

Regional Preaching Scenes and Islamism: A Bandung Case Study

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Abstract

This chapter is based on the author's ongoing research into Islamic oratory in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. It examines how repetitive uses of civic infrastructure by specific interest groups for the holding of preaching events reveal formations described as 'preaching scenes'. These are differentiated by their distinctive treatments of difference in ideological and cultural variables. The chapter examines one scene, described as the 'establishment scene'. This utilises civic infrastructure, and is motored primarily by the provincial and municipal governments, which have an interest in promoting preaching events in Bandung. In particular, the paper examines how this scene, which generally aims at a broadly acceptable template of Islamic identity, has come to include a 'hardline' Islamist, Lurus Haqan, as a key orator. The conclusions have relevance for contemporary discussions of the formation of a public Islamic sphere in Indonesia, and enhance our knowledge of the relationships between radical Islamist contributors to this sphere and regional governments on the other.

Introduction

Like many cities in the Republic of Indonesia, Bandung is busy with preaching. Its citizens listen to sermons in mosques during the Friday congregational prayer, but will also hear them in less sacred locations, such as workplaces and celebrations of life-cycle events, especially weddings and circumcisions. These oratories are provided by a class of religious specialists who make a living from this activity. They are known in Indonesia by the Arabic-derived terms *muballigh* (literally: informer or messenger) or *dai* (literally: one who invites). As part of an ongoing research project into Islamic preaching in Bandung, I recently spent six months travelling with Bandung's *muballigh* and *dai* as they fulfilled invitations to give sermons.

In this research, I have had to confront the shaping effect exerted on preaching by the complex metropolitan environment of Bandung, a city of approximately three million people, of whom more than ninety per cent are Muslims. The recent rise in Islam in Indonesia's public sphere has increased the value of preachers for religious and non-religious actors and interests. In turn, this has increased the resources made available for the giving of sermons, and also positioned preachers as players of influence in

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diverse commercial, political and ideological activities. Because of this, Bandung's preaching spaces reflect the many possibilities for social variation typically found within a modern metropolis. Preaching fashions itself around these possibilities, taking shape in varying styles, cultural forms and ideological orientations that respond to the diversity of the urban environment. The preaching taking place within them, therefore, is not uniform, so we cannot generalise about Islamic preaching in Bandung, but need to approach it as the simultaneous conduct of a number of contrasting preaching projects.

In this chapter I consider the logic underlying the ways in which Islamic preaching shapes itself around the social diversity of urban environments. I use the concept of the 'scene' as a tool for plotting this logic, and explore one of Bandung's most significant preaching scenes by discussing a 'hardline' Islamist preacher, referred to in this chapter as Lurus Haqan. In the concluding discussion, I locate the chapter in a broader discussion about politics and Islam at regional level in contemporary Indonesia.

Preachers and alliances

The interweaving of preaching with diverse interests can be illustrated by my experiences in the early stages of fieldwork. I opened my field research by quickly establishing the names of the most popular preachers in Bandung, and sought introductions to some of these. I travelled with them as they performed their engagements. While doing this, I was constantly reading the Bandung media, including newspapers, specialist Islamic publications and mosque newsletters. These media frequently carried writings in the names of the same popular preachers who were assisting me in my research. It did not take long to realise that these writings were not the product of an authorial process in which an original text is created by the preacher as a sovereign, individual author: it was impossible for these very busy celebrities to produce so many pieces of writing. The process became clearer when I started to meet students who were employed as writers in the media just mentioned. These students were engaged by ideological or commercial interests that owned, produced or sponsored the media in which the writings appeared. Their task was to attend a sermon by a name orator and make a sound-recording of it. This would be

transcribed and prepared – in edited form – as an article, published under the name of the orator. The writer sometimes consulted with the celebrity preacher as part of the process, but not always. To my knowledge, the decorum of this system does not demand the preacher be given a chance to read the piece before publication, and I also believe that where the smaller media are concerned, the preacher is not remunerated for his ‘work’.²

Over the following months, the logic in this pattern of preaching, transcribing, publication and dissemination emerged. It is based on alliances between the preachers and other interests. An example of such an interest is Bandung’s largest private *zakat* (alms) organisation, which was established in Indonesia in 1993. It was formed by journalists concerned to improve the efficiency of the obligatory alms payment as a response to Indonesia’s poverty problems (*Highlight...*). It establishes its infrastructure in regional cities by collaborating with well-known preachers. These preachers, all of whom support the goals of the organisation, become its ‘public profile’. The *zakat* organisation benefits from having these well-known figures as its public faces.

