USE OF THESES

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THE POLITICS OF BECOMING
FUNDAMENTALIST
IN THE AGE OF CONSUMER CULTURE

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University
July 2009
To Nala, Daffa and Siwi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the writing of this thesis I was greatly assisted by a number of people. I would like to express my thanks to those who have generously offered their support and advice. In particular, my deep thanks go to my supervisor, Michael McKinley, who has supported and assisted me during my studies at ANU, especially throughout the writing process. I would like to thank Jim George who is a member of my advisory panel. I am grateful to Amrih Widodo and Gerry von Klinken for discussions and comments on my argument; and to David West, Rick Kuhn, Ariel Heryanto, Damien Kingsbury, Robert Cribb and Greg Fealey for their comments on my research proposal. My thanks are also due to the Islamic fundamentalist activists and organisations I worked with during the fieldwork for this project. Last but not least, I am indebted to my family, for their support, help and encouragement. It is to them I dedicate this thesis.
The focus of this thesis is the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia since the late 1990s. The arguments outlined in the existing works about the recent Islamic fundamentalism can be categorised into four topics: Islamic politics, interpretation of religious teachings, global Islamic radicalism and endogenous militant Muslims in the past. This thesis suggests an alternative approach. Based on theories developed within the studies of social movements, identity politics and consumer culture, it is argued that Indonesian Islamic fundamentalism is a form of resistance to problems of oppression and domination and, essentially, reflects social antagonism. The resistance takes the path of the struggle for identity because oppression and domination work at the level of self and everyday life. This kind of oppression and domination takes away one’s critical abilities to take independent action and to produce one’s own meanings of life in order to create a sense of certainty.

The source of oppression is the rapid flow of images and signs that increasingly colonise the fabric of everyday life in modern society. The flowing images reflect the consumer culture, which constitutes the increasingly dominant social and cultural order. Capitalist development contributes significantly to its emergence. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism can be seen as a negation of consumer culture. The resistance, moreover, is an attempt to reject the occupation of self and everyday life by the saturating images and is a challenge to the consumer culture’s dominating power. The way the fundamentalists resist, however, is influenced by their location within the class divisions created by the same capitalist development that produces the consumer culture.

Throughout this thesis the intention is not to treat knowledge as a neutral and objective instrument for passively disclosing reality. Instead, knowledge is used not only to describe a given phenomenon, but also, more importantly, to shape and produce it. Specifically, the knowledge produced here attempts to expose contradictions and conflicts within the existing socio-cultural order in which Islamic fundamentalism emerges. My aim is to produce a different reality of the phenomenon in order to promote a more critical understanding of the current structural conditions.
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<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah</td>
<td>Adherents of the prophetic tradition and the community. The long-hand for much widely known term “sunni”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akhlak mulia</td>
<td>Noble character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As-salaf as-Salih</td>
<td>The pious ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurat</td>
<td>Parts of body have to be concealed according to Islamic norms</td>
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<td>Ba'iat</td>
<td>Taking oath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baju koko</td>
<td>A specific type of dress for Muslim male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baju Muslim</td>
<td>Muslim dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Collective behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakwah</td>
<td>Religious propagation and proselytising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dauroh</td>
<td>A training program in Islamic subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDII</td>
<td>Dewan Dakwah Islamiyyah Indonesia (Islamic Proselytising Committee of Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI</td>
<td>Darul Islam (or the sphere of Islam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fasad</td>
<td>The Arabic term for the appearance of evil because of human own making</td>
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<td>Fatwa</td>
<td>A legal ruling by a competent Islamic legal scholar</td>
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<tr>
<td>FKASWJ</td>
<td>Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah (or Communication Forum for the Adherents of the Prophetic Tradition and the Community)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPI</td>
<td>Front Pembela Islam (or Islamic Defenders Front)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamis</td>
<td>Long flowing robe. An Islamic dress for male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadith</td>
<td>Any saying by, or action attributed to, the Prophet Muhammad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halal</td>
<td>Permitted to engage in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halaqah</td>
<td>Religious study circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haram</td>
<td>Forbidden to engage in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawa nafsu</td>
<td>Carnal desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijab</td>
<td>A specific type of dress for Muslim female. A long and loose dress covers the whole body from neck down to both feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijra</td>
<td>The migration of Muhammad and his followers from hostile Mecca to friendly Medina in 622</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hijriah</td>
<td>The Islamic calendar based on a lunar cycle of 12 months. The beginning of Islamic calendar is the year Muhammad migrated to Medina</td>
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<td>Hikmah</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTI</td>
<td>Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (or Indonesian party of Liberation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ibadah</td>
<td>Worshipping Allah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICG</td>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikhlas</td>
<td>Sincere. A free willing to follow Islamic values and norms</td>
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</table>
Ikhsan: State of awareness of being constantly watched by Allah
Jahiliyyah: Ignorance. Frequently refers to the time before the advent of Islam when superstitious and barbaric customs were a part of Arabian life
Jannah: Heaven or paradise
JI: Jamaah Islamiyyah (or Islamic Community)
Jihad: To struggle, strive or exert. Frequently translated as holy war
Jilbab: Headscarf
KCM: Kompas Cyber Media
KFC: Kentucky Fried Chicken
Kopiah: A head gear commonly associated with Indonesian Muslim
LJ: Laskar Jihad (or Jihad Troops)
LPI: Laskar Pembela Islam (or Islamic Defender Troops)
Majelis ta'lim: A general religious teachings
Masyumi: Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia
Menahan diri: Self-restraint
MMI: Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (or Indonesian Islamic Warriors Assembly)
MUI: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (or Islamic Scholar Assembly of Indonesia)
Nasyid: A specific type of a capella associated with Muslim
Niat: Intention
NII: Negara Islam Indonesia (or Islamic State of Indonesia)
NSM: New Social Movement
NU: Nahdlatul Ulama. The largest traditionalist Muslim organisation in Indonesia
OKB: Orang Kaya Baru (or the New Rich)
Pesantren: The Islamic boarding school
PKI: Partai Komunis Indonesia (or Indonesian Communist Party)
Pornoaksi: Action porn
Ramadhan: The Month of Great heat. The month when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk
RCTI: Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia, A private TV channel in Indonesia
Riba: Usury
RM: Resource Mobilisation
Salafi: The short-hand of as-salaf as —Salih
Sayyid: The direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad
SBS: Special Broadcasting Service. A TV channel in Australia
SC: Social Constructionist
Shari'a: The Islamic way of life. Frequently translated as Islamic law
Shaytan: Satan
Sholat: Prayer
Sinetron: Sinema Elektronik (or Electronic Cinema). A movie serial on several Indonesian TV channels
Syahid: Die because of fighting for the honour of Islam
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<td>Syahwat</td>
<td>Sexual lust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablig akbar</td>
<td>A mass religious rally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takwa</td>
<td>A conscious awareness to follow constantly Islamic values and norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukhuwah islamiyah</td>
<td>Islamic brethren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umma</td>
<td>The community of believers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usroh</td>
<td>The Javanese term for Arabic, usra, means nuclear family. The term used by the Muslim Brotherhood for its constituent cells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ustadz</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahn</td>
<td>Loving living in the world and being afraid of die</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zikir</td>
<td>Remembering Allah through repeating religious phrases</td>
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

The focus of my study is the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia since the late 1990s. My goal is to explain this recent religious radicalism and to understand its development in the context of larger social structures and historical changes associated with the way contemporary Indonesian society is instituted. I start from the following simple question: "Why does Islamic fundamentalism emerge in Indonesia?" I argue that Islamic fundamentalism is a form of resistance that responds to oppression and domination and, significantly, reflects social antagonism. The resistance appears in the form of the fundamentalists' struggle for their identity because oppression and domination work at the level of self and everyday life. This kind of oppression and domination creates the problems of inauthenticity and disenchantment. It takes away one's critical abilities to act independently and to determine one's own understanding and direction of life.

The source of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment is the rapid flow of images that increasingly saturate and, in effect, colonise the fabric of everyday life in modern society. The saturating images portray and reflect consumer culture, which constitutes the increasingly dominant social and cultural order. Its emergence is a major result of capitalist development and signals major transformation within capitalism. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism can be seen as a negation of consumer culture. The resistance is an attempt to reject the occupation of self and everyday life by the saturating images and to challenge and disrupt the dominating power of consumer culture. The way the fundamentalists resist, however, is influenced by their location within the class divisions created by the same capitalist development that produces consumer culture.

This Introduction discusses the theoretical framework. In the next section I will outline the existing works on the issue and the location of my study within the recent debates. Following this, the focus will be on theories and perspectives that inform my studies, particularly those derived form studies of social movements, identity politics and consumer culture. This leads me to make certain propositions. I then discuss the methodological approach adopted in this research project before outlining the thesis structure.
THE EXISTING WORKS ON THE RISE OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN INDONESIA

The arguments outlined in the existing works on recent Islamic fundamentalism can be categorised into four areas. Increasingly, scholars and lay observers alike become accustomed to the way the issue is portrayed as either a sort of Islamic politics, a problem of interpreting religious teachings, a part of global connections of Islamic radicalism, or the child of endogenous militant Muslims in the past. In the following pages I will discuss these four topics respectively as they are revealed in the existing literature. I will then provide my own critical assessment and introduce the way my studies will approach the issue.

Islamic Politics

The term Islamic politics represents the main view developed within the existing works. By this I mean that Islamic fundamentalism is largely seen as a movement that seeks to establish an Islamic state based on a strict adherence to Islamic values and norms. Closely associated with an Islamic state is the idea of comprehensive implementation of shari'a, a sort of Islamic way of life, which has to be the sole source of law and to supply the norms and codes of conduct for the umma, the community of the believers. It is argued that the demand for the implementation of shari'a represents the holistic nature of Islam in their worldview. As Islam provides knowledge about everything Muslims find in the world, the very idea of separation between the transcendental and the temporal is strongly denounced and renounced. An autonomous political sphere, through which the formation of a (secular) state separated from the influence of religious dogmas, is unthinkable. This leads not only to the rejection of the secular state of Indonesia, but also to the rejection of democracy, human rights and pluralism.

1 Abuza (2002; 2003; 2004); Barton (2004; 2005); Butler (2003); Bubalo and Fealey (2005); Eliraz (2004); Fealey (2004); Hasan (2002); ICG (2001; 2002b; 2003; 2004a; 2004b; 2005); Jamhari and Jahroni (2004); Singh (2003); van Bruinessen (2002a; 2002b); Wright-Neville (2004).
Nevertheless, the movement is hardly united when it comes to the question of how to execute the ideas.\(^5\) By and large, they all accept the virtue of \textit{jihad}. As noted by Eliraz, \textit{jihad} is loosely understood as "...one's duty to strive to follow God's path, by spreading belief in God and making His word supreme in this world..."\(^6\) However, as the concept of \textit{jihad} is a broad one, including both peaceful and violent means, its real practices can vary from one group of fundamentalists to another. In fact, the existing works inform us that we should distinguish groups which use explosion to register their demand from other groups which consistently distance themselves from any form of violence.

\textbf{Interpretation of Islamic Teachings}

Many observers argue that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is a product of a specific interpretation of Al-Qur'an and hadith.\(^7\) As indicated above, the fundamentalists tend to believe in the holistic nature of this religion. According to Machasin the fundamentalists' interpretation is based on a strong belief that Al-Qur'an is divine revelation, which is transferred to humans through His Prophet. The revelation, which is eternal and hardly bounded by history and culture, consists of orders and prohibitions as divine guidance for humans on how to live their life correctly.\(^8\) The authority to interpret and decide the standard meanings of verses inside the Holy Book rests on Islamic scholars and classical Islamic thought, which has been standardised during the course of divinely purified Islamic history.\(^9\) For their part, humans are obliged to obey and be loyal to Him and His teachings.\(^10\) As the divine revelation does not need human intervention in its formation, the proper attitude towards Islamic teachings is following strictly and literally everything that has been mentioned in Al-Qur'an. Here we find the label "literalist" which is frequently applied in the recent studies to categorise the activists for their habit of

\(^5\) Barton (2004; 2005); van Bruinessen (2002a); Fealey (2004); Wright-Neville (2004); ICG (2001; 2004b).


\(^7\) Abdala (2003); Machasin (2003); Jamhari and Jahroni (2004); Bubalo and Fealey (2005); Eliraz (2004); Barton (2004; 2005).

\(^8\) Machasin (2003).

\(^9\) Machasin (2003).

\(^10\) Machasin (2003).
literal reading of the teachings. Another similar label is “textualist”, which implies their preoccupation with the religious text and its historical divine status.

More importantly, these labels emphasise the significant contribution of religious interpretation in the emergence of religious radicalism. We can understand why a number of observers often refer to “salafism” as another category widely used to refer to activists of this movement. Basically, salafism is an attempt to revive Islamic’s fundamentals by returning to the practice of this religion by the pious generations. *As-salaf as-salih*, that is, these faithful forefathers, is commonly seen as the Muslims who lived during Muhammad’s lifetime until the tenth century after He passed away.

It seems that the terms “literalist”, “textualist” and “salafism” also bring other implications to how we make sense of Islamic fundamentalism. Since the fundamentalists rely on the literal reading of Islamic texts and on blind loyalty to the old religious practice of the so-called pious generations from some hundred years ago, they can be seen as both traditionalist and conservative. They are traditionalist for maintaining the old traditions and, hence, conservative in a sense that the preservation of out of date religious practices can potentially prevent Muslims from being positively exposed to change, innovation and progress experienced by the other parts of the world.

**Global Connections**

The other main theme in the current studies on this subject is global connections. The argument is that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is not an isolated process in which the discussion of the phenomena can be confined within factors and elements found inside Indonesia’s boundaries. The movement should be seen as having some connections with similar radical groups in other countries and as being part of the community of radical Muslims at the global level. The recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia in this respect should be better located within the active and very often deliberate attempt to forge strong links between like

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11 See, for example, Bubalo and Fealey (2005) for the meaning of salafism. See also ICG (2004b).
12 See, for example, Abdala (2003).
13 Bubalo and Fealey (2005); Eliraz (2004); Abuza (2002; 2003; 2004); Batley (2003); Singh (2003); ICG (2002b; 2002c).
minded radical Muslims across continents. It then makes sense to speak of such a thing as the global community of radical Muslims. For the connections allow Islamic fundamentalists from different countries to build a network through which they share ideas, cause and resources to help each other in fighting for their goals.

Initially, connections to figureheads, groups and organisations outside the country are taken as decisive. Shortly after the first Bali bombing, a number of Indonesian Muslim leaders still clung to the view that the act of terrorism in the name of Islam is an entirely foreign ingredient added into theological teachings of local groups. This view found a common ground with arguments outlined in a few writings, which emphasise the decisive role played by Al-Qaeda in various terrorist attacks across the Archipelago. However, the majority tends to argue that the global connections do inspire ideas and provide resources. But Indonesia has its own history of Muslim radicalism. It is a combination of these two factors that gives rise to the recent movement.

Local Context

Under the rubric of local context we can identify at least three major threads of analysis within the existing works. First, the origins of the recent radical Muslim groups can be traced to the emergence of some militant Islamic organisations and movements in the Archipelago during the first half of the twentieth century. Masyumi and Darul Islam (DI) are perhaps the most important and relatively indigenous political movements. The former was initially created by Japanese colonialists as an umbrella organisation that merged all Muslim associations in the country, before transforming itself into a political party until it was disbanded in the 1960s. DI is an indigenous rebellion movement in the name of Islam, which arose originally from Muslim militias who fell out with the new born Indonesian government over their

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16 van Bruinessen (2002a; 2003); Barton (2002; 2004; 2005); Davis (2002); Eliraz (2004); ICG (2001; 2002b; 2002c). See also Hefner (2000); Aragon (2001); van Klinken (2001).
17 van Bruinessen (2002a). See also Nasution (1965) and Hefner (2000) for the rise of Masyumi and its historical transformations.
decision to accept an agreement with the Dutch.\textsuperscript{18} It is argued that the two movements are the forefather of the current one.

The second thread of the analysis argues that the recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism is preceded by changes and transformations in the political, social and cultural life of Indonesian Muslims.\textsuperscript{19} In the social and cultural sphere the country has witnessed the rapid development and dissemination of radical Islamic ideological views among the Muslim students in university campuses across the Archipelago since the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{20} Basically, the Islamic revivalism provides the current movement with a social and cultural basis. It produces a new generation of activists who are not necessarily connected to the older militant groups, but adopt a similar world view. It is also during the time of revivalism that the young Muslim students were exposed to ideas, thoughts and ideologies of various radical Islamic thinkers.

In the sphere of politics, the most important change is in the relations between the incumbent political regime and the radical Muslim community. Since the rise of Soeharto’s New Order in the late 1960s, the radical Muslim community has always been put under strict control.\textsuperscript{21} However, near the end of Soeharto’s New Order, the tide changed dramatically. Soeharto and the most prominent members of the highest New Order political elite turned to the radical Muslim community for support. It is argued that such change has not only given them resources, but also opened the way for them to enter politics.\textsuperscript{22}

The third thread of analysis specifically focuses on the structural contingent following Soeharto’s resignation which is seen as having produced favourable conditions for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The country was suddenly free from political oppression and the freedom has led to the emergence of many organisations and groups from various ideological and social backgrounds. Within such a political dynamic, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is made possible. In addition, Soeharto’s fall negatively transformed the state into chronic disarray, which equally contributed to the emergence of religious radicalism.\textsuperscript{23} Perhaps, the most

\textsuperscript{18} van Bruinessen (2002a); ICG (2002b; 2005). See also van Dijk (1983) for more detail discussion on DI.

\textsuperscript{19} van Bruinessen (2002a; 2003). See also Hefner (2000); Schwartz (1999).

\textsuperscript{20} van Bruinessen (2002a); Rahmat (2005); Hasan (2002).

\textsuperscript{21} See, for example, Hefner (2000); Schwartz (1999); van Bruinessen (2002a); Rahmat (2005).

\textsuperscript{22} See, for example, Hefner (2000); Schwartz (1999); van Bruinessen (2002a); Rahmat (2005).

\textsuperscript{23} See ICG (2001; 2002b; 2002e). See also Barton (2002).
important thing is that much of the state apparatus failed to function properly. This has, for example, prevented the state from applying legal sanctions to civilian militias, including those of radical Muslims, who use violence illegally to achieve their ends.

**Religio-political, Resistance and the Expressive Dimension**

The problem of the existing works is that they tend to treat Islamic fundamentalism as a religious phenomenon, at first, which then turns political during the course of its development. It is a religious phenomenon in two senses. First, those who are involved in this movement want to implement what they believe are the truest teachings of Islam. Second, the movement is inspired by a specific interpretation of religious values and norms. Nevertheless, Islamic fundamentalism is not entirely a matter of religiosity as it is involved in the power struggle. The movement is hence political because, according to the fundamentalists' interpretations, the truest teachings of Islam imply the replacement of the existing secular state with the one based on *shari'a*. This is why the notion “Islamism” is logical. For the movement is not only a matter of religiosity at the personal level, but also a religious inspired political ideology aimed at controlling and dominating society as a whole. As an inspired political ideology, Islamism can then be portrayed as being part of the global community of radical Muslims. The movement emergence can also be related to the existence of similar groups in the past, which come to life when the socio-political changes provide the opportunity.

Islamic fundamentalism is certainly a religious phenomenon. It is simply too obvious to say otherwise as Islam as a religion appears everywhere, not only in their appeals, but also in their daily conversations, their fashions and, even their body movements. Nevertheless, religiosity is neither an isolated phenomenon nor a self-sufficient organism. Religion is always part of and interacts with the larger social context where it exists. How it emerges, grows and develops cannot be understood by referring to its internal logic, as defined and explained by its own texts. Instead, the relationship between religion and its social context, in my view, forms a sort of ontological base through which we can understand various types of religiosity. The line of argument proposed in the existing works mentioned here could be in danger
of drawing our attention to portray Islamic fundamentalism as an isolated religious phenomenon. My studies, on the other hand, start by locating religiosity into the larger socio-historical context. Religiosity is not therefore the starting point. It is more an effect rather than the cause.

The arguments of religious interpretations, global connections and local contexts did try to explain and, hence, treat the movement more as an effect. Yet, in my view, the arguments tend to be tautological. That is to say, we cannot explain the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in terms of the fight for an Islamic state and shari' a because of, for example, the way one reads Al-Qur'an: the interpretation of religious texts is itself the fundamentalism. Similarly, being part of the global community of radical Muslims and of endogenous radical movements is the process of becoming fundamentalist that needs an explanation rather than explaining.

In this regard, the way the current studies describe the political nature of Islamic fundamentalism should also be carefully scrutinised. As already mentioned, the political is the power struggle, which is unavoidable as the fundamentalists' interpretation of Islamic teachings leads them to fight for the establishment of an Islamic state. Here we encounter at least two problems. First, politics is hence nothing more than an appendage to religiosity. The power struggle can only be understood by referring back to interpretations of religious texts. It has little to do with factors such as the socio-cultural backgrounds of activists other than the fact that they are Muslim: it is not seen as their material interests and their location within the existing economic structure, or, simply put, the more worldly appeals related to problems they face either as a human being or a citizen. As a consequence the political tends to be withered away because the power struggle is just another form of religiosity in metamorphos's.

Second, let us assume that there exists a power struggle, which is relatively independent from the consequential logic of religion as a self-sufficient system, with the implication that we should consider factors other than Islam and open the analysis to the wider socio-historical context. Yet, even this theoretical modification does not bring much help. For a power struggle is merely a form of conventional political practice that appears to us as a fact of politics. Instead, a power struggle cannot be taken for granted. It is not a given and self-constituted phenomenon, but the result of real politics, which is, I argue, located in the very way society is structured. In other words, the power struggle and Islamic fundamentalism are facts
about politics whose meanings and essence can be understood if we look at the social structure that produces them.

Why do those shortcomings outlined above occur? While a number of works in the current studies rightly point out the collectively organised nature of the movement, the studies fail to give more attention to the protests that are inherently attached to the movement actions. By protests I mean that in the various actions, both legal and illegal, taken by the movement we can easily see how the fundamentalists express their disagreement with and rejection of certain issues and conditions. Protest implies that the fundamentalists' preoccupation with religiosity and their appeals for a new system (i.e. Islamic state, *shari'a*) that protects pietism is a form of resistance to the existing social order. The resistance is nothing less than an attempt to change radically the way contemporary Indonesian society is structured. Simply put, Islamic fundamentalism is better viewed as a form of resistance that tries to transform the existing order. We should focus our investigation on this issue if we want to unveil the political nature of the movement.

The other important issue ignored by the existing works is the symbolic dimension of Islamic fundamentalism. While religion is too obvious to be ignored, the ubiquitous presence of a specific physical appearance, body movements, fashions, banners and colours attached to the fundamentalists can also be hardly unnoticed. In fact it is on the symbolic dimension that we make sense of the religious nature of the movement. We recognise the fundamentalists not only by their appeals, but also and very frequently by what they wear. For their part, the fundamentalists seem to have deliberately used the movement to perform their specific cultural image. The movement and its various actions then become a medium through which this symbolic expression is publicly accentuated. At this point, we need to deal with several questions. "How important is this expressive dimension?" "How is it related to the resistance and the attempt to transform the existing social order?" "Is it the main locus of resistance the movement is involved in?" "If it is so, how and why has the resistance ended up being preoccupied with the expressive dimension?" "What kind of social transformation are we witnessing, and, indeed, should the locus of resistance be these cultural symbols and images?"
ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

As indicated in the previous section, my argument is that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia following Soeharto's resignation should be seen in two ways. First, it is a form of resistance that tries to transform the existing social order. Second, it is a medium through which the movement's cultural symbols and images are accentuated. This approach leads me to two groups of theories. The first is derived from a wide range of studies on social movements. The second is closely associated with the discussion and analysis of the issue of identity politics. In this section I will focus on the theories of social movement. Identity politics will be discussed later.

To begin with, I understand a social movement to be a collectively organised form of protest and resistance. This collective form of action deploys uncommon methods (whose legitimacy can be debateable) of influencing the socio-political process and of changing the existing institutionalised power relations. A social movement is different from other forms of collective action such as panic, riot, fad, craze and outburst as well as organised actions taken by actors such as a political party. To borrow Melucci's argument, the main difference is in the orientation of actions. He specifically identifies three basic orientations of social movements: solidarity, conflict and "breach of the limits of compatibility of the system of social relationships". Solidarity refers to the ability of actors who are involved in a social movement to recognise, and in return to be recognised by, their fellow activists as being part of the similar social collectiveness. In contrast to this is collective action which is based on aggregation of atomised behaviours. Conflict-oriented social movements involve antagonism between two or more actors over the control of valuable social resources available to society at large. The opposite of this is collective action based on consensus on the rule and procedure regarding the distribution of valuable resources. The "breach of the limits of compatibility" is Melucci's description of the transformation of the way the society is structured. On the other hand, collective action that does not belong to the category of a social movement tends to maintain the existing social structure.

24 See, for example, della Porta and Diani (2006); Tilly (1986); Melucci (1996); Buechler (2000); Goodwin and Jasper (2003).
Debate within Social Movement Studies

Inspired by the works of Buechler, della Porta and Diani, Melucci, and Pakulski, I will now identify various theories and perspectives within the social movement studies. This identification is based on the debate between Marx, Lenin and Gramsci. One thing is for sure, these Marxist ancestors would not have posed the question about what makes people involved in social movements. They would rather have focussed on issues such as social structural change, domination and oppression created by the social structure that lead to resistance and revolution by the oppressed, and how resistance arises and develops. Nevertheless, their accounts on these issues precede and seem to have inspired the contemporary theories concern on resistance, solidarity, conflict and social transformation which explain social movements.

In short, these three authors put a different emphasis on factors that lead to resistance. Marx brings in the issue of the large social structure, Lenin is preoccupied with organisation and Gramsci relies more on the power of culture. Within the contemporary studies of social movements these differences are reflected in the debate between “structure” (macro-level of analysis), “organisation” (meso-level of analysis) and “ideology” (micro-level of analysis). Based on this I will review what I understand to be the three prominent approaches within the studies: collective behaviour (CB), resource mobilisation (RM) and social constructionist (SC).

Collective behaviour

CB is perhaps the oldest and the most established approach within the tradition of social movement studies. It basically comprises several theories of collective action influenced by symbolic interactionism, structural-functionalism, mass society and totalitarian movements and relative deprivation. One thing that unites this range of approaches is the use of CB as a unitary concept to describe and explain various forms of collective action. Riot, mob, panic, craze, outburst and movement are merely various manifestation of CB that can be explained by using the

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27 See, for example, Tarrow (1994).
same logic. Unlike normal daily life which moves according to some patterns and rhythms, the approach views this range of actions as less institutionalised and spontaneous. Unsurprisingly, CB is commonly taken to be less political than psychological. It is further seen as less purposive and an irrational form of behaviour which is largely categorised as a form of deviance.

Similar to Marx's preoccupation with the larger social structure, the core of the CB approach is its emphasis on the important role of "structural strain/breakdown" in explaining the rise of collective action. It is broadly argued that such structural breakdown creates social instability and alienation, which may then pave the way for the emergence of various CB forms. The breakdown allows individuals to join collective action because it makes them feel anxious and angry. Neil Smelser, for instance, proposes six hierarchical steps of movement development from its first articulation to its final appearance at the end of the process. The process starts from (1) general structural conduciveness, which refers to the presence of structural conditions that encourage—though do not necessarily determine—various forms of CB. This is followed by (2) structural strain, which refers to ambiguities, deprivations, discrepancies and conflicts, and (3) generalised belief in terms of widespread definition and understanding of situation. The next process is (4) triggering events and actions, the precipitating factors which provide the direct catalyst for collective action, before (5) the participants of action are mobilised. The final step concerns (6) the operation of social control, which must be temporarily absent if CB is to be fully manifested.

**Resource mobilisation theory**

CB is frequently criticised for its preoccupation with structural strain. While such strain creates grievances and tensions, people who are alienated, experience anxiety and discontent do not automatically decide to join actions. A new approach that emerged during the time when CB dominated the way social movements are understood was RM theory which takes away our attention from structural breakdown, anomie and frustration. The theory's main concern is the meso-level structure of movements, how movements are organised, how this allows movements

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29 Melucci (1996); Buechler (2000).
to mobilise resources necessary to achieve movement goals, and how movements respond to new situations and opportunities.\textsuperscript{33}

The pioneers of RM theory, McCarthy and Zald, outline the importance of meso-level structure in an economical tone.\textsuperscript{34} They argue that the decisive factor that contributes to the rise of collective action is the control that people possess over resources necessary for successful movement actions. By implication the aggregation of resources is crucial to social movement activities and requires some form of movement organisation as the most basic condition for protest to occur. However, the role of groups outside a given social movement significantly influences the way resources available in society are distributed. The flows of resources towards or away from a given movement entity works according to supply and demand principles. Here social movement organisations are often seen as operating like firms competing for resources and followers.

The other original model of RM proposed by Charles Tilly is oriented towards the issue of power struggle.\textsuperscript{35} His model should be understood against the background of the division that he makes within a bounded population, such as a nation state, between polity members on the one hand, who have easy access to power, and challengers on the other, who must be involved in collective action to enjoy the same access. Tilly outlines, in particular, four elements without which collective action will hardly take place: group interests, organisation, mobilisation of resources and opportunity.

Different from CB, RM theory does not treat social movements as deviance. They are part of the normal political process and aimed at influencing policies by deploying, transferring, exchanging and converting both material and non-material resources.\textsuperscript{36} RM theory also describes social movements as a specific form of collective action that pursues specific goals and no longer portrays them as merely unregulated and shapeless behaviour symptomatic of structural breakdown. Instead, they pursue their goals through various forms of action that are skilfully organised and based on careful consideration.\textsuperscript{37} Finally, RM theory views individuals who

\textsuperscript{33} Pakulski (1991); Buechler (2000); della Porta and Diani (2006).
\textsuperscript{34} McCarthy and Zald (1977; 1973). See also Buechler (2000: 35-6) for a summary of McCarthy and Zald’s model.
\textsuperscript{35} Tilly (1978). See also Cohen (1985: 677-90) and Buechler (2000: 36-7) for Tilly’s model.
\textsuperscript{36} Pakulski (1991); Buechler (2000); Cohen (1985).
\textsuperscript{37} Pakulski (1991); Buechler (2000); Cohen (1985).
participate in social movements as rational, relying on the gains and losses calculation before making the decision.  

**Social constructionist approach**

As can be expected, RM is most commonly criticised for its exclusive focus on the meso-level structure of social movements. In particular, the model tends to view social movements as a sum total of individualised cost-benefit calculations. However, according to Melucci, those involved in movement actions can hardly consider the potential gains and the anticipated losses unless they have developed a shared yardstick that can be used to recognise which benefits belong to their expectation.  

Such yardstick in turn requires a shared understanding of who they are and what they are doing. That is to say, solidarity, through which a sense of unity and of having similar directions is constructed, precedes and makes possible any sort of rational action. We can also add here that solidarity is not based on gain-loss considerations. It is instead built through the process of identification with “friend” and “enemy”.

This criticism, especially the notion of solidarity, destabilises the very foundation of the RM model in three ways. First, the decisive element of social movements is no longer organisation and resources but a symbolic exchange between movement activists and followers that produces meanings and shared understandings. Second, a given social movement is not an aggregation of individualised rational considerations but is based on a shared identity of those involved. Third, formal organisation is less significant than informal networks among individuals and groups inside a given social movement that is constructed during the course of social interactions. This, in effect, brings the issue of culture into the discussion. The SC approach is developed within the new preoccupation with cultural process associated within social movements.

By and large, SC understands social movements as a cultural process involving symbolic exchange and construction of meaning and identity among participants and followers. Perhaps the most significant theoretical contribution of SC is its use of the concept of framing in understanding social movements.

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According to Hunt et al, the term is borrowed from *Frame Analysis* written by Erving Goffman, a key figure of symbolic interactionism. They note that a number of social movement scholars have adopted Goffman’s ideas to make sense of how movement actors understand their social worlds. Framing refers to the way individuals and groups inside social movements construct and attach meanings to their activities through an interactive and collective process. The concept is designed to discuss issues such as the social construction of grievances, individual motivation and recruitment into a given social movement, and collective identity. In terms of grievances, framing is a matter of how those involved identify problems, suggest possible solutions and activate motivation for actions. When it comes to the issue of motivation and recruitment, framing is about how movement organisations reach people who already share their orientation; how they appeal to values and beliefs strongly held by society in general; how they extend the number of sympathisers by describing the movement as a logical response to concerns of some segments of the population; and how they create and nurture new values. On the issue of collective identity, framing defines those who are involved in social movements, recognises their antagonists and identifies those that must be categorised as audience.

*Explaining Islamic fundamentalism*

How can these approaches and theories inform this study? We learn from Marx and CB that, as a form of resistance, Islamic fundamentalism is better understood against the backdrop of a larger social structure and historical change. Marx would specifically emphasise the importance of structural contradictions. It means that the movement is a product of tensions and conflicts that characterise and reproduce contemporary Indonesian society. Furthermore, resistance is led by those who are oppressed, who are basically on the less fortunate side of contradictions. Marx in particular uses the term alienation to explain how resistance is a response to the problems of oppression and domination. In Marx’s sense alienation is a state when a person becomes alien (1) to the products of one’s own activity, (2) to the nature in which one lives, (3) to other human beings and (4) to one’s own historically created human possibilities. Alienation for him, however, is not merely a descriptive concept, but more importantly a call for a revolutionary change (de-alienation) of

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42 Marx and Engels (1967); Marx (1970).
social structure and history that produce alienation. \(^43\) Resistance is in this sense de-alienation. In CB’s standard idioms, it is an expression of anger, anxiety, frustration and discontent by those who are in the state of anomie.

Nevertheless, social movements are not entirely a result of some natural mechanism working at the level of social structure that can be objectively identified. RM theory opens our eyes to the fact that social movements are nothing less than normal and collectively organised activities. We learn that without some level of organisation anger, anxiety and frustration can lead to various forms of unregulated, shapeless and less patterned behaviours such as riots, panic and outbursts.

Finally, the cultural dimension of collective action is also important in understanding the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. SC helps us to understand that the main process within this cultural foundation is framing. That is to say, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is also a product of how the fundamentalists make sense of their grievances, how they motivate and recruit their followers and how they recognise themselves as one collective unit.

This leaves us with at least two problems which CB, RM and SC fail to deal with. First, one thing that enables us to learn so much from these prominent approaches is the combination of various theoretical insights in each of them. If looked at separately as an isolated framework of analysis CB, RM and SC only provide a partial explanation. What we need is an approach that can combine all three level of analysis. Second, and more importantly, none of the approaches discussed thus far touch upon the issue of expressive dimension I noted before. SC’s preoccupation with the role of culture in collective action could give us some clues as to how to deal theoretically with this issue. However, SC is in my view slightly biased toward RM. What I mean is that it emphasises the importance of culture because it wants to complement the importance of organisation and resources with cognitive aspects of motivation and recruitment into collective action. Unsurprisingly, culture here refers to abstract things such as meanings, shared understanding and collective identity. The more concrete forms of cultural symbols attached to fashion, physical appearance and body movements are hardly taken into consideration.

These two problems lead to another group of theories and models derived from studies on contemporary social movements such as environmentalist movements, feminist movements, peace movements and counter culture movements. I will use the controversial term "new social movements" (NSM) theories. For me, NSM theories are more about an approach which can be significantly distinguished from CB, RM and SC.

New Social Movement Theories

NSM theories are the works on contemporary social movements produced by Touraine, Melucci, Offe, Habermas, Pizorno, Eder, Inglehart and Pakulski. This new approach is commonly seen as a reaction to the economic reductionism of conventional Marxism and to the privilege of proletarian revolution. Even though they retain Marx’s preoccupation with the larger social structure and historical change, the authors I mentioned above have also included elements such as politics, ideology, identity and culture in unfolding the logic of collective action. Social movements for them are forms of organised action, while the privilege enjoyed by the proletariat as the most important agent of change is challenged as other bases of identity for resistance in ethnicity, gender and sexuality are discovered.

By and large, NSM theories restore the macro level of analysis by linking collective action to a historically specific social formation. The contemporary movements are largely seen as responses to the capitalist free-market, state administration, bureaucratised society, scientific and technological-imposed social interactions, or instrumental rationality-characterised life. Even though they disagree over the use of the terms “modern” or “postmodern” in naming the societal totality defined by this range of social institutions, the theories share similar views that social movements in the late twentieth century respond to the dominating nature of these advanced modern systems. The domination is argued as manifesting in the oppression of everyday life, which at the same time turns the same everyday life into...

a new arena of political action. In this sense, the contemporary movements rarely
operate within the area of redistributive struggle in the conventional political sphere.
Instead, to borrow Habermas' expression, the movements are "to defend or reinstate
endangered life styles..."47 to free one's everyday life from being dominated and
controlled by these systems.

The oppression of everyday life, the very terrain of identity, leads to the
centrality of the latter within the contemporary movements. The argument is that the
advanced modern institutions are equally intrusive and invasive. Their power to
dominate and control life renders obsolete public-private and collective-individual
divisions and opens formerly intimate and personal aspects of one's life to political
intervention.48 This fosters the struggle for (collective) identity because personality
becomes the locus of conflict and resistance. Retaining SC preoccupation with the
micro level of analysis, the centrality of identity further means that the ability of
people to take part in movements depends on their ability to define who they are in
the first place. And who they are has little to do, for example, with one's class
background. The construction of (collective) identity is a matter of resisting the
capitalist free market, state administration or scientific and technological imposed
social interactions by providing, for instance, alternative meanings and knowledge
which are locally bounded to the intrinsic formation of identity.49

Since the issue is everyday life and personality, the movements are viewed as
being highly preoccupied with "post-materialist" values.50 Instead of seeking power,
control or economic gain, they are more inclined to seek autonomy, recognition and
democratisation and to defend values such as civil liberty, gender equity, pluralism,
peace and sustainability. It is argued that this range of appeals is not only to be
transformed into policies and regulations through the classical power struggle, either
through protests or parliament. But more importantly it is achieved by the very
activists themselves through strong commitment and willingness to adopt and
practise these values.51 In this regard several models within the new approach,
especially the more cultural variant of NSM theories,52 treat social movements in
completely different manner compare to the one proposed by CB, RM and SC. While

47 Habermas (1981: 33).
48 Toussaint (1981); Mehucci (1989; 1994; 1996); Offe (1985b)
50 Inglehart (1990).
51 See, for example, della Porta and Diani (2006).
52 See, for example, Buechler (2000).
CB tends to portray collective action as the end form of structural breakdown without any goals other than representing deviance and abnormal behaviour commonly found in the condition of anomie, RM and SC take social movements first and foremost as a tool to achieve movement goals. In contrast to this, NSM theories' preoccupation with everyday life and identity and with post-materialist values and the activists' commitment to them leads to the view of a given social movement and its goals as coinciding. Put differently, the movement is the goal in-itself.

In fact, the new approach sees organisation less as a strategic instrument than as a symbolic expression of movement values and member identities. According to Melucci, NSMs function less as standing armies than as a laboratory of culture that vacillates between latency and visibility. They are not only involved in street protests and battles on specific demands, but are also involved in politicised subcultures that sustain movement values and orientation.\(^5\) Pizzorno arrives at the same conclusion when he identifies the expressive dimension of the contemporary movements. He argues that such expressiveness makes "real claims", commonly associated with social movements, absent in actions. Instead, the real appeal is the recognition of the actual subject who is involved in the movement.\(^4\) In this respect, movement organisation in the view of NSM theories is somewhat different from RM. The former emphasises the decentralised, egalitarian, participatory, pre-figurative and ad hoc nature of collectively organised actions. This type of organised collective action, instead of a highly entrepreneurial and bureaucratic kind of movement organisation emphasised by RM, is more appropriate to the contemporary movements' concern with values such as autonomy, liberty and democracy.

The other significant implication is that the use of the movement as a medium to express movement values signifies the role of cultural and symbolic forms of action. This cultural dimension is to affirm the existence of a new or recognised collective actor. While several scholars within the new approach criticise the apolitical and romantic nature of this cultural and symbolic action,\(^5\) several others defend such unconventional forms of resistance as embodying the contemporary movements' rejection of the instrumental rationality of advanced capitalist society.

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\(^4\) Pizzorno (1978).
\(^5\) See, for example, Habermas (1981); Eder (1985; 1993).
and its systems of social control and cooptation.\textsuperscript{56} Indeed, if the problem is the domination of everyday life and the intrusion and invasion of advanced modern institutions into one’s own self, any form of symbolic expression that can be taken as a challenge to, for example, the scientific and technological imposed social interactions should be viewed as a form of resistance.\textsuperscript{57}

What do we learn from this? It looks odd to use NSM theories to understand religious radicalism. Islamic fundamentalism is commonly seen as conservative, reactionary and traditional. It stands against the post materialist values such as democracy, civil liberty and human rights, which are strongly associated with contemporary movements. The way the new approach builds its theories is also deeply preoccupied with the tendency to assign the new movements with the historical task of transforming society into a better future, either in terms of democracy, egalitarianism, participation, peace, or being ecologically friendly. Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia is hardly taken as having such a historical task and, instead, is frequently seen as representing the bleak future of emerging democracy in that country.

Nevertheless, the concern with post materialist—or, rather non materialist—values is by no means the monopoly of the new movements. We can easily see that the issues of identity, recognition and autonomy, in particular, are also inherently attached to religious and ultra-nationalist inspired collective action.\textsuperscript{58} Instead, the gist of NSM theories, in my view, revolves around not only the emphasis of identity as a political issue, but also and more importantly concerns the argument that contemporary movements are involved in the struggle for identity in response to the problem of domination and oppression that work at the level of self and everyday life. The contemporary movements are better understood as a reaction to the social structure and historical change, but the intrusive and invasive nature of the latter works at a sphere of cultural reproduction and social integration as well as at the level of personality and intimacy. In this regard, we can rely on NSM theories to understand the recent Islamic fundamentalism in the Archipelago. We can portray the resistance that lies at the heart of the movement as taking the form of a struggle

\textsuperscript{56} See, for example, Melucci (1996; 1989; 1994); Pakulski (1991).
\textsuperscript{57} See Buehler (2000).
\textsuperscript{58} See, for example, Castella (2004); Hetherington (1998). See also Eder (1985; 1993); Calhoun (1995).
for identity as long as such resistance can be related to domination and oppression that works at the level of everyday life and self of those involved.

In addition, the new approach argues that, within the very struggle for identity, resistance and transformation coincide. Hence, in contrast to the existing studies on Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia, I do not treat the movement itself and its actions as a tool to achieve movement goals. The movement actions and its goals are not two separate moments in time that reflect the internal logic of movement development from one stage to another. Instead, the movement, resistance and transformation coincide. Resistance is not only aiming at establishing an Islamic state based on shari'ā, but more importantly it is conducted in a manner which is taken by the fundamentalists as being based on divinely legitimised teachings. It has to be this way because resistance is significantly associated with a strong commitment to specific values and norms that imply a transformation at the level of personality of those who involved in the movement. This kind of transformation is as crucial as the fight for an Islamic state. In fact, I argue that the attempt to establish a new state based on shari'ā is above all a matter of adopting and demonstrating one's commitment to specific values and norms. At this point, to use a more popular notion, we can then say that the movement itself is the message.

Finally, based on arguments developed within NSM theories, both the struggle for identity and the coinciding of resistance and transformation turn social movements into a medium through which those involved express who they are. This view significantly touches upon the expressive dimension of the Islamic fundamentalism movement in Indonesia. In fact, it helps me to understand the movement's expressive dimension. Since commitment to what the fundamentalists take as Islamic values and norms is as important as the goal to establish an Islamic state based on shari'ā, the movement becomes the medium through which one's commitment is expressed. Being involved in the movement implies not only demonstrating specific values and norms, but also practising certain conducts, behaviours and attitudes. The movement and, especially, the various forms of its collective actions are then hardly different from a site of performance, which is marked with cultural symbols and images attached, for instance, to the fundamentalists' physical appearances, fashions and body movements.

Simultaneously, as a site of performance, the movement enables the fundamentalists to tell others who they are. The movement allows them to accentuate
their existence and valorise it as real and significant to an Indonesian audience in particular. *Hijab* can be easily seen as a cultural symbol representing the fundamentalists. Yet, even the demand for the full implementation of *shari‘a* can also be treated more as an expression of who they are rather than the demand itself with its substantial implications on specific policies and regulations. At first, the fight for *shari‘a* is a result of strong commitment to what they take as the truest values and norms. Then, the demand for its implementation is to tell others how to define the identity of those who are involved in the movement. In short, the accentuation of the movement’s symbols and images through its expressive dimension informs us that the struggle for identity is at the heart of the recent Islamic fundamentalism.

Nevertheless, NSM theories fail to deal successfully with the following issues. “How exactly is the struggle for identity a form of resistance that transforms the existing social order?” “How can we associate identity with the issue of autonomy and freedom from oppression?” To answer these questions “is it necessary to unfold the process through which identity is constructed and produced?” If the answer is yes and regarding the argument that the movement is the message, “how can the construction of identity be a form of resistance that tries to transform the oppressive social structure?” Furthermore, “are the expressive dimension and the process of identity construction two separate issues in which the former simply demonstrates the substance of the latter?” “How does the expression contribute to the very construction of identity?” “How can these various possibilities existing in the relations between the expressive dimension and identity construction be understood in terms of resistance and an attempt to transform the existing dominating order?” To deal with these unresolved problems I now turn to other approaches and theories derived from studies on identity politics.

**ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AS IDENTITY POLITICS**

The term identity politics refers to a sort of political movement that seeks to defend and promote the interests of a specific group of people who are oppressed because of the identity they share. It is commonly argued that the interests of groups and individuals who are defined by categories such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender
and sexual orientation cannot be advanced by agencies such as class or nation-state. Identity politics is then a matter of struggle for recognition and the defence of minority rights. It celebrates cultural diversity and the right to be different, and for that difference to be recognised as legitimate. As it takes the centre stage, it is further argued that contemporary politics should also be understood as being organised around struggles over identity.

However, there is also another sensibility that questions the assumption previously outlined. This kind of identity politics is seen as being based on the contention that groups and individuals act on behalf of and for the interests of self-defined identity which is fixed and stable. The problem is that the notion of identity as a unified, fixed and stabilised entity is believed to represent the old form of identity which is in crisis. Nevertheless, this sensibility does not entirely reject the idea of identity politics. It merely wants to discard any form of essentialism within the struggle for recognition and minority rights. Such essentialism can potentially end up in a new oppression and marginalisation of other identities. Here, the question is: “in what sense should Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia be better understood as a form of identity politics?” However, it is important to first establish how identity and the struggle for identity are defined and understood within the existing studies.

**Approaches to Meanings of Identity and the Struggle for identity**

Stuart Hall identifies three different conceptions of identity, which he names “Enlightenment subject”, “sociological subject” and “post-modern subject”. The Enlightenment subject refers to the conception of the human subject as a fully centred and unified individual, who possesses capacities of reason, consciousness and action. The person is endowed with a substantial content which first emerged when born, is attached to the same person throughout development and continues to be the same throughout the person’s existence. This substantial content hides inside one’s inner self, that constitutes the centre of the self, and is a person’s identity.

The sociological subject is based on a conception that questions the autonomous and self-sufficient nature of a human’s substantial content. Following

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the rise of new social sciences, the individual subject is increasingly seen as located within the larger structures of modern society. Sociology, in particular, criticises the Cartesian subject for its emphasis on rationality and individualism. The subject is instead placed in group processes and collective norms. It argues that individuals are formed through their membership of, and taking part in, wider social interactions. The person’s identity is constructed in relation to their significant others. These significant others help the subject to learn, adopt and internalise the culture of the world in which one lives. In return, social processes and the larger supporting structures are kept working by various roles which individuals play.

Hall conceptualised the post-modern subject as having an identity which is hardly fixed and essential nor remains the same throughout the subject’s existence. Rather, it is historically produced and constantly in the process of transformation in relation to the way it is represented in the context of the cultural system where one lives. Identity has never been a unified entity consisting of an inner core that constitutes one’s substantial content as an individual human subject. It is inherently fragmented as the subject selects different identities at different times. The fully unified self and a stable meaning of one’s identity is a fantasy. It has never been a complete and coherent unit as it is constantly exposed to the multiplicity of various identities one can identify with.

Based on Hall’s conceptions I identify two approaches in understanding struggles over identity. The first sees the struggle for identity as an attempt to rediscover identity already existing in the past, seen as true and original and waiting to be excavated. This yet-to-be-discovered identity is a sort of collective true self, hiding inside many others. It is something that the people who share the same history and are assumed to be the offspring of the same ancestors hold in common. The struggle for identity often involves the promotion of its positive images and to fight against inadequacy and distortion created by its existing negative images.

The second approach views identity as something that has to be produced. The struggle for identity involves the politics of representation, that is to say, the politics of how identity is produced and adopted through the practices of representation. This means that identity has never existed in the past nor waits to be discovered. Instead, identity is produced through the play of difference. Its meaning

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60 See Hall (1990); Calhoun (1994; 1995); Grossberg (1996).
depends on its difference from and its negation of some other terms and identities. The positivity of any given identity is only achieved through the negativity of its differences and its negating others. This constitutive relation of negativity implies that identity is always (in the process of being) destabilised. The instability is due to the fact that its formation always incorporates its negation, which becomes the source of disruption that prevents the former from being fixed and stable. Identity is also contradictory and is made out of partial fragments. The production of identity is hence another kind of "play", not with difference, but with selecting and moving from one type of identity representation to another.

The fundamentalists' struggle for identity

I argue that the fundamentalists' struggle for identity takes the path of the politics of representation. The struggle is a matter of producing their identity through petitions, statements, sermons and jargons; through fashion, banners and colours; and through physical appearance, body movements, demeanour and emotion. Perhaps the most important thing is the play of difference. There is no such thing as an original and true fundamentalists' identity hidden in the past within the shared history and culture. Rather, it is within difference the fundamentalists' identity is constructed. The positivity of their identity can only be produced through the relation to other, to basically what they are not and what they lack.

However, I argue that the positivity should be more than the negativity of other terms. It is about the root and the depth of the merely flattened surface of identity produced through the play of difference. It is important to note, however, that the root and the depth, the very positivity, are created after the formation of identity rather than vice versa. This is because the construction of identity never occurs within a political vacuum. It always takes the issue of power and domination into consideration. Therefore, the production of the fundamentalists' identity is not only the art of making difference and of negation, but also the act of resistance and of making boundaries.

In this regard, Castells' view on identity in his seminal work, *The Information Age*, is instructive. Since the construction of identity always occurs within power...
relations, Castells contends, we could make a distinction between three different types of identity formation. The first is "legitimising identity," which is generated by the dominant institutions of society to maintain their domination of social actors. The second one is "resistance identity," which is produced by the subordinated group, through the formation of a fortress of resistance and survival, based on values and principles different from, or opposed to, those permeated by the dominant groups. The third form is "project identity," which is introduced by social actors to build a new identity which simultaneously redefines their location in society and attempts to transform the entire social structure.

For Castells, it is natural that identities that start as resistance may end up in project identity and may be equally, through a long historical period, becoming the dominant identity. Islamic fundamentalism, as he understands it, is a form of resistance identity. The identity of this movement, as he nicely puts it, is an expression of "the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded." By this he means "the building of defensive identity in terms of dominant institutions/ideologies, reversing the value judgment while reinforcing the boundary." In the longer run, this Islamic resistance identity could become a project that produces subjects, which he understands as the collective social actors through which individuals within the movement reach the meanings of their being in the world. At this point, the building of a fundamentalist identity is an attempt to write a different life, a life based on shari'ā, not for the fundamentalists alone and only, but also for the whole society.

Castells' argument is useful, as it confirms the act of resistance and of making boundaries in the production of identity mentioned above. His discussion on project identity, particularly his emphasis on this form of identity building as the next logical sequence of resistance identity, is equally helpful. It tells us significantly how the construction of identity could end up in the formation of subject, that, I will shortly explain, constitutes the root and the content of initially an empty signifier of identity. Nevertheless, there are a couple of issues that still concern me. First, how can the act of resistance and of making boundaries, the very exclusion of the excluders by the excluded, exist in real life and not always be trapped inside the prison of discourse? Second, why does resistance identity end up in project identity

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64 Castells (2004: 7-12).
65 See also Calhoun (1994).
that produces a subject? To answer these questions I now turn to the work of Judith Butler.

**Identity Performance and the Production of Subject**

The following discussion is based on Butler's most widely celebrated—as well as criticised—essay, *Gender Trouble*. In my view her essay is a response to the issue of female identity and Foucault's works on how discourse produces a subject. Butler starts her inquiry by challenging the sense of coherent self and identity commonly adopted by feminist theories and practices. It is necessary to address this issue as she encounters some conceptual problems in the existing approaches. In particular, she is concerned with the fact that feminists commonly assume the pre-established sexed body. Feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir are correct in portraying gender as social construction. Yet, they recklessly connect the fabricated gender with an already sexed body, as if such connection is given and needs no further investigation. Butler argues in contrast that the body is itself socially produced and can hardly exist before the formation of gender differences. For her, we should not treat the body as passive medium waiting to be lived by the marking of gender, but see it as "come into being" in and through the construction of identity.

Following Foucault, Butler comes up with the argument that the production of gender is a "discursive effect". She means that the construction of male and female identities takes place through their involvement with, and subjection to, cultural and linguistic code. However, the work of discursive power on individuals is not as direct and automatic as one thinks. Adding to the Foucauldian premise that discourse produces and destabilises subjects, she proposes the notion of "performativity" as the specific "aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names". She then takes a Derridian turn to suggest that performativity occurs through a certain kind of repetition and recitation. In this sense, rather than as a result of inner desires and reason, identity is produced in the act of performing

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68 Butler (2007: 11-8).
70 Butler (1996: 112).
sexuality, doing gender and enacting desires. This set of repeated performances is largely fashioned after the cultural representations of masculinity and femininity found in the modern life.\textsuperscript{71} Butler further argues that the performances of gender identity are highly regulated forms of power. She notes in particular how heterosexual relations regulate and dominate practices of gender. A sort of rigid social norm with the power to discipline and control is established from this, which shapes decisively performed identity of a sexed body.\textsuperscript{72}

I have argued that the fundamentalists’ struggle for identity takes the form of the politics of representation in which their identity is produced mainly through the play of difference. The problem is that the play of difference creates identity as nothing more than an empty signifier. We can add the issue of power and domination to the argument as Castells did, but the resistance and the making of boundaries associated with this politics of representation is hardly real and remains trapped within the practices of discourse. Butler on the other hand portrays the formation of identity as a process involving performance. Identity in here is a set of real, repetitive and disciplined practices. Based on this view, we can now see that the expressive dimension discussed thus far is the site through which the fundamentalists produce their identity by conducting specific performances. The practices and performances could be seen as the mark of identity and could also be taken as the site where identity is present. However, by the same token, the practices are the real politics of identity. It is here the actual act of resistance and of making boundaries takes place. We can further say that it is through practices associated with the constructed identity that the human subject is produced.

Allow me to develop my point in more detail. In the initial stage the play of difference produces identity as an empty signifier. It is empty because its meaning is less than the negative meaning of its other. In the later stage, identity is signified by a number of practices. The fundamentalists’ identity, for example, is associated with practices such as adopting busana Muslim (Muslim dress) through which the individuals concerned as well as others recognise those who are involved in the movement. Certainly, wearing the hijab could be hardly understood, for example, without taking the fundamentalists rejection of other styles of fashion into account. Nevertheless, identity is now more than just an empty signifier, as its emptiness is

\textsuperscript{71} Butler (2007); Elliot (2007).
\textsuperscript{72} Butler (2007); Elliot (2007)
filled in with real action, that is, the act of taking up a particular dress code. While the construction of identity involves a politics of negating others at a purely discursive level, the practice of wearing Muslim dress transforms this discursive politics into a form of action in real life. It is through this kind of real action that we can sense the depth and the substance of identity.

More importantly, the practices, the real action that forms the substance of constructed identity, are the key foundations of the subject being constructed. It is through these practices, identity produces subject which is adopted by individuals in the movement. I have to stress that the subject is produced through the practices. This implies that the subject is not some abstract entity, and it is not a matter of what one’s position in the whole society is, as implied by Castell’s argument above. Instead, the subject is as real as about how one should behave, what kind of conduct one should engage in and what type of attitude one should adopt.

Inspired by Foucault, I also argue that the practices implied by identity are better seen as disciplinary practices.73 These practices are strictly regulated in purely negative terms, particularly through limitations and prohibitions. At the heart of disciplinary practices is regulation of the body. The body is effectively controlled and protected through a constant process of surveillance and by a range of punishments. Regulations of the body and practices then result in specific conducts, behaviours and attitudes attached to identity. Regulations further materialise in particular skills of body movements implied by disciplined conducts, behaviours and attitudes. Here, I should reiterate my previous statement: identity is more about performing specific practices. And the practices, which are based on discipline and control of the body, do not form, but are the subject itself. In other words, the subject is produced in the course of its materialisation.

Agency and Embodied Self

Butler reluctantly uses the term performance and prefers performativity instead. The reason is that, while the former presumes a subject, the latter contests the very notion of the subject and tends to locate it at the end of process.74 Such

74 Butler (1996).
contention has led critics to label her as an anti-humanist. The theory of performativity in fact leaves no place for any form of agency at the level of self.\textsuperscript{75} Butler in this sense inherits the Foucauldian effect of de-centring the human subject.

Clearly, even though identity is always relational and depends on its relations to its significant others, its construction presumes some form of action on self however limited it is. If we take action on self as the most basic form of consciousness, some sort of agency should have existed before the formation of one's identity. Take as an example, Lacan's mirror stage in the development of the individual subject when, as a small infant, it first establishes a sense of self through visual identification with its image in a mirror.\textsuperscript{76} The mirror lies because it provides an image of bodily wholeness, of oneness and unity which contradicts the lack of physical coordination that the infant experiences in the real life. Hence, the reflecting mirror leads to misrecognition of selfhood. While Lacan is correct that the mirror lies, the mirror could only misguide if as a small infant the individual subject notices something in it. The subject then misinterprets this thing inside the mirror as the image of its fully united and constituted self. Put differently, the subject is relatively independent in recognising an image that it misrecognises as its true projection.\textsuperscript{77} Similarly, the discipline and control of the body could only work if the fundamentalists first take a note of it. However, they consciously recognise and accept it as something desirable, as part of the attempt to fight oppression and domination.

