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‘A Little But Enough’:
Street Children’s Subcultures in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
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This thesis represents the results of my own research. Where I have drawn on the work of others, due acknowledgement has been made. The text is not longer than 100,000 words.

Harriot Beazley
Abstract

This thesis is an examination of how street children in Indonesia are living on the edge of society and face multiple forms of social and spatial exclusion in their everyday lives. Homeless street children have often experienced alienation from their homes and families, and discrimination when working on the streets. In Indonesia they are perceived to be ‘out of place’, and to be committing a social violation by transgressing that which is considered to be appropriate behaviour. Consequently, they are stigmatised through a discourse of deviance, and physically removed from public spaces by state ‘cleansing’ operations which involve arrest, imprisonment and, in some cases, torture.

The majority of Yogyakarta’s street children are boys, although the numbers of girls are growing. In the thesis I show how despite their social and spatial oppression, boys and girls living on the streets are not passive victims. Instead, they have found multiple and resourceful ways to earn money and exercise their own agency from the margins of the world economy, and from the periphery of gendered power relations. This has been by ‘winning spaces’ in the city where they can survive and exist, and by constructing their own communities or urban subcultures within Indonesian society. The thesis examines the spatial expressions of the street kid subcultures, including territorial issues; how the children identify with particular areas for different activities; and how their identities, including their sexual identities, shift in relation to their social and spatial settings. The analysis also explains the process of socialisation to the street-child world, and how the children have developed their own code of ethics, norms, values, hierarchies, language and bodily styles, which have emerged as a way to resist and subvert their imposed exclusion in the world. Finally, I explain how for many street kids ‘home’ is yet another ‘space of exclusion’, and why it is very difficult for children to return there. This includes an inquiry into the problems which adolescents face as they have to make difficult decisions in the ‘liminal’ period between childhood and adulthood.

My research methodology in the field included informal interviews, participatory observation on the street, and PAR (Participatory Action Research) activities, including focus group discussions and the collection of spontaneous drawings and ‘cognitive maps’ drawn by the children. I also traced the biographical paths and changing life situations of six, key informants. In addition, I interviewed other people on the street who had interaction with the children in their daily lives, and I spent time working with non-government organisations which assist street children, interviewing both the workers and children. My work contributes to the growing body of critical studies of children and geography, subcultural studies, and of street children in the 'developing' and the 'developed' world. Equally important is how the children themselves directly participated in the investigation of their lives.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am indebted to the girls and boys who live and work on the streets of Yogyakarta. Without their friendship, support and acceptance, this account of their lives would not have been possible. My sincere thanks also to Alison Murray, my supervisor, whose scholarship, critical guidance, and imagination have inspired me throughout the research and writing process. Also to Peter Rimmer for his encouragement, support, and advice, and the occasional apt reminder to ‘finish the thesis’. I have also been fortunate to benefit from the guidance and suggestions of Kathy Robinson, Laine Berman, and Sharon Bessell. Their advice and comments on my approach, research and writing have been stimulating and insightful. Inge Kerssemakers has proved invaluable by translating Dutch articles, commenting on chapter drafts, offering me her ideas and perceptions on events, and for generally being there throughout my fieldwork and beyond. I am also grateful to Jose van Veldhoven for her translations and friendship. Of course, any shortcomings in the thesis are solely my responsibility, and in no way should be attributed to anyone else.

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GLOSSARY

Adik little brother
Alun-Alun city square
Anak Baru new kid
Anak Bebas free child
Anak bermasalah problem child
Anak Jalanan street child
Anak Kecil small child
Anak nakal naughty child
Anak terlantar abandoned child
Andong horse drawn buggy
Aparat state apparatus
Azik great!
Bahaya Sikat shoot to kill
Bahasa language
Baik good
Baik hati kind hearted
Banci transvestite
Bapak father
Bapak tiri stepfather
Bebas free
Becak pedicab
Biarin leave it
Biasa normal
Bibit Bobot Bebet ancestral characteristics
Bis bus
Bhinneka Tunggal Ika unity in diversity
Bo’el anal sex (slang)
Bosan bored
Bule white foreigner
Butung-butungain
Cah-cah
Calo
Cari
Celek-celek
Cewek materi
Cita Cita Anak Indonesia
Cuek
Dalang
Dangdut
Desa
Dharma Waniwa
(d)idalam
(d)angkap
(d)kompas
Dilarang
(d)aair
Dua Anak Cukup
Duit
Durang awoong
Enak
Enak di Jalan
Garukan
Gatol
Gelandangan
Gembl / Bukan Gembl
Gerbang
Gozdengo
Gudeg
Halal
Hasrat
pretending to have amputated
limbs
local lads
passenger recruiter for buses
to look for
rattle (for busking)
material girl
ideal Indonesian child
don't care (slang)
puppet master
popular music
village
women's organisation
inside (prison)
arrested
to be mugged
forbidden
evicted
two kids are enough
money (slang)
not yet a person
Nice or tasty (for food)
its great in the street
police operation (slang)
itch
vagrant
vagrant/ not a vagrant
train carriage
long hair
traditional dish
correct
frustration
Hebat
Hitam
Homo
Hoyen
Hutang
Ibu
Ibuism
Ibu tiri
Icik-icik
Iehlas
Ikat-ikutan
Inayaf
Jelek
Joget
Joki
Jorok
Kabur
Kampung
Kelarga
Kalah
Kartu kelarga
Kemajuan
Keras
Kere
Kereta api (gravis)
Kerja
Kos
Kraton
Lampa Merah
Lebaran
cool
black
homosexual
leftover food
(slang)
derby credit
mother/ term
of address
state discourse of ibu
stepmother
rattle for busking
sincerity
following/copying (a person)
educated / aware
ugly / bad
dancing (to Dangdut music)
car jockey (3 in 1)
shabby/uncouth
run away/ flee
residential area (urban)
family
big brother/sister
family identity card
progress
harsh/ unpolite
vagrant / street kid
Train (free train)
work
boarding house
sultan's palace
traffic lights
religious holiday
Lebih
Lem
Lesahan
Lendo
Lente
Lasman
Lacu
Laruh
Mabuk
Main (billiard, dingdong)
Malas
Malu
Manja
Marah bodoh
Masyarakat umum
Membalas dendam
Menerusau
Minta maaf

Mimam
Mulung
Mum
Musim hujan
Musim gurukan
Nakal
Nenek
Ngamen
Ngelem
Njemis
Ngapil
Nongkrong
Nyemir

more
glue
street side restaurant
White foreigner (Javanese)
prostitute (Javanese)
guesthouse
cute
village head
drunken
play (pool, video games)
lazy
ashamed/ shy
spoil
uneducated
mainstream society
revenge
to wander
ask for forgiveness
(at Lebaran)

drunk
scavenge
season
rainy season
police operation season
naughty
grandmother
busking
sniffing glue
beg
taking pills
hang out
shoe-shine

Nyopet
Obat (gendeng)
Oleh-leleh
On
Operasi
Operasi Preman
Pacar
Pacaran

Pak
Pancasila
Parkir
Pasar
Pembangunan
Pembantu
Pemulung
Pendamping
Pengamen
Penyakit
Pepek

Perek (perempuan eksperimental)
Perempuan
Perempuan
Perempuan Nakal
Petrus (Pembunuh Misterius)
Pil
Preman
Preman kecil
Priyayi
Puasa
Pusaka
Pusing

pick-pocket
(crazy) medicine
presents
uncle/ elder man
police operation
preman operation
girl/boyfriend
to go out with a girl or
boyfriend
sir
state ideology
to park cars
market
development
domestic servant
scavenger
NGO worker
busker
disease, police (slang)
impared (slang)
experimental girls
cross roads/ traffic lights
woman
bad woman (prostitute)
mysterious killings
pills
thug/ hoodlum
small thug
Javanese elite
fasting month
powerful object
dizzy/ confused
Putus
Rahmadan
Rel rere api
Rendan (Kere berandar)
Rakun
Sakit hari
Saling memperhatikan
Saling menelong
Saling pinjam
Sampah masyarakat
Santai
Sawah
Sekolah
Senang
Seni
Seri
Sera
Sex Bebas
Sholat
Siang
Skripsi
Sodomi
Sopan
Stres
Suap
Subversif
Sulit Hidup
Taman
Teler
Teman
break/split-up (in a relationship)
fasting month
train tracks
street girls (vagrants wearing make-up
harmony
hurt feelings
look out for one another
help each other
borrow from one another
scum of society
relaxed/peaceful
rice fields
school
happy
alone
art
scary
free sex
to pray
late morning
dissertation
anal sex
polite
stresses
fine
subversive
difficult life
park
drunk (slang)
friend
Terlantar Keluarga
Tewas
Tidak Boleh
Tikyan (Sithik ning Lamayan)
Tumbal
Uang
Warung
Yayasan
Zaman pembangunan
abandoned by family
drunk (slang)
cannot
street boy
sacrifice
money
food stall
foundation/organisation
development era
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<td>ABG</td>
<td>Anak Baru Gede (urban teenagers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
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<td>BKKKS</td>
<td>Institute of Social Welfare</td>
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<td>BMW</td>
<td>Bersih Manusiai Berwibawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brimob</td>
<td>Brigade Mobil (Mobile Brigade)</td>
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<td>DIY</td>
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<td>Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara (Broad guidelines for State Policy)</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
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<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>Intel</td>
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<td>IPEC</td>
<td>International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour</td>
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<td>ISJ</td>
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For Topo
Prologue

Nobody Wanted Topo

Topo was thirteen years old when he died, falling from the roof of a moving freight train. At the time he was travelling between Yogyakarta, a small city in Central Java, Indonesia, to the capital city Jakarta. A trip which he made frequently. When he was seven years old his mother remarried and moved to Jakarta. She took Topo's younger sister with her, but left Topo behind in Yogyakarta with his father. Topo's father was a busker and a drunk. He also remarried but Topo hated living with his stepmother, and his father used to beat him when he was drunk or he had lost at gambling. Topo's maternal grandmother also lived in Yogyakarta and he saw her sometimes, but there was no room for him to live with her in her tiny house in the poor kampung (urban housing) by the river's edge. Nobody wanted Topo.

Nobody wanted Topo. Who would want a boy who lived on the streets; who smoked cigarettes when he was ten years old; who rarely washed; who was constantly high on glue, or drunk on cheap whisky? A boy who fought with other street kids, who swore constantly, who stole things and who had a 'couldn't-give-a-damn' attitude to life? A boy who earned his money on the streets by shining shoes, busking with a tambourine, or by stealing, begging, or having sex with transvestites and homosexuals? A boy who spent his money on prostitutes, on alcohol, glue, and pornographic movies? Who would want him?

His parents did not want him, and society did not want him. The state certainly did not want him. Topo was a menace. A threat to society. A bad image for the developing nation to which he belonged: Indonesia. Topo represented dirt, disorder, underdevelopment, and shame. He was a disgrace. He was constantly being beaten up or arrested by the police and security guards, for fighting with knives or fists, for being drunk, for busking at the traffic lights, or for simply being there. Nobody wanted Topo.
Yet Topo was not alone. He had friends. Lots of them. There were other children living and working on the streets of Indonesia, just like him, and their numbers are increasing every day. Topo’s peers in Yogyakarta and Jakarta cared about him. They were his new family and looked out for him, supported him in hard times and shared what they had with him. There were other people who also cared about Topo, and who delighted in his vivacious sense of humour and love of life. There were buskers, stall owners, pedicab drivers, NGO workers, students, even security guards...and me.

Topo was one of my key informants while I was researching the lives of homeless children in Yogyakarta. In March 1997 he died, just before his fourteenth birthday. There are thousands of children in Indonesia who for similar reasons to Topo no longer live with their parents, but instead live with a community of street kids on the streets of Indonesia’s cities. They exist from day to day, trying to enjoy the small pleasures which their hard lives offer them, and scraping together enough money to survive. This thesis is about those children, the time I spent with them in the city of Yogyakarta, and what they taught me about their lives.
Introduction

(Chapter One)

Vagrants for Study

I am definitely a Tikyan
I am definitely a street kid
I am definitely a vagrant
But I don't want to be made into a dissertation
by those who go to school. Why is it us,
who must be researched? We are not trees or animals.
I am a human being. So don't you write a dissertation
just as you wish about street kids
You research us and you ask how did you become a street
to kid? What is it like to live in the street? You seem like a
good person. But it just stays the same, you are happy and
we stay in the street as vagrants. There are
no changes.
With respect, as all the street kids, we request that you
don't:
1. Make us seem vile
2. Criticise us
3. Scapegoat us
(IthEM. Jejal, March, 1997:12).¹

This anonymous poem was written while I was researching the lives of street
children in the city of Yogyakarta, Central Java. At the time 'street kids' (anak
jalan) were a hot topic in the Indonesian media, and a number of people were
coming through Yogyakarta to 'research' street children. One reason for this was
because Girli, the local NGO (non-government organisation) for street boys, had
just opened a new 'street university', which had captured the imagination of many
newspaper journalists.² The journalists would come by for the day, interview the
children, go back to their offices and often write articles unrelated to what the boys
had told them. This infuriated the children. The articles usually portrayed them in a
negative light, and stereotyped them in ways the journalists thought would be a
'good read'. At around the same time there were also some anthropology students
from the local University, Universitas Gajah Mada (UGM), who were distributing
questionnaires among street children and writing about them for their honours
dissertations (skripsi). There was also an anthropologist from Amsterdam
conducting research for her Masters thesis. And then there was me.

¹ My own translation.
It was not the only time I heard such a protest from the children. In fact, it was the biggest criticism I had to face while researching their lives: that I was benefiting myself and my own career, while for them nothing changed.3 It was a challenging accusation to answer, but I tried as best I could. I told them that up till then few people had spent any length of time with the street children they wrote about, or had bothered to get to know them and to really understand them and see their lives from their point of view. Instead, people’s opinions were generally based on preconceived beliefs and ideas.

As the poem implies, street children are often misrepresented in the press, local studies and in academic literature. In fact, the stereotyping of street children is one of the biggest obstacles when attempting to understand them. In Indonesia street children are often portrayed in overly simplistic terms, particularly by the press, and are either presented in a derogatory and negative light as lazy, work-shy and drug-crazed criminals, or they are over-romanticised as pitiful, abandoned victims, unable to look after themselves.

Stereotyping of street children militates against the success of many programmes for these children, despite the large amounts of money thrown at them by local and international organisations. Just as appropriate technology is vital for successful development projects, so too is appropriate intervention into street children’s activities. Further to this, the programmes which do seem to provide effective support and benefit the children’s lives (such as Giri in Yogyakarta) are ignored or undermined by the government. This is because the NGO’s philosophy of letting the children have a voice is considered to be incompatible with Indonesian ideology: an ideology which dictates that children should stay in the family home, not participate in discussions about their lives, and be seen and not heard.4

The way they are perceived by society is one of the reasons why street boys in Yogyakarta have created their own name for their subculture: Tikyan. The name is an acronym from the Javanese ‘Sithik Ning Laman’ meaning ‘A Little But Enough.’5 Tikyan is a name used with pride in the children’s private language, and is a form of resistance to the names with negative connotations, such as gembel or ‘vagrant’ (gelandangan), given to them by society (Berman and Beazley, 1997).6 By ignoring derogatory terms and adopting the name Tikyan the children are able to create positive self-identities to escape feelings of shame (maka) about who they are. In this way the children’s subculture can be understood as a form of resistance to the outside world.

I told the children that I wanted to present their lives in a way that has rarely been achieved in academic literature: by using their own voices, and by letting them speak for themselves. A street child’s view of living on the street is vital before one can even begin to understand the problems, difficulties and social responsibilities which they have to face everyday. I said that I wanted to write a ‘book’ about them so that people would understand them and how they live from day to day.

Hopefully, I said, my book would lead to a greater understanding of their circumstances. I also said that perhaps, in the future, those people wanting to assist street children to improve their opportunities in life would listen to the children themselves, and base assistance programmes on information provided by children in research. As Bessell (1998:1) so rightly says: ‘as children develop they are increasingly capable of forming and expressing their views [and] are well equipped to identify their problems.’

Yogyakarta said to me that children’s ‘participation’ goes against Indonesian culture, and is unacceptable in any programmes for children.

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2 For a description of the ‘World’s First Street University’ see Berman and Beazley (1997).
4 The right to participate is one of the stipulated rights of the child in the United Nation’s Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989), and ratified by Indonesia in 1990. However, a woman from the Coordinating Board of Social Welfare Activities (BKKKS) in

5 The word Tikyan is also often written as Tekyan, but for the purpose of this thesis I am spelling it the former way. A distinctive part of the street-child subculture is the use of their own slang or private language. This issue is discussed in Chapter 6.
6 The term gembel literally means ‘discarded or used clothes’ or ’poor and shabby’ and is often used by mainstream society as a generic label for street children who they regard with disgust. It is also the name given to wanderers, hobos or tramps, and hippy looking tourists.
Street children’s lives are complex and diverse, and the ways in which they present themselves to the people they meet and to each other are constantly changing. Over time, however, and as I gained their trust and friendship, the children gave me a unique opportunity to understand them, by allowing me to have a window into their world.

Literature Review
This thesis contributes to the growing body of literature in three separate but related areas: to the expanding literature on street and working children in the ‘developing’ world; to subcultural studies; and to critical geographical studies of children and youth cultures. The thesis is unique, however, in the way that it brings these three disciplines together. It is also distinct in the way it allows for the expression of children’s agency by asking the children to participate directly in an investigation of their lives and experiences.

Child Labour and Children’s Rights
Street children in Indonesia must be viewed in the context of a growing global awareness and discourse on child labour and children’s rights issues. The United Nation’s Convention of the Right’s of the Child (UNCRC) was drawn up in 1989, and ratified by Indonesia in 1990 (Blackburn, 1997:98). Since then, and throughout the 1990s, there has been a surge of international interest focusing on child labour in developing countries, especially in issues related to the international economy and globalisation (see Bessell, 1998; Roberts, 1998; Katz, 1998; White and Tjandraningsih, 1998). As a result of these discourses, anti-child-labour groups and trade unions in the West have actively participated in creating a conceptual being, who now occupies many people’s geographical imaginations: the ‘Exploited Third World Child Worker’ (Roberts, 1998).

In 1992 Indonesia was included in the global debate when it became one of the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) six test cases in its International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). The IPEC programme attempts to identify, monitor and regulate or abolish child labour. According to the ILO, there are 2.4 million children in Indonesia between the ages of ten to fourteen engaged in labour: 11 percent of children in Indonesia are in that age group (Thijs, 1994:6; Bessell, 1998; Blackburn, 1997). The survey, however, only accounts for a proportion of working children in Indonesia (Bessell, 1998). This is because many are employed outside the formal sector and/or are younger than ten. Of those uncounted children who work in urban areas, many spend their time on the streets, engaged in a variety of income-generating activities in the informal sector. It is these children who are usually given the generic label of ‘street children’.

Street Children: Definitions and descriptions
Any girl or boy for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland etc.), has become his/her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood; who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by a responsible adult (Laski, 1992:297).

This definition of a street child, taken from a United Nation’s report, is expansive enough to include those children who live with or without their families, and who make their living on the streets full or part time. The street children phenomenon is global one and although the continents most affected are Latin America, Africa and Asia, there are more and more children living on the streets in Europe, North America and Australia. It is a phenomenon which is confined mainly to urban

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8 The national steering committee for the ILO-IPEC plan for Indonesia includes the Ministry of Manpower, Social Affairs, Internal Affairs, Justice and the National Development Agency, the Indonesian employees Association, the SPSI (the official Trade Union) and NGO representatives (Blackburn, 1997:100). Of IPEC’s 22 programmes, in 1994/5, 15 were carried out through NGOs, i.e. of which was Giri, the NGO in Yogya working with street boys (said, pers com. Fangi Putranto, July 1995). This funding has since ceased.

9 Estimates of the numbers of children working in Indonesia vary widely, from 2 to 10 million children under the age of 15 (White and Tjandraningsih, 1998:v).

10 One commentator states that: ‘In Indonesia, 3.8 percent or 2.8 million children work in the informal sector, the number may be doubled if [those] working in the informal sectors are included’ (Widasana, Jakarta Post, 23 July, 1991).

11 For studies of homeless children and youth in ‘developed’ countries see Davis, Hatty and Burke (1995) for a description of street kid’s lives in Australia; the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute’s (1996) report on the young and homeless in Melbourne, Australia; the Council of Europe Press (1993; 1994) on homelessness and street children in Europe; Smith (1994;1996) on
areas, and rapid urbanisation is one factor which has contributed to this (Szanton Blanc, 1994:12-17). Other reasons given for the increasing numbers of street children are the greater gaps between rich and poor, poverty, the influence of consumerism, family breakdowns and more domestic violence (Miller, 1996:1). In the developing world, economic stagnation compounded by foreign debt problems has placed impossible strains on families and individuals who migrate to the cities in order to survive. Often these people end up living in slums or shanty towns and require their children to go out and work to contribute to the family income. Once these children have been working on the streets for some time they often leave home altogether, preferring the freedom of the street, and the escape from poverty, parental neglect or violence at home.

Street children are not one homogeneous group. They constitute a diverse population involved in a wide range of activities. Studies in Africa and Latin America have sometimes categorised street children into two or three groups, usually by degree of family contact ranging from those who still go to school and have continual family contact, known as ‘children of the street’, to those who are no longer in school and have minimal or no family contact whatsoever, known as ‘children of the street’ (see Balanon, 1989:160; Lusk, 1992:293). These children live, work, and spend the majority of their time on the streets, and have very little if any contact with their families. Glauser (1990:138) states that:

‘Children of the street’ is the term which grassroots level social workers, non-governmental organizations, international agencies like UNICEF and also social researchers use when, within the broader category of ‘street children’; they want to refer to children who live on the street, as opposed to those who work on the street but return home after work.

Such definitions have recently been described as ‘dated’ and are criticised for obscuring the realities of street children’s lives (Connolly and Ennew, 1996:132; homelessness in New York and North America; Visano (1990) on street kids in Canada and the USA; and Ruddick (1998) on homeless youth in Hollywood.

Franchet, 1996:262; Glauser, 1990). As Lucchini (1996:169) points out, street children do not only occupy the street but pass through a variety of different domains in their everyday lives, such as their family homes, institutions, NGOs and welfare services, where they experience a ‘constellation’ of different relationships.

In Indonesia, street children are also categorised into different types, and are known locally as gembel (tramp) and bukan (not) gembel. Those children who are bukan gembel spend all their days on the streets, looking for money in various ways, but go home at night. Sometimes, however, they do stay on the street at night. This may be because they are too frightened to go home as they face the possibility of violence or abuse for having been unsuccessful in getting their ‘target’ money when working (Hardono and Anwar, 1992: 58). At other times, however, it is because they have become involved in the street culture, and eventually they move away from home altogether. The children I write about in this thesis are those who have left home, although, as I will show, their move to full-time street life may have been gradual, and some do still visit their families.

How old are they?
What is a ‘child’? It is well acknowledged that ‘childhood’ is a culturally and historically specific institution (Aries, 1962; Field, 1995:51; Valentine, 1998:1). This is no less true in Indonesia, where changing notions of childhood relate to the country’s integration into the global capitalist economy, and the subsequent ways in which the elite have been influenced by the ‘global export of modern childhood’ (Stephens, 1995:15). The concept of a child varies considerably in Indonesia, depending on the perception of different activities, and the national age-related legislation. As Bessel (1998:14-5) has noted:

In Indonesia, children are prohibited from employment until the age of fifteen, with some exceptions. At fifteen, however, children are still prohibited from a range of other activities, and have not legally reached adulthood. Indonesia’s Act 4/1979 on Child Welfare identifies a child as any person under the age of twenty-one unless married.
There is, however, discrimination in marriageable age, as it is legal for girls to marry at sixteen, but boys must be nineteen (Blackburn, 1997). This implies that people below these age limits are recognised as children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989:6), however, stipulates that 'a child means every human being below the age of eighteen, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'. In Indonesia majority is reached when a child becomes seventeen. Then they are no longer considered to be under the jurisdiction of their parents, and are obliged to obtain a state-issued identity card (Kim against Penduduk: KTP). Electoral Law also recognises seventeen as the minimum age for the right to vote.

Street children themselves refer to each other as 'child' (anak) well into their early twenties, and it is not uncommon for someone in their late twenties, particularly unmarried girls, to be referred to as anak. Sixteen or seventeen years, however, is about the age that street children in Yogyakarta change their occupations from shoe-shining (which is considered to be a 'young child's'- anak kecil- occupation), to other more adult-related activities such as busking or selling. This is when they start to feel ashamed (malu) about their existence as they reach the 'liminal period' of adolescence (see James,1986). The majority of children and youth with whom I spent my time in Yogyakarta were between the ages of eight and seventeen years. All of them, both boys and girls, referred to themselves as 'street children' (anak jalan). For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, this is the age group to whom I refer as 'street children'.

Why do they leave home?
A recent study on Indonesian street children wrote that gembel are those children who are: 'Orphaned or abandoned by their families and live full time on the street, and children who are organised or pressed by adults to commit crime' (Ghalib et al,1994:16). This statement is a fallacy. In reality there are hardly any children living on the streets who have been orphaned, abandoned or forced into crime. Far from it. Many leave home of their own accord, and it is often an active choice. In Chapters 2 and 8 I emphasise the agency of the children choosing the street as 'home' and the reasons they do so.

How many are there?
Nobody knows how many street children there are in Indonesia. The Indonesian government is yet to officially recognise their existence, and estimates range considerably. In 1991 one government official asserted that there were none. A newspaper recently reported that based on surveys there are currently 23,311 anak menggelandang (child vagrants) in seven major Indonesian cities, while UNICEF has apparently stated that there are 50,000 street children in Indonesia (Media Indonesia, Sept, 1998). Other reports range from a few thousand, to 'perhaps hundreds of thousands', or even three million (Berman, 1994a:18; Kompas, 1995; Bernas, 28 May, 1996; Kedaulatan Rakyat, 13 Sept, 1996; Miller, 1996:1). One reason why they are so hard to count is because they are a highly mobile group, who travel from city to city via Java’s extensive railway system, stowing away on goods trains or riding on the roof of passenger trains (Map 2). It is also because many street children were not registered at birth, and so officially do not exist.

Map 2: Java’s Railway System

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12 This depends, however, on the child's own personal development and when they reach puberty. Some children start to feel 'ashamed' about shoe shining if they have already reached puberty when they are as young as thirteen or fourteen. Other children still look very young at sixteen and continue to earn money shining shoes.

13 These issues are discussed in detail in the thesis.

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14 See the newspaper report 'Di Indonesia tak Ada Anak Jalan'. (In Indonesia there are no street children), in which a government official, Soesatyo Rustam, says that children working on the streets are telling lies that they say homeless in order to get money (Pilihan Rakyat, 13 November, 1993).

15 Many poor families do not register their children at birth as it costs money and is seen to be too much trouble. For more details regarding unregistered children in Indonesia, see Appendix 1 and the case study of Savit in Chapter 8.
Boys between the ages of eight to seventeen, are those most visible working on the streets, although there are also girls. Street girls are not so visible nor are there so many of them because they do not earn their money in the same way, due to gender divisions of labour in the informal sector and the socialisation of children in the home (see Irwanto et al; 1995:3; Bessell, 1998). Sometimes, however, they can be seen working on the street: begging at traffic lights and in shopping areas, working at warning (food stalls), or soliciting for sex. A recent study on child workers in three cities in Java found that: 'Children working in the formal sector were mostly (90 percent) females while those in the informal sector [which includes the street] were mostly (84 percent) males' (Irwanto et al., 1995a: 7).

Indonesian Case Studies
Studies of street children in Latin America, South Asia and Africa, are expanding, but despite the increasing numbers of street children in Southeast Asia not much academic analysis has yet been generated. Of those that exist the majority are about street children in the Philippines and Vietnam. Most studies in Indonesia have been small and Jakarta-centric, highlighting the children's nutritional status and life survival skills, with an analysis of some of the occupational hazards, and education and health implications related to their life styles (Marshall et al., 1991; Hardiono and Anwar, 1992; Sudrajat, 1996a; 1996b; Whitmore, 1996). These studies have been written mainly by NGOs and have focused on programme and social work issues, and recommendations to NGOs and policy makers for responses to the 'problem' (Gahlib et al., 1994; Putranto et al; 1990, Irwanto et al., 1994, 1995; YKAI/ Chadhope, 1991; Sudrajat, 1996a; 1996b; Whitmore, 1996).