I travelled with a preacher who was involved with the *zakat* organisation in the way just described. His name and face appear prominently in its publicity. His sermons appear in edited form in an Islamic broadsheet supported by the organisation. He probably does not receive any meaningful direct financial benefit from his involvement, seeing it as part of his *dakwah* vocation. Nevertheless, he does benefit from the media coverage and publicity the *zakat* organisation creates through its well-funded media strategies. The preacher has his own business interests, notably a *hajj* (pilgrimage) travel company of which he is a part-owner, and this benefits from the support his public profile receives from his involvement with the *zakat* fund. A major selling point of the travel agency is that this well-known preacher is the ‘trainer’ for

² Nevertheless, it is not the case that publication occurs without some prior relationship existing between the preacher and the publisher. In most cases, the publisher and preacher share common interests and are known to each other from previous shared experiences.

its clients, so enhancement of his celebrity through any means enhances the competitive capacity of the travel agency.³

The preacher's high level of public identification is a commodity which makes him an attractive partner for alliances such as that with the *zakat* fund. Alliances of this kind, which are not limited to commercial interests but extend also to ideological and political interests, are the building blocks for the formation of Bandung's preaching 'scenes'.

Preaching 'scenes'

The 'scene' is a way of understanding how diverse social spaces create ongoing clusters of cultural activity in metropolitan environments. The term was developed by music scholars in response to the inadequacy of the idea of the 'musical community'.⁴ The musical community '...presumes a population group whose composition is relatively stable – according to a wide range of sociological variables – and whose involvement in music takes the form of an ongoing exploration of one or more musical idioms said to be rooted within a geographically specific historical heritage.' (Straw, 1991:84). This term was and is still useful when applied to specific geographical locations tied to a particular musical form by a perception of the authenticity of that connection. Yet the myriad ways in which metropolitan communities practice and enjoy a wide range of musical activities cannot be understood through such a lens: 'A musical scene, in contrast, is that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization' (Straw, 1991:84).

Here we have a different way of looking at the nexus between place and cultural practice. A musical community is understood as a continuity between place and musical style. In contrast, scenes imply specific coexistences of styles, and their

³ Before participating in the Islamic observance of pilgrimage, participants are required to attend a number of training sessions, which are usually provided by the tour company engaged by the prospective pilgrim.

⁴ I have relied here on Straw's conceptualisation of scenes (1991). For a recent, scenes-based musicological analysis of an Indonesian music culture, see Baulch (2008).

dynamic property lies in the ways in which they differentiate and/or form alliances and cross-fertilisations.

This provides a useful frame for approach preaching in Bandung. We could consider Bandung as an 'Islamic community', in which an undifferentiated populace take part in preaching events as a form of Islamic participation. But as noted above, many organisations and individuals in Bandung are motivated to produce preaching events on an ongoing basis, and they do so in diverse settings in response to varying motivations, not all of them religious.

Against this diversity, the various scenes produce contrasting negotiations of difference in Islamic viewpoint and orientation. Preachers, for their part, generally wish to appear before as broad an audience as possible, but are sometimes required to make decisions that involve differentiating between audiences. Some speakers remain loyal to ideological positions that limit them to certain settings, while others are more flexible. For example, one informant/preacher is known to belong to the modernist mass organisation Muhammadiyah. Nevertheless, he is often invited to appear before non-Muhammadiyah audiences, as the inviters know from experience that he does not insist on presenting a strict Muhammadiyah dogmatic line. His 'Muhammadiyahness' remains offstage (except in its most general, non-confrontational meanings). For him to do otherwise would cause discomfort to audience members not sympathetic to the Muhammadiyah program. This preacher employs his knowledge of the diverse audiences of the city, and this determines his message and style.

By contrast, other preachers (including some Muhammadiyah *muballigh*) are unwilling or unable to make this differentiation, and as such are only invited to appear before audiences forming within the membership of a specific segment. This kind of scene can be exclusive in the range of Islamic positions it accommodates.