More importantly, by assuming the existence of some level of consciousness I can see how the disciplinary practices imply a form of action on self. However, we should remember that resistance is here is no longer understood negatively in terms of "being free from something". It is more positively taken as "desire to be something". Resistance ceases to free—or rather protect—one's self from oppression and domination. It is more about producing and reproducing one's self as a (new) person. The question is "how the disciplinary practices imply this kind of action on self?"

Let us once more go back to Butler. Her theory of performativity implies the centrality of the body as a site where routine and repeated identity performances take

\textsuperscript{77} See, for example, Elliot (2007); Hall (1996).
\textsuperscript{76} Lacan (2006).
\textsuperscript{77} See Hall (1996).
place. If we agree with her that performances produce subject, the body should then be the main medium through which one makes sense of who one is. The body and the self are hence more connected than we think. Bryan Turner is the leading figure in sociological theories on how the body implies some inner process within human self. He contends that it has become a tradition in social science to discuss and analyse the self as a disembodied entity. The body is commonly conceptualised as the biological limit constrained upon human agency. Turner by contrast finds self as a more embodied unit and this embodied self is necessary for social interactions. Above all, the body defines what being human is. It is something that one possesses and one does and lives with on a daily basis. The body is in fact central to how we make sense of our self and how we engage in interactions with others. Nevertheless, he does not see the embodied self as the passive result of structural and discursive power, but is instead integrally part of being and agency.

I have previously argued that the subject is produced through the practices implied by identity. Now, this constructed subject, which is produced during the course of its materialisation, is further adopted by every individual within the movement through the process of learning the disciplinary practices, exercising and making them routine and of inventing their meanings. The process paves the way for the subject and the disciplinary practices to be transposed into one’s inner self and, in the process, remake the self. The end result is the rise of a (new) personality formed through and by regulations of the body and everyday life.

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CONTRADICTIONS AND THE OPPRESSIVE STRUCTURE

I have thus far discussed the Islamic fundamentalism as a form of resistance that tries to transform the existing socio-cultural order. More specifically, the fundamentalists’ struggle for identity is an outcome that responds to the problem of oppression and domination originated in structures and institutions that are produced by and sustain an established dominant formation of a particular societal totality. In this section my focus will be on the source of oppression and domination and how they take place. I

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will also discuss what kind of contradiction that is revealed through the way society is structured and how it is reflected in the fundamentalists’ struggle for identity.

**Against Oppression: Freedom and Certainty**

As previously indicated, the NSM theories can be regarded as an attempt to reformulate Marx’s argument by viewing the rise of contemporary movements as a response to the problem of oppression and domination. They identify modern structures and institutions such as domination of the mass media, the expansion of state administration, the rapid growth of bureaucratisation and the rise of information technology as the main source of what I refer to as alienation. The works of Habermas and Melucci in particular can help us to make sense of how social movements are better seen as a response to the issue of oppression and domination.79

Habermas’s main intellectual enterprise is preoccupied with a general framework of how to understand modernity.80 Nevertheless, he did find the new social movements as a significant aspect of modern life and its dynamics. He argues that these movements’ main concerns are strongly related to the conflict over issues such as quality of life, equality, individual self-realisation, human rights and democratic participation.81 According to Habermas, the source of conflict is the growing domination of the economic-administrative complex, associated with the state of welfare capitalism. Such a process has led to the colonisation of the life-world by rationalising the economic and administrative process.82 The problem is that the life-world, which Habermas refers to as areas of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation, is his associated sphere for communicative action and communicative reason.83 Unsurprisingly, he portrays new social movements as a response to the domination of instrumental rationality—which originates in the production process and the interests to maintain capital growth—of everyday life through value reason and expressive means. We should add that identity is central because the life-world—which I prefer to call everyday life—is its very terrain. The

82 Habermas (1981).
83 Habermas (1984); Baynes (2004: 204-5).
struggle for identity indicates the oppression and domination that works at this particular level of social life.\textsuperscript{84}

Melucci shares Habermas' view in seeing new social movements as being deeply intertwined with everyday life. He is also in agreement with Touraine in understanding new social movements as a form of collective action that emerges at a specific historical point within contemporary society characterised by the growing dominating role of information.\textsuperscript{85} He specifically emphasises the important role of information technology and communication, which provides individuals and groups with a large amount of information resources, which people use to define their selves and construct their life spaces.\textsuperscript{86} As a consequence, such intrusion and invasion of information puts dimensions of everyday life traditionally regarded as private, subjective and biological under social control and manipulation. Resembling Habermas's life-world, Melucci argues that this is exactly the sphere where individuals and groups lay claim to their autonomy. This is also the place where they search for identity "by transforming them into a space where they reappropriate, self-realize, and construct the meaning of what they are and what they do."\textsuperscript{87} In short, for Melucci, Habermas and other scholars who work on NSM,\textsuperscript{88} the struggle for identity is an outcome that responds to oppression by modern structures. What is at stake is one's autonomous consciousness, which allows one to reproduce oneself as an independent agent. The struggle is hence to serve one's desire for freedom.

The problem is that the idea of identity proposed by NSM theories is always torn by an inner contradiction between individuality and belonging. According to Bauman, it vacillates between the desire for uniqueness that implies an assertion of distinction and the bid for membership in a collectivity that undermines individual idiosyncrasy and points toward sameness.\textsuperscript{89} While uniqueness and distinction relate to the issue of freedom, autonomy and emancipation, belonging and sameness reflect the fear of loneliness and represent the need for security and certainty in life.\textsuperscript{90} Relying on psychoanalysis, Erich Fromm also discovers this contradictory nature of identity. He argues that the social history of humanity is marked by the formation of

\textsuperscript{84} Hetherington (1998: 33).
\textsuperscript{85} Melucci (1996; 1994). See also Touraine (1981); Cohen (1985).
\textsuperscript{86} Melucci (1994: 101).
\textsuperscript{87} Melucci (1994: 100-1).
\textsuperscript{88} See Touraine (1981); Offe (1985b); Pakulski (1991); Castells (2004).
\textsuperscript{89} Bauman (2005). See also Bauman (1998a).
\textsuperscript{90} Bauman (2005: 30).
subjective self-consciousness and the need to "belong".91 In the stage of, figuratively speaking, ties with the umbilical cord, one lacks freedom and is yet to be called individual. But these "primary ties" provide one with security and the feeling of belonging and of having roots somewhere. Once the next stage of complete individuation is reached, one is not only free from these ties, but also faces a new task to tie oneself in the world and to look for the feeling of belonging and rootedness in a different sense to those of one's pre-individualistic existence.92

In this sense, the struggle for identity, that serves the desire for freedom as argued by NSM theories, should at the same time serve the desire for certainty in life. Oppression at the level of self that works through the colonisation of everyday life by modern structures should have not only stripped off one's critical ability to act as an autonomous individual, but also severed the ties that one has with some meaningful rootedness. If we refer to Marx's concept of alienation, the struggle for identity is hence a response to the last two types of alienation: being alien to one's fellow human beings and to one's self. According to a contemporary Marxist analysis, critics of these two types of alienation focus their attention not only on the general state of oppression, but also on the issues of inauthenticity and disenchantment. While inauthenticity is closely related to the problem of uniqueness discussed above, disenchantment is more about a lack of certain meanings and directions in life. That is to say, capitalism is condemned for its violation of one's self-autonomy and one's capacity to live and to give meaning to a life that one has chosen.93 Therefore, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia can be seen as a response to the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment. The movement is to serve the desire for freedom and certainty in the life of those involved.

It seems, however, that we can hardly move further than this argument. There remain a number of question that need to be addressed. Above all, "why is identity in the first place?" According to Hetherington, within the tradition of NSM theories, identity is used to denote something else seen as more important.94 That is to say, identity is to serve as a symbol for the meaning of such things as autonomy, freedom, equality and certainty. It is not surprising that scholars such as Habermas and Eder

91 Fromm (1960: 16-7).
92 Fromm (1960), in particular, the chapter "The Emergence of the Individual and the Ambiguity of Freedom".
are ambiguous towards the expressive dimension of contemporary movements. For this expressiveness, from Habermas's point of view in particular, hardly denotes any form of communicative rationality which he believes is endowed with the revolutionary potential to revive modernity emancipatory credentials.95

Such a denotative move brings two consequences. First, it makes NSM theories fail to see that the contemporary movements' struggle for identity occurred at the specific historical juncture when the stake of identity, as a set of cultural attributes attached to individuals and groups, is high. However, the problem is not who one is, but how one constructs who one is. It is not a matter of how oppression by modern structures marginalises a specific identity; but how the oppressive structures takes away one's ability to produce one's own identity and influences the way of identity formation. The oppression by modern structures also turns one's identity into less unified cultural attributes; discards any substances, contents and originality of one's identity; and makes one's identity less stable. The issue is clearly freedom and certainty, as oppression and domination on the construction of identity significantly challenges one's critical abilities to take actions on self and to associate those actions with some substantial meanings and goals.

In the case of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia, as noted before, the struggle for identity takes the path of the politics of representation. Following the same way of thinking just indicated above, I argue that the struggle also takes place during a specific historical period when the practices of representation are a significant issue. The struggle ends up in the importance of the expressive dimension because oppression by modern structures should have also worked at the same level. To put it differently, the struggle for identity appears in the form of the politics of representation because cultural expressions, images and symbols must have been taken as the main battleground.

Second, the denotative move also makes NSM theories largely fail to discover the power of identity, borrowing Hetherington's expressions, to connote what it denotes. By this I mean that the struggle for identity through the politics of representation allows those who are involved in the struggle to deal with the problem of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment. More than merely an indication, the construction of identity and its representation significantly implies the feeling of

95 Habermas (1981); Eder (1993; 1985); Hetherington (1998).
being free from oppression and of having certain meanings and goals in life. As already discussed, it takes place during the process through which the fundamentalist subject is produced and the fundamentalist self is remade.

**Saturating Images, Consumer Culture and Capitalism**

Before discussing the source of oppression and domination and how it relates to capitalism, we should bear in mind three key issues outlined in the previous section. First, oppression that creates the problems of inauthenticity and disenchantment works through the colonisation of everyday life. Second, oppression problematises the way that identity is constructed. Third, oppression also works in the form of cultural expressions, symbols and images and which has turned this cultural sphere into the battleground.

*Aestheticisation of everyday life*

Allow me to start by arguing that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is better understood against the background of the growing aestheticisation of everyday life. The term aestheticisation of everyday life indicates the rapid flows of images that saturate the fabric of everyday life. This is a result of the new and central role which images and signs play in contemporary society which turns culture into an unprecedented important aspect of life. Jameson in particular notes how society has been increasingly fascinated by TV series and Readers' Digest culture, advertising, the television late show, and the grade B Hollywood movies, which are all associated with the overproduction of images. For Baudrillard, this overload of information provided by the media, particularly television, which confronts society with an endless flow of attractive images and signs, brings a profound change. People now live in a qualitatively new society in which the distinction between reality and image no longer exists. The effacement of such a boundary is the main characteristic of postmodern culture.

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More importantly, in the place of effaced boundary Baudrillard describes a new world constructed out of simulation.\(^{100}\) Since art ceases to be a separate sphere, it starts to be involved in the process of turning the everyday and banal reality into its projection. The result is the end of real as the imagery and the aesthetic simulations are the only reality left to us to deal with. “TV is the world,” cried Baudrillard. People now live in “an aesthetic hallucination of reality.”\(^{101}\) It is at this point, I argue, that we can make sense of how the saturating images and signs can be oppressive and domintive. In my view, the end of real is nothing more than a process through which images provide us with a new reality, a new world and a new life we can hardly escape from. Our critical abilities to act independently are significantly undermined as our actions are increasingly dependent on what and how images tell us to act.

This new reality consists of images and signs which, according to Baudrillard, are able to float free from objects. They get their meanings not from reference to some hidden and independent structure, but from their relations between each other.\(^{102}\) Baudrillard, in effect, promotes the importance of the surface appearance of things in determining human actions and rejects Marxism and other structuralist approaches’ preoccupation with latent underlying structure.\(^{103}\) The notion surface appearance indicates how the rapid flows of images and signs have significantly challenged the legitimacy of any form of deep structure, rootedness and substantial contents in providing meanings and directions for human actions. In its place is the play of difference among images that constitutes a sort of system of signs from which meanings are produced, but meanings which are no longer stable and hardly fixed.

Simply put, the overproduction of images and signs takes away one’s ability to produce action on self, shatters any remaining underlying structures and replaces them with a flattened appearance on the surface expressions of things. They also lead to a loss of stable and fixed meaning in a postmodern jungle of images which play off one against another. As a consequence, the rapid flows of signs and the reproduction of images and simulations seriously undermines one’s ability to produce one’s own identity. On behalf of one’s capacities of reason, consciousness

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\(^{100}\) Baudrillard (1983a).

\(^{101}\) Baudrillard (1983a).

\(^{102}\) Baudrillard (1983a; 1983b; 1988).

\(^{103}\) Baudrillard (1983a; 1983b).
and action, the TV world and the simulational world in general tell who one is and what kind of identity one should adopt. One is left with no choice other than to embrace a new sense of oneself as a less centred and integrated subject.

It is important to note that the saturating images and signs do not merely create the problems of inauthenticity and disenchantment. Since oppression and domination work in the form of cultural images and symbols, the colonisation of everyday life has also set the cultural sphere as the main ground through which any form of resistance against them takes place. In this sense resistance is, for instance, more than just a matter of turning off the TV. It also significantly involves a strong sign of rejecting being controlled by the imposing reality through adopting different, often very contrasting, cultural symbols and expressions. As a result resistance can end up in a battle of images.

**Consumer culture and capitalism**

For both Jameson and Baudrillard, the saturating images and signs are central to the development of consumer culture. Above all, images, styles and representation are always the important part of promotional aspects of economic products. The overproduction of signs is a logical consequence of modern consumption patterns. However, Jameson discovers a qualitatively different role culture plays in what he calls “late capitalism”. He notes that culture has become integrated into commodity production as it is commodified and consumed. It means that styles and appearance are not only the promotional tools, but also the products themselves. In fact, the rapid flows of images that occupy the everyday life of contemporary society are the embodiment of consumer culture. The colonising images indicate the growing importance of cultural associations and symbols which consumer culture attaches to commodities. As indicated strongly by Jameson—and less so by Baudrillard—the rise of consumer culture should then be related to the specific transformation within capitalism. He boldly argues that the rapid flows of images, which constitute the main feature of postmodernism, are nothing more than the cultural logic of the latest form of three phases of capitalist development.

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I argue that consumer culture constitutes the established social and cultural order in which the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantedment originated. The oppressive, intrusive and invasive nature of saturating images represents the growing domination of consumer culture. The domination undermines cultural values and norms other than its own, and challenges any sense of stable and fixed meanings. Consumer culture also gives rise to the new significance of culture through the overproduction of images and signs. More importantly, it has transformed culture into a new site through which its domination and destabilising effect on any form of deep structure and hidden reality takes place. Put differently, it sets culture as the main field of oppression, conflict and resistance.

I understand consumer culture as a specific form of how humans relate to physical objects. The term suggests the significance of consumption in everyday life in which the act of consuming material things does not occur within the vacuum of cultural meanings and symbols. Two aspects characterise consumer culture. The first is the use of material things as a message. Consumption becomes a sort of language through which communication between individuals take place. This is possible because in consumer culture commodities start to possess what Baudrillard refers to as "sign-value". I understand sign-value to be the value of a commodity which is derived from cultural associations and illusions attached to its image. As the commodity turns into merely a sign, its meaning detaches from the object it represented, and increasingly depends on its relations to the other meanings springing from the cultural image of other commodities. In this sense, consumption is a sign manipulation activity. It is comparable to a language, Baudrillard notes, in which individuals are forced to use to communicate with one another.

However, the most important thing for me is that messages transmitted through consumption are mainly about the identity of consumers. The act of consuming material things helps people to tell others who one is and to which part of society one belongs to. The identity that is communicated can be the one attached to the image of commodities by, for example, advertisements. It can also be the one derived from cultural associations of consumer goods invented and constructed by consumers themselves. The underlying fact is that people start to rely on consumption to create social bonds and distinctions. And these social bonds and

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107 See, for example, Lury (1996); Sassatelli (2007).
distinctions are not based on some substantial contents and qualities of one's social origins, but more on what one consumes, on one's appearance, style and self-image.

In this respect, consumption is hardly different from a play with commodities. I use the term play because in consumption people adopt meanings and symbols, identity so to speak, attached to consumer goods that are rarely stable and fixed. Consumption can then become a game of adopting, modifying and changing identity from time to time. Consumption is also a play in another sense of the metaphor. As people consume more than one category of consumer goods, they are more open to the adoption of more than one cultural association and illusion. As a result, consuming commodities in terms of adopting meanings and symbols attached to them appears more like a collage of various identities stitched to one's body.

The second is the use of consumption as leisure activities in which the act of consuming is a matter of celebration. This mainly relates to the function of consumption which is to fulfill human needs and desires. People use commodities because they enjoy the pleasure of consuming material things. Clearly, the use of consumption for pleasure is not a new phenomenon and not only associated with consumer culture. It has long been regarded as highly necessary for work. It helps people to retain many displaced orientations, which are created by discipline, control, hardship and sacrifices necessitated by the world of work. However, I argue, in consumer culture, consumption is no longer to serve work and production. People no longer consume food and drink because they need sufficient energy to work, but more importantly because they want to enjoy the pleasure of having a meal. Consumption is about celebrating the bodily pleasure and the celebration is the main goal. Instead, work has tended to become the auxiliary to consumption. People work hard and earn as much money as possible so that they can have more pleasure through spending and using up consumer goods.

The rise of the consumer culture is closely related to capitalism. To begin with, capitalism is based on commodification, which I understand is a process to create a commodity. In conventional Marxist theories, it is broadly argued that every human society must produce their own material condition of existence. The products take the form of commodities when this production is organised through exchange. In this regard, a commodity has the power not only to satisfy human needs, that is, its

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110 Featherstone (1991a).
use-value; but also to direct other commodities in exchange. When confronted with other commodities in exchange, its value appears in the form of exchange-value, which exists independently from use-value as money. The amount of money that can be used to buy or sell a commodity is then commonly known as the price of a commodity.\footnote{Marx (1976); Bottomore et al (1985).}

Commodification contributes significantly to the rise of the consumer culture. First, since capitalism is based on this commodity system of production, the expansion of capital presumes the expanding process of commodification to every corner of the world and every aspect of human life. Not only does this include things that are used to survive one’s material surroundings, but also increasingly those that are needed to engage in symbolic exchange with other fellow human beings. Commodity, in this sense, creates consumer goods and makes more aspects of human interactions available through the market. I argue that it is only through the availability of a large quantity and variety of commodities and the places where the commodities can be purchased that a consumer culture can emerge.

Nevertheless, the availability of consumer goods alone is hardly sufficient. As discussed above, the rise of a consumer culture is about a different approach to consumption in which the emphasis is on celebrating and playing with commodities. In this regard, the rapid proliferation of beautiful and fascinating images and signs associated with consumer goods in the latest development of capitalism is noteworthy. These proliferating images and signs tell us vividly that producing attractions and spectacles is as important as the availability of a large amount of consumer goods. On the one hand, beautiful and fascinating images have the power to seduce and, hence, to influence people’s desire to consume. On the other hand, the attractiveness makes consumption more enjoyable. As a consequence, consumption increasingly becomes a matter of fulfilling one’s desire and of having more fun in life. So as desire and enjoyment tend to be limitless, consumption will end up in a new drive for more consumption.

Second, commodification that leads to the domination of exchange-value at the expense of use-value weakens the significance of particularities, essential differences and qualities that mark human societies and transform them into mere exchangeable quantities through the price mechanism. For example, a car and a
painting are two totally different things. Nevertheless, the price that is attached to
and represents the value of the respective products renders obsolete their respective
particularities. The price that exists independently in the form of money makes both
items theoretically the same. The difference between them is not in essential quality,
but in the quantity of money. As capitalism expands, this process of reification
through the independency of money from any form of use-value also expands to
almost every aspect of life. 112 More importantly, the domination of exchange-values
has successfully allowed people to forget about the utility dimension of consumer
goods, their significant particularities. The commodity is then ready and has more
freedom to adopt the secondary use-value. This value is the sign-value, the cultural
associations and illusions attached to the commodity. Here, the role of proliferating
images and signs is once again crucial. Through the media and advertisements what
is accentuated is a wide range of images such as beauty, romance, exotica, fitness,
freshness, youth, energy, science and piety that are attached to mundane consumer
goods. People no longer buy a pair of shoes, but consume its cultural associations
and illusions.

Clearly, people have for a long time attached cultural meanings and symbols
to physical objects. Using and consuming things always produce meanings, which
can be communicated to others. 113 The rise of consumer culture does not create this
social habit. It only accentuates and promotes the habit of associating physical
objects with cultural symbols, illusion, emotion and fantasy. Nevertheless, the sheer
scale of availability and variety of consumer goods seems to have allowed consumer
culture to dominate the way people use physical objects to communicate. Department
stores, for example, become more like a dictionary in which a wide range of
available commodities area similar to the words and vocabularies people can select
to express the meaning of beauty, youth, fitness, piety and revolution.

It is important to note that the rise of consumer culture does not occur within
some natural process. Its rise is to serve the interests, needs and desires of specific
social classes, at least, in its initial phase. During the course of its formation, the
classes that benefit the most not only promote, but also deliberately use consumer
culture as a new way to dominate the entire society through cultural means. By and

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112 Adorno (1974; 2001); Horkheimer and Adorno (1972); Marcuse (1964). For the summary
of the Frankfurt School view on consumer culture see Featherstone (1991a); Sassatelli (2007).
113 See, for example, Lury (1996); Sassatelli (2007); Featherstone (1991a).
large, these are the upper and middle classes. They include those who possess income beyond what they need to survive their daily lives. The income hence provides them with more freedom to use a commodity for other than its use-value. In this sense, I argue that capitalism contributes significantly to the rise of consumer culture through not only commodification, but also the creation of social classes who are preoccupied with celebrating and playing with commodities.

**Contradictions and Conflicts**

I have argued that the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia is better understood against the background of the socio-historical context where the movement is born and develops. The movement is a response to the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment which have their genesis in the rising consumer culture explained above. I will now take the discussion a step further by investigating the type of contradictions created by Indonesian capitalism and how it relates to the alienation created by consumer culture.

As we know, within the conventional Marxist theories, it is broadly argued that capitalism is based on, and constantly produces, contradictions. The class conflicts and antagonism are inevitable and can only become deeper as the capitalist system is highly dependent on the social cleavages to produce further capital accumulation. Capitalism is hence a fragile system because it is always undermined from within. In the longer run, Marx argues, this will bring the system to its knees.114 To understand the rise of collective action in the forms of discontent, protest and resistance under the capitalist system, it makes sense to look at this main contradiction. The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia should also be related to tensions and conflicts originating in the class divisions constantly produced by the country’s capitalist development. In this regard, the fundamentalists represent the Indonesian subordinated classes. Their rejection of consumer culture can be understood in terms of the financial power they possess at their disposal.

Nevertheless, I find two problems inherently attached to the classical Marxist argument. First, the argument is preoccupied with the production side. The class

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114 See Marx (1964; 1970; 1976); Marx and Engels (1977)
conflict originates in the production of an economic surplus through the appropriation of the means of production by the ruling class. This, I think, can hardly explain conflicts and contradictions, which are more associated with the consumption side I have discussed thus far regarding Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia. It can certainly be argued that, since the conflict at the level of consumption is perhaps better seen as the conflict between rich and poor, it only reflects and is an unavoidable consequence of the production-based class division. However, even though the material base contributes significantly to the conflict, I believe that the consumption side, as previously demonstrated, can have its own logic of domination and oppression that provokes resistance.

At this point, the notion of consumption-based social cleavages proposed by Bauman might be useful. He broadly argues that based on the way people satisfy their needs either by the market or the state we can divide society into two groups, the seduced and the repressed. The first group has more freedom to make decisions and to enjoy the market. They are absorbed by the consumer culture as their lives are largely devoted to the acquisition and display of commodities they possess. The other group is excluded from the market. Their lack of sufficient economic and cultural resources is a hindrance that prevents them from being part of consumer culture. Their lives are instead entrapped by and depend on the bureaucracy of the state. For Bauman, contemporary society is no longer constituted by the tensions between the exploiter and the exploited or the rich and the poor, but between those who are seduced by the market and follow freely their desires and those who can hardly do so. Bauman’s argument significantly illustrates how society is characterised and dominated by the consumer culture. Clearly, not everyone can enjoy the consumer culture and participate at the same level. Yet, it is exactly the relationship with the consumer culture that defines to what group one belongs. To borrow Bauman’s term, the fundamentalists are the repressed. Their lives might not be intricately entangled with the state, but their power to participate in the market is limited. They are not entirely free from the seduction aroused by the rising consumer culture. But they certainly have less freedom to follow their desires and to celebrate and play with consumer goods. The resistance in this regard reflects the conflicts between the fundamentalists and the seduced.

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Despite his inspiring proposition, it can be seen that, at least, the repressed is another term for the have-nots. In so doing, the seduced-repressed divisions argued by Bauman can hardly escape the production-based class cleavages. While consumption could define one’s social position, it seems that the material basis makes the social groupings possible. The notion of being less seduced can be further seen as a sort of false consciousness that fails to correctly make sense of exploitation and subordination suffered by the repressed.

Here lies the second problem of the conventional Marxist analysis. The analysis tends to relate the class conflict only to the issue of exploitation, poverty and misery created by the brutal process of capital accumulation. It makes this type of alienation the most important concern and subordinates any type of resistance and protest into the service of the fight against exploitation, poverty and misery. Even though these are crucial issues, Marx himself notes that alienation takes various different paths. Oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment are among the other important forms of alienation, which are not subordinated to, nor cultural dimension of, the former. As I have argued thus far, in terms of the struggle for identity the fundamentalists are more concerned with this second type of alienation. The question is how this type of alienation relates to capitalist production without being subordinated to the issue of exploitation, poverty and misery.

As previously discussed, the manipulation of consumers’ desires and the commodification of symbolic exchange through the production of a sign-value are the main sources of alienation that take the form of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment. It seems that everyone can potentially suffer from this type of alienation regardless of one’s financial power, as it largely depends on how far the consumer culture has developed. The social division is in turn based more on how people respond to the problem. There are some people who deal with the problem of inauthenticity, for example, by adopting the new identity provided by the consumer culture. They are also more ready to modify and change the adopted identity as they follow, and devote themselves to the acquisition of, modifications and changes within cultural images and illusions produced by the consumer culture. For this group, the resistance against the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment is hardly different from the celebrating and playing with

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116 See, for example, Marx (1964). See also Bottomore et al (1985); Callinicos (2006).
consumption. On the other side of division are those who fight this type of alienation by negating and demonising the consumer culture. They question the manufactured cultural meanings, values and signs that occupy their lives through the saturating images. They also try hard to discover what they take to be an authentic and true identity, for instance, that they think provides them with both a sense of autonomy and of having roots in some substantial and eternal meanings and goals.

I by no means downplay the role of exploitation, poverty and misery. The classical production-based class division remains important, but in terms of provoking resistance it is no longer decisive. As mentioned above, everyone can be potentially oppressed—or seduced to use Bauman’s expression—and, hence, can also be potentially involved in some sort of resistance regardless of how much money one possesses. The level of income, however, contributes to the way people react. For those who have discretionary income, the struggle for identity, for example, can easily find its way to excessive consumerism. For the poor, rejecting consumer culture, learning not to be easily seduced and disciplining desires is the much better choice. The poor can also play with imitation and the second hand market should they find the temptation aroused by advertisements and the media is too hard to resist. And should they have enough money it might be okay to enjoy some fruits of consumer culture. In this sense consumer culture can be seen as deepening and aggravating the existing class division created by exploitation and poverty. It accentuates the division between the upper and the lower class through the acquisition and display of commodities. It also provides different opportunities for the rich and the poor. The fundamentalists, as can be seen in this study, represent the second group. They fight against the oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment by rejecting the consumer culture and by trying hard—sometimes unsuccessfully—to distance themselves from any type of celebrating and playing with consumption. Their financial base explains why they choose this path as most of the activists come from the lower-middle and the lower classes.

PROPOSITIONS

Based on the theoretical background discussed in the preceding pages, how should the rise of Islamic fundamentalism be understood? First, I argue that Islamic
fundamentalism is a political phenomenon, which appears in the form of religiosity. The political nature refers to the fact that the movement is a resistance to the established social and cultural order, which those involved seek to transform. The resistance is an outcome that responds to the issue of alienation. It is produced within contradictions and antagonisms which are closely associated with the way society is instituted. In this sense, Islamic fundamentalism is a collectively organised action. Those who are involved in the movement develop and share the same feeling of being alienated, the same goal of transforming the existing order as the source of alienation, and the same sense of belonging to a similar collectivity.

Second, the religious aspect of Islamic fundamentalism is not simply one of faith and knowledge of Islamic teachings, that constitute a hidden structure and an independent reality from which the movement is merely a surface representation. The religiosity is the actual surface appearance, the dress code, the symbols, the colours, the body movements and the body language, through which the fundamentalists accentuate who they are and, at the same time, through which observers and bystanders make sense of what fundamentalism is. It means that the Islamic fundamentalism is not only a form of resistance, but also a form of symbolic expression. The resistance in fact involves and ends up in the expression of who the fundamentalists are.

Third, what is expressed through such religiosity is the fundamentalists’ identity. The resistance, through the movement’s cultural symbols and images, takes the form of the fundamentalists’ struggle for identity. However, the struggle is not a matter of rediscovering their original and true identity which existed in the past transcending time and space, but takes the path of politics of representation. Their identity is produced through the practice of discourse, in which the movement is the main media where the fundamentalists construct who they are through the play of difference. The struggle for identity is a response to alienation, which is present in the form of oppression and domination. This kind of oppression and domination, which works at the level of self and everyday life, creates the problems of inauthenticity and disenchantment. They strip off one’s ability to take independent action of self and undermine the meaning which one needs to structure and direct one’s life. Identity hence denotes the desire for freedom and certainty in the life of those involved in the movement.
Fourth, it is my contention, however, that the struggle for identity is not only an indication of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment. By the same token, identity equally implies freedom, autonomy, certainty and security in life. Above all, the fundamentalists' identity, produced through the movement's expressive dimension, is not only an empty signifier, whose positivity is nothing more than negativity of its negated other. More importantly, this constructed identity also implies specific practices and bodily performances, which are largely based on regulations, limitations and prohibitions on the body. During the course of identity practices and performances involving a highly disciplined and strictly controlled body, the fundamentalists' subject is produced. The discipline and control gives the subject values, meanings and goals, which create a sense of certainty for the fundamentalists and of having a direction in life.

Furthermore, the fundamentalists consciously undertake the implied practices and performances, which in effect allow their body to be strictly regulated, because they recognise it as part of resisting the oppression. This simple recognition based on a desire to reject oppression and domination paves the way for them to take an independent action on self, in the form of adopting a deliberately new personality implied by the produced subject. This results in the remaking of self in which the body, instead of being a hindrance, plays an important role. In this sense, rather than defending an identity, subjectivity and personality already existing and in danger of collapse through the oppression and domination, the resistance is a matter of producing something new. The newly constructed identity, newly produced subject and newly remade self is not only a challenge to oppression and domination, but also the solution itself. For it serves the desire for freedom and certainty in life by allowing the fundamentalists to regain their self and reclaim their everyday life, which gives them some sense of autonomy with meanings and directions in life.

Fifth, the source of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment is the rapid flow of images and signs that occupy the fundamentalists' fabric of everyday life. These occupying images provide them with a new reality, new world and new life they can hardly escape from. This significantly undermines their critical abilities, as images replace one's autonomous consciousness in deciding action. The saturating images and signs also accentuate the importance of appearance, which is detached and fully independent from the control of any underlying structure. This equally
challenges any form of rootedness and substance in providing directions and goals for human actions.

Sixth, the rapid flows of images indicate and are produced by consumer culture. The oppressive, intrusive and invasive nature of saturating images and signs, which colonise everyday life and work deep into self, represent the growing domination of consumer culture. As consumer culture constitutes the established social and cultural order in which the problem of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment originated, its domination undermines cultural values and norms other than its own and disrupts any sense of stable and fixed meanings. Furthermore, through the overproduction of images and signs, consumer culture gives rise to the new significance of culture. It transforms culture into a new site through which its domination and its destabilising effect on any form of deep structure takes place. Consumer culture in effect sets culture as the main field of oppression, conflict and resistance. In this respect, the fundamentalists’ resistance that takes the form of struggle for identity is more than just an attempt to prevent being exposed to images in one’s everyday life. It also significantly involves adopting different cultural symbols and images and lifestyles.

Seventh, capitalism significantly contributes to the emergence of consumer culture and its further development. The celebrating and playing with commodities, which constitutes the core of consumer culture, is closely related to specific transformations within capitalism, which manifests itself in the centrality of images and signs. There is a need to reduce the turnover time of capital by using beautiful and attractive images to manipulate consumers’ tastes and desires. In addition, capital expands to the sphere of symbolic exchange in which producing cultural associations and illusions of consumer goods increasingly become more important than producing their use-value.

Finally, I argue that the struggle for identity should also be seen as being produced within the contradictions created by and reproducing capitalism. The way fundamentalists’ respond to the dominating consumer culture, which is mostly present to them in the form of saturating images and signs, is strongly influenced by their location within the existing class division and social antagonism.
Fundamentalism

I am using the term "fundamentalism" because even though in the coming chapters I will also use other terms such as "radical" and "militant", those who are involved in this movement are first and foremost "fundamentalist". I understand fundamentalism as an attempt to return to the fundamentals of religion, to what the fundamentalist interprets as the true and original teachings of a given religion. Fundamentalism's main concern is religiosity. The fundamentalists want to be good Muslims by adopting and implementing what they see as Islamic values and norms. Such concerns can easily end up in radicalism because being pious implies radical change not only in one's conduct, behaviour and attitude, but also in one's personality and one's entire life. It also leads to militancy, as being faithful equally requires strong commitment, consistency and endurance.

In this sense, the term fundamentalism seems to contradict my emphasis on the political nature of the movement. As noted above, some observers will prefer to use "Islamism" to describe it as political ideology, which implies political and social acts necessary for the establishment of a state based on Islam. However, the term will only look odd if we think that politics is entirely a matter of struggle for promoting specific policies and regulations or is an attempt to change a political regime. On the contrary, politics can also mean resistance, conflict and oppression, which do not necessarily work at the level of public sphere and state and, instead, operate at the level of privacy, self and everyday life. Hence fundamentalism does not automatically mean the absence of politics. In fact religiosity and pietism is a form and effect of resistance, which implies radical transformation, even though in the area conventionally taken as non-political.

It is important to note that the term fundamentalism used here should not be treated as a sort of inner structure that has the power to command actions for four reasons. First, fundamentalism is a form and result of resistance. Second, the meaning of fundamentalism is based on the play of difference that is hardly fixed and stable. Third, the state of being fundamentalist refers to surface appearance, practices and performances. Fourth, since appearance, practices and performances need to be learned and adopted, fundamentalism is a matter of "becoming" rather than "being".

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117 See Marty and Appleby (1991); Roy (2004); Castells (2004).
118 See Bubalo and Fealey (2005); Barton (2004; 2005).
METHODOLOGY

I take methodology to be a question of how the knowledge produced in this project is approached and treated, which is to say, how it is revealed and constituted. I believe that knowledge is not something which exists out there already waiting to be excavated. Knowledge is not present in a form of immutable facts which can be revealed once theories are able to discover the natural law and mechanism that produced them. Knowledge is instead more about our intention to produce our own understanding of a given phenomenon in which our own experience, values and interests and the historical contextualised beliefs and assumptions that we already possess can hardly be put aside. Hence, the knowledge produced in my study does not only describe reality, but also and more importantly shapes and produces it. It is not my intention to treat knowledge as a neutral and objective instrument for passively disclosing reality. Instead, I try to use knowledge to propose alternative ways of constructing and reconstructing the given phenomena.

In this regard, the best starting point for discussing the issue of methodology is perhaps to restate the aim of this study, which is to attempt to explain the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia, particularly in the years following Soeharto’s resignation. My goal is to provide an answer as to why people, Indonesian Muslims in this case, become fundamentalist. However, to deal with this question, I try first to understand how they become fundamentalist. Inspired by the debate between Chomsky and Foucault,\(^\text{119}\) I set my study along the lines of “why” and “how” for the following reason. “Why” is a question of substance, of something hidden deep inside, as an independent structure and true reality that has the power to act and to speak. “How”, on the other hand, is a question of form, of surface appearance, which is commonly seen as representing, acting and speaking on behalf of, the real thing inside. My study by and large takes a different approach. I prefer to start from the question “how” because “form” in my view is not only a symbol we give to name the true underlying reality, but also and more significantly implies what we used to take as “substance”. Form in this sense produces substance, rather than vice versa.

In practical terms, my study starts from the surface appearance of fundamentalists. I focus more on the “form” of being fundamentalist, on dimensions

such as fashion, physical appearance and body movements, which constitute the
cultural symbols and images through which we commonly make sense of them.
Instead of uncovering the hidden structure such as the interpretation of religious
teaching and viewing it as the determinant factor that produces human actions, such
as wearing the *hijab*, I try to treat the surface appearance as an independent entity.
The meaning of *hijab*, for example, is relatively free from the control of those who
adopt this specific kind of dress. For it depends on how the *hijab* is compared and
contrasted with other items within the same category. The next step is to know and
understand how the surface appearance such as wearing the *hijab* and growing a
beard is adopted and for what purpose. This is just a bridge to a more important
issue, which is, how wearing the *hijab* and growing a beard influence and bring
consequences to their self, their behaviours and their attitudes.

In so doing, I can hardly treat human actions as being detached from human
experience. By this I mean that human action is not a result of some natural
mechanism. We interpret and define our own actions and attach meanings to it.
Within the tradition of symbolic interactionism, it is even argued that we seriously
take into consideration how others will interpret and give meanings to our actions.\[120\]
Similarly, to understand how the fundamentalists’ surface appearance implies their
substantial content hidden inside their self, I have to understand how they
experience, for instance, the act of adopting Islamic fashion. How they define it, how
they learn it, how they manage it, how they become used to it, what kind of feelings
they have gone through and what they think about other people’s reactions are
among the relevant questions that can lead me to produce an alternative knowledge
about Islamic fundamentalism in the Archipelago. In this sense, the act of adopting
Islamic fashion is similar to a written text, whose main content is a story of how they
become what we know as fundamentalist.

It is important to note, however, that interpretation is not only made by those
who produce the action—the fundamentalists in this case—but also by the
observer—which is myself. This is because I intend to produce knowledge which is
more than just verification of reality as it is, but as a critique of the current condition.
In my view, the current condition, the socio-historical context where the Islamic
fundamentalism emerges, is largely characterised by domination, oppression and

\[120\] See Elliot (2007).
injustice. I am deeply concerned with addressing the issue of alienation associated with the cultural, political and economic establishment, which represent nothing more than replication of power relations with negative effects on the alienated. Inspired by the philosophical approach of the Frankfurt School, the knowledge produced in this study is then an attempt to expose contradictions and conflicts within the existing social and cultural order. In this regard, I base my analysis on the surface appearance of fundamentalists in the context of domination, oppression and injustice originating within the larger social structure. The question is how the act of growing a beard, for instance, can tell us something about the problem of alienation; how it indicates the feeling of being alienated and, at the same time, implies de-alienation. At this point it is my turn to interpret and give meanings to the already meaning bounded human actions. My aim is to produce a different reality of Islamic fundamentalism with the intention of promoting a more critical approach to the existing structural condition and, hopefully, to provide a clue about possible social transformation.

Research Method

I select five fundamentalist groups as the main target of investigation. They are the salafi group, particularly, those associated with Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah (FKASWJ or Communication Forum for the Adherents of the Prophetic Tradition and the Community) and its paramilitary wing Laskar Jihad (LJ or Jihad Troops); Front Pembela Islam (FPI or Islamic Defenders Front); Jemaah Islamiyah (JI or Islamic Community); Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI or Indonesian Islamic Warriors Assembly); and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI or Indonesian Party of Liberation). Above all these five organisations have been the most prominent figures within the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the last decade. The groups were heavily involved and were often the main player in various types of both violent and non-violent actions associated with the movement. The organisations' leading figures are very often taken by the media and the Indonesian audience in general as representing the community of Islamic fundamentalists.

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121 Horkheimer and Adorno (1972); Marcuse (1964); Habermas (1991); Rush (2004); Thompson and Held (1982); West (2004); Giddens (2000).
Finally, at least until some of the groups were banned, paralysed by the Indonesian authorities, or internally divided, they were relatively well organised with significant numbers of members, followers and sympathisers.

I use several research methods in investigating these fundamentalist groups. My study begins by conducting extensive research of various types of related reading materials (books, articles, reports, pamphlets and brochures), including articles and reports presented by both printed and electronic mass media. The most important ones, however, are reading materials produced and published by the fundamentalist groups themselves.

I also conduct a dozen interviews with both the movement leaders and the rank-and-file. By and large interviews are more like conversations that I have with fundamentalists. The structure of guiding questions is loose as I allow the fundamentalists to speak in general terms and, during the course of conversation, I follow certain issues that seem to be important and pursue further information. The main purpose of the interviews is to gather relevant information at first hand regarding issues and topics in the argument I develop in this study.

However, the interviews are also important as a forum for debating the fundamentalists. Debating here means two things: first, debating their views on topics such as capitalism, liberalism and democracy, and, second, debating their own interpretation of the actions they take such as wearing the hijab by proposing my own interpretation. This strategy is very useful not only in understanding meanings they attach to their conduct, behaviour and attitude, but also in allowing a sort of critical evaluation of the given form of their action. Such critical evaluation is an important step in uncovering how the form of their actions and the movement's expressive dimension in particular might have potential implications, which are yet to be discovered should action remain taken as representing some inner substance.

In relation to debating the fundamentalists, and inspired by the method applied by Fromm,¹²² I also use the interviews to make sense of the fundamentalists' subjective motivation, which allows them to understand, interpret and define a specific question I ask and to provide answers with particular directions. The basis of this subjective motivation, I argue, is resistance in the form of struggle for their identity. My concern here is not the rational judgement that we can pursue to validate

¹²² Fromm (1960).
statements they give during the conversations and thereby measure their logic. Instead, their statements are a confirmation of their desire to resist what they take as oppression and domination and the conversation is the medium through which they produce their identity.

Interviews are not the only direct interaction I have with the fundamentalists. During the fieldwork for this project I was involved in a number of the movement's activities and actions. I visited the organisation offices regularly and stayed in place such as Al-Mukmin for some period of time; participated in seminars and small group discussions conducted periodically; and frequently attended sermons provided by leading figures and both daily and Friday prayer held in the organisation associated mosques. In general this type of observation allows me to getting closer to the fundamentalists. During the regular visit to the organisation offices, for example, there were a number of small and short conversations on various issues which provided useful information. These observations also helped me to know many things hardly revealed during the interviews.

Finally, it is important to note that the knowledge produced in this study is also based on my personal experience unnecessarily related to the research project of the thesis. My own encounter with Islamic fundamentalism started in the early 1990s, when the movement was beginning to re-emerge. As an undergraduate student, Islamic fundamentalism for me was one among a few less attractive ideologies debated within the circle of student activists. The research conducted for this study only reactivates the knowledge, perceptions and views I already possessed not only during the encounters that I had with the fundamentalists in the past, but also through present activities mostly outside my academic life, such as my regular Friday prayer. Such knowledge, perceptions and views might be seen as part of a pre-existing assumption that influence the way I understand the movement. However, at the same time, the research that I conducted for this project equally persuades me to revisit and redefine them.

THEESIS ORGANISATION

I divide my thesis into seven chapters. This Introduction contains the theoretical framework of this thesis. The next one focuses on the organisation and the forms of
collective action taken by the fundamentalist groups. The main argument of chapter 3 is that the fundamentalists’ struggle for identity is to serve their desire for freedom and their bid for certainty in life. In chapter 4, I will try to show how the struggle for identity implies their desire for freedom and certainty in life. Chapter 5 discusses the rising consumer culture in Indonesia, how it relates to the saturating images and the capitalist development, and how it can provoke the fundamentalists’ struggle for identity. Chapter 6 will further demonstrate how the process of being fundamentalist can be taken as a response to the rising consumer culture in the Archipelago and how this response should be understood in terms of class antagonism. The final chapter is the Conclusion which contains a review of my analysis and how the knowledge this study produces opens the way for further research.
Chapter 2
THE ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST MOVEMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY

Islamic fundamentalism is better seen as a form of organised collective action which is different from irregular, unpatterned and spontaneous forms of behaviour. The movement is based on specific organisations and followers, pursues certain goals and uses several types of actions to register its appeals. More importantly, the movement is the production of some internal process. Preceding the action is the construction of movement collectiveness that provides some degree of internal unity and coherence and some directions. During the process of creating this internal unity and, hence, boundaries, the fundamentalists define who they are, what they are doing, for what reason and purpose, and who the enemies are.

This chapter also draws on the importance of identity as put forward by NSM theories. I argue that, as a form of social movement, the fundamentalists are involved in the struggle for identity. Actions carried out by the fundamentalists are not merely means to achieve their instrumental goals, but should also be comprehended as the way they make their existence visible, the way they accentuate who they are. Their existence and identity is something that is non-negotiable since it is a matter of being a fundamentalist. In this sense I treat fundamentalist action as a goal in itself. The focal point is not on why they select specific forms of collective action, but on how they use, for instance, protests as a medium for expression, performance, identification and demonstrating strong commitment to specific values and norms.

In this chapter I will discuss three issues. First, I will briefly sketch the movement and its main organisations. Second, I will demonstrate how this movement is an end process of the construction of the movement’s “we-ness”. Third, I will explain the logic behind fundamentalists’ actions through which we can understand the nature of their struggle for identity.
THE FUNDAMENTALISTS

My study focuses on five Islamic fundamentalist groups: FKASWJ, FPI, MMI, HTI and JI. Even though they are not the only fundamentalist organisations, they are relatively the largest in terms of the size of participants and sympathisers and in terms of the number of branches throughout the archipelago. Hence, the movement is not an isolated entity. Its ethical projects are embedded in ideological views of some part of the Muslim community. Its participants and sympathisers can be, to some extent, linked to the modernist and the conservative Muslims in Indonesia.166

The Salafi Group

FKASWJ was founded on 14 February 1998 during tablig akbar (religious mass rally) at Manahan Stadium in Solo, Central Java as a response to what it perceived as the growing threat to the Indonesian Islamic community following the increasing economic and political turbulence brought about by the currency crisis.167 Apart from a number of mass rallies, the organisation activity that has attracted wide domestic as well as international public attention is its involvement in waging jihad war on Christians in Maluku and in the other communal conflict regions in Indonesia. The main figure of FKASWJ was its flamboyant leader, Ja'far Umar Thalib. Since the mid-1990s he had been active as a leader and a teacher in several salafi pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), in Solo, Jember, Balikpapan and Pekanbaru.168 Thalib claimed that he had prepared the formation of FKASWJ for ten years before its official foundation. In fact, FKASWJ’s existence could be traced back to the development of Thalib’s jamaah (community), Ihya al-Sunnah, in Degolan, Yogyakarta in 1993.169 It was this community that became the backbone of FKASWJ when it was formally established. The members of Ihya al-Sunnah served as the organisation members and filled up the positions of the

166 See van Bruinessen (2002a); Hefner (2000); Schwartz (1999).
167 See Baker (2000); Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
168 See Baker (2000); Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
FKASWJ organisational structure. They also helped to create and manage activities of the organisation.

The paramilitary division, *Laskar Jihad* (LJ or *Jihad Troops*), was the leading element of FKASWJ. It was formed on 30 January 2000 as a reaction to what FKASWJ saw as the persecution of Muslims by Christians in the communal conflict in Maluku. In April 2000 its first armed units were sent to Maluku to engage in fighting as well as educational and welfare activities. The command structure of LJ is similar to the military. The commander-in-chief was Thalib himself who was assisted by several field commanders. The total number of LJ members was approximately ten thousand people. At the height of its war campaign against Christians in Maluku, LJ sent more than three thousand personnel.¹⁷⁰

FKASWJ tried to reach the Indonesian public and looked for potential recruits through publications. Apart from several books, FKASWJ published a daily, *Berita Laskar*, and a periodical, *Salafy* journal. There were also two weeklies, *Jum'at al-Jihad* and *Jum'at Nashroh* bulletins issued every Friday.¹⁷¹ Three websites were operated containing news, the official statements and information on the FKASWJ humanitarian activities. The sites disappeared shortly after the Bali bombings. In addition to this, FKASWJ produced a set of cassettes and CDs containing sermons and lectures presented by Thalib and his fellow preachers such as Muhammad As-Sowed, Usamah Mahri and Dzul Akmal. Its activists set up stands in near mosques, schools, traffic lights and other public venues to address passers-by in order to express their Islamic views.¹⁷²

FKASWJ maintained close relations with a number of *pesantrens* and salafi foundations across the archipelago, the majority of which conducted *dauroh* (training program in Islamic subjects) and *Majelis Taliim* (more general religious teachings). The subjects taught included the theories of Al-Qur'an and hadith (the words and acts of the Prophet Muhammad), Islamic theologies, Islamic jurisprudence and Arabic. Some *pesantrens* and foundations provided a special program to train salafi preachers. Others focused on educating children, especially orphans and neglected children who were old

¹⁷⁰ Hasan (2002); Davis (2002); Featey (2004).
¹⁷¹ Yunanto (2003).
¹⁷² Hasan (2002); Yunanto (2003).
enough to go to school. The teachings are strongly influenced by wahhabism, a religious revivalist movement that has a strong influence in the Arabian Peninsula. This is due to the fact that most salafists, including those of FKASWJ, continued their studies with salafi teachers in Saudi Arabia such as Abd al-Aziz bin Baz, Mohammed bin Saleh al-Uthaimeen, Nasir ad-Din al-Albani, Salih ibn Fawzan al-Fawzan and Salim al-Hilali. At the same time, in the last two decades Saudi Arabian religious institutions have played key roles in supporting the global salafi networks.

It seemed that FKASWJ was a growing force. In less than four years it had successfully established seventy branches throughout Indonesia. In Maluku it built its own hospital and a radio station and possessed a number of speedboats and military weapons. It also claimed to have around eighty thousand to ninety thousand members, but a more accurate number was approximately forty thousand. FKASWJ had sufficient financial backing. The spokesman of FKASWJ stated that its funds were from its sympathisers among Indonesian Muslims. But the most important sources of donations were from overseas such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Singapore and the USA. Nevertheless, FKASWJ showed signs of decline in mid 2001 after Thalib was arrested by the Indonesian police. He was accused of the torture and murder of one of the FKASWJ members and of fuelling criminal violence. The accusation was in fact related to the implementation of a shari’a type punishment of one of the LJ fighters who committed rape in Ambon. The sentence was rajm, a sort of capital punishment by stoning to death. In mid 2002 Thalib was arrested for the second time with the charges of insulting the president and inciting religious conflict before eventually being found not guilty. After the Bali blasts, the dissbanding of FKASWJ and its paramilitary wing was made known to the Indonesian public.

Many factors contributed to the dissolution of the organisation. The US-led war on terrorism apparently brought considerable damage to all Islamic fundamentalist

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173 ICG (2004b); Hasan (2002).
174 Hasan (2002); Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
175 Bubalo and Fealey (2005).
176 Davis (2002); Hasan (2002); Yunanto (2003).
177 Yunanto (2003).
178 Davis (2002); Yunanto (2003).
179 Hasan (2002); Shoelhi (2002).
180 Umam (2006); Fealey (2004).
groups in Indonesia, including FKASWJ, as the Indonesian authorities were under international pressure to hunt down suspected Muslim activists and Islamic organisations. Thalib tried hard to distance himself from Osama Bin Laden. He stated that he met Bin Laden in Afghanistan but questioned Bin Laden's Islamic credentials. It was clear that Thalib and FKASWJ were committed to a fatwa (religious legal response) issued by a leading salafi preacher in Saudi Arabia, the late Abd Aziz bin Baz, declaring Bin Laden as an example of a bad Muslim. Another factor was the growing disaffection within the salafi community which denounced Thalib's popularity as against salafi principles. His former allies isolated him and took further action by looking for support from a leading salafi preacher, Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali. Thalib admitted that it was the fatwa from Madkhali that led to the dissolution of FKASWJ. Since the mid 2000s, the salafi group has been represented by a number of different groups, which are led by some former FKASWJ and LJ members. These groups maintain more or less informal contacts and focus more on dakwah and publications, including several websites.

The Islamic Defenders

FPI was established on 17 August 1998 during a meeting at Pesantren Al-Umm in Ciputat, Tangerang, attended by hundreds of Muslims from Jakarta and its surrounding areas to commemorate Indonesia’s Independence Day. Among the attendees were several local Muslim leaders such as Cecep Bustomi, Habib Idrus Jamalullail, Damanhuri, Habib Muhammad Riziez Shihab and Misbahul Anam. These leaders were haunted by what they believed as the continuing and systematic assault on Indonesian Muslims in the last two decades. The meeting resulted in a declaration to establish a front to defend Islam and to uphold the honour of Muslims. The FPI's activists first received public attention when they were involved in PAM Swakarsa, a civilian security unit sponsored by some factions within the government and its security

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181 Umam (2006); van Bruinessen (2002a); Fealey (2004).
183 Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
apparatus. The establishment of this unit was aimed at challenging the growing student demonstration opposing, by then, the administration of President B.J. Habibie and demanding the military withdrawal from politics. It seemed that FPI together with other radical Islam organisations such as Hizbullah Front and Gerakan Pemuda Islam (GPI or Islam Youth Movement) threw their support behind Habibie because the President was viewed as a Muslim leader. The most prominent activity of the organisation was, however, its range of attacks on the so-called places of vice such as night clubs, cafes, pubs and billiard parlours. Similar to FKASWJ, FPI formed its own militia, Laskar Pembela Islam (LPI or Islam Defender Troops) with the main task being to execute the organisation’s programs. In practice LPI was the backbone of FPI’s mass rallies and its attacks on the places of vice.

By August 2002 FPI claimed that it had significantly developed and was successful in establishing representatives in eighteen provinces across Indonesia. This was hardly proved since nearly all FPI activities took place in Jakarta and its surrounding areas. The truth seems to be that FPI is a Jakarta based organisation with a strong presence in approximately forty sub-districts of this city. Indonesia’s media reports show that the real number is close to 170 thousand. The highest number of FPI members is in Jakarta followed by East Java, Sumedang, Lampung, Madura and Cirebon. But even this figure, according to another investigation, is still exaggerated as the number of participants involved in demonstrations staged by the FPI was only several hundred and never exceeded a thousand.

FPI is a unique organisation in terms of the Islamic background of its members. The elite of the organisation is dominated by Arab-decent-Muslim scholars; some of them are from the family of sayyid (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad), who have a strong salafi background. Its leader, Habib Rizieq, is a young Arab who studied at LIPIA and at King Muhammad ibn Saud University in Riyadh. Another sayyid in the elite circle is Husein al-Habsyi, the leader of the Indonesian Muslim Brotherhood who

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184 Jamhari and Jahroni (2004); Yunanto (2003); Purnomo (2003).
185 Jamhari and Jahroni (2004); Purnomo (2003).
188 Yunanto (2003).
189 Yunanto (2003).
was in jail for ten years of a twenty-year prison sentence because of his involvement in the bombing of the Borobudur in 1985.\textsuperscript{190} On the other hand, some members of the FPI elite, such as Misbahul Anam, do not have salafi elements. Salafi here means a movement within Islamic tradition that seeks to return to what the salafists see as the purest form of Islam, they believe, practiced by Muhammad, His Companions and the earliest generation of His Followers. The background of Anam and the majority of the organisation rank and file are traditional Islam. Many of them are Betawi and Bantenese and come from the NU (the largest traditional Islam organisation in Indonesia) family.\textsuperscript{191} Nonetheless, FPI formally described itself as \textit{ahlus sunnah wal jamaah} (adherents of the Prophetic tradition and community). Although the term for many Muslims is longhand for Sunni, FPI orientation is strongly influenced by salafi teachings.\textsuperscript{192}

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and especially after the Bali bombings, FPI had also been in decline. The major blow came in October 2002 when Rizieq was detained by the police over an FPI attack on a billiard parlour. Rizieq was accused of inciting hatred. He was found guilty and received a seven month prison sentence. In November 2002 the FPI leadership decided to “freeze” the organisation. Shortly in February 2003 FPI resumed some of its activities. The organisation was recently involved in a number of mass rallies demanding the government and the parliament to legislate an anti-pornography law in 2006. They were also at centre stage in the street demonstration that ended up in a violent clash with the groups who supported Ahmadiyah in 2008. Ahmadiyah is another movement within Islamic tradition founded towards the end of 19th century and originating with the life and teaching of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

The Mujahidin Assembly

MMI was formed on 7 August 2000 in Yogyakarta. Its foundation was a result of what it declared as \textit{Kongres Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia I} (the First Congress of

\textsuperscript{190} Hasan (2002); Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
\textsuperscript{191} Fealey (2004).
\textsuperscript{192} Fealey (2004); Purnomo (2003).
Indonesia’s Jihad Fighter Assembly) beginning two days earlier. The congress was attended by around eighteen hundred participants from approximately twenty-four provinces throughout Indonesia and some Muslim activist representatives from overseas. The very name Majelis Mujahidin (an assembly of jihad fighters) demonstrates that the foundation of MMI was aimed at bringing together all Muslim activists who fight for the implementation of shari’a and the establishment of an Islamic state.¹⁹³

The congress appointed Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, the alleged JI leader, as the leader of its supreme religious body. The congress also selected Irfan Suryahardi Awwas as the head of the executive board. The organisation makes it clear to the public that MMI is continuing the struggle of DI. The day of its foundation was in fact the fifty-first anniversary of the DI’s declaration of a Negara Islam Indonesia (NII or Indonesian Islamic State).¹⁹⁴ The strong DI background of a number of its leading figures further proves the links between the two. Ba’asyir himself, apart from his connections with JI, was arrested by the New Order government in the early 1980s because of the association of his political activities with the cause of DI. Awwas also served nine years in jail for publishing ar-Risalah, a radical Islam bulletin in the late 1970s that demonstrated its sympathy to the DI’s ideals. However, not all key persons of the organisation have DI elements. Some of them are more close to Masyumi; others are simply veterans of radical Muslim activists who had been oppressed by the New Order regime; and there are also a number of activists who relate to Al-Mukmin.