It is my view that these investigations have failed to distinguish adequately between different types of street children, and tend to see them as one homogeneous group. This is with the very notable exception of Addidana and Ertanto, both of whom work with the non-government organisation (NGO) in Yogyakarta, Giri. Ertanto (1993a; 1994; 1996; undated) is Director of the research arm of Giri, Yayasan Humana; he is an anthropologist who has written numerous commentaries and papers in the Indonesian language about homeless street children for newspapers, local seminars and discussion groups. Currently he is writing his masters thesis at the University Gajah Mada (UGM) based on his many years of experience with Giri and street children. His particular interest is street children within the context of post-colonialism, and of their political identity. I cite his work frequently throughout this thesis. Addidana (1985; 1995; 1996; 1997; Berman and Addidana, 1995) is the founder and principle Director of Giri; he writes brilliantly about street children's lives and their relationship to the Indonesian state. Most of these writings, however, although excellent and thought provoking, are in Indonesian (thus limited in their audience), and remain unpublished.

In addition, Berman, a linguistic-anthropologist has published articles about Giri (1994; Berman and Addidana, 1995) and it was her stimulating article (1994) about the NGO in the magazine Inside Indonesia which first drew my attention to the homeless children of Yogyakarta, and the organisation which works with them. More recently Berman has written about street children's narratives and identity constructions in their monthly bulletin Jejal (1999). In 1993 the Giri boys started their own magazine in order to counteract their negative image in the press, and to present their own accounts of their lives to the outside world (Ertanto, 1994; Miller, 1996). The magazine is called jejal, which is an acronym of 'Screams from the Street' (JEJALANAN).

20 To my knowledge there has been one published study of street children in Medan (Purnamaswari and Damanik, 1993) and one other on the children of Ujung Pandang (Gahlib et al., 1994).
Jejal is a ‘fanzine’ or ‘zine’ (see Leonard, 1998:102). It is compiled by Girli and contains unedited stories written by street children from all over Indonesia about aspects of everyday life which they see as important. It provides a fascinating window into the street child subculture, as it contains many different types of stories and descriptions about home, friendships and life on the streets. In the same way that Hobsbawm (1979:111) says that British punks used ‘fanzines’ in opposition to ‘skewed interpretations in the press’, Jejal can be seen as a way the children have provided themselves an alternative discourse and critical space within the subculture itself. It can be seen as a site of subversion and resistance to mainstream newspapers and discourse, and a means of facilitating the geographical spread of the subculture (see Leonard, 1998:101).

Examining the children’s stories in order to understand their lives was also the approach taken by Miller (1996) in her informative unpublished Masters thesis which investigates street children’s lives by analysing their narratives in Jejal. The same approach was also taken by White and Tjandraningish (1998:42-51) in their short case-study of street children in Yogyakarta, and the anthropologist Purna (undated). Although this method of analysing the children’s stories in Jejal does indeed provide the children’s ‘own view of their lives’, and an ‘intimate glimpse of the street child’s cognitive strategies for survival’, it is nevertheless limited in its scope or understanding of how the children really operate in their everyday lives (White and Tjandraningsih, 1998:43; Berman, 1999: 1).

Apart from these notable exceptions, most of the studies of street children in Indonesia are primarily about children on the street. In addition, the research methods of many of the studies are simply brief interviews with some children, and then conclusions inferred from these fleeting encounters. Other researchers have only interviewed NGO workers, and not the children themselves. Many of the interviews, and much of the data, are based on ill-conceived questionnaires. Further, few researchers spend time getting to know the children, and the children are invariably interviewed by a stranger. This is not the best way of obtaining information, especially from street children who learn to be suspicious of strangers as a daily survival mechanism. As Marshall et al (1991: 30) noted in their brief Cambridge study of street children in Jakarta: ‘Ideally, time should be spent getting to know the children, befriending them, and the researcher should be fluent in the local language and customs’.

There is, therefore, a dearth of rigorous academic research on homeless children in Indonesia, and very little knowledge about their everyday lives, or their intrinsic qualities and characteristics, particularly from the child’s perspective. To compensate for this deficit, the main focus of my thesis is an analysis of the children of Yogyakarta’s street’s ‘culture’, which I see as being manifested in the existence and maintenance of a distinct, street-child social world: an urban ‘subculture’ within Indonesian society. As outlined above, street children in Indonesia are often stereotyped as deviant criminals, or they are over romanticised as helpless, abandoned creatures. Either way, their lives are portrayed as a ‘problem’ which needs a solution. The creation and maintenance of their subculture, however, can itself be seen as their own solution to the situation they find themselves in. As Hobsbawm (1979:81) asserts: ‘Each subcultural “instance” represents a “solution” to particular problems and contradictions’.

Subcultural Theory and Urban Studies
By using subcultural theory formulated at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham (Brake, 1980,1985; Cohen, 1980; Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Hobsbawm 1979; Willis, 1976; 1977; 1990a; 1990b) and other writers on children and youth subcultures (Blackman, 1995; Thornton, 1995;)

21 The word ‘zine’ is an abbreviation of ‘fanzine’ which in turn is an alteration of ‘magazine’. They are self published, independent texts devoted to various groups and topics and produced on a small scale (Leonard, 1998:102). The explosion of fanzines in the 1970s as a response to punk rock established the publications as youth culture media (Leonard, 1998:103).
22 For many years only street boys contributed to Jejal. More recently, however, (since about January 1997) street girls have also started contributing to the bulletin.
23 See Glaister (1990: 148-9) who sees the exclusion of children of the street as being due to a notion held by NGOs of these children being ‘irreversible’, and too difficult to help as they do not fit into programmes and fail to respond in a way that the projects want them to. The children of the street are therefore often excluded from project action. There is at least one project I know of in Jakarta which will not help children of the street (anek genek) because they are thought to fight and intimidate the other children and to be beyond help.
24 See also Swart (1990) who made a similar observation about street children in South Africa.
Redhead, 1997; Skeleton and Valentine, 1998; White, 1990; 1993; Widdicombe and Woofit, 1995; Wyn and White, 1997), I discuss street boys in Yogyakarta as a resistant subculture: the Tikyan. In addition, and central to the concept of 'femininity' among feminist subcultural theorists, I also discuss the lives of street girls, who I see as a separate but connected subculture to the Tikyan, and as a 'microculture' (Wulff, 1988; see also McRobbie and Garber, 1976; McRobbie and Nava, 1984; McRobbie, 1980; 1991; 1996; Taylor, 1993). Drawing on Gramsci's (1979) theory of hegemony, and adopting a neo-marxist approach, the CCCS researchers combined empirical studies of youth subcultures as a way of explaining the forms of rebellion and resistance by particular youth groups. I expand on the CCCS work by drawing on Scott's (1990) concept of the 'elite choreographed public transcript' to explain the means by which the state imposes ideological hegemony and maintains power and domination over subordinate groups. The thesis describes how street children resist the 'public transcript' and subvert dominant discourse by forming oppositional lifestyles, and their own 'hidden transcript' or subculture as a reaction and a form of resistance to state power (Scott, 1990).

An analysis of street children as a subculture involves an inquiry into how they forge their social world by developing street identities and relations as a 'distinctive way of life' which is embodied in beliefs, customs, social relations and particular patterns of behaviour (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). Such an analysis includes: work activities; leisure activities; peer group formation, conflicts and pressures; norms and values; socialisation and construction of identities; and ideas of individuality and freedom. It also requires a semiotic analysis of the children’s subculture, including their system of style, dress, music, slang, gestures, and rituals, and how they ‘live out’ their daily practices (Blackman, 1995; Cohen, 1972; Hebdige, 1979; Thornton, 1995).

Also of significant importance for this thesis have been the ground breaking ethnographic contributions to Indonesian urban and informal sector studies. These include Murray's (1991a; 1991b; 1993a; 1993b) invaluable work on street traders and sex workers in Jakarta, Jellinek's (1978; 1991) work on a poor urban kampung in Jakarta, Guinness's (1983a; 1983b; 1994) studies of a kampung in Yogyakarta (which includes a study of gelandangan), and both John Sullivan (1980; 1991) and Norma Sullivan's (1994) studies of an urban kampung in Yogyakarta.

I have also found sociological and political studies on childhood in the developing and developed world (Boyd, 1990; Boyd and Holdren, 1991; Glauser, 1990; Hoyles and Evans, 1989; James, 1986; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998; Jenks, 1996; Stephens, 1995) and studies of urban childhood and globalisation (Agnew, 1986; Szanton Blanc, 1994; Boyden and Holdren, 1991; Katz, 1998; Nieuwenhuys, 1998; Roberts 1998; Ruddick, 1998; Ward, 1978) to be extremely useful in helping me think through concepts about the construction of 'childhood' and 'street children', and debates on working children. These studies include those on street children in other developing countries, which have been useful for comparative purposes and for ideas on research with street children. Of particular use for methodological and comparative purposes have been Aptekar (1988; 1989) and Felsman (1989) in Colombia; Lucchini (1993a; 1993b; 1994; 1996) in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay; Lusk (1992) and Dinnenstein (1991) in Brazil; Swart (1990) in South Africa; Boardillian (1994) Dallape (1988) and Glauser (1990) in Africa; and Baker (1996) in Nepal.

Critical Geographies of Children and Geographies of Exclusion

In addition to debates on child labour and children's rights, attention has recently focused on children's geographies by incorporating cultural, economic, social and political forces which act on children's experiences within specific places. Following on from these discussions new sociological approaches to childhood are challenging the view that children are merely resources for development, by viewing them as 'human beings' rather than 'human becomings' (see James, Jenks
and Prout, 1998; Valentine and Holloway, 1998; Sibley, 1995; Valentine, 1998; Ruddick, 1998). Within the Indonesian state’s ideology of development (pembangunan), for example, children are often presented as objects of development interventions rather than important development actors in their own right (see Johnson, 1996:35). As Chawla and Kjorholt (1996:45) assert:

...such a slogan like presentation of 'children as a resource' can serve the function of selling a project and the notion of children's participation, but it is a concept borrowed from the field of economics and may be interpreted as an illustration of the increasing incorporation of children into the capitalist market.

In particular, researchers often neglect the spatial variation of children’s identity constructions, particularly within the context of power relations in public spaces, and in the private spaces of the home (see Sibley, 1995a, 1995b; Valentine, 1996, 1997; and White, 1990; 1996 for notable exceptions). Recent studies have suggested that in efforts to 'aestheticize' and 'colonize' public space in order to attract capital, public spaces are being 'annihilated' by the imposition of stringent laws and action in order to drive undesirable others, notably the young and the homeless, out of these locations (Harvey, 1996; Miucinici, 1996; Sibley, 1995a; 1995b; White, 1990; Valentine, Skelton and Chambers, 1998). My research contributes to these contemporary issues by exploring the social and spatial lives of street children (both boys and girls) in a developing country which has been radically affected by the processes of globalisation and social change. In discussing the lives of street children in Yogyakarta, I present a group who are consistently harassed in public spaces, and who are unable to (or who refuse to) be fully incorporated into their family homes or into the capitalist development machine in Indonesia.

By drawing on the works of Crewe (1996) and Sibley’s (1995a) the thesis discusses how by the very nature of their existence, street children are constructed as being 'out of place' in Indonesia, and to be committing a 'transgression' against the state-imposed ideology (Crewe, 1996). Further, through Sibley’s (1995a) work on Geographies of Exclusion, I explain how as a result of this perceived 'transgression' the state employs exclusionary processes, both social and spatial, against them. I then explain how through their own (developed) Geographies of

Resistance, street children have resisted and subverted the restrictions imposed on them, by leaving the family home and by continuing to operate in public spaces (Pile and Keith, 1997). The thesis argues how despite their social and spatial exclusion, street children negotiate specific survival strategies and identity constructions in response to their physical and social environments.

Research and Method
My research with homeless street children in Yogyakarta took a qualitative approach by asking them to participate directly in an investigation of their lives. It was important for me that they were involved in my research so that they could speak for themselves about their life experiences. The approach included focus group discussions, participatory observation on the street, and PAR (Participatory Action Research) activities, including role playing, drama improvisation and the collection of spontaneous drawings and 'mental maps' drawn by the children (Baker, 1996a, 1996b; Chambers, 1997; Gould and White, 1974; Hart, 1996; Johnson et al., 1995, 1996; Matthews, 1992; 1986; 1980). All these methods and convergent research strategies were ideal catalysts for informal conversation interviews, and often led to further discussions about other aspects of the children’s lives.

Gatekeeper
My entry point into the street-child world was the NGO Girli, and between 1995 and 1997 I spent fourteen months conducting fieldwork and working as a volunteer with them.27 Girli is an acronym of pinggir kali, which means 'rivers edge', and is where most of the poor inhabitants of Yogyakarta live (Plate 1.1). It is also where

27 My fieldwork was conducted over a period of twelve months, on three separate trips, between July 1995 and July 1997 (July 1995-September 1995; July 1996-March 1997; July 1997-August 1997). I found that each time I returned to Yogyakarta, my standing with them had improved, and I was more readily accepted than the time before. In addition, I found that I was able to quickly get to know other children whom I had never met before, as they had already heard about me, and so accepted my presence. This is something that Sullivan (1984:10) also noted in her research in a kampung in Yogyakarta. She notes that owing to intermittent, repetitive fieldwork each time she returned to the kampung her social contacts had widened, and the kampung dwellers would tell her that she was showing her sincerity (dikdas) to them. Similarly, the street children told me that the fact I continued to return, and did not ‘forget’ about them, showed my commitment to them and the group. In addition, each time I left I was struck by the number of children who said ‘jangan lupa sama anak-anak ya’ (‘Don’t forget the children, OK?’).
many street children sleep and hang out, particularly under the bridges where it is cool away from the harsh rays of the sun. The NGO Girli was set up on the river’s edge sixteen years ago to help improve the lives of Yogyakarta’s street children.

Plate 1.1: A kampung by the river’s edge (pinggir kali)

At the time of my research Girli had an ‘open house’ or drop-in centre which was close to the main street Malioboro, and where street boys were free to go any time of the day or night. There were also two other open houses in the North of the city, and a ‘training house’, where skills such as batik making, music and crafts were periodically taught.

Participant observation

Although the children knew that I was there to learn about their lives, for the first few weeks I did not ask them any questions about how they lived, unless it came up naturally. I simply wanted to observe them, and get the feel of their world by extensive and attentive listening, and over time get to know them in greater depth.28 As Baker (1996b: 1) has noted in her research with street children in Nepal: ‘The nature of researcher-informant relationships is crucial to the quality of information gleaned from traditional methods of demographic survey and observation.’ Thus, for the first month or so I used my time to make friends with the children and to gain their confidence. I would spend my days with the boys who were visiting the open and training houses, getting to know them, giving tuition in maths and English, hanging out, chatting, playing, and developing their trust in me. During this time I attempted to see things from the children’s perspective, and to appreciate matters which were meaningful to them.

After a time the boys invited me to follow them to the street, giving me the opportunity to observe the children in their daily rounds through the city when they were working and hanging out. In the day time most of the boys slept late (as they had been up working most of the night). In the late morning they would go out to busk (with guitars, tambourines and rattles) in between cars at traffic lights, at bus stops in various parts of the city, and on the buses. Other children would stay at the NGO to make handicrafts and batik cards and pictures to sell in the Girli art ‘gallery’.29 During the day I would often travel around the city on my motorbike and visit the boys at these different locations, or travel with them on the buses when they were busking.

Participant observation on the street led to a ‘snowball’ effect of introductions to other street children in the city. These children were not attached to the NGO Girli, but knew those I was with. They included a group of street boys who lived and operated around the Alun-Alun (City Square), children (boys and girls) who lived and worked at the bus terminal and train stations, and a group of street girls who lived in the City Park (Taman). As I got to know more children living and working on the street I spent less time at the NGO and more time on the street.

At night I would accompany the Girli boys to Malioboro Street (Jalan Malioboro), which is the main tourist and shopping avenue in the city, and the economic and geographical centre of the Yogyakarta. Malioboro is where the younger boys shine shoes and older boys busk at the numerous street side restaurants (lessehan), while people sit on rattan mats eating, chatting and listening to the street musicians.

28 As Polsky (1969:220) has noted in his fieldwork with criminals: ‘...the absolute ‘first rule’ of field work...is this: initially, keep your eyes and ears open but keep your mouth shut.’ (original emphasis).

29 Girli has associations with international organisations which support the NGO, and the handicrafts the children make are often sold overseas, to Australia, England and Japan.
When I first arrived in Yogyakarta during July 1995 it was the shoe-shiners with whom I spent my time and who were my key informants. There were nine boys in this core group, aged between nine to sixteen (although they were not sure of their ages), and they would operate in the same area at night, along a particular stretch of Malioboro. Older girls also worked along this stretch, busking with guitars and other musical instruments. All these boys identified with a specific area for resting, the public toilet (toilet umum) on Malioboro. In the evening I would sit outside this designated meeting place and the children would come to chat and play in between going off to work. Later when they had had enough of working, or had earned enough money to eat, we would sit at one of the lesehan, eat, drink tea, and chat with other groups who work and hang out on Malioboro. It was an ideal opportunity to observe the children interact with each other, as well as their relationships with other groups on the street. These groups included older buskers (pengamen), pedicab (becak) drivers, stall owners, artists, students, street vendors and sometimes street girls.

Street girls were a difficult group to get to know. Unlike street boys, they were not so prevalent on Yogyakarta’s streets, as they did not survive in the same way. They also lived and hung out in different parts of the city, and had a different way of life to street boys. In addition, the NGO Girls is not open to street girls and, when I first arrived, there was no organisation working with them. Over time, however, I got to know and gain the confidence of a group of street girls who lived in the City Park.

Informal interviews

“When did you last see your mother? I don’t know how to answer. I know what I think, but words in the head are like voices in the water. They are distorted. Hearing the words as they hit the surface is sensitive work. You will have to be a bank robber and listen and listen to the little clicks before you can open the safe (Winterson, 1983: 160-1).

From the start of my research I discounted the idea of distributing research questionnaires among the children, as I could see that such a method was a totally inappropriate way of obtaining data, and that the findings would have been next to useless. This was because the questions would have been restrictive, and as I knew little about their lives, I may not have asked the appropriate or relevant questions. It has been noted that children are naturally suspicious of outsiders and often lie when asked questions by adults, especially if they are carrying a clipboard or printed paper and pen.30 Instead, they often make up answers and stories, or they give responses which they think are expected of them by an adult.

For the same reason I also discounted using a tape recorder, or taking notes in the children’s presence (unless I specifically asked if I could).31 Instead, I learnt to remember details of action and speech, and wrote them up in full when I got home (usually at 4 or 5 in the morning) (see also Polsky, 1969:220). I did, however, use a camera, but there were some things which I did not take photographs of, at the children’s request.

While trying to develop special relationships with the children I had to use my sensitivity, instinct, and patience. I sometimes felt like Winterson’s bank robber, listening and waiting for the clicks, one by one, until I thought it was safe to try the handle and ask the questions. I knew immediately if it was too soon, by their expression or a quick response, ‘Why are you so curious?’ ‘Why do you want to know?’ ‘What’s it to you?’ The shutters come down, the contact is lost and the moment is over. Sometimes for good. Other times the children never gave me the signals to try. They did not want to discuss their past experiences or families. They wanted the past to be exactly that. Past.

Slowly, however, and over time, I gained the confidence and trust of the boys. As they got to know me, some of them allowed me to know the stories of their lives. They told me why they had left home, about their lives on the street, and what was waiting for them should they choose to return home. The children did not like being the ‘subject’ of a conversation, and would often try to take control of

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30 See Agestor (1988), Swart (1990) and also Baker (1996). Baker in her research with street children in Nepal noted: ‘There is a growing awareness that the survey approach has shortcomings that include the authoritative stance of researchers, the inappropriateness of questions to children’s experiences and inaccuracy in results due to children’s ready manipulation of the information. Similarly, the YKAI Childhelps (1990:8) study also found that the use of questionnaires was inappropriate when researching street children in Jakarta.

31 I actually started my research with a tape recorder, but it was never used as I intended as I found the children usually clammed up if there was a tape recorder running. Mostly, the children used it to record their singing and music. It was eventually ‘borrowed’ and never returned.
conversations as a form of empowerment. They would also attempt to sound superior and mature, and indifferent towards adults and elders. They would not readily admit their own ignorance about something, as that was a sign of weakness.

Some of my best conversations with the children took place on journeys, either on buses, trains, on my motorbike, or when walking through the city. This was because we had another focus, something else to look at (the passing scenery) apart from each other. As a result the children did not feel as though they were being put so much on the spot. If I was sitting chatting to a child in one place, on the street or at Girli, for example, the slightest change in circumstances could change the entire conversation. They would jump up and leave if they felt uneasy, somebody was listening, or something more interesting grabbed their attention.

**Participatory Action Research** (PAR)

There has been an increased call for children’s participation in research about them (Baker, 1996a; 1996b; Hart, 1992; Johnson, 1996; van der Beers, 1996). Girli is a strong believer in utilising participatory methods with street children, and the NGO often included them in discussions about the running of the organisation, as well as in outreach work with other street children in the city. While I was there some of the Girli boys were taking part in research and data collection on street children in the city who had nothing to do with the NGO. These groups were involved in interviewing street children and mapping the locations where they operated, and they would report back with their findings to weekly meetings at Girli. I sometimes went with them on their reconnaissance missions.

**Children’s Narratives**

[P]eople make sense of what has happened and what is happening to them by attempting to assemble stories...Story telling is very important in identity production as it gives the author the opportunity to have a sense of who they are and how they have become (Revill 1993).

Street children’s narratives are important to understand their identity constructions. Throughout this thesis the narratives I use are in the form of stories and commentaries from Jejal; transcripts from conversations and informal interviews; song lyrics written by the children; poetry; spontaneous drawings; pictures; and ‘mental maps’ or spatial stories which I collected while I was in Yogyakarta. I use the children’s accounts as a way of giving the children a say in what ultimately is my own discussion about their lives and their multiple social realities.

I found reading the monthly ‘zine’ Jejal extremely useful for understanding how children view their lives on the street, and as a way of witnessing the construction of the boys’ personal identities. As James and others (1998:188) have noted, however, it is often hard for children to express themselves verbally in interviews or by writing down their thoughts. In addition, in Yogyakarta some street children cannot read or write and are, therefore, unable to contribute to Jejal (unless someone writes for them, as sometimes happens).

**Mental Maps and Spontaneous Drawings**

In order to determine the spatial stories of street kids in Yogyakarta– and to obtain a different view of their lives– I collected ‘mental’ or ‘cognitive maps’ from the children (Gould and White, 1974; Matthews, 1992; 1986; 1980) which helped me to understand how the children perceived their world and physical environment, and to determine the places where they went. These maps are analysed in Chapters 4, 7 and 8. I also found that spontaneous drawings were an exciting form of self expression for the street kids (Swart,1990; Baker and Punch, 1997; Aptekar, 1988).

One day I was chatting to a child and he was finding it hard to talk about things. He took the pen from my hand and started to draw, he drew different street kids he knew, and put them in circumstances with different people on the street. These drawings told me so much about how this boy saw his world and people around him, and portrayed an imagined resistance that I had been totally unaware of until then (Figure 1.1). Subsequently, I suggested children draw something if they did not feel like talking, such as ‘good and bad things on the street’, but I also just allowed them to draw whatever they felt like (Baker and Punch, 1997; Swart,1990).

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32 For example, some children complained to me that they really wanted to contribute to Jejal, but that they found it incredibly hard to express themselves in writing.
group of children visiting. Sometimes, the groups were facilitated by *Girli*, and I sat in. Conversations were related to their reasons for leaving home; relationships with their families; parents and step parents; friendships on the street; issues related to work; attitudes to society; the problems they face on the street with police, security guards and others; drug and alcohol dependence; tattoos; sexual practices; and their relationship with the NGOs in Yogyakarta and Jakarta. Some topics, however, were better discussed in private with individual children, particularly issues relating to their backgrounds and personal histories.

As well as participatory research and focus group discussions, I also found the views and experiences of people who had close contact with the children to be invaluable, particularly ex-street children, older boys and men on the street, and workers for the NGOs *Girli* and *MMK* (Mitra Masyarakat Kota, in Jakarta). Of particular benefit was a four-day seminar on the 'Social Analysis of Street Children' which took place on Samosir Island in North Sumatra between the ten members of the Consortium of Indonesian Street Children, to which I was very privileged to be invited as a participant. The forum was the first time that workers and street children from different NGOs all over Indonesia (from Lombok to Aceh) were able to come together to discuss street children's lives. Here was a unique opportunity for *pendamping* (NGO workers) to share their problems and experiences of working with street children, and for street children to voice their own concerns and needs. It was also an ideal occasion to discuss the similarities and differences between street children from various regions of the Indonesian archipelago. Sadly, however, this fascinating workshop came to an abrupt end when it was unceremoniously terminated by the authorities. That incident is discussed in the Conclusion of this thesis.

**Ethical Dilemmas**

There is no doubt that my presence as a white, adult female changed the dynamics of the groups of street children I was observing in Yogyakarta. Sometimes it even created rivalry and jealousy between the children themselves. Although I tried not to have 'favourites', some younger children did spend a lot of time with me, and I often worried that I was taking them away from the street only to leave them...
behind a few months later when I returned to Australia. In addition, I was often the only adult present which conferred on me obligations as a ‘responsible adult’ to protect and inform the children (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998:187-188). I was caught in the dilemma of feeling that I had a moral obligation to inform the street children of the dangers which some aspects of their lives entailed versus the ethical issues I grappled with about meddling in their lives, and the strong desire I had not to intervene but only to observe (ibid). Who was I to tell these children how to live their lives? An example is the children’s use of prescription drugs to get high. Was it my ‘moral responsibility’ to lecture them about the health implications and dangers of drug abuse, given that it was one way that they were able to survive hunger pains, depression and shyness when earning money? I decided not, although I did (gently) inform them about the dangers of excessive glue consumption and of unprotected sex. I also gave advice if I was asked, and actively intervened when the children were sick, injured or hungry.

It is important to avoid romanticising street life or the subculture to which street children belong: there are negative as well as positive aspects to the Thai Yan culture. Some people will find these negative aspects hard to understand or come to terms with. If one wishes to be accurate about the lives of street children, however, it is essential to avoid making moral judgements, but to enter the children’s reality by viewing their lives and activities from their own perspective.

Outline of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is an analysis of homeless street children’s geographies and identities which are manifested in the construction and maintenance of distinct street-child social worlds: urban subcultures to which they all belong. These subcultures are separate but connected communities of street boys and girls which have emerged as a form of resistance to their multiple forms of marginalisation.

In a sense this thesis is historical, since my fieldwork was conducted during the Soeharto regime (1966-98), an era which is now consigned to the history books.33

To my mind, however, the New Order still lives on under President Habibie. Hull (1998), for example, recently described the Habibie regime as the ‘New Order Mark Two’ since, despite the (visible) absence of Soeharto, the same people are still involved in running the country.34 The new President was cultivated as President Soeharto’s protégé, and the present government’s policies and methods of social control as yet remain unchanged.

Indonesian society is dominated by the state’s ideologies and policies. Chapter 2 begins with an examination of the city of Yogyakarta, my research site, and an analysis of the nature of the Indonesian state and society. I argue that the increased numbers of street children in Indonesia can be partly understood as an outcome of the country’s inequitable economic growth strategy, aimed at integrating Indonesia into the global economy. By drawing on Scott’s (1990) concept of the ‘public transcript’ the chapter examines the ideological forms of state power for social control during Soeharto’s ‘development era’ (zaman pembangunan). The ‘ideal’ woman, child and nuclear family are central to the construction of a passive, socialised workforce desired by the state for capitalist ‘development’. Women and children need to be domesticated because they, and particularly their sexuality, are dangerous if not controlled. Thus, by the very nature of their existence and survival strategies, street children are committing what Cresswell (1996) refers to as a ‘transgression’ against the state-imposed public transcript, by violating the moral boundaries of the school, the family and the community.

Chapter 3 examines how, as a result of this perceived ‘transgression’, the state employs exclusionary processes, both social and spatial, against street children. By further drawing on Scott (1990), as well as Douglas’s (1966) ‘purity and danger’ and Sibley’s (1995) ‘geographies of exclusion’, I discuss how street children are excluded and constructed as being ‘out of place’ in Indonesia (Cresswell, 1996). I then talk about the state’s attempts to stigmatise, oppress and conceal undesirable groups through a discourse of deviance; the creation of a ‘moral panic’ through the media (Cohen, 1972); and what Scott (1990) refers to as ‘euphemisms for coercive

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33 Soeharto stood down from power on May 21 1998, after thirty-two years as the Indonesia’s President.