In this way, many preaching events are products of alliances between preachers and interests that are created on the back of the preacher's ability and willingness to differentiate. These alliances tend to be repeated in ongoing fashion, revealing patterns through utilisation of the same or similar infrastructure (premises, media, networks). I call these repetitions 'preaching scenes'.

Whereas the process of differentiation and coexistence in music scenes is played out in borders or fusions between musical styles, in preaching scenes differentiation is seen in the position the preacher takes amid the myriad of Islamic positions taken by Bandung's Muslims. The *pesantren* (religious school) scene is an example of a distinct way of dealing with difference. The preachers of this scene are mainly *pesantren* leaders (Sundanese: *ajengan*, Indonesian: *kiai*) who repeatedly invite each other to give sermons within the *pesantren* infrastructure controlled by them. These people support and struggle for the common goals, conventions and aspirations of the *pesantren* environment.⁵ In this environment, the *kiai/ajengan* class possesses unequivocal authority in religion, and for this reason preachers are able to deliver strong, clear messages about propriety in belief and worship practice. These messages are not welcome in other social environments where the conventional authority of the *kiai/ajengan* class is not recognised.

Accordingly, the *pesantren* scene is one in which the danger of difference is averted by forming alliances within the social environment of the *pesantren*. The end result is that the strength of the *pesantren* ethic is preserved within its own infrastructure.

Although my use of the 'scene' as a conceptual tool for approaching urban preaching may be novel, I believe other research indicates its widespread suitability. Mona Abaza has written of Jakartan *dakwah* (propagation, predication) networks with full attention to the commercial, ideological, ethnic and political nuances that distinguish these networks from others in that metropolis (Abaza 2004). Lies Marcoes' analysis of women's study group networks in Bogor and Sukabumi portrays a preaching scene in which the concerns and preferences of female participants become bases for a *dakwah* project excluding participation by males (Marcoes 1988). The regional preachers described by Mazmur Sya'roni and Andi Bahrudin Malik (2003) follow the structure of the scene forming the subject matter of this chapter: the establishment scene.

⁵ Because the *pesantren* education system is constantly adjusting itself to the goals and aspirations of the civil system, this paragraph needs to be qualified. There are *pesantren* in West Java in which the emphasis on the interests of the *kiai/ajengan* class occurs simultaneously with an outward-looking education ethic that engages with the broader dynamics of Indonesian society. Nevertheless, significant segments of this education sector focus their activities and communications solely within the *pesantren* networks. The range of positions is summarised by Azyumardi Azra and Jamhari (2006: 12-16).

Bandung's 'establishment scene'

A preaching scene appears when stakeholders form alliances with preachers and repeatedly use specific infrastructure (venues, communication channels, audiences) for the holding of preaching events. The stakeholders of Bandung's establishment scene are the controllers of the city's civic and bureaucratic spaces, along with the private interests dependent on them. The city (*kota*) level government is the primary actor responsible for organising these preaching events.⁶ The state utilities and educational institutions owned and managed by it, for example, are instructed to provide preaching events for their employees. Business interests reliant on the *kota* government are also stakeholders in the establishment scene, often holding gatherings on religious feast days to which their partners in government are invited. The alms fund described above plays this kind of role in the establishment scene.

The scene's infrastructure is most often civic space. Its preaching events take place in public or semi-public venues such as educational institutions, utilities and the residences of office-bearers. I travelled with an establishment *muballigh* who in one day gave sermons in the Municipal Water Board, in a state-owned technical college, and in the regional television studio (the last of these was a live broadcast). This was a typical day for this *muballigh*.

Establishment scene preaching events also take place in more private venues, such as the premises of large private companies wishing to reaffirm and strengthen their relationships with government. I accompanied, for example, an establishment preacher engaged to give a short sermon at a 'breaking of the fast' organised during the fasting month by a large bank. Senior officials of the bank and local government officials were present. The fasting month typically brings many such engagements for establishment preachers.

⁶ The *kota/kabupaten* tier of government is the third in Indonesia's governmental structure, beneath the national and provincial levels. It has been the beneficiary of a significant increase in power and influence in Indonesia's recent decentralisation program.