In contrast to DI, it seems that MMI does not use an armed struggle to achieve its ultimate goal. The organisation conducts public advocacy and involves itself in a number of non-violent activities such as seminars, public education, publishing and rallies.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, MMI is not entirely a peaceful organisation. For it is closely associated with a paramilitary unit, Laskar Mujahidin (LM or Jihad Fighter Troop). In addition to its main task to ensure the security of MMI and its leaders, the Laskar also waged war on Christians in the communal conflict areas in Maluku and Central Sulawesi.

¹⁹³ Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
¹⁹⁵ Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
MMI has been partly damaged since the Bali blasts as its senior figures were
detained for their activities associated with the terrorist attacks. The supreme leader of
MMI, Ba'asyir, is the accused terrorist religious leader. The Indonesian government did
arrest him for subversion with the aim of overthrowing the government and for the
infringement of emigration law. But he has not been found guilty on the terrorist
charge. Another key figure is Agus Dwikarna, the secretary of the MMI’s executive
board, who has been detained by the Philippine authorities since March 2002. He was
accused of being involved in the bombing of the Philippine embassy in Jakarta in
August 2000. He is also believed to be involved in Al-Qaeda cells in Southeast Asia.
However, Dwikarna was sentenced to ten years prison for possessing explosives. In
2008, the organisation suffered a further setback. The growing internal rift resulted in
the open conflict between Ba'asyir and his followers, on the one hand, and Awwas and
his friends, on the other hand. The former left MMI and established a new organisation
called Jamaa'ah Anshorut Tauhid.

The Party of Liberation

_Hizbut Tahrir_ was originally established by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, a Palestinian
religious scholar, in 1953 in Jerusalem. It became active in Indonesia in the early
1980s, took the name of HTI and went underground during most of the New Order
period. The organisation reached the shore at the same time as another transnational
Islamic movement, _Ikhwanul Muslimin_ (the Muslim Brotherhood) started to influence
Indonesian Muslim activists. The Brotherhood seemed to become more popular as a
number of books written by its prominent figures such as Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb
and Said Hawwa were widely read. Even many HTI's activists made their way to the
organisation after being introduced initially to the Brotherhood ideas.

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198 Jamhari and Jahroni (2004); Rahmat (2005); Fealey (2004).
199 Jamhari and Jahroni (2004); Rahmat (2005).
Two figures that helped the foundation of HTI in the early 1980s were M. Mustofa and Abdurrahman al-Baghdadi, a Lebanese Australian. In the early 1980s both men began to disseminate the Hizbut Tharir ideas and thoughts through halaqah (religious study circle), initially, at Pesantren al-Ghazali. The first participants of halaqah were mostly the students of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB or Bogor Agriculture Institute). In 1985 HTI started to spread to other university campuses outside Bogor. Since the late 1990s, HTI has reached the Islamic community outside university campuses. It claims to have approximately ten thousand members with representatives in twenty provinces of Indonesia. The largest number of HTI activists is in Java. South Sulawesi and South Kalimantan are the strongest non-Java based members. In 2000 it seems that HTI has been confident enough to reveal itself to the public.

Ideologically, HTI is strongly influenced by salafism, Islamic reformism of the Muslim Brotherhood and the ideas of pan-Islamism of Jamaluddin al-Afghani. It is a salafi organisation in a sense that it is preoccupied with the idea of returning to the pristine Islam as practised, in its view, by Muhammad and His Companions. However, HTI departs from conventional salafi such as FKASWJ and FPI, in its emphasis on the importance of struggle for power in order to ensure the implementation of shari'a. HTI also goes even further than the Brotherhood in its goals to establish a world caliphate. The inspiration does not come entirely from al-Afghani’s pan-Islamism of cooperation between independent states to achieve common goals, but also rests on the notion of caliphate as practised by the Prophet Muhammad and the first generation of Muslims.

The organisation uses the media, publications and seminars to reach its supporters and bystanders. It publishes weeklies and operates websites that mainly contain the organisation’s official statements and views on domestic and international issues and produces several books that explains its cause. The organisation also maintains its presence in street protests, but it distances itself from the use of violence and has never established a militia unit. HTI is also the most active element within the
movement which registers its demands through small discussions, seminars and conferences.

HTI has not suffered any serious damage following the 9/11 attacks and the Bali bombings. Its non-violent appearance has probably made many Indonesians believe that the organisation has nothing to do with terrorism. It has worked hard on ideas and thoughts to provide the Indonesian audience with complex concepts and theories not only on why the establishment of a world caliphate is inevitable, but also on how the goal is to be achieved. This seems to have impressed a number of bystanders, particularly within university campuses, as the organisation succeeds in persuading them to become members and supporters.

The Islamic Community

I view JI, the alleged transnational terrorist organisation, as an informal network of like-minded activists with a loose organisational framework across several countries in Southeast Asia. The recruitment process to this network is reportedly based on personal links.\textsuperscript{206} A Muslim activist initially has contacts with JI through his religious teacher or through his religious study colleagues and becomes a member of the organisation by \textit{ba'iat} (taking oath). Since there is no formal binding rules an activist can withdraw from the organisation at any time by not attending JI’s religious activities.\textsuperscript{207}

The origins of this informal network can be traced back as far as the political and religious activities of its two most prominent leaders, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, in the mid-1960s.\textsuperscript{208} The two men were members of an Islamic youth organisation and were involved in \textit{dakwah} activities. In 1967 they founded \textit{Radio Dakwah Islamiyah Surakarta}, a pirate radio station for \textit{dakwah}, before establishing Al-Mukmin four years later. By the time Al-Mukmin was founded both men had become the leading Muslim opposition figures and soon attracted the New Order regime's

\textsuperscript{206} See Abas, N (2005).
\textsuperscript{207} Abas, N (2005).
\textsuperscript{208} ICG (2002b).
attention. In 1975 the *dakwah* radio station was disbanded by the security apparatus for its anti-government tone. Two years later Sungkar was arrested for urging his followers to disregard the 1977 election. In the late 1970s their activities began to have connections with the remaining DI movement.\textsuperscript{209} Although they were arrested in 1978 for their meetings with a DI leader, it was not entirely clear whether both men were involved in the movement.

Upon their release in late 1982, Sungkar and Ba'asyir attempted to redefine their political strategy by putting more emphasis on indoctrination at the individual level. They reminded their followers that the struggle for an Islamic state should be a piecemeal process. At the first step the Muslim activists have to commit themselves to moral self-improvement. This is said to lead to a development of a true Islamic community of committed Muslims, a *jamaah Islamiyah* in a generic sense. *Jamaah Islamiyah* in turn is a step toward the establishment of an Islamic state.\textsuperscript{210} Inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood movement, they started to develop a network of small groups devoted to the implementation of *shari'a*. Both men aimed to regroup Muslim activists who had been scattered and went underground because of New Order repression by organising them into a cell of like-minded people who guide, control and assist one another. Each cell, called *usroh*, consists of eight to fifteen members that are required to uphold the Islamic way of life and to follow Islamic law as instructed in a manual written by Ba'asyir.\textsuperscript{211}

In 1985 the two men decided to leave for Malaysia as their rearrest appeared imminent. The network of *usroh* suddenly collapsed and most of its activists were detained. Later, the government spoke of “the *usroh* movement” and the *jamaah Islamiyah*. The latter referred to a new organisation that, according to the government, had been set up by DI. But the government had never been able to provide sufficient evidence that *jamaah Islamiyah* was in fact a real organisation.\textsuperscript{212} By the time of their escape, Sungkar and Ba'asyir had succeeded in consolidating a network of like-minded activists. The first node of the network was the remaining DI members and their new

\textsuperscript{209} ICG (2002b).
\textsuperscript{210} van Bruinessen (2002b); ICG (2002b).
\textsuperscript{211} van Bruinessen (2002b); ICG (2002b).
\textsuperscript{212} van Bruinessen (2002b); ICG (2002b).
followers. The second was the Muslim youth activists centred at the Sudirman Mosque in Yogyakarta. The third component was the remaining usroh network and the Al-Mukmin network of students and alumni. 213

The fleeing played a key role in further development of what is to be understood as JI. Sungkar and Ba’asyir were able to rebuild their political basis by bringing together Muslim activists who sought refuge in Malaysia in order to avoid regime’s repression. They also maintained contacts with the remaining network of DI members, Sudirman Mosque activists and Al-Mukmin’s students and graduates in Indonesia who had mostly fled to Jakarta following a wave of arrests by the security apparatus. Later, this network of activists reportedly constituted the main basis of recruitment for JI’s operations. Another significant development occurred in the mid-1980s as both men, by making use of the links with the like-minded activists in Indonesia, started to send Muslim youth to wage jihad war in Afghanistan. The battle experience had also substantially improved their skills in using explosives, in producing a terrorist attack with huge damage and in conducting a clandestine operation. It is also argued that the war in Afghanistan had paved the way for JI’s figures to build connections with international terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda. 214 As the war in Afghanistan subsided the JI figures attempted to create other jihad grounds, at first in Mindanao, then in the communal conflict areas in Maluku and Central Sulawesi in the late 1990s and the early 2000s.

Since the Bali bombing the condition of JI has apparently deteriorated badly. The majority of terrorist suspects associated with JI have been arrested. The three Bali bombers, Ali Ghufron, Abdul Aziz and Amrozi were executed in late 2008. Another leading figure, Encep Nurjaman alias Hambali, has been detained by US intelligence. The organisation explosive’s expert, Fathur Rohman al-Gozi, managed to escape from his prison in Philippines, before being gunned down by the security apparatus in October 2003. The Bali bombings and other JI violent attacks have also created internal rifts. Some JI activists who reject the use of violent means in the name of Islam are believed to have withdrawn from the organisation. 215 Since the bombing of the Mariott hotel in Jakarta in 2003, JI has been represented by two Malaysian figures, Dr. Azhahari Husein

213 ICG (2002b).
214 Abuza (2002); Batley (2003); Singh (2003); ICG (2002b; 2003).
and Noordin Muhammad Top. The former, another JI explosive’s expert, was killed in a raid by the Indonesian police in 2005 in Malang. In the following years, the Indonesian authorities also made a number of arrests involving other remaining key figures of the organisation.

MAKING SENSE OF FUNDAMENTALISTS “WE”-NESS

I argue that the Islamic fundamentalist movement is not a given reality, but the result of how it constructs an internal coherence. This internal unitary element is created through two framing processes. First, the activists of this movement define who they are and who the enemies they fight against which culminates in the shared feeling of belonging to the same collectiveness. Second, they also build a shared collective identity by defining the problem they face and how to deal with it. In the following pages I will show how this framing process produces a sort of fundamentalist movement’s “we”-ness.

The Holy Mission

The fundamentalists, as we know, have used various names to call themselves: adherents of the prophetic traditions and community, mujahidin, Islamic community. Even though some activists show no strong objection to the terms fundamentalis (fundamentalist) and radikal (radical), they commonly question the use of these terms. For them, since Islamic values and norms constitute one united self of Islamic doctrines, it is not logical to make distinctions between, for example, Islam radikal (radical Islam) and Islam moderat (moderate Islam) as if the teachings of this religion are compartmentalised. The only legitimate distinction is between Muslim and non-Muslim. Within the world of Islam members of umma are classified according to the quality of their Muslim-ness, between, for example, bad and good Muslims. Therefore, instead of

216 Interviews with a number of activists from MMI, HTI, FPI, the salafi group and those in Al-Mukmin.
fundamentalist or radical, the fundamentalists prefer to call themselves either “Islamic” or “Muslim” activists implying that they represent the righteous and authentic Islam\textsuperscript{217}.

Equally important, the fundamentalists share a feeling of being chosen (by God), of being the only hope left within the community of believers and, hence, of having a huge responsibility to uphold the honour of Islam. Thalib claims that he and FKASWJ are called [by God] to fulfil their responsibility as members of umma and can no longer depend on [the help of] the government and other Islamic groups to deal with the serious threat faced by Moluccan Islamic umma.\textsuperscript{218} He thanks Allah for selecting LJ to lay the groundwork for the resistance against the enemies of Islam in this area. Aziz also believes that he and a few Muslims are called on [by God] for jihad against the terrorist nation [that is, the US], who started the war against Muslims.\textsuperscript{219} In the contemporary world, he argues, Muslims are increasingly in serious difficulty to make a clear-cut distinction between what is right and what is wrong. Only a small number of believers still have the capability of making such a fundamental distinction. This capability, which Aziz calls tabayun, is the main reason why they are so lucky for being chosen (by God) for jihad.

Now, this feeling of being the most prominent member of the Indonesian Islamic umma, in order to be more legitimate, should also be enriched with a sort of holy mission. As mention above, the fundamentalists believe that they are obliged and are willing to take responsibility for the implementation of shari‘a, the establishment of an Islamic state and the practice of jihad and dakwah.\textsuperscript{220} For the fundamentalists, implementing shari‘a is probably the most significant religious duty. In fact, they believe that shari‘a has a number of intrinsic values. Ba‘asyir claims that it purifies humans from the evil influence of natural desire and provides guidance about the goals of life. He also believes that shari‘a will be capable of resolving the so-called multi-dimensional crisis faced by Indonesia.\textsuperscript{221} Echoing this claim Awwas points to the fact that after more than fifty years under non-Islamic ideologies Indonesia has failed to become the greatest nation in the world stage. He thinks that it is the time to give shari‘a

\textsuperscript{217} See, for example, Al-Anshari (2003); Gatra, 16 August 2006.
\textsuperscript{218} Thalib (2001: 11).
\textsuperscript{219} Aziz (2004: 100).
\textsuperscript{220} See Eliraz (2004); Awwas (2001).
\textsuperscript{221} Al-Anshari (2002: 73).
a chance to prove that as a “divinely guaranteed” ideology it will bring prosperity and happiness and will create disaster for umma who abandon it.\textsuperscript{222} In a similar tone, HTI portrays shari’a as a kind of Islamic third way, the only alternative to capitalism and socialism.

It is interesting to see how the fundamentalists develop their argument to defend implementing shari’a as their primary duty. According to Ba’asyir,\textsuperscript{223} the only reason why God creates humans is so that they can worship Him. Ibadah (worshipping God), he continues, covers every aspect of life, every act and speech that are in accordance with God Teachings. Allah sends His Prophets and hands Them His Doctrines so that They can guide humans to the righteous act of devotion. In this sense implementing Allah’s Teachings, that is, implementing shari’a is the only way every Muslim can fulfil his/her principal duty—that is, ibadah—assigned to him/her since the first human was created. Shari’a should direct not only activities such as praying and fasting but also how Muslims run their economic and political systems. Ba’asyir then redefines ibadah as implementing shari’a in every aspect of Muslim life, at the level of individual, family and society affairs.

The mission of implementing shari’a is closely related to the duty of establishing an Islamic state. Since it covers every aspect of life, shari’a must also become the inspiring principle for any type of political regime that exercises sovereignty. Nevertheless, not all fundamentalists accept this idea. FKASWJ, particularly, emphasises the importance of creating a devoted Islamic community instead of an Islamic state. Ba’asyir, on the other hand, insists that shari’a can hardly be implemented without what he calls tamqin and sulthan, that is, political authority.\textsuperscript{224} Political authority will ensure that shari’a is the sole source of law that provides norms and code of behaviour for the community of believers. He claims that the Prophet Muhammad himself established an Islamic authority when he migrated to Madina to secure the manifestation of God’s law. Consequently, the fundamentalists such as Ba’asyir and those of MMI, HTI and JI consider the existing political regime in Indonesia as religiously unlawful and should be replaced either peacefully or violently by a new

\textsuperscript{222} Awwas (2001).
\textsuperscript{223} Ba’asyir (2001: 80-4).
\textsuperscript{224} Ba’asyir (2001: 84-6). See also Eliaz (2004).
system with strict adherence to shari’a. Nevertheless, HTI has a different view on the issue of political authority. It sees the idea of nationalism and the concept of nation-state as out of date and contradicting Islamic values. It proposes, instead, a caliphate as a world state, the sole political authority, for Muslims of the whole world.\footnote{Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).}

Hand in hand with the missions of implementing shari’a and establishing political authority based on Islamic doctrines is jihad and dakwah. According to a MMI activist, Abdul Rahman, jihad and dakwah are historically the way Islam is upheld. He insists that the Prophet Muhammad himself uses these two methods when He disseminates Islamic teachings in Mecca (by dakwah) and in Madinah (by jihad).\footnote{See Awwas (2001).}

Therefore, Rahman insists that it is forbidden for Muslims to discard jihad and dakwah. Jihad generally means making supreme Allah’s words in the world and spreading His teachings, including, for the fundamentalists, making all people convert to Islam.\footnote{See Eliraz (2004); Yunanto (2003).} How jihad is applied in the real world does not necessarily imply physical fighting against Muslim enemies. According to hadith it can be fulfilled either by heart, tongue, hands or sword. It indicates that the concept is a broad one and can be implemented by both peaceful and violent methods.\footnote{As memorised by Bukhari, the hadith is: “Whosoever notices evil behavior should correct this with his/her hands; if he/she is unable, he/she should correct it through speech, and if he/she is still unable, he/she should correct it with his/her own heart. And, the third way is the weakest faith.”} Jihad should also be applied at first at the level of the Individual to improve one’s religiosity and to fight against evil temptations. At the next level jihad is applied to fight the unbelievers and the hypocrite and to fight unjust authorities. However, while Indonesian moderate Muslims prefer to pursue jihad at the individual level and by peaceful means,\footnote{See Yunanto (2003).} the fundamentalists urge what they call a comprehensive jihad that includes fighting against the enemies of this religion by violent means.

Dakwah is not exclusive to the fundamentalists. Even though organisations such as DDII have used this concept to name its proselytising campaign, particularly in the 1970s, many Indonesian Muslims widely regard it as an attempt made by prominent Muslim leaders and teachers to refresh and improve the faith of umma. But it is the activists of Islamic fundamentalism and likeminded Muslims from other groups that
create *dakwah* as a holy mission closely integrated with *jihad*. In practice, the fundamentalists even see both as identical. It implies that *dakwah* may also be a violent act to defend Islam. Thalib, for instance, regards the actions of his troops in Maluku, waging *jihad* war against the Moluccan Christians, as part of *dakwah*. Similarly Rizieq categorises FPI's actions in battering down violently the so-called places of vice as *dakwah*. He argues that such violent conduct is a kind of *dakwah* by example.\(^{230}\)

Finally, these holy missions will have worldly meanings if there are problems that need to be addressed. The fundamentalists always insist on the urgency of *shari'a*, an Islamic state, *jihad* and *dakwah* because they believe that Indonesia in general and Indonesian Muslims in particular are on the brink of disintegration.\(^{231}\) Economic and political crises are seen as the main source of the current deteriorated condition. The activists of this movement are deeply concerned with problems such as the rise of poverty and the increase of foreign debt which indicates the current economic crisis in Indonesia.\(^{232}\) MMI, in particular, believes that the cause of the crisis is currency speculation by figures such as George Soros.\(^{233}\) The fact that Soros is a Jew is essentially highlighted to justify the view that he is deliberately aiming at destroying the economy of Southeast Asian countries, including the majority Muslim Indonesia. More complicated than that, HTI argues that Indonesia's economic debacle is marked by the collapse of production and trade sectors.\(^{234}\) The collapse is due to the highly unstable, chaotic-like, condition of the financial sector which originates in the free exchange rate of the currency system and the function of money as a source of profit accumulation. In other words, the problem is the monetary system that operates independently and is separated from the actual economic production and distribution. As this system enables the making of money from money itself, HTI condemns it as *riba* (sort of usury) and believes that the system contradicts Islamic teachings.\(^{235}\)

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\(^{231}\) See Awwas (2001); Al-Anshari (2002); HTI (2002).

\(^{232}\) Awwas (2001); Al-Anshari (2002).

\(^{233}\) Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).

\(^{234}\) HTI (2002).

\(^{235}\) HTI quotes verse 275 from *Surah Al-Baqarah* stating: "Those who eat *Riba* (usury) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by *Shaitan* (Satan) leading him to insanity. That is because they say: 'Trading is only like *Riba*,' whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden *Riba*. So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stop eating *Riba* shall not be
Under the rubric of political crises the fundamentalists speak of problems such as human rights abuses, communal conflicts and the threat of national disintegration.\(^\text{236}\) It is important to note, however, that their concerns about human rights abuses only refer to what they perceive as a systematic state attack on Muslims, which often occurred in the past, such as in the Tanjung Priok riot.\(^\text{237}\) They are interested in communal conflicts because they think that Muslims in conflict areas such as Maluku are on the defeated side.\(^\text{238}\) Meanwhile, the threat of national disintegration is related to the independence of "the majority Catholic" East Timor that in their view is made possible by the support of the Western countries that are intent on destabilising the "majority Muslim" Indonesia.\(^\text{239}\) The fundamentalists do not seem to have built an argument to explain this political turmoil. The origins of these problems are simply in the lack of moral quality of the current national leaders. Neither the political elite nor religious figures pay sufficient attention to implementing *shari'a*.\(^\text{240}\) Rather, they allow the prevalent iniquity and adopt a non-Islamic ideology.

The fundamentalists frequently warn about Allah's anger in which the current crisis should be seen as a sort of punishment. The problems enlisted above for HTI are evidence of *fasad*, the appearance of evil because of the human's own making.\(^\text{241}\) According to Ba'asyir, it demonstrates that the Allah Blessing is not upon Indonesia, because this nation does not oblige Him and refuses His Law.\(^\text{242}\) Logically, for Ba'asyir, the only way out from this multi-dimensional crisis is not only to repent and ask Allah's Pardon, but more importantly gain His Blessing by establishing His Authority and making His Words supreme in the world.

punished for the past; his case is for Allah (to judge); but whoever returns [to *Riba*], such are the dwellers of the Fire—they will abide therein forever." See HTI (2002).

\(^\text{236}\) Thalib (2001); Awwas (2001); Al-Anshari (2002).

\(^\text{237}\) See Jamhari and Jahroni (2004); Purnomo (2003). The riot occurred in the Jakarta seaport area in September 1984 following a dispute between the local Muslim community and the local military officers. See, for example, Lane (1985).

\(^\text{238}\) See Thalib (2001).

\(^\text{239}\) See, for example, Thalib (2001).

\(^\text{240}\) This argument was frequently proposed to me both by fundamentalist figures and its rank-and-file when I conducted interviews with them.

\(^\text{241}\) HTI cites verse 41 of *Ar-Rum* stating: "Evil (sins and disobedience to Allah) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evil deeds), that He (Allah) may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allah, and begging His Pardon)." See HTI (2002).

It seems that HTI is the only group within this movement that attempts to explain how the current crisis can actually be resolved by implementing shari’a. The organisation proposes, for example, what it views as an “Islamic” financial system. This seems to me to be more like a version of embedded capitalism \(^{243}\) as it is based on two things: the sole function of money as the medium of exchange and the peg of money to gold and silver.\(^{244}\) HTI believes that this will end the instability of the financial sector and put the economy back under the command of production and distribution. By pegging money to gold and silver, these two in effect become the universal currency. HTI then uses the term dinar for gold and dirham for silver and provides them with a religious legitimacy by claiming that both have been widely used within Al-Qur’an as a unit of measurement. For the rest of the fundamentalists in my studies, crisis and prosperity is, as Ba’asyir claims above, a matter of Allah’s Blessing. They seem to be more concerned with obeying Allah’s teachings rather than with a complex argument such as provided by HTI. As long as they dedicate themselves without reserve, without asking for some rationality, they seem to believe that the good things and happiness will come in the end.

The Constructed Enemies

Images of enemies significantly help the fundamentalist movement to consolidate its internal coherence in three ways. First, enemies are what the activists of this movement have in common through which they can understand what they are doing. As discussed later, to justify their actions the fundamentalists, for example, redefine the meaning of jihad by making difference of adversarial terms such as terrorism. Second, enemies accentuate the boundaries that enable the movement to draw the lines between its self and its environment. The lines can be easily spotted when one looks at, for instance, physical performance. Third, images of adversaries are often described as standing in the way of implementing shari’a and establishing an Islamic state. This

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\(^{243}\) See, for example, Hoogvelt (2001).
\(^{244}\) HTI (2002).
makes fighting enemies is another important and inevitable goal for jihad and dakwah. The fundamentalists even believe that the problems that should be addressed which are listed above are partly created by enemies in order to prevent them from establishing God’s Authority in the world.

The fundamentalists creatively construct a number of enemies. Christianity is probably regarded as the most dangerous enemy to Islam that has to be fought. This is highlighted in the Christmas Eve bombings when activists related to JI blow up dozen of churches across the Archipelago. In fact the violent attack on churches has been the most conventional manifestation of animosity toward Christians within this movement in during recent years. In another case, FKASWJ tries hard to reframe local conflict in Maluku and Central Sulawesi into an inter-religious war between Islam and Christianity. By claiming that the Moluccan Muslims are prosecuted and, at the same time, labeling the Moluccan Christians as kafir harbi (unbelievers who belong to war territory), the organisation practically provides its paramilitary troops with a sort of religious licence to kill. The Christians, above all, represent the hostile religion. The fundamentalists quote and reinterpret Al-Qur’an verses to justify their enmity toward Christians and portray Christianity as the eternal enemy of Islam until the end of the world. By the same token, the image of Christians is frequently associated with the crusaders. It provokes the activists of this movement who are always oriented themselves to some Islamic past. Groups such as MMI, HTI and JI tirelessly remind Indonesian Muslims to be prepared for the so-called perang salib baru (New Crusade). In this new war, according to the fundamentalists, the Christians will attempt to destroy Islam by creating public opinion that demonises Muslims as, for example, terrorists, by controlling economic resources and by supporting and financing Muslim groups who do not have animosity towards them. The image of Christians also refreshes earlier memories of the Dutch colonial enmity towards Islam. Unsurprisingly, Thalib compares the war for

245 Thalib (2001); Purnomo (2003); Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
247 See, for example, Aziz (2004).
248 Amhar (2004); Aziz (2004).
Indonesia’s Independence with the war between Muslims (Indonesian) and the unbelievers (Dutch). 249

The other dangerous enemies are the Zionists and the West. 250 Within the world of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia anti-Jewish sentiment is relatively new. Even though the size of the Jewish community in this country is too small to be politically significant, the fundamentalists seriously consider them as among the top rank adversaries partly because they believe that is what Al-Qur’an says. The other reason is that the Zionists represent Israel whose atrocities, for instance, upon Palestinians, is taken by groups such as JI as an humiliation of Muslims around the world.

The US is at centre stage when the fundamentalists construct the West as another dangerous enemy. Activists such as Ba’asyir and Awwas hardly make a distinction between the US and either the Christians or the Jews, implying that they are all identical or at least work closely in a conspiracy against Islam. 251 On the other hand, a number of HTI’s activists explained to me that the US is not necessarily identical with but is more dangerous than the Christians and the Jews. One of the reasons put forward is that the US is currently the world superpower and increasingly relies on values and ideologies other than those of Abrahamic religions such as liberalism, democracy, pluralism and secularism to destroy Islam. 252 The recent anti-American feeling is mostly connected to the US led war on Iraq and Afghanistan. The war justifies the fundamentalist rhetoric that the US is intent on destroying the Islamic world. Figures such as Ba’asyir further blame Washington for its war on terrorism which is seen as a systematic attack on Muslim activists. 253 The fundamentalist groups also condemn Washington for, what they see, as its intervention into internal political affairs in countries such as Indonesia. They believe that the Indonesian government is under a heavy Washington pressure to arrest Ba’asyir. The US is also labelled hypocrite for it pays no attention to the unjust overturning of the legitimate victory of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, to the

250 Thalib (2001); Awwas (2001); Al-Anshari (2002); Aziz (2004). See also Nurdi (2005); Saidi and Ridyaasma (2006).
251 Interview with Ba’asyir.
252 Al-Anshari (2002).
difficulties faced by the Saudi population being oppressed by the corrupt royal family, and to the killing of Muslims in places such as Bosnia and Chechnya.

The Indonesian Chinese and the Communists are a less important adversary. The Chinese minority, constituting less than five per cent of the Indonesian population, has long been the target of hatred. The fundamentalists portray them as an ally of the Christians. The fact that a number of Indonesian Chinese are Christians justifies this stereotype, and makes the attack on churches, in many cases, hardly distinguished from anti-Chinese sentiment.254 This ethnic minority also represents the Indonesian capitalists. Groups such as MMI blame this class for plundering Indonesia's natural resources for their own benefit at the expense of the whole society.255 The communists embody the rival ideology, Communism. The fundamentalists describe Communism as a dangerous ideology because they think that it is based on atheism.256 The local context is also likely to deepen the fundamentalists' enmity toward the Communists. The image of the Communists as being responsible for the attempted coup in 1965 has long dominated the Indonesian collective memory. Although the exact role of Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI or Indonesian Communist Party) in this incident has been widely debated, this historical stigma has been frequently used to condemn, for example, activists from within the contemporary student movement in Indonesia who are oriented to some leftist ideas.

It should be added here that the list of the fundamentalists' adversaries can also be expanded to include other actors in Indonesia such as the government, the armed forces, the national police, political parties, NGOs, politicians, national figures, intellectuals and student activists. Since the world in the fundamentalists' eyes is simply divided between "us" and "them" these actors can easily become an enemy not only by criticising this movement but even by trying to be neutral. In many cases the fundamentalists will accuse without hesitation those who denounce their actions of being controlled either by the Christians, the Zionists or the West. Thalib, for example,

256 I was once invited by a group of young fundamentalist activists in Yogya to give a speech on socialism. When I asked the participants how they define socialism, the majority gave a similar answer. That is, socialism is a Western ideology that rejects the existence of God. Some also underline their suspicions by pointing to the fact that one of socialist prime philosophers, Karl Marx, is a Jew.
sarcastically calls a professor from the University of Indonesia as an intellectual from within the group of hypocrite Muslims who is bribed by the Church to criticise Muslims, simply because the professor asked the government to withdraw FKASWJ’s troops from Maluku. Thalib was also deeply disappointed with the armed forces (TNI) when in one communal conflict incident in Maluku its troops refused to help the under siege Muslim fighters. Similarly, activists of JI and MMI accuse the government of being compromised by the Western powers, particularly the US government. Their disappointment refers to the arrest of Ba’asyir and to the hunting down of a dozen Muslim activists who are associated with JI.

In this sense Muslims themselves can be the subject of envy and suspicion as long as they question the fundamentalist Muslim-ness or embrace a different type of theology from that of the fundamentalists. Munafik (hypocrite) is the name often used by the fundamentalists to label these people, implying that they can sometimes be more dangerous than the Christians, the Zionists and the West. Their understanding of Islamic teachings provides them with better knowledge of how to destroy Islam from within. In the contemporary Indonesian context the group of activists of Liberal Islam embodies the fundamentalist image of dangerous Muslims. This group comprises a number of Muslim intellectuals who emphasise the significant role of reason and defend individualism in interpreting Al-Qur’an and hadith. The fundamentalists regard their proposal as an act of heresy, simply calling them sekuler (secular) and accuse them of being infiltrated by the interests of the Christians, the Zionists and the West.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST ACTIONS

In the previous sections I have discussed the general profile of the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Indonesia. I have showed that the movement is a

collectively organised action and it is a result of those who are involved in the movement constructing internal unity and coherence through the process of framing. I will now focus on the fundamentalist’s actions. I will try to understand the logic behind the actions and how it leads us to the struggle for identity which I argued in the Introduction lies at the heart of the fundamentalist movement.

The form of fundamentalist collective action ranges from violent and deadly attacks to peaceful street demonstrations and mass gatherings. In the last six years the rise of this movement has been largely associated with a series of bombings and explosions across the country. The use of such lethal means by Islamic radical groups is not a new phenomenon. In the past, the blowing up of several public venues had been connected to the activities of the remaining DI’s members. Recently, JI is the most prominent group that has been involved in this type of collective action. The organisation introduces itself to the world through its deadly attacks in various places in Indonesia which have killed more than three hundred people. In fact JI has launched more than fifteen bombing raids to accentuate its existence since 1999 in which the first Bali bombing was the most catastrophic. 261

At around the same time as JI started its bombing campaign across the country, other Islamic fundamentalist activists became involved in the communal conflicts in Maluku and Central Sulawesi. In the name of defending Muslims in this area FKASWJ, particularly, sent at least three thousand fighters to fight the local Christians. JI and other groups such as MMI also participated in the battle by sending a much smaller contingent of troops. In particular, JI takes a different approach by sending only a group of activists who are regarded as military skilful. They then train local militias as well as indoctrinating them with jihadist ideology. However, the relations between LJ’s troops and JI’s fighters have rarely been in good shape. 262 One factor that contributes to this is the fact that both sides took different strategies. While LJ’s troops often made their presence publicly known, JI’s fighters preferred secretive actions. In many cases this had misled the authorities as they condemned LJ for attacks made by JI.

262 ICG (2002a; 2004a).
Apart from bombings and sending fighters to communal conflict areas, the fundamentalists also carry out campaigns against prostitution, pornography, alcohol, drugs and gambling. In the past, the campaigns, frequently resulted in physical assaults on places such as bars, pubs, cafes, night-clubs, discotheques, massage parlours, casinos and billiard halls—the so-called places of vice—and were spontaneously implemented by local Muslims living in the areas where such venues have been established. Recently, FPI is the leading element of this kind of action. Since 1999 this anti-vice campaign has frequently occurred during the period leading to, and during, Ramadhan, the Muslim fasting month. As the fundamentalists consider it as the holy month they usually ask the local government to close places of vice. Should the government fail to meet their demands groups such as FPI will take the initiative by themselves. On one occasion FPI even dared to occupy the office of the Jakarta regional government when this local authority decided to close entertainment centres only for the first two days of Ramadhan instead of the entire month as demanded by the organisation. In many cases, however, FPI and other like-minded groups often carry out the campaigns without making any appeal to the government.

The fundamentalist groups also conduct mass rallies to voice their appeals and to introduce themselves to, mainly, the Indonesian public. In recent years HTI and FPI have played significant roles in mobilising radical Muslims to protest on the streets. The rallies sometimes involve intimidation and violence as in the case of FPI’s attack on the office of the National Commission of Human Rights. The organisation is disappointed with the way the Commission, in its view, failed to set up enquiries into human rights violations in the communal conflict in Maluku but has been successful in doing so in East Timor where Christians are the main victims. The rallies generally addressed three main issues. First, they are part of anti-vice campaigns as organisations such as FPI, MMI and HTI make appeals to the government to, for example, ban any type of pornography. Second, the rallies are often carried out to show the fundamentalists’ support and sympathy to Muslims in other countries who become victims of war and

264 Purnomo (2003); ICG (2002a).
265 See ICG (2001); Purnomo (2003).
communal conflict and to condemn those who are accused of being responsible for the misery. The US and Israel have been always the main targets of condemnation. The building of the US embassy in Jakarta has been frequently visited by a mass of demonstrations protesting against the war in Afghanistan and Iraq.267 Third, the fundamentalists frequently protest against what they perceive as a systematic attack on Islam. FPI and MMI, for example, reject blasphemy such as, in their view, the publication of cartoons of Muhammad by a weekly published in Denmark.268 HTI also conducts a number of mass rallies that condemn what it sees as the terrorist stigma applied by Western media to label the Islamic fundamentalist activists.269

The Logic of Fundamentalist Action

How could this range of collective action outlined above be better understood? I argue that at the heart of this collective action is a struggle for identity. Its logic can be viewed in three ways: as an accentuation of their existence, as a practice of identification with both fundamentalists’ positive and negative other, and as a practice of specific Islamic values as interpreted by the fundamentalists.

Logic of symbolism and performance

I have used the term expressive dimension to demonstrate that the actions taken by the fundamentalists are not merely a way to voice their appeal, but also to assert the actual subject involved in the actions. Actions become a medium through which a specific identity is produced in a number of symbols and performances. Above all, the fundamentalists always symbolise their actions as a conflict between two identities. It is a fight between “the good”, that is, the fundamentalists themselves, and “the evil”, that is, their constructed enemies. If “the good” is represented by FKASWJ, “the evil” will be either the Moluccan Christians, the Indonesia’s security apparatus who in their view favour the Christians, or what they believe as the Crusade-cum-Zionist international

267 See KCM, 10 August 2006.
268 KCM, 3 February 2006.
conspiracy. When “the good” side is JI, the most important identity of evil is seen as the West. The actions conducted by MMI and HTI also express the clash between “the good” and the West as the prominent evil, apart from other evil identities such as the liberal Muslim. For FPI, the enemy is more abstract, that is, the practice of sins which is exemplified by venues such as bars and massage parlours.

The personification of the confrontation as between “the good” and “the evil” makes some actions tend to be violent. Since “the evil” is a sort of illegitimate enemy, its existence is, for the fundamentalists, morally and religiously unacceptable and has to be eliminated. In this sense violence is an important dimension for groups such as FPI because it expresses the strong commitment to fight against immorality and shows FPI’s rejection of compromise with those who commit the practice of sins and with those places where such practices are carried out. Azis also believes that Islamic teachings, according to his interpretation of an Al-Qur’an verse, allow its followers to use violence in fighting against the enemies of Islam. Furthermore, the battle against this illegitimate enemy is part of a purifying process of the protagonist identity. Taking part in action involves transformation at a personal level from being a “bad” Muslim, one who does nothing against “the evil”, to a “good” Muslim who does something. The sense of a true Muslim identity is accentuated by Thalib when he defends the sending of LJ troops to wage jihad war in Maluku. As a (good) Muslim he claims that it is his moral duty to protect the Moluccan Muslims from the prosecution. This Muslim-ness is also expressed by Aziz, when he outlines the rationale of his terrorist acts. For Azis, how one can be a true Muslim if s/he does not fight against those who create damage in places such as Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq? Similarly, Rizieq questions the very Muslimness of those who are ignorant of iniquity and believes that FPI’s actions uphold the honour of Muslims who have been partly contaminated by the prevalent immorality.

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270 See, for example, Efendi (2006).
271 Aziz has made use of verse 54 of Surah Al-Maidah to legitimate his atrocities. In fact he only quoted a tiny part from the whole verse, that is, “...humbled towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the way of Allah, and never fear the blame of the blamers...” Aziz (2004: 104).
The expression of identity within the fundamentalist actions is, however, more easily observed by looking at the physical performance of its activists. The Muslim-ness is no longer accentuated within the construction of the abstract identity of “the good” and “the evil”, but in performing a specific style and in wearing a particular type of clothing. Here, the action becomes an expression of true and original Muslim identity that not only rejects evil identities, but also adopts, for example, a “Muslim dress code”. Even though a number of items of this dress code, such as long dresses worn by the fundamentalist activists during a street campaign looks at odds with the tropical climate of Indonesia, it is, in their view, in accordance with the views of Muhammad and the pious generation. By implication, adopting such a style is religiously legitimised, is a part of strong commitment to Islamic values and can be categorised as an act of good deeds.

In actions such as tabligh akbar and street protests the activists of this movement can be easily recognised by a number of trademarks related to their fashion. The fundamentalist male activists always cover their head with either sorban (turban), kopia (traditional Indonesian male Muslim head cover), or a combination of both. The use of a turban is as old as the history of the salafi movement in Indonesia. Whereas the recent prominent salafi leaders, such as Thalib and Rizieq, have never made public appearances without a turban, it is the LI fighters, among others, that play an important role in creating and popularising the image of the turban as a symbol of Islamic fundamentalism following their frequent street campaigns. Kopiah is widely used by Indonesian Muslims regardless of their Islamic background. The black kopiah is even regarded as the national head cover and is also frequently used by non-Muslim Indonesians. However, the habit of wearing the kopiah, especially the white one, by the fundamentalist activists has created this item as another trademark of the movement. Traditionally, white kopiah was worn only by those returned from the haj. However, according to a teacher in Al-Mukmin, Muslims should now wear the white kopiah, even though they are not haj returnees, so that they can distinguish themselves from the Christians who sometimes wear black kopiah.

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275 See, for example, Tempo, 23 January 2000; 19 May 2002; 1 December 2002; 8 December 2002.
276 Interview with Yahya.
The fundamentalist male activists also wear *gamis* (long flowing robe) and *baju koko* (literally “koko shirt”). *Gamis* is an imported style from the Middle East and Central Asia (Pakistan and Afghanistan). The message of wearing robe is that, according to a number of activists, Muslims are not allowed to wear pantaloons as it imitates the way the Jews dress. Similar to *kopiah*, *baju koko* is widely regarded as a common Indonesian male Muslim dress. Its model is interestingly similar to and seems to have been influenced by the style of the Chinese male traditional dress. However, regardless of its origins, the activists prefer to wear it when either praying, attending religious sermons, or participating in street demonstrations. For the female activists the main trademark is the *hijab*. This type of fashion is a combination of a long and loose headscarf and a long and loose dress that covers the whole body, except for the face and the palm of hand. Some activists also add the veil and leave the eyes as the only part of the body that is uncovered. The idea of the *hijab* is that the style of women’s dress should not accentuate the parts of the body that have to be concealed.

Amrozi seemed to have taken fashion as a way to express his identity seriously. Having looked at one picture of him when he was first arrested and at another when he was in detention, the contrast between the two is palpable. The first picture is the Amrozi with a modern style of haircut and with the smile that shocked the Australian audience. The second picture is the Amrozi with *kopiah* and *baju koko*. He keeps his famous smile but his face looks a bit different. He grows his beard as growing a beard is also another trademark of the fundamentalists. This changing appearance shows that for Amrozi the dress code signifies what he is and his identity is an important issue otherwise he would not change his style. In contrast to this is his younger brother, Ali Imron, another Bali bomber. In one of his public appearances several months after he was arrested, Imron chose a modern style of fashion with suit and tie. This is in accordance with his confession that he feels guilty and wants to apologise for what he has done. It seems that the suit and tie help him to express himself as a newly different person, the one who does not belong to the fundamentalist world anymore.

277 Interviews with Safruddin and Supri.
278 For the pictures of Amrozi see *Tempo*, 17 November 2002; 21 September 2003. His image can also be seen in a number of footages broadcasted by TV channels in Australia (particularly ABC and SBS) and in Indonesia (particularly RCTI, SCTV and Metro TV).
Logic of identification

The fundamentalists also manipulate the idea of the other to accentuate their existence. The other becomes the point of reference that enables the activists of this movement to construct their identity as representing both oppressed Muslims and Muslim heroes. The term “logic of identification” indicates that their collective action is a mode of identification with other Muslims through which they valorise their identity as real, original and true. The idea of other as a symbol of identification is dominantly represented by Muslims that in the fundamentalists’ view are the victims of atrocities conducted by the enemies of Islam. Thalib, for instance, makes it clear to the public that he sends his troops to Maluku to defend the honour of Moluccan Muslims who in his view have been prosecuted by Moluccan Christians who are supported by international forces such as the US and some factions of the Indonesia’s military.279 This type of sympathy that invokes actions is also expressed by other fundamentalist groups. Laskar Mujahidi, which is closely associated with MMI shares, the grievances of Muslims in Maluku and Poso as they send fighters to fight the Christians in these areas.

JI broadened the notion of oppressed Muslims to include those far from Indonesia. Ali Ghufron claimed that he was motivated by the death of six hundred thousand babies in Iraq and half a million Afghan children and mothers.280 His fellow bomber, Azis, says that he was shocked by the picture of “...[the body of] babies without their heads and hands... bombarded by the Crusade troops of America...”281 In fact, in the last ten years the global arena has become the main source of subjects and causes with which almost all Islamic fundamentalist groups in Indonesia find the symbol of identification with oppressed Muslims. The misery suffered by these Muslims, for the activists of this movement, is caused by a continuing attack on Islam by what they frequently call the Crusade-cum-Zionist international conspiracy.282 This includes

279 Thalib (2001); Yunanto (2003); Jamhari and Jahroni (2004).
280 Quoted in Batley (2003).
Muslims who, in the fundamentalists’ eyes, face injustice in places such as Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya, Bosnia and the southern Philippines.  

The identification with oppressed Muslims is, for the fundamentalists, religiously legitimised. They use the concept such as *ukhuwah islamiyah*, a sort of religious credo claiming that all Muslims are brothers and sisters, to frame an attack on one Muslim as an attack on all Muslims. Aziz makes the following analogy. “Aren’t we like one body, should one part is hurt the other will feel the same? Isn’t their blood also our blood? Isn’t their honour also our honour?” Therefore, the Bali bombings, Aziz believes, is a materialisation of *ukhuwah Islamiyah*. This terrorist attack is, in this sense, the way they speak on behalf of the grievances of Muslims in countries such as Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. This is just *reaksi seimbang* (an equal reaction) by mujahidin (*jihad* fighters), claims Aziz, for the murder of millions of Muslims. It is simply a revenge to uphold the honour of their identity that they believe has been embarrassed and shattered by what happened to their Muslim brothers and sisters in other countries. The attack on every Muslim regardless of nationality and ethnic background is taken as an attack on their identity. Aziz vividly expresses this as he says that his Muslim-ness is being annoyed and his faith would be (if he does nothing) put in question, when he looks at the picture of heavy casualties in Afghanistan following the US air raids.

The fundamentalists also associate themselves with a kind of “Muslim heroes”, that is, those who fight the enemies of Islam. This source of admiration and duplication for the fundamentalists is, as can be easily predicted, those who are on the other side of George W. Bush’s war on terrorism. Azis calls them international mujahidin, a name that he has promoted to replace the label of terrorist given by many governments around the globe to a number of his heroes such as Muhammad Omar from Taliban; Osama bin Laden, Aiman Azh-Zhawahiri, Sulaiman Abu Ghaits and Muhammad Athef from Al-

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286 Once again Aziz cites an Al-Qur’an verse to support this. The verse is *Al-Anfal 73*: “And those who disbelieve are allies of one another, (and) if you (Muslims of the whole world collectively) do not do so, there will be *Fitnah* (wars, battles, polytheism) and oppression on the earth, and a great mischief and corruption (appearance of polytheism).” Aziz (2004: 161).
Qaeda; Ahmad Yasin, Abu Marzuq and Abdul Aziz Ar-Rantinsi from Hamas; and Salamat Hasyim and Abu Sayyaf from southern Philippines. Bin Laden is an interesting figure. While Thalib publicly questions his Islamic credentials, Bin Laden is widely regarded as the icon of the Muslim resistance against the West, particularly the US. It can be understood why his image, either on a T-Shirt, banner or poster, is often part of fundamentalist street campaigns.

More importantly, Bin Laden represents the identity of the Muslim that is being harassed by the label of terrorist. The fundamentalists who identify themselves with him will take his grievances as an offence against their very identity. Their reactions to defend him, to elevate him to the level of hero and symbol of resistance, is not so much for the cause of bin Laden himself, but more on the accentuation of their own identity. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir clearly explains that “Osama bin Laden is part of the Islamic umma... Hurting Osama is [similar to] hurting Islamic umma.” Hence, Ba’asyir warns that “accusing Osama of conducting terror without accurate evidence is similar to accusing Islamic ummah...as a terrorist.” At the same time activists such as Aziz compare their actions with those of bin Laden and the like. Here, bin Laden and figures such as Mullah Omar and Ahmad Yasin represent the identity of a good Muslim, that is, the identity of a role model that should be copied by other Muslims. By identifying with these figures, activists such as those of JI valorise their existence as part of broader, borrowing Aziz’s expression, international mujahidin movements that defend the honour of Muslims and fight the enemies of Islam.

The other symbol of identification is a number of legitimate figures in the history of Islam including the Prophet Muhammad. As noted by Batley, the majority of JI’s activists believe their actions duplicate the attempts made by Muhammad either to fight oppression, injustice and attacks on Islam or to broaden the dar al-Islam, the sphere of Islam. Aziz claims that all Imams of the four Sunni legal schools, including Ibn Taimiyyah and his disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah, also engaged in a dozen armed struggles to defend the glory of Islam. In so doing, the JI activists accentuate the

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290 See, for example, Abas, P (2005).
righteousness of their actions and tell the public what a real Muslim is, a Muslim that is ready to die for Islam.

**Logic of bearing witness**

I borrow the term “logic of bearing witness” from della Porta and Diani, who use it to make sense of movement actions that demonstrate “… a strong commitment to an objective deemed vital for humanity’s future.”293 I find this term useful to describe the way the fundamentalists make use of their action to accentuate their identity. The activists of this movement always justify what they have done either by quoting Al-Qur’an and hadith or by referring their actions to similar events in the history of Islam, particularly that of the pious generation. Being involved in actions is not merely a matter of achieving goals, but more importantly a matter of practising specific values and norms. Here, the activists express their identity by showing their strong commitment to Islamic doctrines.

First of all, the fundamentalists always believe in the religious validity and righteousness of their goals and actions. Implementing shari’a and establishing an Islamic state is considered as an obligation of every Muslim that is divinely justified. This non-negotiable religious righteousness is blatantly expressed in a statement made by Rizieq. “If defending Allah is a terrorist act, if defending the Prophet is a terrorist act, if defending Shariah is a terrorist act, then we say to the world that we are all terrorists.”294

Eliraz notes that the fundamentalists compare their actions to achieve these goals with the act of spreading belief in God and making God’s word supreme in the world.295 As previously indicated, they often call it jihad which also means removing obstacles— with violence if it is required—obstructing the establishment of the authority of God. The fundamentalists argue that jihad is an obligation of all Muslims.296 It is the essence of Islam, writes Muchtar Naim,297 is as old as Islam itself, and creates Islam as agama jihad (a religion of jihad). More importantly, however, they upgrade the status of jihad

293 della Porta and Diani (2006: 176-8).
294 Quoted in Batley (2003: 3).
296 See Thalib (2001); Awwas (2001); Aziz (2004).
within the Islamic doctrines from the level of collective obligation to the level of individual obligation. It means that *jihad* is as important and compulsory as the other undisputed individual obligations such as praying five times a day and fasting during the *Ramadhan*. The fundamentalists propose an interesting method of interpreting Al-Qur'an to support this argument. They find the word *kutiba* (obliged) in verses that order Muslims individually to conduct, for example, prayers five-times a day, has the same meaning with the one in verses that ask for *jihad*. Consequently, the fundamentalists insist, those who abandon *jihad* are committing sins in the same way as those who abandon praying five times a day.

In addition to this, a number of activists, especially those of JI, redefine and narrow the meaning of *jihad* and associate it with an act of war against the enemies of Islam. While a number of non-fundamentalist scholars will argue that *jihad* is broader than fighting infidels and can be achieved by peaceful means, Aziz criticises them by insisting that embracing the teachings of the Prophet should include copying His anger and the twenty-eight wars He waged. In so doing, he believes that Islam is not only the religion of peace but also the religion of war and violence. Aziz also argues that suicidal bombing is religiously legitimate. He points to a number of incidents in the history of Islam when Muslim fighters in different battlefields take actions that he categorises as suicidal attacks. He further stresses that if suicidal bombing enhances the spirit of Muslim fighters and weakens that of enemies of Islam, it is highly recommended.

The meaningful thing here is not the way the fundamentalists have misinterpreted Al-Qur'an as one might suggest. Since the interpretation tends to be subjective and will generally be driven by some sort of political interest, what is important is the way they have made use of Islamic teachings to valorise their actions as significant. By elevating the position of *jihad* within Islamic doctrines, the fundamentalists redefine their action as an important act of devotion to God's words. Should they refuse to take action fundamentalists such as Thalib believe that they will be

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298 Aziz (2004); Al-Anshari (2003).
300 Aziz (2004: 175-6).
punished by Allah.\textsuperscript{301} Furthermore, blaming the misinterpretations of Islamic values and norms by activists such as Aziz is not helping because it assumes that they have failed to discover the true and original identity of the Muslim. Instead, he seems more concerned with expressing his identity by changing the label terrorist which is attached to him. As he invents the concept international \textit{mujahidin} to call figures such as Osama bin Laden, it is logical that he portrays the Bali bombings as an act of \textit{jihad}. Since taking part in actions is a matter of practising values and norms, the fundamentalists demonstrate their strong commitment to Islamic doctrines by expressing their willingness to run personal risk. Thalib and his fighters show this willingness when the sending of LJ troops to Maluku is strongly opposed by the Indonesian authorities. Although Thalib and LJ might have received political backup from within the military,\textsuperscript{302} he declares that he is more afraid of Allah rather than of the Indonesian authorities. He chooses to be in conflict with the government for what he believes as the ultimate religious duty.\textsuperscript{303} Aziz clearly states that those who conduct \textit{jihad} are those who are ready to kill and to be killed to uphold the words of Allah.\textsuperscript{304} Echoing this claim Rizieq describes the activists who are involved in \textit{jihad} as the troops of Allah who readily welcome death with a smile.\textsuperscript{305} To put it simply, they are ready to die in the name of Islam. For FPI the options are either living with dignity or dying for the glory of Islam. Azis expresses his feeling of happiness that he will receive the death penalty.\textsuperscript{306} Furthermore, since the fundamentalists consider strong commitment as an essential element in their actions, they also emphasise the importance of process. Na’im explains that what makes \textit{jihad} so prominent is not what it achieves, but how it achieves its goal. Ba’asyir also underlines the importance of process. By conducting \textit{jihad} he believes that at least he has met his obligation as a Muslim.\textsuperscript{307} Here, Na’im and Ba’asyir’s argument implies that seriousness and loyalty to the cause of Islam is as significant as implementing \textit{shari’a} and establishing an Islamic state.

\textsuperscript{301} See Thalib (2001).
\textsuperscript{302} See, for example, Davis (2002).
\textsuperscript{303} See Thalib (2001). See also Davis (2002); Shoelhi (2002).
\textsuperscript{304} Aziz (2004: 48).
\textsuperscript{305} Quoted in Jamhari and Jahroni (2004: 155).
\textsuperscript{306} Aziz (2004: 192).
\textsuperscript{307} Interview with Ba’asyir.
More than a matter of religious righteousness, this force of commitment enables the fundamentalists to accentuate their existence as representing the true and original Muslim identity. As discussed before, they not only do something, but more importantly are ready to be caught at serious personal cost such as being detained or being murdered. At the same time, this ready to die attitude paves the way for activists such as Ghufron, Aziz and Amrozi to purify their identity. These Bali bombers reportedly refused to ask for amnesty for their capital punishment. Since the ultimate amnesty only comes from Allah, Amrozi believes that it is forbidden for them to make a request to the government, that is, their fellow humans, to ease the penalty. Aziz relates the issue of amnesty to his very identity. Since his action in Bali is based on faith, it is unacceptable to ask for mercy. Should he decide to demand amnesty from the President, it simply means that he regrets what he has done, betrays what he believes in and justifies those who frame his action as an act of terror. In this sense Aziz has taken the issue as a question of his Muslim-ness and he clearly opts not to contaminate his identity by rejecting the use of a label, such as terrorist, to refer to himself.

Moreover, the fundamentalists seem to believe that by being involved in jihad, that is, in actions such as attacking Westerners and damaging the places of vice, they become better Muslims. Aziz claims that taking part in jihad makes him feel more close to Allah. As noted before, he identifies himself with others who are also involved in jihad and refers to this “international mujahidin” as ahluts-tsughur. He praises highly this ahluts-tsughur including as Mullah Omar, bin Laden and Abu Sayyaf and believes that because of their jihad that makes them closer to Allah and they are the best Muslims within the entire Islamic umma. In the process, Aziz promotes himself as a better Muslim and distances himself from those who do not take part in jihad as a low quality Muslim.

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308 See Kompas, 20 October 2005.
The focus of this chapter is the movement and its main organisations, the construction of the movement's "we-ness" and the logic of the movement's actions. I have demonstrated that Islamic fundamentalism is an organised collective action. The movement is based on specific individuals, groups and organisations which, despite some internal frictions, share similar goals and appeals. In fact, the movement itself is the product of how those who are involved in it develop the shared feeling of being one, of having the same problems, of facing the same enemies and of moving in the same direction. At the heart of the increasing Islamic fundamentalism, however, is the struggle for identity. I have shown how actions taken by the activists are aimed at accentuating their existence and valorising them as real and important. The actions are also a place where they demonstrate their strong commitment to what they believe as Islamic values and norms that, in consequence, allow them to experience some sort of personal transformation.
Chapter 3
IDENTITY FOR FREEDOM AND CERTAINTY

In the previous chapter I argued that the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Indonesia is involved in the struggle for identity. Violent attacks, being involved in communal conflicts and street protests are not merely instruments to achieve the movement’s goals, but more importantly the media through which they valorise their identity as significant and real. In this chapter the focus is on “why do the fundamentalists struggle for their identity?” “What do the activists resist?” “What kind of oppression and domination is at work that provokes them to struggle for Muslim identity?” I will now provide a general answer to these questions, which is, broadly that the fundamentalist struggle for identity is to serve the desire for freedom and the desire for certainty in life. Following this, I will discuss their struggle in the context of their rejection of trends in everyday life such as those in fashions and lifestyle, their outrage about immorality and liberalism, and their concerns about hedonism.

