of integration," Gun Gun said, "but this integration is very difficult because of the issue of backgrounds. It is a problem."

Just how unique is the situation in Indonesia, where journalism is seen as being related to *dakwah* or the propagation of the faith? Are there parallels with what has been called "prophetic journalism" in the United States? Several of the working journalists with whom I spoke mentioned their goal of *jurnalisme kenabian*, which translates as journalism of the prophet. Doug Underwood (2002) has also described what he calls prophetic journalism, or U.S. reporting that draws upon the Hebrew prophetic tradition of protesting injustice and rooting out corruption. Apparent in the classic adage by 19th-century U.S. journalist Finley Peter Dunne that the proper journalist is someone who "comforts the afflicted [and] afflicts the comfortable," the "journalism of outrage" is especially obvious in the investigative reporting of the Progressive Era. Yet as Underwood found, many contemporary U.S. journalists who are quick to describe themselves as secular will endorse religious values when they are couched in the language of journalism—such as the Dunne quotation—rather than in the language of the Bible.

There are indeed some similarities between the *jurnalisme kenabian* of Indonesia and prophetic journalism in the United States, but there are key differences as well. In both there is an emphasis on justice and on the corrupting influence of materialism. However, in the American use of the term, prophetic is taken to mean jeremiad or the telling of "hard truths about the condition of . . . society," as well as the warning of dire consequences to those who do not take heed (Underwood, 2002, p. 22). In Indonesia, *jurnalisme kenabian* is understood more in aspirational terms, or as being the kind of journalist who is "like" the Prophet Mohammad. As *Republika* editor Priyantono Oemar said,

We try to develop prophetic journalism, journalism of the prophet. The Prophet Mohammad himself had several qualities that can be adopted and practiced in journalism. You want to give something that is true and honest, and give it in an intelligent manner. This is also what we can implement. (interview, August 23, 2011)

As Underwood has suggested, investigative journalism in the United States draws upon a prophetic tradition, yet American journalists shy away from declarations of faith. In Indonesia, most journalists are Muslims and have no objections to being identified as such.¹⁴

Conclusion: "We Are All *Da'i* Here"

Although the number of graduates of Indonesian state Islamic institutes and universities who find jobs in journalism may be relatively small, the numbers are deceptive. The *dakwah* faculties make explicit something that most Muslim journalists in Indonesia take for granted—that the values of journalism and the teachings of Islam are the same. In the words of Arys Hilman, the deputy chief editor of *Republika* newspaper,

This is where Islam is universal: justice, truth, these are teachings of Islam. We as journalists have to explain, if you are Islamic, you have to be anticorruption, you also have to be clean. If the government practices corruption, it has to be wiped out. This is also a teaching of Islam. (interview, May 11, 2012)

Perhaps Subagio Budi Parjitno, a lecturer in the department of communication studies at UIN Bandung, put it best when he told me, "We are all *da'i* here" (interview, October 18, 2012). By explaining that "we are all engaged in *dakwah*," Budi meant that, for Muslims, everything one says and does is a means of sharing the message of Islam. Thus, the lessons taught by the *dakwah* faculties at Indonesia's Islamic universities and institutes are relevant not only for the aspiring journalists who study there but for all Muslims. Muslim journalists should always be mindful of sharing the truth and of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, or inviting good and forbidding evil, regardless of whether they work for Muslim media. In the words of *Republika*'s managing editor, Elba Damhuri:

We as Muslim people don't always understand media. I believe that all media can be Islamic if they guard the code of ethics of journalism. Because Islam is something that isn't only in the sky, it is in our life. If I give money to someone who needs it, that's Islamic; when I give work to my friend who is unemployed, that is Islamic. . . . So everything we do is Islamic. This is our vision, that when we do something that is good, this is Islamic. (interview, June 5, 2012)

Whereas perhaps not all journalists are as conscious of the obligation to invite good and forbid evil as are *Republika* journalists and students of *dakwah* at Indonesia's Islamic universities and institutes, it is nevertheless a fundamental aspect of journalism in Indonesia, Malaysia, and probably other majority

¹⁴ In an important 2011 survey of 600 Indonesian journalists, 85% of the respondents said they were Muslim. About half of these identified themselves as "religious" Muslims, while 22% described themselves as secular (Pintak & Setiyono, 2011, p. 191).

Muslim countries as well.¹⁵ For Western policy makers who seek to engage with journalists in majority Muslim countries, an understanding of how the norms and values of journalism are taught within the context and culture of Islam is essential.

¹⁵ Impressionistic evidence drawn from the author's lectures and meetings with groups of Muslim journalists and journalism students in Sudan and Egypt in 2010 and 2012 supports this conclusion.

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