The establishment scene is well-funded because the stakeholders bring resources to the events. The city reserves some funds for these activities, as do the private interests for whom celebration of religious events is an opportunity to reach out to their government contacts. With such resources, the scene generates considerable publicity. The celebrity factor enhances this publicity: some of the establishment scene's events bring together high profile people such as elected leaders, name preachers and business people, and the media transform these meetings into 'news'.

The establishment scene has its characteristic way of dealing with difference, which can be understood as a response to the nature of its audiences. The establishment scene utilises civic infrastructure, so its audience is made of people in their civil identities. They attend as subjects of civic contexts, as students, teachers, employees, prisoners and so on. This audience is highly mixed in its ideological perspectives. The workforce of the Bandung Water Board, for example, includes people of many ideological streams within the Islamic community. When attending in their civil identities, the members of the workforce leave behind their specific Islamic positions.

The preachers also have their 'homes' elsewhere in Bandung's diverse community. They have other audiences with whom they share quite specific Islamic orientations. When preaching to these other audiences, the preacher addresses an audience united by a homogeneous ideological outlook. When preaching in civic contexts, however, he or she must search for common ground. They must leave their own ideological preferences 'off-stage', realising that the audience will not agree to the specific preference of one constituency being elevated over their own. Like the subjects of Robert Bellah's 'political society' (Bellah 1970:170), in the civic contexts of Bandung, followers of all Islamic denominations are equally entitled to participate as citizens, so establishment preachers produce an Islamic text that avoids division, typically concentrating on the individual selves of audience members as the locus of improvement, not on the individuals as members of the many groups which fragment Indonesian Islamic society. Preachers not willing to make this accommodation, and these preachers certainly exist in Bandung, are not invited to be part of the establishment scene.

This is the distinct way the establishment scene deals with difference. The preachers transform the threat of difference into something acceptable to everyone, flattening out diversity in the process. The ideological profile of the establishment scene is amorphous; it avoids taking on any distinct shape.

The alliances that enable establishment preaching events are threaded through with political considerations. Like governments throughout the Islamic world, the Islamic revival compelled Bandung's *kota* government to expand its religious programs to meet increased public demand for an Islamic ethical public sphere. Supporting *dakwah* programs is a way of doing this. High-profile preachers are valuable in this endeavour, for Bandung's populace generally understand religious leaders as people of learning and commitment. On top of this, a number of these leaders have become regional celebrities, and the respect these figures generate in the community is of great value to the city level government, which hopes to obtain Islamic credibility from alliances with them. It suits the city government to 'share the stage' with such people. Furthermore, it organises the scene so that it includes preachers from a wide variety of Islamic orientations, allowing the government to send positive messages to followers of all these orientations.

The preachers themselves tread a fine line in these alliances. The *kota* officials represent political parties, and are chosen by democratic election. Establishment preachers, however, repeatedly told me that they took care to avoid affiliating with a political party. If a preacher supports a political party, they stated, access to some contexts will be denied, and credibility with the broader public is damaged. By remaining free from party affiliation and expressing broad support for a range of parties, invitations will be received from across the political spectrum. The typical establishment preacher, therefore, is not affiliated with a political party.

Against this background, it is not surprising that establishment preachers commonly express criticism of the government in public, usually around its handling of uncontroversial issues of public morality (prostitution in public, new religious groups etc.). Criticisms of this kind tend to increase a preacher's credibility amongst the broader populace, and simultaneously make an alliance with him more valuable for the city government. As a result of this, the embrace between the *kota* government

and the establishment preachers is an awkward one: it is in the preachers' interest to become the government's partner, but becoming too closely identified with the government's agenda would be a mistake. Nevertheless, their status as establishment *muballigh* implies at the very least a mutually beneficial alliance. They are not preachers whose previous conduct or statements have placed them beyond the interests of the government.

An illustration of this reluctant mutual dependence arose with the introduction by the city government in 2007 of the program known as '*Kota Bandung Agamis 2008*' (Bandung 2008 – A Religious City). The purpose of the program, one of seven priority development projects, was to improve urban Bandung as a living environment by implementing the teachings of the religions practiced within the broader community, commencing with programs aimed at the employees of the city government itself. This program, I was told, included a budget for the holding of sermons in the city's utilities, and was a good opportunity for the city government to prove its Islamic credentials by engaging figures from Bandung's diverse Islamic constituencies.