CONTROL, DOMINATION AND RESISTANCE

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, my thesis is strongly influenced by studies on new social movements and identity politics. According to both groups of theories, the struggle for identity is an outcome that responds to control and domination that works at the level of self and everyday life. More specifically, it creates the problems of inauthenticity and disenchantment. That is to say, it makes a person become alien to one’s fellow human beings and to one’s own historically created human possibilities. Based on this, I treat identity in this study as the main site where the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Indonesia operates. Identity becomes the locus of resistance and empowerment because the control and domination takes away one’s capacity to live the life that has been independently

selected and to give meaning to it. Therefore, the fundamentalists' struggle for identity is, firstly, to serve the desire for freedom. Secondly, it is a bid to have meaning and goals in life that provide a sense of certainty.

I argue that the problems of being inauthentic and social disenchantment are a result of colonisation of everyday life by what the activists understand as trends in lifestyles, immorality and hedonism. They look with concern at the fact that nowadays the decision on how to run one's daily routine—to having one's meal, dressing one's self up, filling one's spare time—is increasingly out of their hands. Instead, they find themselves being shaped by an anonymous social power that works mainly through trends such as those in fashions and in lifestyle. The activists of this movement are wary that the uniforming power of trends makes Muslims and non-Muslims become less different in many aspects of life. They believe that similarities in fashions and lifestyle will in effect destroy their very authenticity, which I understand to be the basic substance of being a Muslim, that is being unique and unlike anyone else in society. The struggle for identity is to rediscover this authentic substance, to reach one's uniqueness. This struggle is in fact to serve the desire of freedom because it is an attempt to free one's self from being dominated and controlled by trends and to live one's life independently.

The fundamentalists are also concerned with their everyday life because they find it increasingly invaded by the rapid rise of immorality. They view daily immoral conduct such as promiscuity and pornography as a result of humans being controlled by natural instinctive impulses. Such control indicates the rule of one's basic desire over one's capacity to reason, where autonomous consciousness is at home. Understandably, they see immorality as symptomatic of the loss of self-autonomy. The struggle for identity in this sense is an attempt to restore the rule of reason over natural instinctive impulses. Reason for them operates according to the logic of right and wrong provided by Islamic doctrines. Here, the restored autonomous consciousness is reflected in one's ability to produce reasoned thinking and actions, that is, the ability to follow correctly Islamic values and norms and, hence, distancing oneself from immorality.

Inauthenticity is closely related to the problem of disenchantment. By this I mean that the bid to (re)discover one's uniqueness leads to questions such as who one is and which part of society one belongs to. These questions are raised in regard to the power of trends in everyday life that detaches the activists from their authentic
substance and, at the same time, reproduces them as a new person. As a result this uprooting process creates a feeling of uncertainty about one's self and one's life. Uniqueness is the cure for this anxious feeling. It tells the activists exactly who they really are, what kind of qualities they should possess to be an authentic Muslim, and what their position is in what are seen as relatively unfriendly social surroundings is. But the value of certainty and security in life are more than that. The fundamentalists are highly obsessed with the more foundational questions, particularly related to the directions of one's life. What they are looking for is the real and true life which goes beyond living in the world and living in the present. They find instead the one provided by the invading hedonism in daily life which, for them, is untenable. Their rejection of the hedonistic lifestyle, as part of the attempt to accentuate their exclusive existence as a Muslim, indicates their desire to have some certain meanings and goals in life which are achievable and morally acceptable. However, one should bear in mind that hedonism does not include polygamy, which is from outside can be seen as a very hedonistic lifestyle. Instead, the fundamentalists strongly believe that Islam allows them (men) to have more than one wife. And polygamy is ironically taken as the best way to avoid Muslims from promiscuity. They regarded regarded promiscuity as the real hedonism one should fight against.

THE BID FOR UNIQUENESS

Uniqueness is the first thing that appears in the fundamentalists' mind when they come to terms with the concept of identity. They simply see themselves as a Muslim, a specific type of human being, uniquely made by Allah, that is and must be different from the rest of humankind. A group within the movement even consider "muslim" as no longer an appropriate term because it is a too catch-all term that is widely used to include Muslims who have betrayed the very uniqueness of this identity, such as Shiites, the Ahmadiyah and the Liberal Islam. They instead prefer to

311 In the interviews that I conducted during my fieldwork I asked every respondent what Muslim identity means for them. The response to this question is almost the same for everyone, that is, being a Muslim is being a unique human being compared to others.
call themselves salafi, a shortened of *salafus shalih*, that is, the followers of a pious
generation, to assert their exclusiveness to common Muslims.\(^{312}\)

More importantly, however, the fundamentalists all agree that the uniqueness
of being a Muslim is essentially based on the making of differences from what they
call non-Muslims. By and large, the major distinction is in the way of life, religion,
ideology and thoughts. Organisations such as HTI and MMI identify Muslim identity
with Islamic doctrines, values and norms and claim that their fight for the
establishment of an Islamic state is nothing more than an attempt to be a true
Muslim. Ba'asyir points to *shari'a* as the unique element of being a Muslim and
believes that the absence of Islamic law in Indonesia reflects the loss of identity of
Indonesian Muslims.\(^{313}\) But uniqueness also includes a more specific and concrete
form of identity. Awwas made it clear to me that being unlike non-Muslims implies
distinctions in the type of school, in the way of greetings, in the type of clothing and
even in the type of hair-cut. Ba’asyir, in one of our conversations, included language
and calendar. This implies that a true and authentic Muslim should speak Arabic and
use the *hijriah* calendar.\(^{314}\)

Nevertheless, it is mainly through the more easily seen construct of identity
that both the fundamentalist leaders and the rank-and-file declare and understand
their unique being. Fashion is the most frequent item pointed out by activists
regarding the form of Muslimness. They firmly believe that fashion is more than just
a matter of covering and hiding *aurat*, but should also be about the type of clothing
that must be different from non-Muslims. Even though this explicit form of identity
is indifferent to gender, it is how the woman dresses herself up that dominates their
sense of uniqueness. Both the fundamentalist men and women repeatedly refer to the
*hijab* as being essential.

According to the most radical group of this movement wearing the *hijab*, and
not wearing pantaloons, or at least blue jeans for the fundamentalist men, is essential
for the activists mainly because they find this to be the least difficult sign of
distinction to be grasped during their own process of becoming an authentic Muslim.

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\(^{312}\) The group explains in detail what salafi means in one of its leading websites.
(accessed on 6 September 2007) and “Siapakah Ahlus Sunnah?” (accessed on 6 September 2007)

\(^{313}\) Ba'asyir provided this argument in his speech in a seminar on the politics of Islamic law in

\(^{314}\) *Hijriah* calendar is the Islamic calendar starting from the day the prophet Muhammad fled for
Madinah.
One reason for this is that even among the leaders of the movement who produce and reproduce the abstract form of identity such as shari'a, an Islamic state, Islamic law and an Islamic economy, it is difficult to find and to have a clear sense of what is the specific and easily seen construct of these abstractions of identity. They might have developed an original and uncomplicated form of the Islamic political system as identity. My concern is that to reach to that level an activist should not only have a feeling of being fully committed to what s/he understands as Islamic teachings, but also should invest sufficient time to contemplate, and to think carefully and thoroughly about the ideas, the concepts and the manifested structures of an Islamic system. The problem is that the question of identity as the question of uniqueness requires an immediate response since it is embedded in everyday activities when the fundamentalists meet others directly on the street, in the shopping centres and in other public venues, or indirectly through television, magazines and various types of mass media. As such a daily life leaves a limited time for immersion, it seems that the fundamentalists could only (re)define their uniqueness by distraction, that is, by making their appearance quite different to that of non-Muslims.

The formation of authentic being through negating the most distractive elements of the other, in fact, explains why there is less depth and unsubtle ideas of shari'a as a distinctive socio-political system. When the activists of this movement speak on behalf of Islamic doctrines to outline what shari'a could tell about an Islamic state, for example, they commonly do this by simply negating the most distracting elements of democracy—seen as the contemporary opposite of an Islamic political regime—such as the ideas of people sovereignty, majority rule and civil liberty. It is argued that the supreme authority of an Islamic state is based on Allah (instead of people); in which collective decision is based on the truth and original reading of Al-Qur'an and hadith (instead of majority rule); and when strictly applied determines what is allowed and forbidden according for Islamic doctrines to all Muslims (instead of civil liberty).

The Ruling Trends and the Desire for Freedom

According to the fundamentalists, being unique is divinely justified and obligatory. They refer to a number of verses in Al-Qur'an and interpret them as an
instruction to be exclusive to non-Muslims, particularly to Christians and Jews. A student of Al-Mukmin, for instance, told me that wearing a belt is unacceptable because it is part of the Jewish tradition. The prophet Muhammad himself, claimed the fundamentalists, once reminded the ummah that should they follow and imitate communities of non-Muslims, they part of them, implying that they cease to be Muslim. However, becoming an exclusive being with uncompromising uniqueness is more than merely a religious duty. The fundamentalists complain about the hardship of their everyday life in modern society in Indonesia. They find it difficult to become an authentic being—in this case, to be an original and true Muslim according to their interpretation—free from the dominant culture in current Indonesian society. Instead, they discover themselves in the process of being shaped by an anonymous power of society that dictates to them in almost every aspect of life from what to eat, to drink and to wear, to what kind of education one should take, what kind of ideology one should embrace and what kind of political system one should fight for. In fact, they see themselves under control and continued surveillance to behave as society wants. Should they fail to meet the standard of normality inscribed by society, they will be penalised socially.

An activist of HTI, Siti, told me her story when she first made the decision to wear the hijab. For her this decision was so important because it was about her own choice of what kind of person she wanted to be. But it was in the early 1980s in Indonesia where merely wearing a headscarf will provoke an uncomfortable response. She worried about how people surrounding her, those in her family, in her neighbourhood and in her school will react, as she learned two of her school mates who wore the hijab were harshly treated. She felt that she will be socially punished and expelled because her appearance will deviate to what was regarded normal by the community where she lived. Hence, it took several years for her to wear a headscarf and a few more years to wear the hijab. But once she was able to dress herself up in the way she wanted to be she felt relief that she could in the end stand for her own self and apart from the control of society. A similar story was told to me by a leading male activist from the salafi group, Ayip Safruddin. I asked him what kind of sensation he feels as he wears particular clothing that makes his appearance

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315 One of them is verse 116 from Surah Al-An'am (chapter 6): “And if you obey most of those on the earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah’s Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie”. See Awwas (1999); Al-Jawi (2004b).
uncommon. He replied by saying that he feels as if he has just been freed from kungkungan (oppression) in his life and his self. He also feels that he now has ultimate control over his own body as he decided to ignore social judgements about how one has to appear in public. Indeed, freeing oneself from social control is at the heart of the fundamentalists' struggle for an exclusive and authentic being.

I use the term “social control” to suggest the submission of members of society to the existing values and norms.316 This control allows no deviance from, or alternative vision of, the current order. It encourages conformity and takes over the consciousness of the masses. In many ways each member of society is unaware of their submission to the dominant values and norms. For it goes through a spontaneous process by which individuals transpose the existing order into their inner self. The result is an immediate identification of the individual with her/his society.317

The fundamentalists are largely uneasy about social control. They are concerned about the uniformity in lifestyle and appearance in current Indonesian society which makes it difficult to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims. I asked them how important the issue of identity is nowadays and they advised that they perceive it as important not to be swallowed up by the uniforming power of the dominant culture. The main issue is that many Muslims have submitted their consciousness to the rule of the existing values and norms. They, like their fellow Indonesian regardless of religious background, follow the same trends in fashion in which the dominant model is largely seen as unislamic as it accentuates aurat; they have meals in fast-food restaurants; and they engage in social intercourse in which hanging around in shopping centres, for example, is the main way of socialising with friends. As put by the HTI's spokesman, Ismail Yusanto, “one is Muslim but one’s behaviour is similar to the Western artists. He adds that “one is truly the follower of the Prophet Muhammad...but one’s idol is Bon Jovi.”318 When I did the interviews for this project, Valentine's Day was the main target of criticism by the fundamentalists. They were pained as they witnessed that the celebration of Valentine's Day had became a new trend that is socially accepted without any sort of

316 I am inspired by the way the Frankfurt School theorises the emergence of mass society. See Horkheimer and Adorno (1972); Marcuse (1964); Adorno (2001). See also Strinati (2004).
317 Marcuse (1964) uses the term "mimesis" for this immediate identification of individuals with her/his society. See also Adorno (2001).
negative thinking by the majority of Indonesians, including, and more importantly, by Muslims.\textsuperscript{319}

The trends themselves, in this respect, are the social control. Following trends becomes commonsense, a socially constructed sense accepted and believed by the masses as logical and true in itself. Those who refuse and fail to follow trends will be stigmatised as either \textit{ketinggalan jaman} (old fashioned), \textit{ketinggalan mode} (out of mode), or \textit{kampungan} (backwardness). This commonsense paves the way for individual Muslims to invert the existing values and norms into their inner being. The result is an immediate identification with society through the process of keeping up-to-date with the latest developments in trends in lifestyle and appearance. In a conversation with me another HTI activist, Desti, revisited her life in Jakarta before moving to Yogyakarta and being registered to the organisation. It is described as a life of catching up with trends in fashion, such as women’s handbags, perfumes and cellular phones. She once returned to Jakarta and found that her trendy friends looked and responded negatively to her wearing the hijab. At one point, she thought that she would never come back to this city, or, at least would never stay permanently. She said that she is tired of Jakarta’s life of following trends; she takes it as an insurmountable challenge since trends change within days; and she rejects being manipulated and controlled by big corporations, which she believes are the main beneficiaries of this kind of lifestyle. Becoming a member of HTI helps to free her from social control as she no longer takes comments seriously by people surrounding her about, for example, her clothing and her behaviour, as she believes that what she does is an expression of her true and authentic being.

In fact, the fundamentalists often express their feelings of being controlled and dominated. They largely point to cultural imperialism working through the trends discussed above and through the propaganda of what they perceive as foreign ideas such as democracy, human rights, pluralism, feminism, liberalism, secularism, and capitalism. Westernisation is, for them, identical to cultural imperialism and it makes Indonesians in general and Indonesian Muslims in particular become “inferior

subjects”, having no self-confidence and losing their uniqueness. And this westernisation, according to Ba’asyir, is more dangerous than a terrorist attack such as the Bali bombing. It will kill no lives but allow people to live without their soul and dignity. In this sense, showing and performing openly a Muslim identity, through various forms of collective action and in daily activities, is a big step forward in fighting cultural imperialism. For it frees Muslims from the prison of feeling ashamed to witness themselves in their original and non-westernised appearance.

However, the activists of this movement do not complain explicitly about the loss of freedom as a human being. As I will discuss in the next part, the fundamentalists regard freedom and liberty as dangerous and contradicting Islamic doctrines. Rather, they frequently demand their rights as Muslims to choose the kind of life they want to live—that is the life in accordance with shari’a—as a rejection of what they see as an inauthentic dominant way of life. Indeed, their rights as Muslims are essential. Awwas stated to me several times that shari’a and an Islamic state are matters of hak-hak demokrasi (democracy rights) of his and his fellow believers. It is an era of democracy in which everyone has the right to show publicly what kind of life one wants to pursue, even if it looks strange, claimed a teacher at Al-Mukmin. Disallowing him and his co-activists to bid for the implementation of Islamic law, for Awwas, must be condemned for two reasons. First, it denies the righteousness of this divinely legitimised system. Second, it is totally unacceptable in a country which proclaims itself to be democratic.

Awwas might be manipulating democracy, making maximum use of the political freedom and civil liberty created by the broadening process of political inclusiveness following Soeharto’s resignation in 1998, to elevate political leverage of himself and his organisation. Nevertheless, to speak of “democracy rights” equally suggests an obsession for an authentic self free from the domination of society’s dictating power. In this case, this dictating power is the dominant discourse that perceives democracy as the modern, the best and the only system to be pursued by everyone and, at the same time, denounces an Islamic state as being out-of-date, the worst system and should be abandoned. Rather than merely a discursive problem,

321 Interview with Ba’asyir.
322 Interview with Darwis.
some might argue that this is the real shortcoming of (liberal) democracy as it permits no deviances and blocks critics—often in disguised undemocratic ways—of its very values and principles. But my concern is that the cry for “democracy rights” is a challenge to democracy and civil liberty as a commanding trend that must be followed, and a commonsense that must be uncritically accepted, by each and everyone in the society. Hence, the problem of democracy and civil liberty is hardly different from the problem of a (new model) cellular phone. As repeatedly expressed to me they felt being forced to accept democracy as the dominant trend in town. They, at least, demand equal treatment to demonstrate their disagreement the idea of democracy, just as the proponents of democracy criticise them. They feel that what they receive is, in effect, an unfair judgement, a sort of social punishment, that sharia'a is a backward and an unreliable system to deal with modern civilisation even before the idea of the system being negated is explained properly. Understandably, the bid to implement shari'a is commonly formulated in the language of something alternative, of being unlike other human-made systems and of a uniqueness that reflects a rejection of being absorbed by the dominant discourse.

For the Certainty in Life

As mentioned above, the bid for uniqueness sets the fundamentalists free from the uniforming power of trends in everyday life. At the same time, the road to authentic being enables the activists of this movement to identify and associate themselves with their fellow unique being. For a young student at Al-Mukmin, displaying identity publicly will help him to recognise his fellow believers. His teacher repeated the same argument and urged Muslims to always use Islamic greetings to allow other people to know their religious background. Other more extreme views insist that the hijab, the white kopiah, the beard and Arabic language are significant in order to make a clear and strict distinction between “friends” and “enemies.” It means that the public display of uniqueness enables the like-minded Muslims to know for certain to which part of society they belong. By recognising

323 See, for example, Mouffe (2005). See also Zizek (2004).
324 All views outlined above expressed to me when I did a number of interview with students and teachers at Al-Mukmin.
“friends” they find some certain, and supposedly secure, place within an unfriendly social environment.

Siti told me how associating herself with Muslims of similar beliefs gave her a sense of security. When she first wore the hijab it was her like-minded friends that provided her with much-needed support to face the community and with self confidence to stand for her authenticity. I frequently heard similar stories narrated by younger activists about the friends, who help them not to feel lonely and isolated, and that not the only ones resisting social control. Indeed, accentuating exclusiveness that leads to association with others who share similar uniqueness creates a shelter, at least at the early stage in the process of becoming a fundamentalist. The importance of support by like-minded friends that creates a virtual shelter has been taken seriously by a number of fundamentalist organisations. HTI, for instance, transforms it into a method of recruiting new members and sympathisers. Most of HTI’s activists who spoke to me about how they were brought to and registered by the organisation told the same story. They started the process by meeting an unknown like-minded person, who at first is someone to share uniqueness and a feeling of being insecure. Later, the same person led them to be part of HTI. Being involved in the movement in this respect is a process through which an activist is located in a well organised, secure space compared to a mainly informal and less structured connection with like-minded friends.

In a discursive sense, however, uniqueness implies certainty in a different way. I argue that this is a path through which uniqueness moves from a mere form (signifier) of difference to a concept (signified) that produces meaning (sign). Meaning might be either unstable and change continuously, or, simply a myth to hide and divert the real meaning. The important thing is that once uniqueness turns from the play of difference into a relatively stable meaning, at least for some period of time, it becomes a certain definition. At this point being unique is a matter of imitating and embracing characters and symbols attached to a definition of what uniqueness means. To be a unique being called a Muslim is to be able to tick all boxes available in the list of Muslim exclusive qualities. More than rejecting the existing value and norms and negating the non-Muslims, being a Muslim is being a certain kind of person.

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325 I borrow the terms signifier, signified and sign from the works within the tradition of semiology and poststructuralism. See, for example, Barthes (1957); Derrida (2002).
Indeed, becoming a specific person with a definite character attached to the personality is what Awwas told me about his view on identity. Association with like-minded friends is crucial because it helps activists to reach their real “me”, that is, to discover the truest definition of being a Muslim and to meet the standard enlisted by the definition. In a more structured and regulated association with friends that forms the movement organisation and leads to collective action this real “me” appears in a more rigid definition of Muslimness with a more rigid standard of lifestyle and appearance. This helps us as the outsider to make sense of their uniqueness as the end product of the sign constructing process of fundamentalism.

IMMORALITY AND LIBERALISM

The fundamentalists’ bid for uniqueness and their rejection of the dominant existing values and norms is to serve the desire for freedom. They use the language of “cultural imperialism”, “inferior subject” and “democracy rights” because they see themselves as an independent subject that must have the right to select the life they prefer to live. The struggle for identity in this sense is a struggle to control one’s own mind and body and to reach one’s agency, that is, capacity to control one’s action through the act of will. However, the fundamentalists develop a conception of inner self as a de-centred and un-unified entity. At least, it is divided into a sort of Islamic self-consciousness, which is based on Islamic teachings; and hawa nafsu, a sort of Islamic id, the general human natural instincts. The relations between the two are by no means harmonious and the results of this inner conflict shape the nature of subjectivity. For the fundamentalists an independent subject is a kind of subject whose actions are based on the value rationality provided by Islamic doctrines. On the other hand, the less independent subject is the one who is controlled by hawa nafsu. The inner battle between the Islamic value reason and hawa nafsu is at the centre of their protests against the growing immorality in society. I will show how they take the problem of immorality as an issue of identity.
The Growing Immorality

Immorality is a generic term, which covers everything that contradicts Islamic teachings, as interpreted by the fundamentalists. Several activists, for instance, see the state, the republic of Indonesia, as an obvious example of immorality as it is based on values and norms other than shari‘a. However, blaming the absence of shari‘a is too vague to be easily absorbed by the fundamentalists sense of evidence of immorality. One reasons is that what shari‘a suggests about the specific political and economic system that is in accordance with Al-Qur‘an and hadith remains debatable within the movement. The activists, for instance, have different views on democracy. Ba‘asyir told me that taking part in the Indonesian general election is haram (forbidden). For him, the practice of elections is based on democracy teachings which are derived from non-Islamic sources. On the other hand, Farid, one of leading teachers at the same Islamic boarding school as Ba‘asyir, Al-Mukmin, expressed to me that taking part in an election is religiously justified as long as it will help Muslims to prevent, for example, a non-Muslim from becoming the president.

Nevertheless, Ba‘asyir and Farid as well as the rest of the activists in this movement have no disagreement in terms of immorality of, for example, the use of drugs and alcohol. It is clearly and strictly mentioned in Al-Qur‘an and can be easily judged as immoral without too many dissenting views. In fact, the majority of fundamentalists are more concerned with the immorality found in their social surroundings and in the media. Apart from the illegal use of drugs and alcohol, this includes a range of, in their view, asocial behaviour such as gambling, promiscuity, prostitution, homosexuality and pornography. The activists demonstrate a grave concern at this micro level of immorality because they confront it on a daily basis. An HTI activist, Mamat, told me that nowadays being takwa (one’s conscious awareness that one is watched by Allah)—and, hence, distancing one’s self from immorality—is a delicate matter. For as soon as Muslims put a step outside their home, they will...”melihat wanita telanjang (see nude women).” He meant to say that what one will find in a public space as well as in the media is a number of women either without the hijab or with a fashion style that accentuates, rather than hide, their body. A woman without a hijab is, for him, not so different from a woman without clothing covering her body. More importantly, a woman without the hijab is
not only immoral in itself, but also potentially throws him into committing the sin of seduction through the temptation aroused by their appearance.

In particular, the fundamentalists are extremely anxious about the rapid increase in what they perceive as sexual related-immorality. First, they witness with anger the widespread of promiscuity among teenagers, youths and the older generation. Quoting reports published by a private national television station, Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia (RCTI), on 25 May 2007—stating that 40-50 per cent teenagers, more than 60 per cent of senior high school students and around 90 per cent of university students in Makassar have been involved in this immoral conduct—they believe that promiscuity has gradually become a new lifestyle in Indonesia’s large cities. For them it is further evidenced by the growing number of pregnancies before marriage, abortions and divorces as well as the increasing number of people infected by sexual related diseases.

The picture of promiscuity in Indonesia presented by the fundamentalists might be accurate since non-fundamentalist sources also report a similar image. But it is also important to note that they also exaggerate the issue and, by implication, make it look worse. They, for instance, consider pacaran—an Indonesian expression for having a love affair commonly between two members of the opposite sex—as the practice of promiscuity simply because they strongly believe that those who are involved in this type of relationship are, in the end, unable to stop themselves from having sexual intercourse. Interestingly, even though almost all activists take it as unislamic behaviour and discourage their fellow Muslims from taking part, there is disagreement within the movement on how to islamicly categorise pacaran. While several activists simply classify it as zina, that is, having sexual intercourse between a man and woman beyond the legal marriage bond, others argue that the Islamic legal standard for pacaran is more complicated. When talking about Islamic law on adultery, the teacher of Al-Mukmin, Farid, bluntly explained to me that zina suggests “...alat yang laki-laki itu masuk pada alat yang perempuan (...man vital organ [penis] enters woman vital organ [vagina]).” For him, if it is only “...peluk-pelukan, cium-ciuman...(hugging, kissing...)” Muslims are not allowed to condemn it as zina. In this respect, he would argue that pacaran does not necessarily mean and lead to promiscuity.

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327 See, for example, Emka (2004).
Second, the fundamentalists are equally concerned with the rapid increase in the production and distribution of pornography in Indonesia and, what they call, *pornoaksi*—which literally means action-porn, especially following the fall of Soeharto. Using another source—this time a report published by a national weekly, *Republika* on 17 July 2003—an activist of HTI, a former Indonesian rock star, Harry Mukti, claims that Indonesia is second only to Russia, in the list of countries considered as the heaven of pornography.\(^{328}\) Mukti and his fellow fundamentalists are certain that there is no other country in the world other than Indonesia where pornographic VCD are found at an extremely cheap price, pornographic and semi-pornographic magazines and tabloids are sold on every street corner and the pornographic website is easily accessed through a vast number of relatively low rate priced internet-cafés scattered throughout the big cities.

*Pornoaksi* is a relatively new term invented by the fundamentalists and like-minded Muslims. It is defined as every type of conduct that displays auras to people other than those allowed by Islamic rules. This includes erotic acting, semi-nudity and nudity performed by artists in general during entertainment.\(^{329}\) The term occupies the centre stage of public debate in the early 2000s following the rise of a female singer, Inul, who was nationally famous for her erotic dance, the so-called *goyang ngebor*,\(^{330}\) that sparked a widespread condemnation by a large number of Muslims within the radical Islamic community. Later, *pornoaksi* became the heart of the debate on a new anti-pornography bill.\(^{331}\) The fundamentalists and their like-minded Muslim associates support the bill because its definition of pornography touches upon their concerns about *pornoaksi*. A number of human rights activists, intellectuals and performers, on the other hand, oppose the bill since the notion of *pornoaksi* implies that, among others, erotic acting and pictures for purely an artistic purpose, as well as nudity that remains legally attached to the traditional custom of a number of ethnic groups in Indonesia, will be unjustly considered as illegal.

The fundamentalists outrage about promiscuity, pornography and *pornoaksi* is becoming stronger as they find themselves to be the only group left in the “morally ill society of Indonesia” who still hold on to the commitment and the spirit to fight

\(^{328}\) Mukti (2004).
\(^{329}\) See *Al-Wa‘id*, May 2006.
\(^{330}\) See *Kompas*, 10 March 2003; *Suara Pembaharuan*, 9 May 2003; *Tempo Interaktif*, 17 May 2003.
\(^{331}\) See *Kompas*, 25 February and 25 March 2006; *Sinar Harapan*, 14 March 2006; *Detikcom*, 16 March 2006.
this religiously unacceptable conduct. The government, the political leaders and the national figures have no sense of urgency regarding the issue. Instead, a number of national figures, including some former presidents, are accused of having been involved in sexual abuse.\footnote{See Risalah Majahidin, February 2007; Al-Islam, May 2007.} As expressed to me, they were also at a loss to understand why Muslims are among those who oppose the new pornography bill. They blatantly denounce, for example, the former president, Abdurrahman Wahid, the leading figure of the largest traditional Muslim group, for his support for goyang ngebor.\footnote{See, for example, Jaiiz (2006).}

Against the backdrop of this social condition, in the longer run, the fundamentalists are deeply worried that immorality will no longer receive negative response from the majority of population, but will cease to be seen as anti social behaviour and will be regarded as normality. The worst scenario, from their point of view, would be that immoral conduct such as promiscuity is transformed into a trend in social intercourse; is taken as commonsense which is true in itself; and is transposed to the inner self of the masses through the process of immediate identification. To add credibility to this fear, they frequently point to the fact that instead of gaining support from the majority of the population regarding the righteousness of their fight against immorality, what they receive is public condemnation and a socially negative stigma. They bitterly discover themselves to be seen as strange and weird because of their support for morality. As the fundamentalists often identify themselves with morality itself, their isolated existence and uncommon presence understandably convinces them that in the eyes of the majority of the population morality is also increasingly taken to be abnormal.

\section*{Condemning Liberalism}

The activists of this movement blame liberalism for the rise of immorality. HTI, for example, is certain that liberalism is the prime cause of the increasing amount of divorce, abortions, sexual deviation, homosexuality, AIDS infected people and sexual related-crime prevalent in the contemporary Western society.\footnote{Al-Wa’ie, December 2006, p. 3-4, 13.} This
same damaging liberalism is, claim the fundamentalists, emerging in Indonesia and will turn the country into a similar moral backwardness as in the West. They look uneasily at the lifting of political oppression following Soeharto’s resignation. This political freedom they dreamt about for so long also paves the way for the proliferation of immoral conduct. A dozen activists told me how the blossoming idea of freedom of expression allows magazines, VCDs and movies full of pornography and *pornoaksi* to be distributed at ease. Freedom of expression also means freedom to perform erotic dances publicly without any fear of being socially penalised; freedom to have sex in a way that is not in accordance with Islamic teachings; and freedom to use alcohol and drugs.335

In the midst of *goyang ngebor* controversy, Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI or Islamic Scholar Assembly of Indonesia) issues a fatwa that categorises this erotic dancing as *haram*. The fundamentalists are enraged as the fatwa is opposed and largely ignored, including by their fellow Indonesian Muslims. The opposing groups argue that the fatwa is in conflict with human rights and the idea of freedom of expression. Consequently, Liberal Islam and other groups who promote liberal ideas are accused of damaging Indonesian society from within by promoting immorality.336 This accusation is strongly supported indirectly by MUI which officially categorises liberalism as a deviant doctrine from their Islamic point of view. This fatwa in effect provides the fundamentalists and like-minded Muslims with a religious licence to assault the proponents of liberalism in the same measure as their violent attack on Ahmadiyah which is also categorised as deviating from Islamic values and norms.

By and large, the fundamentalists understand liberalism to be an idea that promotes four types of freedom: freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of ownership.337 Apart from the problem of freedom of expression outlined above, freedom of speech also strongly distracts the activists. This freedom, in their view, allows Muslims, whom they see as having no credibility in presenting the true meaning of Islamic doctrines, to reinterpret Al-Qur’an, hadith and Islamic history haphazardly and to speak freely on behalf of Islam. Above all, the fundamentalists take liberalism as something other than and contradicting Islam.

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337 See Al-Jawi (2004c); *Al-Wa’ie*, December 2006.
Liberalism is largely seen as the Western imported culture that works through the propaganda by Western indigenous allies such as the activists of Liberal Islam to contaminate the purity and exclusiveness of Muslimness. However, the elements of liberalism's damaging effect are more than that. For the activists of this movement, its main threat is located in its conception of humanity, which, in effect, lowers the quality of humanity to the level of animals. Here, the challenge of liberalism to the Muslim identity has nothing to do with the problem of being different to anyone. As will be discussed shortly, it is a matter of being a human with some mental properties as a subject represented by the identity being accentuated.

A leading figure of HTI, Muhammmad Shiddiq Al-Jawi, explains that the basis of liberalism is permissiveness. He comprehends permissiveness as a sort of way of life that encourages every human being to abandon rules, especially the one that is derived from religion. It suggests that everyone is allowed to conduct whatever she/he loves to do without having to be afraid of being punished by social norms. During my conversations with a number of activists I found that the notion of permissiveness as the basic principle of liberalism is the common understanding within the movement. For the activists, living under liberalism implies that one should have to pay no attention to halal (permitted) and haram in having a meal, in dressing, in social interaction, in fact in every aspect of life. But, permissiveness is seen as by no means an end in itself. Its presence as a life principle is to serve the desire to fulfil human basic instincts such as sexual and aggressive impulses with no limitation. The unbridled fulfilment of desire is in fact the ultimate meaning of being a liberal. Understandably, Al-Jawi and his fellow fundamentalists classify conduct such as promiscuity and pornoaksi as liberalism itself.

At this point, in my view, the fundamentalists conceive liberalism as an idea that specifically redevelops the conception of a human being as a subject who is driven by instinctive impulses. The human subject is no longer seen as having the capacity to think and to act independently. Instead, a human being becomes the slave of its own desires. For them the centrality of natural instincts makes humans no different to animals, which also depend on the fulfilment of natural impulses to stay alive. Being liberal, in this sense, means nothing more than being an animal called

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338 See Ba'asyir (2006b); Al-Jawi (2004b).
human. Even, for Ba’asyir, under liberalism the human quality is lower than that of animal. He sarcastically notes that during his life he never find a homosexual couple within the world of animals. On the other hand, liberalism paves the way for homosexuality being officially legalised.

However, why are the fundamentalists deeply concerned with unbridled human natural impulses and afraid of being compared to an animal? Part of the answer is their strong belief in the divine status of the human being as the best creature created by Allah who authorises her/him to be the leader of all creatures. The more significant answer is that they are obsessed by the idea of the human subject having autonomous consciousness. More to the point, the fundamentalists might have misread the idea of liberalism and misinterpreted it in a way that makes the idea look worse. What is important for me is that the conception of a human being who is driven by non-rational impulses denies that human is a subject who possesses the power to control one’s own self and life. Their rejection of liberalism, in this respect, is an attempt to rescue the human being as an independent subject.

The issue of hawa nafsu

To understand this obsession further, I will start by discussing hawa nafsu. It is an Indonesian term (borrowed from Arabic nafs) which literally means carnal desire. Hawa nafsu is a sort of Islamic notion for id, the site of natural instinctive impulses, which functions according to the pleasure-pain principle. The fundamentalists understand hawa nafsu as being part of one’s inner self. The fulfilment of this carnal desire is seen as an inevitable consequence of being human. But, as mentioned above, they have no belief in the virtue of unbridled fulfilment of natural desire. Instead, the lack of control over human instinctive impulses is responsible for the rise of immorality in current Indonesian society. In the case of the erotic dance, goyang ngebor, discussed earlier, the fundamentalists claim that this dance is extremely popular because it serves the sexual impulses of its male fans. They also believe that uncontrolled sexual desire has led both Muslim and non-Muslim teenagers to promiscuous behaviour.

341 Ba’asyir (2006a; 2006b).
Moreover, *hawa nafsu* is, according to the activists, a place where *shaytan*—an Arabic term for Satan—the evil spirit, works to tempt and control of human beings. The unbridled fulfilment of natural impulses suggests that the attempt by *shaytan* to take control of the human mind has been successful. Immoral conduct, in this sense, is no longer perceived as part of human behaviour, but taken as the presence of an evil spirit that operates through the human body. Here, humans, who, the fundamentalists believe, are located at the highest rank compared to all creatures created by Allah, submits their subjectivity as an independent and respected entity to the rule of the lower creature, *shaytan*. In secular terms, the evil spirit can mean various things. Ideas such as democracy and pluralism can be easily regarded as the presence of *shaytan*. The evil spirit is also omnipresent through trends in fashion and in social life in general as discussed in the preceding section.

What is important though is that the notion of the rule of *shaytan* working through the unbridled fulfilment of natural desire accentuates their sense of having lost control of their own mind and body, as they feel that they are forced to accept the dominant ideas and lifestyle and to follow the ruling trends in social life. The existence of immorality is also significant because it allows them to show how human beings who are ruled by *shaytan* through the colonising power of *hawa nafsu* have ended up. At the same time, their own presence as the moral minority left in a largely ill society is saved from the prevailing sin simply because they remain human and that is supposed to be a subject with autonomous consciousness that possesses the capacity to control its natural instinctive impulses.

During my conversation with key figures such as Ba’asyir and Awwas, they frequently spoke of *menahan diri* as the key to their success in avoiding immoral conduct. *Menahan diri* literally means self-restraint. In its broader usage by the movement it suggests the capacity to stir and control the fulfilment of *hawa nafsu* which is reflected in the capacity to think and to act reasonably. To think and to act reasonably, for the fundamentalists, suggests a rejection both to be guided by the pleasure-pain principle and the gain-loss calculation. In this regard, Ba’asyir claims that Muslims who question the originality of the Islamic state idea are simply "*bodoh* (stupid)” because they base their decision, according to Awwas, on “...like and dislike.” By this, Awwas meant that many Muslims are uneasy with the idea because it will prevent them from having unrestricted pleasure by having unbridled fulfilment of human basic desires. Hasyim from MMI bluntly explained to me that those who
are against the implementation of *shari‘a*, which, for example implies a strict rule on, women to cover their bodies properly, are those who are driven by their sexual lust to always enjoy watching the beautiful body of a woman.\(^{342}\)

From this claim, it seems to me that the fundamentalists accept the existence of the capacity to reason inside oneself, where autonomous consciousness, an entity through which one constructs reasonable thinking and actions, is at home. This substance functions mainly to lead the body, where *hawa nafsu* is located. However, fundamentalist’s thinking substance is different from that of “cogito ergo sum.” The majority of the fundamentalists believe that the main function of the human mind is to receive *wahyu*, revelations from Allah, and to understand Islamic teachings properly. Therefore, *akal* is the site of Islamic doctrines. The doctrines work according to the logic of right and wrong and constitute a sort of Islamic value rationality that guides the fundamentalists’ thinking and actions. When Ba’asyir categorises some Muslims as stupid, what he is referring to is their lack of knowledge of Islamic values and norms. Stupidity and being unreasonable both reflect a lack of the Islamic value reason and is a sign of being controlled by *hawa nafsu*. In this respect, the presence of God is beyond *akal* and is a matter of faith. It is Allah that provides the value reason through Al-Qur’an.\(^{343}\)

Nevertheless, this by no means implies that Islam, as interpreted by them, forbids the fulfilment of *hawa nafsu*. Instead, the fundamentalists are certain that under the surveillance of the Islamic value reason Muslims can fulfil their natural instinctive desires in the right manner. The argument was widely proposed during two sexual related controversies in late 2006.\(^{344}\) The first controversy was a sexual affair involving a national female singer, Maria Eva, and a male member of national parliament, Yahya Zaini. The second controversy was the decision by a nationally well-known Islamic preacher, Abdullah Gymnastiar, to conduct polygamy.\(^{345}\) Both incidents invoked public debate on issues ranging from male dominating power, women’s rights, sexual abuse and the separation of public and private spheres. For the activists what these two controversies tell us is the difference between the human who is controlled by “*syahwat* (sexual lust)” and the one who is controlled by the

\(^{342}\) Interviews with Ba’asyir, Awwas and Hasyim.


\(^{345}\) See *Detikcom*, 2 December 2006; 3 December 2006; *Tempo Interaktif*, 8 December 2006.
Islamic value reason. Should the male member of national parliament, who also happened to be Muslim, follow his “akal sehat (mind)” he would choose polygamy, as Islamicly legal conduct according to them, rather than having a secret lover.

In fact, the issue of polygamy was at centre stage at that time. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was also affected as he ordered his assistants to tighten the non polygamy rule to include all state officials. Ba’asyir, on the other hand, told me that those who are against polygamy are, once again, stupid. He bluntly explained that polygamy is an Islamicly legalised answer to the problem of, among others, “...laki-laki yang punya nafsu besar...(man who possesses strong sexual lust).” For me it implies that there is nothing wrong in fulfilling one’s sexual desires, despite abusing the rights of others—the rights of women in this case—as long as it is conducted within the space permitted by the surveillance and disciplining power of Islamic doctrines, as interpreted by Ba’asyir and like-minded Muslims. Later, the fundamentalists are enraged that the public paid more attention to the case of polygamy and complained little about the conduct of Yahya Zaini. While Gymnastiar was accused of abusing his first wife, there is no similar charge against Zaini. For them this obviously means that the majority of the population take the side of immorality and, thank God, there remains the small number of the chosen minority who still consistently cling to Islamic values and norms.

THE MEANING OF LIFE AND HEDONISM

I turn now mainly to the issue of certainty. The focus is the anxiety of the activists of this movement regarding the question of their original foundation of life. Uncertainty and insecurity here indicates the feeling of being unclear and indeterminate about the meaning of one’s life and the goal by which one’s life should be directed. It is also related to the question of a sort of eternal life that haunts the fundamentalists, that is, life that exists beyond both living in the present and living in the world. The struggle for identity is, in this sense, a cure for this anxiety. It is the basis through which they discover the answer to what their life is for and the path to reach the ultimate meaning of being human. Identity equally helps them to develop a logical connection between their life in the past, in the present and in the future through some conception of the afterlife.
Apart from immorality, the activists frequently condemn what they understand as hedonism, which, for them can also be regarded as immoral conduct itself. I will show that at the heart of this condemnation is their concern about the foundation of life. The most often raised questions regarding these issues are related to the meaning of happiness. The answers lead them to a strong rejection of hedonism, which is seen as having turned their life meaningless and made it fail to reach the truth and the real life.

Hedonism and Anxiety

The fundamentalists commonly believe in the virtue of having a clear goal in life. The good thing of having identity is that they start to have meanings and directions attached to their daily activities. An HTI leading figure in Yogyakarta, Yoyok Tindyo Prasetyo, explains that without goals his life becomes useless. He recalls his life before becoming a member of the organisation; a life that he describes as falling under the sway of the social trends previously discussed. When he was an undergraduate, he used to imitate what his friends did in order to become acceptable to his peers, by being involved in a music band and in a theatre group. But this ended up in a feeling of uncertainty about what kind of person he really was and what kind of future he wanted to have. His decision to register himself in the organisation and to find his own self through his participation in the movement is part of his attempt to find a true meaning and direction in life.346

Likewise, Yoyok’s fellow HTI’s member, Desti, underlines the importance of objectives in life. Hers is a life which is marked by economic hardship. She used to consider it to be her fate that she came from a financially less secure family. She felt that she had a bleak future and decided to be involved in a number of student extracurricular activities as an escape from her anxiety about her difficult life. It was HTI—through its members who are closely associated with her—that helped her to regain her life by redefining its meanings and its directions.347 Awwas echoes similar thoughts. He further adds that without goals and some hope of a better life in the future humans are no different to animal. He argues that an animal lives its life by following the natural cycle from birth to death through the working of its natural

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346 Interview with Yoyok.
347 Interview with Desti.
instincts. Humans, on the other hand, should construct their lives according to a specific guide to reach some worthy future. And having a clear goal in the future is, for Awwas, part of Muslim uniqueness. 348

But having a goal alone is not sufficient. For Yoyok, becoming a member of a music band by no means implies that he has no goals in life. The difference between the identity of a band member and that of a member of the organisation is that the meaning of life provided by the latter is, he believes, the real one. His decision to join the movement is more than simply having guidance of how to live his life. More precisely, it is about selecting goals that provide him with a sense of certainty. The fundamentalists’ rejection of hedonism discussed shortly should be understood in this way. It is a matter of negating the meaning provided by this style of life that is seen as untenable.

The term hedonism is used in its broader meaning as the pursuit of pleasure, particularly, body related-pleasure. The fundamentalists believe that this celebration of bodily pleasure is increasingly becoming the dominant way of life in Indonesia. It regulates people’s minds not only in how to run their daily activities, but also in how to operate politics and the economy. They frequently point to the pursuit of luxury commonly seen as desirable by many Indonesians as a prime example of hedonism. They also use the term to refer to the dominant trends in social habits such as hanging around in shopping centres, particularly for youth; regularly visiting the cinema and other public entertainment venues; and buying things ranging from cellular phones to cars for the sake of having something new. By and large the activists of this movement perceive hedonism as being part of cultural imperialism. It is an imported culture—from the West, as usual—that works through the media, particularly television and film, to take control over the consciousness of the masses.

Sinema elektronik (sinetron or Electronic Cinema), a sort of local movie series on TV, is frequently mentioned as the channel through which hedonism as a style of life is disseminated and socialised. The activists are certain that sinetron has thrown many Muslims, especially the younger generation, under the sway of this lifestyle. As they see it daily through the glass screen, the style, behaviour, attitude and appearance exhibited by artists are taken as normal and as the model to be imitated.

348 Awwas (1999).
More importantly, hedonism is seen as being closely related to the problem of hawa nafs discussed above. This radical Muslim group is enraged to discover that the pleasure-pain principle that is at the heart of a hedonistic lifestyle has been increasingly transformed philosophically into an ethical doctrine in everyday life. Many Indonesians are seen as largely accepting the seeking of pleasure in life, by every means available, as good and desirable in itself. Awwas, for instance, sarcastically notes that nowadays the majority of the population only live to work, to eat, to sleep and to reproduce before they conclude this cycle with mortality. People, he continues, have stopped to possess any idealism and progressive thoughts because what is important is how to please "...isi perut (stomach)" and "keperluan syahwat (sexual needs)." The hedonistic lifestyle is, for him, a kind of life which is controlled by hawa nafs.

Indeed, the main issue is the celebration of pleasure in life and the association of hedonism with immorality. It is widely believed that, as implied by Awwas argument above, a hedonistic lifestyle makes Muslims less critical toward social realities surrounding them. They pay little attention to their very existence as supposedly unique beings and to meanings and goals of life. Instead, Muslims are persuaded, through, among other things the media and the school, to enjoy life by allowing the fulfilment of desire. This closes the way for the emergence of an autonomous consciousness where the Islamic value reason is located, through which one can develop negative thinking toward hedonism. Consequently, for many activists, being part of the movement, being reborn as a new person with a unique identity, entails abandoning an easy going life. Life becomes more or less serious stuff as they start to make themselves busy with questions related to directions and goals in life.

Mamat told me that before being registered as a member of HTI he used to associate himself with the celebration of pleasure. He rarely took part in religious-related activities because he felt that he was only a teenager who still wants to have much fun in life. Religion was simply much too serious and would become a matter of urgency once he gets older. Then, he decided to become an Islamic activist because found that his celebrating pleasure as a way of life was untenable.

349 Awwas (1999).
A similar story was also told by Desti. Prior to her involvement with the movement, she had a life full of fun. She used to hang around in shopping malls regularly, visit the movie theatre frequently, and spend most of her time with her friends sharing rumours and making fun of each other. She suddenly realised that this kind of life fails to answer a number of her fundamental questions such as why was she born in the current situation where she is? What is her life for? What does it mean to be happy? These questions lead her to give up her former life and to discover the new one provided by the movement.350

Likewise, another young fundamentalist, Doriman, proudly claimed that joining the movement had cost him a girlfriend. This relatively good-looking young man expressed to me how becoming an Islamic activist has turned him revolusioner (a revolutionary person). When he did his undergraduate studies in Brawijaya University in Malang, East Java, he built a special relationship with one of his female friends. But, as he started to be involved in various religious activities, mostly conducted by Islamic radical groups, he determined to end his love affair. Having a girl friend gave no answer to what kind of life he wanted to pursue.351 Here, the revolutionary change he talked about is a drastic move in his everyday life from one which involves having as much pleasure in life as possible to one which is fully committed to pursuing specific meanings and goals.

Giving away a hedonistic lifestyle is also part of the story when the older generation of activists started to participate in the movement. Awwas notes that being an Islamic activist implies that one should prepare to have a difficult life.352 Awwas himself, in fact, spent part of his life in jail. Such a difficult life, for Aziz, is a life based on the virtue of patience, thrift, steadfastness and abstinence. As a teenager, Aziz selected the opposite lifestyle to hedonism when he accepted an offer to be part of the Islamic fighters in Afghanistan.353 Both Awwas and Aziz believe that, despite of all the hardship, they have found the true meaning of life.

350 Interview with Desti.
351 Interview with Doriman.
352 Awwas (1999).
Eternal and Meaningful Happiness

The remaining questions are: why are the fundamentalists so allergic to hedonism? What kind of meaning of life do they find in their identity as Muslims? What we witness here is the discovery of one specific meaning of life as much as the negation of another. A hedonistic lifestyle for sure provides directions and goals on how to live one's life. But it is the rejection of the meanings of life enlisted by this lifestyle that leads the activists to struggle for identity. To begin with, the questions put forward by Desti outlined before might be useful. One issue that bothered her several times is the meaning of happiness. This is highly significant because it is crucial in helping her to define and set the direction of her life. Differently put, Desti and her co-fundamentalists also care about the pursuit of pleasure in life and perceive it as equally fundamental. Yusanto, underlined this as he strongly believes that every human being, including Muslims in general and people like himself, are deeply obsessed with the issue of happiness. The meaning of happiness and the way to achieve it is the major factor that shapes how he runs his life and how he and his fellow activists are different from the rest of society.  

The key problem of hedonism is that the fundamentalists are less certain about the meaning of happiness provided by this lifestyle. Consequently, they attempt to look for a more secured fulfilment of pleasure, which, they think they have truly found when they (re)discover themselves as a unique being called Muslim.

In general, the human body is the main locus of hedonism. The body is transformed into a vehicle to reach a happy life in which happiness is a matter of fulfilling basic desires attached to the human body that creates a sense of pleasure. A moment of happiness is a moment of pleasure sensation when the desire for eating, having sex or possessing (new) goods is met through, for example, consumption. The fundamentalists have little objection regarding the association of happiness with the sense of pleasure. But, they strongly reject the human body as the main site for achieving happiness. They believe that being independent from the capacity to reason the human body will be guided by hawa nafsu. As the unbridled fulfilment of hawa nafsu will end up in immorality, they tend to see the body as the vehicle for sin and, therefore, must be disciplined. The disciplining of the body is possible through

354 Interview with Yusanto.
355 See, for example, Featherstone (1991a; 1991b).
asceticism, by embracing the virtue of thrift, patience, steadfastness, abstinence and moderation. It is the control and the domestication of *hawa nafsu* through asceticism that brings happiness. The sense of pleasure is reached when one is able to put one’s own natural desires under the rule of, what they perceive as, autonomous consciousness, the home of the Islamic value reason.

But how can happiness be reached through an ascetic body? Is their rejection of the notion of the body as a vehicle for pleasure entirely for religious reasons? The activists believe that even though the meaning of happiness associated with the fulfilment of desire is morally accepted, hence ignoring the notion of the body as vehicle for sin, a happy life could only be dreamed of and will never be attained. Ibnu Chanifah, a member of the leadership board of Al-Mukmin, brings the issue of *kepuasaan* (satisfaction) into the fore. Regarding the desire to have a life of luxury that leads to a sort of race among Indonesians in general for possessing as many goods as possible, he wonders what the final result of the race will be. Being wealthy might be morally acceptable, but he asks himself what is the standard for satisfaction and being pleased with what we possess. For him, satisfaction has no standard because human desire has no limits. Fulfilling one desire will be only result in a bid for another one, so possessing as many luxurious goods as possible will never be sufficient.\(^{356}\)

For the fundamentalists, since desire and satisfaction have no limits, the meaning of happiness becomes unclear. One never knows whether one has already been happy because the sense of pleasure at one moment will only be the true meaning of life before the fulfilment of another desire takes place. This is exactly the issue that disturbs Desti before she joined the movement as she kept asking herself about what it meant to be happy. She wondered whether happiness should be measured either in terms of possessing new products sold in the department stores or in terms of luxury. In fact, Desti and her fellow fundamentalists discover that under hedonism life is more uncertain with unclear directions and goals, except for the unbridled fulfilment of *hawa nafsu*.\(^{357}\) Their obsession with controlling *hawa nafsu* is also a bid to have a certain meaning of happiness, to have certain directions and goals in life.

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356 Interview with Chanifah. See also Awwas (1999); Thalib, M. (2007a).
357 See, for example, Awwas (1999); Al-Jawi (2005b); Thalib, M (2007a).
Furthermore, Chanifah's reflection on the issue of satisfaction suggests that a hedonistic lifestyle might bring happiness, but this happiness will be short lived and will suddenly disappear as soon as a new desire emerges. Between the disappearance of happiness created by the fulfilment of one desire and the fulfilment of the next one is a moment of waiting for the celebration of another bodily pleasure. This is the moment of anxiety as one is nervously concerned with possible success (or failure) to reach (new) happiness. The fundamentalists take the moment of anxiety seriously as part of their rejection of hedonism. While its proponents might argue that a hedonistic lifestyle brings a perpetual happiness, the activists of this movement would note that hedonism can be equally seen as creating infinite anxiety. The activists are preoccupied with *rasa tenang* (the feeling of ease) as an opposite of *gelisah* (anxiety). As happiness is a matter of having the feeling of ease, they tend to associate those who live in luxury as having an uneasy life.³⁵⁸ Safruddin expressed to me with confidence that being an Islamic activist helps him to achieve an ultimate feeling of ease, one that he is unable to describe in words. He feels that his life becomes more worthy and meaningful since he is totally free from the control of his own desire, most importantly, for having a life full of wealth. Safruddin also has a feeling of relief because he was once in a position to have a luxurious life. Should he pursue hedonism, he believes that his life would be full of anxiety.³⁵⁹ Equally significant, however, feelings of ease and anxiety are related to purchasing power. From the point of view of the class basis of this movement, a hedonistic lifestyle is largely not affordable. I will discuss in length the relations between the rejection of hedonism, the social class background and the rise of the consumer culture in Indonesia in Chapter 6. Suffice here to note that for fundamentalists such as Desti and Chanifah the feeling of anxiety is as real as the fact that they are financially less powerful to possess, for example, the newest model of cellular phone. Desti told me how her identity as a Muslim, provides her with a sense of unique being, and this helps to ease her feeling of being embarrassed because of possessing an out of mode Motorola hand-phone.³⁶⁰ In this sense anxiety is related to the lack of material power. They have a feeling of insecurity because they know for sure that their financial power is a hindrance to have the happy life

³⁵⁸ See, for example, Awwas (1999); Thalib, M. (2007b).
³⁵⁹ Interview with Safruddin.
³⁶⁰ Interview with Desti.
according to hedonistic values. Rejecting hedonism and seeing it as contaminating the uniqueness of the Muslim identity helps the activists to redefine the meaning of happiness as new directions and goals in life without having to take any financial impediments into account.

Pilgrimage to Life After-Death

The fundamentalists admit that hedonism creates a more colourful and attractive life. The so called *perhiasan dunia*—literally means worldly decoration—such as fashion, cars and houses, is, according to the salafi group, deeply enjoyable.¹ This hedonistic world is equipped, added Awwas, with a huge number of facilities to entertain and to please human beings so that every normal person can easily fall into its arms.² The director of Al-Mukmin, Wahyuddin, further claims that arts (especially music and film), sports (particularly sporting events relayed on TV screen) and games such as video games and TV quizzes are among the top facilities of entertainment that give people great pleasure.³

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, this radical Muslim group questions such a colourful and attractive hedonism. They believe that it takes away Muslims’ attention from the much more fundamental issue concerning meanings and goals in life. More importantly, “world jewellery” and entertainment facilities make Muslims relatively vulnerable to suffer from a sort of social disease they called *cinta dunia dan takut mati*—literally means falling in love with the world and being afraid to die.⁴ This term is an Indonesian translation from an Arabic word *wahn*. The activists use this word to describe a kind of mental state of being highly obsessed with worldly related bliss, especially the one that is related to wealth, power and sex. Once a Muslim is suffering from *cinta dunia dan takut mati*, s/he will be at the stage of *mabuk dunia*—an Indonesian expression used by them to describe a mental state of losing autonomous consciousness because of *wahn*—as s/he uncritically accepts the hedonistic world as desirable and as providing the real virtue of life. Key figures

² Awwas (1999).
³ Interview with Wahyuddin.
⁴ See, for example, Awwas (1999); Thalib, M. (2007b).
such as Ba'asyir repeatedly remind his fellow Muslims of the danger of *wahn*. He claims that the Prophet Muhammad Himself has warned His followers that at the end of the world His *umma* will badly suffer from *wahn* as they refuse to leave the world for a new life in the hereafter.

Clearly, the notion of dangerous *cinta dunia* is simply another way of rejecting the hedonistic lifestyle. What is significant for me is the specific part of hedonism that is denounced by this negative religious campaign against worldly related bliss. I understand hedonism as essentially celebrating life in the world. Life is simply here and now, is only once and, hence, must be used to achieve pleasure as much as possible, by, among other things, setting free the body from any type of surveillance and disciplining power, especially one that is produced by traditional values such as religion. One might be getting older and die, but that is the end of the “real” life. The issue is by no means that dying is inevitable, but how to avoid dying in pain, that is, passing away before fully benefiting from the hedonistic lifestyle. Later, I will show that celebrating living in the world is at the heart of, and obtains its full strength from, consumer culture—some might call it postmodern culture—that is emerging in Indonesia. My concern here is that the issue of inevitable death is taken seriously by the fundamentalists. More than simply an end, mortality is crucially seen as the limit of this hedonistic “real” life. And because it has limits, hedonism must by no means be the true one. Instead, the real life must be eternal transcending life and death.

Another HTI activist, Nopri, metaphorically expressed to me that this eternal life is like a long line that connects being born, living in the world, dying and the life after death. This connection is the main basis through which he discovers the meaning and the goal of his life. It seems to me that, for Nopri, his life is a pilgrimage, a trip from one point to another certain point; with a clear distinction between the past, the present and the future; with inescapable suffering and pain during the trip; and a promised life of happiness at the end of the passage. The term pilgrimage used here is not so different from the one used by Bauman. He applies the term to describe the formation of modern identity. In the postmodern world,

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365 Interview with Ba'asyir.
366 See, for example, Featherstone (1991a; 1991b).
367 See, for example, Baudrillard (1983b; 1998); Jameson (1991); Bauman (1996; 1998a).
368 Interview with Nopri.
identity is less like a pilgrim and becomes more like a tourist, moving and changing continually, being fully in the present and with little sense of past and future, and without a solid basis attached to a specific culture as in the modern world. For me the worth of this term is that it helps me to understand the way fundamentalists distinguish the conception of their life from the one of hedonism. Celebrating life in the world, that looks more like celebrating living in the present of postmodern identity, is unacceptable because it abandons, particularly, the life after death, which, for the fundamentalists, is the real one. The very Muslim identity they struggle for reminds them that their worldly life is part of a pilgrimage to the true life in the hereafter.