34 There are some skeptics who believe that Soeharto is still playing dalang (puppet master) in the wings.
acts’. The chapter considers how public spaces are being created and reconstituted by globalisation with norms of behaviour which street children violate. Such violations justify state engineered ‘cleansing operations’ involving the forcible removal of children from the streets, arrests, imprisonment and, in some extreme cases, torture and extermination.

Public spaces, however, are essential to street boys’ survival, as it is where they can access resources to alleviate their needs. This is where I begin my analysis of the street boys in Yogyakarta as a subculture, or as a ‘hidden transcript’ (Scott, 1990). Chapter 4 describes the Tikyan’s conception and use of space, and how this space is constructed as a ‘geography of resistance’ within the marginal existence imposed on them by the centre (Pile and Keith, 1997). The chapter explains how in response to their social and spatial exclusion, street children have created alternative geographies for themselves, by securing or ‘winning’ specific places from the dominant culture for their everyday survival and existence (Clarke, et al, 1976:42).

By using ‘mental maps’, the chapter examines the perceptual images street boys have of the city, and identifies the places of activity nodes which are tied to various aspects of their lives (Gould and White, 1974; Matthews, 1980; 1986; 1992). I illustrate how despite their social and physical oppression, street boys find multiple and resourceful ways to earn money and exercise their own agency from the margins of the world economy.

The next two chapters (5 and 6) are a social analysis of the street boys’ social world which exists within these marginal spaces. Chapter 5 examines socialisation into the Tikyan subculture, and draws on Visano’s (1990) concept of a street kid’s life as a ‘career’. By employing Turner’s (1985, 1994) ‘self-categorization’ theory, I discuss how a street boy’s individual identity construction and performance entails a continual interaction with the Tikyan collective identity. In addition, by drawing on the work of subcultural theorists, including Blackman (1995), Brake (1980), Cohen (1972) Hall and Jefferson (1976), Hebdige (1979), Thornton, (1995), and Willis (1990), I reflect on how the Tikyan have developed their own code of street ethics, values, hierarchies and styles of belonging, as a reaction to, and a subversion of, their imposed exclusion. Chapter 6 presents a semiotic analysis of their subculture, including their assemblage of style, dress, music, rituals and bodily modification, showing how, despite their subordination, street children are able to express themselves and create their own meanings.

A study of street children is incomplete without an understanding of street girls. In Chapter 7, therefore, I focus explicitly on the lives of a street girl community in Yogyakarta’s City Park (Taman). Within the context of feminist subcultural literature (Blackman, 1995; 1998; McRobbie and Garber, 1976; McRobbie and Nava, 1984; Wulff, 1988), I explain how, despite their constant interaction with the street boy communities, street girls live different and separate lives from the boys, and operate within their own individual groups in very different spaces. These differences are defined in the context of gendered power relations, which exist in the Indonesian dominant discourse, as well as within the street world, where street boys have appropriated dominant patriarchal attitudes, despite their alienation from society. Street girls negotiate their social spaces in the male-dominated street world, with their own strategies of resistance and subversion, articulated through style, discourse, and behaviour patterns.

Finally, Chapter 8 considers how street children often identify with a place called ‘home’, which is, in fact, a place of conflictual identity and often another space of exclusion (Sibley, 1995a, 1995b; Valentine, Skelton and Chambers, 1998:9). I explain how street children (who have been living away from their families for a long time) have an array of emotions about home and often think about returning there. The issues which frequently trigger a street child’s desire to go home are examined, followed by the problems and fears which they face if they want to return there. Drawing on Sibley (1995a; 1995b) and Scott (1990) I look at the conflicts which exist between the ‘hidden transcript’ of the street kid subculture and the ‘public transcript’ in the home. In particular, I focus on six children’s experiences and shifting identity performances when they took me home to meet their families. Their awkwardness in the family home served to emphasize the radical autonomy and subversive principle of the Tikyan subculture.
While I was in Yogyakarta conducting fieldwork, and throughout the pages of this thesis, I consistently strove to heed the request written by the street children in their poem at the beginning of this Introduction. In this thesis I do not seek to demean, criticise or scapegoat street children, or to expose them as deviant criminals. Nor do I mean to romanticise, sensationalise or glorify their existence, or present them as helpless victims. They are neither. Instead, I wish to reveal to the reader the lives of street children in Yogyakarta from a perspective which up to now has had little credence: their own. As best, that is, as a middle-class, white English woman can.35

35 In order to protect their identities, all the children’s names, including their street names, have been changed.

The Absent Bapak: Power, Ideology and the State
(Chapter Two)

Plate 2.1: Street kids in a becak on Maliboro

The lives of street children in Yogyakarta cannot be fully explained without first understanding their environment, that is, the city in which they live: Yogyakarta in Central Java, and the nature of the Indonesian state and society. It is also important to understand the families from where they originate, and the reasons that they left home and went to live on the streets. Initially, this chapter focuses on a description of Yogyakarta, and how the city relates to the nature of the Indonesian state which has appropriated Javanese symbols and practices in order to maintain power. The chapter then explains state rhetoric as the creation of an ‘elite-choreographed public transcript’ of domination (Scott, 1990: 105). Scott (1990:67) defines a ‘public transcript’ as the state’s attempt to persuade the public of its power, and to indoctrinate, awe and intimidate subordinates ‘into durable and expedient compliance’. In this respect I explain how the government and
dominant groups have constructed their own ‘public transcript’ based on Javanese culture and manipulated ideologies, while pursuing an appearance of unity and harmony (rukan) across the nation. This is most obviously expressed in the national slogan ‘Unity in Diversity’ (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika).

Then follows a description of the style of development which has dominated Indonesia’s cities and economic centres for three decades during the Soeharto era (1966-1998), and how this has affected social change. I argue that street children can partly be understood as an outcome of the country’s capitalist growth strategy, aimed at integrating Indonesia into the global economy, and as a result of the maintenance of a social hierarchy. Within the context of Indonesia’s development strategy I explain how government policies have impacted upon the lives of children and their families, and how the patriarchal ideology of family life has contributed to the marginalisation of street children from mainstream society. I also show how the status of vagrants (gelandangan) including street children has changed during the ‘development’ era in Indonesia, due to the state’s reinforcement of sedentary lifestyles, and a changing attitude of the elite to those ‘outside’ the development process.

A review of the Indonesian state and society is essential before one can begin to perceive street children in Yogyakarta as a subculture of resistance. As writers on resistance assert, ‘Relations of domination are, at the same time, relations of resistance’ (Scott, 1990: 45), and there can be no adequate study of resistance within any society without a prior study of the forms of power, domination, and suppression used by controlling groups and their agencies (Scott and Kerkvliet, 1986, Foucault, 1984, Turton, 1986, Scott, 1990, Pile and Keith, 1997). This approach illuminates not only what is being resisted, but also the power relations which limit, and occasionally enable, strategies of resistance to ‘manipulate, endure and benefit’ from them (Pile, 1997:3).

Yogyakarta: ‘Traditional’ Culture

Indonesia confronts an array of challenges due to its diverse economic, environmental, religious, ethnic, geographical, and cultural dimensions. In order to maintain power and control, the Indonesian regime has recognised the need to use the regalia and symbols of local communities in order to legitimise itself and to show its continuity with the past (Errington, 1989: 58). The (conscious) choice of Soeharto’s ‘New Order’ regime (1966-98) was Javanese culture, which is centred on the old court city of Yogyakarta, the cultural heart of Java, and Soeharto’s birthplace. Since he came to power the Indonesian state has promoted Javanese culture as the ‘Indonesian way’ in an effort to consolidate control, and to make an Indonesian culture visible for one of the country’s key industries: tourism. Domestic and foreign tourism is extremely important to Yogyakarta’s economy, and before the political and economic crisis occurred in 1997 it was a rapidly growing industry, and the city’s main business activity (Haryadi, 1994: 221).

Yogyakarta is situated ten hours by train from Jakarta in the ‘Special District of Yogyakarta’ (Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta - DIY) which stretches about thirty-two kilometres along the coast of South Central Java. It is one of the poorest and most over-populated provinces in Indonesia. There are few large industries and, with its numerous private and state universities, academies and educational institutions, it is most famous as a student town. It is often referred to simply as ‘Yogya’ (pronounced Jogja) by both local people and Indonesians generally.

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1 The ‘New Order’ regime began in 1966-67 when Soeharto took power, and ended in May 1998 when he was forced to step down. The ‘New Order’ was a ‘distinctive institution’ which oversaw rapid social and economic change, and the consolidation of a social order which was widely accepted (Hill and Mackie, 1994: 38). For a detailed analysis of the New Order regime see Hill (1994).

2 This is, of course, with the exception of Bali which is the most famous of Indonesia’s tourist destinations. (Although it is often said that many tourists do not even know that it is part of Indonesia).

3 The Daerah Istimewa or ‘special district’ gives Yogyakarta the status of a province in which the Sultan acts as a governor. This means that every branch of government must be represented at the local level (Rachmih, 1987: 52). Only one other province (Aceh) has this special status in Indonesia.

4 The population densities in the province of Yogyakarta are about 1000 per square kilometre, compared with the Indonesia average of 85 per square kilometre. White and Tjiandraingsah (1998: 42) note, however, how ‘despite acute population densities and undesirable poverty, the region scores surprisingly well on a number of social and demographic indicators’. Hull and Jones (1994: 136-40) have similarly noted a decline of mortality rates and fertility rates in the region. More recently, however, since the impact of the socio-economic crisis in Indonesia there has been a large jump in rates of severe malnutrition levels among children in Central Java, particularly girls (Hull, 1998).
Yogyakarta is the 'undisputed traditional cultural capital' of Indonesia, and is central to the country's historic image because it symbolises the important elements of the nation's 'inheritance' or 'heritage' (keturunan) (Smithies, 1987). It was the old capital of Java, seat of the powerful Mataram dynasty, and the focal point during the 1945-9 revolution against the Dutch (Ricklefs, 1993:220-33; Smithies, 1987:10-12). It is also where President Sukarno (1945-66) declared Independence in 1945 (ibid). The Sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengkubuwona IX, was a key figure in the revolution and became co-ordinator of security during the battle against the Dutch (ibid). He remained involved in Indonesian politics after independence: as a Minister of Defence in Sukarno's cabinet, and as Vice-President to President Soeharto for a few years after 1973 (Ricklefs, 1993:299).

**Malioboro**

*Jalan Malioboro,* or Malioboro Street, is the main tourist attraction in the city, and the geographical centre of Yogyakarta where formal and informal activities mix (Plate 2.2). With the establishment of Soeharto's New Order government, Malioboro (as it is known by locals) began to play an especially important role in Indonesia's tourism industry as a destination for both domestic and foreign visitors. Along with the island of Bali it is now regarded as one of the industry's most prominent assets.

During the 1970s the rural areas in Central Java were adversely affected by the 'green revolution' and people came into the city looking for alternative channels of survival. At this time Malioboro Street transformed into a powerful market place, and was all the more strategic because of Sosrowijayan Street—the first tourist area in the city which is full of hotels and guest houses (toseran) and where the majority of European and Australian tourists stay. In the 1980s handicrafts and food sellers blossomed along the mile-long stretch of Malioboro, which soon became known as the longest open-air market in the world, resulting in a further increase in the numbers of migrants to the city. The craft stalls are open all day until 9 p.m., and then the food stalls (lesehan) come out for the rest of the night.

Plate 2.2: Malioboro.

Malioboro has a particular atmosphere at night, unlike anywhere else in Java; the lesehan sell gudeg, a traditional jack fruit dish, and people sit on rattan mats to eat and listen to street musicians serenade them until the early hours. It is the place for many of Yogyakarta's students and activists to sit and discuss issues into the night.

Malioboro has craft markets, lesehan, peddlers, hawkers, street children, musicians, a brand-new shopping mall, department stores, shops, and domestic and foreign tourists: it is where 'contrasting identities are visible', and where diverse elements of the city are brought together in close, regular contact (see Arauzes, 1996:82). It is also where I spent much of my time conducting research, as Malioboro is the place where the Giri street children community finds its identity, and is the centre of many of the children's lives.

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3 See Manning (1988) for a detailed analysis of the green revolution and its impact on rural areas and population mobility.
Java's most powerful mystical symbols: the still-active volcano Mount Merapi, and the Indian Ocean (home of Nyai Loro Kidul or 'Queen of the South Sea') forty-five kilometres to the South (Smithies, 1987; Ricklefs, 1993).

The abiding strength of mystical Javanism in Yogyakarta should not be confused with Soeharto's exploitation of central Javanese symbols and objects in Indonesian 'national culture', from architecture to rhetoric (Matheson Hooker and Dick, 1995:9). In this way the images of 'traditional' Javanese society are represented uniformly by the Indonesian state as physical symbols of past greatness; central to the heroic historical narrative of Indonesia. This approach has been described by Geertz (1990: 80) as 'Neo-Javanism...an attempt to revitalize traditional Javanese beliefs and expressive forms, to return them to public favour by demonstrating their continued relevance to the modern world' (see Matheson Hooker and Dick, 1995:9).

Power, Surveillance and Indoctrination

Modern ideologues of tradition have supplanted traditional ideology in certain settings; newly fabricated cultures of tradition have replaced traditional culture and brand new social groups give the impression of being the preservers of traditional culture (Sullivan, 1991).

There have been many attempts at the cultural construction of 'tradition' through the initiation of 'Indonesian' national characteristics which are in fact Javanese. Both Koentjaraningrat (1985) and Anderson (1972:1-67) support the analysis that the Indonesian state's 'public transcript', and a substantial part of the state's ideological discourse, is based on ancient Javanese traditions, institutions, and political culture. They further compare modern day urban elites and bureaucracies with the traditional Javanese bureaucratic elite (priyayi), whose social hierarchy was based around court life, and the co-option of 'clients' into the president's surveillance system. Anderson (1972: 4-12) also asserts that the way to understand Javanese politics is to appreciate the desire to 'accumulate and absorb power', and illustrates how Soeharto attempted to accumulate power through the possession of potent objects (pancasila). The use of persuasive philosophies such as

Panca...
Rukun Warga (RW) and Rukun Tangga (RT) are communal administrative units in cities. Families have identity cards and are grouped together within RTs, and several RTs form the next level of administration. RW, Rukun (harmony) is a concept appropriated by the government and promoted through ideological discourse as a traditional Javanese value. Ertanto (1993) explains how the state maintains control over kampung citizens through this RT/RW surveillance system which is controlled by the kampung or village head (Lurah). Laws in Indonesia dictate that residents of a kampung must report to their kampung head if they wish to move house or travel to a different town, and no one can move anywhere without the permission of the village authorities (RW/RT/ Lurah). Over-night visitors are also legally required to register with the village head. There is an elaborate, bureaucratic form-filling system which must be completed by all people wishing to travel. Those people found outside their kampung (or to be staying in another) without the necessary travel documents are punished.

The Soeharto regime became notorious for physical forms of coercion but that is not enough to maintain power and reinforce the public transcript. It is also necessary to examine the other 'political resources' or methods of power which are sustained through tactics which go beyond the micro-level to the reinforcement of the public transcript (Liddle, 1993: 451; Scott, 1990). In Foucault’s (1981:93) analysis of power, he talks of the need to examine forms of power which surpass the state, and which are ensured by techniques and tactics over bodies—both social and individual—using a multiplicity of institutions, with the help of what he calls the ‘microphysics of power’ (Foucault, 1981:84). Gramsci (1979) also believes that the reproduction of a capitalist society depends on the dominant class maintaining its hegemony through political ideological struggle. In such a way the state can ‘work with velvet gloves’ by means of seemingly respectable mechanisms, so that ‘the hegemony of one social group over the entire nation is exercised’ (Gramsci, 1979:204).

Further, Cresswell (1996:19,179) examines ideology in terms of Bourdieu’s (1977) ideas of doxa or ‘common sense’, as a mechanism for domination, and sees these ideas as resembling Gramsci’s conception of hegemony. Drawing on these works, Cresswell (1996:18) contends that the state and mainstream society dictate what is natural in the ‘common-sense world’ and considered to be appropriate behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour is seen to be the opposite to common sense and is, therefore, regarded as a transgression of the ‘natural’ boundaries set by the established order. These boundaries have affected society’s mental, moral, and spiritual development, thus mobilising society to serve the needs of the state, to behave in certain ways, and to be acquiescent social subjects (van Langenborg, 1986:13). In the context of Indonesia, this is what Murray (1991a:6) refers to as ‘authorised discourse’ and a ‘regime of truth’.

Soeharto’s principal method for gaining legitimacy and consolidating the power interests of the state was through economic growth, and the systematic promotion of a development ideology (pembangunan) (Anderson, 1972:12). When Soeharto came to power in 1966, Indonesia was in crisis. President Sukarno left a fledgling
state engulfed by regional unrest and economic disaster, and with inflation running at 900 percent (Ricklefs, 1993:280). With the establishment of the New Order regime, Soeharto brought a dramatic change in state ideology by switching from Sukarno’s radical nationalism to pursuance of national development which gave priority to economic recovery. Soeharto was known as the ‘Father of Development’ (Bapak Pembangunan) owing to his ideologies of pembangunan and progress (kemajuan). These focused on private foreign investment, industrialisation, low wages for ‘comparative advantage’ over other countries, and the re-integration of the economy with world capitalism (implemented by US trained technocrats known as the ‘Berkeley Mafia’). The development focus seemed to pay off and, for many years, Indonesia experienced high rates of growth and until recently economic performance was one of the key legitimising factors of the Soeharto regime.

Economic globalisation and ‘commodity capitalism’ have encouraged materialism, consumerism and individualism in all levels of Indonesian society. These changes in values have had far-reaching consequences on class and changing patterns of middle-class ideology which have affected the family and gender relations. The urban elite today live a similar lifestyle to traditional Javanese elite (priyayi), with luxurious homes and access to privileges and rewards from the government’s patronalist system (Guinness, 1994:286). The model for modern Indonesian culture and society has emerged from a mixture of Western, urban middle-class values, together with Javanese feudal aristocracy, based on the maintenance of a social hierarchy (Guinness, 1994:286; Berman and Adidarma, 1995). Pembangunan ideology, therefore, has not only focused on technocratic techniques for economic development but has incorporated policies of social engineering and moral boundary enforcement. This has been partly through the intervention of the state into civil society in an effort to transform cultural norms and values, and to determine the direction of development and social change. Thus, economic growth and the increase of an urban middle-class has been paralleled by the expansion of a modern consumer culture, with elite control through ideological discourse formulating the expected norms of city life (Guinness, 1994:286; Anderson, 1972).

The ‘Ideal’ Family and the ‘Ideal’ Child
The key to social control is sexuality and reproduction, which in Indonesia centres on the ideology of State Ibuism and the harmonious family. The term ibu (‘mother’ and ‘wife’), is an ideological and cultural concept, described as a combination of Dutch petit-bourgeois values and traditional priyayi (Javanese élite) values, developed in the early 20th century (Suryakusuma, 1987:47). The expression has been re-worked and promoted by the state, and ‘initiated’ into a modern patriarchal state ideology, reflecting priyayi values, where priyayi women have been traditionally dependent on their husbands (ibid).

State Ibuism represses women by placing them in a subordinate position to men, and emphasising the ‘traditional’ role of women as weak, submissive wives and mothers who care for their family and the state without demanding any power or prestige (Suryakusuma, 1987:47; 1996). Such gender construction may be attributed to the interests of the state in maintaining its power and control over society (Suryakusuma, 1991:8). The connection between sex and power has been described by Foucault (1981:102) as an ‘especially dense transfer point’, where sexuality is useful for the greatest number of manoeuvres and is capable of serving as a ‘linchpin’ for the most varied strategies of power accumulation. The state is responsible for promoting a model of the ‘idle woman’ as a housewife and mother who ‘inhabits the outer edge of the world’ as a method of social control, all in the name of development (see Foucault, 1981:121).

Although the state is anxious to mobilise women behind its development efforts, it envisages them playing a narrow role, with their primary responsibility towards their husband and family. In this way: ‘Women have been sacrificed more and more on the altar of national development’ (Suryakusuma, 1990:23). Such reordering of gender relations often occurs with capitalist development as one of the features of capitalist societies is the important part played by the state in the economy, and in the oppression of women.
The Harmonious Family

Elite groups have also endeavoured to provide models of personal relations and family life which are expected to be ‘in harmony with the nature of Indonesia’ (Berman and Adidarma, 1995:2). In modern Indonesia, families are not regarded as being ‘private’, and may be seen as an ‘agency of control’ for the elite, and as an indispensable instrument for political control and economic development (Foucault, 1981:121). So, by making the family the smallest administrative unit, with their own identity cards (karnu keluarga), the family has been absorbed directly into the development process and the structure of power. In this way the home is positioned in Indonesian state discourse as having a fixed agenda of values and interests that are heavily moralised. This is because it is the site of child-rearing and the regulation of sexuality as well as the central site of consumption, and thus of fundamental importance to the economy and development. The nation can thus be seen to be ‘invading the home’ by providing cues for behaviour in families, as they relate to the domestic environment (see Sibley, 1995a:90).

The Indonesian state has managed to control the family through organisations such as the PKK (Pembinaan Keselamatan Keluarga, the Family Welfare Programme), which was established in 1972 in order to increase the role of women in development (Rustam, 1986:77). Every village and urban kampung in Indonesia has a village development body (LKMP) with a PKK section. The PKK is controlled by Dharma Wanita, a women’s organisation run by elite civil servant’s wives. It adheres to urban, middle-class values, faithfully emphasising the domestic role of women in society. Under the PKK programme, women are officially declared to be responsible for household management, including correct child care, family health and ‘emotional and physical security in the home’ (Czolk, 1992: 47). Although child welfare policies exist, the Indonesian government does not have any policies for street children. Instead, it incorporates children under the PKK and leaves their upbringing and protection to their mothers and the community.

Also in keeping with the state’s developmental focus is the state family planning programme, or Keluarga Berencana (KB), with its national campaign of ‘Two Kids Are Enough’ (Dua Anak Cukup), which is co-ordinated through the PKK. Under this internationally acclaimed programme, civil servants are penalised for having more than two children, and more than three will not be recognised (in rice rations or pay subsidies). Thus monthly allowances and even opportunities for promotion are linked to having only two children. There has been a variety of responses to this policy, including the giving away of unwanted children who, if they survive, may end up on the streets (Berman, 1994a: 21). Further, civil servants’ wives perpetuate the ‘Dua Anak Cukup’ approach through Dharma Wanita and the PKK programmes, which penetrate to the village and kampung level, thus further exacerbating the problem of unwanted children. In this way the state’s ideological discourse infiltrates the village and also the family, which is the major institution for the socialisation of children. This is also of particular interest when seeking to understand the nature of the society in which street children exist.

The Construction of the ‘Ideal Child’

Children and adolescents are also sexual beings, with feelings of desire and connection, curiosity and lust. Sexuality and the license to deal with sexual feeling are rights and responsibilities for children as much as for anyone else […] All too often, adults attempt to regulate children’s sexual expression through fear and shame. But stigmatizing children’s sexual expression does enormous harm. Can we free ourselves from such deeply held adult attitudes towards children’s sexual practices? (Rajani and Kudrat, 1996: 315).

It is well acknowledged that the meaning of ‘child’ has been socially and culturally constructed in different ways in different times and spaces (Aries, 1962; Maus, 1976; Cunningham, 1991). In modern Indonesia there has also been a ‘transformation in representations of the role of the child and the nature of

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42 In keeping with the policy of women being weak and inferior to men, the positions women take in the PKK are related to their husbands’ position in local government at the village level, through to the national government in Jakarta (Rustam, 1986). Thus, the wife of the village head (Lurah) is the head of the village PKK activating team. The wife of the subdistrict head (Camet) is head of the subdistrict (Kecamatan) PKK activating team, and so on, up to the wife of the Minister of Home Affairs, who is national chairperson of the Dharma Wanita.

11 The welfare department Dompas does have programmes for anak terlantar (abandoned children, which is the official state discourse includes street children) who are also mentioned in the 1945 constitution. Some policies look good on paper, however, are never actually implemented (Bessell, pers.com. 1999).
childhood", where the child no longer has a role within the family economy and is expected not to work (Bessell, 1998:165). Instead, children are seen as the embodiment of national aspirations for development (pembangunan) and progress (kemajuan) (Bessell, 1998:173). Consequently, they are consistently presented in state and media rhetoric as constituting an "asset for the nation’s future." As Act 4/1979 on child welfare states, children are seen to ‘constitute the potential and successors of the nation’s ideals which have been laid down by the former generation.’

Traditionally in Java, children have been given the classification of ‘not yet people’ (durbang uwong), indicating that parents have the responsibility of guiding them into adulthood (Adidananta, 1995:1). So, families in Javanese priyayi society demand that their children should be ‘seen and not heard’ and stay close and loyal to their families. Meanwhile, those from poor, traditional Javanese homes have lived much freer lives than their more affluent peers, as they have often been expected to go out to work and contribute to the family income (Sullivan, 1994: Geertz, 1972). Those from more well-off families have not.

The concept of Cita-cita Anak Indonesia (‘the Ideal Indonesian Child’) is actively promoted through the Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation (Yayasan Kesejahteraan Anak Indonesia, YKAI), and in 1993 the notion of the Ideal Indonesian Child was brought into official policy by including it in the ‘Broad Guidelines for State Policy’, GIBHN (Garis-garis Besar Hukum Negara) (Bessell, 1998:163). This policy expounds eight principal characteristics which children are expected to exhibit: the performance of religious duties; being respectful and devoted to their parents and teachers; being honest, capable and sensitive in conduct; clever at reading and writing; competent and full of initiative; self-reliant, self-disciplined and responsible; full of confidence in facing the future; and to have a love of Indonesia (Bessell, 1998:166). In addition, just as women’s sexuality is suppressed by the state, so too are children and adolescents denied the right for sexual expression. Sex before marriage is a taboo subject in dominant discourse and there is no sex education in schools or safe-sex campaigns targeted at the unmarried young. The Indonesian government refuses to acknowledge the fact that children and adolescents are sexual beings and, as I will show, through fear and stigmatisation attempts are made to regulate any sexual expression.

Thus, just as women are expected to conform to particular role models, in its efforts to control society and social reproduction the Indonesian state has also constructed the ‘ideal child’. This construction is expected to be shaped by the forces of the family and school which are saturated with ideological discourse and values and are the two most powerful socialising influences in a child’s life (Bessell, 1998:165-6). As Bessell (pers.com., Jan, 1999) puts it: ‘the education system in Indonesia is about transferring ideology rather than transferring knowledge’, and through the state-controlled textbooks it is anticipated that children will perpetuate state ideology and values into the future.

Universal Education

Along with high rates of economic growth, one of the most significant achievements of the New Order regime has been the expansion of formalised mass education at primary school level (for six years). Jones (1994:161) informs us that this has ‘been to the point where universal primary education has almost been attained’, due to a six-year compulsory (or ‘universal’) education policy implemented in 1973. In 1994 the government expanded this programme to nine years of compulsory education and, until the recent economic crisis, enrolment

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12 See also Nieuwenhuys (1998:275) for a discussion of the construction of ‘global childhood’, and the ‘ideal of the economically useless child’.
13 See for example an article by Akhun in Kompas, July 23, 1997 which states that ‘Children are not only producing a rate of return for the family but are also determinants of the nation’s future’.
15 Although the six-year compulsory education policy officially provides children with an education until the age of twelve, many children are in primary school beyond the age of twelve because of having to repeat years, or due to late starting.
16 See also White (1994:866-7). However, Jones (1997:28) underlines that 100 percent enrolment does not necessarily mean that all children in Indonesia complete primary school, and that ‘approximately 20 percent of children do not complete primary school’.
figures have been steadily increasing in secondary schools (Jones, 1994:165). In addition, and as Bessell (1998:22) and White (1994:866-67) both emphasise, the expansion of primary education in Indonesia has been an important factor in keeping children under the age of twelve in school and out of full-time work. In support of this analysis one of the NGO Girls workers, Kink Ertanto (pers.comm. Aug:1996), commented to me that although the overall numbers of street children were increasing, he had noticed that the numbers of younger children (under the age of twelve) had decreased. It was his belief that this was due to the government’s policy of universal education at the primary school level.17

In 1997 the government sought to consolidate the construction of the ideal child by bringing its new labour relations legislation into line with its 1994 nine-year compulsory education act which states that children must attend school until the age of fifteen. Articles 95 and 96 of the 1997 labour legislation relate to the employment of children and specifically prohibit those under the age of fifteen from working, unless they are ‘compelled to work for certain reasons’ (see Bessell, 1998: 251). As Bessell notes, however, this stipulation, in effect, means that children are still able to work, as ‘certain reasons’ can account for just about anything. Further, the new legislation does not state a minimum age under which they cannot be employed at all.