A number of religious leaders and preachers expressed doubt about the program to me, interpreting it as an effort by the city government to publicly demonstrate its Islamic commitment rather than make real improvements in areas of social concern. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how preachers could avoid being involved in this program. A preacher whose celebrity is an important element of his or her ongoing *dakwah* project cannot afford to cede the stage to other preachers. The *Bandung Agamis* program included public meetings attended by elites that attracted media attention. Refusing an invitation to speak at such an event means that the opportunity to do so would fall to other preachers.

Preaching the status quo

It follows from the above that the establishment scene is highly conservative. The interests underlying the scene desire preservation of the status quo. The commercial interests, for example, rely on the status quo for their capacity to operate. The interests benefiting from preachers' celebrity demand maintenance of that celebrity.

The city government wants to present its Islamic credentials to the public but at the same time wants to avoid Islamically-motivated challenges to policies. The preachers desire the continuation of precious patronage relationships, so their preaching presents no serious challenges to public orthodoxy or the Islamic versions preferred by the state. The scene nullifies the threat of difference, and causes no problems to any influential party.

In some ways, the scene bears some resemblance to what Hefner has described as *regimist Islam*, an Islam that is fully supported by the state but must also serve the state's interests (Hefner 2000:150). Yet there are differences between the contexts observed by Hefner during the closing years of the New Order Period and the establishment scene of Bandung in 2007. Unlike the New Order period, when the rights to assemble, political expression and hold a public sermon were regulated by the state under threat of coercion, the establishment scene is now only one scene in an array of burgeoning scenes. Its alliances may serve the immediate interests of its stakeholders, but they are limiting in other ways. For example, the scene excludes participation by youth. Although establishment preachers are skilled at communicating with young people, the establishment scene protects interests owned by influential adults and respects relationships between adults already established in their positions in civil and commercial life. Contemporary Indonesian youth turn elsewhere for their *dakwah* needs.

But we can not reasonably expect Bandung's youth to be attracted to the establishment scene. Contemporary Indonesian youth are attracted to the preachers who dominate national media networks, and Bandung's establish scene is disconnected in important ways from that activity. The *kota* government is concerned with its regional constituency and the political challenges arising out of it, and is not in the business of national *dakwah*, which is dominated by a younger generation of successful national tele-preachers who anticipate the needs and tastes of Indonesian youth. The new tele-preachers combine actual face-to-face preaching with sophisticated exploitation of national television networks and other communications technology (Fealy 2007). The *kota*-level establishment scene is not the place to look for the 'dawning' of new Islamic media, in which, according to Eickelman and Anderson, a 'new sense of public' is emerging through increasingly open contests

over the authoritative use of Islamic symbols occurring via ‘new and increasingly accessible modes of communication’ (Eickelman and Anderson 2003:1-18). In fact, the establishment scene appears out of date in comparison with the vigorous uptake of new media evident in other locations of Indonesia’s Islamic society (e.g. Nadirsyah Hosen 2008:161-169). But to criticise it on this account would be to misread the platform on which the scene is based: it doesn’t seek *dakwah* forms appropriate for the contemporary Islamic community. It relies on the ongoing presence of established preachers operating to further already-entrenched interests. It seeks to stabilise Muslim publics rather than open them up to new possibilities.

A ‘hardliner’ in the establishment scene

The list of Bandung’s establishment preachers includes one ‘hardline’ Islamist member, to whom I will refer as Lurus Haqan.⁷ Writings in his name frequently appear in Bandung’s mainstream media, notably in the major regional daily (*Pikiran Rakyat*). Apart from this, his speeches are edited and carried in the publications of two *keras* Islamist groups, namely the DDII’s *Bina Dakwah* and a bulletin published by an organisation referred to in this paper as ‘the Forum’. He is regularly invited to give sermons in civil contexts, is a ‘public face’ and sharia consultant of the alms fund referred to already in this chapter, and is invited by the city government to speak on topics such as the *Bandung Agamis* program. As such, he is a preacher of the establishment scene.