The idea of life after death is crucial. Departing from merely condemning hedonism, this idea suggests alternative meanings and directions in life. This afterlife consists of surga (paradise) and neraka (hell) representing eternal pleasure and eternal pain. Paradise is reachable, regardless, for example, how much money one possesses. One simply needs to follow the right directions in one’s pilgrimage from birth to death and to the life after death and one will find the true and never ending happiness at the end of the trip. As they are certain that the goal of their life is also to reach happiness in terms of pleasure as promised by a hedonistic lifestyle, their feeling of pleasure, here in the world, should be delayed for a while to achieve the real and the eternal happiness (paradise), by nurturing their life correctly, through defeating, among other things, the power of hawa nafsu on their body and mind.

Aziz, regarding this matter, claims that being accused as an evil terrorist, being imprisoned and being sentenced with capital punishment create no feeling of sadness or regret for him for not having sufficient time to fully enjoy a wonderful life. Because of the pain he has suffered in his life, Islam promises an eternal happy life in the hereafter. According to a text in a website frequented by Aziz, the life in jannah (paradise) is full of a joy none ever see, hear, or, think about. In this life no-one will suffer from disease, will be old or will die. How can one not be happy and be satisfied, it continues, since in jannah one will live in a palace made of

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370 See also Bauman (2005); Baudrillard (1983b); Jameson (1983).
371 This way of presenting the importance of the afterlife is commonly found in sermons by key fundamentalist figures. Almost every sermon in Friday prayer, that I attended when I was in Al-Mukmin, either starts or concludes with the importance of having an eternal life in paradise.
pearl with a fairy in each of its corners. Indeed, Aziz expresses no sign of anxiety since he strongly believes that should he be syahid, that is, die because of jihad, Islam, as he understands, promises him, among other things, a beautiful fairy accompanying and serving him in the afterlife. Paridah Abbas, the wife of another Bali Bomber, Ali Ghufron, echoes Aziz’s claim. She also believes that a beautiful paradise fairy will be the present from God for her husband should he syahid. It seems to me that Aziz is equally obsessed by sexual bliss commonly found in the hedonistic lifestyle. The difference is that he wants to have it eternally and to obtain it through a divinely legitimised way. It might be the promise of a fairy in the hereafter and other promises of unimagined worldly pleasure that makes another Bali bomber, Amrozi, keep his famous smile. For these promises generate a sense of certainty of what they are doing and what future they are directed towards.

Moreover, according to Safruddin, he does not have to wait for the afterlife to be secured from anxiety. As soon as he rediscovers his Muslim identity that guides him how to live his life correctly, he feels both happy and more secure in the unfriendly world where he lives. Safruddin, for instance, is less worry about the social judgements he will receive because of his clothing and his appearance. Similarly, the younger activists such as Mamat, Desti and Doriman, experience a new sensation as they find their real “me.” They share a feeling of ease and relief, in stark contrast to nervousness, fear and being in doubt that often haunted them before joining the movement.

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In this chapter I explain that the fundamentalists’ struggle for identity is to serve their desire for freedom and for certainty in life. The struggle is a response to the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and social disenchantment. The invasion of trends in lifestyle, immorality and hedonism into their everyday life is largely seen as the main source of the problem. Their fight against trends, immoral conduct and a hedonistic lifestyle involves resisting social control, to secure their own unique being and to

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373 The title of this text is “Bantahan atas Alasan Orang-orang yang Enggan Berjihad.” The text was originally posted at http://www.istimata.com. When I accessed it on 24 August 2007, it was posted at http://www.geocities.com/bush_ekl/bantah.TXT. The same text was also posted at http://perangsalib01.cjb.net
375 Interview with, Safruddin.
restore the meanings and the goals of their life. Trends in fashion and in lifestyle in general are taken as a form of social control. The fundamentalists’ emphasis on their uniqueness mainly reflects the attempt to free themselves from being absorbed by the uniforming power of trends. In the process of securing their authenticity, the bid for uniqueness helps the fundamentalists to (re)discover secure place within unfriendly social surroundings, to discover their real “me” and, hence, to serve their desire for certainty in life. The fight against immorality is predominantly about the issue of autonomy. They take the rapid increase in immoral conduct prevalent in society at large as a sign of the emergence of *hawa nafsu* as the ruler of the human mind and body. Since humans who are dictated to by *hawa nafsu* are no longer independent subjects—even no longer humans—rejecting immorality is nothing more than restoring the rule of autonomous consciousness under the guidance of the Islamic value rationality. Finally, the resistance to hedonism is by and large related to the question of certainty. The activists are deeply concerned about the meanings and goals of their life. They reject hedonism because they find the meanings and goals provided by this lifestyle as unreal and untenable.
In the preceding chapter, I argued that the fundamentalists' struggle for identity is a response to the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment. The primary sources of these problems are the commanding social trends in everyday life, the rapid rise of immorality in society at large and the popularity of a hedonistic lifestyle. The struggle for identity is at once to fight against these "social ills" and to serve the desire for freedom and the bid for certainty in life. In this chapter I will examine the identity that has been discussed thus far. What is the fundamentalists' identity? How can the process of adopting their identity be understood in terms of rejecting oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment? How does it serve the desire for freedom and autonomy on the one hand and the bid for certainty and security in life on the other hand?

Drawing on the type of identity politics outlined in the Introduction, I argue that the fundamentalists' identity is invented, rather than discovered. The construction of this identity depends upon its difference from, and its negation of, other terms and identities. Following Castells, at the heart of this construction process is the act of resistance and of making boundaries. Their identity is constructed through the act of resisting the social ills and the domination of other identities. The identity is also produced through the making of boundaries, a sort of signifying process aimed at accentuating the difference between the activists and their others. Through resistance and boundaries, the construction of fundamentalists' identity ends up in the creation of what I call identity space. This space is initially the empty signifier of the actual identity under scrutiny. It is such a blank sign of being a fundamentalist because, through the play of difference, its meanings and substances are nothing other than the negativity of its others.

Nevertheless, inspired by Butler and Turner, I argue that this emptiness is filled in with real actions that create substance and qualities of their identity. Its main content is in fact new subjectivities produced through the materialisation of new practices and performances implied by the constructed identity. The invention of fundamentalists' identity and the filling in of the space created by resistance and boundaries then results in the formation of the fundamentalist subject, which is
supposedly free from oppression originating in trends, immorality and hedonism. Furthermore, the new subject is transposed into, and in effect remakes, the fundamentalists’ inner self. The remaking of self is a decision the activists make to adopt the new subjectivities through the process of learning and understanding new practices and making routine the physical skills implied by new practices.

In the following pages, I divide my discussion into two main parts. The first part focuses on the production of the fundamentalist identity. The next one examines how this identity produces the fundamentalist subject and remake fundamentalist self.

DISCOURSE, BODY LANGUAGE AND MOVEMENT SITES

The fundamentalists’ identity is constructed through the practice of discourse. It is further present in body language and in places associated with the movements. At the heart of this identity construction process is negation of modernity and the West. The process also creates boundaries that allow the activists to enjoy a sense of freedom from being controlled by social ills and to acquire more certain meanings and goals of life.

The Politics of Representation

As previously noted, the fundamentalists were deeply concerned about the issue of authenticity. Ironically, the originality they are looking for is skilfully manufactured and uncritically taken up through writings, statements, public speeches and sermons conducted mainly by the movement’s elite. There are, at least, two cultural identities, Islam and Indonesia, that predominantly present in both their writings and oral statements. Nevertheless, Islam is the most important one. In fact, Indonesia as a cultural identity is also adopted because, for the activists, it does not negate the Islamic identity.

The construction of the fundamentalists’ identity by making difference and negation of others highlights their uneasiness with and scepticism toward modernity. Modern life, in the way they understand it, is the site of the colonising trends,
immorality and hedonistic lifestyle already discussed. Producing one’s identity by making a difference of modernity is a form of resistance that responds to the oppression and control by these social ills. It is also an attempt to draw the line that will keep the purity of self and everyday life from being contaminated by modern life. However, the construction of their identity is based upon their rejection of identities of, most notably, the West, but also the Christians and the Jews. As mentioned previously, for the activists of this movement, Christianity and Judaism represent the hostile religions. The West is seen as the embodiment of the crusade-cum-zionist international as expressed by some activists.

Islam as the main cultural identity presents in almost every type of writing and speech. Its presence can be found in the subject position inside the discourses that speak. Almost every fundamentalist who occupies this position, no matter what organisation she/he comes from, will speak—or, I should say, hail their audience—from the standpoint of what they believe as the true Islam. Frequently, the activists even see and present themselves as Islam itself and take any response to their discourse as a reaction to Islam. In a debate between MMI and some elements of Liberal Islam, opinions that questioned their interpretation of Al-Qur’an verses were easily taken as an insult to this religion. Islam also presents in the point of reference identified by the activists of this movement to divinely justify her/his subject position. Al-Qur’an, hadith and the view of medieval Islamic scholars are always the main source of quotations.

Islam further appears in the style of language. I found many parts of their oral and verbal presentations look more like a projection of the Al-Qur’an language style into their own discourse. The language style that grounds, for instance, the way they occupy the subject position and the way they want audiences to listen to them resembles the one in Al-Qur’an that clarifies the presence of Allah. I attended a number of public sermons provided by various figures from the movement elite. On many occasions the preacher spoke and used the language as if it was Allah or, at least, Al-Qur’an itself that was speaking. This is hardly surprising. As I have just noted, the fundamentalists often and too confidently feel that they are the embodiment of the true Islam.

376 I borrow the term “present” and “presence” in such usage as “…the presence of Islam…” and “…Islam presents…” from Stuart Hall’s Cultural Identity and Diaspora (1990).
Part of the language style is the usage of jargon, terms and concepts mostly in Arabic. During our conversation, Yoyok interestingly drew a line between the identities of him and the one of, what he thought, was mine. I asked his opinion on modern items such as computers and shopping malls. He felt that it would help me to understand his position on the issue better, if he could give his opinion in terms and concepts which are part of my identity. So, he nicely tried to explain his view by using a few English words and expressions because he took English as part of the identity of people like me who study in a foreign country. But then, after facing some language difficulties, he decided to retain his identity, by using several Arabic terms and concept, in outlining his view on modernity. And, yet, I could fully understand his views. Even, without both Arabic and English, I could still follow perfectly what he said. But, for Yoyok, Arabic and English, whatever cosmetic role their function was during the conversation, are significant as the language tells his audience, including myself, who he is and is not.

The fundamentalists believe that the Islam they represent is the original and the true one. Its meanings and substance has existed for some fourteen-hundred years, when the Prophet Muhammad was still alive and received divine revelation from Allah. They claim that what they are trying to do, and have been partly successful in so doing, is to excavate Islamic history, especially the period of Muhammad and the three Muslim generations after Him, and to rediscover an authentic Islamic self. The meaning and the content of Islamic self, they further add, is not something that needs to be interpreted. It is already there and ready to be adopted.

But is there some original Islamic self hidden inside Islamic history waiting to be excavated? To begin with, the fundamentalists invented their identity by making use of Islamic teachings and history. This invention should be understood as just another way of interpreting, for instance, Muhammad’s life, though in a less innovative manner. Surely, the activists of this movement will insist that their interpretation is the only true and legitimate one. Putting aside this bizarre claim, the interesting thing for me is that the fundamentalists do not only interpret, but also select the type of Islamic self they want to adopt. Copying literally Muhammad’s way of life is at once the result of interpretation and the making of preference. I

378 See, for example, *Risalah Mujahidin* December 2006.
argue that making preference involves a process of identification, of how the activists identify themselves with something else that will valorise their presence as real and significant. Referring to the logic of identification discussed in chapter 2, the positivity of Islamic self they think they have discovered inside Islamic teachings and history should have been produced through the negativity of others. Specifically, the presence of Islam and their preference of copying literally Muhammad's life as the true and the original identity occurs in the absence and the rejection of modernity. The Islamic identity might have existed in the past as they claim, but the past that is constructed through the activists' location in the present.

In chapter 6 I will show that their relationship with modernity is more complicated than a simple blatant rejection, as they demonstrate a strong desire to be some sort of modern human being. They also propose a different way of understanding modernity and what modern life should be. At this stage, it is sufficient to say that copying literally Muhammad's life might lead them to become some sort of traditionalist Muslim. Nevertheless, this invented tradition is now an innovation that, kind of, turns the modern life up-side-down. And this is just one step in an attempt to ridicule and mock the world outside the identity space, the world which is seen as being dominated by trends in lifestyles, immorality and hedonism. As will be discussed later, turning the existing modern world up-side-down is one of the most important parts of resistance and of making boundaries. For by doing that they are able to purify and re-nurture their self and everyday life in their attempt to fulfil the desire for freedom and for certainty in life.

The predominant presence of Islam in their discourse is made more notable by the fact that Islam, they believe, is absent in modern life. For Awwas, unless they promote and fight for it, Islam..."hanya akan menjadi catatan pinggir saja (will only become a footnote)," suggesting its marginality in contemporary Indonesia.380 This marginality is more painful as they found that in the absence of Islam the identity of the West took centre stage. The West is present everywhere, in fashions and lifestyle, in names and words, in education, sports and arts, and in economy and politics. Therefore, the presence of Islam in their writing and speech always tends to be the site of the inferior, the defeated and the dominated. Islam, nicely put by Awwas..."bagai sosok lelaki tua, terbaring tidak berdaya, papa, sakit-sakitan, 380 Interview with Awwas.
The personification of Islam into the body of a weak, old man has a long history. The activists of this movement believe that Islam used to be superior and dominant. Referring to the glorious days of the Islamic caliphates of the Umayyah (661-750), Abbasiyah (750-1517) and Utsmaniyah (1517-1924) dynasties, they told me that there was a time when Muslims were really the *khayru ummah* (the superior umma) as informed by Al-Qur'an. They were the most modern civilization, the centre of development and progress in philosophy, science and technology and, consequently, the world leader in almost all aspects of life. But it was a long time ago. At present, Muslims are divided into hundreds of nation states; are poor and backward; are involved in conflicts and wars; and have no power to fight against imperialism.

On the other side is the West, which they see as the united civilization, the rich and the progressive, the peaceful, and, also, the imperialist. They argue that it took another long history before the West assumed the current superiority. Within this history they bitterly witnessed how Islam was defeated by the incoming new world super power. It all started with the Crusades that, they believe, were initiated by the West with the aim, among the others, to plunder the fruits of progress of Islamic civilization, especially in science and technology. Even though the caliphates survived and won the wars several times, this did not prevent Islam from being severely demoralised and, eventually, defeated. The fundamentalists often consider the rise of Kemal Pasha in Turkey in the early 1920s and the resignation of the last caliphate of Utsmaniyah dynasty as the day when Islam was finally put into the drawer of history. What they inherited is an inferior Islam; Islam as in the body of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir who is also old, weak, sickly, poor and accused of being a terrorist. Now, it seems that this defeated Islam wants to take revenge when its presence is so pervasive in the fundamentalists’ writing, statements, public speeches and sermons.

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382 Interviews with Yusanto, Yoyok, Oni, and Nopri; Amhar (2004); Al-Wa’ie March 2004; Al-Wa’ie March 2005.
383 See Amhar (2004); Al-Wa’ie March 2004; Al-Wa’ie March 2005.
384 See Amhar (2004); Al-Wa’ie March 2004; Al-Wa’ie March 2005. See also Armstrong (2000) for a more balanced and fair account of Islamic history.
The fundamentalists also see themselves as Indonesian. In his plea, for instance, Ba'asyir blamed the US and its allies for pressuring the government to charge him with anti-terrorism. For him, the charge was a challenge to the sovereignty of Indonesia by the US administration. Ba'asyir, a Yemeni descendant, asked his fellow Indonesians to rebuff the charge and to fight against the US intervention because it was the dignity of Indonesia as an independent nation-state that was at stake.\(^{385}\) Ba'asyir, as well as his fellow fundamentalists—including those of HTI who look to be more interested in the issue of a world caliphate—had no real difficulties in combining the presence of Islam and Indonesia in their discourse. This is partly because they very often took for granted the fact of Indonesia being a majority Muslim country and, hence, regarded Indonesia as a Muslim country in itself.

The other important thing is that, for them, Islam was the main backbone that fought Dutch imperialism. All major figures of the Indonesian national heroes, they claim, were Muslim. They also tried hard to convince Indonesian audiences that such figures as Thomas Matulessy, a national hero from Molluccas—a part of Indonesia where the number of Christians of the total population equals the number of Muslims—who was a Christian was in fact a Muslim. Consequently, they often arrogantly proclaimed themselves as the ones who have the sole right of leadership of Indonesia. Others, particularly the Christians, have contributed nothing to Indonesia’s independence and, therefore, should not be given the same opportunities to lead the country.\(^{386}\)

More importantly, the presence of Indonesia is the site of hope. It is the site where they construct themselves as a man on a mission, an agent of change for a better Indonesia. I frequently found in their writings and speeches that they present themselves as someone who wants to contribute to the prosperity of Indonesia, to solve the current crisis that is damaging the country and to develop this nation-state a better future.\(^{387}\) They are confident enough since they have Islam in their hands which they see as the divinely justified system. It is then hardly surprising that they portray their struggle for the implementation of shari'a and the establishment of an Islamic state as their answer to a better Indonesia. More than just religious duty,

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\(^{385}\) See Al-Anshari (2002); Awwas (2004a); Ba'asyir (2004).

\(^{386}\) See, for example, *Risalah Mujahidin* September 2007; *Risalah Mujahidin* February 2008.

\(^{387}\) See Awwas (1999, 2005a); Yusanto (2001; 2007b); Abdurrahman (2007); Al-Khatthath (2007); Thalib, M (2007b); *Risalah Mujahidin*, May 2007
Awwas and Shobbarin told me that implementing Islamic teachings in every aspect of life will bring prosperity, progress and happiness to all Indonesians regardless of ethnic and religious backgrounds. At the same time, it is, for them, a big chance to show the world what Islam—the inferior and the defeated—can actually do.

The Look of the Body

The resistance shown towards modern life and the West is more apparent in body language. Islam that is adopted through the practices of discourse presents in a distinguishing look of the fundamentalists' body. The boundaries, that are supposed to safeguard the fundamentalists' self from being contaminated by other identities, appear in such form as the hijab, the kopiah, the turban and the beard. The hijab, in particular, dominates the image of Islam as presented by this radical Muslim group. In this section, my discussion will focus mainly on the hijab as the look of the fundamentalist body.

As already noted, Islamic fashion is more than just Islamic rule on how to dress. More than anything else, it is also about rejecting, and distancing oneself from, any non-Islamic dress code. This is a very important issue for the fundamentalists. Should they fail to present themselves in a completely different body language, their existence of a supposedly unique being called a Muslim will be in doubt. This will be taken as a sign of being controlled—as usual, by the West—and of losing one's autonomous consciousness. Unsurprisingly, the activists discovered not only originality, but also autonomy and freedom, in Islamic fashion.

Chanifah made an interesting point regarding the issue. He wondered why people often question the hijab and rarely question the bikini. Awwas shared the same concern. He was hurt when he found out that people frequently associate items such as a beard and the hijab with terrorism, but are rarely critical of the bikini and what he mentioned as "budaya telanjang" (literally "the culture of nudity"). For Awwas and his co-activists this is just another form of domination by the identity that is represented in the bikini and the culture of nudity—that is, the identity of the West and of the Americans in particular according to Awwas. This is further evidenced, they argued, in the popularity of the Western fashion style among Indonesians. Instead, we should be fair by leaving these two types of dress as a
matter of preference and allowing people to make their own choice, insisted Chanifah. Questioning Muslim dress contradicts one’s rights as a human being, added Shobbarin, to freely select the style of clothing one wants to adopt.

The issue of one’s rights was also raised by the HTI activist, Desti. She told me that it is her right to protect her body from being controlled by either the media, advertisements, or, simply, the comments made by people surrounding her. Understandably, a female student in Al-Mukmin, Qisthi, concluded that those who do not wear the hijab, particularly non-Muslims, would easily become “korban mode” (the victim of trends). They will simply lose their freedom as a human being because they will always submit their bodies to the rule of, for example, trends in hair styles. Interestingly, I asked her opinions on trends in Islamic fashion, trends in the hijab and headscarf that are also presented by a number of Indonesian top models and are widely published in dozens of magazines and tabloids. Her first reaction was not a rejection of trends in fashion itself, but a rejection of the type of Islamic dress worn by the models that she believed was not properly in accordance with shari’a. She later added another view, questioning the very public appearance of a female in a picture inside magazines that, she thought, contradicted Islamic teachings. However, based on her first reaction, it seems to me that Qisthi will not have a problem with trends in fashion as long as it is presented in the context of Islamic values and norms—particularly, the one that is interpreted by them. By implication, rather than rejecting them altogether, trends can become another site where Islam is presented. The presence of Islam will arguably challenge the domination of, what Chanifa see as, the bikini and, what Awwas takes as the culture of nudity in fashion. In fact, it is a matter of presenting Islam in a covered (female) body that is at stake.

The way that the hijab symbolises and accentuates the autonomy that works through the body can also be seen in another way. Hijab literally means curtain. According to the activists of this movement, the curtain symbolises the boundary, the strict line of a less direct contact between men and women in everyday life. The aim, among other things, is to protect a woman’s body from the gaze of a man. Here, the gaze of a man is taken as a form of domination. At first, the gaze itself is a form of exploitation. Then, such exploitation becomes more real when the female body—under the control of the gaze of man—is transformed into an object that has a price.

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388 Interviews with Chanifah and Awwas.
389 Interview with Shobbarin.
In short, the body is commodified. At the worst end of this dominating process through the eyes of man, a woman’s body is nothing more than the slave of man’s carnal desire. The dominating man’s eyes present in every aspect of life. It does not necessarily mean the eyes of a real man standing in front of a real woman and uncovering her privacy by passionately looking at and enjoying her body. More importantly, it is about the way the female body is presented in public, by the arts, by the media and by teenagers in shopping malls, that always goes through the dominating man’s eyes. This makes a woman lose her freedom as her appearance is dictated by man’s desire. The hijab is a look of the body that has successfully escaped the dictating gaze of man. By wearing the hijab one does not have to worry about one’s appearance, whether one is slim and one’s skin is white enough, as demanded by the man’s eyes through, for example, advertisements.

The Movement Sites

In the introductory part of this chapter I noted that the positivity of resistance and boundaries is the production of identity space. This space is most easily seen in the physical places associated with the movements. They include the headquarters and the branch offices of organisations; educational institutions such as pesantren and Islamic schools; the activists meeting points such as mosques, various parts of university campuses and book shops; and sites of actions such as areas of conflict, military camps and public venues where protest are staged, or sermon are provided.

These movement sites are a sterilised space, to use Aziz’s expressions when he described the military camp he attended in the borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the early 1990s. “Disitu aku memulai kehidupan yang sama sekali baru (There [in the borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan] I started a totally new life),” claimed Aziz, “kehidupan yang betul-betul bersih sekalipun tidak...steril 100 persen (a life which is truly clean though not 100 per cent sterile).” In fact, for the majority of activists, these are the places where no one will find social ills. In places

such as organisation's offices and pesantren contacts with the outside modern world are strictly monitored usually by the leaders and the elite. In Al-Mukmin, for example, television and radio are prohibited because, in the view of the school leaders, both media could encourage students to participate in various trends in lifestyle, immoral conduct and hedonism into. When I visited Al-Mukmin for the first time, it was initially very difficult for me to talk with the students. As an outsider some teachers took my presence to be no different from television and radio. They thought that I would be an intrusion and contaminate their sterilised students. Even one of them broke into one of meetings that I had with the male students, persuaded me to leave and talked angrily to the students as if he just turned off the TV.

In these places, while the identities of the Jews and, particularly, the Christians are mostly absent, the identity of the West still presents. However, its presence is no longer in as a dominating and superior force as usually projected by the fundamentalists. By and large, the West presents in two ways. First, it presents in items which have been ideologically neutralised and are seen as less dangerous. English, for example, exists strongly within this space. Even though it remains less important than Arabic, in Al-Mukmin there are certain days when the students are obliged to speak English in their daily conversations. I asked the pesantren director, Wahyuddin, who also has relatively fluent English, why the language is compulsory. He explained that English is only a tool to communicate, a tool, for instance, to present Islam to those who can only speak the language. He also added that it can help the students to acquire knowledge, as many scientific books are written in English. For him, English no longer belongs to the West and has now become a universal language. Rather than being suspicious of its universal character as just another form of disguised domination, he even proudly told his story to me of how he mastered English mostly through a self-learning process and by attending a few English courses provided by activists of the Church of Mormon back in his village in West Java some four decades ago. Second, the presence of the West in these places is the site of the defeated and the inferior. The West appears in, for instance, an American flag which is engulfed in flames during an anti-West mass demonstration. The West also appears in concepts, theories and ideas which are carefully learned, but severely criticised as untenable and treated as second best compared to the one provided by Islam. The HTI branch office in Yogyakarta, for example, was the main
meeting point where the activists of this organisation discussed and shared their knowledge about democracy and capitalism. The aim is to prove the inferiority of both systems to shari'a.

The places associated with the movement also have strict boundaries that separate this space from its surroundings. In sites of actions where protest is staged the boundaries are very obvious. As I mentioned in chapter 2, the activists can be easily distinguished from bystanders by looking at their customs, the colours and styles of their fashions, the flags and the banners with specific symbols. More importantly, however, the boundaries provide the activists with a sense of security and certainty in life. These are the places where they belong. Places such as pesantren, the organisation's offices and mosques are like a home where they feel most secure, and safeguarded from unfriendly surroundings. There is always someone to share with and a friend to give help.\(^{393}\) These are also the places where the activists ensure that they will have a life which is true and original. Every aspect of life, every act, form of behaviour and attitude, is attached to specific values and norms and is always in accordance with Islamic teachings.\(^{394}\) This is where they find the real meaning of life they are earnestly seeking.

THE PRACTICE OF PIETY

Nevertheless, the activists by no means turn fundamentalist by simply producing and adopting an Islamic identity in writing and speech, wearing Muslim dress, or, being part of places such as pesantren, organisation offices and military training camps. Instead, resistance and boundaries implied by this identity construction process initially create only the identity space. It is then through this space they start the real process of becoming fundamentalist. At this point, I can understand why wearing the hijab or being involved in actions is just the beginning of a new life for the majority of activists. What exactly the new life is involves the new practices implied by the form and the expression of Islamic identity. Muslim dress, for instance, implies that one must conduct compulsory ritual practices regularly. It also means that one has to

\(^{393}\) Interview with Abbas.

\(^{394}\) Group discussion with the Al-Mukmin's male students.
stop being influenced by trends in fashion styles. The new life, in this sense, is the life of committing oneself to the practice of piety.

More importantly, the new life, the very practice of piety, leads to the construction of a new personality. The hijab, kopiah, beard and Arabic language are equally a part of the process of becoming a new person. However, the new personality is not something that is learned from Islamic teachings. Nor is it an outcome of one’s knowledge about Al-Qur’an and hadith. The new personality is instead grounded in the practice of piety implied by the constructed identity mentioned above. This is why the changing personality is a matter of new conduct, behaviour and attitude attached to, for example, pesantren. In fact, it was these consequences at the level of conduct, behaviour and attitude that initially prevented the parents of HTI activist, Dian, from giving her permission to wear a headscarf. They were hesitant to allow her to wear it because they thought that her behaviour was too far from and contradicted the identity represented by the headscarf.\footnote{Interview with Dian.}

In the following pages, I will discuss two issues. First, the changing of life and personality is a long process involving discipline, surveillance and punishment. Second, such a long process is confirmed by the fact that becoming fundamentalist is a matter of learning a great deal of new things and of trying to make them enjoyable.

Pietism and the Production of the Fundamentalist Subject

How do they fill in the identity space? What does it mean to have a new life? Speaking about the time he spent in a temporary pesantren during Ramadhan when he was at high school, Aziz sensed the beginning of a new life that was completely different from the one he had before.\footnote{Aziz (2004: 32-3).} Desti echoed this sentiment. She took some time to think carefully and thoroughly before she made the decision to join the movement and, hence, to adopt Islamic fashion, because she knew for sure that once she wore the hijab there would be consequences that would radically change her life. It meant that she could no longer do such things as visiting the cinema, hanging around in shopping malls, and having fun with both her male and female friends by, for example, sharing gossip. The Al-Mukmin’s students became aware of the new
life through such things as the absence of television, as well as radio, tape recorders and VCD players, in their entire daily activities. For some male students this meant they stopped watching the matches of their favourite soccer teams. They told me how they missed the likes of Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard, two soccer stars in the English Premier League.

The process of the beginning of a new life is referred to by Awwas as *islah*, which is an Arabic term which he translated into Indonesian as *reformasi* (literally reform). He selects the word *reformasi* because, for him, it is a process to improve one’s life, to fix one’s wrongdoings in the past by adopting the right and true way of life for a better future, not only here in the world, but also in the life after death. More importantly, the activists must change their life as they are no longer the same person they used to be. In fact, the first reaction commonly made by people surrounding them, their friends and their family, is notice to their new personality. The activists were simply seen as a different person to the one they were before. Aziz noticed this when he went back to the school after finishing the temporary pesantren. He remembered how his friends reacted uneasily to his new personality. Some were even upset and insulted him as Aziz’s new personality seemed to create a gap between them. He, for the first time, refused to be physically touched by his female friends. For Dian, it was her parents who looked strangely at the hijab and wondered about her personality implied by the fashion she was wearing. From then they realised, particularly her father, that she was no longer the same daughter they used to know. Mamat’s parents also noticed that his personality has changed. However, unlike Dian’s parents, his father seemed to be uncomfortable with his new look as it led to tensions and a number of conflicts between them.

The view of Dian’s parents, that the headscarf implies specific behaviour and attitudes, is indeed the common view among Indonesians. It has been widely believed for some time, particularly among the Muslims, that those who wear the jilbab (another term commonly used by Indonesians for headscarf) and the baju koko must be the faithful ones. Their mere appearance confirms that they are more pious than other Muslims who do not adopt this dress code. The fundamentalists take this very seriously. They also believe that the form and the expression of Islamic identity

\[397\] Awwas (1999).
\[398\] Aziz (2004: 34-5).
\[399\] Interview with Mamat.
they produce and adopt have to be associated with the practice of piety. Later I will explain how this turns into a surveillance system that disciplines the activists to be always consistent with the (new) subjectivity. What I am going to discuss at this stage is the importance of being pious as the primary foundation of the fundamentalist subject.

The disciplinary practices

To begin with, what does it mean to be faithful? The simple answer, as we would expect from the fundamentalists, is to follow strictly and literally Islamic teachings as stated in Al-Qur'an and as conducted by Muhammad. However, in practice, following Islamic teachings is not that simple. This is not because the meanings of Al-Qur'an and hadith depend on interpretation and, hence, tend to be relative, as the Liberal Islam would argue. Rather, for the activists of this movement, it is due to the fact that the human subject is an entity that is divided into value reason and hawa nafsu. As discussed in chapter 3 a full commitment to Islamic teachings indicates the rule of value reason over hawa nafsu. The problem is that it is not always the case and, as a matter of fact, hawa nafsu often wins the battle. In this situation, the fundamentalists argue, a Muslim does not only fail to follow Islamic teachings correctly, but also loses her/his autonomous consciousness. In this sense, defeating hawa nafsu is the key element of being faithful. Becoming the person implied by, for example, Islamic fashion is basically a matter of putting one’s natural instinctive impulses under the guidance of Islamic value rationality.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that taming one’s basic desires is as simple as an outcome of the inner battle between Islamic value reason and Islamic id discussed above. Nor does the ability to menahan diri as frequently claimed by figures such as Ba’asyir and Awwas, reflects one’s better understanding of Islamic teachings, as the activists of this movement would have us to believe. Instead, to defeat hawa nafsu the fundamentalists take the battle to the level of the body and daily practices through which their natural instinctive impulses are safely managed and, during the process, the fundamentalist subject is created. More to the point, controlling hawa nafsu implies some regulations of the body: The body must be disciplined to prevent it from being too preoccupied with pleasure sensation, by applying some prohibitions and/or limitations on the fulfilment of basic desires. Prohibitions and limitations often mean control of several parts of the body: control
of eyes, control of ears, control of mouth, control of stomach, and, perhaps the most important one, control of the sexual organ. The battle against *hawa nafsu* in this respect is a battle on almost every inch of the human body. The fundamentalists believe that they can win the battle by virtue of steadfastness, abstinence and moderation, among other things.

I frequently heard an interesting claim made in the sermons provided by several figures of this movement, mostly during the Friday prayer, that during our life here in the world, we are always under the surveillance of our own organs such as the hands and legs. Later, on judgement day, when every human is questioned by Allah about one's conducts in life, it will be the organs that reply. While humans might mislead God by manipulating the answers, the organs such as legs will respond honestly to every question being asked. To be fair, I also often heard the same story about the talking human organs in the hereafter explained in sermons by Muslims without a radical Islamic background. The important thing is such claims connect logically to the entire project of controlling *hawa nafsu* through real actions at the level of the body. By telling their audiences the story of talking organs they valorise the regulated body as significant and real.

The view of the male activists on the *hijab* is another example of how the activists underline the importance of discipline and control. Both the top figures such as Ba'asyir, Awwas and Safruddin as well as the rank-and-file take the *hijab* as equally significant for regulation of the body of male activists. They claimed that the *hijab*, which protects the female body from being publicly displayed, helps the Muslim male to control his eyes. The *hijab*, which they thought makes the woman unattractive, will then help the Muslim male to discipline his sexual organ. I tried to debate this issue by arguing that sometimes male sexual desire could be a matter of imagination about, rather than seeing directly, the female body. But even female activists such as Desti reject this view. She strongly believes that disciplining the male sexual organ must start first and foremost with controlling a man's eyes.

The regulation of body is manifested in a series of religious practices. There are a number of compulsory and highly recommended ritual practices that the activists must fulfil. The activists have to conduct prayers five times a day and fast during Ramadhan. The Islamic daily prayer, for example, is not only a matter of

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400 I asked about the *hijab* when talking to almost all activists.
401 Interview with Desti.
worshipping Allah, but also about specific actions and movements of the body. From
the secular point of view, the praying is more like a physical exercise that must be
conducted at a specific time. During the praying—or, I should say during the
exercise—the body is assumed to be detached from worldly affairs by symbolising
every movement as the embodiment of human submission to Allah. The body
movements will help to empty the human mind from any worldly influences and
allow the mind to be fully focused on worshipping Allah. The praying then is the
time when the body is freed from the influences of such things as modern trends,
immoral conduct, a hedonistic lifestyle and materialism found in everyday life and,
hence, the control of *hawa nafsu*.

Such regulation of the body is more apparent during fasting. This ritual is
about not having food and drink for a certain period during the day for one month.
However, fasting is more than a simple starving exercise. During the fasting it is also
compulsory for Muslims to behave in a certain way. For example, one must be able
to manage one’s temper and, most of all, to discipline one’s sexual desire. Even
controlling emotion and the sexual organ is often seen as the most essential aspect of
fasting. The activists said to me that they often conducted *puasa sunat* (non
obligatory, but highly recommended, fasting) as part of the exercise to *menahan diri*.
Mamat, for example, told me how he struggled almost every day to fight the
temptation arousing from the appearance of his female university mates with tight T-
hirts. He said that his only defence was the recommended fasting which he
conducted regularly and which he believed helped him to suppress sexual desires.

These ritual practices are the main features of the new life experienced by the
activists. Living in places such as *pesantren*, organisation offices and military
training camps, for example, makes them become more committed to daily prayer
and fasting. Another feature involves practices that are less connected directly to
worshipping Allah and more about human-to-human relations. However, the
regulation of the body is not symbolical. Prohibitions and limitations are real and
direct, aiming at controlling the body in everyday life activities. Here, the body is
disciplined through a list of things to avoid. The list includes all daily routines seen
as susceptible to the unbridled fulfilment of human natural instinctive impulses. The
things to avoid may vary in different fundamentalist organisations. In Al-Mukmin, as
mentioned previously, TV and almost every type of electronic media is prohibited. I
also hardly ever found popular magazines and tabloids, including those of the major
national weeklies. When I talked to both female and male students I asked them why they are not allowed to have access to the media, at least, as long as they are inside the pesantren surroundings. The common answers were that the media was prohibited to safeguard the students from temptation and seduction brought about by its sounds and pictures. Similar responses were given to me by the teachers and the elite. The media must be banned because most of its contents are the celebration of hawa nafsu.

It seems that the fundamentalists might be right in saying they prohibit TV and other media in their everyday life. But it is equally true that this is merely a simple regulation of the body. In this sense, turning off the TV is a form of control of fundamentalists’ eyes, on what to see and what not to see. Hence, turning off the TV is no different to putting the hijab on the female body. Prohibiting TV could also be seen as a way to discipline the sexual organ. Both the students and the teachers in Al-Mukmin seemed to believe that by preventing themselves from enjoying its sounds and pictures, they will be less sexually stimulated. In this regard, a female teacher, Khotijah, claimed that she will do whatever she thinks necessary to protect the students from bad influences, even if it means imprisoning them.402 This claim is echoed by another FPI figure, Almascaty. He argues that the life of a Muslim who wholeheartedly commits it to a life for Allah is like a prison. This life is full of rules and limitations. However, rules and limitations on how one has to behave, in the end, will bring happiness.403

However, it is the regulation of how a woman and a man have to interact with each other, perhaps more than anything else, which is the most important issue in the entire edifice of controlling hawa nafsu through a disciplined body. By and large, all fundamentalist groups apply a strict rule on separation between their male and female activists. In the praying congregation, in a religious discussion, in religious mass rally, in seminars and in street protests, the male and female activists are never in the same area. They are never allowed to be together except for some very good reason, and one can easily see the definite boundaries that separate them. The contacts between both sexes are allowed, but firmly regulated. Physical contact is prohibited and eye contact is limited. Communications are permitted for activities

402 This was comment made by Khotijah in the group discussion with the Al-Mukmin’s female students she attended.
such as religious discussions and seminars, but there are a number of rules on how to behave when talking with and listening to each other. The main reason for strict separation and limited contact is that both men and women, the activists believe, are prone to be sexually tempted by each other. Desti explained to me that a man easily falls in love by simply looking with his eyes. For a woman, she added, the physical touch is more important. The primary aim of regulating the male and female activists' interactions hence is to discipline the sexual organ.

Regulation of the body and daily practices end up in behaviour and attitudes attached to piety. Now, the beginning of a new life is more than just prohibitions and limitations. It is also a matter of how a pious person should become and what kind of attitude one should adopt. In general, the activists frequently claimed that they become more committed to Islamic ritual practices. They considered themselves as persons who loves praying and fasting. An Al-Mukmin’s student, Rifki, told me how he deeply regretted and felt sorrow because he once missed the time for conducting *sholat dhuha* (*dhuha* prayer)—which is not compulsory and he need not be considered as committing a sin for abandoning it. For Rifki and his school mates, this should be the way a true Muslim behaves regarding religious practices. Regret and sorrow represent the correct attitude of a pious person. Indeed, the majority of activists would not challenge Rifki’s claim. They also strongly believed that enjoying the religious practices is the correct attitude of the faithful. It will also bring positive influences to bear on one’s day-to-day behaviour. For Doriman, this implies that he should behave properly in speaking and talking to others. Doriman, for example, felt that since becoming a new person with his *gamis*, he always wanted to talk about Islam. He started to frequently quote the Al-Qur’an verses to support his views when discussing a range of socio-political issues. He also planned to apply an “Islamic point of view” as the theoretical basis for his master’s thesis. Doriman’s friends apparently took the change in his style of speaking seriously as they started to nickname him *ustadz* (religious teacher).

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404 See, for example, An-Nabhani (2001).
405 See, for example, Awwas (1999).
406 Interview with Doriman.
Surveillance and punishments

Nevertheless, insisting on the importance of conduct, behaviour and attitude is one thing, adopting them is another issue. The activists told me how long and difficult the path is that they have gone through to become, in their own interpretation, a true and original Muslim. And, yet, they felt that they are still in the process of becoming such a being.\textsuperscript{407} Regulation of the body and daily practices were not undertaken easily, at least, in the earliest stage of becoming the new person. Some honestly told me that abandoning the old way of life, including beloved hobbies and favourite things, was initially very painful.

It seemed to me that the remnants of those painful years are still with Chanifah. He used to be extremely interested in art and possesses some talents. He was and remains a skilled guitar player and a good singer. He was also formerly a theatre artist. During the conversation we discussed the current Islamic music in Indonesia, particularly, the popularity of nasyid. Even though his students in Al-Mukmin loved it very much and took it as representing Islam, Chanifah did not like nasyid because of "kurang nilai seninya (its lack of artistic value)." But these were all things in the past. With a glimpse of sorrow in his eyes and a sound of sadness in his voice, he explained to me that he simply had to leave it behind. He also decided not to transfer his artistic skills to his children, not to teach them how to play guitar and how to sing, because it was not allowed in Al-Mukmin. Then he quickly sounded more optimistic by claiming that, despite the hardship and the pains, he was thankful and felt happier with his new life. After all, for activists such as Yoyok, Siti and Desti, this difficult life was a result of free and independent choice. It was one’s own decision, they claimed, consciously made without being imposed by someone else, to select the life and the kind of subject they want to be. Furthermore, it is the certainty of having happiness, at least, later in the afterlife that strongly motivates them to permit restrictions of their body and everyday life.

More importantly, the difficulties of a new life imply that regulation of the body and daily practices were by no means uncomplicated. The fundamentalists, particularly the younger generations, did feel like they were living in a prison. There was a time, though not often, when they wanted to escape from all prohibitions and limitations. Dian, for example, was still struggling to strictly regulate her body. She

\textsuperscript{407} Interviews with Chanifah, Fikri, Yoyok, Siti, Desti, Dian, Doriman and Mamat.
made it clear to me that she was sometimes still influenced by trends in fashion. It is natural for women, she tried to argue, to be easily tempted by a fashion style. Her fellow HTI member, Siti, shared a similar experience. Even for her age—she was in the early 40s—and for the time she spent in the organisation—more than fifteen years—the difficulties of regulating the body and freeing oneself from being tempted by worldly influences were still around the corner. Therefore, Dian, Siti and the majority of activists believe in the virtue of surveillance and punishment of their daily conduct and behaviour. Surveillance might not make the activists less vulnerable to such temptation faced by Dian, but it will prevent them from easily and deliberately breaking the prohibitions and limitations on the body. In particular, punishments will discourage the activists to break the rules of being a true Muslim.

Surveillance, first and foremost, is conducted by every individual fundamentalist of their own acts and thoughts. Almost every activist I talked with claimed that once they changed, for example, their physical appearance, they automatically become vigilant about their own behaviour. Awwas, for instance, had always looked after his own conduct carefully since he adopted the Islamic identity. He always tried to make sure that his actions were in accordance with shari'a and with the identity he represented. The feeling of regret and guilt, sometimes followed by deep sadness, is the type of punishment available in this self-surveillance system. Aziz, for example, claims how he cried throughout the whole night when he first realised all his wrongdoings in the past. He was in deep sorrow and considered punishing himself further by quitting the high school he attended. He then decided to continue his studies to please his parents, though by making his days in the school less enjoyable than they used to be.

The question, however, is “how effective is self-surveillance for the regulation of the fundamentalist body?” Self-surveillance is more complicated than it looks. This is by no means as simple as an activist watching her/his own self. Instead, they have to do that because they are extremely certain that Allah is always watching. The story of the watching human organs noted above, for the fundamentalists, is basically the surveillance of Allah at work. Hence, this kind of surveillance is taken to be as close as one’s skin and bone and no-one will ever

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408 Interview with Siti.
409 Interview with Awwas.
escape from it. The activists frequently use the term *ikhsan* to describe their state of awareness of being continuously watched by God. Yusanto explains that *ikhsan* means one worships Allah as if one could see Him. Yet, even if one cannot actually see Allah, then one should believe that He always watches. For me, Yusanto’s explanation of this term makes the surveillance of Allah appear more like a sort of panopticon. The state of awareness of being constantly watched by Allah is no different to the state of permanent visibility experienced by the disciplined body. Unsurprisingly, for the majority of activists this surveillance system is very effective.

Furthermore, Allah possesses a range of severe punishments for the wrongdoers that no-one could ever imagine. The story of the painful torture one will receive after one dies and waits for the Judgement Day and, later, in hell should one die having sinned is frequently told to prove the credibility of Allah’s punishments. Kurnia, by quoting a hadith, notes that the softest punishment in hell for a sinner will be a slipper made of fire on one’s feet whose heat will boil one’s brain. Surely, this unimaginable punishment will make Aziz spend the night crying. He must be deeply sad knowing how much he has to pay in the afterlife for sins he conducted during his life in the world. It might also be the fear of such divine torture that has inspired him to do things such as the terrorist attack in Bali, which he thinks could help him to escape Allah’s punishment for his sins in the past. Indeed, for Kurnia, the nature of the relationship between good Muslim and Allah is a mixture of love and fear. The fear of Allah could be more important. It makes Muslims always feel guilty and, hence, always want to do something good and extraordinary and to maintain consistency with the type of personality they have chosen.

Surveillance also works collectively. At this level it takes several forms. In organisations and educational institutions such as *pesantren*, surveillance is the main part of the disciplinary apparatus—the rules, the norms and the code of conduct—that regulate the body of activists or students. Should one fail to meet the standards of the organisation, there are always a range of punishments available in the system. In Al-Mukmin, for example, the student who missed the compulsory prayer could be punished physically. They could also be compelled to pay the price physically should they transgress the division that separates male and female sections within the school.
area without proper permission. Wahyuddin told me how he punished a student who was found drunk. The student was isolated and was forced to do heavy work (without pay) in the school tofu home industry.

However, for the fundamentalists in general the presence of their fellow activists is more significant. An MMI activist, Abbas, claimed that he always needed a like-minded friend who watched his conduct and corrected his wrongdoings. His decision to register himself in the organisation was partly to be in a place where he could meet someone who would watch him. The Al-Mukmin teacher, Farid, shared the same view. He said that as soon as someone already declares her/himself as a Muslim, she/he comes under the responsibility of the whole Muslim community. The community should not leave her/him alone and should always look after her/his conduct, behaviour and attitude. The significance of the term *saling mengingatkan* (reminding each other in terms of correcting misconduct) frequently mentioned by the activists now becomes apparent. I did experience this *saling mengingatkan* attitude myself, as I was several times reminded and corrected on how to behave properly.

The surveillance of fellow fundamentalists partly explains why the activists tend to keep their entire life—family, work, school, free time—close to the community where they belong, that is the community of Islamic fundamentalism. In the previous chapter I demonstrated that being part of the community of like-minded friends is part of an attempt to find and to be settled in a secure space that is supposed to safeguard them from unfriendly surroundings. Now, it seems that being secure is also about always being under the guardianship of like-minded friends, who will help them not only in fighting the dominant culture, but also in reconstructing their “real me” through disciplinary practices. Exclusion from the community is the real threat for the wrongdoers. Failing to meet the prohibitions and limitations on the body and practices could result in losing the secure space. Fear of the outside world and the guarantee of a secure feeling inside the community are apparently effective enough to discipline the activists to always meet the standards and the rules of the community.

Surveillance could also work at the level of society as a whole. I mentioned before that there is a sort of pre-conception in the mind of Indonesian society,
particularly the Muslim one, about what and how a person with Islamic dress should be. This person is predominantly seen as the faithful. A range of socially desirable behaviours and attitudes of a pious person is attached to those who wear the baju koko and the hijab. Society will condemn the wearers of Islamic dress who do not meet the desirable standards. The fundamentalists are very much part of this society. They also believe that the person who represents an Islamic identity should comply with the code of conduct of a pious person. A number of fundamentalist figures, for instance, frequently underlined the importance of Islamic fashion to safeguard Muslims from committing sins. This basically means that, because of their very public presence and expression of their identity, the activists are always visible on the street, at the market, in university campuses, in fact in all public venues. They, therefore, could hardly escape the surveillance of society that works through, for example, a dress code associated with piety. Yahya explained to me how his fashion protects him. He said that he would feel embarrassed to do such things as gambling because of the baju koko he wears. Not only is gambling prohibited in Islam, but more importantly, Yahya was concerned with people's reactions. He believed that should he commit such a sin, society will denounce him. He imagined that people will be shocked and ask “ustad kok ngono (how come a religious teacher behaves like that)?” Indeed, the activists always behave as if they are watched by society. The surveillance of society, through socially desirable conduct attached to the personality of the faithful, is also similar to a panopticon, the state of permanent visibility of a disciplined body. The fundamentalist hardly knows for sure whether society is really watching. But the fear of social condemnation and of being accused of hypocrisy for misconduct that contradicts the fashion will not allow them to take a risk by committing sins and pretending that no-one will notice.

The Remaking of Fundamentalist Self

In the previous section I demonstrated how the activists fill in the space created by the construction of the Islamic identity by producing the fundamentalist subject through disciplinary practices. Not only is the (new) subject supposed to be

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416 Interviews with Ba'asyir, Farid, Awwas, Yusanto and Safruddin,
free and independent, but also to be the uniqueness they are looking for. In the following discussions, my focus is mainly on the nature of freedom and autonomy. What does it mean to be free and to be independent when it comes to the formation of a fundamentalist subject through prohibitions, limitations and controls on the body? As I will shortly explain, being free and independent is a matter of one’s capacity to take action on one’s self. I call the capacity to take action on self as agency.

A useful starting point might be the statements made by the activists themselves. As mentioned above, they claim that it is one’s own decision to allow one’s body and everyday life to be strictly regulated. Surely, we could not understand the meaning of this statement without referring to their resistance of modernity and the West. However, in doing so, we could be trapped in the dilemma of the identity construction process through the play of difference. That is, freedom and autonomy tend to be seen as purely discursive and, hence, hardly exist in the real life of fundamentalists. Instead, if we take these statements as equally representing their real actions in life as fundamentalists and attach the actions to some process within the inner formation of fundamentalist self, then we might sense some kind of agency at work.

However, it is important not to forget that the source of agency is not the mind of fundamentalists. The action on self instead originates in embodiment actions, in regulations of the body and daily practices. Hence, self, and to some extent the way of thinking, is more an effect of embodiment actions. The question is “how exactly do regulations of the body and practices imply action on self?” The action on self, I argue, takes place through the learning process of becoming a fundamentalist. First, it is part of an attempt to transform the feeling of being forced to conduct such things as ritual practices into the feeling of wanting to do, for example, the daily prayer because one just loves to do it. Once the activists start to enjoy praying they no longer see it as merely regulation but an action which they willingly perform. This involves a learning process, because to reach the point of willingness they have to understand, for example, the meaning of praying, how it affects their life and how it benefits them. Second, agency is also part of a process that transposes disciplinary practices into one’s inner self. This is a process of how the activists adopt new subjectivities implied by regulation of the body and daily practices which result in the formation of a new self. The adoption goes through
learning the disciplinary practices and, then, exercising and making them routine. What is learned is (new) skills of body movements associated with regulated conduct, behaviour and attitude.

**Agency on regulated body**

Allow me to reiterate that becoming a fundamentalist is a relatively painful process. The activists, at least at the earlier stage, went through some difficulties as they permitted their body and daily practices to be strictly regulated. However, just as Chanifah said, the activists largely claimed that at the same time they felt happier. Regulation of the body and practices also created a positive sensation that is hard to describe and explain in words, insisted Safruddin.417 Similarly, when I asked the Al-Mukmin’s students about their feelings about the compulsory daily prayer, they told me that they did not know the best words to describe how good it makes them feel. How can this sort of masochism, a sense of pleasure derived from pain, be better understood? Part of the answer, as previously, has to do with the feeling of anxiety they are suffering from. Prohibitions and limitations cure this feeling by creating a sense of certainty and security of self and everyday life. Here I am concerned with the issue of agency. The feeling of pleasure derived from the regulated body indicates some form of action on self.

By and large, the fundamentalists take religious practices such as the daily prayer and the fasting as compulsory first and foremost. From a religious point of view compulsory means that one has to conduct it and will be rewarded by Allah. Should one abandon it, one will be punished by Allah. Aside from its religious meanings, compulsory, more importantly, implies that, for the activists, Muslims simply have to conduct the practices without looking for any reason why they have to pray and fast. It is all about obeying Allah’s rules. Muslims should not debate the rules. For what has been ruled by Allah must be good for all mankind. Instead of reason, Muslims will find *hikmah* (wisdom). It is a sort of worldly reward from Allah to those who are fully committed to worship Him. *Hikmah*, the activists argue, is not the reason why one has to conduct religious practices. It implies that should one find *hikmah*, she/he is still obliged to follow the practices. For example, conducting the daily prayer regularly could prevent Muslims from wrongdoings such as stealing and

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417 Interview with Safruddin.
murdering. If all Muslims in a country such as Indonesia are fully committed to this religious practice, it will presumably end up in the creation of a healthy society with a low criminality rate. However, if the hikmah of a low criminality rate is the reason why the daily prayer is important, Muslims would think that they do not necessarily have to do it. For the rate of criminality could be reduced, perhaps more effectively, by other means.

Nevertheless, hikmah, the activists argue, will help Muslims to acquire better understanding of religious practices. It tells Muslims that behind those firm regulations there are invaluable meanings and philosophies of life. Better understanding about meanings and philosophy of practices such as praying and fasting will then ease the feeling of being forced to conduct those rituals. Better understanding means that one is aware of one’s own doings. One starts to realise the real significance of praying and fasting and therefore becomes more enthusiastic in pursuing these rituals. At this point, we now can make sense of their excitement, the feeling of happiness and enjoyment of practising the daily prayer and the fasting. More importantly, understanding through awareness of one own doings, creates a sense of autonomy. In this regard, the activists often talk about ikhlas. This is an Arabic modified term which literally means sincere. However, for them, it is more like a state of mind when one conducts religious practices out of one’s free will to dedicate one’s self to Allah. They believe that ikhlas is at a higher level than merely conducting religious practices. It signals a movement of Islamic values and norms from external regulation of the body into an internal part of the fundamentalist’s self through the process of awareness. Ikhlas is achieved when this inner transformation results in the formation of a new subjectivity through the process of transposing Islamic rituals into the fundamentalist’s self.

This line of argument is a conclusion I make based on my conversations with top figures such as Ba’asyir, Wahyuddin, M. Thalib, Awwas and Safruddin. The phases of obligation, hikmah and ikhlas, in conducting the Islamic rituals were also frequently presented in their writings and sermons. It is interesting to note how the same argument is reiterated when they talked about shari’a. Ba’asyir said to me that implementing shari’a hardly different from common Islamic rituals: it is an obligation applied to all Muslims. Muslims are not allowed to compare shari’a with, for instance, democracy and decide which one is better for Indonesia. Shari’a is “the direction of use” (English in original) of life issued by Allah, who created humans.
and the very world in which we live, stated Wahyuddin. Hence, the idea that humans can make their own decisions about life without taking the guidance provided by the sole creator of humans, Allah, into consideration, he continued, is simply illogical. And Allah knows what is best for humans, added Awwas. He insisted that Allah will never order human beings to do things that will harm themselves.

Ba'asyir told a story to me. When he was in prison, he was visited by a Buddhist monk from Thailand. The monk, he said, wanted to thank him for his struggle in attempting to implement shari'a. Ba'asyir explained that the monk happened to live for a while in Kelantan, Malaysia, where there was a sort of Islamic law. The monk found this Islamic law was far better than he had expected, as his religion was fully respected and the amount of immoral conduct was significantly reduced. Ba'asyir was then quick to conclude that Indonesians should take this story to be the real historical hikmah of Islamic law: that shari'a would create a better society, even from the point of view of a non-Muslim. He further added that Muslims should learn from life experiences like this to enhance their understanding about Islamic values and norms. He ended his story by insisting that there will always be something positive about shari'a we humans have yet to discover.

The process of transforming praying and fasting from a religious obligation into conducting these rituals out of ikhlas might look easy and smooth. Instead, as I have frequently noted, this is a learning process that involves a number of trials and errors and takes quiet a long journey. Therefore, it is very important to know exactly how the activists experience this transformation and how they navigate their real lives as fundamentalists. Furthermore, I did find in their explanation of transforming obligation into ikhlas some forms of action on self. It confirms the making of the fundamentalist self as an effect of regulation of the body and daily practices, I have noticed. However, in the argument outlined to me by the key figures mentioned above, the form of action on self seems more as a result of a solely inner process, on how hikmah leads to ikhlas through better understanding and awareness of one own doings. The question remains how, particularly, hikmah relates to actual disciplinary practices. The answer will help us to understand the way the fundamentalists cope with the difficulties they face in the process of becoming new person.
The majority of activists were not as comfortable as we might think when, for
example they first looked at their new appearance in gamis and hijab.418 There was a
feeling of defiance as one realised this is not who one is. This is simply somebody
different. It took some time for them to adopt this type of dress and to accept their
new look as something normal. They undertook some trials privately in front of a
mirror and publicly when attending events provided by the movement before being
registered in the organisations. Some also chose a gradual process by, for example,
wearing a headscarf sometimes, before replacing it with the hijab. Others still felt
uneasy with the baju koko and gamis and only wore them at specific events such as
at the Friday prayers. At the same time they also fully realised that they are obliged
to wear Islamic fashion. It is part of ibadah as adopting Islamic dress, they believe,
is explicitly mentioned in Al-Qur’an and, hence, a direct order from Allah. Should
they fulfil this obligation, they will have a happy and better life here in the world and
later in the afterlife. Therefore, they were initially both “crying” and “excited” when
they allowed their body to be regulated: “crying” at being uncomfortable with the
new personality and “excited” about the promise of a new life.