Besides the education system, children’s stories and magazines also perpetuate the construction of the ideal child and are essential instruments in its creation (Bessell, 1998; Shiaraishi, 1995:170). Society’s perception of the family and the role of the child within it is influenced by the media, films and TV programmes, all of which are under strict state censorship (Shiaraishi, 1995:179). Shiaraishi (1995:179), in her analysis of Indonesian children’s literature tells us that stories show an ‘amazing uniformity’ in the portrayals of family life:

17 It must be noted, however, that since the Asian financial crisis, enrolment rates have declined and the numbers of school dropouts are increasing rapidly (UNICEF, 1998:1; Jones and Hall 1998). It has also been reported to me that since the crisis there are far more children working on the streets, who are much younger than ever before (Adidanna, pers.comm. March 1999; Berman, pers.comm. Dec. 1998).

the authoritative all-knowing father; the ever-giving, never-angry, and also all-knowing mother, who is in charge of family life; and the obedient children whose mistakes start the stories and are corrected by their parents at the end.

In these ways children are taught what is expected of them by their parents and their teachers and how they should behave. There are also gender stereotypes for the socialisation of boys and girls which are reinforced through the school system and the PKK, with the girl child being brought up differently from the boy child.

Girls

Traditionally, in Indonesian society girls are not socialised to spend time on the street or to work in the public sector, and are usually kept close to home and assigned domestic roles and duties from a very early age (Geertz,1961, Sullivan, 1994:84).18 Such gender stereotyping excludes girls from the labour market and binds them to their future role as mother and caretaker of the family home (Niewenhuys, 1998:275). Mobility restrictions are also enforced particularly once a girl reaches puberty (De Silva, 1997:53). This is because girls are believed to need protection and guidance sexually, and their movements are restricted to around the ‘safe’ environment of the family home, a household, or a factory (see Katz, 1993: 102; De Silva, 1997:53). It may also explain why street girls are not so prolific in numbers as street boys, as such socialisation makes a girl far less competent to cope in the world outside the domestic arena (Niewenhuys, 1998:275). Many girls when they do work outside the home do so with their mothers in the markets or at food stalls, as domestic servants (pembantu) or in factories and, therefore, are not so visible as boys working on the street or in other informal sector activities (Blagbrough, 1995; Wolf, 1996, Bessell, 1998).

Boys

Although a similarity exists between the ways in which girls from both poor and middle-class families are socialised, there is a significant difference between the way in which boys from middle-class families are brought up compared with those from the kampung. These differences may also account for why there are more boys than girls, and more boys from lower-class rather than middle-class

18 See Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of street girls in Yogakarta, which includes an analysis of the construction of the ‘ideal girl’ in Indonesia (Walkerline,1990:51).
families, living and working on the streets. From a very early age *kampung* boys spend more time on the streets, participating extensively in the street social life. Consequently, they lead relatively free lives and, in contrast to their sisters, they are encouraged to be ‘naughty’, break rules, and run around exploring the city (Sullivan, 1994:83). They often walk home from school, and in the *kampung* they interact easily as there are no physical or social boundaries between houses and families (Haryadi, 1994:215). In this way they are more ‘culturally oriented’ than girls or middle-class boys to be outside of the house and on their own (Utami, 1993:15). Further, poor families rear their boys by stressing self assurance and early independence— including working on the streets to contribute to the family income. This is because the phenomenon of a working child is deemed to be culturally normal for families in circumstances of urban poverty, and it is considered to be appropriate behaviour by the urban poor (Utami, 1993:14; Bessell, 1998).19

In contrast, however, the same behaviour is deemed to be inappropriate by the middle classes who value the state constructed ideology of childhood. Middle-class children are cloistered by their families, and often live in fortress-style homes with guards, maids and electronic gates. They are picked up from school by their drivers, and are forbidden from playing in the streets with undesirables.20 Public spaces are seen to endanger the ‘sanctity of childhood’ and the working child is regarded with disdain by these groups (Niewenhuyse, 1998:277).21 In Twain’s (1876) novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, the street kid Huckleberry Finn is mistrusted by parents who do not want their sons to be influenced by the boy’s wayward behaviour. Tom Sawyer, for example, had strict instructions not to play with him, so he played with him whenever he could:

> Huckleberry was cordially hated and dreaded by all mothers of the town because he was idle, and lawless, and vulgar, and bad — because all their children admired him so, and delighted in his forbidden society, and wished they dared to be like him (Twain, 1876: 51).

Huck’s father was a notorious drunkard with whom he could not live due to his violent temper. His friends and ‘respectable boys’ admired and envied him (Twain, 1876:46). In the same way as the ‘respectable’ children in Twain’s classic novel, middle-class children are often sheltered by their families, who do not want unsocialised ruffians to lead them astray from the ‘public transcript’ of the correct way to behave.

**Reality Bites: Urban and Social Problems**

Women in poor urban areas are responsible for the socialisation of their boy children in a way that contradicts state policy and the elite family values which the government is trying to impose. As Gerke (1993:47-8) emphasises, however, such policies are highly inappropriate, and are merely an imposition of middle-class values which have moulded ‘traditional’ practices to suit the needs of dominant groups to create a passive, socialised workforce, and to control overpopulation and unemployment. The policies only see women in relation to their husbands and children, thus ignoring their roles in the labour market, and the fact that many women are economically independent and dominant members of the household. Far from being ‘idle’, in reality, women in Java are traditionally economically independent, autonomous decision makers, who have to cope with the problems of poverty, unemployment, and oppression in their families’ everyday lives (Sullivan, 1994: 111). Such a truth means that women cannot stay at home looking after their children, but must go out to work.

Economic restructuring and Soeharto’s development ideology converged on profit-making in specific urban centres, with political control, economic power, and information management all concentrated at the ‘centre’. Over the decades, the green revolution, modernisation, and rapid industrialisation accelerated urbanisation, and resulted in a widening gap between the rich and poor, and the marginalisation of thousands who migrated to the cities where ‘development’ was centralised.22 As urbanisation continued it impacted on people’s lives and, as the

19 See also Apte (1988:156-162) who has made a similar observation among poor families in Colombia.

20 See the film *Langitik Rumahku* (‘My Sky, My Home’) for a good example of the differences in the lives of a middle-class boy and a *kampung* boy, who works on the street after school.

21 See Niewenhuyse (1998:267-280) for an extended discussion on the globalisation of childhood and how poor children’s work patterns and use of public spaces, ‘are used to construct the lives of the poor into a perceived *exclusion* from childhood’.

22 The island of Java covers only 7 percent of Indonesia’s 1.9 million square kilometres, but holds around 60 percent of its 200 million people. Today, one third of Indonesians are said to be urban dwellers, with Java being the most urbanised region in the country. By the year 2010 it is believed
cities expanded, so did the informal sector and urban poverty. People who were unable to find work in the new textile, pharmaceutical or footwear factories sprouting up in urban centres (particularly around Jakarta) ended up on the streets, trying to earn money in the increasingly crowded informal sector. Such occupations were seen as preferable to returning home to the village where, due to the impact of the ‘green revolution’ and the introduction of labour-replacing technology in rice agriculture, there was no longer any land to work on or any jobs to be had.

The impacts of the state’s development strategy have created many social changes in Indonesia, and these have placed an enormous strain on the traditional patterns of family structures. Growing male unemployment, and lack of work in rural and urban areas, has seen many adults (male and female) migrating to work on plantations in Sabah and elsewhere in Malaysia. Significant numbers of young women have also started working in factories or as housemaids in Singapore and the Middle East, leaving their children in others’ care, and this has resulted in the desertion and dislocation of many families (Wolf, 1992; Cox, 1992:12). Jellinek (1991:20-9) also noted how in a poor kampung community in Jembrana in the 1980s: ‘The ties between husbands and wives revealed the looseness of family relationships, divorce rates were high, and there were a substantial number of single parent families’, all headed by women, living alone with their children.

In contemporary Indonesia there are many families in which women are the sole income earners and, due to the decline in agriculture and traditional cottage industries, they are being forced to find work in the informal sector or in the factories where wages are low (Black, 1995: 48; Berman and Adidananta, 1995:2). Consequently, the number of female-headed households in Indonesia is increasing, while women’s earnings have remained low (Gerke, 1993:48; Heiler, 1984). This has resulted in many more children needing to work on the streets to supplement the family income or to just escape the overcrowded family home.

The ‘traditional’ concepts of women’s and children’s roles in society as promoted by the state are, therefore, the antithesis of the traditional role of the majority of lower-class families in Javanese society. As the informal sector has grown, the street has become a reflection of serious economic imbalances and deep social inequalities which exist within Indonesian society. Street children can be seen as a visible indication of this disorder, because children living in poor, lower-class families have been affected by socio-economic problems in the home. As a spokesperson from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has asserted: ‘children are always the group that are left behind in the development process, and often experience negative effects of development’.

Leaving Home

Poverty is frequently cited as one of the main causes of children first going to the streets to find alternative channels of income. Financial hardship, however, is far from being the only reason, and although it is often a contributing factor, there is usually some other family problem. During interviews and focus group discussions, and from reading the monthly magazine Jejal, I found that quite often violence, neglect or physical abuse motivates a child to flee (kapur) to the street permanently. This may relate to parental depression or alcoholism, the child being naughty in the home or the kampung (thus creating shame for the parents), not doing well at school or not bringing home enough money. Frequently, homeless children come from families with stepparents and stepbrothers and sisters, and inequitable treatment and victimisation has left them feeling unloved and

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33 In 1988, 48,837 Indonesians went to the Middle East, 87 percent of whom were females working as housemaids, with most coming from Java. Indonesian social workers suggest that the impact of their mother’s work on children can be quite adverse (Cox, 1992:12).

34 Jellinek (1991:28) also notes how ‘Most women had married at least three times, while some men had married more often. Men and women who had only married once were an exception.’

35 See Berman and Adidananta (1995:2) who state that factory salaries for women are 40-60 percent lower than a man’s.

36 See Bessell (1998:69) who states that in 1990 there were over five million female-headed households in Indonesia, and that ‘studies reveal a heightened tendency for children from female-headed households to enter wage employment and their income is an important component of the survival strategies of these families’ (see also Irwanto, 1995: 50).


38 See Bessell (1998:67) who in her study of Child Labour in Indonesia drew a similar conclusion, and states that ‘Poverty is not the only, or necessarily the most significant factor in determining whether children enter the workforce.’
unwanted. Fathers or mothers may remarry and neglect their children from their first marriage, or a stepchild may be beaten by his stepmother or father and run away when he cannot tolerate it any more.29

Other children told me that they left home because they were sick of the restrictions placed on them. As Valentine, Skelton and Chambers (1998:9) have noted, the home can often be a space of exclusion: ‘The home - like the public space - is another place where young people often find their use of space and time subject to surveillance and control by adults’. Sibley (1995b) has also presented a useful analysis on how adults set boundaries for their children in the family home, and the transgressions made by children against them. He suggests that intergenerational conflict is likely to be triggered by the fact that young people have few opportunities for privacy in the home, while adults may often find their constant presence a nuisance. This is particularly true for children who come from poor families where the parents and a number of siblings all live in one or two rooms. As Sibley states (1995a: 98; 1995b: 129), these problems are likely to spill over into the street and other public spaces.

Conflict is also likely to precipitate between children and their parents due to the pervasive images presented to them by the media and television. Many young people in Indonesia are increasingly influenced by the changing expectations created by capitalism and globalisation, and have become dissatisfied with their home lives and the boundaries and restrictions enforced by their ‘positional parents’ (Sibley, 1995b:130). They no longer want to go to school or work in the rice fields (jawa) and eat white rice (nasi putih). They want to live the way they see other young people are living on the TV: going to McDonalds, wearing trendy clothes and hanging out in the city (Utomo, 1998). For these reasons many children actually choose to work. I return to this issue later in the chapter, and throughout the thesis.30

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29 Stepchildren are at a far greater risk of suffering violent, abuse and even death. According to a recent study by two Canadian scientists stepsiblings represent the single most important risk-factor for severe violence against children (Kohn,1996:35).

30 See also Chapter 8 for an extended discussion of street children’s perceptions of home, the boundaries which they encounter there, and the reasons why they leave.

School: What for?
The strict boundaries of school and pressure to do well were also frequently cited as reasons for leaving home, and many children combine work and school and find it hard to continue to do so.31 In addition, teachers are often said to be fierce and cruel to children at school (as they take it upon themselves to socialise children to become the ‘ideal child’). Also, many kampung children believe that an education has nothing to offer them as they see their friends and other young people graduate from school, and then enter a society which has no job to offer them. Unemployment among young people has been rising throughout Indonesia, particularly in the larger cities of Java, and the prospects for poor urban youth are bad unless they have important connections into work (Jones, 1997:33-4).32 Jones states that this leads to the conclusion that ‘a crisis situation is emerging, and that the economy is unable to absorb the young people leaving school and college’ (ibid). Consequently, young people remain unemployed, become involved in crime, take drugs or join the informal sector, which is where they could have gone without any education. In addition, the quality of much of the secondary schooling in Indonesia is considered to be poor, particularly in rural areas, and to be irrelevant for real life (see Jones,1997: 33; Bessell, 1998:6).

Accordingly, parents, as well as young people (particularly street children), are increasingly cynical about school, and many children drop out after primary school - or even before - preferring to go and work on the streets and earn money. They cannot see the point of gaining an education, as it is considered expensive with no obvious benefits. Although school is supposed to be free, street children complained to me that they had to buy school books, pens and the compulsory uniform, and pay for transport to and from school. They also said that they were

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31 See Bessell (1998:6-11) for an extended discussion on how many children in Indonesia combine work and school, and the reasons why many of them leave school for full-time work: ‘Reasons include an inability to pay for school; an inability to purchase the required uniform, which sometimes provokes discrimination from teachers and is a source of embarrassment and shame for the children; hostility from teachers directed towards some particularly poor children; boredom and/or a sense of unfamiliarity and discomfort with school; and a belief that school will not lead to better employment prospects or increase earning potential’.

32 Before the economic crisis in Indonesia, those aged 15-24 made up 64 percent of the total unemployed (Jones, 1997:34).
victimised by the teacher and had to pay a ‘fee’, and even a bribe to go up in class. Teachers get very poor wages in Indonesia and, in a country where corruption is rife, this information did not come as a complete surprise. The children are also aware of how connections and ‘luck’ are vital if you want to get a proper job in Indonesia. Kuntet (12), for example, left school when he was ten. He was very outspoken on most issues, and often voiced his objection, to school and the elite, as in the article below which he wrote for the magazine Jejak (January 1996:8-9): ‘What is School for?: (‘Untuk apa sekolah?’):

One of my friends said to me: ‘you should go back to school, you know!’ I answered: ‘Why should I? There is already a president and ministers, and even university graduates cannot find work. I would rather quit school and get a job, any job. I can get some money, spend it as I like and play all day. School is just wasting our money, it’s not cheap. If we are dumb we stay dumb, those who are clever stay clever. So being a president or an engineer is just a matter of fate. It’s only luck. If I go to school the teacher asks for money, for this and that, to buy books and things. The teacher is fierce, and likes to extract money to go up a class. You can become clever without going to school. Work and ambition is all luck, and many facts prove that going to university does not mean you will get work. School only wastes money just like the elite do. It is all in vain.

Figure 2.1: A Graduate pushing a Meatball Soup (Baso Sapi) cart.

Suvil’s (14) drawing (Figure 2.1) echoes a similar sentiment, by depicting a person wearing a degree robe and mortar board, pushing a Meatball (Baso Sapi) food cart: a common way of earning money in the informal sector of Indonesia’s cities.

Once a street child has left school it is very difficult for them to return to the system should they decide to reverse their decision. This is because street children who have left home usually do so without school records, a KTP or birth certificate—the documents necessary to register with a school. Even if they still had family contact, it would still be hard to obtain these papers, and would certainly require a large outlay in cash. Moreover, school systems are ill-equipped to deal with the needs of children wishing to reintegrate to formal schooling after spending time working (Bessell, 1998:22).

**Captivating consumerism**

The integration of Indonesia into the global economy has led to increased individualism and consumerism in society, not only among the middle-classes but throughout all levels of society. As Jones (1997:38) says:

> Adolescents in the Asian region, like the rest of the population, are living in a rapidly changing environment. Profound changes in technology, international economic relations and living conditions are altering the nature of their lives and influencing family relationships and expectations placed on them.

This, then, is another reason why children have gone on to the streets: either to meet the increased needs of their families and/or maintain their families standard of living, or to earn their own money to spend as they please, on video games, drugs and interesting food. Thus, even though street children are excluded by global forces, the children themselves are not unaffected by the pervasive attraction of global capitalism and the desire to acquire consumer goods. As White (1994:874) points out:

> It is contradictory and unjust for society on the one hand to bombard children with all the messages of the national consumer culture, underlying the importance of having money and spending it in certain ways, and on the other hand to deny the same children the right to earn money.

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35 See also Bessell (1998) who made similar observations in interviews with working children in Jakarta.
The city offers many more attractions and opportunities and greater freedom than the village or home. It is often a source of liberation for children, and not all street children are from lower-class families. Some are from affluent or middle-class homes, and are on the streets because they are rebelling and are attracted by a consumerist society and the street subcultures. At home, children consume media, radio and TV images of the bright lights and glamorous city lifestyles, and are strongly influenced by global ideas of modernity, individuality, freedom and ‘goods associated with a proper childhood’ (Nieuwenhuys, 1998:275). As Jones (1997:39) asserts:

Villagers these days are bombarded by images of the urban middle-class, not to mention the great world beyond national boundaries...these images help to fuel the migration of young people from rural areas to the cities.

Although it is difficult to assess the direct effect of mass media on the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, the images of global youth culture in magazines, films and on the TV, are far more pervasive than even the government’s ideological construction of the ‘ideal child’, and much more appealing as an agent of socialisation to young people.

Of course, some children just crave freedom, and run away (kabur) looking for adventure and a new life. Many become absorbed into the street subculture, and are encouraged to a life on the streets by those who have already left home. Often this happens when they go out to work in the daytime for their families, or to pay for their schooling. As the months go by they start skipping school more and returning home less. Some children told me that being invited by a friend to join them (diajak teman), or just following others (ikut-ikut) was why they initially went onto the streets. A child or young person’s pursuit of personal freedom and

adventure is frequently part of the reason that they leave home in the first place. Thus, despite mainstream rhetoric (of street children as abandoned victims) street life offers many children something which they cannot find at home, and they go onto the streets precisely because it is a place outside of parental and family control, and where they can be anonymous and experiment and develop a new identity. The street kid subculture is more than just an individual protest; it is a means of creating a new home or ‘family’ with its own codes, symbols, hierarchies and anti-establishment street aesthetic.

Merantau
Although this behaviour is not exclusive to children in Indonesia, it can be seen partly in connection with the culture of merantau (wandering) in Indonesia. This is a traditional concept of leaving home to search for wealth and gain experience, and returning to one’s village with new-found status and prestige (Forbes, 1980:6-10). To an extent the practice still exists in Java and Sumatra. Naim (1976:149-50) has defined merantau as: ‘leaving one’s cultural territory voluntarily, whether for a short or long time, with the aim of earning a living or seeking further knowledge or experience, normally with the intention of returning home’.

Many children gave me the answer ‘merantau’ when I asked them why they left home. This was particularly true of Batak children from North Sumatra where the tradition is still strong (Milton, pers.com, Sept, 1996). As Forbes (1980:7) points out, however, the Sumatrans are not the only group in Indonesia with a reputation for merantau. It is also important to the West Javanese, the Bugis (of Sulawesi) and the Banjarese (ibid). In addition, Anderson (1972:7) informs us that traditionally in Javanese society it was common practice for pre-pubescent boys to leave home to ‘make their own way in life’, and to seek knowledge and experience. There was a kind of ‘hero value’ attached to this transitory lifestyle

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34 The exposure of youth to the media, and today’s rapid flow of information have also been given as reasons for the new groups of middle-class urban youth, ABGs (Anak Baru Gede), teenagers who are not street kids but spend their spare time hanging out in city Malls (Jakarta Post, 14 February 1995). The ‘moral panic’ in the media about ABGs blames western culture for corrupting Indonesia’s youth. These groups (between the ages of 10-15) copy the style of American rappers and have their own street slang, take drugs, wear designer labels and grow their hair long, all shocking behaviour in Indonesia. The same phenomenon of the impact of globalisation also applies for street boys, an issue which is discussed in Chapter 6.

35 See Forbes (1980:6-10) for a discussion of traditional mobility patterns and the culture of merantau, which he says originates from the Minangkabau in West Sumatra.

36 Milton is an ex-street kid from North Sumatra. He now runs a street kid NGO for boys in Pematang Siantar, near Medan. It was Milton who told me that the concept of merantau is still strong in Sumatra, and is frequently the reason that children first go on the streets. Merantau is discussed again in Chapter 8, in relation to children going home.
which was considered ‘a genuine rite of passage from childhood into maturity’ (ibid).  

In recent years the patterns of *merantau* have changed (Forbes, 1980:7). These days most people do not return to their villages to take up traditional occupations in agriculture. Instead, they begin new professions in the cities, in trade or services where there are greater financial benefits than working in the village (ibid). Young boys who *merantau* to the city find that they can earn more money and that they are able to consume products in the capitalist economy. Consequently, they do not wish to return to their village which they find dull and uninteresting.

As well as changing patterns of *merantau*, perceptions of the people who *merantau* or ‘wander’ have also changed. This is due to the development of a specific New Order public transcript which has enforced sedentary lifestyles through *kampung* surveillance systems and restrictions of mobility. The desire to reinforce sedentary behaviour is connected to the state’s fear of disorder and instability, and the state’s preoccupation with the importance of ‘stability’ is directly related to the chaos and bloodshed which followed a poorly executed ‘coup’ attempt in 1965, when several hundred thousand people died (Ricklefs 1993:280-90; Hill, 1994:xxii). This was when Soeharto relieved President Sukarno of his duties. Since then there has been a culture of fear of a recurrence of such upheaval and bloodshed: a fear factor which is linked to a fixation with the need for stability, in order to prevent anything like that ever happening again. As a result, fear and the desire for stability have remained principle components of political behaviour in Indonesia, and are partly the reason why Soeharto was able to remain in power for so long: people felt safer with him in power than not. As Crouch (1993:91) informed us before Soeharto fell: ‘Many Indonesians prefer to go along with the existing order rather than risk the consequences of the upheaval which might accompany his overthrow.’

People who wander around the country are outside the state’s surveillance system. Consequently, they are distrusted by society, as they are seen to represent disorder. Since most homeless street children have no KTP they are outside the state controlled system, and officially do not exist. Although this excludes them from many of their basic rights as Indonesian citizens, it also gives them a kind of freedom which people within the system cannot enjoy. They can go wherever they like without having to gain permission from the *kampung* authorities, and be whoever they like, whenever they like. Such freedom of mobility is seen as deviant and is regarded as a threat to stability by agencies of the state. Thus, with the growth of capitalism and urbanisation those people who live transitory lifestyles are no longer revered, but are seen as deviant, unstable, dirty and dishonest (Ongkokharn, 1984:3-4). These changing attitudes can be seen in the way that the word *gelandangan* (a person who wanders from place to place), has taken on negative connotations, and such people are often thought to be thieves and a health risk to other citizens (Miller, 1996:47; Guinness, 1983:71).  

In addition, the majority of circular migrants from the countryside to the cities usually find employment in petty commodity production or what is known as the informal sector (Forbes, 1980:3; Hugo 1978 26-9). Circular migration is also seen as deviant in nature, and a threat to the nation’s overall stability (Hettler, 1984; Jellinek, 1978; 1991; Papanek, 1976). This is not only because of the state’s desire for a sedentary population, but also because the informal sector is regarded as a social problem which is not contributing to the development of the economy or the state (Berman and Addiandana, 1995:3). In fact, those who participate in the informal sector are frequently referred to as ‘obstructors’ of development (ibid).

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37 See also Fraser (1985:182-220) who discusses a similar phenomenon called *liliu* among youth in the Solomon Islands. Fraser sees *liliu* not as aimless wandering but as a ‘strategic behaviour’, as adolescent’s greater mobility increases a young man’s learning and chances in life. They also engage in *liliu* to distance themselves from adult society, and as a rite of passage (Fraser,1985:203). Fraser also notes, however, that traditionally young people would eventually return to the village with their new found wealth and knowledge. Nowadays, due to the period of rapid change and growth in the Solomon Islands, they are more likely to stay in town, and not return to the village. It is the same in Indonesia.

38 Current events in Indonesia may perhaps indicate that these fears were justified.  

39 See also Sullivan (1980, 1991) and Guinness (1983a) for a discussion on how *gelandangan* are perceived in a negative way by the local *kampung* communities in Yogyakarta and Jakarta.  

40 As Forbes (1980:3) and Hugo (1978:64) both assert, however, not all migrants are involved in the informal sector, and some also work in offices and hotels.
For many Indonesian elite the sight of people working on the streets offends their sensibilities, by representing underdevelopment, disorder, and instability.

Conclusion
This chapter has investigated the nature of the state in Indonesia and the consequences of global cultural, economic and social changes during the New Order regime. Initially I described the city of Yogyakarta as the cultural heart of Java, and how Javanese culture has influenced the nature of the Indonesian state in its desire to maintain power. I also explained the country’s economic growth strategy during the New Order regime, and how such an approach caused Indonesia to experience rapid urbanisation, radical social change, and a widening gap between rich and poor. It is in this climate that many children went to live on the streets.

I then discussed how government policies have impinged directly on the micro structures of the home and family through the construction of a ‘public transcript’ and specific ideologies based on ‘traditional’ Javanese culture (Scott, 1990). These ideologies have included the state’s construction of the ideal family, mother and child. The ‘ideal Indonesian child’ is not expected to work but to go to school, and to stay at home with their mother who has been prescribed the role of housewife and carer of her children. This ‘regime of truth’ is policed via a ‘multiplicity of organisations’ and a rigorous surveillance system through which the state has access to people at all levels in society (see Foucault, 1984). As Murray (1991a: 6) tells us, however: ‘The urban poor have little or no input into this ‘regime of truth’ and its policies, which are often inappropriate in relation to everyday kampung life’. In reality, only elite, middle-class, affluent women can afford not to work and to stay at home to be mothers and housewives, while women from poor families have had to go out and work, often sending their children too.

The presence of children living and working on the street is not only due to poverty, however, but also to do with problems in the home, and changing expectations caused by the pervasive growth of capitalism. For these reasons children go on to the streets in order to escape abuse, to meet their families’ increased needs, or to find enjoyment and earn their own money. Traditionally, in Indonesia, it was considered acceptable, and a rite of passage for young boys, to have complete freedom, leave home and live a transitory existence. In modern Indonesian society this kind of behaviour is no longer considered acceptable by the dominant social class and the state. This is because the street is perceived as somewhere outside of family control, and street children are often thought to be abandoned by their families, and to have lost their bhab, bobat, and beker kinship ties (Ertanto, 1993). These qualities refer respectively to family wealth, social rank, and ancestry, and are the basis for categorising people in Java. A person without any knowledge of their family connections is considered to be of the lowest possible position in society, and children who have lost all family connections are considered by the majority of mainstream society to be a social pariah infesting the city streets (Ibid).

Children are seen by the state as belonging with their families, and family connections are essential to identity and participation in society. Consequently, street children are perceived to be upsetting the patriarchal ideological constructions based on middle-class values of the role of the family, and to be transgressing that which is considered to be appropriate behaviour for children. Aptekar (1988) has noted a similar phenomena in Colombia. In his book, The Street Children of Cali, he discusses how street children in Colombia threaten the strategy of patriarchal social reproduction on which the ideology of the home and family is based:

...the street where the family name had no meaning, where family connections were worthless, but where one’s personal abilities to get the job done were paramount to survival. ‘Children’ belonged in families, where family name was essential to identity and participation in society. With the children on the streets, the families in jeopardy of losing power felt even more at risk. The street children threatened the questioned tenets of the accepted forms of child rearing [...]. If children were seen as healthy, the irreplaceable necessity of the dominant family would have been jeopardized. Street children, if seen as functional, might well have debunked ‘family’ as it was perceived form the patriarchal point of view. This was ample motivation to secure the view that the children were unable to manage their own lives and were in need of moral supervision (Aptekar, 1988:135-60).

I am grateful to Dr. George Quinn, Australian National University, for explaining the meaning and significance of these different qualities.