His presence on the establishment scene is worth examining because, on the surface, it creates a certain tension. The establishment scene inhabits mainstream, public environments, and displays a tolerant façade, in harmony with Indonesia’s largely non-sectarian political system.⁸ Haqan is incongruous because his uncompromising

⁷ I use the term ‘hardline’ to describe Lurus Haqan and his milieu because it is an approximate English equivalent to the Indonesian term *keras* (hard, loud, strident, harsh), which is the word most commonly used by my informants in Bandung to describe him. When people in Bandung describe Haqan in this way, no overtly negative implication is intended. It is used to distinguish his style from the less confrontational styles adopted by other preachers in Bandung.

⁸ This tolerance is illustrated by the Bandung *kota* government’s choice of the title *Bandung Agamis* (Religious Bandung) for its revitalisation program in preference for *Bandung Islami* (Islamic Bandung). The Bandung government opted for the more inclusive title, even though other regencies (*kecamatan*) in West Java have recently embraced comprehensively Islamic conceptions of social life by implementing Sharia regulations.

message highlights fragmentation within the Indonesian Islamic community, and appears to encourage division.⁹ There is a segment of the community that supports these positions, and Haqan, known for his uncompromising honesty and consistency, is of course held in high regard by this segment. Nevertheless, Bandung's public Islamic sphere is characterised by general support from all groups for tolerance and pluralism (Dundin Zaenuddin 2001:48-50), so how do we account for the presence of such a voice within it? The remainder of this chapter uses this question as a way of exploring the dynamics of the establishment scene.

A native of Bandung who studied at Cairo's Al-Azhar mosque for seven years, Lurus Haqan has been active for a number of decades in Bandung's public Islamic sphere. On returning from his studies in Cairo, he became secretary to a noted Bandung Islamic leader, and was active in the MUI (Council of Indonesian Ulama). This activity brought him into confrontation with the government on a number of occasions. The most notable confrontation was his vocal criticisms of the state-run coupon lottery (SDSB), which was closed down by the national government due to public demand in 1993 (TEMPO, Desember 4, 1993, 38-40).

Having established a name as a preacher, Haqan was approached in 2001 by a small group of young and determined Islamists who had formed an activist organisation, 'the Forum'. This group, which has a very small following in comparison with other Islamic organisations in Bandung, maintains surveillance of West Java's social and religious life, on the lookout for issues to be transformed into confrontations for the sake of public morality.¹⁰ The Forum is highly sensitive to unorthodox religious groups such as Ahmadiyah, and to groups that diverge from commonly expressed understandings of correctness, such as the liberal Islam movement. It perceives these groups to be dangerous to the welfare of Islam in general. The Forum agitates around

⁹ A recent writing in his name illustrates his non-compromising style. In this example, Haqan conveys his conviction that it is impossible for religions other than Islam to exist, along with strong rebukes of Muslims who are prepared to acknowledge the existence of other religions. In Haqan's view, the correct form of tolerance in this matter is not to acknowledge the existence of other religions, but to acknowledge and tolerate the existence of other groups who claim to follow other religions (*Tabloid Al-Hikmah*, no. 15, October 2007, p. 6). This view is not uncommonly expressed in Indonesia, but mostly emanates from Islamic groups that position themselves in opposition to other religions. This is a minority position in contemporary Indonesia.

¹⁰ The International Crisis Group has accused the Forum of orchestrating an attack on the minority sect Ahmadiyah in July of 2005 (ICG 2008:3).

these issues, and represents them as matters of public importance through the issuance of *fatwa*, the holding of demonstrations and media releases.

The Forum is an example of a new phenomenon in Indonesia's public Islamic sphere. Organisations that strove publicly to implement exclusively Islamic versions of politics and society were heavily restricted during the New Order period (1965-1998). Since 1998, however, they have been free to operate publicly, and have exerted influence on Indonesian politics (Barton 2004). Regional strategies have played an important part in these operations, leading one observer to accuse such groups of seeking to exploit Indonesia's recently implemented decentralisation process in order to prosecute their social and political goals (Azyumardi Azra 2004:147).