However, the feeling of being uncomfortable did not disappear following the
passage of time. It was not also erased by the excitement of a new life, nor by the
promise of heaven. As expressed by Chanifah, this uncomfortable feeling was still
with him even after some twenty-five years that he had spent in Al-Mukmin and will
remain inside his heart for some time to come. Siti, who has been in the movement
for more than a decade, also could still recall with some excitement the time when
she was actively involved in hiking with her fellow university students.419
Unsurprisingly, the younger generation, those who have been registered with the
organisations for less than ten years, have spent most of their life as an activist to
fight this uncomfortable feeling.420

The activists often told me that the key difference between their old life and
the new one is in the role of hawa nafsu. They had to leave the old life behind
because it was the life controlled by hawa nafsu. Indeed, the notion of control of
hawa nafsu reveals why it is extremely difficult for them to cure the pain of

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418 Interviews with Siti, Desi, Doriman, Mamat and Nopri; group discussions with the Al-Mukmin’s
male and female students.
419 Interview with Siti.
420 Interviews with Dian, Doriman, Mamat and Desti; group discussions with the Al-Mukmin’s male
and female students.
abandoning one's old favourite habits and hobbies which are seen as immoral from the point of view of the new personality. It indicates that the very basis of the old life is the uncontrolled fulfilment of one's basic desires. As desires remain attached to one's body, the feeling of being uncomfortable, created from the regulation of human instinctive impulses, will be in place as long as they are alive. In other words, the uncomfortable feeling is a sort of unconscious resistance to regulation of their body and daily practices. This partly explains why they consciously permit the surveillance system to work on their life. Surveillance and punishments will strongly discipline their body and, at the same time, push their unconscious resistance into less dangerous zones, such as in the expression of sorrow when they spoke to me about their previous life.

Nevertheless, surveillance was not the only way they coped with the uncomfortable feeling. To make it more enjoyable, they had to identify themselves with the new life, they had to accept and enjoy the discipline and control. One way of doing that is by creating positive values on new conduct, behaviour and attitude. For example, to signify his Islamic fashion, Fikri claimed that he had not worn blue jeans since he was in high school. At first, he explained that the positivity of adopting the baju koko and of not wearing blue jeans was that the price of the former is cheaper. Then, he added that blue jeans is the type of clothing for a cowboy who, he thought, was not an intellectual person. Finally, he talked about not wearing blue jeans as part of his effort to counter Western cultural domination. Desti also inscribed the positive value of her new appearance by insisting that she was no longer influenced by trends in fashion. It basically meant that she was not interested in possessing a new dress using money that she did not have. Not buying a new dress, she continued, implied that she would not enrich capitalists who, she said, were already wealthy.

Clearly, the positivity of a new life and of a new personality is produced through the negativity of other terms (blue jeans, trends in fashion and hedonism). More importantly, this positivity is hikmah, the worldly rewards for the regulated body, that the activists were seeking. Hikmah is nothing more than justification of a new life and of a new personality because everything else other than, for example, wearing Islamic fashion, cannot be afforded. Such justification significantly functions to relief the pain of abandoning the old life. It also helps the activists to

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421 Interview with Fikri.
422 Interview with Desti.
accept regulation of the body and daily practices as the only and the best alternative left for them in life.

_Hikmah_ in this sense is an invention. It is produced through the process of inscribing worldly values on ritual practices. Such worldly values are, for instance, saving one’s money as the benefit of not wearing blue jeans, of not buying a new dress and of not having a hedonistic lifestyle. A healthy body was also frequently noted as the worldly benefit for those who pray and fast regularly. In fact, the worldly benefits are many, claimed the activists. They told me that it was better for me to seriously conduct Islamic ritual practices and to find _hikmah_ by myself instead of asking them about it. It is as if _hikmah_ is already there and is waiting to be discovered. For me, they would rather say that if I could practise Islamic rituals, I would be able to create my own _hikmah_. Nevertheless, inscribing worldly values is a key step in transforming religious obligation into activities which are done willingly. With _hikmah_, practising daily prayer is not only compulsory, but also a need. It is both obligation and a reasonable form of action.

I use the term “worldly values” because _hikmah_ is always relevant to everyday life affairs. The benefits mentioned above are a matter of daily concern. Not only ordinary people, but also fundamentalists want to save money and to have a healthy body. _Hikmah_ in this sense is a way to signify the regulated body as a better way to live everyday life. In contrast to those who see activists as both traditionalists and more preoccupied with the afterlife affairs, I argue that _hikmah_ paves the way for them to engage with the modern world. It makes their new life and the new personality more real and contextual. Wearing the _hijab_, for example, becomes a form of action that is contextual. It deals with a number of issues they come across in everyday life; a matter of preventing oneself from consuming trends with money one hardly possesses, according to Desti.

In fact, according to key figures such as Ba’asyir, Farid and Safrudin, _hikmah_ is proof that a total commitment to Islamic values and norms will not prevent Muslims from having a happy life here in the world. To be happy, one should not have to wait for paradise in the hereafter, as _hikmah_ seems to bring a taste of joyful heaven here in the life before death. This explains Safruddin’s peace of mind and the ecstasy experienced by the Al-Mukmin’s students, when I asked them how it felt to perform Islamic ritual practices. This was further confirmed by younger activists.
such as Desti, Doriman and Mamat. Desti, for example, told me that wearing the hijab was not as bad as she first thought. After all, she could still enjoy her life, though in a different way of understanding and experiencing it. Even the happy life in this world enjoyed by fully committed Muslims, they insisted, is the better one as it is achieved in a divinely justified way.

Learning and adopting the new self

Transposing a regulated body and practices into one’s inner self is not achieved through the work of hikmah only. The process of learning and exercising new skills to master new conduct, behaviour and attitudes implied by discipline and control also brings significant internal transformation. Indeed, through this process the regulation of the body and daily life result in the production of a new self. What is transposed into the fundamentalists’ inner self is (new) subjectivities implied by the disciplinary practices. The new subjectivities are a number of noble characteristics highly valued by the fundamentalists. In the last part of this chapter, I will focus my discussion on how the activists master new skills of body movements associated with regulated conduct, behaviour and attitudes; and through which they take up the noble characteristics as part of their (new) self.

According to Kurnia, a Muslim must have akhlak mulia (noble character), particularly one who takes responsibility to propagate Islamic values and norms—in this case people like him and his co fundamentalists. For him, akhlak mulia includes such characteristics as shyness, patience, good-temperedness and kindness, honesty, being prudent and cautious in speaking, modesty and humbleness, always smiling, and always keeping one’s promise. Awwas focuses on "sabar" (patience). He believes that patience is the finest characteristics that Muslims like him and his fellow activists must adopt. Being patient, he claims, is more difficult than conducting jihad. The highest quality Muslim, he concludes, is someone who conducts jihad and who is always being patient. Other activists, particularly those of the salafi groups, are also concerned with akhlak mulia. They claim that akhlak mulia is in fact the v subjectivity of Muhammad which Muslims must imitate. They also insist that noble characteristics such as those outlined by Kurnia above are literally

423 Interviews with Desti, Doriman and Mamat.
424 Kurnia (2007).
mentioned in Al-Qur'an. By implication, being patient, for example, is part of *ibadah*. Even, for them, these noble characteristics could tell us about the faith quality of a Muslim. They believe that shyness is an essential peculiarity of the faithful.427

This *akhlaq mulia* is generally good in itself. Many Indonesian Muslims without radical Islamic influences would also value highly these noble characteristics. Patience, for example, is often taken as the most significant characteristic that should be adopted by all Muslims regardless one's organisational and ideological backgrounds. However, it is hard to believe that the fundamentalists do actually adopt these noble characteristics in their real life. It is blatantly ironic that those who highly praise the characteristic of being kind to others should launch bloody attacks that kill hundreds of innocent people. Rather, following the first Bali bombing, I frequently noticed that activists such as Ghufron, Amrozi, Aziz, Azahahari and Top were publicly condemned by their fellow Indonesian Muslims for contradicting *akhlaq mulia* and, hence, falsely representing Islam. Even within the movement itself, those who did not see the use of terrorism as divinely legitimate, particularly the salafi activists, supported this condemnation and sarcastically questioned the Islamic credentials of those who were involved in the atrocities.428

Nevertheless, I did observe several noble characteristics mentioned above when I met the movement's leaders and rank-and-file. The most common and apparent characteristics, among the others, were shyness, moderateness and simplicity. They also insisted that other characteristics such as patience and kindness were equally significant, though more difficult, and hence take time to be adopted. More importantly, these characteristics were entirely new for the majority of activists. Desti, for example, was not that shy when she first joined the movement. She declared herself as *cablak*. *Cablak*, a slang expression among the youth in large cities in Java, means someone who speaks uninhibitedly. A woman who always speaks that way, within the cultural context of where she lived, is hardly regarded as a shy person. When she started to wear the *hijab*, her being *cablak* contradicted the

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428 See, for example, Ba'abduh (2005).
subjectivity of her dress. Likewise, Nopri was not a shy young man initially. He used to interact freely and without any psychological barriers with all sorts of friends, with both male and female. Since becoming a member of HTI, Nopri was obliged to imitate different types of characteristics in associating himself with his friends and his social surroundings. Aziz also recalls his days in primary and high school. It is the time when he considered himself as not being a moderate and humble person. Aziz saw himself as an ambitious young boy. He was always among the top ranking students in his class. He always wanted to work hard to present himself prominently as the best student. He also always wanted to win all academic competitions both at his school and at the town level where the school was located. Unsurprisingly, for Desti, Nopri and Aziz, as well as for the majority of activists, being part of the movement implies that one is prepared to remake one’s self by abandoning one’s old personalities. This is the essential implication as they decide to allow their body and daily practices to be strictly regulated.

It is important to understand that shyness, moderateness, simplicity, humbleness and other noble characteristics are deeply attached to the disciplinary practices. The activists rarely spoke about akhlak mulia in terms of some abstract concepts and theories. Instead, the noble characteristics, for them, were very often about the real embodiment actions, the actual body movements. Shyness, for example, is more physically bounded with a specific type of body movement such as avoiding direct eye contact. In fact, akhlak mulia is not an outcome of learning carefully Islamic values and norms. It is significantly more an effect of new conduct, behaviour and attitudes implied by regulation of the body and daily practices. It is produced through the process of adapting oneself to new conduct, behaviour and attitudes. The main way of adaptation is learning and exercising a number of new skills implied by, for example, new behaviour such as staying at a proper distance in interaction with one’s opposite gender. Through learning and exercising, one’s inner self will feel, learn and understand—in fact through a similar process of transformation from hikmah to ikhlas explained before—a new way of being a Muslim and of experiencing life. The end product of this process—when learning and exercising turn into normal daily routine—is the construction of akhlak mulia. In

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429 Interview with Desti.
430 Interview with Nopri.
this sense, more than merely a result of interpretation of Islamic teachings, fundamentalism is a matter of embodiment action. Being a fundamentalist is not only about what practices one physically conducts, but also about how one physically moves one's body parts. Being a fundamentalist implies being a skilful person in specific body movements and actions.

As previously noted, being pious implies that the activists are obliged to conduct religious practices. There are a few activists, however, who never participate in praying and fasting throughout their whole lives. The rituals are entirely new and they have to start from scratch. Most activists, on the other hand, have already practised them. They knew, for example, how to do the praying physically and memorised perfectly the praying recitations. The problem is they have not done it consistently and have not taken the practices as the genuine obligation one must fulfil. Another group of fundamentalists also already possessed the physical skill of praying. They even seriously took the praying and the fasting as compulsory for all adult Muslims and conducted them regularly. Yet, they have not found the real meanings of praying and fasting. They have done the rituals merely as part of a social habit because they, for instance, were born in a family who has an Islamic committed background. Regardless of these differences, the praying and the fasting are relatively new for the majority of activists. They all have to learn and to exercise the rituals, should they want to master them. For the activists who have to start from the very beginning, the learning and exercising might be more extensive, as they have to, at first, master the simplest things such as the body movements in praying. The praying then becomes more like a routine physical exercise. For those who belong to the third category mentioned above, the learning process is more focused on advanced things such as the skill of being simple and humble while conducting the rituals.

According to the Al-Mukmin’s students, even through the simple fact of physical exercising, the praying reconstructs their very self. They claimed that the noble characteristic of a good Muslim is, among others, self-discipline. They pointed to the way the daily prayer helps them to develop this subjectivity into their inner self. The praying, for example, has specific rules on body movements and recitations.

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432 I met a number of FPI activists who belong to this category.
433 See, for example, Aziz (2004).
434 Group discussion with the Al-Mukmin’s male students.
It must be conducted at a specific time. The body also has to be literally clean before conducting the ritual. Following rules, washing several parts of the body regularly, being on time, and doing difficult things such as waking up in the early morning to conduct the morning-prayer were seen as the main basis through which they learned to be self-disciplined.

This view was supported by several Al-Mukmin’s teachers. For Fikri, sholat (praying) might be seen as merely how to move one’s hands and legs. Hence, just like other Muslims view the hijab and Islamic fashion in general as less substantial and less significant, what is important about sholat is its meanings and values rather than its physical exercise. On the contrary, he insisted that these merely physical movements “...ada pengaruhnya ke kejiwaan seseorang (have influences on one’s psyche).” The acts of bowing during the praying, for example, express literally a Muslim submission to the authority of Allah. One thing for sure is that a Muslim could still submit her/him self to the rule of God inside her/his heart without bowing physically. However, for Fikri and other fundamentalists, only by kneeling and touching one’s forehead on the floor can one feel the real meaning of submission. From this physical submission, one then learns what it means to be humble. In this regard, Fikri would not disagree that being humble is part of the noble characteristics highly recommended by Islamic teachings. But he would equally insist, I argue, that one will be able to fully adopt the characteristic of being humble as part of oneself by physical movements such as bowing during the praying; by looking down while walking; and by becoming more quiet thereby lowering one’s profile. Unsurprisingly, for Fikri fellow teacher in Al-Mukmin, Taufiq, sholat was the key factor in shaping one’s subjectivity. He told me that, should a Muslim remain arrogant or demonstrate other low personal characteristics she/he just has to improve her/his daily prayer.

The remaking of fundamentalist self through embodiment actions can also be seen in the non-ritual practices. As previously discussed, part of the disciplinary practices is prohibitions and limitations on interactions between a woman and a man. The main rule is that a woman and a man have to stay at a proper physical distance when they engage in daily social interactions. Staying at a physical distance implies a number of skills in how to move parts of body. The act of avoiding direct physical interactions...

435 Interviews with Fikri, Taufiq, Yahya and Farid.
contact was always mentioned as the most important way of maintaining a proper distance. This means, for instance, that the fundamentalists are not allowed to shake hands with the opposite sex. The activists also very often pointed to avoiding direct eye contact as another good example of appropriate interaction between both genders. Hasyim, for example, explained that, if he meets a woman on the street, at the market or in other public venues, he will either swing round his face to avoid eye contact, look down, or pretend that he has not seen her.\textsuperscript{436} Since he will always meet women who are not his relatives in his public activities, Hasyim continued, it is better for him to master the skill of looking down and of pretending not to see people around him while walking.

The fundamentalists largely acted in the same way as Hasyim. This was equally true and more significant when it comes to the female activists. They seemed to be always looking down wherever they are. The female fundamentalists were also persuaded to lower their voice when talking to men. They were asked to use a regular tone and not to speak melodiously as if they are attempting to charm the person who is listening to them.\textsuperscript{437} Verbal conversations with men were frequently restricted.

For Siti, Dian, Desti and Nurul this range of new skills that have to be adopted was extremely challenging.\textsuperscript{438} Before joining the movement, they used to be either cablak, a tomboy or simply a naughty young girl. They had to double their effort to master these skills. They have to learn and exercise a different way of speaking and walking, and get used to the new skills, so that they could become a new person. They initially felt they were being forced to do this. However, they later noticed that the skills not only taught them how to be shy, but also explained why shyness is such an important noble characteristics attached to a good Muslim. The process took time, added Dian, as her inner self was still learning to be shy. Hence, for Dian, mastering the skills was one thing, and seemed to be the easiest part, while transforming them into her inner self was the next and more difficult step. She told me that she still felt some resistance within herself when these new skills were about to install the subjectivity of shyness. It was very difficult for her to restrict, for

\textsuperscript{436} Interview with Hasyim.

\textsuperscript{437} See, for example, "Menebar pesona, Menuai Petaka" published on 30 October 2007 in http://www.darussalaf.or.id (accessed on 7 November 2007); "Wanita-wanita yang Tidak Pantas Dinikahi" published on 21 October 2007 in http://www.darussalaf.or.id (accessed on 7 November 2007); "Di Balik Kelembutan Suaramu" published on 9 August 2006 in http://www.darussalaf.or.id (accessed on 28 November 2007).

\textsuperscript{438} Interviews with Siti, Dian and Desti; group discussion with the Al-Mukmin’s female student attended by Nurul.
example, verbal communications with her male friends. Nevertheless, Dian fully understood why her fellow activists were uneasy with the way she interacted with the opposite gender. She truly acknowledged that staying at a proper distance from her male friends in talking and in other types of social interactions is the proper way to be shy. She just still needed time to transpose the changes in the physical movements of her body parts into her inner self.

Aside from shyness, strict regulations on how a woman and a man engage in social interactions also result in simplicity as another new subjectivity adopted by the fundamentalists. Included in regulations about interactions between both genders is the rule on fashion. The basis of Islamic dress is to prevent both genders from viewing *aurat*. However, merely covering *aurat*, for the activists, is not enough.439 I have mentioned before that the dress must not accentuate the body. More than that, the cloth, the type and the colour of the fashion should not also attract the opposite gender’s attention. A highly attractive dress, even though in the form of the *hijab*, would be seen as seductive.440 Therefore, to avoid being the focus of attention and, potentially, of temptation, the dress must be simple. The primary character of the *hijab*, for example, is its simplicity. It is a very simple model of a loose-long dress and very often in one colour such as black, dark blue, dark green or dark brown. Unsurprisingly, the activists told me that the *hijab* tells them a great deal of how and what it means to be simple in life, in the way they behave and speak, and in purchasing goods and commodities for daily survival.

For the male activists, there is no specific dress code such as the *hijab*. However, apart from hiding *aurat*, simplicity is strongly emphasised. They always stated that there is no point in using clothing as a medium to celebrate one’s material abundance. After all, they insisted, should one die, one will simply take a two metre length white *kain kafan* (a white cloth used to wrap up the deceased body of a Muslim before being buried) as the one and only personal belonging during the time in *alam kubur*.441 For Safruddin, it was this simplicity that he had taken into his inner self. The white *gamis* he wore, he claimed, taught him a lot about being simple.

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439 Group discussions with the Al-Mukmin’s female students and the MMI female activists.
440 Interviews with Safrudin, Yoyok and Nopri.
441 *Alam kubur* literally means the realm of the grave. It is the time one spent after death, as a transitional period experienced by every individual who dies, before being resurrected to face the divine judgement at the end of the world. The judgement will decide one’s fate in the afterlife, whether one lives in heaven or in hell eternally.
In this chapter my focus is on the Islamic identity. The fundamentalists' struggle takes the form of the politics of representation in which the Islamic identity is largely produced through the play of difference. At the heart of this process are the resistance and the making of boundaries that allow the activists to fill in the space created by the construction of identity with specific practices. The practices are based on regulation, limitation and prohibition on the body and on daily activities. Through the materialisation of such discipline and control the fundamentalist subject, which is supposedly free from the ruling trends, the growing immorality and the dominating hedonism, is produced. The subject is also endowed with specific values and norms that give the activists some sense of direction, goals and security in life.

However, the production of subject, the very identity practices and performances, implied some form of action on self. In fact, the fundamentalists become fundamentalist through a long process of learning and adopting a regulated body as something desirable and arising out of one's free will through the mechanism of hikmah. They also have to learn, exercise and master a range of new skills in body movements related to new subjectivities implied by the invented Islamic identity. This entire process results in the remaking of the fundamentalist self.
Chapter 5
AGAINST THE RISING CONSUMER CULTURE

What is the source of the ruling trends, immorality and the hedonistic lifestyle? What are the origins of the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment? I argue that the fundamentalists' struggle for Islamic identity is understood against the background of Indonesian capitalism over the last three-to-four decades. In particular, the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment originate in the increasing consumer culture in the country which is closely related to the capitalist development. The overproduction of images and signs that have saturated the fabric of Indonesian everyday life since the 1990s is a significant development in the increasing consumer culture. It is through these saturating images and signs that the activists have become aware of the ruling trends, the growing immorality and the pervading hedonistic lifestyle, which gives them a sense of being dominated, of losing uniqueness and of experiencing doubt and uncertainty in life. I will start by discussing the saturating images and signs and will demonstrate how the activists find them threatening. My focus then turns to consumer culture. I try to understand how it relates to the centrality of images and how the struggle for Islamic identity can be understood against it. In the final section, I will sketch the capitalist developments in Indonesia since the late 1960s and how these produce, and are reproduced by, consumer culture.

THE HAUNTING IMAGES

In chapter 3 I noted that the fundamentalists were strongly against the ruling trends in everyday life, the growing immorality in society at large and the dominating hedonism in almost every aspect of life. They often quoted data presented in several writings and/or reported by the mass media to support their argument of the increasing social ills. The publication of Moamar Emka’s book, Jakarta Undercover: Sex n’ the City, for instance, had sparked an outrage within the radical Islamic community. The book was a report on promiscuity in a number of entertainment venues in Jakarta which was based on the author’s field-research. The
fundamentalists were quick to conclude that the book proved that immoral conduct in the major cities is increasing. Other fundamentalists spoke of evidence they also found. A number of MMI activists, for example, claimed that they found used condoms scattered in several public venues in Yogyakarta on Sunday mornings. Even though it was never clear how they found these—whether they were walking in those venues when they spotted the condoms, or whether they took a deliberate action to look for evidence that could support their claim—the story was said to me several times as proof that immoral behaviour in this city was a real issue.\(^{442}\) They also talked about the growing prominence of trends, immorality and hedonism they witnessed directly through persons and communities they were closely attached to, such as neighbours, university friends and work colleagues.\(^{443}\) A few even found the social ills inside their own family.\(^{444}\)

The problem is that this sort of evidence was not credible as confirmation of a serious threat. The concern about increasing immorality in the major cities was not new. For many years it has been an issue which worried a number of parents who decided to send their children to continue their studies in cities such as Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta. One did not have to read Emka’s piece and to spot scattered used condoms to make sense of promiscuity as a problem and to be fearful of the growing immorality. Furthermore, this hard evidence lacked intensity. The activists talked about their immoral neighbours, but the fact was that they did not have to meet them every hour or every day. They could also decide to mind their own business and, as most of them did, to withdraw from public life where immorality was prevalent and find a safe haven in places such as pesantren and the organisation’s offices. Finally, one was not really scared of, for example, one’s hedonist university friends because one did not lose a sense of control over the situation. Mamat, for instance, was concerned about his little brother who always tried hard to keep up with the latest trends in fashion. He was worried, but remained calm, because he still had opportunities to talk to his little brother, to remind him about his wrongdoings and to encourage him to choose independently his way of life

\(^{442}\) Interview with Awwas, Shobbarin, Hasyim and Harun.
\(^{443}\) Interview with Siti, Yoyok, Doriman, Nopri and Lukman.
\(^{444}\) Interview with Desti and Mamat.
if necessary. Surely, with this sense of control Mamat would not see his little brother as being threatened by the ruling trends in everyday life.

Here, it is interesting to note that this radical Muslim group were more anxious about trends in lifestyles, immoral conduct and hedonism that they found in images and signs that saturated Indonesian everyday life. The activists of this movement were deeply concerned about pictures, displays, spectacles and festivals presented in the media such as television, magazines, tabloids and the internet, and in public venues such as shopping malls, cafés, fast food restaurants and by the side of roads. This by no means implied that the social ills were more prevalent in the “unreal” world. Rather, for them, the saturation of images and signs was the “real” world of trends, immorality and hedonism itself. It was the picture of a young executive with a cellular phone and smart clothing standing in front of a luxurious car in an advertisement in a weekly that created a sense of the ruling trends. The dominating hedonism was largely about sinetron and reality shows such as Indonesian Idol and Akademi Fantasi Indonesia. Similarly, when they protested vehemently about the increasing immorality in society at large, the image of a female singer who performed an erotic dance often came to the fore.

In this sense, the real world where they lived was frequently taken to be the projection of images. They were uneasy, for example, with the behaviour of teenagers in shopping malls and in university campuses which they described as inauthentic. But they took this more as a simulation of images they found in films such as Buruun Cium Gue and Virgin: Ketika Keperawanan Dipertanyakan. The issue was more about the films and less about the real teenagers in public venues. If films like these were banned they believed many Indonesians would adopt a proper way of behaving. Moreover, the very existence of images was frequently seen as immorality in itself. Consequently, the non-existence of images was illusively taken

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445 Interviews with Mamat and Nopri.
447 See, for example, Al-Jawi (2005b); Mukti (2004). Interviews with Safruddin, Chaniqah and Hafid; group discussion with the Al-Mukmin’s male students.
as the absence of social ills. As discussed in the foregone chapters, in places such as Al-Mukmin, almost all types of pictures, displays and spectacles were strictly prohibited. This has made those in the pesantren feel that this school was free from the dangerous trends, immorality and hedonism prevalent in the rest of society.\footnote{Group discussions with the Al-Mukmin’s male and female students.}

This explained why the activists were so worried about the shopping malls. Even though they commonly took shopping malls to be hardly different from a market, the place to buy things, they could not accept being in venues where there were images and signs as far as eyes could see.\footnote{Group discussions with the MMI’s female activists and the Al-Mukmin female students.} They feared being controlled and dominated. As usual, they then expressed this anxiety by claiming that their presence, which supposedly represented the world of morality, simply did not match the overloading pictures, displays and spectacles that, for them, spoke for the world of immorality. In other words, the true morality and the real immorality should not and could not be in the same room. Their presence in shopping malls could be easily seen as supporting, and by implication being part of, the immoral world of images and signs. Their uniqueness would then be in question and their Muslimness would be contaminated.\footnote{Interviews with Safruddin, Yahya and Nopri.} For Safruddin, this also implied that he should doubt the Islamic credentials of national Islamic leaders who still possessed television in their home. For him, Islam and televisions, which shows, for instance, an image of the pop star, Madonna, were two separate worlds. One could not be a Muslim and a Madonna-type person at the same time.\footnote{Interview with Safruddin.}

From the fundamentalists’ point of view, the other significant issue was the mobility and the malleability of images and signs.\footnote{Interviews with Safruddin and Mamat. See also Yusanto (1998); Al-Jawi (2005b); a report on an interview with the HTI’s figure Rochmat S. Labib published in http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2008/10/30/ustadz-rochmat-s-labib-kelompok-liberal-itu-mengada-ada (accessed on 6 November 2008).} Images could easily move from one place to another and take various forms. Hence, the problem was not only the ubiquity of pictures, displays and spectacles in public venues such as the shopping malls which are out of their control, but also their presence in what are supposed to be sterile areas such as schools, and in private spaces such as bed rooms. The booming mass media over the last decade has exacerbated the situation. The emergence of several private TV stations with their predominantly entertainment programs, in particular, increased significantly the availability of images to almost
twenty-four hours a day. Wahyuddin, for example, complained about the intrusion of television into the Muslim’s daily routine. Its presence, with its own time schedule and with such intensity, could potentially prevent Muslims from having their own life free from the influence of images.454

Understandably, the activists felt they were being haunted by the images and signs that had started to colonise the everyday life of many Indonesians. Another HTI figure, Labib, insisted that Indonesians had been increasingly encircled by displays and spectacles, which were, for him, hardly different from pornography. “How can parents be able to provide religious education properly to their children in a situation like this?” he asked himself hopelessly.455 Yusanto feared for the future of Muslim youth. Since they were living in era of a booming media that brought about a process of deislamisasi (de-Islam-isation), these young Muslims could end up living in the age of jahiliyah (ignorance).456 This had in fact created a sort of “moral panic” within the radical Islamic community in general.457 The rapid proliferation of pictures, displays and spectacles in the last ten to fifteen years made the fundamentalist feel that their lives had now begun to be dominated by foreign and dangerous values and norms. The issue of promiscuity among the youth that had been aired in public for years became more real and urgent. The ubiquity, proximity and continuity of images intensified their anxiety. Unless they did something, this would only bring further deterioration to their identity and uniqueness.

It was this fear, among other things, that led the fundamentalists to respond in the various ways discussed earlier: the banning of television, the support for the anti-pornography bill and the attack on the so-called places of vice. Perhaps the most important thing about this reactionary attitude was the expression of anger and of disgust. Such expression could help to ease the anxiety. The reactionary responses also revealed a feeling of powerlessness. How many types of media could they ban? How many cafés could they destroy? The answer, as some of them knew for sure, was that this kind of reaction would hardly block the invasion of images in their

456 The idea of moral panic was presented by Arief Aries Mundayat and Amrini Widodo in a seminar on the film “Ayat-ayat Cinta” on 17 April 2008 at the Australian National University. See also Widodo (2008).
everyday life.\textsuperscript{458} Yet they continuously took this kind of attitude because it could create a feeling of having done something and, hence, of having some control over the situation. Being angry about immorality, explained to me by Ba’asyir, was the least thing one should possess as an indication of one’s Islamic credentials.

**Images Seduce, Control and Normalise**

Within the tradition of postmodern theories outlined in the Introduction, it is argued that the rapid proliferation of images and signs tends to blur the line between reality and fantasy. The saturating images and signs have put an end to what we used to know as reality and turn everything inside its space into merely simulation. I have mentioned that the fundamentalists tended to take the ubiquitous presence of pictures, displays, spectacles and festivals as the real world. Their concern about the emerging inauthentic way of life was more a response to images and signs that they suddenly found everywhere and that they could hardly escape from. They also took the actual life, the actual practice of promiscuity, for example, as largely a part of the images. It was nothing more than the transformation of images in the media such as film into real life. But, “how did images come to rule over their lives?”

By and large, the activists believed that the proliferation of pictures, displays and spectacles was dangerous. The beauty, the fascination, the dream world and the spectacular produced by, for example, films had the power to invade and influence the human mind. Images, they insisted, could force one to submit oneself to its rule.\textsuperscript{459} It took over one’s autonomy and forced obedience. It also celebrated hawa nafs\textsuperscript{u} and destroyed established values which provided meaning in life and goals for one’s life. Furthermore, pictures, displays and spectacles were, for them, not only terrorising, but also propagandising. They were not a passive presence of social ills that one could avoid by, for example, not visiting shopping malls and turning off the TV. They were instead more alive as they actively tried to occupy oneself and

\textsuperscript{458} Interviews with Oni, Yoyok and Lukman; group discussions with the MMI’s female activists.

\textsuperscript{459} Interviews with Safruddin and Ba’asyir; group discussions with the Al-Mukmin’s male and female students. See also “10 Alat penting Ghazwul Fikri” published on 21 September 2004 in http://swaramuslim.net (accessed on 1 October 2007); “Bunuh diri Bersama TV” published on 26 December 2004 in http://swaramuslim.net (accessed on 28 September 2007).
everyday life, in order to reshape one's identity, subjectivity and personality. But, how did images and signs celebrate hawa nafsu and shatter their meaningful life?

Above all, these radical Muslims were very sure that images would bring fitnah (in this case temptation). The images of men and, particularly, women in, for example, advertisements, which could be easily spotted on billboards by the side of roads in large cities, were always sexually provocative. Whoever saw the pictures, they thought, would hardly be able to control their carnal desires. Unsurprisingly, almost all types of human images for them became little different to pornography. They tended to see pornography no longer in terms of which parts of the body were being displayed. Rather, the image of a woman, for instance, even though with a fully and properly covered body, could be regarded as pornographic if its beauty and its attraction aroused one’s sexual desires. Labib, for example, complained about the ubiquity of pornography as there was no longer any space left without its presence. The strong support for the anti-pornography bill could also be seen as arising from this sort of anxiety, from a feeling of being surrounded by pornographic images. While Indonesia did experience a sort of pornographic boom in the last ten years, to say pornography was everywhere was exaggeration. It seemed that Labib’s concern was more about displays and spectacles, which were not necessarily pornographic, but could be regarded as sensual and seductive. His concern, as well as the anti-pornography campaign, reflected the fear of being controlled and dominated by the beautiful and fascinating pictures, displays and spectacles.

In this sense the saturation of images was threatening because it challenged the rule of value reason. As discussed before, this rule was based on the discipline and control of hawa nafsu. Through this rule, the fundamentalists made sense of having an autonomous consciousness. The problem was that the saturation of images could free hawa nafsu from the control of value reason. They felt they were being persuaded by images to celebrate hawa nafsu and to liberate the body, particularly the sexual organ, from any sort of discipline and surveillance. Should this persuasion be successful, they were fully certain that they would lose their uniqueness as a

460 Interviews with Ba’asir and Safruddin. See also Al-Jawi (2005b); Husaini (2004a, 2004b); Yusanto (1998).
462 See the report on an interview with Labib
supposedly autonomous being called a Muslim. This was perhaps the most basic element of the dangerous nature of images that they were worried about.

The saturating images and signs that seduced the viewers also had another meaning. As noted above, the activists found pictures and displays in the mass media, for example, dangerous because it was always enjoyable to have a look at them for the sake of the beauty and the dream world that they presented. The seducing images, in effect, drove the attention of the young Muslim generation, in particular, away from the other important things they had to care about in their lives. HTI, for instance, were enraged because they witnessed how images had emptied the minds of Indonesian teenagers. They were mindly brainwashed, with their heads filled up with entertainment, sex and everything other than Islamic teachings. As a result, according to the salafi group, the Indonesian Muslim teenagers nowadays increasingly paid less attention to the importance of religion, not to mention their being disinterested in the value of jihad. They had even lost their souls—which is supposed to be a sacred place where one’s faith in Islam is located—as well as their purity and dignity (as a Muslim).

In place of serious attention being given to Islam, jihad and Allah, there was fun and pleasure. Displays and spectacles in public venues and in the mass media encouraged Muslims to celebrate and enjoy life. For this radical Muslim group, the images-inspired-celebration of life implied that one should abandon, for example, the daily prayer, because the prayer restricted the body and prevented it from having immediate satisfaction. This was Wahyuddin’s main concern when he complained about “permainan” (literally game) which he found in sport, music and quizzes on TV. These TV shows were too entertaining and could make Muslims, especially the young ones, think that (actual) life could also be entertaining and easy; that real happiness was here in this worldly life full of fun; and that the life after death, the

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promise of heaven and hell, seemed unreal and mythical.\textsuperscript{466} Therefore, everything that was entertaining, including the sound of music coming out from a tape-recorder, which could lead one to move one’s body parts in rhythm, was regarded as dangerous.\textsuperscript{467}

The seduction paved the way for the control and domination of images. More than simply attractive, the images on TV and in the tabloids, for example, started to occupy everyday life. Initially, it could be just addictive. But, then, as one spent more time enjoying displays and spectacles provided by the mass media, one’s life gradually became organised around, for example, the importance of having time for one’s favourite TV shows.\textsuperscript{468} At this point, Muslims would be on the brink of being fully controlled by the media in particular and by the saturation of all the images and signs in general. Images’ were no longer a mere source of enjoyment as Muslims, who had been drawn by the images attractiveness, began to emulate the beauty and the dream world that they found.\textsuperscript{469} The emulation could be of the physical appearance of figures seen inside the images; it could also be of behaviour and attitude. More importantly, the emulation was a process of identification. The audiences tried to identify themselves with the images. The result was the formation of a (new) identity as the old one was stripped away. Yusanto noticed the emergence of a new Muslim generation who were suffering from “a split personality.” They were both sinful—for being influenced by the media—and faithful—for being born as a Muslim—at the same time.\textsuperscript{470}

This line of claims outlined by the fundamentalists could make us think that there existed some sort of original Islam before the explosion of pictures, displays and spectacles occupied the fabric of Indonesian everyday life. The saturating images and signs could then be regarded as challenging and disrupting the existing Islamic values and norms. Islam is the main victim and their struggle is to purify their Islamic identity which is under threat. We should bear in mind that the real issue is instead what the activists themselves refer to as an “empty mind” and “lost soul”. This tells us vividly the most important thing, that is, their feeling of being controlled.

\textsuperscript{466} Interview with Wahyuddin.
\textsuperscript{467} Group discussion with the Al-Mukmin’s female students; Abas, P. (2005).
\textsuperscript{468} Interviews with Safruddin, Darwis and Chanifah. See also “Serangan Media Informasi,” published on 10 May 2006 in http://www.darussalaf.or.id (accessed on 28 November 2007).
\textsuperscript{470} Yusanto (1998: 6-7).
and dominated by the proliferation of images and signs. Islam comes later and is used to reclaim both the empty mind and lost soul. At first, they construct and define Islam in terms of negating the saturating pictures, displays and spectacles. The result is an Islam according to their interpretation that significantly functions as a safe shelter for their united, original and substantial self. This shelter protects the self from being torn apart, disauthenticised and uprooted by the haunting images. Then, this newly constructed and defined Islam valorises their existence and speaks on behalf of their feeling of being oppressed and alienated. It is hardly surprising that they point to Islam, rather than their own self, as the victim of images and signs that overload their everyday life. In this sense, Islam is there to help them cope with the problem of losing control of producing one’s own unique identity.

This anxious feeling of a shattered self can be seen in the way the activists of this movement discovered what they took to be the power of images to socialise and to educate the masses. While the producer of “Virgin” insisted that the film was trying to portray what was happening in the real lives of the urbanite, modern and young Indonesian teenagers, the activists had a different view. They were more concerned with its spectacles, rather than its supposed substantial message about the social problems among youth. The spectacular expressions and acting of one of the film’s main figures, Ketie, who was seen as vulgar and too direct, were taken as a kind of propaganda as, they believed, it taught the Indonesian younger generation how to be modern and to be cool in a strictly unislamic way of behaving in public and private life. Instead of reporting about the issue of promiscuity, they accused “Virgin” and other films such as “Buruan Cium Gue” of promoting and educating people on how to have sex outside marriage.471

The task was mounting as the power of images to socialise and educate had apparently developed into its finest form of domination. The fundamentalists witnessed anxiously how images had started to normalise things which were either sinful from an Islamic point of view, or socially unacceptable from the Indonesian cultural perspective.472 The heavy presence of an image of a woman in a bikini easily spotted in various advertisements found in public venues, for example, was attractive, but also confusing. Which one was normal, was it the (images of) a bikini

472 Interview with Darwis; group discussion with the Al-Mukmin’s female students; Al-Jawi (2005b).
or what they took as the widely accepted normal clothing of an Indonesian woman? However, the spectacular and fascinating images could solve this confusion. The attractiveness of the advertisements and movies, the activists insisted, successfully persuaded the audiences that the normality was the images. This was the main problem of films such as "Virgin", "Buruan Cium Gue", "Ada Apa dengan Cinta?" and "Eiffel...I'm in Love". For this radical Muslim group, these films simply normalised promiscuity and hedonism.473

The Appearance is the Substance

The images I have discussed thus far are produced through the stylisation of what we (used to) know as the real life, of how everyday life is turned into an aesthetic field. As the images are increasingly dominating our surroundings, the stylisation of life becomes important. So as the images become the reality, the aestheticised becomes the substance. This line of argument noted in chapter 1 is useful to describe how the fundamentalists were against other aspects of the haunting images. They were concerned with the presence of images that in some subtle ways seemed to have been successful in persuading everyone to turn themselves into an image too. Since the images were the real and the aestheticised was the substance, people started to think that their own self and everyday life should also become the main objects of stylisation. Then came the importance of penampilan (physical appearance), of how to present in public, by recreating the image of oneself through fashions, hair styles and demeanour. At the same time, what the fundamentalists believe is the real substance—the faith and the intellectuality—was gradually disappearing from the scene and rarely taken into account.

For the activists of this movement the main thing they learned from the rapid flows of images was the predominance of the body, particularly, the aurat.474 Advertisements, the mass media and films, they claimed, were nothing more than the arena for pamer aurat (literally displaying aurat). Apart from displaying aurat which

474 Interviews with Safruddin and Wahyuddin; group discussions with the Al-Mukmin’s male and female students. See also Mukti (2004); "Menebar Pesona, Menuai Petaka," published on 30 October 2007 in http://www.darussalaf.or.id (accessed on 7 November 2007).
is itself sinful, an HTI activist, Ita, discovered that the implication of the overloaded images of the body in public spaces was more serious for Muslims. She believed that the images were telling us what was and was not valuable. She could see how, for instance, that the media played a big role in accentuating the importance of having a beautiful body. Being beautiful, in terms of physical presence, was smoothly presented as the main foundation of being a woman. For their part, the women, claimed Ita, then tried to aestheticise their appearance by, for example, working hard on whitening their skin. Being attractive physically was increasingly seen as the first thing a woman had to care about.

The fundamentalists claimed that the importance of physical appearance was in fact a sort of cultural plague that had become an epidemic. The Indonesians who suffered from this did everything to stylise their body. The boys painted their hair and wore earrings and necklaces. The girls wore mini skirts, had tattoos on their skin and showed their navel.475 In the late 1980s, this became further associated with the emergence of the culture of mejeng (literally means hanging out) and ngeceng (literally means viewing). Both became the culture in public venues such as shopping malls and fast-food restaurants, mainly among the urbanite Indonesian youth. While mejeng was about how to present the image of self in these public venues, ngeceng was about viewing the images of others.

In fact, this youth culture apparently told us that the importance of appearance made everyday life look more like a living and moving show, a site to perform and to act in accordance with a specific image being presented. Places like shopping malls were simply a big stage where people tried to be looked at and to enjoy beautiful scenes. The fundamentalists were confused. They were uneasy with the shopping malls because of the heavy presence of images and signs. The problem was that the images were not only in the pictures and displays, but also portrayed by the men and women who visited the site. And the images of these two different objects were almost the same. Every single thing in the shopping malls then looked like part of a big spectacle. This could perhaps explain why they combined the terms pornography and pornoaksi. Pornography was loosely used to label any images that were seductive. Pornoaksi was more like an active and lively pornography, which

was a label attached to the real appearance of human beings in everyday life. What appeared in reality was an aestheticised body which the fundamentalist saw as seductive and, hence, hardly different from what they understood as pornography. Their support for the anti-pornography bill meant that they were not only against the seductive images, but also the seductive physical appearance of real men and women they found in public venues. Their exaggerated sense of being under siege from the invading pornography was understandable because the haunting images were not only the pictures, the displays and the spectacles, but also the actual human beings in their surroundings.

More importantly, the Indonesian teenagers, in particular, according to the activists of this movement, seemed to have taken physical appearance as being the real substance of being a human. The teenagers started to think that popularity—similar to the one enjoyed by their new heroes, that is, the celebrities—was a great achievement. It often meant being the centre of public attention, being in the media and being mentioned and discussed by people in public and in private. Yet, the popularity was achieved through the body being presented in its aestheticised form. They had to emulate their heroes, try to be beautiful and handsome, or, at least, as attractive as the celebrities, in order to be well-known. For the activists of this movement, it was hardly surprising that many Indonesian teenagers wanted to be a “cover boy/girl”. There was a long queue in the auditions for TV shows such as Indonesian Idol and Akademi Fantasi Indonesia. The rating of these shows was very high and millions of people were involved in the show through sending an SMS to select the idol. The issue was serious even for the Al-Mukmin’s students who rarely watched TV. Their teacher, Chanifah, had to calm them down by firmly explaining to them that physical appearance was less significant than one’s faith.

Here, their emphasis on faith and their rejection of the beautiful body presented by the saturating images was more about the issue of certainty. The fundamentalists seemingly worried that the abundance of images of the body, which led to the importance of physical appearance in everyday life, was liberating the

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477 Interview with Chanifah.
body from any meaningful values and norms. The body became the tool for hura-hura (having fun) and for a hedonistic lifestyle. The activists never saw hedonism as real life. Its emphasis on bodily pleasure and its drive for immediate satisfaction was not only endless, but also made life full of anxiety. The life itself became meaningless, except for the unbridled celebration and satisfaction of the body. Furthermore, the saturating images and signs were oppressing. This is not because of the preoccupation with style and appearance, because the fundamentalists themselves are also preoccupied. But more it is because they promote and socialise a specific body image, they make the image dominant through its ubiquitous presence, and turn it into the real and the only choice left that everyone should adopt.

THE RISE OF CONSUMER CULTURE IN INDONESIA

The rise of consumer culture in Indonesia since the 1990s has contributed significantly to the proliferation of images and signs into the fabric of everyday life. To understand this, I have argued in the Introduction that we should refer the term consumer culture to, at least, two cultural aspects of mass consumption. First, it is about the cultural dimension of consumer goods in which the commodity is used as the “message”. Consumption is no longer understood as consuming the material utility, but more as playing with, and manipulating, the cultural meanings and signs of commodities. Second, consumption is also a leisure activity. To consume is not only to communicate, but also to have pleasure and more fun in life. Therefore, consumption is not only a sort of language, as suggested by Baudrillard, but also a form of celebration. In this regard, the rising consumer culture is always strongly associated with the production of images. Such production represents the importance of sign-value, the style and the appearance. It also socialises and normalises celebrating and playing with commodities. Hence, the fundamentalists’ fear of seduction, the importance of appearance and the power of images and signs to

control and dominate are better seen as the expression of anxiety against this rising consumer culture.

I did not ask the activists their views on consumer culture, but I did bring the issue of consumerism into the conversations. I understand consumerism as an expansion of consumption as a leisure pursuit. Shopping in particular becomes the most popular leisure activity. This is associated with the visibility of various forms of shopping in particular and the increase in sites of purchase and consumption in general. More importantly, in consumerism we witness three aspects closely related to consumer culture: First, the growing importance of packaging and promotion of commodities; second, the growing pervasiveness of advertisement in everyday life; and third, the growing significance of the style, appearance and design of goods.

In general, the fundamentalists presented the common view that tended to be suspicious about consumerism because it was a bad habit of going on a shopping spree, of consuming for the sake of consuming more. They were also concerned that many Indonesians had started to abandon the utility aspect of consumer goods. People’s decisions to purchase commodities increasingly became more influenced by advertisements and the desire to keep up with the latest trends. They knew for sure that advertisements and the trend propaganda were manipulating forces. Chanifah told me that, should people think again about the function of goods as the most important driver of consumption, they would not buy, for example, a new cellular phone every time the old one (because of the advertisement manipulation) looked out of date. Instead, consumerism, argued Yusanto, had created a “throw-away society” (English in original). And the out of date things that could be easily dumped were not only consumer goods, he continued, but also one’s partner. Thank God, claimed the relatively well-to-do HTI activist, Oni, he was not addicted to consumerism. By this he meant that, even though his earnings were more than enough to purchase the basic needs, his decision to buy things, especially the tertiary consumer commodities such as cars and motorcycles, was always based on the utility aspect.

This brought a number of consequences. For Yusanto, consuming for the sake of consuming became the goal of life. It illusively promised happiness. People worked hard to earn as much money as possible so that they could fulfil their desire

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479 See, for example, Lury (1996: 29-36). See also Sassatelli (2007).
480 Interviews with Oni, Chanifah, Yoyok and Safruddin.
482 Interview with Oni.
to consume. As discussed in chapter 3 this would only turn one’s life into a vehicle to pursue pleasure, which becomes the ultimate aim and the main basis through which the meaning of life was understood. In this respect, according to another MMI activist, Lasti, consumerism represented the general cultural tendency in Indonesian society nowadays. She used the term budaya instan (literally “instant culture”) to refer to a culture of having a life full of as much fun as soon as possible. Strongly influenced by the media, in particular, many Indonesians no longer saw happiness as a result of hard work, discipline and a long process of seriousness and hardship. Why should one bother to go through hardship and discipline if one could be happy without a painful process on the body. Lasti told me that consumerism was among the best and easiest ways to have a plentiful life full of endless leisure.

At the same time, the celebration of hawa nafsu, as mentioned several times previously, was the sign of a less autonomous consciousness. Consumption for the sake of having more pleasure implied that humans were controlled by basic desires. Instead of reasonable consideration, the decision to consume was based on the pleasure-pain principle. This was alarming from the fundamentalists’ point of view. It indicated that the value reason was put aside and its rule over the human body and everyday life was challenged. As the value reason was always taken as the source of independent thinking and actions, the celebration of bodily pleasure through consumerism was viewed as a form of domination.

The abandoning of the utility dimension of consumer goods had another implication. For Oni, not being consumerist also implied that he would not buy things because of the image presented in advertisements and/or constructed by the public. For example, he decided to keep his old motorcycle even though it did not look as “sporty” (English in original) as the latest model in the market. The old one might look out of date, less attractive and “not sporty” at all, but the most important thing, for him, was that it was still fully reliable. Here Oni and his fellow fundamentalists were concerned with a range of cultural association and illusion attached to the mundane consumer goods in images presented in the media and public venues. They frequently spoke of pamer (in this case showing-off) and gengsi

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484 Interview with Lasti.
485 Interview with Oni.
It meant that consumerism was a matter of demonstrating to others who one really is. What is demonstrated is illusion rather than the real substance of one’s self. Consumption, in this respect, was for the sake of prestige, of declaring one’s social status.

However, the fundamentalists were largely inconsistent regarding this aspect of consumer culture. On the one hand, as implied by what I noticed about their rejection of the importance of physical appearance, the cultural association of consumer goods was simply taken as another form of manipulation by, for example, advertisements. On the other hand, the cultural image of Muslim dress was extremely significant for them not only as a symbol of their Islamic identity, but also and more importantly as a medium through which they constructed, produced and made sense of who they were. Here, Muslim dress implies that what one wears and in what venues one spends one’s leisure time, is always important. In other words, just like mundane consumer goods, the dress also has its sign-value, its own cultural association and illusion. The activists who adopt the Muslim dress code are fully aware of these cultural and symbolic dimensions. In this sense, they do not entirely reject the importance of the cultural image of physical objects which is what they would have us believe.

Hence, in the case of consumer culture, the fundamentalists seemed to reject the sign-value of a commodity but they hardly escaped the play of the symbolic dimension of consumer goods. I asked the HTI activist, Nopri, whether a Muslim, like him, was allowed to have a meal in a fast-food restaurant such as KFC. His first response was that it was legally acceptable from the Islamic point of view. Later, I will discuss more about this response as a type of cultural strategy to cope with the (dominating) consumer culture. At this stage, his second response was more interesting. He told me that, even though it was伊斯兰ically legal, he decided not to have a meal in KFC. He was concerned with the image of the KFC restaurant as not a proper place for an activist like him. He was certain that, should he eat there, people, including his fellow fundamentalists, would question his credibility as an Islamic activist. In Indonesia, the KFC restaurant, as it is an American-imported cultural item, is commonly associated with the rich and with the West. He believed that an activist like himself should be more distant from the rich and the West. In this

486 Interviews with Chantifah, Hafid, Safruddin, Oui, Hasyim, Desti and Lasti.
sense, Nopri and the fundamentalists like him might question the images of commodities. Yet, in some ways, they took them seriously and were involved in the play of cultural meanings and symbols of consumer goods even when they rejected them.

**Consumerism and the Indonesian New Rich**

Consumer culture is relatively new in Indonesia and is still in the process of developing. Although the first sign of its development had emerged as early as the mid 1980s, as can be seen in research on the growing middle class conducted by *Kompas*, it was not until the first half of the 1990s that Indonesia witnessed the steady rise of consumer culture. Various reports suggested that the consumer culture was largely an urban phenomenon. It emerged mainly in the major cities in Java, Sumatra and Sulawesi. In 1997 and 1998 Indonesia experienced the greatest financial meltdown in its modern history. The rise of consumer culture seemed to be put on hold as the crisis rendered the income of many Indonesians into less than a quarter of its pre-crisis value. Certainly, the financial debacle had reduced the power to purchase. Nevertheless, the desire to buy things, I argue, was often stronger than the money in one's pocket. Since consumption had turned into a medium to communicate and to celebrate life, the size of income was less of an issue. The crisis only led to the modification of consumption. Unsurprisingly, as soon as Indonesia recovered from the financial meltdown, the consumer culture continued to develop.

Two main processes allowed the rapid development of consumer culture in the 1990s. The first was the increase of consumerism, particularly, the consumption of the secondary and tertiary commodities. The second was the formation of Indonesian new rich. The rise of consumerism, especially in its earlier phase, was largely associated with the increasing demand of consumer goods made by those who had incomes far above what they needed for meals, clothing and housing. It could be argued that consumerism was to serve the purchasing power of this class. At the same time, the emergence of the new rich was easily spotted in what they

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487 Tanter and Young (1990: 167-174).
488 See Tanter and Young (1990); Robison (1996); Heryanto (1999); Priyono (1999); Young (1999); Gerke (2000). See also *Forum Keadilan*, special edition, April 1996; *Kompas*, 30 September 1996; *The Jakarta Post*, 29 June 1997;
consumed. In fact, they deliberately used their above-average power to purchase beyond the daily basic commodities not only to accentuate their existence to other classes, but also to make their own sense of who they were. To this class it might be correct to use the expressions “I consume, therefore I exist”.

The most discernible indication of consumerism was the mushrooming new housing estates. The housing ranged from the comfortable to the luxurious, equipped with security guards and surrounded by various types of enclosure. In one of the luxurious housing complexes in Jakarta, Villa Kelapa Gading, the price of one house and land package in the mid 1990s was estimated between Rp6 billion and Rp7 billion (around US$3 million). In Bukit Golf Utama the estimated rate was more than Rp10 billion. The mushrooming housing estates were everywhere in Java’s major cities. In many places the rapid increase of housing had contributed to problems such as shortage of land for agricultural purposes, floods and an increasing temperature.

The other visible sign of increasing consumerism was the ubiquitous shopping malls, which were large, multistorey and fully air-conditioned. While the highest growth was in Jakarta, the malls were also built in relatively smaller town such as Solo. Not far from Ba’asyir’s Al-Mukmin were two shopping centres, Grand Mall and Solo Square. Compared to their surroundings, the centres, particularly Grand Mall, looked so exclusive and luxurious. Indeed, the malls were commonly characterised by their interesting design and construction. The buildings used attractive colours and designs to create a sort of mall identity and to tempt as many visitors as possible. Plaza Indonesia was an interesting case. It was opened in 1990 in central Jakarta and set a new trend in the importance of attractive building design. The most distinguishing aspect was its luxurious interior features which aimed to give an impression of calm and elegance.

The rise of consumerism could also be seen in terms of consumer spending. As reported by Robison, in the mid 1990s the increased expenditure was evident in

490 In the 1990s, particularly before the financial crisis, the value of US$1 was around Rp2000.
almost all sectors of production.\textsuperscript{495} Aside from luxurious houses, many Indonesians spent their money on purchasing apartments, cars, cellular phones, electronic appliances, clothing and cosmetics. In 1985 the total number of apartments was 753 units. In less than ten years, following the growing demand for urban housing, the number increased more than 1000 per cent.\textsuperscript{496} In the 2000s the demand for apartments seemed to accelerate even further, as living in supposedly modern urban housing had gradually become a new trend. The same can be seen in the level of vehicle sales. The sale of sedans during the decade, for example, was estimated to have jumped from 30,321 units in the early 1990s to around 60,000 in 2000.\textsuperscript{497} Unsurprisingly, in the 2000s traffic jams, car accidents, noise and air pollution were common scenes in the large cities across the Archipelago. Likewise, the scale of cellular-phone sales was extremely high. In the medium-sized cities such as Bandung, Yogyakarta and Solo, cellular phones were sold like chips. Its outlets were everywhere, often by the side of the road.

The increased consumer spending was also found in other sectors. Kompas reported that a number of Indonesian consumers had started to spend their holidays travelling overseas.\textsuperscript{498} Some, especially the so-called “super rich”, even made the trip, sometimes in their private jets, just to go shopping, and Singapore, New York, London and Paris were among the favourite destinations.\textsuperscript{499} For those who were not so rich, Kuta and the Legian area in Bali were the perfect place.\textsuperscript{500} The conspicuous consumption was also evident in entertainment and sport. Hosting international pop stars had become a new phenomenon in the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{501} Similarly, the number of applications to join golf clubs with their skyrocketing administration fees, seemed to increase significantly, as the number of golf courses in Jakarta rose dramatically during the 1990s.\textsuperscript{502}

Accompanying the rising consumerism was the formation of the Indonesian new rich. They were mostly the new members of the urban upper class and upper-middle class. Their structural occupations ranged from middle and high ranking bureaucrats to managerial, professional and technical workers; artists and

\textsuperscript{495} Robison (1996). See also Priyono (1999).
\textsuperscript{496} Robison (1996: 80). See also Priyono (1999).
\textsuperscript{497} Priyono (1999: 224).
\textsuperscript{498} Kompas, 30 September 1996. See also Wardhana and Barus (1998).
\textsuperscript{499} Wardhana and Barus (1998)
\textsuperscript{500} Kenichiro (2001).
\textsuperscript{501} Heryanto (1999).
\textsuperscript{502} Kenichiro (2001: 495-7).
intellectuals; large capitalists and petty bourgeoisie. The Indonesian term for the new rich was *orang kaya baru* (OKB). Commonly good-looking, mainly because their purchasing power allowed them to style and improve their physical appearance, people started to call them Indonesian yuppies. They were largely described as individualist, socially insensitive, ambitious, preoccupied with material things, and hedonistic. They were often condemned for being politically conservative. The issues of democracy, civil liberty and social justice were barely considered; their primary concern was their personal life and fun.

The new rich were also characterised by other things. In terms of educational backgrounds, this class had higher qualifications compared to other social classes. They even had a better education than their parents as more than 50 per cent were university graduates. Higher quality education, combined with political connections and nepotism, seemed to have helped them to find better jobs with large incomes. More than 70 per cent earned more money than their parents have ever done.

Therefore, like their counterparts in other Asian developing countries, the new rich were not only well-educated, but also economically better off. They lived a life with a scale of income far beyond what people generally needed to secure the daily basic commodities.

According to surveys on the emerging middle class in Jakarta conducted in the mid 1990s, the income of 46 per cent of the new rich was between Rp400 thousand and Rp1 million (around US$200 and 500). The rest had more than Rp1 million per month. Some even earned more than Rp4 million. In addition, they had access to another source of purchasing power. They, for instance, had more freedom to benefit from bank credit facilities and used their credit cards mostly for retail purposes. With such a discretionary financial base, the new rich were in a perfect position to enjoy consumerism and to exercise consumer choices in ways that the majority of the lower class could only aspire to.