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The Indonesian state also perceives the danger of functional street children who visibly flout conventional family ideology as it has been constructed.42 This is because they are seen to be diverging from the norms of society and to be committing a 'transgressive act' by violating the moral boundaries of the nuclear family, school and the community (see Cresswell, 1996). By surviving outside parental control they are not conforming to the desired image of the 'ideal child', and their constant mobility is seen to represent instability and disorder. They are regarded as a menace to the regime's overall preservation of power, which is based on sedentary lifestyles and the view that the family structure is irreplaceable, and the nation is modern and 'developing'. As Glauser (1990) states: 'the daily visible presence of deviant children [are] permanent and sometimes harassing reminders that all is not normal.'

In spite of President Soeharto being known as the 'Bapak of development' when he was in power, and the state's claim that children represent the nation's 'future', it has not taken responsibility for street children, and has no policies which benefit them. Instead, they have been systematically excluded by state regulations and rhetoric. For street children, therefore, the Bapak of development has been absent from their lives. Unless, that is, he wished to remove them from sight, for trespassing the boundaries of the public transcript. In the following chapter I examine how as a result of this perceived transgression, the Indonesian state and dominant groups attempt to stigmatise, oppress and conceal undesirable homeless children, and to limit the physical spaces in which they can operate.

Social and Spatial Exclusion for Children 'Out of Place' (Chapter Three)

The concern with street children in particular seems to arise...not only because they may suffer, be at risk, or be on the edge of survival but, I would suggest, because they disrupt the tranquillity, stability and normality of society. Their behaviour on the street may be seen as aggressive on an individual level but their very existence 'in the open' and visible to everybody, outside what is thought as normal, questions social and cultural patterns. This is ultimately what is at issue. Street children represent deviations from normal standards and it is they who, in a way which cannot be ignored, confront and touch society's dominant sectors' views and lives and interfere or threaten to interfere with its major interests. It becomes clear, therefore, that society as such has a practical need to conceptualize this phenomenon in order to express public concern and take action (Glauser, 1990: 46).

The dominant concept of the family as a political agency of control is seen to be endangered by the existence of alternatives, such as street children, who constitute a disruption of national space with their 'alien values' (see Sibley, 1995a:42). The children themselves are sometimes blamed for their predicament, and are said to be backward or have a 'weak mentality', and to be in dire need of moral supervision (see also Antekar, 1988:156). In addition, street children are repeatedly labelled by society and the media as neglected or abandoned by their families (terlantar dari keluarga), thus placing the blame for their predicament on to their parents, and deflecting blame away from structural or economic explanations. Parents are also labelled as 'lazy' for forcing their children to work on the streets. As Aididinata (1995:1) tells us in reference to street children in Java: 'If a parent is seen as being

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42 See also Nieuwenhuyse, (1998:277-9) who discusses how in the pursuit of a 'global childhood' ideology nation states view street children as being 'out of childhood', and to be trespassing that which is perceived to be the 'acceptable life-style for children'.

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too neglectful of their own children then they are referred to as being inhuman (dada awong).

In this chapter I show how the state attempts to stigmatise, oppress and conceal those groups which it perceives as challenging the hegemonic values it tries to impose. This encompasses an examination of the social and spatial exclusionary processes which have affected street children, including a language of deviance, media scare-mongering, and ‘euphemisms for coercive acts’ (Scott, 1990:53). I then explain how these discourses have legitimised the more physically coercive forms of state domination. To support my analysis I draw on Douglas’s (1966) examination of the concept of dirt, pollution, and the fear of disorder; Cohen’s (1972) work on Mods and Rockers and media ‘moral panics’ in Britain; and the Australian criminologist White’s (1990, 1993, 1996) work on urban youth and their increased exclusion from city spaces. I continue to draw on Sibley’s (1995a) and Cresswell’s (1996) work on exclusionary discourses, dominant ideologies and perceived transgressions.

Choose Us! : ‘Cockroach Symbolism’ and the Discourse of Deviance

Society invents a spurious convoluted logic to absorb and change people whose behaviour is outside its mainstream. Suppose that ah kon aw the pros and cons, know that ah’m ganna have a short life, am ay sound mind etcetera, etcetera, but still want to use smack? They won’t let ye do it. The won’t let ye do it, because it’s seen as a sign of their ain failure. The fact that ye jist simply choose to reject what they hav to offer. Choose us. Choose life (Welsh, 1996:187).

In his novel Trainspotting, Welsh (1996) observes that British mainstream society will not tolerate, and attempts to absorb and change those people who are perceived to be flouting dominant patriarchal values. If they are unsuccessful in absorbing these people into the ‘proper’ way of thinking and behaving, then they, the outsiders, are shunned.

Welsh (1996), Cresswell (1996) and Sibley (1995a) have all noted how in Western societies an individual is not permitted to do as he likes to his or her body, or to live as he or she pleases. ‘They won’t let you do it, because it’s seen as a sign of their own failure’. This is especially true in Indonesia, where the state is trying to attract foreign investors and tourists, and does not want street children and vagrants, the nations’ ‘failures’, sullying the desired image of an (until recently) economically secure and blossoming nation (Adidananta, 1995). Further, the apparent refusal of homeless people to absorb dominant group’s ideologies, thus rejecting ‘what they have to offer’, is seen as a challenge to the state system of values. This is also true in the developed world, as a homeless man in London expressed:

In many ways I wish to be homeless but society won’t allow me to be. I look back to a time that revered travelling, when people were nomadic. I would like to live as a free spirit, but society dictates otherwise (Grant, 1997: 15).

Similarly, street children in Indonesia challenge the state’s moral boundary enforcement, and those ‘outside’ these boundaries are further distanced through discourse. One reason for this is because they are highly mobile, and constantly move from place to place, and city to city, in defiance of the state’s RT/RW surveillance systems. Unmonitored mobility is seen as a kind of ‘superdeviance’ (Cresswell, 1996: 85):

Ideas about geography play a central part in the construction of normality and thus deviance. In a society with geographic norms of property ownership and the separation of home and work, the travelling lifestyle appears to be disordered, dirty and irresponsible.

When discussing those people who do not fit within the mainstream, many commentators draw on Douglas’s (1966) book Purity and Danger. This work examines the concept of dirt and pollution in relation to disorder, and how

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Hoggett (1992:233) discusses how the threat of invasion by an alien group (Bangladesh) into a white community in London brings about a ‘necrophobic anxiety’ which is represented through a number of forms, particularly the cockroach which signifies a complex knot of resentment, fear and hatred. Sibley (1995a:32) refers to this representation of Hoggett’s as ‘cockroach symbolism’. See also Rantzer’s (1985) satirical play, Operu Keus (The Cockroach Opera), about Jakarta street people and how they violate the state’s desired image of a developing nation.

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Pile (1997:19) also states that: ‘it is demonstrably true that many oppressive practices of authority seek to control and regulate people’s use of space, ultimately confining people to highly circumscribed spaces’. The RT/RW surveillance system is an effort by the Indonesian state to regulate people’s mobility, and by the very nature of their existence, street children are outside of the entire surveillance system, and are thus disregarded.
something considered to be unclean in any culture is a reflection of the ordered patterning which that culture is striving to establish. Douglas (1966:40) illustrates how dirt is often 'matter out of place', a definition which simultaneously suggests a system of classification as well as a transgression of order. In other words, street children are considered to be 'out of place' by state and society because they violate the expected norms of appropriate behaviour (Cresswell, 1996). Their presence is interpreted as an invasion and defilement of public space which signifies disorder and pollution, because 'things which transgress become dirt' (Cresswell 1992: 332-3).

In addition to being considered 'out of place' by state and society, street children's dirty appearance is also seen as a sign of moral disorder, and frequently links them to crime and pollution in the eyes of society. Street kids generally wear old clothes which are often filthy, because they spend their time in dirty, polluted streets. They also have dark skin, particularly on their arms and faces which have been tanned from hours of working in the hot sun. Hitam, or black skin is an undesirable colour in Indonesian society, as it is considered ugly and a sign of poverty or kampung (Murray, 1991:119). Thus, the colour of most of the children's skin, combined with their grubby, old clothes, gives them a black, dirty and ragged appearance. As Sibley (1995a: 22) informs us 'black signals fear', and 'has both practical and moral associations, which make it a potent marker of social difference'. For mainstream society the sight of street children often suggests an alarming difference which is associated with danger, disease and shame, and for these reasons street children are often feared by the public who do not want to get too close, for fear of contamination.7

Cleanliness and order are also inextricably linked in the eyes of state authorities who view minorities as threatening the 'purified majority', thus making public space 'unsafe' (Sibley, 1995a: 67). The state, therefore, attempts to 'purify public space' of their defiled and polluting presence (ibid). In Yogyakarta huge billboards can be seen around the city with the slogan 'Pleasant Yogyakarta' ('Yogyakarta Berhati Nyaman'); a campaign to beautify and improve the image of the city. Similar programmes exist in other cities such as Jakarta BMW.8

Social control can be seen in the state's attempts to 'other' those who live outside specific set boundaries, and who do not adhere to the culture of conformity imposed through ideological discourse and more direct oppression. Order, conformity and social homogeneity are sought by state and society through negative stereotyping, demonisation, stigmatisation and denying that groups even exist. In this way limits are set by the state as to what is ideologically admissible social behaviour, and that which is seen as offensive is identified as unlawful, in order to legitimate oppression. As Cresswell (1996:85) points out in reference to travellers in Britain:

In order to understand the phenomena of 'deviance' we must look at dominant society as an active partner in its production. Rarely is a connection made between the supposed deviance of travellers and the unequal distribution of political, economic, and social power...Often the 'offenders' are simply blamed for their own deviance, without any attempt to explain the way in which the deviant category is defined by the dynamic relationships between subordinate and dominant groups in society.

It is the same for street children in Indonesia. The mass media often portrays street children as deviant and delinquent criminals, creating disorder with their socially undesirable appearance, behaviour habits and life styles. The grossly unequal political, economic and social system is hardly ever seen as an explanation for their existence, and why they live the way they do. Instead, the children's differences are emphasised, and intolerance of their existence is exaggerated by the media and state discourse which excludes and stereotypes 'others'.

Exclusionary Discourse
If an individual or community has an attitude or way of life which does not fit in with government ideology they are stigmatised and excluded through a language of

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7 The children do find it difficult to wash their clothes, and will often throw them away rather than wash them, although most children do wash themselves (mandi), in public toilets. However, younger children in particular will often cultivate a dirty, ragged appearance as part of the performance of the 'street kid' identity in order to promote sympathy from the public, and thus earn more money when working. I discuss issues of behaviour patterns (such as hygiene and income earning activities), and identity construction in relation to work and leisure in later chapters.

8 Jakarta BMW (Berbisnis Menangis Berhijabah) is a slogan attached to a programme to make Jakarta clean, pleasant and humane. 'Shining Jakarta' is another example of a similar programme in the city of Klagen.
deviance. Ideological control is the basis for the state’s attempts to other those in society who do not adhere to the culture of conformity and modernity imposed through ideological discourse. What is not acceptable is labelled criminal and the terminology of deviance is a prerogative of the state. In Indonesia there are numerous terms to stigmatise and stereotype those who do not conform to accepted norms and who are outside the state’s elaborate structure of control. People are branded with such labels as GTB (Garakat Tanpa Bentuk or ‘Formless Organisation’), penghambat pembangunan (obstructer of development), subversif (subversive), anti-Pancasila (anti-state philosophy), Ex-Topat,9 and mbalelo (rebel). There are also labels which specifically stigmatise and marginalise those who are ‘lacking’ (tuna) such WTS (Wanita Tuna Suzila, literally ‘Women without morals’, i.e. prostitutes); Tuna Karya (the jobless); and Tuna Wisma, (the homeless).10 Other labels which stigmatise the homeless include gelandangan (vagrants), Tunane masyarakat (social dregs), gembel (street kids), and kere (tramp). Negative labels are also used for children and youth who present the state with problems, and include preman (thugs) GAlI (Gabungan Anak Liar, ‘Gangs of Wild Children’); anak bermasalah (problem children) and anak terlantar (abandoned children).11

These labelling campaigns are very effective in influencing society’s attitude towards particular groups, and perpetuate the idea that street children are dangerous and undesirable. The labels are used consistently in government rhetoric and

9 The Pancasila philosophy is the state ideology formulated by Sukarno in the 1945 Constitution (see Chapter 2). The role of Pancasila remains accepted today and has repeatedly been reassessed by government officials as distilling Indonesian national ideology and as providing a code of individual and national conduct. As a result individuals (and groups) can and are arrested if their behaviour is said to be ‘anti-pancasila’.

10 Until 1997, Ex-Topat (ET) was a stamp political prisoners had on their identity cards. It literally means ex-political prisoners, but in Indonesia it is synonymous with having ‘Communist’ stamped on one’s identity card as it is a stamp which was put on all prisoners who were arrested for being communists in the 1960’s. This label severely limits the holder’s (and family) opportunities in life, including obtaining a job in the formal sector, renting accommodation, travelling or even making friends as people distance themselves from such people for fear of stigmatisation by association (Miller, 1996:52).

11 As Addidana (1995:5) points out, not everyone who is out of work is stigmatised in this way; those people working in the informal sector are often regarded as tuna karya; and those college students who have graduated but have not yet found work and are still living at home with their parents are ‘adong ciri kerja’; (‘in the process of looking for work’); never tuna karya. Meanwhile, a corrupt official will never be called ‘wanasusila (lacking morals)’ (ibid).

12 See also Addidana (1995:4; 1996:4) for further discussion on criminal labelling by the Indonesian state.

pervade the education system and media, so the whole of society is indoctrinated into thinking about particular groups (such as prostitutes, becak drivers, street kids, homeless people, beggars, scavengers, as well as murderers, thieves, and drug dealers) in the same way, and justified in shunning them or treating them badly. Further, the campaigns are followed up with the state’s attempts to finds ways of regulating and eradicating such deviance and disorder. These have involved particular coercive activities by agents of the state such as arrests, imprisonment and torture of street children. Such means of regulation are discussed later in the chapter.

‘Manufacturing Consent’13

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 1).

The mass media is a powerful and effective ideological institution for asserting state hegemony, and is used by the state for winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears justifiable. In the quote above, Herman and Chomsky are discussing the US mass media, but the Indonesian media is controlled even more heavy-handedly by state ideological discourse which, in turn, controls and manipulates mainstream opinion and public understanding of events (Berman,1994:5). This is sometimes done by the media inciting a ‘moral panic’ about undesirable, who are constructed as national ‘folk devils’ (Cohen, 1972). Mead (1997:14) informs us: ‘As a media event moral panic works to create two effects: a climate of fear and a scapegoat to be targeted’.

The Indonesian press is responsible for regularly generating anxiety about the prevalence of ‘thugs’ (preman) et large, who disrupt concepts of order by ‘ruining the streets like a field’, and who ‘have ruled many of the capital’s streets and shopping centres and markets for years’ (Jakarta Post, March 10, 1995).14 As an

13 See Herman and Chomsky (1988) for an elaboration of this concept, and the importance of propaganda in the mass media in order to ‘mobilize bias’ and thus influence public opinion.

14 Preman is the name given to ‘thugs’, ‘bouts’, ‘hoodlums’ or ‘trouble makers’, but can be any person who looks as though they could cause trouble, due to the style of their dress, or even the length of their hair. The majority of preman are urban youth. Preman are held responsible by the
Indonesian sociologist stated recently, "the word premam has always related to
deviation of behaviour or something illegal". Premam, are consistently presented
in the press as socially threatening and a jeopardy to stability and thus development
which, in turn, justifies the state’s harsh treatment of them.16 Feelings of lack of
safety in Indonesian cities are discussed in special reports on crime and premam
which feature regularly in newspapers and magazines.17 These news articles incite
fear in the public, and the issue of criminality is always linked to the levels of fear
in society with captions such as; ‘don’t be surprised or lament the fact if one
afternoon you become the victim of crime in the street, and no-one will care’,
heading magazine stories (Gatra, 1996: 28). The word premam is thus
sensationalised and has the ability to invoke fear and moral panic in society.

Street children are also linked to crime and premam in the press, where they have
inspired outbursts of moral outrage and a disparaging vocabulary which has
socially constructed them as menacing. Sometimes they are referred to as ‘little
goondums’ (preman kecil), or as ‘delinquent’ (anak nakal) or ‘problem children’
(anak bermasalah). These reports perpetuate stereotypes and stigma. As a result
street children are often regarded with suspicion on the street by the public,
something which children told me hurts their feelings (sakit hati).18

Spatial Apartheid

The social and the spatial are so thoroughly imbued with each other’s presence…a
sustained investigation of the ‘out of place’ metaphor points to the fact that social
power and social resistance are always already spatial. When an expression such as
‘out of place’ is used it is impossible to clearly demarcate whether social or
geographical place is denoted, place always means both (Cresswell, 1996:11).

Cresswell (1996:60) argues that the regulation of people is often a project to
manage the purity of space, thus ideological and social control has extended to
public space, through ‘spatial ideologies’ (Cresswell, 1992: 330). This is because
there is a strong connection between the space of cities and the exercise of political
power (Foucault, 1984:243). Smith and Katz (1993:76) extend this notion by
saying: "It is not space per se that expresses power, but the thoroughly naturalised
absolute conception of space that grew up with capitalism, and which expresses a
very specific tyranny of power."

Visions of public space have changed dramatically over time, and can no longer be
regarded as synonymous with freedom, even though urban space is often still seen
as a potential liberator by street children and also women.19 As Valentine
(1996:155) points out, the term ‘public space’ now seems inappropriate, given the
way these spaces are often privately owned, controlled and regulated, and are no
longer public because many people are excluded from them on the grounds of race,
age or sexuality. They are also excluded because of their income level.

It appears that the boundaries between the consuming and non-consuming public
are strengthening, with non-consumption being constructed as a form of deviance
at the same time that spaces of consumption eliminate public spaces in the city
(Sibley, 1995a: xii).

Élite control through ideological discourse has extended to public spaces in a way
which has been described by White (1996:39), as ‘spatial apartheid based upon
socio-economic status.20 This is due to the street, previously a multipurpose space
for all classes, being transformed by bourgeois notions of consumption which
involve new patterns of shopping. Capitalist space has thus ‘colonized’ public

16 As explained in Chapter 2, the importance of ‘stability’ is linked to a culture of fear in Indonesian
society which the state exploits in order to maintain power. For example, the need to maintain
’safety’ for ‘development’ purposes is often presented in the press. See for example, Sodarto’s
claim: ‘Without stability how can development proceed?’, in the Jakarta Post, 1996.

17 See for example Jumur special report (25th January 1997) Jakarta di Tangan Premam, ‘ Jakarta in
the Hands of Hoodlums’, and Gatra (6th January, 1997) special issue on premam which is entitled
Kemiskinan Menginat Kita, ‘Crime is Lying in Wait For Us’.

18 Many of the children told me of how they hate the way people clutch their bags close to them or
lock their car doors when they see them approaching or walking by.

19 As noted by Wilton (1991) in respect of women in western cities. See Chapter 7 for a further
discussion on the city as a liberating domain for girls and women in patriarchal societies.

20 See White (1990) for a discussion of young people in Australia and their similar struggle ‘for a
space of their own’, against comparable methods to restrict the use of public space.
spaces, which have subsequently been socially constructed as commercial or leisure spaces, guarded by security officers and agents of the state (see Gregory, 1994).

Within this ideological construction, public spaces, such as shopping centres, have been recreated as aesthetic consumer and leisure spaces where the new middle class does not wish to be confronted by poverty and inhospitable sights such as dirty homeless children. Up until 1997 high rates of economic growth in Yogyakarta resulted in rapid infrastructure development with many new buildings, malls and department stores being built, particularly in the centre of the city (Haryadi, 1994: 211; White and Tjandraningsih, 1998: 43). As Haryadi (1994:211) has noted, however, the kampung, its residents, and people working in the market places have been increasingly isolated from the inner city, which is 'being transformed into an environment for higher income people' (Haryadi, 1994:211). This is because the kampung and markets are seen as backward and outmoded by a state wishing to promote a modern image to visiting foreign dignitaries and tourists. Traditional markets and kampung have been destroyed in government 'improvement programmes', which, in reality, are planned for the middle classes, rather than kampung people (Haryadi, 1994:212; see also Jellinek, 1991:110-12; Murray, 1991a).

Street children are also being marginalised in these improvement campaigns, as they too contradict the desired image of a developing, modern nation, that the government wishes to present. In this way urban aesthetics have been linked to capitalism, and the existence of street children signifies disorder and a lack of safety, thus scaring off potential shoppers, tourists as 4 investors from the city (see Mitchell, 1997:309). Because of this perceived threat street children are restricted from the areas in which they can operate. They are also perceived to be deliberately 'refusing' to conform or to take advantage of what society has to offer them (see Mitchell, 1997: 319).

Street children's everyday activities are also seen as transgressions and are deemed to be 'out of place', as well as 'out of childhood' (Nieuwenhuys, 1998:278).

Crosswell (1996:60) asserts that often the fear of the state is that such transgressions will change the meanings of places, eventually resulting in the places themselves changing, becoming the other's place. In the eyes of the state, street children's very existence is, therefore, regarded as a criminal activity and justifies control, imprisonment, and in some countries extermination. As Harvey (1996:429) has written: 'Aesthetic judgements, have frequently entered in as powerful criteria of political and social action'.

The ability of the state to control the use of space lies in what De Certeau (1984) refers to as the 'spatialising practices' of the powerful, where invasive or transgressive spatial acts may be punished. The state is instrumental in redefining what is considered to be acceptable behaviour in public spaces, and what the meaning of that space should be (Crosswell, 1996:59). Public space is often regulated by banning from sight behaviours that are, for various reasons, considered alien and offensive to dominant groups in society (see Duncan, 1996:14; Sibley, 1995a). Increasingly, growing social disparities in Indonesian society are accompanied by the 'militarisation of the landscape', based upon exclusionary laws and policies, and have led to a systematic erosion of public space (White, 1996:417). Such schemes have been described by Mitchell (1997:305) as the 'annihilation of space by law', which, in the context of North America, he describes as a legal remedy to 'cleanse the streets of those left behind by globalization...by simply erasing the spaces in which they must live'.

The battle over space in Indonesia was seen recently when preman were blamed for inciting riots in the Tanah Abang area of Jakarta, after public order officials attempted 'to prevent vendors from taking up too much space reserved for pedestrians and traffic' (Jakarta Post, 28 January, 1997). In this case preman were...

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21 Amnesty International has documented an escalating number of reports of violations and "disappearances" of street children in Colombia who are frequently assassinated by armed vigilantes working together in death squads. In 1993 death notices were put up on the streets of the capital, Bogota, inviting the community to attend the funerals of street children. The notice read: 'the industrialists, businessmen, civic groups, and community at large invite you to the funerals of the delinquents of this sector' (Amnesty International 1994a:No.65). In Brazil and Guatemala street children are also abused and often killed 'like cockroaches' as a form of 'social cleansing' by police and security vigilante groups (Amnesty International, 1996a:16). In the Philippines, street children have been driven to secluded areas by the police and shot dead (Amnesty International, 1996a:9).

22 Original emphasis.
used as scapegoats to whom the state deflected blame for the current economic crisis—the true reason for the riot.  

It is also evident in Indonesia that urban communities reinforce the state’s message by policing themselves. Scavengers (Pemulung), for example, live off other people’s waste and so are seen by many kampung residents as unclean undesirables who need to be kept at a distance. The spatial dimensions of this fear have resulted in most kampung forbidding scavengers and vagrants (gelondangans) to enter their localities, due to the ‘threat’ of pollution and crime. Hostility towards difference is expressed, then, as an anxiety about property, and the desire to distance oneself from ‘others’ (1995a). Almost all kampung in Yogyakarta have a sign at the entrance which states ‘Scavengers Prohibited Entry’ (Pemulung Dilarang Masuk) (Plate 3.1).

Plate 3.1: ‘No Entry’: A sign to scavengers at the entrance of a kampung.

Similarly, many houses and offices in Yogyakarta have the sign ‘Buskers [play] for Free’ (Pengamen Gratia). Society is thus also engaged in the purification of space through the ‘fortification of their neighbourhhoods’ (White, 1996).

Reluctance to have street children in the neighbourhood is further illustrated by the reaction of kampung residents to open-houses for street children. For example, the NGO Girli, always finds it hard to get a contract for an open-house as local people are very suspicious of street children, particularly those without identity cards. This is because kampung law dictates that only those with identity cards (KTP) may live in the area. Errando (1993) tells the story of how local authorities evicted Girli from an inner city kampung because the children did not possess KTPs. When it was pointed out that the majority of the children were under seventeen, and therefore too young to have a KTP, the authorities said that every child must have a birth certificate or some form of identification. For homeless children this was an impossible request because many of them do not know their own date of birth or where their parents live.

Street children’s activities are therefore suppressed by attempts to restrict the spaces in which they can operate, and they are frequently evicted (disisir) from both

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11 Although, as Hayadi (1994) has shown, kampung residents are themselves excluded by the processes of the global economy, they nevertheless perpetuate state discourse on street children, pemulung and gelondangan by perceiving them as a threat, and excluding them from entering their kampung. For example, Sullivan (1980: 65-6), in his study of a kampung community in Yogyakarta, notes how ‘kampung folk’ saw gelondangan as an ‘immediate threat’, to their possessions (as some stole their clothing while it was drying), and how they equated poverty and disorder with crime, and were very hostile to gelondangan, and referred to them as ‘social drags’. He further states that their presence was thought to reflect badly on themselves and draw the unwarranted attention of the authorities to their communities. Guinness (1983a: 77-79) also discusses how gelondangan were often suspected of stealing from kampung homes, and of being a health risk to citizens, and that scavengers were considered ‘the dregs of society, often abused by kampung and streetside children, and snarled at by dogs’. However, Guinness tells the story of how kampung residents eventually facilitated the integration of a community of gelondangan into kampung society. This was done through: “sympathetic encouragement and a degree of tolerance of abnormal behaviour” (Guinness, 1983a: 81).  

12 In November 1997 a new ‘drop-in centre’ for street children in Semarang was unceremoniously closed down by ‘local’ people who no longer wanted the NGO in their neighbourhood. What is interesting is that in the same area there was a newly built hotel, shortly to be opened. Whether it really was the community or the local authorities who demanded the closure of the NGO is not known. As a worker of the NGO said to me ‘I cannot imagine that a run down office housing street children does much for property evaluations or our tourist marketing campaigns’. Two months before this incident masked intruders came one night to the NGO and beat the children, who then ran away to Yogyakarta (Jane Eaton: pers. comm. November, 1997).
public and private places by agencies of the state and members of society. As White (1996:44) puts it: ‘street policing is increasingly oriented toward ‘cleaning up the streets of young hoodlums and thugs, to make invisible the rabble rubble [sic] of late capitalist economies.’ Street children are very aware of the state and mainstream society’s attitude towards them. This is expressed in a poem written by a young rubbish scavenger, Sony (Jajal, Sept, 1997: 12-13), in Yogyakarta:

We are the City’s Tramps
The morning’s rubbish has arrived!
The morning’s rubbish has arrived!
Now let’s party.
We are Yogyakarta’s tramps,
the thin rat dwellers of Yogyakarta’s slums
who are always close to the world of dirt
in the sun which brings sweat
in the rain which brings shivering
we go along
in submission
and open hearts
this is our fate.
The river water is in our stomachs
wet newspaper plastic house
an old bridge is good for us
we don’t have any winter coats
except to chase after rubbish
which is piled up in the corner of the city
In a moment we will be raid by police
goodbye and respect us tramps
Yogyakarta’s rubbish cleaners!

Stigmatisation is part of the construction of the public transcript, and perpetuates the idea that these groups are dangerous and undesirable, and that they pose a threat to harmony, national stability, and development. The Robot case, discussed below, is a clear example of a ‘media event’ that generated moralising terror and panic, and illustrates the ways in which street children have become scapegoats through media discourse. It shows how the common mythology that street children are sexually deviant is perpetuated, and how ‘exclusive morality discourse often дraws on sexuality, and comes back to the idea of dirt as a signifier of imperfection and inferiority’ (Sibley,1995a:14).

Robot and Rhetoric
July 30th, 1996 was an ‘interesting’ time to begin my fieldwork as it was three days after the July 27th incident outside the Democratic Party’s (PDI) headquarters in Jakarta. 28 It was also the same day that Siswanto (33), alias Robot Gedek, the serial killer was arrested: the man held responsible for brutally murdering at least twelve Jakartan street children. This event was the pinnacle of an hysterical barrage in the press which brought street children and their unsavoury lifestyles into the national consciousness.