The Forum, and other groups like it, faces a large problem in Bandung and in Indonesia generally: finding an audience. Because of the conflictual and uncompromising message disseminated by the *keras* Islamists, they find it difficult to attract support in urban centres (Dundin Zaenuddin 2001:54). Lurus Haqan is not only a popular preacher with access to the establishment scene – an audience with which the *keras* movement finds it difficult to connect – but is also a travelling partner on the same ideological trajectory as the *keras* Islamists. For the Forum, he offers an effective channel of communication to a broader audience. Lurus Haqan's celebrity is vital to the group's ability to present itself as 'protectors' of the Islamic public. As such, the group have adopted him as their public face. For this reasons, the Forum's *fatwa* are issued in his name, including 'death *fatwa*' directed at Indonesian Muslims (Akh Muzakki 2006). In the publicity surrounding these *fatwa* he is named as the Forum's *ketua* (head) (Jaiz 2005: 58-62).

A number of questions need to be dealt with to resolve the incongruity under discussion here, the first being the nature of the benefit Haqan receives in return for his support of the Forum. I observed that their energetic propaganda, organisational skills and technical savvy are of value to his career.¹¹ The Forum ensures that his name is connected with their strident efforts to safeguard public morality, which

¹¹ The Forum exploits media potentials deftly. For example, during the brief incarceration of a very high-profile Indonesian Islamist preacher and activist, the Forum organised a broadcast of a sermon delivered by the preacher speaking by telephone from prison to an audience sitting in a Bandung mosque. The text was recorded, then transcribed and published in an Islamist broadsheet.

supports his reputation and protects him from becoming ‘yesterday’s man’. In short, the Forum supports his profile in Bandung. A further benefit Haqan obtains from the alliance, it can be assumed, is a vocational one: the organisation’s agenda corresponds with his own religious vocation.

Yet this does not explain his access to the establishment scene. As noted, his public positioning stands out in this scene because it is so confrontational and disciplinary. I did not notice a great demand among Bandung Muslims for the strident assertions produced by him and the Forum. How, then, do we account for his prominence on the establishment scene? This can be resolved partly through understanding his preaching persona. Bandung audiences like a fatherly, self-deprecating style from their preachers. The preachers generally adopt a humble bearing before their audiences, and the successful ones are those able to adopt this bearing yet still stimulate an audience to reflect profoundly on religious questions. Haqan has mastered this. Furthermore, he has the ability to read an audience and adapt to its sensibilities. He approaches diverse audiences such as female audiences, Islamist circles and civil servants with a highly informed sense of how to bring on this state of reflection in that particular audience. He anticipates and responds to difference. If he senses that an audience will not respond to an uncompromising position on a particular issue, he will avoid this issue altogether and address topics to which they will react positively. His success on the establishment scene, therefore, is achieved partly because his preaching persona is acceptable to mainstream face-to-face audiences.¹²

Apart from this, Indonesia’s current climate creates an audience for the strident voice that Haqan produces in his activities with the Forum. In his 2001 review of the pro-sharia movement in Bandung, Dundin Zaenuddin noted that many Indonesians perceived the country to lack social justice and civil order, leading them to turn to literal interpretations of Islamic norms as a solution (Zaenuddin 2001:49-50). Haqan

¹² The same cannot be said for the publications appearing in his name, which avoid the warm and inclusive style of his sermons. These writings, prepared by ideological groups such as the Forum, transform a one-hour sermon into an 800 word written text. If his sermons display a process of adaptation to various contexts, these editorial processes do the opposite: they select the aspects of his oratory that take an uncompromising stance on social issues, then amplify them. The writers make no effort to achieve the direct and positive communication strategies Haqan utilises with such skill. As a result, the writing appearing in his name, directed as they are to the agendas of interest groups rather than the goal of audience communication, are berating and confronting.

gains merit against this social trend because he has for decades taken a consistent and uncompromising stance on these issues. His determination and sense of mission generate an Islamic authenticity in an Islamic sphere somewhat lacking in these qualities. Many people who do not agree with the specific positions he takes when co-signing a death fatwa, for example, nevertheless admire his resolve and conviction.

For these reasons, he holds instrumental value for the city government, which seeks credibility by affiliating with a person so dedicated to 'public morality'. In granting space to Haqan, the state avoids being seen as lax with regard to safeguarding the public interest and Islam more generally. Apart from this, I was told by some preachers that Haqan's past and current activities have typed him as a person with the potential to 'cause difficulties' for the city level government, and in that sense the government would go to some lengths to maintain good relations with him.