In fact, their presence was mostly visible through the consumer goods they purchased and through the facilities where they spent their leisure time. The new rich

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503 Robison (1996); *Kompas*, 30 September 1996.
507 *Kompas*, 30 September 1996; *The Jakarta Post*, 29 June 1997. Certainly US$500 might not be that much. However, against the standard of living costs for average Indonesians during that period, Rp1 million was a large amount of money even for those who lived in Jakarta.
508 Priyono (1999); Robison (1996).
were, for example, the occupants of luxurious housing complexes and apartments. They played golf and loved car races. They strolled through shopping malls, with a baby sitter who looked after their children walking a few steps behind. They wore the latest model of popular brand shoes such as Nike and Kickers and had meals in the fast-food restaurants such as KFC and McDonald’s. Together with the so-called modern heroes, such as artists, entertainers and celebrities, the new rich were the real trendsetters in fashion, housing and entertainment. This group was the main agent of consumer culture who taught others not only what and how to consume, but also consumerism itself.

Compared to developed countries, the rising consumerism in Indonesia was still in its early days. Even by the standard of neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Thailand, not to mention Singapore, the purchasing power of the Indonesian new rich was relatively weak both before and after the financial crisis. Yet, through the increasingly significant role of the media, which experienced a boom during the early 1990s and then another rapid growth spurt following Soeharto’s resignation, the new rich habit of consumption and the culture of extravagance attached to their lifestyles was easily present in the homes of the majority of Indonesian households. The media images, which were often beautiful and spectacular, seemed to have been successful in persuading the Indonesian audiences to imitate the urbanite enclave culture of the rich. It was not surprising that consumerism slowly, but steadily, spread to the entire social ranks across the nation. Regardless of the size of income, many Indonesians apparently had become consumerist.

For the lower class, their relatively weak financial base, rather than a hindrance, allowed them to be more creative in pursuing consumerism. As suggested by Gerke, “resource pooling” was the most popular strategy to get access to sufficient financial resources for consumerism. Students who shared a house, for instance, or, teenagers who lived in the same neighbourhood depended on this strategy. They basically put together any limited resources—money, clothing, footwear, etc—they possessed so that they could share either the big brand items or take a visit to a fast-food restaurant. At the same time, the lower class did not have to go to the luxurious malls mentioned above. To serve their desire to consume, plenty

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509 Wardhana and Barus (1998); The Jakarta Post, 29 June 1997.
of low priced shopping centres were waiting for them. They could still find Nike shoes with its perfect swoosh even though it was a skilfully made local imitation. They could also select other consumer goods that misused, but made them look similar to, the big brand names and logo such as Cravil (for Carvil), adudas (for adidas) and SUNY (for SONY). Should they really want the brand name articles, the second hand market was always reliable.511

Celebrating Consumption

The new rich were the children of the Indonesian developmental state. As will be discussed further in the next section, they were a product of successful economic modernisation, particularly during the three decades before the financial turmoil, in which the state played a decisive role in supporting capital accumulation. However, the Indonesian capitalist state was not a rational actor. State-capital relations were mostly based on networks of patronage, rather than on a purely free-market principle. The important factors were political connections, loyalty, nepotism and corruption. Therefore, even though they were more educated compared to their parents, the emergence of the new rich was rarely a result of fair competition, accurate and rational planning, expertise and skill, seriousness and hard-work. The network of patronage was the key to their success.

This significantly affected the way the new rich treated consumption. Since the path to wealth and prosperity they went through was less challenging, to use Heryanto’s words, "what comes easily, goes away easily."512 Becoming wealthy and sustaining prosperity was no longer an issue, he continued, as the main concern of the new rich was how to use the discretionary purchasing power at their disposal to have a life full of as much fun as possible. It was not surprising that they were more preoccupied with excessive consumerism. They had used consumption beyond the logic of use-value. They turned it into a medium of pleasure and of celebrating life in ways that defied economic logic. Saving and other forms of future investment were

511 In Yogyakarta, the second hand market, which used to be a number of outlets located on the main street around 500 metres to the south of Tugu, was always full of visitors, mostly from the lower-middle class and lower class. It was rumoured that the original articles of big brand names sold here were most probably stolen goods.

rarely taken into account. They seemingly preferred to maximise and expand the scope of enjoyment and to live life in the present.

At the same time, I argue, that the majority of the new rich spent their adult life in a different cultural milieu to the one that older generations of the upper class and upper-middle class used to be part of. The new rich had adopted a culture of celebrating life, of having as much pleasure as money could buy. In a culture that was increasingly global and dominating, hard work and discipline remained important. In fact, this was the culture of a "Puritan by day and a playboy by night," to borrow Danigle Bell’s expression. However, enjoyment and pleasure were no longer seen as serving the world of work. Rather than signalling the paradox of the modern consumer, as Bell would argue, this was the time when work had become auxiliary to pleasure. In this sense, the Indonesian new rich not only had a relatively easy path to wealth and prosperity, but also lived in a particular time in history when enjoyment and fun were the keywords. The combination of a big income, a strong desire for pleasure and the culture of having fun easily resulted in consumerism.

What did it mean to have pleasure through consumption in real life? How much money did the new rich have to spend? As discussed previously, consumption for fun was evident in the increasing amount of consumer expenditure on secondary and tertiary commodities. However, it was not the act, for example, of buying a new sedan that mattered. Rather, it was the desire to possess new things that was the issue. Consumption became a moment of pleasure because it was an act of fulfilling the desire to possess. The desire to possess new things could not be rigidly attached to either specific products, brand names, or, models. It was unlimited and always demanded immediate fulfilment. In addition, desire could always be skillfully manufactured. In the contemporary capitalist world, the roles of the media and advertisements were crucial in cultivating the desire to consume. Increasingly, many people decided to buy things more because of image propaganda, rather than because of reasonable calculation of the utility dimension of the commodities being purchased. As the invasion of the media and advertisements overloaded Indonesian daily life with spectacular, beautiful and fascinating images and signs, the new rich in particular and the Indonesian consumers in general were easily seduced and controlled by the new culture of celebrating commodities.

513 Quoted in Featherstone (1991a: 21).
Consumption for pleasure could be seen in the purchasing of common consumer goods such as electronic appliances, clothing, footwear and food. As mentioned above, travelling overseas for shopping had been common among the Indonesian new rich for some time. Reportedly, a business woman admitted that she could spend Rp200 million (around US$100 thousand) during a shopping trip and this amount was normal. She then returned to Indonesia with several suitcases full of new clothing and would do the same thing on the next trip, which could be in a matter of weeks and months. One wonders whether she had enough time to wear all the new clothing between the trips and why she purchased more when she had not tried on every single piece that she possessed. For this business woman, I argue, we miss the point. The most significant thing was not wearing, but buying, that clothing: buying was the main and real fun.

Consumption for the sake of celebrating the pleasure of possessing new things created a moment of joy. It was joyful because consumption seemed to have the power to cure stress, anxiety and sadness. The new rich often insisted that they needed consumerism to have some fun in their lives. Otherwise they would be internally damaged by stress. The reason for their habit of frequenting cafés, in this sense, was to keep themselves mentally healthy. They travelled overseas on holidays and sailed far away from their daily modern life for deep fishing in order to free their minds and bodies from the discipline and control they experienced at work. Certainly, it was expensive, but they would say that happiness, however limited, is the thing that money cannot buy. After all happiness was the greatest reward they were looking for after all the hard work they had done.

One thing that made consumption joyful was the fact that consumption was also entertaining. The power of places such as cafés to heal anxiety and sadness and to create fun was not through the soft-drink that was consumed, but through the atmosphere, the scene and the sounds that were entertaining. Having a meal was in fact secondary, as the majority of the new rich visitors were looking for this entertaining dimension of the café. This type of consumption was probably more visible in the night entertainment venues. However, the interesting thing was that in the latter, entertainment was the use-value to be consumed. Cafés on the other
hand were basically a place to have a drink. And, yet, the majority of cafés in the Indonesian large cities that were built in the last five-to-ten years were more preoccupied with a stylised appearance, through beautiful and colourful designs and sounds, in order to create an entertaining and lively atmosphere. As cafés tried to attract consumers by using fascinating and spectacular images to manipulate their desires, the new rich and other visitors started to consume more of this entertaining atmosphere.

The entertaining dimension was strongly present in shopping malls. The malls appeared more like indoor amusement parks equipped with a range of lovely and outstanding pictures, displays and spectacles. Many Indonesian, not only the new rich, went to the malls to enjoy this saturating images and signs. Strolling through the mall corridors was in fact a cheaper form of consumption, but full of fun. The strollers were charmed by the spectacular interior design. They took pleasure in viewing attractive and enticing advertisements and pictures. They were fascinated by the beautiful consumer goods inside the shop windows. They also enjoyed seeing other beautified and stylised visitors who passed by. As insisted by another MMI activist, Nur, the shopping centres were no longer just the places to buy things. People still purchased personal and daily needs in the malls, but she explained, something that only needed less than five minutes shopping time was in stark contrast to another five hours afterwards spent walking through the corridors of the mall. In fact shopping centres had become the favourite place for *cuci mata* (literally “eye cleaning”). This metaphor meant that in these places people could refresh their sight by allowing their eyes to enjoy the pleasure of beautiful images.

Being joyful and entertained implied that discipline, limitation and control on the fulfilment of bodily pleasures were, at least, partly released. One could hardly take pleasure from the beauty of any seductive images if one's eyes and/or sexual organs remained strictly regulated. Since discipline and control of the body could be understood as a significant part of (the formation of) culture and civilisation, the consumption of the entertainment dimensions of places such as shopping malls and cafés signalled the presence of cultural disorder. It could be further argued that in shopping centres, just as in the fairs and carnivals traditional in Europe a few

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519 Group discussions with MMI’s female activists.  
521 Featherstone (1991a).
centuries ago, the dominant culture and civilisation was actually being turned-upside-down. In a later section I will demonstrate how the activists have their own moment of carnival, of inverting their outside world. What is important here is that, from the fundamentalist point of view, the culture and civilisation that regulated and basically oppressed the body was the main source of autonomous consciousness. The cultural disorder meant that autonomous consciousness had no order in places such as shopping malls and cafés and so was turned on its head. Specifically, as discussed in the foregone chapters, the basis of regulation of the body was the control of hawa nafsu by value reason. The control was achieved through strict discipline of various body parts. For them, the notion cultural disorder indicated that in shopping malls people were encouraged to free their body and to celebrate hawa nafsu. The established values and norms were turned up-side-down as in these places hawa nafsu, not the value reason, was the rule.

Consumption is the Message

The rise of consumer culture in Indonesia, as elsewhere, was also characterised by the use of consumption as a sort of communication tool. The importance of sign-value implied that consuming a specific commodity could be seen as an act of not only adopting the cultural meanings associated with it, but also communicating the meanings to others. In particular, the adopted sign-value could, and was meant to, tell us the identity of those who consumed the commodity. Consumption therefore was a statement of who one is and which social group one belongs to. Nevertheless, as put by Heryanto, consumption has never taken place in either universal, nor, in a purely natural and biological context. Not only does he underline the fact that use-value has become less significant, but more importantly the cultural meanings and signs associated with consumer goods are also locally bounded. Heryanto himself noticed that eating a McDonald’s hamburger in Los Angeles hardly equates to the same meaning as eating the same hamburger in Yogyakarta.

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522 Featherstone (1991a); Stallybrass and White (1986); Bakhtin (1984).
523 Heryanto (1999: 159-60).
In this sense, advertisements, for example, play a crucial role. Advertising associates mundane consumer goods with cultural images and illusions. Unsurprisingly, consumer spending is increasingly influenced by cultural associations and meanings of commodities people have found in the media and in various consumption facilities. At the same time, over the last two decades, some big corporations have radically changed their production strategy by focusing more on manufacturing the image—or, rather illusion—instead of the utility dimension of their products. In the most extreme case, it was believed that Nike, for example, had ceased to sell shoes, but were selling Nike itself. People who no longer consume the use-value of Nike's products started to buy the so-called Just Do It lifestyle. However, just like McDonald's hamburgers in Los Angeles and Yogyakarta mean different things, the image of Nike does not necessarily mean the same for the consumers in Jakarta, Surabaya and Medan. In fact, the sign-value of any commodity can be defined by consumers themselves. The role of the cultural image as constructed by the owner of a brand name, or advertisements in general, in shaping the cultural meanings and illusions of commodities was only one among many factors. How consumers perceive the origins of the commodity was equally important. Whether it was made in Indonesia, or, made overseas—and in what country—was always part of the construction of the sign-value. How consumer goods were associated with whom was also important.

One thing is for sure, the majority of Indonesian consumers, notwithstanding socioeconomic backgrounds, used consumption to construct and improve their appearance. Specific goods were put on in order to create certain impressions on their friends, colleagues and/or the common people they met on the street. This was even more so in the case of the new rich. They blatantly admitted that they spent a lot of money on their physical appearance. For them, the big brand commodities they possessed with passion, the expensive hobbies they loved, and the beautiful goods they collected were not for daily needs, but more for enhancing their self-image. The cultural signs and illusions attached to the images of commodities in advertisements provided much needed support in improving their self-image. One could easily notice through the images in the media and public venues that a good

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525 See Gerke (2000).
526 The Jakarta Post, 29 June 1997.
and enhanced self-image was largely associated with the illusion of being young, fit, beautiful and smart. As this was taken for granted, people competed to look smart, for example, by possessing the latest model of cellular phone. For their part, the big brand names such as Nokia and Sony Ericsson were in ceaseless contest to present their respective phones as the smartest one. Many consumers were also obsessed by the image of being young and fit. For the new rich, any sporty type car or motorcycle would enhance their image.

The power of consumer goods in reshaping one’s self-image was more than just the propagation of these illusions by images and signs. The HTI activist, Ita, argued that advertisements not only taught many Indonesian women that being beautiful was highly important, but also told them how being beautiful should be defined. She noticed that within the world of the media beauty was commonly represented by slimness and a white skin. Unsurprisingly many young women did whatever they could to be slim and to be white. Even, in one of the salafi group’s websites the issue of whitening one’s skin was hotly debated. This is ironic because the majority of female activists of this group wear not only the hijab, but also a veil. Yet, they did care about beautifying their skin. For Ita, the association of beauty and slimness was simply a media delusion. She insisted that there was a time when fatness was instead the sign of beauty. She concluded that these illusions were only meant to persuade consumers to spend more money on cosmetics.

At the same time, Indonesian consumers in general had their own illusion of self-image, relatively free from the intervention of the media and advertisements. Instead of adopting directly the cultural associations attached to the image of consumer goods by the media and advertisements, the Indonesian consumers invested their own construction of self-image on various commodities that they consumed. By and large, the illusion of being modern had often been the most important image in the rising consumer culture in Indonesia. While it could be associated with ideas such as progress, innovation and rationality, for many Indonesians a modern man is defined by what he wears. Benetton, Hammer, or, Levi’s would certainly do. Nokia and Sony were also very useful. A number of public

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527 Interview with Ita.
529 See Gerke (2000).
venues equally symbolised modernity. As reported by the *SWA* magazine, since the late 1990s, cafés had become a popular venue frequented by young teenagers who wanted to be seen modern.\(^{530}\)

Other than the illusion of being modern was the illusion of being a member of an elite. In the rising consumer culture in Indonesia, in order to be seen as, for example, a rich man, one would invest energy and money in perfecting one's outfits.\(^{531}\) The brand name articles mentioned above would surely help. For the new rich, these articles might be expensive, but their discretionary financial base made the price hardly a hindrance. For those from the lower classes, their level of income could prevent them from having a self-image of being a member of an elite. Yet, sharing commodities through the strategy of resource pooling argued by Gerke was the answer to their desire for *Nike* and *Levi's*.\(^{532}\)

However, there was another way to be looked elite through the consumption of expensive and luxurious commodities. It was not the price that mattered, but the association of specific commodities with national and international popular figures. The business woman discussed in the previous section was an interesting case.\(^{533}\) She was once on a trip to New York and stayed at one of the *Four Seasons* hotel’s president suites. She then realised that just before her visit the room had been rented by Sharon Stone. On another night she met Sylvester Stallone when she was having dinner in the hotel’s restaurant. The most unforgettable thing, for her, was not the price of this accommodation which was far beyond the reach of ordinary Indonesians, but the fact that she had shared similar facilities with stars such as Stone and Stallone. Because of sharing the same luxurious hotel, she felt as if she was at the same level socially with these movie stars and with other prominent figures like them. Similarly, the *McDonald’s* director in Indonesia, Bambang Rachmadi showed how proud he was to possess an F50 *Ferrari*.\(^{534}\) The car was very streamlined and extremely expensive, yet, that was not the reason for him to be so delighted. He explained that the F50 was a "*sedan langka*" (rare sedan). The *Ferrari* factory, he claimed, only produced 349 units of this type and he was the 77th owner. In Asia, he continued, there were only two F50 owners, him and the sultan of Brunei, Hassanal

\(^{530}\) Quoted in Kenichiro (2001: 502).

\(^{531}\) See Gerke (2000).

\(^{532}\) Gerke (2000: 147).


Bolkiah. It seemed that being at the same level with Bolkiah in terms of owning the same F50 was one of Rachmadi’s proudest moments.

It is important to note that to use consumption as a medium to accentuate one’s identity, the act of consuming commodities should be publicly visible. Consumption can be a declaration of identity if one’s friends, neighbours and people in public places generally witness what one eats and wears. This explains why the key characteristic of many fast-food restaurants in Indonesian large cities, for instance, is a wall of glass that encloses the main building. The design allows consumers to be seen in the restaurant and having an “international” and “modern” meal. As reported by Gerke, the consumers would often take the empty meal bag with them as they left the restaurant. The bag was to let their neighbours and others know where they had had their meals. It was through this kind of communication that the consumers in fast-food restaurants socially classified themselves.

THE INDONESIAN CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

The rise of consumer culture in Indonesia is better understood against the backdrop of the capitalist economic development in this country following Independence. The development had provided the socioeconomic basis for the rise of consumerism and the formation of the new rich. It is important to note, however, that real economic development with a significant effect on the emergence of consumer culture had just started in the late 1960s, which was around two decades after Independence had been marked by tensions and conflicts. This political turmoil culminated in 1965 when a failed revolution by PKI was crushed by a coalition of members of army, technocrats, businessmen, religious leaders, intellectuals, journalists, artists and students. Accompanying the rampant mass killing of those who were accused of being PKI members and sympathisers was the formation of the New Order. It was the New Order that rehabilitated and restructured the economy. It was based on a firm belief in the prominent role of capital accumulation in modernising the country and paved the way for development and growth for the next thirty years. However,

555 Gerke (2000).
development and growth is only one part of the story. The other part is about oppression, a wide social gap and misery.

The New Order inherited not only the political instability of the previous regime, but also a stagnant economy. In 1965 the inflation rate was 635 per cent; the budget deficit was around 14 per cent; the deficit in the balance of payments jumped to US$248 million and the value of exports slumped from US$924.4 million in 1956 to US$705.9 million in 1965.\footnote{Mas'oed (1989); Hill (2000).} Under the tutelage of liberal technocrats Indonesia underwent shock-treatment. Thanks to foreign support and political repression, which enabled the technocrats to implement the rehabilitation program without significant opposition from those who would suffer under the policies, the crisis was successfully neutralised and the economy was better prepared for further development. As one of the oil-rich countries, the dramatic increase of this commodity price in the early 1970s could only help the New Order to realise its dream of developing Indonesia into an industrialised nation. The capitalist economic development was, in fact, in full-speed. From the beginning the state had always played a significant role both directly by investing a huge amount of capital in a range of economic sectors through various state owned companies and indirectly by providing regulation and a legal framework for capital accumulation.\footnote{Robison (1987); Robison (1987); Hill (2000).}

In the mid 1980s the dramatic fall of the international oil price severely damaged Indonesian capitalism because the oil sector had previously contributed more than 60 per cent of the country's exports. The growth slackened, the balance of payments was devastated, state revenues ran into deficit and domestic savings dried up. The New Order was forced to restructure the economy and to pursue reform policies.\footnote{Hiariej (2003).} The most significant effect, however, was the decline of state direct involvement in capital accumulation. This paved the way for the private sector to emerge as the "new engine of development".\footnote{Hill (2000).} Indonesia soon recovered and the economy grew around 7 per cent annually. The manufacturing sector increasingly became prominent and its annual growth surpassed the economic growth.\footnote{Hill (2000).} In the second half of 1997 Indonesia was hit by another economic crisis. This time it was the financial meltdown that ruined the country's economy and politics. The financial
debacle provided more opportunities to restructure and reform the economy. Following the political demise of the most powerful figure in the New Order, Soeharto, the crisis led to a further decline of state participation and a significant increase of the private sector in economic development. Since the early 2000s, the most prominent state sectors have been either fully or partly privatised.

The size and scope of change brought about by the New Order capitalist development was extraordinary. Before the 1997-98 financial crisis the annual economic growth had been rarely less than 7 per cent. In the three decades since the 1970s, GDP had almost doubled. The dramatic transformation was more evident in the growing prominence of the industrial sector. In 1960, the contribution of agriculture to GDP was more than 50 per cent. Since the 1990s its share had sharply declined and constituted less than 20 per cent. In stark contrast was the manufacturing sector. In 1960 its contribution to GDP was less than 10 per cent, but in the next three decades its share increased dramatically. It was within this newly industrialised and relatively prosperous Indonesia, for the upper and middle classes in particular, that the consumer culture emerged.

**Consumer Culture and Capitalism**

Nevertheless, I by no means intend to exaggerate the impact of capitalism on the rise of consumer culture in Indonesia. My argument is that the New Order's capitalist development provided the necessary conditions that helped and accelerated the emergence of a consumer culture. Many Indonesians have used material things to demonstrate who they are for some time. However, capitalism significantly created a range of social infrastructure, facilities, tools, equipment and goods through which this cultural habit became not only visible, but also increasingly dominant. Therefore we could find a sort of birth date of the consumer culture in Indonesia which, I argue, was in the first half of the 1990s. This was the time when the New Order's capitalist development had reached the point where the wealth it produced allowed and gave more freedom to Indonesian consumers and, in particular, the new rich to celebrate consumption and to use consumption as a medium for communication. At the same

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time, the expansion of capitalist production started to depend on the act of consuming commodities other than its use-value. Through the strategy of promotion, packaging and advertisements, commodities became associated with spectacular and beautiful images and masked with cultural associations and illusions. The aim was to persuade consumers to consume for the sake of consuming more. The same strategy also encourages people to consume sign-value, instead of use-value. Hence, we could also witness the emerging culturalisation of things as a result of a constant attempt to accentuate the cultural image of consumer goods and to hide their utility dimension.

What was created by the New Order's capitalist development that led to the rise of consumer culture? Consumer culture only emerges in society where mass and modern consumption takes place. The modern mass-consumption is made possible, among other things, by the increase in consumer demand as a response to changes in capitalist production. These include the availability of consumer goods; different ways of purchasing things; different locations for pursuing consumption; as well as the growing importance of style, design and appearance of goods. In the case of economic modernisation in Indonesia, the capitalist development in the last four decades did lay the foundations for this production-led consumption, that consequently led to the acceleration of the consumer culture. The most important factor, as mentioned in the Introduction, is commodification. The sheer size and scope of commodification in the last forty years has indeed been extraordinary. The pace of industrialisation, especially in the manufacturing sector, has significantly increased the number and availability of consumer goods. Not only in large cities have people become more dependent on what is being sold in the market to survive their daily lives, but also increasingly in small towns and in the countryside where people used to rely partly on some sort of subsistence mode of production. It has become more and more common for the middle-class households in large cities, for example, to buy, rather than cook their own, meals. In other words they preferred to ask someone else to cook for them. It could be either a nearby warung (a traditional and relatively small restaurant), a fast-food restaurant, or, pembantu rumah tangga (PRT or household assistance). As they now did not have to do the hard work of cooking, the process of having a meal could be more fun and more open to various symbolic uses. Even the fundamentalists admitted to the growing importance of the

542 See, for example, Lury (1996).
supermarket in their life. They find it easy, handy and much more efficient to purchase their daily needs here.\textsuperscript{543}

The other important factor is consumption facilities. Closely related to the process of commodification, the facilities are public venues where consumption occurs, where people buy and consume commodified things, processes and social relations. This includes venues such as shopping malls, supermarkets, fast-food restaurants and cafés as well as amusement parks and tourist resorts. The growth of shopping centres in particular has been remarkable. Until the mid 1980s, shopping centres, including in the biggest cities, were hardly noticed. Jakarta, for instance, had less than ten malls, and each mall was relatively small as most of them occupied less than 25,000 square metres. However, the number has rapidly increased since the late 1980s. In the ten years between 1988 and 1997 at least twenty-nine shopping centres were built in Jakarta alone. Eleven of the new malls occupied more than 50,000 square metres and a few were more than 100,000 square metres.\textsuperscript{544} In the medium cities the growth was much more moderate. However, over the last decade five shopping centres in Yogyakarta, not including a couple of hyper-markets, have provided even more opportunity for the city consumers to enjoy and celebrate consumption with ease. The growth of fast-food restaurants and cafés has also been significant.\textsuperscript{545} The fast-food restaurants, in particular, seem to have accompanied the rapid increase in the number of shopping malls. Almost in every mall in the large cities one could find at least three of the most popular fast-food franchises: KFC, McDonald's and Pizza Hut. The café boom has been the most recent phenomenon. While in Jakarta it had started to grow in the early 1990s, in other major cities the number of cafés expanded swiftly in the 2000s.

Finally, it is also important to note the emerging sign of culturalisation of commodities. I use this term to describe a process through which the cultural images of consumer goods are accentuated. At first, beautiful and fascinating pictures, displays and spectacles accompany the introduction and promotion of various consumer goods. Then, cultural meanings, values, signs and illusions—the sign-value in short—attached to the image of commodities are not only strongly emphasised, but also deliberately manufactured to hide the real and mundane

\textsuperscript{543} Interview with Oni; group discussions with the MMI's female activists.

\textsuperscript{544} Kenichiro (2001); Priyono (1999).

\textsuperscript{545} See Kenichiro (2001).
function of the daily commodities—the use-value so to speak. Within the story of the New Order's economic development, the growing importance of appearance, style and design of consumer goods indicated the culturalisation process. The process seemed to have started in the early 1990s. The media boom, particularly the emergence of several private TV channels, during the same period, I argue, significantly influenced the production-led consumption. Television basically turned into a new public space—which could be present in private—through which consumer goods were introduced and promoted. In fact, the new private TV channels were crucial in helping consumer goods to saturate the everyday life of many Indonesians with their cultural images and signs which were largely manipulating.

At the same time, the sudden availability of a large amount and wide variety of consumer goods rendered the new space created by the media boom as the most important arena of competition. However, the competition between different types and models of commodities was no longer about substantial content and qualities, or different functions and abilities, of respective goods. It was more about style, design and appearance. As the images of consumer goods became more important, the competition between two similar items produced by two different brand names became more a competition between physical strength and smartness, exotica and modernity, or, romance and rationality.

The media boom had its own logic. Even though the capitalist development in Indonesia, especially following the mid 1980s economic reforms, significantly contributed to the rapid growth of the media industry, factors other than the direct effect of capitalism, such as cultural globalisation and political openness, also played important roles.\textsuperscript{546} For me, the most important thing about the media boom in the 1990s, and later in the 2000s following Soeharto's resignation, was that it allowed promotions and advertisements of consumer goods on an unprecedented scale. Before it was banned by the New Order's political regime, advertising on television, for example, only existed on the TV channel owned by the state. Now, it was not only allowed, but seemed to dominate TV programs. The main distinction between the advertising which used to be on the state's TV and the one on the current private TV stations, however, was that promotion of commodities was no longer stuck within the few seconds slot available during specific programs such as news, movies, quiz

\textsuperscript{546} See, for example, Sen and Hill (2000).
shows or sinetron. In recent years, we can easily see how a significant number of TV programs, particularly the entertainment-related shows, have turned into advertisements themselves. In these specific TV shows, one sees not only the singer, but also the brand name of a specific commodity that allows the show to happen. In the music entertainment program sponsored by the cigarette, Sampoerna A Mild, on a private TV channel an intriguing question arises: “which one is the real star, the musician or the cigarette?”^547

We should bear in mind the importance of the mid 1980s period of the New Order’s capitalist development for the rise of the consumer culture in Indonesia. I have mentioned above that in this period Indonesia was hit by the fall of the international oil price which dried up state revenues. The state was forced to reform policies and to be more open to international capital inflows. The most crucial effect was that the state had to withdraw from direct involvement in economic development, sell part or all of its entire shares in various state owned corporations and allow the private sector to take on more investment and industrialisation. This all ended up in the emergence of the private sector as the “new engine” of development. The private-led development brought significant implications for the production-led consumption. Different from the state-led development of the 1970s when industrialisation focused more on producing capital and intermediate goods, the private sector invested more money in producing consumer goods. This sector also gave more attention to social and physical infrastructure and the property sector. Together with the release on imports and foreign capital inflows, the private-led development increased the number, variety and availability of consumer goods, created more consumption facilities and provided the stimulus for the growing importance of style, design and appearance of commodities. The private-led development also contributed significantly to the emergence of the new rich. As will be discussed shortly, it created investment and job opportunities that were to result in enlarging the size of the Indonesian upper and middle classes.

^547 See, for example, the broadcast of this type of music entertainment on RCTI.
Wealth generated from three decades of capitalist economic development was reflected not only in the mushrooming skyscrapers, shopping malls and housing estates, but also in the increasing number of people who could be categorised as upper and middle class. The new rich earned more than they needed for daily survival and, therefore, had more freedom to celebrate and play with consumption. It was reported that in the mid 1990s the consumer spending of these classes constituted more than 30 per cent of national income. They also made use of no less than Rp21 trillion of bank credit for consumption.

When the New Order began economic modernisation in the late 1960s, the size of the upper and middle classes was a tiny fraction of the wealthy, modern and urbanite social groups. After three decades of growth and industrialisation the number did increase dramatically, though remained relatively small and constituted less than 20 per cent of the population. During the 1970s and the early 1980s, the growth of these classes was moderate. The state's pervasive involvement in economic development created the public sector as the most reliable path towards higher social and economic status. However, this sector was strongly dominated by civilian and military officials. Unsurprisingly it only provided a narrow access for non-state individuals and groups to enjoy the fruits of the early economic growth. The exception was a few capitalists who benefited from the network of political patronage. In the mid 1980s this condition changed. The oil shock forced the state to withdraw from direct and extensive participation in economic development and to allow the private sector to assume a significant role in promoting growth and industrialisation. The private-led development in effect enlarged the size of the capitalist class. A significant number of the new capitalists were politically connected to the New Order's prominent figures, either through blood, or, bribery. They took advantage of reforms such as privatisation of fruitful sectors such as transportation and the media. The private-led development also increased the number in the middle class. It expanded job opportunities outside the public sector

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549 Priyono (1999).
552 Hiariej (2003).
553 See Robison (1997); Hiariej (2003).
for skilled managerial, technical and sales staff as well as professional financial and legal experts. In the mid 1990s Indonesia witnessed the boom of the new rich.\textsuperscript{554}

As mentioned in the preceding pages, the new rich were widely seen as politically passive at best and less-progressive at worst.\textsuperscript{555} They commonly restrained themselves from being directly involved in political activities. They tended to prefer gradual and moderate political change if it was possible and to maintain the current socio-political order if it was too risky. For them, economic welfare seemed to always come first before democracy and civil liberty. It was understandable that they were widely accused of being too greedy, selfish and individualist, too preoccupied with material things and lifestyles and too socially insensitive. As noted before, their huge incomes then easily resulted in excessive consumerism. Part of this claim is true if we consider the path through which the new rich emerged. They benefitted the most from the New Order’s capitalist development, which achieved remarkable economic growth and industrialisation through harsh political oppression. Their very apolitical attitude was in fact a significant political support to the New Order regime that created, nurtured and produced them. Nevertheless, not all upper and middle classes were politically inactive and conservative. Some fractions of these classes, for example, were heavily involved in the opposition that led to Soeharto’s fall. There were also elements of radicals and revolutionaries who since the late 1980s had worked with peasant and labour movements in the country.

However, I am more concerned with their excessive consumerism that is seen as reflecting their apolitical stance. As also been noted by a number of scholars,\textsuperscript{556} I argue that it is instead through their excessive consumerism that we might understand what and how politics could have meaning for them. To begin with, the very newness of the new rich could be significantly political. The newness implies that they were still in the process of being part of the rich. It meant that their existence within the group remained fragile and yet to be fully acknowledged. The established faction within the upper and middle classes might feel uncomfortable with the newcomers and find some way or another to maintain the social distance that they had before. For their part, the new rich wanted to assure others that they were no longer part of the large group of Indonesian poor. They also knew that they

\textsuperscript{554} See Heryanto (1999).
\textsuperscript{555} See Priyono (1999); Forum Keadilan, special edition, April 1996; Kompas, 30 September 1996.
\textsuperscript{556} See Young (1999); Heryanto (1999).
had to learn a lot of new things and use symbols and various social tokens. Consumerism in this sense accentuated their collective existence. It was the best way for them to show off publicly how much money they possessed and how their new financial power had taken them to a new social status.

Furthermore, the new rich could use the same excessive consumerism to challenge the position of the old members of the upper and middle classes and to assert their own domination. A wide range of consumer goods masked with cultural images and illusions provided them with new resources. In fact, what they wore and ate and to which place they went and spent their leisure time had been increasingly imitated by the majority of Indonesians. They, together with artists and celebrities, were widely seen as the trend-setters. At this point, it is interesting to note how the new rich acquired domination not through politics in a conventional sense, through political parties, parliament and elections, for example, but through the politics of consumerism. They used their spending sprees to distance themselves from the lower class, to challenge the old members of the upper and middle classes and to build and enhance their domination in society.

The politics of consumerism could also be seen from another point of view. Reportedly, a large number of new rich were born after the 1950s. In the mid 1990s the so-called Indonesian yuppie was commonly recognised as young professional, wealthy and educated. It seemed that they spent most of their adult life, as previously mentioned, within the increasingly global cultural milieu that emphasised the celebration of life. Their parents and grandparents, as well as the old upper and middle classes, might have lived in an era when the dominating established values, either from religion, or, from “High Javanese Culture”, stressed the value of discipline and control of the body and everyday life. Within the historical period of the new rich adult life, on the contrary, the new culture tended to portray discipline and control as old-fashioned. Nothing was wrong with bodily pleasure and having more fun in life. After all, they fully had the right to enjoy life with all the discretionary financial power at their disposal. Being happy and remaining so, for the new rich, was as significant as working hard to earn more money. And happiness, I have demonstrated before, could mean spending a large amount of money, in order

557 See Gerke (2000); Kenichiro (2001). See also Young (1999); Heryanto (1999).
558 The Jakarta Post, 29 June 1997.
559 Wardhana and Barus (1998).
to possess cellular phones, cars, clothing and yachts. In this respect the excessive consumerism was no different to the liberation process. It was an attempt to free one’s self form any type of regulating values and norms and to allow the body to enjoy the pleasure.

The new rich grew under a political regime that was repressive. Even though they might support the regime for the political stability it created which was conducive to a good “business-climate” and, hence, for investments and growth, repression could also hurt. Harsh oppression of political opponents, limitation on freedom of expression, intimidation and illegal arrest were among the most favourite forms of repression conducted by the New Order. But repression could equally work directly on the body through ideological means. In the name of (economic) “development”, it was the habit of the New Order to persuade Indonesians to work and study hard; to put one’s self, one’s material interests and personal pleasures, after one’s obligation to the state and the community; to be disciplined and obey the rules; and to have a simple life.\textsuperscript{560} On the one hand, the new rich might have little problem with the former for it was more like a necessary evil for a successful economic modernisation through which they benefited the most. On the other hand, they hardly escaped the latter form of repression. Instead, they grew within a culture of self-restraint and discipline officially promoted by the political regime they supported. It was this official culture that was under serious challenge by the increasing alternative one that celebrated life and allowed more freedom of the body. Here we could say that the excessive consumerism was perhaps the price of political repression. It was through the celebration and the play of consumption they could free themselves from the virtue of discipline and control officially preached by the regime.

In this respect, the rising consumer culture, to a very important extent, both accentuates the emergence of the new rich and, more importantly, the domination of this class. The resistance against consumer culture can hardly be understood without taking this domination into consideration. In the next chapter, I will show how the fundamentalists’ response to these dangerous social ills is strongly influenced by the fact that they are not on the dominating side of class division within current Indonesian society.

\textsuperscript{560} From my own experience these series of regulations of the body through ideological means could easily be found in school rules.
To sum up, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia is better portrayed as a form of resistance against the rising consumer culture in the country. I have demonstrated that, to explain the resistance, we should at first understand the way the activists take the overproduction of images and signs that saturate the fabric of Indonesian everyday life as the real world of dangerous trends, immorality and the hedonism that they worry about. It is no longer seen as imagery and fantasy because pictures and displays found in the media and in the public venues have the power to control and dominate the human mind and, in the process, socialise and normalise values and behaviour. These seductive spectacles also accentuate the importance of appearance, style and self-presentation at the expense of any substantial content and qualities that might hide deep inside one's self. The saturating images and signs represent the rise of consumer culture in Indonesia. It is a logical consequence of the rapid increase in the production of attractions and spectacles associated with the introduction and promotion of commodities. It is also largely part of the growing prominence of sign-value, the cultural associations and illusions attached to consumer goods. In Indonesia two factors give rise to consumer culture: consumerism and the formation of the new rich.

The capitalist development pursued by the New Order played an important role in the emergence of consumerism. Through the process of commodification, it increased significantly the availability of a wide range of consumer goods and created various types of consumption facilities. This led to the importance of advertisements and promotion, on the one hand, and appearance, style and packaging, on the other. Capitalist development also produced the new rich, who rely on their excessive consumerism to make sense of who they are, to challenge the established elite and to imprint their own domination, and to oppose any form of discipline and control of the body.
This chapter focuses on two particular questions. First, how do the fundamentalists resist the rising consumer culture that presents to them through the haunting images? Second, how exactly do capitalism and the rising consumer culture provoke the fundamentalists' resistance? I have previously argued that, to protect themselves from dangerous trends, immorality and a hedonistic lifestyle, the activists allow their body to be strictly regulated. In this chapter I will show that discipline and control help them further to resist these social ills by reclaiming their life from the consumer culture occupation. They do this by “sacralising” everyday life in place of celebrating and playing with commodities. I understand the “sacralisation” of everyday life to be an attempt to transform the mundane daily practices into the sacred sphere. The simple activity of eating, for example, is no longer a matter of serving one's basic need, let alone a celebration of having a meal, but a daily ritual. It is a ritual because specific Islamic values and norms are attached to the very act of eating. There is a strict prohibition and limitation on what to eat. There is also a divinely justified guideline on how to eat correctly. Eating in fact becomes an integral part of one's obligation to worship Allah. One only eats in the name of Allah and eating is to demonstrate how one is grateful for His Blessings.

In this regard, reclaiming everyday life might look like a withdrawal from the modern world, the place where the consumer culture is located. It seems to support the argument that tends to associate Islamic fundamentalism with a retreat to traditionalism. However, regulation of the body provides the activists with the freedom and certainty they are longing for, the “sacralisation” frees their everyday life from being controlled by consumer culture and, at the same time, creates more certainty by providing directions and goals in life. More importantly, as I have indicated in the Introduction, the reclaiming helps the activists to live with the rising consumer culture. It gives them strategies to deal with and, even, to appropriate various elements of consumer culture. It is hence ironic that, instead of radical transformation, the resistance in the form of reclaiming tends to preserve the existing dominant order.
I argue that the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia reflects some sort of contradiction within the capitalist development in this country. The resistance informs us that not everyone benefits from the consumer culture and/or enjoys it on the same terms. Based on Marxist conventional analysis, income can be easily seen as the source of contradiction. For the poor the rising consumer culture is a luxury that is hardly affordable. Therefore, the logic behind the rejection of the consumer culture lies within the class division originating in the process of production. The resistance is part of a general response to the issues of exploitation, misery and poverty. Even though income and the production-based class division are crucial, I have argued in the Introduction that the consumer culture has its own logic of contradiction. The rising consumer culture contributes significantly to the problems of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment. One rejects the celebrating and playing with commodities because one wants to save one's uniqueness and one's autonomy. If the oppression of consumer culture appears in the form of seduction springing from the saturating images and signs, we might say that the contradiction is not only between the poor and the rich, but also between those who are strongly seduced and those who are not or less seduced. Nevertheless, the production-based class division remains significant. In fact, the way people react to the colonising consumer culture depends on their position within the class division.

In the following section I will discuss the fundamentalists' attempt to reclaim their everyday life. I will show how this attempt can be seen as a form of resistance against the rising consumer culture. Then, I will sketch the class tensions within Indonesian capitalism and the rising consumer culture. My aim is to demonstrate that the combination of exploitation, misery and poverty, on the one hand, and oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment, on the other, are important foundations through which we can understand their resistance.

TURNING THE CONSUMER CULTURE UP-SIDE-DOWN

The Islamic fundamentalism discussed in this project could be easily seen as the otherness or opposite of the rising consumer culture. In the place of celebrating and playing with life, the fundamentalists emphasised the virtue of discipline and control. Style, appearance and aestheticisation were also negated and were substituted with a
regulated body and asceticism. This simple play of negation is useful as it accentuates some correlations between the two. However, it is hardly sufficient because the negation cannot explain why Islamic fundamentalism emerges in the first place. It also fails to tell exactly how the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism has anything to do with the rising consumer culture. At this point, it is important to understand how the consumer culture could be a real threat from the Islamic fundamentalists’ point of view.

Clearly, the consumer culture is dangerous because it could create a sort of cultural chaos. It tends to challenge and discard established values and norms. What is challenged and, then, rejected is discipline and control of the body and everyday life, as the consumer culture promotes the importance of having fun and more pleasure in life. This could be frightening for the fundamentalists because established values and norms are a matter of order and certainty. People discover meanings and goals that give their life clear and right directions and, hence, make it feel more secure. As already discussed, the activists’ main concern was the certainty in life, of having an original, true and meaningful life. The rising consumer culture just did the opposite. It renders obsolete and, in the process, discards the people’s source of meaning and uniqueness. The bid for the implementation of shari’a is an attempt to reclaim the obsolete and discarded sense of substance and autonomy. This became more urgent since the new values and norms brought about by the consumer culture, the importance of immediate satisfaction and bodily pleasure, for example, was seen as untenable. They thought that it only turned their life into a more miserable journey.

Perhaps, the most alarming aspect is the fact that the consumer culture, especially in the major cities, has started to dominate people’s everyday life. It might be originally attached to the new rich, but with the power of the media and the attractiveness of advertisements and places such as shopping malls, more and more Indonesians, regardless of class, ethnic and religious background, seem to have fallen under its spell. The rising consumer culture is threatening not because it discards established values and makes substantial content and qualities irrelevant, but more significantly because it makes the act of denouncing established values as highly acceptable and desirable. The rising consumer culture has the power to influence and control, so to speak. I have mentioned several times before, that apart from certainty, the activists of this movement were also deeply concerned with freedom, autonomy and authenticity. Many of them decided to join the movement because they thought
that by doing this they could free themselves from being dominated and oppressed by various kinds of evil, whether it was called secularism, capitalism, materialism, or, Western culture. The rising consumer culture was just the opposite of what they were trying to achieve.

Nevertheless, the fundamentalists’ response to the rising consumer culture is not that simple. The activists did express significant rejection of the growing consumerism, but they hardly spoke of the concept. The activists were more deeply concerned with the ruling trends, the growing immorality and the popularity of hedonistic lifestyles. The so-called enemies of Islam, particularly the West, were often accused of being behind all these social ills. The West was commonly seen as conspiring against the Muslims both through military means and, more increasingly, particularly in the case of Indonesia, through cultural means such as ideology (secularism, liberalism, capitalism, democracy, pluralism, feminism and so on), lifestyles and fashions. I use the term consumer culture to describe and refer to the current socio-cultural context in which, I argue, activists see the problems of trends in lifestyles, immorality and hedonism originating. The consumer culture also represents the increasing dominant values and norms, especially in the major cities that, I believe, have been mistaken by the fundamentalists for the West as conspiring to culturally destroy Indonesian Muslims. It seems to me that their anger toward the social ills looks more like an expression of anxiety, of being oppressed, controlled and dominated by something more powerful than themselves that they are yet to know more accurately than simply the enemies of Islam. Under these circumstances, how can we understand the fundamentalists’ response to the rising consumer culture?

I argue that the fundamentalists’ response was largely part of the attempt to reclaim their everyday life from being dominated by these social ills. Reclaiming means that the activists not only rejected these social ills, but also tried to regain their control and meaning of their everyday life. One way of doing that was the struggle for Islamic identity. As discussed in chapter 4, the resistance and the making of boundaries implied by the struggle resulted in the formation of identity space. This was a sterilised space, was supposedly free from any traces of social ills, through which the fundamentalists produced their own subject and remade their own self. This same place was also the starting point through which the activists attempted to recapture their own life, which had been severely contaminated by the ruling trends, the growing immorality and the prevalent hedonism. The way they reacted to the
consumer culture in this regard is evident in the new life navigated by these radical Muslims who continue to be in the process of learning and becoming fundamentalist. The practice of a new life involved behaving in the same way whenever they were, regardless of whether they were in pesantren, at home, on a city bus, or, even, in a shopping mall. The new life, as will be explained soon, is more a matter of how they have new meaning and understanding of what life—including the one they already navigated before joining the movement—should be.

But, how exactly was the new life, together with the new identity, subjectivity and self, a response to the consumer culture? To answer this question I am inspired by the seminal work of Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, particularly on the concept of “carnivalesque”. Bakhtin studies the medieval European popular culture and its influence on Rabelais. His main intention is to develop the concept of carnivalesque and use it to describe the roles of festive rituals such as carnivals, comic shows and popular feats in inverting the official culture. For example, the carnival celebrates sexual promiscuity, fattening food and intoxicating drink. The celebration indicates that this festive ritual is more preoccupied with the material body as opposed to the ideal, classical and official body of beauty, symmetric and elevated. In fact, the carnival and the material body represent the otherness which is negated within the formation of the cultural norms of society. However, carnivalesque is more than just the otherness to official discourse. The important thing for me, as put by Stallybrass and White, is that “carnival...is both a populist utopian vision of the world seen from below and a festive critique, through the inversion of hierarchy, of the ‘high’ culture.” Bakhtin himself insists that “…carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth of the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions.” In other words, the culture of carnivalesque, very often associated with the market and the fair, not only turns the social order up-side-down, but also resists oppressions and constraints put by the official and dominant culture on individuals.

Following the translation of Bakhtin into English, carnivalesque emerged as an attractive model and analytical category, especially in cultural studies. I am more
interested, however, in the idea of resisting the official culture by turning it on its head. I find the idea very helpful in describing how the process of becoming an Islamic fundamentalist can also be seen as a form of resisting and inverting the increasingly dominating consumer culture. However, the conflict here is not between the popular/low culture and the official/high culture. The tensions are instead between Islam as interpreted and produced by the fundamentalists and the rising consumer culture. Interestingly, one could argue that the emergence of the consumer culture is itself an outcome of a cultural process through which traditional values and norms such as religion is mocked and inverted.\(^{563}\) Perhaps it happens during those times when the religion is the official and dominant culture. One might wonder whether it is the time for traditional values and norms to adopt the carnivalesque, when the consumer culture that used to be part of the subordinated and the unofficial starts to represent the social order.

In fact, the production of identity, either through discursive practices, Islamic fashion or physical places, is politically crucial in itself. Its existence was a real challenge to the consumer culture, and challenging could mean various things. The presence of the hijab, for example, quite similar to theatrical performances in the carnival, is destabilising and disrupts the dominant culture for a couple of reasons. Above all, the hijab represents the disciplined body as opposed to the liberated body. It mocks and ridicules the beautification of the body and the importance of self-presentation by being preoccupied with asceticism, and instead emphasises the centrality of faith. More importantly, the hijab tells us that a world other than the one already conquered by the consumer culture still exists and remains possible. There is a genuine alternative to type of body being projected by advertisements. At the same time the hijab accentuates the limits of consumer culture. Its power to control and dominate seems to have significantly failed to touch the body of the fundamentalist women. And those who wore the hijab, I have previously demonstrated, did celebrate freedom and liberation from the established order created by the domination of trends in lifestyles, immorality and hedonism in everyday life.

Nevertheless, critics have long been sceptical of the power of the carnivalesque to transform the oppressive social order that it wants to challenge. It has been widely argued that carnivalesque is more a festive celebration than political

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\(^{563}\) See, for example, Featherstone (1991a; 1991b).
criticism and is often licensed by the official authority, which seems to allow a restrictive space of protest and liberation, so that it can establish a firmer grip on the people. The Islamic fundamentalism proves the merit of this scepticism. Although they seem to have inverted trends, immorality and hedonism and replaced these social ills with Islam, the new life pursued by the activists ironically paves the way for them to touch upon and enjoy some parts of the consumer culture. As I will explain later, the new identity, subjectivity and self equally help them to appropriate what they seem to have strongly rejected. In the process, the fundamentalists, in my view, serve and enhance the rising consumer culture. This is perhaps mostly evident in the issue of style and image of the person. The Muslim dress, for instance, apparently represents the fundamentalists’ rejection of the importance of style and appearance strongly and excessively promoted by the consumer culture. Yet, the hijab also tells us vividly that the activists hardly reject the importance of physical appearance and just want to have the one which is Islamic and/or in accordance with Islamic teachings. Here, they by no means challenge the consumer culture preoccupation with style and image. They are absorbed by this preoccupation and, in effect, support it, as they are also involved in the aestheticisation of body and self. The only differences are two. First, the hijab provides them with a sense of control and certainty, as if they have autonomy in producing their own self-image within the image-saturated everyday life. The second is the form of style in which the consumer culture is flawed mainly because it has promoted an incorrect—or they would say unislamic—fashion style.

The Sacralisation of Everyday Life

How did the activists of this movement reclaim their own everyday life? The reclaiming was a matter of how the fundamentalists—now with the new identity, subjectivity and self—redefined the meaning of life according to certain values and norms. The outcome was a new perception of how one should treat one’s own life and a new understanding of what life is meant to be. More importantly the redefined meaning was the deep structure that gives life some stability and order for a certain

564 The critics of carnivalesque are listed in Stallybrass and White (1986: 12-7)
period of time. It also provided a life with pure qualities and turned life into a medium through which some substance materialised. In addition, certainty and substance created a sense of control. As they often told me, everything in life, from waking-up in the morning to sleeping at night was always within the reach of their \textit{niat} (intention). The everyday life was not happening because of something other than their intention to preserve specific values and goals.

Since they always associated oppression and domination with any sort of unislamic elements, the reclaiming in this sense was purification. Prior to the involvement with the movement the activist regarded their life as full of sin.\textsuperscript{565} This unholy life was controlled by Satan, which was called by its various contemporary nicknames such as liberalism, materialism and hedonism. The reclaiming was a process to cleanse one's contaminated life. It is achieved during the course of inverting the dominant trends in lifestyles, the immoral conduct and hedonism by placing greater emphasis on discipline, control, prohibition and limitation. This range of regulatory practices was, on the one hand, a carnivalesque sort of turning of the world outside the movement. I am fully aware that the term carnivalesque might be problematic. However, what I find useful is the way carnivalesque is portrayed as a form of resistance to the official and dominant culture.\textsuperscript{566} In this sense, \textit{hijab}, for instance, is not carnivalesque, which tends to be on the short term basis and to be wild. But surely, it is a form of resistance by turning its outside world up-side-down.

On the other hand, it was also like a passage of rituals associated with life changes.\textsuperscript{567} The regulatory practices were to separate the activists from the society where contamination (trends, immorality and hedonism) originated and to remove any previous identity attached to the old unholy life. Becoming involved with the movement was then hardly different from a passage from unislamic space to more Islamic one. As a consequence the reclaiming is nothing more than an attempt to turn one's everyday life into a sacred sphere. Religiosity ceased to be confined within such rituals as the daily prayer and the fasting during \textit{Ramadhan}. Every single thing in life, every move, act and speech, became \textit{ibadah}. In this sense, the reclaiming was nothing more than the sacralisation of everyday life.

\textsuperscript{565} Interviews with Desti, Dian, Doriman, Nopri, Mamat, Yoyok, Hasyim, Cahidar and Lukman; group discussion with the FPI's male activists.
\textsuperscript{566} Bakhtin (1984). See also Stallybrass and White (1986); Featherstone (1991a).
\textsuperscript{567} See, for example, the work of Turner, \textit{The Centre Out There: Pilgrim's Goal}, quoted in Hetherington (1998: 107, 110-3).
The sacralisation can be seen in the way the fundamentalists commonly redefined life as a pilgrimage, a sort of holy path to the life after death.\(^{568}\) The life here and now was not the real one and only a tool—which very often required hard work—to achieve the real happiness. The hereafter was more important and the place where one would find the eternal life. Every human, claimed Awwas, including the most evil one, wants to spend the afterlife in paradise where the real happiness rules.\(^{569}\) However, he insisted, heaven is only for those who have *miftahul jannah* (an Arabic term for the key of paradise) and *shari‘a* is the one and only key. With *shari‘a* life was redefined as an enterprise of abdication to Allah. It means that Muslims must follow His orders without either reasoning or reservation. What exactly the divine orders might be are a matter of contention as different Muslims, for sure, have different understandings. But for the fundamentalists the meaning of *shari‘a* was as clear as their own interpretation.\(^{570}\)

This by no means implied that the life here and now was irrelevant from the fundamentalists’ point of view. On the contrary, human beings are blessed by Allah with reason, science, wealth and health so that one is able to undertake good deeds as much as possible during one’s time in the world. The good deeds help one to pay the entrance fee to life in heaven. Therefore, it was extremely useless to indulge in this unoriginal worldly life,\(^{571}\) which was, I argue, propagated by the rising consumer culture. Despite painful regulations, prohibitions and limitations, one was better prepared for the life after death. After all, life is relatively short. Using a Javanese proverb, Wahyuddin insisted that life is nothing more than a short stop to have a drink. He did not understand why so many Indonesian Muslims wasted this limited, but precious, time to watch movies, frequent shopping malls or accumulate wealth, instead of *zikir* (remembering Allah by mentioning and praising Him), *sholat* and *jihad*. He believed that they would be later sorry for this wasted life as it could not save them from the torture in hell.\(^{572}\)

Unsurprisingly, the activists found the life here in the world as more complicated than it really was. Reflecting the feeling of being controlled and dominated, they saw the majority of Muslims nowadays as living under non-Islamic

\(^{568}\) Interviews with Ba‘asyir, Wahyuddin, Farid, Safruddin and Yusanto.
\(^{569}\) Awwas (2005a: 33-4).
\(^{570}\) Awwas (2005a: 34-5)
\(^{571}\) See *Risalah Mujahidin*, June 2007.
\(^{572}\) Interview with Wahyuddin.
rules. They lacked authoritative and divinely justified guidance on how to navigate life. Hence, how could one accumulate good deeds and be sure that one would reach heaven if there was no guidance. Instead, Muslims' lives had been largely structured by non-Islamic teachings. They had increasingly depended more on this illegitimate guidance to engage in interchanges with their material surroundings and to have symbolic exchanges with their fellow human beings. The whole Muslim life was probably on the bad, wrong and unislamic side. And if this indicated the scale of contamination, reclaiming the everyday life certainly needed a huge purification effort. However this heavily contaminated life could not just be abandoned. The fundamentalists admitted that Muslims had lived this life for generations. Few aspects were found useful and not all things, relations and processes were bad in themselves even though they existed under non-Islamic rules. The reclaiming in this regard required not only correct guidance, but also creativity. The creativity in particular could help the activists to take the few good things and processes out of this contaminated life.

At this stage, it is important to understand how the fundamentalists used Islam as a religion to help them in dealing with the rising consumer culture. To explain this, allow me to start by arguing that religion is an admission of human insufficiency. Humans need religion because they believe there are things bigger, stronger and more invincible which are beyond their control. These transcendental things represent domination, uncertainty and insecurity, the sphere which is out of the reach of the best human mind to comprehend. The presence of religion is crucial because it helps humans to have some understanding of—and, hence, more certainty of—this uncertain area of life. Traditionally, death is the transcendental thing. Religion is hence more preoccupied with the questions of death and the life hereafter. However, for the fundamentalists, death is no longer the uncontrollable and uncertain area. This is not because the technological progress in the area of health and medicine has made death more predictable; but because they know for sure that everyone will die and death is nothing more than a short interval before the eternal life in the hereafter. And the life after death, as discussed in the previous chapters, is comprehensible. It consists of paradise or hell and is within the reach of all humans. Even though Allah has the final word, they strongly believe that humans are blessed

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574 Bauman (1998b).
with all the power they need to shape their own fate and to decide whether they will end up in unimaginable happiness in paradise or in eternal horror in hell.

The transcendental on the other hand is more about the life before death. The life here in the world is more complicated and is becoming less understandable. The scale of change and technological development, for example, often leaves humans with less power to control and to make a reasonable sense of what is really going on. But the problem, for the fundamentalists, was not only in material progress and modernisation. They were more concerned with the fact that the majority of Indonesians nowadays live in an era of rapid change of cultural values and norms, which I argue, have been brought about by the rising consumer culture. They lacked authoritative and divinely justified guidance to navigate life with a sense of autonomy and some certainty. Hence, how could one amass good deeds and be sure that one would be on the right direction to a meaningful life if there was no guidance on good and bad, right and wrong, and Islamic and unislamic.