National hysteria following the killings was not because the victims were homeless street children, working on the streets for their own survival, or because (in some cases) they had no identity, or even because they had been murdered. The real reason for the frenzy which ensued was because the children were victims of anal sex (seksom) before being killed. This revelation sparked a huge debate in the press about paedophilia, and marked a jump onto the international band-wagon. 29

The street children I knew referred to this time as the ‘Robot season’ (masim Robot), and the event very much entered their consciousness. Some of the children knew Robot (who used to live in Yogyakarta), as well as those who were killed. What frightened them most was the fact that the victims had been brutally murdered with their stomachs cut open. 30 The press, however, focused on the sexual abuse, and the perceived prevalence of homosexuality within the street-child community.

28 On July 27th 1996 riots broke out across Jakarta when Megawati Sukarnoputri was deposed as leader of the PDI. I discuss this incident in the Conclusion.
29 In 1996 there was an international panic about paedophilia in the press, around the time of the ‘World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children’ held in Stockholm from August 27-31.
30 The Robot case stimulated stories from the boys about the dangers of living in Jakarta, including the danger of ‘jockeys’ (jokerto), or ‘three-in-one’ boys in Jakarta being raped by their customers. ‘Three-in-one’ boys are those who are seen at the side of the road in the early morning rush hour, courting themselves as extra passengers to cars who are about to enter restricted zones where only cars with three passengers or more are permitted to enter. The boys also talked about the danger of becoming rumah, a Javaanse offering or gift for the spirits to prevent misfortune in a new development or building. Traditionally in Java buffalo are used, but the children told me that sometimes business men pick up street boys to use as rumah, who are then thrown into the cement foundations of new developments. The boys said that the business men may not really believe in the necessity of giving a rumah to the spirits, but would not be willing to take the risk of not doing so. This was obviously something which I could disprove or confirm, but it certain was a common belief or perhaps an ‘urban myth’ among the boys in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.
Stories I read either portrayed all street boys as sexual deviants who frequently engaged in homosexual sex—thus ‘blaming the victim’—or as innocent ‘helpless victims of sodomi’ who were ‘easy targets’ and ‘easily trapped by a tiny deal and a bit of trickery’ (*Paron*, July, 1996, *Jakarta Post*, July, 1996) (Figure 3.1). As Smith (1994:89) implies in reference to homeless people in New York:

> Ongoing erasure from public gaze is reinforced by media stereotypes that either blame the victim and thereby justify their studied invisibility or else drown them in such lugubrious sentimentality that they are rendered helpless puppets, the pathetic other, excused from active civic responsibility and denied personhood.

In Indonesia, the representations in the press deny street children their own agency and sexuality, stereotyping them as depraved degenerates, or helpless puppets in the hands of wicked paedophiles. Yet, for the children *sodomi*, or dibó’ol in their own language, is a fact of life, a source of survival for many, and of no surprise. Street children are indeed vulnerable to all sorts of violence on the street, including rape by older boys and men, but they also have sex with men for money, out of choice, and with each other for pleasure, affection and comfort. It is untrue to say, for example, that they are all, ‘victims’ (*korban*), as expressed in one newspaper with its blazing headline ‘Children, Victims of Sodomy’ (*Anak-Anak Korban*

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31 I discuss this issue in Chapter 6.
Sodomi), depicting the picture of a faceless boy cowering in the shadow of a naked, hairy, male, leg (Plate 3.2). Such language and simulations perpetuate the stereotypes of ‘pathetic other’.

Plate 3.2: ‘Children: Victims of Sodomy’.

During the Robot case there was not enough debate about why the children were killed. The national media focused on the issue of sodomi, but there was no discussion or analysis regarding the lives of street children, and the connections they have on the street — including drug related ones, which may have had more to do with their being killed. In short, I wondered if there was a cover up, and some people I spoke with voiced the same suspicions.32 There was also a national sigh of relief when it was (conveniently?) announced that the killer was

32 See also Jakarta Post 7th August, 1996 where Jovita Martina, a former lecturer in criminology at the University of Indonesia, is quoted as doubting the arrest and speculates that it might have been engineered as the police were ‘under pressure from their superiors and the public...for an immediate arrest of the serial killer’. The late Catholic priest and social commentator, Mangun Wijaya, also expressed the same suspicion (Tempo, No.22/01).
in fact one of 'them', a homeless scavenger and ex-street child himself. At least such an 'abnormality' was being kept among 'them', and there was just a voice of concern about protecting 'our own' children from such horrors in the future. The whole event led me to speculate whether the discovery of twelve street children murdered in a 'normal' way (without having been sodomised) would have been any news at all.

Throughout the Robot incident the Indonesian media played a major role in fostering street kid stereotypes. It was responsible for either drowning them in sentimentality or for encouraging an hysterical response, by demonising them and accentuating their 'deviance', thus othering and marginalising them still further. Such social vilification led to 'the taking up of absolutist positions and the manning of moral barricades...on behalf of the family' (Sibley, 1995a:42). When discussing similar media and society treatment of street children in Peru, Cussianovich (1997:1) warns us that verbal abuse can easily transform into physical violence and abuse:

Language is action, and is a vehicle for vision and concrete mission; language expresses what we are willing to do in practice; language is passion and in this case it does symbolic violence to children. From symbolic violence to direct violence is but a short step.

Physical Repression: The State Apparatus of Power

The negative public image of street children expressed in the mass media, and the moralising tone used in judgements about their lifestyle and behaviour, is part of the concerted effort by the state for social control and the regulation of public space (White, 1990:138). The Indonesian state is thus involved in the 'spatialized control' of those groups it considers to be on the margins of its moral boundaries. So as not to upset people's sensibilities it employs euphemisms in official discourse for coercive acts, such as 'clean-up campaigns', in which street children and other undesirables are forcibly removed from the streets. As Scott (1990:52) informs us:

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The imposition of euphemisms on the public transcript plays a major role in masking the many nasty facets of domination and giving them a harmless and sanitized aspect. In particular they are designed to obscure the use of coercion, [and] to put a benign face on an activity or fact that would morally offend many.

Social Cleansing

Street children face the daily threat of violence and abuse at the hands of state authorities during their 'purification' and 'cleansing' campaigns. The children have their own word for these street raids: garukan. In recent years there have been frequent coercive 'sweep' and 'cleansing operations' to remove beggars, vagrants and street vendors from the streets, and street children are often caught in such campaigns. These operations have also been launched against criminals and pemran, in initiatives such as the 'Hoodlum Cleanup Operation' ('Operasi Bersih Pemran', or 'OBP') as a means to 'discipline and educate' street social life, and to eradicate street hooliganism and restore the public's sense of security' in major cities. The euphemism 'Operation Cleansing' (Operasi Kebersihan), was used for another operation which was an 'effort to rid Jakarta streets of the petty criminals' who, according to the police, were 'terrorizing the local population'. Officials are frequently quoted in the press as saying that crime has risen alarmingly and that 'shock therapy' is needed to make the community safe again (Amnesty International, 1996b).

34 Similar 'clean up' operations exist against street children in many other countries, including Australia, Britain, and the USA. For example 'Operation Clean Sweep' in Adelaide was a scheme devised to 'crack down on bums, litterbugs and bad language' (White, 1990:102). Recently, a new policy of 'Zero Tolerance Policing' which is a 'back to basics' aggressive style of policing tried in New York, and Britain, has been introduced as new legislation against 'street gangs' and 'anti social behaviour' in Western Australia (SBS TV, Justice, 24/4/97). The philosophy behind it is to target minor infractions in order to stop worse crimes before they happen. Commentators on this style of policing believe that it sometimes gives youth a negative view of themselves and often leads to feelings of alienation and resistance, leading excluded youth to attempt to 'take back the street' for challenges, excitement and daring (White, 1996:45).

35 'Shock therapy' was also the term used by Soeharto (1989) in his autobiography to justify the 'mysterious' (Pembunuhan misterius or 'Pamru') killings during 1983-5, when more than 3,000 suspected criminals, mostly youth, who were dubbed 'GALI' by the press ('Gangs of Wild Children'), were killed by 'mysterious gunmen' and their bodies dumped in the streets, in an effort to eradicate crime (See Roucher, 1990). At that time only in Yogyakarta it was admitted that the shootings and killings were part of an official war against crime, while in other regions the government denied that the deaths were the result of security officers' actions. In contrast, the recent killings by authorities have been dubbed 'Petenan', or 'open killings'. (penembakan terang-terang) (Amnesty International, November, 1994).
In March 1995 a nationwide ‘war against preman’ was launched following the murder of a police officer in the Blok M area of Jakarta, described as ‘preman heaven’ by the press (Kompas, March 11, 1995), and an area where many street children live and work. The operation involved security forces in Yogyakarta and, in the first week, more than 6,000 ‘suspected hoodlums’ were detained, meaning anyone working on the street, or having a non-conformist appearance, including long hair or tattoos (Jakarta Post, 13 March, 14 March, 21 March 1995).

Before the 1994 Asia-Pacific Economic Committee (APEC) Summit in Jakarta, ‘cleansing operations’ were also ordered by the Armed Forces Commander due to a concern about Indonesia’s international image, and to ensure a ‘clean and stable environment’ for the talks (Amnesty International, 1994). At the same time similar anti-crime campaigns went underway in Yogyakarta, Semarang and Surabaya, leading to an increase in human rights violations against a wide range of socially marginalised groups:

They were looking for weapons, pornographic magazines and other ‘suspicious objects’. Prostitutes, beggars and street children were also targeted to improve Jakarta’s image for the summit, according to residents who reported seeing officials putting them off the streets (Human Rights Watch Asia, 1994:8).

Detentions by police after ‘cleansing operations’ have sometimes resulted in death, and there have also been cases documented where ‘suspected criminals’ have been shot when they have attempted to flee due to a ‘shoot-to-kill’ (bunaya sikat) police policy (Amnesty International, 1994b). In 1995 it was reported hundreds of suspected criminals in major cities were shot and killed during anti-crime campaigns (including in Yogyakarta) and street children have been shot in such

38 Under a doctrine of ‘dual function’ (dwi fungsi), the military is given special civic rights and responsibilities, and considers internal security as its primary mission. As the US Department of State (1998) delicately puts it, the military ‘have traditionally acted swiftly to suppress perceived threats to security, with a vigor which has often led to human rights abuses’. This includes the ‘threat to security’ of undesirable groups on the street. The pre-APEC crack downs were to ‘present a harmonious image of Indonesia’ and ‘cleanse’ the streets of Jakarta, which resulted in serious human rights violations. Similar regional ‘anti-crime campaigns’ have since been initiated in other parts of the country, including Yogyakarta (Human Rights Watch Asia, October, 1994).

39 For accounts and case studies of death in custody see Amnesty International, 1996b. It should go without saying that the extra judicial executions through the ‘shoot to kill’ policy are a clear violation of the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty, and the right to personal liberty and a fair trial.

38 A street child Rony Fardian was shot down by security officers at the train station in Jakarta in 1994.
39 The US Department of State Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 in Indonesia (1998:6) recently stated: ‘The police often employed deadly force in apprehending suspects or coping with alleged criminals, many of whom were unarmed. In response to protests that the methods used were unjustifiably harsh and amounted to execution without trial, the police generally claimed that the suspects were fleeing, resisting arrest, or threatening the police…press reports including statements of police officials, show a pattern of increased lethal shootings by the police of criminal suspects’. The report also lists accounts of torture including beatings and electric shocks used by the police during interrogations.
40 There are often garukan to clean up the streets of children, prostitutes, beggars and preman before foreign dignitaries or government officials come to town. While I was in Yogyakarta in 1995 I witnessed two such garukan: once before the President was in town, and once before the King and Queen of Holland visited. The children are put in trucks and driven out of town where they are dumped, far away from sight and too far to walk back to town easily (see also Berman, 1994a).
If a child is picked up in one of these operations they refer to it as being 'hit' by a garukan. Police and security guards are responsible for confiscating and destroying street children’s possessions and merchandise (clothes, shoes, musical instruments and goods to sell), for verbal abuse, brutal beatings, shaving their heads, torture, rape, electric shocks and other abuses which street children frequently report they receive while in custody.41

Moreover, street children in Yogyakarta often report being beaten up by security guards at the traditional market, outside the Mall, and at the train station when they were scavenging for garbage or leftover food (koyan) on the empty trains. The most frequent accounts were from those who had been arrested busking or begging at traffic lights. As one street boy tells of his experience in Yogyakarta:

When I was busking at the traffic lights one night, I was chased by the police, maybe it was an unlucky time for me again, I was arrested and taken to the police station. When I was there I was put in with mad people and asked all kinds of stuff, the police asked for my identity card and I said I didn’t have one and the officer jeered that I was just a vagrant, I disagreed because I am not a vagrant then that policeman beat me up. Then I was kept for one night and the next day I was released and reminded not to busk at the traffic lights because it spoils the view, since I was arrested I have always been very careful when busking at the traffic lights in case the police have another cleanup operation (Iwan (15), Jejak, July, 1997).42

If the children are arrested they are usually held in a cell for two or three nights and then either released or handed over to an institution, such as an orphanage, a government juvenile detention centre, an adult prison, a rehabilitation centre, or a premam re-education camp in order to 'develop their mentality' (Repablika, 1996, Gatra, 1996).43 There is no special juvenile detention centre for children in Yogyakarta. Arrested children are often tried and imprisoned with adult offenders (U.S. Dept. of State, 1998).44

Further to these blatant human rights violations, are the less obvious effects of police garukan. For example, when the police are operating sustained clean-up campaigns over a period of time, the children complain that they cannot eat for as long as two or three days as they are too frightened to work. Some days they would go off to the traffic lights to work, only to return a short time later saying they had been moved on by the police who threatened them with arrest. These circumstances

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41 Saya Punya Cerita: This picture drawn by Supri (14) shows three street kids who are all saying 'I have a story' (Saya Punya Cerita). Below, the captions read: 'When I was busking at the traffic lights I was arrested by the police, because I scratched a car: 'When I was shoe-shining I was arrested by a garukan, when I was sleeping in the street I was asked for my KTP: 'When I was drunk in the street I was arrested by the police, and I don’t want to be drunk again'.

42 Similar tactics are employed in other countries. Cohen (1972:83) tells of how police in Britain round up 'certain groups' and give them 'free lifts' to the roads leading out of town. In Guatemala in 1980, I witnessed trucks drive around the city picking children up off the street. I do not know to where they were taken.

43 A recent survey has found that police officers top the list of human rights abusers in Indonesia (Jakarta Post, 76 December 1996). The data was based on printed media reports throughout the country which were tabulated by the Centre for Human Rights Studies, Jakarta.

44 Jakarta Post, 10 March, 'War on Premam Declared', 14 March, 21 March, 16 March 1993. Premam have also been put into religious schools to 'develop' their mentality and to give them guidance on Islamic teachings for 7 days before being released, so that they 'return to the right path' (Repablika, 3 February 1996).

45 Although juvenile detention centres do exist in Indonesia, Yogyakarta has no special place for holding or imprisoning children (Jakarta Post, 24 June, 1995). Although juvenile justice legislation was established in 1997, while a child is awaiting trial he will often be placed in an adult detention centre (see Bessell, 1998: Chapter 6). Street children are also marginalised in these centres, where they are put in to special 'quarantine rooms' as they 'do not know about hygiene' (Jakarta Post, 23 July, 1995).
often result in the children having to move to another city to earn money, or to resort to less lawful (halal), ways such as pick pocketing (nyopet), or mugging people (menggampas). Although street children are often involved in petty crime in order to survive, and it is sometimes the reason they are arrested, it is obvious that the crimes they commit do not justify the 'punishments' which they receive. Also, street children are often arrested for just being on the street, and not for committing any obvious crime.

In Britain, Cohen (1972:94) noted that most harassment was reserved for those who can be identified by state authorities 'through the process of symbolization'. Similarly, in Indonesia, long hair (gondrong), tattoos, body piercing and clothing styles are all read as symbols of deviance in Indonesian society, and as opposition to conventional community values. These signs are regarded as legitimate grounds for considering someone as a target for social control. This is particularly true during clean up operations such as Operasi Preman, when the children told me that one could be arrested for just having long hair and tattoos, and thus looking like a preman. As one boy said to me: 'If you have tattoos you're treated more severely (lebih berat) when you're arrested' (Yogyakarta, October, 1996). In Yogyakarta I knew of both children and adults who had burnt their tattoos off with lime, acid, or a hot iron, so as to avoid arrest during, 'police operation seasons' (musim garukan) and others said that they could only bask at night when their skin was not so visible.\textsuperscript{44}

The children often call the authorities who come to clear the areas where they work as 'the disease' (penyakit), 'Mr Moustache' (Pak Kumis), or 'uniformed thugs' (preman berseragam).\textsuperscript{45} If the children see them coming they will shout to their friends 'garukan, garukan', and run away or hide. Usually they know a garukan is happening when a police or military truck pulls up, or men arrive brandishing batons and guns. I witnessed this brutality on a number of occasions. There was a period of a few weeks in early January 1997 when men would arrive at the toilet

area where the children hung out at night on Malioboro. They were dressed in black, riding black motorbikes, and attempted to clear the area by kicking the children who were sitting on the ground, and hitting or endeavouring to hit the children before they ran. Other nights they would just arrive silently and stand around watching the children, in an intimidating manner. These men were not in uniform, but the children told me that they were armed forces, and brought my attention to the small Airforce (Angkatan Udara) stickers on their motorbikes.\textsuperscript{46} It seemed to me that in a similar way to the 'vigilante' off duty police in Brazil, Colombia and Guatemala, the soldiers were taking it upon themselves to 'clean' the streets of these unsightly children after hours.\textsuperscript{47}

Santani di Yogyakarta

It is not only security forces and the police, but also society who are perpetrators of violence against street children. For example, hungry children stealing food or fruit to re-sell in the market are sometimes subjected to beatings if they are caught. However, many of the children told me that it was more relaxed (lebih santat) in Yogyakarta, compared to living in other cities. This was despite the complaints of the increased violence on the streets of Yogyakarta and Malioboro.\textsuperscript{48} Scorio (14), for example, told me that he has lived on the streets in Malang, Solo, Surabaya, Semarang and Bandung, and that Yogyakarta is the best city to be homeless. Andi (17) also told me that Yogyakarta was popular with kere (street kids) because the authorities are more lenient. He said this is because in Yogyakarta there is the protection of the Sultan, who has a unique authority, and who protects people working in the streets

\textsuperscript{44} This sinister approach is similar to the Ninja assaults which occurred in East Timor prior to the Santa Cruz massacre, when masked men, dressed in outfits similar to Ninja style costumes, were involved in intimidating independence protesters, damaging property and carrying out night time raids on homes. They were particularly active in October 1991, in the period leading up to the Dili massacre, and were involved in the murder of Sebastian at the Mostai church which set off the chain of events leading to the massacre (pers.comm with Alison Murray, March, 1998; Sherlock, 1996:12). More recently the Ninja style of killing has also been adopted in the 'mysterious' killings of Muslims and holy men in East Java (Gatra, 31 October, 1998). Many people claim that the Ninja are sponsored by Indonesian military intelligence, a claim denied by ABRI (Sherlock,1996:12).

\textsuperscript{45} In recent years there have been numerous documented accounts of death squads, police forces, business people, and vigilante groups murdering street children in South American cities. See for example Dusenborn (1991): Amnesty International (1994:14-15,1993: 6-7); Swift (1996). In the past 20 years Brazil, like Indonesia, has experienced a mixture of capitalism, cronyism and neoliberalism, which has produced an 'economic miracle' along with a huge disparity in the distribution of income.

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with a particular law (aturan di surat lukam) which is related to Yogyakarta’s status as a ‘special district’ (Daerah Istimewa). It is because of this authority that street vendors and dwellers are more tolerated in Yogya, and are not forbidden in the same way as in they are in other cities. I learnt from many of the children that there are far more cleansing operations in other cities, especially Bandung and Jakarta. This was why Yogyakarta was considered lembah santri within the street kid community.

The children also told me that in Yogyakarta they are sometimes not arrested, but instead have to pay a bribe (snap), of a few thousand rupiah to the police or security guards. This was considered usual (biasa) and if a child could pay rather than be arrested, then obviously he would. At other times (as with the Ninja style raids) they are frightened away by displays of pure force, violence and intimidation. Being ‘hit’ by a gurukan as I understood it, therefore, does not always mean that the child is arrested.

Conclusion

It is not the game (street child) per se that provokes fear and disgust, but that which is projected on to him. The disgust is projected out of fear that every friction in society has toward those who avoid responsibility (Gutierrez, 1972:337).

This chapter has further explained how street children’s lives subvert the norms of society and the public transcript. I have shown how they are mistrusted and feared by state and society, and stereotyped as physically unattractive, disease ridden, socially threatening and involved in crime. Anxiety about their existence is expressed through concern with invasion, crime and dirt, and has resulted in their systematic exclusion through spatial ordering (see Hetherington, 1998:336).

Attempts to enforce the national ideology of ‘Unity in Diversity’ have, in fact, led to the criminalisation of diversity. Order, conformity, and political control are sought by the state and mainstream society in order to eliminate sources of resistance. Public opinion is managed by the state and the media, to mobilise bias against undesirable groups, and to ‘manufacture consent’ for the overt use of state power and physical oppression (Herma and Chomsky, 1988). As a result, street children are presented as perpetrators of transgressive acts, and as being out of place, even though it is often the various processes of society that have caused them to appropriate these spaces in the first place. The Indonesian media has presented a ‘discourse of disordered’, as a reaction to street children who are either stigmatised and portrayed as physically unsightly, and a threat to national harmony and stability, or over romanticised and depicted as victims with no agency at all (Cresswell, 1992:332).

Oppression and exclusion of street children is often in the form of verbal abuse, evictions, arrests, beatings and torture while in police custody, and other excessive infringements of the children’s basic human rights. These abuses must be emphasised as it is such treatment that has contributed to their alienation, and led to the strengthening of a street kid subculture as a group response of solidarity, subversion and as a means of survival. In this way, street children’s subcultures can be seen as the production of a ‘hidden transcript’ which has developed as a resistance to, as well as a negation of, the state’s ‘spurious convoluted logic’, offered in its public transcript (Scott, 1990; Welsh, 1996:187.). As Foucault (1984:95) asserts: ‘there are no relations of power without resistances, and these resistances challenge ideological practices and the effects of power.’ Further, as Turton (1986:37) points out: ‘Everyday forms of resistance are to a large extent responses to everyday forms of repression and domination’.

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49 Yogyakarta is more tolerant towards the informal sector than other cities. Where as in many cities (Jakarta and Surabaya, for example) hawker (pedicab) were banned as they were seen to disrupt traffic, in Yogyakarta a special side road has been built on both sides of Malioboro, so that hawker and sundan (traditional horse drawn carriages) can still operate. I was also told that in 1994 the Sultan strongly protested against the closing of the Kampung on Malioboro, to make space for the glezy new shopping mall. This same authority of the Sultan was most recently displayed when he backed the student demonstrations against former President Soeharto. On May 20th 1998, the Sultan sanctioned the march of 500,000 students and peoples through the city from the University of Gadjah Mada to the City Square (which is behind his palace), and ordered the military and the police not to get involved. They obeyed his order, and commentators reported a ‘minimal presence of either military or police’ in the city that night (ABC National Radio, 21st May 1998).

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51 See Cresswell (1992) in his discussion of media and government actions to graffiti in New York, which is presented as a symptom of disorder and a threat to the image of the city. He sees the responses as presenting a ‘discourse of disorder’ which play an important role in the meaning of place, and argues that place and ideology both play a role in structuring the other.
The creation of any subculture requires space, and it is not possible to explain street children's subcultures until it is appreciated how their social spaces are created and defended, despite their spatial exclusion. As Roddick (1998:343) advises in relation to homeless youth in Hollywood, it is important to explore: 'the crucial role of space in the production of subcultures of resistance, and the interdependency of the production of "space" and "self".' Thus, within the context of understanding the street children's community in Yogyakarta as a subculture, it is essential to first explore their geographies, and how these contribute to the formation of individual and collective identities on the street. This includes an examination of how street children have been able to subvert and resist their everyday oppression and the domination of public space, by re-coding it in their own interests, and through their own everyday practices (see Pile, 1997; Harvey, 1996:230; Laws, 1994:29). The following chapter focuses on street children's spatial practices in everyday life, and examines their search for places outside dominated spaces, as 'geographies of resistance' to their social and spatial exclusion (Pile and Keith, 1997).

Bus Stops and Toilets: Identifying Spaces, Spaces of Identity
(Chapter Four)

If we are to understand the process by which resistance is developed and codified, the analysis of off-site social spaces becomes a vital task. Only by specifying how such social spaces are made up and defended is it possible to move from the individual resisting subject—an abstract fiction—to the socialization of resistant practices and discourses... As we turn to an examination of the social sites where the hidden transcript grows, it will be helpful to keep several points in mind. First, the hidden transcript is a social product and hence a result of power relations among subordinates. Second, like folk culture, the hidden transcript has no reality as pure thought; it exists only to the extent that it is practiced, articulated, enacted, and disseminated within these off-site social sites. Third, the social spaces where the hidden transcript grows are themselves an achievement of resistance, they are won and defended in the teeth of power (Scott, 1990:118-119).

In this passage Scott is observing that the creation of a 'hidden transcript' or subculture needs space. This is because it is through space that everyday experiences and identities are constructed, articulated and enacted (Keith and Pile, 1993: 2). Spatialities are, therefore, essential not only to domination, but also to resistance, as 'resistance occurs in spaces beyond those defined by power relations' (Pile, 1997:26). Thus, in order to understand the street children community as a subculture, it is vital to first appreciate how their social spaces have been won, created and defended 'in the teeth' of Soeharto's power.

Control by dominating agents may be seen as complete, but there is always the possibility of subversion. We cannot understand the role of space in the reproduction of social relations without recognizing that the relatively powerless still have enough power to carve out spaces of control in respect of their day-to-day lives (Sibley, 1995a:76).

The previous chapter has shown how street children are both spatially and socially oppressed, through multiple forms of social control, marginalisation and powerlessness, and how everyday life for a street child can be like living in enemy territory. Public space, however, is a means of survival for street children, as it is where they can access resources to alleviate their needs. Indeed, it is vital to their very existence that they find spaces in the city in which they can survive, even if it is a marginal space like a public toilet or a bus stop. Such appropriation of space by subordinate groups has been described as 'carving out' and 'chiseling away' spaces of control from the margins of power (Sibley, 1995a; Clarke, et al., 1976; Scott, 1990; White, 1990; Huang and Yeoh, 1996).
This chapter seeks to explain the spatial expressions of the street kid subculture, and the ways in which their lives, experiences, attitudes, and earning opportunities are socially and spatially structured. It shows how, in response to their subordination, street children have developed a 'repertoire of strategies' which have contributed to the formation of a street child 'cultural space', including 'actual room on the street' in which they can survive (Clarke et al., 1976: 45). These are spaces for coping that the children have negotiated and constructed for themselves, within the marginal existence imposed on them by the 'centre'. By exploring street children's production and use of space as 'geographies of resistance', the chapter identifies the spaces which the street children in Yogyakarta have 'won' for their everyday survival. I see these 'won spaces' as urban niches in the city (see Pile and Keith, 1997; Clarke, et al., 1976: 42). I further demonstrate how street children's geographies are transient, and how their relationships with different spaces are complex as they interact with, negotiate around, and react against different social groups and outside forces.

In order to be aware of the reality of their lives, I draw on selected accounts of street children's spatial stories, so as to 'map the spaces' which they occupy, and to understand the various settings of their subculture (see Davidson, 1996:114). The analysis includes territory issues; how street kids identify with particular areas for different activities; how their identities shift in relation to their spatial settings (Knopp 1995; Smith and Katz, 1993); and the fluctuation of activities through time and space. This is done by analysing street children's 'mental maps' which were collected as a participatory research exercise while I was in Yogyakarta (see Gould and White, 1974; Matthews, 1980; 1986; 1992). The maps illustrate how the children's social marginality is reflected in the places they occupy, and documents the images the children have of the city, in the context of work, leisure, and other street associations. I also use field notes, informal interviews, poems from Ajax, and drawings of places in the city. Specific places which are 'symbolically rich' in the children's maps are discussed in detail, as they are an intrinsic part of the children's identity formation, and can be understood as 'pivotal points' which are essential to their survival and emotional well-being. It is important, however, to

first gain a clear understanding of their daily lives on the street. By using street children's coping strategies as an investigative device, their everyday practices and relationships to space can thus be revealed (see Davidsou, 1996).