In summary, Haqan's position in the establishment scene is a combination of his own qualities with circumstances arising out of the times in which he operates. Without doubt, he belongs to a confrontational, uncompromising segment of Bandung's Islamic society, which makes him popular in some quarters but limits his appeal more broadly. But he has not allowed this identity to become a straightjacket for him, for he is a skilful and inclusive preacher able to mix his messages for diverse audiences. To these audiences, for whom the sense of moral crisis gripping Indonesian society is an ongoing reality, he appears as an authentic Islamic voice of high conviction, even for those audience-members who may not approve of the messages appearing in the writings prepared by his supporters. At the same time, he has become the figurehead of an ideological organisation that, like others that have emerged since the end of the New Order period, is striving to exert influence on the political process. Their activities inflate his significance in Bandung society, making him a figure to be reckoned with by the *kota* government, and also support his reputation and celebrity.

Closing discussion: the regional Islamic public sphere

The scholars of music who devised the concept of the scene as a tool for approaching music practices in urban environments did so because the method brought the social meanings of musical activity into clearer focus. It allowed them to bring the

complexity of urban modernity into their understandings of processes of musical production. The tool gives the same benefit when applied to preaching: it is a cultural/religious activity that occurs in real situations determined by social realities, and the social realities of the modern metropolis are complex and manifold. Preaching shapes itself to its infrastructure, audience and supporting interests, and its negotiation of difference reflects this.

More specifically, this approach brings clarity to the dynamics of the regional Islamic sphere, and the ways in which these contrast with the national sphere, a topic of some importance in current times. 'Mapping the scene' brings the localised dynamics of religious practice in the public sphere into the spotlight. In this connection, this chapter has resonances with recent research on public Islam in Indonesia, notably Robin Bush's examination of regional bylaws based on the sharia code (Bush 2008). The establishment scene deals with Islam in a way that replicates, to some degree, the process of regional legislation of sharia. Bush seeks an explanation for a contradiction quite similar to the one addressed above: some regional leaders (at *kota/kabupaten* level) see great political currency in the local sharia regulations, even though the results of national elections indicate that Indonesians give weak support to a strongly sharia-based legal framework (Bush 2008:183). Their relative popularity amongst elected leaders is based in part, she argues, on their value as practical political tools for establishing Islamic credentials in the new era of *kota* and *kabupaten* elections. I explain Lurus Haqan's incongruous presence on Bandung's establishment scene in a similar way.

Furthermore, she notes the lack of ideological consistency behind the implementation of the laws; it was in most cases not Islamist parties that legislated the literal implementations of sharia, but the nationalist-oriented parties (Golkar, PDI-P, PD and PKB) (Bush 2008: 181-182). The establishment preaching scene shows a similar tendency, for although the *kota* government appears to support Lurus Haqan, in fact it does not explicitly support his position on religious and social issues, at least not to any greater degree than it supports all the ideological possibilities amongst the preachers of the scene. The relationship between Haqan and the *kota* government is not based on shared conviction. The establishment scene has preachers to suit most inclinations, and this range of orientations protects the *kota* government against

damage to its Islamic credentials. It grants space to diverse understandings of the role of Islam in public life, but at the same time allows the government to be non-committal: it takes no distinct position for itself, other than being observed to be supportive of the diversity of Islamic constituencies within its region. From this point of view, it must embrace Lurus Haqan or a similar figure, for activist organisations such as the Forum, which only became publicly active after the end of the New Order era, deliberately seek confrontation in Bandung. By being close with Haqan, the *kota* government avoids being cast as an opponent of the Forum and like-minded groups.

As is the case with the regional bylaws, the establishment scene is a response by local government to the complex dynamics of Islamic society within its area, including the rise of radical activists seeking political influence, a general upsurge in piety, the increased stakes in *kota/kabupaten* level politics due to decentralisation, and an increase (probably not significant) in the amount of voters seeking Islamic solutions to societal ills. The establishment preaching scene and the regional bylaws are products of the *kota/kabupaten* level governments' efforts to deal with these issues, and thereby create a religious sphere based on a contrasting logic to the national sphere. Shaped by a process of 'looking inward' at regional level, Indonesia's regional Islamic public spheres differ greatly from those forming in response to national considerations.

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