Islam was used by this radical Muslim group to deal with these circumstances. It provided them with the wit and muscle to have a closer grip on this worldly uncertainty. Islam was to help them ensure that they were on the right path on their pilgrimage to the most meaningful and eternal life. As a consequence, the fundamentalists treated Islam more as a manual sort of “how to navigate one’s life”. Through their interpretation of the meaning of shari’a, Islam was turned into the primary source of detailed and specific guidance on how to use things, how to engage in social relations and how to spend daily life. This materialised, for example, in a number of “Islam for beginners” articles on websites, in magazines, bulletins and leaflets. At the centre of this constructed divine life manual is an attempt to negate the rising consumer culture by promoting discipline and control in opposition to celebration and play. It should be remembered that the fundamentalists were not alone in turning the everyday life into a sacred sphere. The Muslims in general also tended to believe that their mundane life could be related, at least indirectly, to the fulfilment of values and norms enlisted in Al-Qur’an and hadith. The main difference was that the activists attempted to transform the everyday life into a rigid and tightly structured Islamic ritual similar to the daily prayer and the fasting.

The way their interpretation of shari’a produced Islam as a sort of life manual can be seen in various ways. Above all, as insisted by Yusanto, the Islamic world caliphate he was fighting for was only a medium, and not the goal, through which
Islamic law could be implemented. With the law, he argued, Muslims could easily purify their contaminated everyday life and turn it into a sacred space through which their entire life was nothing more than a constant dedication to Allah’s rule.\textsuperscript{575} The Islamic law, for Yusanto and his fellow fundamentalists, was largely based on the rules that permitted and forbade Muslims to use or engage in a wide range of activities. Specifically, it comprised at least five different rules: \textit{wajib}, \textit{sunat}, \textit{mubah}, \textit{mehruh} and \textit{haram}.\textsuperscript{576} These rules were highly important because they allowed Muslims to restructure their life according to certain meanings and goals. In practice, the notion of Islamic law turned Islam into a divine manual for daily activities such as how to have meal, how to sleep, how to take a bath, how to dress and, even, how to have sex.\textsuperscript{577} Islam, the activists stated, taught them how to accumulate wealth and spend the money.\textsuperscript{578} There was also guidance on how to be a leader, to be a father and a mother and to be a mujtahid (Islamic scholar).\textsuperscript{579} In the manual for having a meal, for example, the fundamentalists believed that Islam ordered them to sit while eating, to use the right hand, to start eating the meal located at the edge of plate first, and to wash hands before eating.

Furthermore, Islam was also reinvented as a primary source through which the activists could know for sure the legality or illegality of new things found in modern life which were rarely mentioned literally in Al-Qur’an and had never existed in Islamic history. In fact, this was one of the most popular issues discussed in several websites published by the salafi group. Two of the websites, www.asysyariah.com and www.darussalaf.org, not necessarily accessed by the users from within the group only, often became an online forum for debate, consultation and fatwa on issues such as tattoos, skin whitening cosmetics, hair painting, perfume, drugs, rock music, western fast food, shopping malls, test tube babies and pirating computer software. For HTI, the new things that required Islamic legal status also included currency, bank interest, the stock exchange and financial markets.\textsuperscript{580} Awwas claimed that it was his duty as well as that of his fellow activists to respond quickly and provide Islamic legal status for these new issues. This would prove, he

\textsuperscript{575} Interview with Yusanto; \textit{Al-Wa’ie}, March 2004: 91.
\textsuperscript{576} Interviews with Farid, Wahyuddin, Safruddin and Ba‘asyir.
\textsuperscript{578} \textit{Risalah Mujahidin}, February 2007: 77-81.
\textsuperscript{579} Awwas (1999); Rahman, A.M.I.A (2006); \textit{Risalah Mujahidin}, May 2007
\textsuperscript{580} Based on interviews with several HTI activists in Yogyakarta.
said, that Islam was not an old and out-of-date way of life as it was capable of coping with the latest issues and developments in modern life. At the same time, the response would assist his fellow Muslims to have certainty and an Islamicly correct attitude towards new technology, material progress and cultural change.\textsuperscript{581}

However, in my view, the real issue is that Awwas and his fellow fundamentalists wanted to have a firmer grip on their uncontrolled and fast changing surroundings. They adopt Islam, and then promote it in a certain form so that they will not drown in the reality of daily life, which is full of new and incomprehensible things. They can then create their own life, which is, they think, original, meaningful and free from domination and oppression.

The Strategy of Appropriation

For the fundamentalists, reclaiming means that their everyday life did not occur other than through their own will. Instead, every single thing was under their control, through their intention to preserve specific values and norms. More importantly, this agency of self-intention to do things paved the way for the next step of reclaiming everyday life. At this stage, the fundamentalists not only had more control on their life, but also could modify, improve and constantly restructure it by creatively appropriating items and elements of modern life, which were largely seen by them as being part of the non-Islamic world. This appropriation further allowed them to possess some sense of autonomy in making use of the rising consumer culture. The key is \textit{shari'\`a}, or more precisely the divine law that permits and forbids Muslims to engage in various things as interpreted by the activists. At first, \textit{shari'\`a} based rules look quite rigid as they were applied to everything, and every process and relation in worldly life. Then, as long as these worldly elements pass the legal scrutiny of \textit{shari'\`a} based rules, the activists are free to use them and can take their action as a result of autonomous consciousness. For example, as long as eating \textit{KFC} is legally acceptable from the point of view of their interpretation of Islamic teachings, those who eat this fried chicken cannot be seen as acting under, for instance, the influence of American cultural domination. Rather, eating \textit{KFC} is a

\textsuperscript{581} Interview with Awwas.
result of deliberate and autonomous choice based on careful thinking about Islamic values and norms.

To discuss the issue, I will first outline the fundamentalists' view on modernity and how they treat and relate to modern life. The reasons for this are two folds. First, the main target of appropriation is modern life. Its appropriation allows the activists to live with and adopt various elements of modern life, including the consumer culture. Second, modernity, as discussed in the foregone pages, increasingly becomes identified with items such as shopping malls, cafés, cellular phones and big brand named clothing. Unsurprisingly, the appropriation of modern life easily ends up in the appropriation of consumer culture.

The fundamentalists commonly associated modernity with development and change that represent the quality improvement of society as a whole. They understood development and change in, at least, two ways. The first was the progress in science and technology and in the production of material things. The second was the improvement at the level of the individual and society in the sphere of morality. By and large, the fundamentalists rarely demonstrated any substantial reservations about modernity. Even though modern life might be under the domination of the West and seemed to be identical with the Western culture, they found it useful and unavoidable. The developments in science and technology, for example, helped all kind of human beings, regardless of colour and of faith, to improve their life in areas such as communication, transportation and production. Although the technology was invented and developed by the West and the unbelievers, Muslims did not have to reject it. After all, the cloth that was used to make the hijab, for instance, was probably produced by a machine which was invented by the unbelievers. Similarly, Al-Qur'an was printed by a machine which was unlikely to have been produced by the Muslims themselves. Instead, material things such as cellular phones, computers, cars and aeroplanes were universal equipment and did not represent any specific cultural background. Both Muslims and unbelievers who study and work hard could produce and develop these things. Hence, Muslims should not be

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582 Interviews with Taufiq, Nopri, Safruddin, Ba'asyir and Yusanto.
583 Interviews with Yusanto, Safruddin, Ba'asyir, Taufiq, Yahya, Yoyok, Nopri, Lasti, Siti and Desti.
584 HTI (2002).
sanctioned for making use of this equipment and/or for purchasing it from the West as the Prophet Himself did use things produced by the unbelievers. 586

More importantly, modernity was not just about material progress. Morality was more significant than the most advanced science and technology. 587 Being modern meant becoming morally a better person. Hence, for Taufiq, how could one be seen as modern if one’s *aurat* was not properly covered. The label of modernity, he added, could not also be attached to those who were promiscuous and used drugs. Instead, displaying *aurat* publicly, promiscuity and drugs represented the age of *jahiliyah*, commonly described as the period before the coming of Islam. This was the age of backwardness when humans were yet to believe in God or at least in one God and mixed up right and wrong. Islam came to improve this backwardness, to modernise so to speak, by teaching humans to believe in one and only Allah and to separate the right from wrong. In this sense, the activists would argue, Islam was much more modern and advanced than the West. They claimed that since the beginning Islam had taught humans how to civilise their physical appearance by hiding *aurat* and their sexual life by having sex with one’s legitimate partner(s) only.

Therefore, although it was useful and unavoidable, navigating modern life required strategies to adopt the good things and reject the vice elements. One of the strategies was a sort of ideological scrutiny applied to various aspects of modernity. Commonly adopted by the HTI activists, the strategy was based on the classification of all material and cultural things according to the concepts of *madaniyya* (largely understood as material products) and *hadharah* (largely understood as civilisation). 588 *Madaniyya* was the progress in science and technology discussed above. *Hadharah* was ideology, thoughts and concepts and/or what they claimed as *hadharah* inspired material and cultural goods. While Muslims were legally permitted to engage in *madaniyya*, they were asked to be cautious with *hadharah*. Yoyok provided me with this example. Bill Gates was clearly a non-Muslim, but Microsoft which he invented and produced was *halal*. Hence, the issue, for the salafi group, was more about whether Muslims are allowed to pirate the software. And the

588 Interviews with Yusanto, Yoyok, Nopri and Oni; HTI (2002); An-Nabhani (2001).
answer, for them, was that Muslims must comply with the copyright. On the other hand, democracy, explained Yoyok, was hadharah. He insisted that Muslims must carefully investigate the ideological and cultural base of the concept before deciding its legal status. And for Yoyok, as well as the majority of activists I spoke with, democracy was a secularism-cum-Christian-inspired cultural phenomenon that was haram.

Nevertheless, with some creativity, even those categorised as ideology-inspired materials, could be transformed into being islamically legal. This creativity is illustrated in the following cases. Parida Abas, the wife of the Bali bomber, Ali Ghufron, spent her educational formative years in Malaysia under the influence of western culture. She had good English, used to sing songs such as *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* and memorised well stories such as *Hanzel and Gretel*. She knew for sure that part of these were, to use HTI’s term, hadharah. Yet, it did not prevent her in using *Hanzel and Gretel* to teach Islam to her children. She just had to modify the story by praising—rather than demonising as in the original story—the virtue of having a stepmother. She thought that, by doing this, she could prevent her children from being anti-polygamy.

The other more common strategy of modification was in the use of the bank. The fundamentalists largely believed that the interest rate applied by the bank on both savings and credit facilities was hardly different from a usury, which is strictly forbidden in Islam. And, yet, for the HTI’s Siti, this by no means implied that she could not save her monthly salary in the bank or borrow money from the bank to buy a house. To do that, she had to first select the so-called bank syariah (literally *shari'a* bank). She said that the difference between the common banks and the bank syariah was similar to the difference between promiscuity and marriage. Both promiscuity and marriage was, among other things, about having sex. The main difference was that the former was illegal. She told me that she was about to buy a house. Rather than borrowing money that has to be paid back in a larger amount through the islamically illegal interest rates, bank syariah asked her to adopt the following procedure. The bank would first buy the house she wanted to purchase.

592 Interview with Siti.
The house would then be sold to her at a higher price and she was allowed to pay in instalments. The higher price would almost certainly be the same amount of money plus interest that she could have borrowed from the common banks to buy the same house. But Siti believed that she was not using a modified credit facility of the bank. She saw her relations with the bank as more like a buyer-seller transaction which is allowed by Islam. While ignoring the fact that the higher price could be the same as a loan plus interest for the same period of time, it was normal and divinely acceptable, she argued, for the seller to seek a profit by selling the purchased commodity at a higher value than its original price.

However, the most important thing was, according to Ba’asyir, the man behind the gun (English in original). He meant to say that with the good intentions of Muslims whose Islamic credentials had been proven—certainly from his point of view—the use of various unislamic-inspired things could be morally justified. The context of this statement was my question on his opinion about democracy and the role of Islamic parties which had won parliament seats. His first reply was that democracy was simply haram. As for the Islamic parties, he said that as long as the parties were headed by those who had a strong faith in Islam and used democracy for divinely justified purposes, we might expect something good to come from this illegal cultural action. Indeed, in the name of divinely legitimised intention, Muslims were strongly recommended to adopt science, knowledge and concepts that might look unislamic. For Almascaty, even though it may have been invented by non-Muslims, all useful knowledge must have from Allah. In his own words he declared that “Although the Islamic economic system, for example, has been discovered by Karl Marx who was an atheist, Muslims scholars still have the right to adopt it without the feeling of inferiority.” Since, he continued, “all types of systems that are useful and correct are [part of] the science of Allah that He grants to those who try hard even though they are unbelievers, atheists or secular.”

The creative appropriation of modernity has significant implications for the way the fundamentalists treat the rising consumer culture. First of all, the consumer culture was commonly seen as part of modern life itself. More importantly, as long as they passed the madaniyya and hadharah tests, were used by good Muslims and with good intentions, either with or without modification, items and elements of the

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593 Interview with Ba’asyir.
consumer culture could be Islamicly acceptable. Yoyok and Oni, for instance, found nothing wrong with having meal in KFC and McDonald's restaurants because the fast-foods were not hadharah. The only problem for Nopri was that eating in these relatively expensive restaurants for many ordinary Indonesians contradicted his very existence as an activist who was supposed to defend the rights of kaum dhuafa—those who were economically and politically oppressed. While the main concern for Desti was the price of this commodity, Farid added that Muslims just had to make sure that KFC, for instance, was produced from chickens which were slaughtered correctly according to the Islamic guidelines for killing animals.

Similarly, the activists took the shopping centres originally to be nothing more than markets, a place to buy and sell things. As mentioned above, they were fully aware of the celebration and the play with life associated with the malls. However, it all depended on "the man behind the gun". Should they have to go to these places, they believed that the faith and the Islamic credentials that they possessed would prevent them from using malls other than as venues for purchasing goods. To put it differently, it was only the fundamentalists and certain others that could use shopping malls and all items and elements of the rising consumer culture in the right way and with legitimate intentions. The other Muslims, whose Islamic quality was still in question, were surely from the point of the activists' understanding of what Islam should be, in danger of being dominated if they engage in the consumer culture. Therefore, such Islamic credentials allowed Yoyok and his HTI fellow activists to continue their habit of listening to Metallica's songs. The Al-Mukmin's students did not agree with this. Initially, it seemed that they simply took the songs as representing the enemies of Islam. Later during conversation with me, it was revealed that music groups such as Metallica and Slipknot were denounced because their songs were, for the students, hardly understandable and no more enjoyable than common popular songs.

595 Interviews with Yoyok and Oni.
596 Interview with Nopri.
597 Interviews with Desti and Farid.
598 Interviews with Oni, Yoyok, Siti, Lasti, Safruddin, Yahya, Fikri, Hafid, Chanifah; group discussion with the MMI's female activists.
599 Interview with Yoyok; group discussion with the Al-Mukmin's male students.

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The Question of Beauty

The Islamic fundamentalists are often regarded as conservative. Nevertheless their conservatism, I believe, has nothing to do with any attempt to revert Muslims to the golden age of Muhammad, His Companions and the Islamic caliphates. Instead, conservatism is more about how they deal with the socio-cultural context they want and are supposed to change. We can call them conservative because the reclaiming of everyday life as a carnivalesque sort of resistance seems to have ended up in their efforts to live within, rather than change and transform, the dominating and contaminating culture they strongly opposed. As mentioned before, nothing is perhaps more illustrative than the case of the hijab. In the following pages I will try to explain how the hijab that was supposedly a revolutionary movement at the level of the body has resulted in preserving the rising consumer culture.

The rising consumer culture, as discussed previously, emphasised and played with style, design and appearance. It turned not only goods, but also humans, social relations and social processes into the sphere of art. The aestheticisation of body, self and everyday life then became important. The self-image and self-presentation had increasingly taken over any meanings and values that might be attached to some substantial content and qualities of being a human. Initially, the fundamentalists seemed to oppose the importance of style, design and appearance. The faith, in particular, was for them the most pivotal element of humanity that could not be manipulated by stylisation of body. However, I have previously explained that the faith was more a result rather than the starting point. It was mainly through regulations, controls, prohibitions and limitations on the body that the activists learned and understood how to believe in Islam. Specifically, the ascetic body helped them to be what they took as a unique being called Muslim. The hijab as a form of discipline and control created an ascetic body because those who wear it were obliged to follow strictly certain rules of conduct and of body movements. The hijab in effect produced and reproduced the Islamic identity, the Islamic subject and the Islamic self.

Even though this works under the rubric of discipline and control, it can hardly be ignored that the hijab is also a form of image creation process. Discipline and control was also some kind of stylisation that re-formed and re-constructed the body to create specific cultural meanings, values and images attached to those who
adopt Muslim dress. The activists themselves admitted the importance of cultural associations and, perhaps the illusions attached to the hijab. Deliberately adopted, the hijab helped them not only to enhance their faith, but also to aestheticise appearance and to represent a specific self-image. Muslim dress in this sense was nothing more than simply another sign add to the already image-saturated everyday life. It competed with other signs produced by the consumer culture to take centre stage in an age when aestheticisation dominates. Therefore, the hijab might disrupt the dominating consumer culture that produces a different type of body. But the disruption hardly challenged the consumer culture preoccupation with aestheticisation. This proves the inability of the hijab as a carnivalesque form of resistance in transforming the oppressive culture because the aestheticisiation, the importance of image and sign-value, is elementary to the very foundation of the consumer culture, and it is this consumer culture which produces the dangerous trends, immorality and hedonism.

It is then understandable that several female fundamentalists regarded the hijab as a symbol of beauty. The Hijab is not only disciplined and controlled, but also beautified. They compared it with jewellery that could make those who wear it look pretty. Siti, for example, frequently described herself as “gundulan” (Javanese expression for being bald) when she referred to her image on the photographs taken before she started to wear a headscarf regularly. For her, a woman who did not adopt the hijab was as ugly as the women who lost their hair. When she first wore the dress, she claimed that her university mates praised her new appearance as they saw her as looking more beautiful. This view was shared by the Al-Mukmin’s teacher, Yahya. He insisted that the Muslim women were strictly obliged to cover their whole body except for the face and the hands. How the body should be covered was left to the Muslims to decide. One could just use any kind of clothing as long as it prevented the body from being publicly displayed. However, for Yahya, since being attractive was equally significant, one could not just take any kind of covering. The Hijab was an aesthetical way of covering the body that made those who wear it look attractive. It allowed the Muslim women to follow the divine rule without having to sacrifice their beauty.

601 Interview with Siti.
602 Interview with Yahya.
In fact, as I have mentioned above, other radical Muslims such as the salafi group were concerned with issues such as skin whitening cosmetics, perfume and hair styles. The activists were looking for a fatwa regarding these matters. The group officially announced that Muslims are allowed to beautify their appearance as long as in doing so they do not permanently alter what had been created by Allah. Dian herself told me that she was not influenced by the images of beauty produced in the advertisements and the media. White skin and a certain hair cut was no longer an issue for her. And, yet, it by no means implied that she could escape from the image of beauty that impacted on her everyday life. Dian’s fellow HTI activist, Ita, for instance, stated that she rejected advertisements because they associated being beautiful with slimness and white skin. What she rejected was white skin and slimness. Ita, however, hardly questioned the idea of being beautiful and did not see it as being part of media manipulation. She tried instead to appropriate the idea and reconstructed it by promoting an alternative meaning of being beautiful.

Ita’s view represented the common attitude towards the importance of being beautiful within the movement. The activists seemed to compete with the rising consumer culture in shaping the meaning of, and promoting the alternative image of, beauty. One way of doing this was the play of difference. For the activists, the hijab was more beautiful because it covered the body and the covered body represented nobility, dignity and high culture. On the contrary, the less covered body of the consumer culture, and nudity, were the illusion of beauty. It represented instead low culture, ignorance and backwardness. The fundamentalists commonly argued that before the coming of Islam humans were not obliged to cover their bodies properly. It was also claimed that during some festive rituals within the community where Muhammad was born, those who attended the rituals often did not wear any clothing. Islam came, the activists insisted, to civilise this low culture. Islam taught humans

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604 Interview with Ita.
how to behave normally, among other things, by covering their bodies properly. Islam was, from the fundamentalist viewpoint, in fact a kind of modernising force that brought some sort of progress. In this respect, the hijab symbolised beauty because it also represented what the activists understood as modernity.

THE CLASS TENSIONS

I argue that the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia is better understood against the background of the socio-historical context where the movement was born and is developing. The movement is a response to the problem of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment significantly caused by the rising consumer culture explained earlier. I now want to take the discussion a step further by investigating the type of contradictions created by Indonesian capitalism in general and the rising consumer culture in particular. This contradiction paves the way for the resistance, which takes the form of the reclaiming everyday life.

The Contradictions within the New Order’s Capitalist Development

The emergence of the New Order and the subsequent economic development it pursued was based on and reproduced the class divisions. The formation of the New Order’s political regime was in fact a result of conflicts between Soekarno, PKI and the military, particularly, the army. The conflict, in a very significant sense, was an outcome of class struggle. Even though they were not committed seriously to class struggle, the three parties often spoke on behalf of the broad-based social classes. Soekarno and PKI were commonly seen as representing the interests of the emerging revolutionary subordinated classes, especially the peasant and working

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classes, and received significant support from progressive intellectuals. The army was strongly associated with a grand coalition comprising domestic capitalists, foreign capital, the urban middle class and the rural upper class. The struggle resulted in the emergence of the military and its grand coalition as the new power bloc, the dominant class, which established the New Order's regime and dominated the Indonesian's socioeconomic life for the next three decades. The legitimacy of the regime was largely based upon a combination of harsh repression and a relatively moderate and persuasive strategy of corporatism to control the subordinated productive classes and to prevent any sort of class struggle from emerging. At the same time, the New Order protected and nurtured the interests of its supporters mainly through economic modernisation.

This class division is the main basis of the New Order's capitalist development. The production of an economic surplus occurred following the appropriation of the production process in sectors such as natural resources, agriculture and manufacture by the most prominent elements of the grand coalition: bureaucrats, technocrats, economic planners, foreign capital and national business. Assisted by factors such as the oil boom and the political and economic support of the governments of Western countries, the appropriation, as discussed before, produced economic growth and industrial development and a significant increase in national production and income.

The fruit of the New Order's capitalist development mostly benefited elements of the dominant class. The capitalists, in particular, took full advantage of being protected and nurtured by the state. In the initial stages, for example, the state provided them business opportunities, credits and fiscal concessions. In the later stages the state continued to serve them by restructuring the economy which stimulated further capital accumulation. The urban middle class was another lucky group. They benefited from various types of job opportunities, with relatively high salaries, in both the state and the private sectors. They also received a better education, health services and housing facilities. The new rich discussed in the preceding pages came from these classes. Not everyone though was happy with the

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609 See Anderson (1978); Mas'ood (1989).
610 See Robison (1986); Hiarij (2003).
New Order's economic performance. Even within the grand coalition, various groups were gradually marginalised as the economic growth and industrialisation rarely did them any favours and often contradicted their interests. The petty bourgeoisie was among the first casualties. As early as the 1970s they had started to realise that economic development was more for the benefit of large business and foreign capital.\(^{613}\) A wide range of progressive and radical elements of middle class was also increasingly becoming upset with the New Order. They were initially concerned with issues such as human rights, civil liberty, democracy and corruption which seemed to have become the victims of development. Later they were also alarm to find that poverty was increasing and largely being ignored by the regime.\(^{614}\)

However, the worst process of marginalisation occurred on the other side of the grand coalition. The subordinated productive classes, and their subsequent generations, were not only defeated, but put under strict regime control.\(^{615}\) Their political energy and dynamism at a high level, which allowed and nurtured by Soekarno and PKI, was rechannelled to serve of economic development and to support the New Order's regime. From the regime point of view, it did not really matter if they did not receive fair material compensation, let alone enjoy the fruits of capitalism on the same terms as the grand coalition. After all, exploitation and the misery suffered by these classes was functional for capitalist development. The peasants, for instance, were the victims of either the green revolution, the expansion of property sector or infrastructure development. They were forced to leave their lands by force if necessary or had to accept a cheap price decided unilaterally by the authorities. They often ended up in the big cities and lived the life of unemployment or various forms of semi and disguised unemployment. The workers shared the same fate. At first, it seemed that they were in a position to benefit from the trickle down effect of the rapid rise of the manufacturing sector following the mid 1980s. The truth was that they received almost nothing for a pair of shoes they produced that could be valued at hundreds of thousands of rupiah in the mushrooming department stores in the large cities. They were also forced to work under poor working conditions and with no rights to express their grievances, not to mention to be involved in political movements. This should not come as a surprise, since the low-

\(^{613}\) See Muhaimin (1990); Robison (1990).
\(^{614}\) See Heryanto (1996); Aspinall (1996).
\(^{615}\) See Hiariej (2003); Hadiz (1997); Aspinall (1999).
wage workers were in fact the backbone of the Indonesian export-oriented industrialisation.

As predicted by Marxist theories, the contradiction resulted in unrest. The New Order witnessed the rise of opposition from within its own supporters and, more importantly, from within the classes it had brutally oppressed. Between the 1970s and the early 1980s the opposition was largely led by students and human rights activists and confined to the major cities in Java. In the late 1980s, it continued to escalate following the rise of the peasant and working class movement and contributed significantly to Soeharto’s resignation.

The rising consumer culture initially seemed to only reflect this classical production-based class division. Consumerism was widely seen as for the rich and the exploiter. As mentioned before, it was the emerging new rich who introduced and popularised a new way of treating and participating in consumption by emphasising the importance of celebrating and playing with commodities. However, it became clear that the consumer culture did not simply extend the production-based class division, but also added its own logic of oppression. Above all, the rising consumerism appeared as a cultural sort of force that brought physical changes, allowed Indonesians to learn many new things, socialised specific values and meanings and persuaded the people to take part in it. It was a force in the sense that it had the power to restructure the life of Indonesians. It could influence how people survived their material surroundings and how to interact with each other to produce meanings and shared understandings. As noted above, the consumer culture then provoked reactions and resistances. Nevertheless, it was through different paths of reaction to consumer culture we can understand how the production-based class division is significant.

Articles and reports produced by a number of scholars on the emerging new rich and consumerism in Indonesia and several other Asian countries illustrate various dimensions of what I understand as the consumer culture power to dominate and oppress. At the level of physical change, the consumer culture was described as having created a new face of large cities such as Jakarta, with attractive-designed sky scrapers, luxurious housing estates and expensive cars. This seemingly less important transformation in fact brought more substantial effects. The ubiquitous

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616 See, for example, Robison (1996); Heryanto (1999); Gerke (2000); Kenichiro (2001); Young (1999). See also Robison and Goodman (1996); Beng-Huat (2000); Pinches (1999)
shopping centres, for example, had become not only public parks, but also the new temples for consumption worshippers. Before their arrival, the people must have gone to different public parks or probably had no idea what a public park was. Consumer goods were mostly treated according to its functional dimension and the authority of God had yet to be challenged by the seductive of advertisements of commodities. The consumer culture simply changed all this.

The change, however, was not a simple process. Following Young, the rising consumer culture required learning and education. It successfully persuaded people to learn many new things such as how to visit and stroll through the shopping malls, how to use cellular phones and how to live in an expensive house. Clearly it was highly crucial to know exactly how to operate, for instance, a cellular phone. But it was more important to know what kind of behaviour and attitude one should have toward the commodities. Put differently, the consumer culture educated the people in practising a new way of consuming goods. I have noted above that celebrating and playing with commodities were at the centre of the new way of consumption. The effect, however, was far more serious than the excessive acquisition and display of consumer goods. At first commodities started to occupy the everyday life of many Indonesians, regardless of one’s socioeconomic background, mainly in the form of cultural images. Thanks to the multitude of pictures, displays and spectacles, the saturation of consumer goods images, according to Gerke, altered many Indonesians understanding of the real, the possible and the fictional. As a consequence, celebration and play seemed to have spilled over into various aspects of life. For the HTI’s Yusanto it had successfully made the people think that everything could be regarded in the same way as consumer goods. As commodities, through their cultural images, looked more alive, they were probably not too different from humans. Hence, Yusanto found that humans were increasingly treated as commodities by their fellow human beings. He said that, by implication, one could celebrate having a wife or a girl friend and then dispose of them for a new one; just like one could have a TV and abandon it as soon as the new and more attractive model arrived on the market.

617 Young (1999).
The celebration of and the playing with commodities and, even, increasingly human relations and processes had other implications. On the one hand, as outlined above, it opposed any types of restriction that could prevent the enjoyment of bodily pleasure. On the other hand it undermined the importance of any substantial meanings attached to goods, humans and social interactions. The celebration of and the playing with commodities hence basically challenged the established values and norms regarding the virtue of a regulated body and substantial meaning in life. This was the place where one's identity, subjectivity and self were once defined and constructed. Unsurprisingly, being uprooted from shared cultural foundations, the people who lived under the influence of consumer culture, found their lives increasingly becoming more uncertain and insecure as they lost direction and goals. It also became apparent that one had lost one's uniqueness and originality following the disruption of established values and norms. It is through this process of oppression and domination that we can treat the rising consumer culture independently as source of alienation.

The new rich had already suffered from the problems of inauthenticity and disenchantment. Their very newness meant that they were in transition. Whether it was described as a movement from poverty to wealth, rural to urban or tradition to modern, it implied the process of departing from what used to be one's socio-cultural location. Consequently, since life in the city was different to the one in the countryside, for example, the new rich realised that their lives were now in a process of learning and adapting to various new things.\footnote{See, for example, Young (1999).} This often forced them to discard the cultural habits, values and norms they used to possess. They could also maintain their former cultural foundations and, frequently, suffered the consequences of being confused for standing \textit{in between} rather than \textit{on} either side of the established values and norms. A number of commentators who were fully aware of the in-between phenomenon tended to use terms such as split mentality and double identity to describe the psychological condition of the Indonesian new rich.\footnote{See, for example, Sutanto (1999); Jatman (1999).} The term new rich itself, or OKB in Indonesian, could sometimes be seen as a mockery of this condition. The term was used to ridicule those who had became wealthy but were yet to understand and adapt to the culture of being rich.
The rising consumer culture aggravated this problem for two reasons. First, it increasingly dominated what people had in their minds about the urbanite, modern and luxurious way of life. I have previously demonstrated that being modern, for instance, was not only associated with the level of education and the type of job, but also and more significantly with items such as shopping malls, cafés and big brand name consumer goods. The movement from traditional to modern experienced by the new rich in particular and the people in general was in fact a movement from the old values and norms to the new establishment set by the rising consumer culture. Second, the consumer culture was seductive. The beautiful and spectacular images and signs found in the media and in the venues such as shopping centres and downtowns had the power to draw people under its spell. At first, the saturating images created confusion between the reality and the fantasy. Gradually, the fantasy took ascendance and turned into the only reality available to the people. At this stage, they were easily persuaded to adopt, for instance, the identity implied by the cultural associations and illusions attached to the image of commodities distributed through the media and to abandon the one they used to identify with.

The difference between the Indonesian dominant class and the rest of society was in the way they responded to the life that had been increasingly dominated by the celebration of and the playing with commodities. Their location within the classical production-based class divisions contributed significantly to the way they responded to the problem of alienation. In particular, their income provided them with more freedom and choice to select the most comfortable way of dealing with the issues of inauthenticity and disenchantment. To rediscover the lost uniqueness one could identify one’s self with a specific brand name. They could also find new meaning in life in places such as shopping malls. However, I do not intend to say that all members of the Indonesian upper and middle classes responded to the consumer culture and behaved in the same way. There was a significant number of new rich who still clung tightly to some substantial values and idealism. They were the group who constantly believed in the virtue of values such as democracy, human rights and civil liberty and/or continued to base their life on directions and goals provided by religion and cultural tradition. There was also a group of upper and middle classes who were in between. They were both democrats and consumerists, frequenting mosques as much as shopping malls. This fact instead underlined the amount of
freedom and choice available to the new rich in dealing with the rising consumer culture.

The contrast was found in the majority of the Indonesian lower classes. In particular, for those who had moved to the big cities, lived and worked under poor conditions, the lost memory of their villages could hardly be replaced by fast-food restaurants. Not only were the restaurants in stark contrast to the paddy fields, but also they simply did not have the money to go there. The price of the simplest meal in KFC in Yogyakarta, for example, was more than half the wage of one day’s labour. Even the labourer who worked in the restaurant could hardly afford the meal they produced. They had to live with the lost memory of their established values and norms but could perhaps rediscover it in other places such as the mosque. However, this was not the only option left to the lower class. As previously stated, to deal with the seducing consumer culture, second hand and the low price shopping centres with the imitation consumer goods were also available. In addition, they could use strategies such as resource pooling and share the signs of modernity within their peers. Nevertheless, they did not have the same freedom and choices available to them were more limited. In other words, their income prevented them from being part of the consumer culture on the same terms as the dominant class.

The Fundamentalists’ Class Backgrounds

Indeed, the outcast of Indonesian capitalist development was the group that formed the majority of the radical Muslim community. They came from the lower-middle and lower classes, which suffered from exploitation, poverty and misery and were further alienated by the rising consumer culture. A significant number of fundamentalists could be categorised as petty bourgeoisie. They were involved in small scale trading in goods such as Islamic fashion, footwear, basic daily needs, honey, perfume and traditional medicines. The goods were not produced by big brand names, were largely bought from local and usually small producers, and were sold at prices that were within the reach of the people from the same classes. Several activists also ran small businesses in various sectors such as education, printing and

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622 Interviews with Safruddin, Lukman, Yoyok, Shobbarin, Hasyim and Chaidar; group discussion with the MMI’s female activists.
publishing and transportation. Often, the main market, the place where commodities were produced and distributed, was the radical Muslim community itself. This was evident in the case of MMI. Nur and her husband had a small shop in their hometown in Southeast Sulawesi.623 One of the main suppliers of the Muslim dress they sold was their fellow MMI member, Shobbarin. The other MMI activist, Chaidar, ran a business of producing and distributing traditional medicines.624 His main distributors were his fellow members, particularly those who were under his command in the *Laskar Mujahidin*. The production and distribution of commodities within the same community was more apparent in printing and publishing. Organisations such as HTI had their own publication house that printed and published books on a wide range of issues, mainly representing the organisation’s views, and they produced their own weeklies. The main consumers were the HTI activists and their sympathisers.

The other prominent category was intellectual. This group includes the activists who worked as university lecturers, religious teachers and preacher, and also students.625 Only a few university lecturers were from the major universities in Java. The majority worked in private and small universities. The contrast was in the number of student activists in the group. As demonstrated in chapter 2, in its earliest days HTI was associated with Muslim students in the big cities such as Bandung, Bogor, Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Surabaya. In recent years, the organisation still gained significant support from the students of these cities. The salafi group was another example. During the heyday of LJ, the group drew a large number of sympathisers from the students of the natural science faculties in Gadjah Mada University, Diponegoro University and Airlangga University. The inclusion of religious teachers and preachers in this category might be debatable. The majority of fundamentalists, or at least their prominent leaders, often saw and proclaimed themselves as religious teachers. They wanted to be called *ustadz* and claimed that they were always preaching Islamic teachings. A Muslim is considered a preacher from birth, insisted Safruddin. At least, one should teach Islamic values and norms to one’s own family, he continued.626 However, being *ustadz* could also be a job that generated money. First of all, a religious teacher is a specific kind of job in both

623 Group discussion with the MMI's female activists; interview with Rohani.
624 Interview with Chaidar.
625 Interviews with Wahyuddin, Taufiq, Fikri, Yoyok, Oni, Nopri and Siti; group discussion with the MMI's female activists. See also Saraswati (2007).
626 Interview with Safruddin.
public schools and Islamic boarding schools. Those who taught at Al-Mukmin, for example, were not only part of the attempt to establish an Islamic state, but also taught there for the money they earned each month. Preaching, in its generic term as teaching Islamic values and norms to others, could also produce wealth from another source. Some fundamentalist prominent figures admitted that they received money after the sermons they provided for Muslims outside their community. They claimed that they did not ask for it, but neither did they reject the offer. Even though the amount of money was rarely large, it was enough to supplement the income from their regular job either as a petty bourgeoisie, university lecturer or school teacher which was relatively small.

Finally, a large number of fundamentalists were unemployed and/or involved in various disguised and semi-unemployment. Most common were the activists who did not have a permanent job. Some of them had temporary casual work in places such as traditional markets and bus stations. A few others had formerly used various types of crime to earn money. Unsurprisingly, the activists from this category committed themselves largely to casual work related to organisation activities. The work ranged from printing and selling organisation publications to mail delivering, cleaning the office and cooking. In return, they would receive a small amount of money if the activities were profitable, such as those related to publishing. But if they were not involved in wealth producing activities, they were at least allowed to enjoy organisation facilities, such as having lunch or dinner, or using the office building as a place to stay should they have no other home to go to.

Certainly, not every fundamentalist lived in poverty and misery. I visited the houses of several prominent figures. Some houses could be categorised as expensive and the owners could be viewed as the new rich. I was also told, for example, that two MMI members were very rich.627 One of them owned a hospital and ran a successful gasoline station. The other was rumoured to have built a house priced at Rp10 billion. However, the majority of activists found themselves more as the victims of economic development. They were on the losing side, the people who had worked hard night and day, but had hardly escaped poverty.628 They rarely paid a visit to the shopping malls and frequented traditional markets. The latter was

627 Interviews with Awwas, Shobbarin, Hasyim and Harun.
preferred because they could find a lot more bargain prices. 629 Economic development was blamed for failing to provide them with a better education and jobs. It was often too late to realise, they argued, that those who were marginalised could ended up in violence and crime. 630 The successful economic growth was also blamed for widening the social gap. 631

The fundamentalists' reaction, however, was more complicated. On the one hand, they found exploitation, poverty and inequality as incorrect and urged their fellow Muslims to fight against it. On the other hand, they also seemed to be more preoccupied with being poor. They tended to valorise and even celebrate the situation of being poor by identifying poverty with some high standard of Islamic values. The prophet Muhammad and His Companions, for instance, were often described as economically less fortunate. Although one of the Companions was widely known for being extremely rich, it did not prevent the activists from associating poverty with Islam. 632 It was understandable that Awwas considered it was not possible to seriously believe that shari' a went hand in hand with expensive cars, luxurious houses and excessive wealth. 633 For money and wealth, according to Taufiq, could distance oneself from Allah. 634 Those luxurious things, insisted Ba'asyir, would easily turn Muslims into unbelievers. He urged his fellow Muslims that it was better to live in poverty and remain Muslim, rather than vice versa. 635

This view could be projected as a way to escape from the misery they suffered. By identifying poverty with Islam and salvation, they could forget about the hardship of their real lives. Nevertheless, valorising being poor could equally tell us something much more real. The comments made by several Al-Mukmin's teachers were interesting to note. 636 In particular, Chanifah and Darwis admitted that, compared to their friends and colleagues who lived and worked outside the pesanren, they had relatively less material benefits. The reward for being poor, however, was a pure and less contaminated life. The Al-Mukmin was a place, they claimed, where their uniqueness is safely guarded. They did not have to worry about the influence of other values and norms as everything there had been strictly

629 Interviews with Chanifah and Fikri.
630 Risalah Majahidin, December 2006: 24-5.
632 Interviews with Hafid, Hasyim and Abbas.
634 Interview with Taufiq.
635 Interview with Ba'asyir.
636 Interviews with Chanifah, Darwis, Wahyuddin, Fikri, Taufiq and Nurhadi.
regulated under the divinely justified guidelines. Poverty in this sense is celebrated because it was taken as a virtual form of confinement that could prevent them from being part of the uncertain world outside the movement. The power of being poor to protect their meaningful and original life was based on the fact that it prevented them from enjoying places such as shopping malls. Fikri, Chanifah and Safruddin, for instance, felt more comfortable in the traditional market. Comfortable for Fikri meant that he belonged to the same culture with those in the traditional market. He could speak the same language and be involved without any psychological barriers. Fikri in fact found the market more as community in which he was independently part of, and certain about its rules and norms. In contrast, although the shopping malls were basically a place to buy and sell things, the activists found it more difficult to deal with. The place was simply not for them as it was associated with a different, and to them a foreign culture. They might even be persuaded to abandon items that were associated with their very uniqueness such as the Muslim dress should they have to go there. Visiting shopping malls could then be a threat to their autonomous consciousness. Clearly, the preference of traditional markets, in a very significance sense, reflected their fear of being controlled and contaminated by the shopping malls. They loved being poor because it could protect them from being oppressed, and losing their authenticity through this specific element of consumer culture. As I noted before, it is the rising consumer culture that leads to their resistance, while their level of income shapes the form of resistance.

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In this chapter, I have argued how the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is a response to the problem of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment originating in the rising consumer culture in the country. By and large, the response takes the form of reclaiming everyday life by transforming almost every aspect of their daily practices and activities into a sacred sphere. This process of sacralisation that turns the consumer culture up-side-down interestingly paves the way for them to appropriate and to enjoy some elements of the world outside the movement. In the end, the

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637 Interview with Fikri, Chanifah and Safruddin.
638 Interview with Fikri.
639 Interviews with Fikri and Safruddin.
reclaiming ironically allows them to live with and, in a very important sense, to preserve the existing social order they fight against.

The class divisions and the way the fundamentalists adopt and relate to Islam, which produces a sort of class consciousness, play an important role in the emergence of the movement as a form of resistance. The activists are largely part of the lower class that has badly suffered from the exploitation, poverty and misery created by Indonesian capitalist development. They are further alienated by the rising consumer culture, which takes away their autonomous consciousness and shatters their established source of meaning and direction in life. In contrast to the new rich, their limited income was a hindrance to rediscover their lost uniqueness and certainty in life by the celebrating and playing with commodities.
My study is an attempt to explain the recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia. Departing the existing works on the subject, I try to understand its development in the context of a larger social structure and historical change associated with the way contemporary Indonesian society is instituted. With the help of theories developed within the studies of social movements, identity politics and consumer culture, my answer is that fundamentalism is a form of resistance that seeks to transform the existing social order. The appeals for an Islamic state and shari'a, the religious mass rallies and the violent attacks are the result of resistance. More importantly, Islamic fundamentalism is not an abnormality. Actions that take the path of deadly assaults such as terrorism are wrong, but the resistance itself is legitimate, unless we take the current Indonesian social and cultural order as unchallengeable and true in itself. In fact, the fundamentalists' resistance is a response to the problems of oppression and domination. Becoming a fundamentalist is to fight against this problem. And the fighting is produced within contradictions and social antagonism originating in the dominant structure.

This leads me to describe Islamic fundamentalism as a social movement. The five groups discussed in the foregone chapters are well structured organisations with clear goals, policies, programs and strategies, at least until some are either disbanded, paralysed by the Indonesian authorities or internally divided. They have significant followers and receive important support and sympathy from a wider community outside the given organisations. More importantly, the Islamic fundamentalist movement is not a given reality. It is a result of how the fundamentalists construct an internal coherence, of how they build the movement's "we"-ness. This sense of collectivity is achieved through two framing processes. The first is by recognising who they are and by identifying their enemies. The second is by defining the problems they are facing and how to deal with them. The fundamentalists prefer to see themselves simply as Muslims who share the feeling of being divinely chosen, of being the only hope left in society and, hence, of having a huge responsibility to uphold the honour of Islam. They are willing to take responsibility for establishing an Islamic state based on the full implementation of shari'a through jihad and
However, this is not an easy task since the enemies of Islam will always stand in the way of their effort to uphold the God authority in the world. The most prominent enemies constructed by the fundamentalists are the Christians, the West, the Communists and the local Liberal Islam.

At the heart of fundamentalists' resistance is a struggle for identity. I explain this kind of struggle by making a simple distinction between instrumental and expressive dimensions that we can apply to any form of collective action conducted by the fundamentalists. Focusing on the second dimension, I have proposed a different logic to understand the fundamentalists' actions. The first is the logic of performing and symbolism. The fundamentalists have used their actions to produce their identity by using their appeals, physical appearance, body movements, colours and banners. The second is the logic of identification. By this I mean that actions have become a medium through which they valorise their identity as real and important by identifying themselves with top Muslim figures and heroes, and with the defence of the rights of marginalised Muslims around the globe. The third is the logic of bearing witness. I use this particular notion to describe the way actions have become a site for them to adopt certain Islamic values and norms, to demonstrate their strong commitment to Islamic teachings and, as a consequence, to experience some sort of transformation at the level of personality.

Why should we take into consideration the issue of identity and why is identity political. For the activists of this movement identity is largely a matter of how they see themselves as divinely obliged to display publicly their Muslimness without being afraid and ashamed of doing so; and to treat this Muslimness as the sole basis of their acts, behaviour and attitude. However, I discover that identity for them is more lively and dynamic than simply such an underlying structure that produces and commands every fundamentalist as a human subject. By this I mean that, apart from representing what they take as an original and true Muslim, the adoption of Muslim dress is, for instance, a response to their social surroundings and is a decision made under a specific socio-historical situation.

Specifically, the expression and accentuation of their existence through the movement's cultural symbols and images is important because the fundamentalists firmly believe that their uniqueness as human being called a Muslim is in danger and, even in some cases, has badly deteriorated. They are deeply concerned with trends in fashion, in physical appearance and in lifestyles in general that seem to have ruled
the way ordinary Indonesians live their daily routines. Trends in fashion, for example, create uniformity and make Muslims hardly different from non-Muslims in terms of physical appearance. The bid for uniqueness is a rejection of conformity, of being shaped by the existing cultural order that works through trends. Therefore, uniqueness is about having an autonomous consciousness and the capacity to act independently. The growing immorality for them only brings more threats to autonomous consciousness. To understand this I have demonstrated that the fundamentalists tend to associate immorality with liberalism. The latter for them is based on permissiveness, which they further see mainly functions to serve the unbridled fulfilment of human natural instincts. Liberalism that lies at the heart of immorality hence produces a human subject who is driven by hawa nafsu, instead of Islamic value reason. Since the latter is taken as the place where autonomous consciousness is at home, the rule of hawa nafsu for them signals how the growing immorality denies that the human is a subject who possesses the power to control her/his own self and life.

However, the bid for uniqueness is not only to restore the rule of autonomous consciousness based on Islamic value rationality, but also to fulfil the desire to have security and certainty in life. Uniqueness in this respect means being part of the group of individuals who share the same unique qualities which serve the need to have some roots. More importantly, the desire for certainty requires them to have meaning, goals and directions in life which are real and true. The growing immorality is alarming because liberalism and permissiveness, as they understand it, tend to celebrate life. That is to say, people are encouraged to have more fun in life by fulfilling their basic desires as much as possible. Life has ceased to be a journey to some meaningful end with the promise of eternal happiness. It becomes merely a sequence of perpetual releasing of desires with perpetual short-lived happiness. Hedonism is the term I use to describe this kind of life that the fundamentalists find as destroying the true and real meaning of life without any clear direction, other than having fun.

The fundamentalists frequently point to the overproduction of images and signs when they express their anxiety about the ruling trends, the growing immorality and the dominating hedonism. The activists were deeply concerned about the pictures, displays and spectacles presented in the media such as television, magazines, tabloids and the internet, as well as in public venues such as shopping
malls, (refurbished) downtown and by the side of roads. Their resistance is a response to the multitude of images and signs that colonise the fabric of Indonesian everyday life.

Above all, the flowing images are seductive. The beauty, the fascination and the dream world produced by, for example, films and advertisements, they believe, invade and influence the human mind and force one to submit oneself to its rule. The attractive spectacles celebrate *hawa nafsu* and, through that celebration, take over one's autonomy and force obedience. The feeling of being controlled and dominated can be seen in the way the fundamentalists view the power of the saturating images to socialise and to educate the masses. This ends up in a sort of "the end of the real" as they discover how the behaviour and attitudes of Indonesian teenagers, for example, are nothing more than the projection of images. Worse than that, such power has allowed images and signs to normalise things that were formerly seen by them as either immoral, unislamic, or unIndonesian.

In addition, images are produced through the aestheticisation of the real. The activists of this movement are concerned with the aestheticisation because it seems to have crowned image as being the most important aspect of life. This includes the way people pay more attention to their self-presentation and physical appearance instead of their substantial content as human beings. In this regard, there are two things that the fundamentalists perceive from the colonising images and signs. First, the body, particularly the *aurat*, is predominant, is celebrated and, in the process, is freed from discipline and control. Second, any form of substance, underlying structure and inner reality, that provides fixed and stable meanings and directions, is significantly undermined. It is replaced with the importance of being beautiful, young and energetic. As I have discussed before, the liberation of the body and the importance of image, self-presentation and physical appearance are not welcomed by the fundamentalists. The less disciplined body and the lack of substantial meanings have turned their lives into a more uncertain journey.

The rapid flows of images and signs that saturate the fabric of everyday life in contemporary Indonesian society are produced by, and reproduce, the rising consumer culture in the country. Two factors contribute significantly to the growing dominance of celebrating and playing with commodities in the major cities. The first is the rapid increase in consumerism. Its most discernible indications are the mushrooming new housing estates, the ubiquitous shopping malls and the dramatic
increase in consumer spending. The second is the growth of the upper and middle classes, particularly the formation of the Indonesian new rich who have access to income and credit beyond what they need to buy their basic commodities.

I understand the rise of consumer culture against the backdrop of capitalist development in the Archipelago. In the last three decades it has generated a significant amount of wealth, goods and facilities necessary for modern mass consumption. The process of commodification has significantly increased the number, variety and availability of consumer goods. We also witness the rapid development of consumption facilities such as shopping malls, supermarkets, fast-food restaurants, cafés and tourist resorts. This is accompanied by the growing importance of promotion and advertising of commodities through style, packaging and appearance. Wealth generated by the capitalist development is reflected not only in the mushrooming sky scrapers, shopping centres and housing estates, but also in the increasing number of the new rich. They are well-educated and are willing to consume excessively with the financial power at their disposal beyond the logic of economy and the utility dimension of a given consumer good. In addition, they have used their excessive consumerism to accentuate their presence and to challenge the established privileged classes. They also rely on consumerism to free themselves from any type of regulating values and norms and, in effect, to allow their bodies to enjoy more pleasures.

The struggle for identity is the answer to all these problems. The struggle takes the form of practices of representation in which the Islamic identity such as the hijab is produced through its negation of other fashion styles. The hijab, beard, and movement sites such as pesantren then imply specific practices and performances which are based on regulations, limitations and prohibitions on the body. During the course of implementing identity practices and performances, the fundamentalist subject is constructed. The subject can be regarded not only as being free from the ruling trends, the growing immorality and the dominating hedonism, but also as being firmly attached to an inner core, which is Islamic values and norms. In this sense, becoming a fundamentalist is a matter of adopting new subjectivities implied by the Islamic identity practices. The process involves learning and mastering certain behaviour and attitudes such as humbleness and shyness that require specific skills of body movements. It then brings implication to one's inner self and, in turn, remakes
the self. What we see in this entire process is a form of action on self through the centrality of the body which ends up in the formation of a new personality.

In this sense, the Islamic fundamentalism discussed in this project can be seen as the opposite of the rising consumer culture. In place of celebrating life, the activists emphasise the virtue of discipline and control. Style, physical appearance and beautification are negated and are substituted with the regulated and ascetic body. Indeed, regulation, limitation and prohibition of the body helps the fundamentalists not only to protect themselves from trends, immorality and hedonism, but also to reclaim their lives from being occupied by the consumer culture. This is achieved through the transformation of daily routines into ritual practices by attaching Islamic values and norms to mundane processes such as eating, sleeping and buying things. Islam is turned into a sort of life manual on how to do things and to engage in various activities. Such a process then creates a sense of having control of oneself and autonomy in everyday life. At the same time it provides the activists with a firm basis in these times of worldly uncertainty.

Furthermore, this sacralisation allows them not only to reclaim their everyday lives, but also to modify, improve and constantly restructure life by creatively appropriating items and elements of modernity, which were largely taken by the activists themselves at some stage as being part of the non-Islamic world, including those coming from the rising consumer culture. The radical Muslim group believes that it is divinely permitted to engage in those things as long as they pass the scrutiny of shari‘a based rules; are taken as forms of madaniyya; are under the control of those whose Islamic credentials are justified; and are part of legitimate modern life as defined by the fundamentalists. Therefore, even though Islamic fundamentalism is certainly a form of resistance that brings dramatic changes at the level of personality and everyday life, the movement fails to transforms the established social and cultural order it challenges. Instead, the movement seems to only bring the transformation within, rather than beyond, the rising consumer culture. The adoption of Muslim dress is the interesting case. For sure, the dress undermines and, as a matter of fact, turns the consumer culture celebration and liberation on the body up-side-down. However, the hijab itself is a form of aestheticisation of the body which ends up in the production of specific images attached to the fundamentalists. The adoption of the Muslim dress in this regard is not a rejection of the consumer culture, but merely a challenge to the meaning of the beauty it defines.
The rising consumer culture tends to alienate everyone regardless of financial power. Nevertheless, how people react largely depends on one’s location within the existing class divisions. While the new rich are able to fight the alienation by celebrating and playing with commodities, the fundamentalists who mostly come from the lower middle and the lower class can hardly do the same. The latter have less freedom to enjoy the consumer culture and very often have to distance themselves from shopping malls, fast food restaurants and cafés and to learn how to discipline the body properly.

**Islamic fundamentalism and democracy**

Regarding the Islamic fundamentalists, one could wonder “am I with or against them?” Since the movement has been frequently seen as a serious threat to democracy in the country “does it mean that we should oppose them at all cost and, if necessary, disband the organisations?” How do my studies allow me to answer these questions? What kind of academic investigation is further needed?

First of all, I find the very notion “with or against them” problematic because its logic barely touches upon my position. As mentioned several times, this thesis treats Islamic fundamentalism as a result rather than a cause. Should we regard the movement as dangerous, the real problem we need to deal with lies within the social structure that allows and provokes its emergence. Instead, the following questions, which require another project of investigation, should be raised. Is fundamentalism or the social structure that produces such religious radicalism a hindrance to the ongoing process of democratisation in the Archipelago? Is it the failure of the democratisation process to take into consideration the problems of oppression and domination at the level of self and of everyday life that have led many of us to focus our attention more on the fundamentalism, instead of on the structure that produces it? How should the democratisation process be better understood against this largely ignored social structure and historical change? What does democracy mean if we take into account the issue of oppression, inauthenticity and disenchantment?

In so doing, as a form of resistance that responds to the problem of oppression and domination, Islamic fundamentalism is a normal social movement that tries to bring a dramatic change at the level of personality. In fact studying this movement can help us to understand similar forms of resistance conducted by other contemporary groups in the country such as feminist movement, the environmentalist
movement, the student movement and the counter-culture movement. It is interesting to know how these latter movements are involved in their own struggle for identity; how their respective identities denote and connote their respective desires for freedom and certainty in life; and how they differ from Islamic fundamentalism.

What is unacceptable, however, are two things. First, the fundamentalists' preoccupation with resistance fails to transform the social structure they oppose. It seems that they are not really against the rising consumer culture. They just want a certainty in life and a sense of having autonomous control over things and activities they engage in. Their fight against the consumer culture and liberalism, for example, is more about accentuating their existence and valorising their identity. In this sense the Islamic fundamentalist movement is hardly an agent of change. No-one should rely on them for a meaningful social transformation that brings emancipation to all. Instead, the fundamentalists tend to be both pragmatic and conservative. Social transformation for them is nothing more than having a different approach, a different understanding and different relations to the world surrounding them without the real and significant change of that world. How the movement ended up in this kind of reactionary tendency and conservatism will need further investigation.

Second, while the fundamentalists' resistance to oppression and domination might be legitimate, the way it has rejected pluralism, tolerance, liberty and democracy should be denounced. Nevertheless, we should be cautious not to be too quick to jump to the conclusion that what is needed is educating the activists about pluralism, tolerance, liberty and democracy as well as replacing their established understanding about Islamic teachings with one that is more closely associated with these universal values. In my view, the fundamentalists are to think what they like, to make their own interpretations and to express them just as I have the same right to have a different understanding and to reject their way of thinking. However, they should not try to force others to agree with them and to treat other views as simply wrong, containing elements of evil or being part of a conspiracy against them. They cannot treat other groups and individuals, particularly those who are opposing the fundamentalists' way of thinking, as enemies that must be vanquished, but as adversaries that have the right to live, to think and to speak differently. To borrow the expression of Deleuze and Guattari, we might think about the relations between the fundamentalists and other groups and individuals in terms of "...fragments whose
sole relationship is sheer difference—fragments that are related to one another in that each of them is different without having recourse to any sort of original totality...639

One could easily argue that it is the fundamentalist way of thinking that leads them to treat others as the enemy. As demonstrated in the foregone chapters, the fundamentalists rely not only on the making of difference, but also on the negating of others, in making sense of who they are. It seems that rejecting others, treating others as a dangerous entity that must be eliminated, is ironically constitutive to their identity. Here, we might be tempted to ask a question: “Is fundamentalism the only entity which produces its identity by rejecting and sometimes demonising others?” Does democracy itself, regarding the notion “with or against them”, rely on a similar logic of difference? If the answer is yes, “is it possible for democracy to end up in some form of undemocratic attitude toward others, including the religious radicalism it strongly denounces?”

In this sense, we can equally approach the issue from another direction with the following question. “Is it possible to think about the logic of negation as social construction?” If the answer is positive, borrowing Mouffe,640 the way individuals and groups in contemporary society treat others as illegitimate enemies is perhaps produced within a specific historical context where politics and, in particular, democracy have ceased to be about antagonism between legitimate adversaries. It seems that what happens is not the end of antagonism as some would love to occur, but instead, antagonism is merely transformed into a new form of conflict. This time democracy, which has abandoned antagonism, is not the realm of conflict, but part of the conflict against other systems and identities, including religious radicalism, which is ironically regarded as the illegitimate enemy which has no right to live.

Simply put, we are right to reject the fundamentalists for violence, intolerance and the anti-democracy stand they are preoccupied with. However, we should not lose sight of the oppression, domination and contradictions that produced the rise of such religious radicalism in the first place. For this could lead us to maintain, rather than question, the established socio-cultural order. Moreover, our rejection of Islamic fundamentalism should not also allow us to treat the fundamentalists in the same way they treat us as the illegitimate enemy. This could turn us into the same monster we condemn.

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