Behaviour Patterns

In terms of different activities within the subculture, street children's coping strategies can be divided into three groups: working; looking for entertainment; and resting. These activities are all linked to the children's identities as they move around the city, and shift depending on who they are with, which spatial setting they are in, and the activity they are involved in. The children assume a very different identity, for example, when they are trying to earn money on a bus as a street kid, or trying to get free food from a food-stall woman, to when they are hanging out with the boys, or having sex with a street girl or a transvestite.

Plate 4.1: Shining Shoes (Nyemir)

In short, different activities in different spatial areas result in the children adopting different identities. With regard to work, there are distinct hierarchical levels and codes of ethics attached to all street children's activities. The lowest level of work is seen to be begging (mengemis). This is generally viewed as lowly and shaming, as it does not conform with the value of being independent. Also seen as a low-status job in the eyes of Tikisan is scavenging (murung), although it has a higher status than begging. Shoe-shining (nyemir) is the most common profession among younger street boys, and can be highly lucrative, especially for those young boys who play on the fact that they look, cute (lucas). Despite its high returns, however, nyemir is considered to be only for young boys and they will stop shoe shining
when they feel they are too old to do so. Other professions which street kids in Yogyakarta are engaged in are selling newspapers, bottled water, sweets and stationery, making and selling jewellery and busking (menggamen). The most common instrument to busk with is a guitar, although the smaller children also busk with drums, tambourines, and cekal-cekal. Once the boys are older they want a guitar and are too shy (malu), to busk with anything else. The boys usually busk in twos or threes along Malioboro at night, serenading people eating at the numerous lekehan. In the day-time they busk on buses at bus stops, or ride the buses on particular bus routes across the city.

The boys have their own rules for busking—these include being polite, neat and tidy, not being drunk or displaying their tattoos—because they want the bus passengers to feel sorry for them as street children, and not to think they are preman. Sometimes they get angry if someone is seen to be visibly out of it on drugs or alcohol while busking on buses or at traffic lights, as they feel he is giving the rest of them a bad name.

Plate 4.2: Busking on the buses

The buskers usually gather at particular bus stops where bus drivers stop for a change over, or to rest for a few minutes. The boys board the bus in pairs, while it is stationary, introduce themselves as street children (anak jalanan) to the passengers, and one sings a song while the second boy collects money. Another way of busking on the buses is to board a mobile bus and travel with it for a few stops. The boys are very friendly with many of the bus conductors, and there is an understanding that they will not be charged a fare. I never once heard of or witnessed a boy being refused access to a bus, and they would often travel across the city for free, just because they were carrying a guitar. Similarly the buskers are tolerated by the passengers who will usually give some small money.

Other places to busk are at various traffic light intersections around the city, which is where younger boys also beg. Some boys hide their legs in their trousers to make it look as though they are disabled, and thereby promote sympathy in drivers as they crawl between the cars asking for money. Any sort of income-earning activity at the traffic lights is greatly restricted by the police, as traffic light intersections are the most common place to be picked up or ‘fined’ by a gendak. This is especially true in the afternoon when the roads are busiest.

Children’s leisure activities include playing pool and video games, going to the cheap cinema, playing cards, gambling, taking drugs and drinking. Other leisure activities include looking for and having sex with street girls or transvestites, and the street boys often go in groups to the areas where the transvestites (banci) and street girls (rendan) hangout. These activities are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. The resting patterns of the children include eating and sleeping. Looking for and eating leftover food (bayan) is one of the most important elements in the Tikun culture, and is a major part of their everyday lives, and an identifying feature for

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1 A cekal-cekal is a small stick with metal bottle tops nailed in to it, like a rattle. The younger children shake it and sing at traffic lights and on buses. Older boys refuse to use them as they see them as no different to begging.

2 However, almost all the boys, take mild doses of drugs, in order to get over feelings of fear and shyness while busking on the buses or at traffic lights. The issue of drug taking is discussed in Chapter 6.

3 During the day I often sat at the bus stops or rode the buses while the children busked, but I would pretend that I did not know them in order that I could observe their interaction with the passengers and bus conductors. Some of the children also preferred it if I didn’t sit near them or chat to them while they were working, as this led the passengers to presume that if the children had a ‘rich’ friend then they did not need money, as I would obviously be providing for them.

4 This activity, known as bunung-bunungan (pretending to have an amputated limb) is not practiced widely in Yogyakarta, and most boys just beg or busk at the traffic lights. In Bandung many more boys beg bunung-bunungan style, and probably brought the idea with them to Yogyakarta. Like most street kid styles and activities, the children learn tricks, and pick up different ideas from other children in other cities. In his autobiography about life as a street child Heri Bongkok (1995:69) talks about forcing younger children to bunung-bunungan for him in Jakarta, while he was out for police.

5 As explained in Chapter 3, if caught by the police, children working at the traffic lights often have to pay a fine to the police to avoid being taken to the police station.
the street kid's subculture. This is because if a boy has not experienced eating such food, he is not yet considered to be a proper vagrant (kere), as he obviously has enough money to still enjoy decent food.

At night street kids generally sleep in two or threes for safety, and will spend time looking for a safe place to sleep, although most children have favourite places where they go regularly. Children sleep on Malioboro (Plate 4.3), at the public toilet, in shop doorways, in empty becak, under bridges, at the train and bus stations, in the main square, and in shopping (the traditional market). In one night the children may sleep in several places. Those sleeping on Malioboro are woken up every morning at about 5 or 6 a.m. by the market stall owners who want them to move so they can set up their stalls. These children have only just got to sleep at 3 or 4 a.m. The children also have to move if it is raining, they are moved on by police, they are in danger, or they are uncomfortable for some reason. Owing to these disturbed patterns, they also find various hidden places during the day when it is safer to sleep.

Plate 4.3: Sleeping on Malioboro.

Time and Space

Massey (1994: 269) perceives space as being created out of social relations, and as a complex web of relations of domination, subordination, solidarity and cooperation, and that; ‘the spatial is social relations stretched out’. In addition, Smith and Katz, (1993:77) state that; ‘multiple identities...margins and escape from space are all in different ways a response to the political inviability of absolute location’. These assertions relate well to the situation of street children in Yogyakarta, and how their spatial areas are created by their relations with authority (police, security guards, government), society, and other groups on the street.

Central to Massey's argument is that space must be perceived integrally with time, and that one should always think in terms of space-time. It is important to view the children's social relations with regard to time and how they use it as well as space. Time is important as it bears a sometimes crucial relationship to which space/place the street child occupies. This is not only over a period of a day but also a month and a year, such as the 'old and young dates' (tanggal muda dan tanggal tua) which relate to the time of the month, and whether people have been paid. Different seasons (wet and dry) also greatly affect children's income earning abilities, and which spaces they occupy in the city.

During the wet season, for example, it is much harder to earn money as there are fewer people out on the streets, and so very little business for shoe shining or busking. Therefore, the children have to change their activities and find alternative avenues for survival, which can often mean moving to a different city. During the hot season many of the children who usually work in Jakarta come to Yogyakarta where it is cooler. As one young boy, Roy (12) told me, Jakarta is especially hard to work in: 'Jakarta is too busy, hot. In Yogyakarta you're not confused... in Jakarta you get confused... it's much nicer in Yogyakarta'. Over the religious festival following

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6 In Yogyakarta, public servants and academic staff are paid every four weeks, towards the end of the month. The 'old' and 'young' dates is an expression many people, including the children, use in Yogyakarta, and refers to whether people have been paid or not. The 'old date' refers to the fact that people have not yet been paid, and are therefore short of money. A 'new date' means that people have recently been paid and therefore have money to spend. As in other towns where the majority of the population are paid at the same time (for example, Canberra) the streets are much quieter during the 'old date' period, as people have spent all their money and are staying at home, waiting for pay day. This obviously affects the children's income earning possibilities.

7 During the wet season very few children shoe shine and all complain that life is 'hard'. This is because leather will not shine if it is wet, and they therefore cannot earn money that way. Also, fewer people go out when it is raining. Most people in Yogyakarta travel on motorbikes and get soaked if they go out in a heavy rain storm. The rain was a perfectly acceptable reason to miss an appointment or to not go out at all. During the rainy season people often cancelled appointments or just did not show up because it was raining.
the fasting month, Lebaran, however, Yogyakarta was deserted and the children travelled to Jakarta to work as there were better income earning opportunities. One reason for this was because people were feeling charitable and had the equivalent of the ‘Christmas spirit,’ giving generously to people on the street, which they saw as a good deed (amal). 1

Street Children’s Perceptions of Place and Use of Space

The search for emancipation from social control instills the desire, the longing and in some cases even the practices of searching for a space ‘outside’ of hegemonic social relations and valuations. Spaces ‘on the margin’ become valued spaces, for those who seek to establish differences (Harvey, 1996:230).

Street children identify each other individually by the town or region they come from. When a new kid first arrives in Yogyakarta, the initial question they are asked is ‘where are you from?’ (Dari mana?). From then on the child is identified with that place: for example, a boy from Blora in central Java is known as ‘Blora’, or Supri from Surabaya is known as Supri Surabaya. At the same time the children claim a collective identity, recognising different groups of street children by the places they occupy in Yogyakarta for working and hanging out. These groups have constructed the symbolic walls of ‘home’ which are invisible at first, but which can be perceived as ‘symbolic cocoons in public space’ (Arantes, 1996:86). For example, street boys who occupy the centre of the city are known as the Malioboro kids (Anak Malioboro) after the main street where they work, sleep and hang out. At night these boys gather outside the public toilet in the middle of Malioboro (Maps 3 and 4).

In Yogyakarta the different working groups of street boys include the IMKA, Janti and Korem boys, named after the bus stops where those who busk on the city buses congregate; the Surgawong boys who live underneath a bridge to the north of the city; the city square boys (Alun-Alun); the Shoping kids (the traditional local market where vegetables and second-hand goods can be bought); the train station kids (Anak station), and the bus station kids (Anak terminal) (see Maps 3 and 4).

Groups of street boys also congregate at various traffic light intersections and bus stops around the city. Many homeless street boys in Yogyakarta identify themselves with the NGO Girli, which until very recently had an open-house in the centre of the city called Cokro. 2 All these children have different valued spaces in which they can earn their living and establish friendships.

1 Lebaran or Idul Fitr is the celebration of the end of the fasting month Ramadan or Puasa. During Puasa the children find it really hard to earn money as very few people are out in the day (because they are resting), and at night they are at home eating with their families, as is tradition. In addition, few people go out at night onto Malioboro as it is a holy month, and the street is unusually quiet. Jakarta, however, was a different story and at night the roads were full of traffic. Because of this many children migrated to Jakarta to work at the traffic lights in the capital, and I travelled with them.

2 The Alun-Alun boys and the Bus Terminal Boys were groups of homeless children I met who do not identify themselves with the Girli NGO. Both these groups regard where they sleep as ‘home’.
Mental Maps

We should recognise that geographical reality is first of all the place where someone is, and perhaps the places and landscapes which they remember—formal concepts of location, region or landscape, are subsequently. It follows from this that geographical space is not uniform and homogeneous, but has its own name and is directly experienced as something substantial or comforting or perhaps menacing (Relph, 1976:5).

In attempting to see the city from a child’s perspective, this section maps the spaces street children in Yogyakarta use for their survival, thus revealing their relationships to space in their daily lives. While I was in Yogyakarta I collected ‘cognitive’ or ‘mental maps’ drawn by the children as a participatory research exercise (see Gould and White 1974; Matthews, 1980; 1986; 1992). I did this in order to understand the children’s ‘geographical reality’ of their everyday experiences, and to better understand which places in the city were ‘comforting’ to them and which places they saw as dangerous (Relph, 1976:5-6). I asked the children to draw a map or ‘picture’ of the city, and to mark the places where they spent most of their time or that were important to them and which they knew best.

Cognitive maps mark off space and indicate how the urban public space is culturally managed, arranged, used, and represented by different children in the same group. This approach attempts to ‘give voice’ to children’s everyday realities, and to identify the range of places or ‘activity nodes’ which are tied to the various aspects of their lives (see Davidson, 1996). As well as enabling me to see the city from the child’s perspective, I found that the maps were also a great tool for stimulating conversation, as it helped the children to articulate their experiences. Once they had drawn the maps we spent a long time discussing them, and these discussions inevitably stimulated longer conversations helping me to understand more about their lives, their attitudes and their experiences on the street. During the research exercise, some children found it almost impossible to draw any form of map of the city and became confused by the concept. Some of these children had left school at an early age and had problems with reading and writing, and were unfamiliar with using pencils and paper. The majority, however, had an awareness

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of their environment and demonstrated an ability to draw maps of the places familiar to them.

As with the findings of both Gould and White’s study (1974) in Sweden, and Matthews’ (1986:1980) studies in Britain, the geographical knowledge of the children in Yogyakarta appears to grow outwards from the well known places as the children get older, and a more complete mental image of the environment develops over time (Matthews, 1980:172;1986:125). This can be seen in how the majority of the younger children’s maps of Yogyakarta suggest that they feel at home in restricted areas. For example, all the details on the younger children’s maps are in the immediate vicinity of the toilet area on Malioboro—the meeting and hanging out place and centre of gravity for many children.

![Figure 4.1: Sorio’s (10) map of Yogyakarta.](image)

It is also interesting how the younger boys’ pictures pay more attention to detail than the older ones’ maps, and how they personalise their accounts by drawing friends and particular features which they see as significant but that older boys do not include. Younger children draw familiar items into their landscapes such as shoe-shine boxes, traffic lights, water pumps, plant boxes, street lamps, and shops on Malioboro (distinguished by what they sold). This accords with Matthews’ findings who notes the child's concern with the minute and the incidental as compared to the adult world.

Ten-year-old Sorio drew a map of Yogyakarta after being there for only two weeks (Figure 4.1). Malioboro street runs through the centre of the picture. He was able to show the main areas of Malioboro, starting from the train station to the right of the picture. Sorio personalises his account by drawing the train tracks and the train on which he arrived from Jakarta. He has also drawn the numerous food-stalls (lesehan, which are identifiable by their square rattan mats on which customers sit), along Malioboro, a satay cart, and a horse-drawn cart (andong) on the right of the road. To the left of his map he shows the public toilet area, where street children on Malioboro gather in the evening in between working. Beside the Toilet he has included the tree under which the children sit on a rattan mat, which he has also drawn. There are three other children playing under the tree on Malioboro (one of them has a tambourine in his hand), and a parked becek. Other people he has drawn include the andong driver and the woman, who owns the lesehan, opposite the Toilet where the children eat at night. He has also drawn in the cigarette kiosk which is parked there every night.11

In Bambang’s map (Figure 4.2), focus is on the Malioboro and Toilet area, with Ngebong (Gerbang) located behind the station, the railway tracks, Sosrowijaya, Sapeng (Shoping), Alun-Alun, and Mas (a gold shop) are also marked. As explained in Chapter 2, Sosrowijaya (known locally as Soso), is a street where tourists and backpackers stay. It is often considered to be off limits by many of the boys and is known as tempat homo, a place where homosexuals hang out and approach the boys for sex. The children were also afraid to go into this area as white tourists (bule or londo in Javanese) scare them. This is a common reaction to bule in Yogyakarta, and many people, not just street children, told me of how they were scared of white people.12

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11 The man who owns the cigarette kiosk is at the Toilet every night, and told me that most children have been gathering there for the past ten years. He says he has seen 'hundreds' of street boys come and go over that time.

12 Part of the reason for this is that the majority of bule cannot speak Indonesian and are difficult to communicate with. It is also because of the stories which still circulate about the cruelty of the
Sopeng or shopping (shopping) is the local, traditional market where many street children hang out in the daytime, playing video games, pick-pocketing or stealing fruit to re-sell. It is also where many of the children went to when they first arrived in Yogyakarta, particularly those from Central Java who came by bus, and who perhaps already knew boys or families living in Shoping. In Shoping the children sleep in the book market, on top of the closed boxes of books, or in empty baskets.

In Figure 4.3, Idrus (11) has drawn in the Mall (Mall), and the squiggle on the map represents the movement of children playing outside the Mall. The Mall is left out by many of the children as it is a space where they are not welcome. Often if they try to enter the Mall they are forced to leave by security guards. The WC, or Toilet where the children hang out at night is located on the bottom right-hand corner, and the square shape beside it is the mat which the children sit on. Idrus has also drawn in the railway tracks, and the police post (Pos), at the top of Malioboro. Sosrowijayan street is drawn twice because he decided it was in the wrong place the first time.

Idrus has also drawn in Tugu railway station with the ngerpong (Gerbong) area behind it. The 'Asu' scrawled across the bottom of this map was written by another child who was unable to draw maps, and wanted to sabotage other's attempts. Asu

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Dutch in the Yogyakarta region during the colonial era and revolution (pers. comm. with Arief (17) who told me about the scary stories his grandfather told about the Dutch).
is a very strong swear word in Javanese and means 'dog'. An appropriate translation in these circumstances would be 'bullshit', which is what he thought of my research exercise.

only their surroundings but many aspects of their lives, with the patterns of information they use to define their environment varying depending on their age and how long they have been in the city.

In his map Ari (15) has put in various spots where the children busk in the daytime, where the children sleep at night ‘children’s sleeping place’ (Tempat anak tidur), and lesihan Lisa, a food stall where the children often eat (Figure 4.4). The roads on the map relate to the bus routes he follows when busking on the buses. Korem, the ‘Busking place’ (Tempat Ngamen), is marked by the picture of a bus, and is where he gets on and off the buses, numbered on the map. Tugu is a monument, and a major landmark in Yogyakarta. Cokro is the NGO Girl’s open-house. WC is the Toilet. Garuda is an expensive five-star hotel at the top of Malioboro, outside which groups of children and street girls sometimes gather. Rel Kereta are the train tracks. Gerbong is illustrated by a train car. Shoping, Stasiun and Sorro are also marked.\footnote{The writing on this map is my own, as Ari wished for places to be marked but could not read or write, and asked for me to mark the map as he instructed.}

The younger children’s maps are therefore restricted in the areas they cover in the city. The older boys indicate a much broader mental territory in their maps, as a result of a widening experience from the central area. They incorporate not only the Malioboro area, which they visit at night, but other places they go to when busking during the daytime. The mental images that boys build up of Yogyakarta reflect not
In Figure 4.5 Daniel has marked Shoping, the local market, the Permata cinema (Bioskop Permata), which the children visit regularly as it is cheap; two Prapatans (Perempatan, traffic light intersections) where many boys beg and busk; the taman or city square where a group of street girls live and where transvestites (banci) and gay men (Homo) solicit for sex at night; and THR, the peoples entertainment park, (Taman Harapan Rakyat) where dangdut music is played everynight until 11 p.m.\textsuperscript{14} It is also where groups of street girls hang out and, at night, older boys sometimes go to the THR to look for street girls. Also on the map is a police station, the central post office, the Runah Girli (open-house), and Senisono, an old Dutch building where many children hung out and slept. Last year it was sealed off by high fences and is to be renovated into apartment flats.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{traffic_lights_train_tracks_buses.png}
\caption{Traffic lights, train tracks and buses.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{14} Dangdut is a form of modern 'pop' music which is particularly popular among the working class. The music is associated with drum and malayan rhythm and is also influenced by Indian film music. For a discussion of dangdut, and how it relates to Indonesian cultural nationalism and identity see Simatupang (1996).
Some children were unable to draw ‘maps’ but instead drew objects which were familiar to them in the city, including landmarks in the city, trains and becak. In Figure 4.6 a child has made a batik card of a bus on which he busks in the city, another boy has drawn traffic lights (lampu merah) where many of them work, and another child has drawn a city full of roads and railway tracks. Almost all the children depict motion and mobility with cars, roads, trains, train tracks, traffic lights and buses featuring strongly in their maps and drawings. Many children simply drew a road with cars on it when I asked them to draw a map of the city. These perceptions of their environments reflect the fact that the street is where the children spend the majority of their time, and that mobility is an integral part of their lives.

Places as Pivotal Points
The places the children have marked on their maps are those that are important to them and which they occupy at different times of the day. They are spaces which have been appropriated as a strategy for survival, and for fulfilling specific needs such as eating (at the train station and Malioboro), sleeping (the Alun-Alun, Toilet, Girli), earning money (traffic lights, bus stops and Malioboro), feeling safe (Toilet, Girli), forming friendships and finding pleasure (THR, Taman, Toilet), washing (Toilet, Girli, and Shopping), and having sex (Gerbong, Taman).

Some of the sites marked need to be discussed in more detail: the train station; Malioboro and the Toilet; the Alun-Alun, Surgawong, and Gerbong, because they are what Matthews terms as ‘mean centres of gravity’ or ‘beacons’ for the children (Matthews 1980:174; 1992). They are sites essential for the children’s survival and emotional well being while they are in Yogyakarta.

The Train Station
The train station and train tracks running through the city feature in most of the children’s maps. This is because high mobility is a particularly noticeable behavioural aspect of the Tikyan, or street kid subculture, and they move across the country with what appears to be considerable ease via Java’s extensive railway system, riding on goods trains which they call ‘the free train’ (kereta api gratis), and which depart regularly from the railway station (Figure 4.7 and Map 2).
As Foucault (1984:243) has stated, railroads can be seen as an aspect of the relations of space and power. They can provoke resistances, give rise to new ‘social phenomena’ and create familiarity between people:

A new aspect of the relations of space and power was the railroads. These were to establish a network of communication no longer corresponding to the traditional network of roads. In addition there are all the social phenomena that railroads gave rise to, be they the resistances they provoked, the transformations of population, or changes in the behavior of people.

The children’s use of the railways can be viewed as a form of resistance, as well as an instrument of power which opens up new spaces of interaction. They are used by the children as a way of communicating with other street children in other cities and for spreading the subculture. Their high mobility is a geography of resistance, as the railways are a way of avoiding state authorities control and kampung surveillance systems, and enable the children to ‘jump scales’ to other cities, away from oppression in one city to possible freedom in another (Smith, 1994:90).

Children often take up and leave a city if they are in trouble with the authorities, if the earning opportunities are bad, if there is a ‘Cleanup Operation’ on the scene, they have fallen out with someone, or they are just looking for adventure or want to follow friends. While I was in Yogyakarta, groups of children frequently travelled to Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, and Solo, and often returned with a friend or someone they had met en-route. There was also a constant flow of children between Yogyakarta and Jakarta. Many of the children felt at home and had survival niches in both cities.

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13 See Cresswell (1993) who in the context of Kerouac’s novel ‘On the Road’ examines mobility as a form of resistance to the American Dream, the ideals of family and home, and the established ‘norms’ of 1950s America.

16 Smith’s (1994) account of the homeless in New York, examines the use of a ‘Homeless Vehicle’ which allows homeless people to have greater spatial mobility, and thus enables them to ‘jump scales’. Street children are also able to jump scales by riding the trains in between cities, while simultaneously avoiding the kampung surveillance system which severely restricts mobility for mainstream society.
Thus, street children in Yogyakarta are not necessarily from the city but have sometimes arrived by train from Jakarta or other cities. As a result, the train station is often the first meeting point for street children, and where they first learn how to survive on the street. At the train station, the children learn about other places in the city which are important for their survival, such as Shoping where they can scavenge for hoyen and fruit to re-sell, and Malioboro, which offers various avenues of survival for the street child. Many of the children I knew earned money and slept in the station when they first arrived in Yogyakarta before they gravitated south to Malioboro and other parts of the city. There are various ways of earning an income and surviving around the station, from scavenging for newspapers, plastic spoons and bottles to selling goods, shoe-shining, stealing and begging. Children also look for hoyen in the carriages, which they have to get to before the cleaners arrive or the station guards beat them up.

Malioboro

Malioboro you are my life
You give inspiration to the outcasts
And this is where we are at!
Malioboro I feel alive again, because
on your land I can smell the fragrance
I have to care about
Malioboro your thriving occupants
Your prosperous situation
Malioboro you own us
You own the exiled children.
(Iwan Galang, Jejat, Sept 1997: 10).

The maps show that Malioboro is at the centre of many street children’s lives, where they work, rest and play. These children feel as though they belong in Malioboro, and that the street actually ‘owns’ them, body and soul. Along Malioboro younger street children shoe-shine and busk (ngamen) at the numerous food stalls and restaurants. Older boys busk with guitars at the same food stalls, serenading diners. Malioboro is a ‘prosperous situation’ where street boys can earn money—the ‘fragrance’ they ‘have to care about’. Malioboro is a mass of territories for the people working on the street, and by walking down the length of Malioboro, ‘interconnected territories’ of shoe shiners, buskers, pick-pockets and vendors are ‘constantly crossed’ (Arantes, 1996: 86). These are areas which are recognised in the street world as belonging to different groups as well as to individual buskers and shoe-shiners. The boundaries of the territories are invisible but known to all the children, and if they are crossed then conflict erupts. Street law dictates that appropriate distances must be kept between workers, and newcomers are instructed not to work too closely to another busker on Malioboro, as if one busker is singing it could ruin the ‘act’ of another.

The Public Toilet

Plate 4. St. Hanging out at the Toilet

The Public Toilet (Toilet Umum) on Malioboro forms a very definite image in the minds of all the children, and despite the differences in the areas represented in the maps, there is a large measure of agreement in terms of this pivotal point. The Toilet is marked at the centre of many of the children’s maps because it is an assembly point for the Malioboro street boys.

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17 Many children also arrive by bus, particularly those children who come from the surrounding villages in Yogyakarta province.


19 Violence and law on the street are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6.
The retreat to the public toilet represents both a manifestation of the highly circumscribed and regulated behaviour...in the public sphere and the creative use of toilet space as a means of social expression, refuge and freedom from surveillance. Thus the basis for action and the use of space and time by young men and women is related to the extension of existing opportunities (White, 1990:197).

People marginalised and stigmatised by harsh laws and social attitudes claim and share spaces in the city which are available (Murray, 1995). These places are important for empowering alliances and for creating a common identity among marginalised people in opposition to oppression. The Toilet is such a place for street boys. For street boys, alienated and stigmatised by society, it is a claimed territory which has immense emotional importance. It is a meeting place, ‘a site of cultural resistance’ and a ‘liberated zone’, where the children can feel a sense of safety, relax, sleep, gamble, or hang out with friends (Myslik, 1996: 168). It is also a place where they can hide their possessions, such as their shoe-shine kits, guitars and clothes. As shown on some of the children’s maps, outside the Toilet there is a rattan mat to sit on which is for the use of the children. The mat serves to ‘mark’ the place and is a sign that it is a claimed space which has been ‘won’ by the street children.

The Toilet has always been a meeting point and hanging-out space, but in recent years it became a source of economic opportunity when the children created a parking lot at the front. This was a result of the opening of the ‘Basement’ nightclub which brought the subsequent opportunity for parking cars (parkir). The nightclub, situated under the Mutia Hotel, beside the Toilet, cost Rp15,000 (AS7) to get in and was very popular among the affluent young who arrived in their shiny new cars. At night the space outside the Toilet was occupied by the parkir boys who ‘parked’ the nightclub runter’s cars. These boys had their own system of organisation for who could participate in parking, and how money was distributed.

The parkir were expected to wear cut off jeans or shorts as they felt it made them look younger and poorer, so people would feel sorry for them and give them more money. They also had to wear shirts and cover their tattoos, thereby assuming a different identity to the tough ‘hard’ image they portrayed to each other in between working. If the drivers of the cars said they were not going to pay, the boys would sometimes let down the tyres, scratch the cars, or break in with an iron bar and steal re-saleable goods as a form of resistance. The boys would work all night and have to wait until 4 a.m when the nightclub closed and the last punters had left. Then they divided their takings between themselves and either hid a wash (mandi) in the Toilet, put on long trousers and went to look for street girls (cari rendam) in Shoping, went back to the Giri house to sleep, or got something to eat and slept by the Toilet or lesuhan (foodstalls) over the road.

As well as the parkir boys, the Toilet was also occupied by younger children who came to hang out and chat in between going off to shoe shine and busk at the lesuhan along Malioboro. Drinking rituals took place periodically throughout the night at the Toilet, and the boys bought alcohol by having a whip-round for money. Holding one’s drink is considered to be a display of masculinity– an important part of the Tikyan subculture. In direct contrast to how the children covered their tattoos when they were trying to earn money, the boys sat in a circle on the mat, took off their shirts, displayed their tattoos, and passed one glass round the group, each drinking a whole glass quickly until the bottle was finished. They then went back to work, drunk. Drugs were also consumed by the boys at the Toilet; marijuana or ‘bob’ (Marley) when they could get it, and all types of prescription pills which they also sold to people who were going into the nightclub.

The Toilet is a very masculine space, and compliance with peer norms of masculinity is essential to the Tikyan because friendships, support in hard times, and personal safety are all dependent on acceptance by the group. Street boys often have to act tougher and in a more masculine way than is already required of men in Indonesian society. This is particularly true for the young pre-pubescent boys for whom acting ‘macho’ comes less naturally.

A sense of belonging or not belonging contributes in an important way to the shaping of social space at the Toilet. On the street an age hierarchy exists, with the boundaries around the Toilet being policed by the older boys who are more

20 Since the economic crisis of 1997/98, this nightclub has closed down and the boys no longer ‘park’ cars on Malioboro.
dominant in the peer group. One evening an unknown youth at the Toilet was very drunk and annoying me both physically and verbally. The parkir boys could see that I was being bothered, and they did not like it. One of them came up and asked me 'is he bothering you? Do you want us to beat him up?'. I said 'no', that it was not necessary, but they went up to him and told the boy that he had to apologise to me and leave, which he did. After he had left the boys just said 'we protect our own.' It was the first time that I felt as though I was included as being one of them, as an insider, and that I had witnessed the group's boundary enforcement from within. It made me feel safe, and as though I belonged.

These feelings of security and belonging are one reason why the children gather at the Toilet. Another experience at the same spot a few weeks later, however, showed me that my own role with the boys shifted between being an insider or an outsider at their own discretion. It is also an example of how I had to adhere to rules on the street if I wanted to continue to be accepted. Notes from field notes (16 February 1997):

This evening at about 11pm I arrived at the Toilet for the night and Tari immediately approached me and asked me to leave. He explained that the boys were expecting 'some people' to arrive for a fight at midnight. He said they all had knives and were awaiting their arrival (I then looked around and saw that all the older boys had long knives down their shirts or trousers). I asked him who they were going to fight with and he just replied 'people', but I suspected it was something to do with the recent incident with Amrth, a butcher, getting beaten up at the bus stop for interfering on another group of basket's bus route (No. 10). Amrth was later arrested for stabbing one of them, and everyone was talking about it. There is the ever-present value of revenge (menhalas dalam) on the street, and you can never let an event go by without remembering, in order to save face. That is how Amrth explained it to me when he recounted the incident, and it was the reason why he 'borrowed' the knife from the woman at the meslah and stabbed one of the boys who had hit him for encroaching on his bus route. He said that he had no choice, and that he had to 'answer back'. So there is to be a duel of some sort over this incident, or so I suspect. I doubt I will be told the full details. Being a girl unfortunately usually puts me outside the 'boy's stuff' and masculine discourse, something which I frequently regret. Tari actually said to me 'It's because we like you - please leave, go home and come back tomorrow. It's because it's dangerous and we don't want you to be hurt.' I had developed a good relationship with this difficult character, the leader of the house break-ins gang and the older boys. I felt I had to adhere to his wishes. If I stayed (to witness the fight, which I wanted to do), I would risk him being angry with me for disobeying him, which is not a pretty sight. He can get very aggressive and threaten people with his knife. I've had knives pulled on me a couple of times at the Toilet, but as a show of force, not as a direct threat. Anyway, I didn't want to get on the wrong side of Tari's knife, so after a quick calculation of what to do, I decided it would be best to respect his wishes and leave. I was a bit taken aback as it has never happened before, but he was dictating the boundaries. Before I left I asked him about the welfare of the younger kids. He said I wasn't to worry - that they wouldn't be involved. Only the older boys he said, indicating to a few who stood around us listening to the conversation. One of the boys was Kink, in my eyes still a child, but then he has grown up a lot in the past year, and stopped shoe shining a long time ago.

The above examples are clear illustrations of the ways in which the boys police the boundaries of their claimed territory. While I was in Yogyakarta I heard frequent accounts of similar incidents from children who were from other cities and who went to the Toilet when they first arrived in Yogyakarta. These new kids were often interrogated and sometimes beaten before they were permitted to join the group at the Toilet. These accounts also illustrate the levels of violence which are reached on the street in order to protect both territory and dignity, or 'face'. Amrth is now busy running on a bus route which another group of boys considered to be their territory.

 Territory
The street is therefore made-up of 'specific territories which can be mapped according to specific activities carried out by specific groups' of street boys (see White, 1990: 142). In their maps it can be seen that the boys have developed a system of meaningful places which give form and structure to their experiences in the world (see Relph, 1976:1). There is also a system of territorial rules which are adhered to in the street kid subculture, and different groups operating along Malioboro, or elsewhere in the city, occupy different areas which relate to the various professions pursued. The street kids themselves have their own specific bus routes and bus stops which they always 'work' during the day. These routes can be seen on a number of the children's maps, and many of the children drew their maps of the city in relation to bus routes.

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21 Although 'respecting one's elders' and age are very important factors in the street kid social hierarchy (as is also the case in Javanese society), also of importance for gaining status is the length of time a child has lived on the street, as it gives his/her added 'street credibility'. Naturally, older children were usually the ones who had been on the street for longer, although there were some younger boys who had added status compared to those in the same age cohort, because of their length of time on the street.

22 I discuss how new-comers are integrated into the street-child world, and the processes of socialisation to the street kid subculture in Chapter 5.
The most powerful example of this is Agus’s map where he has drawn a series of lines across the page (Figure 4.8). Agus (12) describes these lines as the bus routes branching out from the numbered bays at the bus terminal and winding off through the city. The map is a fascinating conception of space and mobility throughout the city, as Agus’ patterns of information are directly connected to the way he earns money, and the various bus routes along which he travels when busking. Agus explained that also in the map are train tracks, the train station and several shops (marked with a cross, including a chemist). In a similar way Ari described his map of Yogyakarta to me in relation to the bus stops and bus routes he travelled on everyday while busking (Figure 4.4).

The strong competition for the use of space on Malioboro, and in other areas of the city, is accompanied by a discernible community spirit between the different groups on the street. This community of resistance is most apparent when an outside force intrudes, and when the children’s power of control over a ‘public’ space is superseded by a more powerful force which occasionally visits the Toilet. As explained in the previous chapter, this force is described by the boys as penyakit (the disease): the police or army who periodically come to the Toilet to ‘clean up’ the area.23

Clearly, the children at the Toilet are not safe from oppression and brutality, but many children told me that they regard it as a safe place, mainly because of their feelings of safety in numbers. When a garukan (police raid) hits, the people on the street will unite to help each other, and the Toilet is a place to where children run if they feel threatened or if they are looking for companionship.24 The Toilet is a place where the children can identify with one another and assert their differences and marginality; and the safety they feel is an ‘emotional and psychological safety that comes from being in an area with a sense of belonging or social control, even in the occasional absence of physical control’ (Mystik, 1996:168).

Alun-Alun

As indicated on many of the children’s maps, the Alun-Alun is the main square to the South of Malioboro and the North of the Sultan’s palace.

Plate 4.6: Alun-Alun boys

A small group of street boys aged between nine to twelve years sleep behind a fence on the east side of this square. While I was there two of the boys went off on a journey riding the trains to the west of Java. Only one came back. He returned after a few weeks, distraught with the news that his friend had been knocked off the

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23 The use of language, parody and other acts of resistance used by the street kid subculture in response to their marginal status, is analysed in Chapter 5.
24 See Titi’s account of pengamen (buskers) looking after the children’s shoe shine boxes when a garukan struck Malioboro. Jurnal, Januari/tuwi1996:2.
roof of a train when they went through a tunnel. They had been sitting on the top of a goods train. Many boys have stories of accidents riding the trains, although this was the first time I learnt of a child dying. Sadly, however, it was not the last.25

A distinctive feature of the Alun-Alun children is that they are glue sniffers, and they continually sniff cans of glue which they keep up their T-shirts (a can is being held in Plate 4.6). They learnt to do this from a Jakarta street boy whom they appear to admire, saying he is their friend. At another time I asked them who they thought of as their enemies, and it was this same boy. When I said that I thought that he was a friend, they said he was, unless he was forcing money from them (mengompas). It turned out the boy had been by earlier to force money from them, as other boys from Malioboro are also prone to do. The children’s perceptions of people therefore vary greatly according to circumstances and time. This is something I noticed with all the children. They would often consider someone a friend one day and an enemy the next, whether fellow street children or adults.

In the evenings the Alun-Alun boys hang around the square, sitting on the pavement or at the various food stalls (warung), on the east side of the square. During the afternoons, however, between about 4-7 p.m., they can be found begging and busking (with celek-celek) at the traffic lights nearby. The children also sometimes operate by the traffic lights at the bottom of Malioboro, if there are no police to move them on. Over the holiday periods (Christmas and Lebaran), however, the police were stationed there permanently, enforcing the traffic operation, Operasi Lilin Prago, and threatening the children with arrest if they tried to beg there. As a result the boys rarely went there. In contrast to these police the police stationed at the Shopping traffic lights allowed the children to beg, and so there were no such obstructions. The Alun-Alun boys are very dirty and rarely wash. One reason for this is so they can get more money begging, but they also say they are too lazy (malas) to wash (mandi) everyday.

At night, the Alun-Alun children often walk up Malioboro to the train station to look for hoyen and to beg. In the day they spend their time wandering around Shopping, where they buy supplies of glue to sniff, and hang out in the video arcade. The Alun-Alun boys say they do not want to go to the NGO Girti, as the boys there are naughty (masal) but they would not elaborate. I suspect that as they are young they were forced to provide sexual favours for the Girti boys, something which often happens to smaller boys when they arrive in a new community of street kids. I discuss this issue in the next chapter.

Surgawong

Plate 4.7: Surgawong

Resistance cannot be understood as a face-to-face opposition between the powerful and the weak, nor as a fight that takes place only on grounds constituted by structural relations— because other spaces are always involved: spaces which are dimly lit, opaque, deliberately hidden, saturated with memories, that echo with lost words and the cracked sounds of pleasure and enjoyment (Fidel, 1997:16).

One ‘dimly lit’ and ‘deliberately hidden’ social site for a group of about fourteen street boys is Surgawong, the name given by the boys to a bridge under which they live, and where one can encounter the sounds of enjoyment. Surgawong is a bridge to the Northeast of Malioboro (Plate 4.7). Across the bridge in Edy’s picture of Surgawong (Figure 4.9), is written: Jembatan (Surgawong) Kauzul Julur Ker, ‘Surgawong Bridge: Special Way for Street Kids’. Underneath the bridge is the running river and the mats on which they sleep where Kamar, or ‘room’ is written. This is their space, where they hang out when they are not working at the bus stops of traffic light intersection nearby.

25 Not long after this incident, Topo, a 13 year-old boy, with whom I was very close, went missing. It was later reported on the street kid grapevine that he had died in the same way as the boy from the Alun-Alun, by falling off the roof of a train. I discuss Topo, his short life, and my experience when he took me to meet his mother in Chapter 8.

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Surgawong is in the North East of the city on a main road which runs out to the airport, and over which hundreds of tourists travel every week, on their way to the famous Hindu temples in Prambanan. Although it is hot, dusty and noisy on the bridge, beneath it is a quiet, tranquil, and cool place, sealed off from the pollution and noise above by huge concrete slabs on the underside of the bridge. The children have made use of these slabs, by using wooden planks to construct platforms between them, thereby making a safe place sealed off from surveillance, where they are able to sleep and hide their few possessions. Below the bridge runs the river where the boys wash everyday, and there are palm trees dotted around making it a very pretty place, as the boys were keen to point out to me. Above the bridge, just a few hundred meters away, is a bus stop where they can earn money in the daytime while the buses are running (until six o’clock).

Every evening, between 5-9 p.m. the children worked in a group busking with guitars and drums at the Demangan traffic light intersection. After they have finished working the Surgawong kids frequently spend all their money on video games in Jalan Solo. Sometimes they would come and visit me at my house as it was very near to the Demangan traffic lights. They often came before or after work, to chat and eat and hang out, and sometimes to stay the night. In this way my house became another urban refuge for the Surgawong boys while I was in Yogyakarta. I knew Suvi, the ‘boss’ of the Surgawong community very well, and first met him when he was a s - c h i - n on Malioboro.  

Almost all the children living at Surgawong identify themselves as Giri children, although they are now completely independent of the NGO, which gives them a sense of pride. Suvi got the idea to live under the bridge after he stayed with a street kid community in Jakarta who also live under a bridge, near to the Rambutan market in the East of the city. The community which lives there is very strong and well known among the street-kid population in Jakarta, and Suvi stayed with them for a few months before he returned to Yogyakarta.

26 Suvi’s story is told in Chapter 8. He is one of the boys who took me home to visit his parents. He is from Jakarta, but has been in Yogyakarta since he was ‘very small’, probably about eight or nine years old. He did not know how old he was. Neither, incidentally did his mother, but we found out when we went to visit his grandmother.
Gerbong: 'The Sex Place'

At night time the boys from the Alun-Alun and Malioboro sometimes visit Gerbong to get paid by the transvestites (banci) for oral sex, or to pay a prostitute for sex. They also sometimes visit Sarkem where there are prostitutes. They are more likely, however, to pass Sarkem and go through the underground tunnel to Gerbong where sex is cheaper, or you sometimes get paid.

A traditional belief exists among the older prostitutes in Yogyakarta that sex with a child can cure disease or make one young again, and as a result street boys are sometimes able to have sex with prostitutes for free (Paterson, 1985; Berman, 1994; Mboi, 1995:2). Similarly, the same myth 'medicine of everlasting life' ('obat awet muda') which links rejuvenation and sex with children also exists in the banci community, who believe that the semen of young boys will keep them young and beautiful (either by drinking it or putting it on their skin).21 As a result street boys sometimes get paid Rp. 5,000 to 10,000 by the banci (who hang out at Gerbong and in the Taman at night) to be given oral sex or perform anal sex (membo'ol) (see also the documentary film, Kancil, 1995). This depends on whether the banci can afford to pay, and sometimes the boys themselves pay for the same services. There are always negotiations to do with service and payment between the boys and the banci and prostitutes when a boy visits Gerbong.

The boys go to Gerbong for one reason only: sex. Almost all the boys, even the youngest, put it on their maps, although some chose not to. On one occasion I noticed that sixteen-year old Azy had omitted to draw Gerbong on his map. I knew he knew the place, so I asked him where Gerbong was, and he said: 'Jangan! Bahaya AIDS! Nanti kamu digigit.' (Don't go there, it's dangerous, you'll get bitten (lit) by AIDS!). I was very curious to visit Gerbong at night but the boys did not want me to go there, and said it was 'dangerous'. I eventually got one of the boys who was gay and a part-time transvestite to take me to Gerbong one night. I shall call him Jeanette.22 Jeanette was about eighteen-years old and knew all the

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21 Personal communication with Jeanette (19), a street boy who was also a transvestite, and sometimes solicited for sex in Gerbong. See also the film Kancil (1995) where the boys also discuss this myth.

22 This was the name the boy gave me when I asked him the pseudonym he would like in my thesis.
banci at Gerbong, where he sometimes worked; and introduced me to the ‘leader’ of the banci who is known as Ibu (the polite form of address for an elder woman). Ibu occupies the police post after the police have gone home, from 10 p.m until 4 a.m. From the post she can watch the comings and goings into Gerbong, inform people of other’s whereabouts, chat to passers by and solicit for sex. She also works for the local AIDS awareness organisation, Lentera, as an outreach worker, and calls the police post her ‘office’. The children sometimes stop and chat to Ibu or other banci who are hanging out at the post. They then go on to Gerbong where they can either go with banci, who hang out in the east side of the area closer to the station, or further down the tracks for sex with prostitutes (lonte). The prostitutes solicit along the dark train tracks nearer to the bridge. In this area there are a lot of men hanging around and sitting in very dimly lit food and beverage stalls (wurung), which are set up on either side of the railway tracks. Apparently there are frequent police raids along this stretch of rail track, and when one occurs, clients and wurung owners have to clear out of the area quickly, throwing themselves over the fences by the rail tracks in order to escape arrest.

At Gerbong Jeanette showed me around and told me how different places were for different groups of banci or prostitutes. He pointed out the various locations where activities take place; train coaches area (from which the area gets its name), outhouses, strategic bushes, and the covered train washing-areas. He also told me of how ‘shocked’ (kager) he had been one night to see a younger boy from Malioboro there having sex with one of the banci. What really shocked him was how experienced the boy appeared for someone so young. Jeanette would not tell me the boy’s name, although he said I knew him and that he was a shoe-shiner on Malioboro. This is another example of how the children shift their identities according to their environment and activity. On Malioboro the shoe shine boys act cute, in order to promote sympathy and get clients, but at Gerbong they become sexually experienced young men. Jeanette also shifts his identity from street kid on Malioboro to ‘guide’ with me, to banci when he is with his friends and work colleagues at Gerbong.

Meanings of Places

Particular places in the city, therefore, have special meanings for street children, and this is reflected in their maps and also their conversations about specific locations and the people who occupy them.29 For example, in the street boys’ language the word ‘shoping’ is often used as a metaphor to signify ‘cheap’ or inferior, as cheap goods and street girls can be found there.

Figure 5: Petrus’ map of Shoping and Taman

Similarly, Taman, Gerbong and Shoping are all areas in the city which have extended sexualised meanings within street boys’ discourse, as they are places they go to look for street girls (rendan) and banci for sex. Thus, gender, sex, and

29 See Raphel (1976:3) for an elaboration on the ‘meanings’ of places: ‘A place is not just the “where” of something: it is the location plus everything that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomena’. 
sexuality are all spaced in the children’s imaginations of the city. This can be seen clearly in Figure 5, where in his ‘map’ Petrus has divided the Shopping building into four different parks (Taman, in reference to the City Park, over the road from Shopping); Taman Bendi (Transvestite park); Taman Rendan (street girls park); Taman Homo (the gay park); and Taman Kere Shopping (the street boys from Shopping’s park).

All these groups spend time in the city park at different times (the bendi and homo at night). As this map shows, street girls occupy different spaces to street boys. They sleep and hang out (nongkrong), at the city park (Taman), and they also visit different places at night. The street girls’ subculture, and their concept and use of space in the city is discussed in Chapter 7.

Conclusion
Street children in Yogyakarta contest their own exclusion by appropriating specific places in the city, and by constructing a network of entwined spaces for their everyday survival. This chapter has shown how these chosen places reflect the children’s social marginality, and describes them as the children’s own produced ‘urban niches’ in which they can earn money, obtain food and feel safe, despite the hostility of outside forces.

In Yogyakarta street boys have marked particular places on their maps which they perceive as important: the traffic lights, bus stops, the sides of roads and rail tracks, outside a public toilet or an entertainment area, under a bridge or in a city park, and other public spaces where access is not rigidly controlled. The maps show that the children are not tied to any one place, and that they have numerous ‘symbolic cocoons’, or urban niches which they use in the city in order to survive. These territories are alternative spaces and sites of interaction for the boys, and where alternative communities are formed. They are places for establishing and maintaining solidarity, and for creating a collective identity between marginalised people, in opposition to oppression (Murray, 1993b). Spaces such as the Toilet and Surgawong create a strong sense of belonging and empowerment which allow the boys to look beyond the dangers of being homeless in the city, and to feel safe. In effect, these spaces have become a ‘home in the public space’, and help a child to survive, and to feel as though he belongs and exists in a world which would rather he did not (Arantes, 1996: 86).

It is the ‘fluidity’ of these spaces, and the flexibility of the children to shift from one place to another at a moment’s notice, which ensures their survival (Massey, 1994; File, 1997). If one place becomes difficult to operate in, due to the threat of a gang or the penyakit coming, then they escape to another urban niche, or else appropriate somewhere new. In addition to the fluidity of spaces this chapter has also shown how the shifting of identities is also a necessary part of street survival, and that different places result in the children assuming a different identity. Street children have to learn from early on when it is necessary to be cute, macho, friendly or hostile, and their identities are as fluid, and shift as frequently as the spaces in which they operate.

In summary, contrary to popular belief street children are not passive victims. They adopt various strategies of resistance to the marginalisation imposed on them by state and society. They do this by occupying multiple and shifting sites around the city, and by employing an expansive range of survival strategies across diverse spatial relations. These actions are ‘geographies of resistance’, and everyday forms of endurance (File and Keith, 1996). Street children’s relationships with different places and their use of geographical spaces are, therefore, complex and layered, and their activities and behaviour patterns change over time in response to their changing environment. Such adaptations are part of their survival.
A Different Reality: The Tilyan Subculture of Yogya

(Chapter Five)

Stop. We greet you as liberators. This ‘we’ is that ‘us’ in the margins, that ‘we’ who inhabit marginal space that is not a site of domination but a place of resistance. Enter that space... I am speaking from a place in the margins where I am different, where I see things differently (bell hooks, 1990:152).

Street children in Yogyakarta have developed a ‘repertoire of strategies’ in order to survive, despite their subordination. These include the appropriation of urban niches within the city, in which they are able to earn money, feel safe and find enjoyment. In addition to ‘winning space’ for their survival and existence, it is within these niches that street kids have created collective solutions for the dilemmas which they confront in their everyday lives. As Massey (1998:128) tells us: ‘the construction of spatiality can be an important element in building a social identity’. The spaces have become territories in which identities can be constructed, and where alternative communities are formed. In some cases they are what Scott (1990:119) terms ‘off stage social sites in which resistance is developed and modified’, and where the ‘hidden transcript grows’.

The primary purpose of the next two chapters is to discuss the street child’s social worlds which exist within these marginal spaces. In this way, I present the Tilyan subculture of Yogyakarta as a technique for street children to resist and negate ‘the fraudulent claims of dominant groups’, and thus to defend their very existence (see Bondi 1994:87). Such an inquiry requires a social analysis of the various forms of emotional, psychological, and physical tactics which the Tilyan have created as a ‘peculiar and distinctive way of life’, and which are embodied in their own systems of values, beliefs, social relations, slang and forms of adornment (Hall and Jefferson, 1976: 10).

The theoretical framework for this chapter draws on Scott’s (1990) concept of the ‘hidden transcript’ of resistance, together with the works of subculture theorists from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham.¹ I also use

Visano’s (1990) methods employed in her study of street children in North America, by describing life on the streets as a ‘career’. \(^2\)

As Visano (1990:142) states, ‘the concept of a career’ and its various stages of assimilation to street life is a useful tool for exploring street children’s ‘activities and relationships attendant with street socialization’. In addition, Blackman’s (1995:24-35) model for the interpretation of youth practices and relations helps to describe the children’s behaviour patterns, by portraying them as ‘specialised positions’ and as ‘social relations of the face’. This includes street kid’s ‘lived out’ daily practices and attitudes: their ideas of individuality, freedom, and solidarity; how they shape their norms, rules and values; their social organisation, conflicts and pressures; and their relationships with other people on the street (Cohen, 1972). I describe these practices as the Tikyan’s obligatory performances, and the expected ways of behaving in order to remain accepted by the group.

The chapter begins by examining the processes which occur when a street boy first goes onto the street, and how he is received and initiated into the street-child social group. I then discuss the distinct social processes related to the construction of a new self identity, and how a child’s individual identity transformation entails a continual interaction with the street kid collective identity, and the frequent display of appropriate attitudes and behaviour patterns (see Turner, 1983, 1994). As Turner (1994:1) suggests: ‘we need to distinguish between personal and social identity as two different levels of self-categorization, which are equally valid and authentic of the psychological process of self’. As a continuation of the discussion, in Chapter 6 I present a semiotic analysis of the images which street kids adopt as symbols of their subculture (Cohen, 1972). These are the Tikyan’s systems of style, dress, music, rituals and bodily styles. They are what Blackman (1995:35) refers to as the ‘specialised semiotic’ of a group; and what Thornton (1995:99) identifies as a subculture’s ‘capital’. \(^3\)

The focus of the next two chapters is explicitly concerned with groups of street boys with whom I spent time in Yogyakarta.\(^4\) For this reason I use the pronoun ‘he’ throughout, unless I am discussing an issue which applies to street children in general.

Tikyan: Subcultural Solution

By the time children have opted for a life on the streets, they have often endured the systematic erosion of self esteem in the home from neglect or verbal and physical abuse, and possess a battered self image. Once on the streets, they are further alienated by the attitudes of both state and society toward them, and often feel even more vulnerable and uncertain about who they are. As Smith (1994:105) has noted with respect to homeless people in the USA: ‘Homelessness is a dramatic loss of power over the way in which one’s identity is constructed, since the home no longer shields from the public gaze’.

As explained in Chapter 3, the state and the majority of society often construct street children to be deviant criminals, or they are over romanticised, and portrayed as the passive victims of a ruthless society (Glauser, 1990). An overall theme in this thesis is the assertion that street children should not be perceived within such rigid stereotypes. Instead, it is important to focus on street kid’s agency, in order to challenge those commentators who present them as total victims, or as cunning criminals. As Lucchinini (1993:16) says:

\[^{2}\] The ‘specialised semiotic’ are the rules which create and relay the main elements of style, such as music, drugs, free sex, dress, and bodily style (Blackman, 1995).
\[^{3}\] The data for the next two chapters comes from field work with Anak Bikers (the street boys who are affiliated to the NGO Golden), who hung out and slept on Malioendo, under the Gending Bridge, and in the Gejayan Rukun Sole area. I also draw on observational and interview data which I obtained from the Alum-Allah (City Square) kids, the bus terminal children, and children affiliated to the Jakarta NGO MMK (Minta Manara Kutsa), who often came to Yogyakarta. I also spent time at MMK’s open and training house in Jakarta, which was called “B2” (Binaan Baju), as many of the girls children went there on their trips to Jakarta. There was a good relationship between the children of these two NGOs, and also with children from the NGO ISJ (Institut Sosial dan Jakarta). Sadly, however, as an indirect result of the political crisis which has ensued since the July 21st incident in 1996, these NGOs were victims of harassment and intimidation, and one of them (MMK) was forced to close down. I discuss these events in the Conclusion.
The definition of the street child only in terms of ‘victimization’ or of delinquency leads to a reduced conception of a reality which is in fact far more complex. This dichotomy generates the stigmatization of the child.

It is essential to view street children’s actions and motivations as complex and diverse, depending on the situation they find themselves in, and the people with whom they interact. Hart (1991:41) for example, in her discussion of women in Malaysia, stresses the need for a dynamic conceptualisation of agency that ‘recognises multiple (and possibly contradictory) sources of identity and interest’, as well as a recognition that interests are not fixed but fluid.

Street children similarly possess fluid identities which shift depending on their circumstances, the spaces they occupy, and their daily interactions. Thus, even though their lives are regularly portrayed in a negative way, and as a ‘problem’ which needs a solution, their decision to leave an impoverished or abusive home should, in fact, be understood as the child’s own solution to a personal predicament. As Bourdillon (1994:529) asserts, when discussing street children in Harare:

For street children, life on the streets is not so much a problem as a solution to a variety of problems. Having been failed by the adult world, they find solace and support among other street children who show them how they can survive on their own.

Street children do not lack agency, but take responsibility for their own actions, and are in control of their own lives. The creation of street kid identities and the maintenance of their subcultures can thus be seen not as a problem, but as response to their stigmatization, and a solution to the variety of problems they face in a world which is hostile to their very existence. As Brake (1980:xxii) states, subcultures are often an attempt to resolve collectively experienced problems arising from contradictions in the social structure, alienation in society, and harassment by the law. He says that they appeal to those who feel that they have been rejected, and provide an alternative social reality and status system which offer ‘safety points’ and ‘symbols of solidarity’ (Brake,1980:175). Similarly, Cohen (1955) points out that cultural forms emerge when a number of people with comparable problems are able to interact with each other. Collective adaptations, Cohen (1955) says, produce internal social developments and processes within the group which work in conjunction with external constraints to shape their lives.

Socialisation to a subculture, then, helps a young person redefine negative self concepts by offering a collective identity and a reference group from which to develop a new individual identity, and thus face the outside world (Brake,1980:166). A community of children who have similar background problems and experiences can provide new children on the street with comfort, support, and vital knowledge necessary to survive (Bourdillon, 1994; see also Visano, 1990:149). The following section discusses how seasoned street kids in Yogyakarta help to socialise newcomers to the street and the Tikyan social identity. The socialisation provides new kids with peer support and survival skills as well as a collective identity which assists them in their construction of a new positive self image. Within this analysis it can be seen that there are frequent contradictions between a street child’s individual and collective identities. These discrepancies are related to the differences in needs and requirements of the individual child and the social group.

Plate 5.1: Tikyan

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Street Socialisation: Initiation, Integration and Identity Transformation

Socialization refers to an interactive process of transmitting and learning 'acceptable' ways of acting, interpreting and feeling. This process is viewed as occupying a central place in the lives of children. Sociologists analyse socialization as an important clue to determining how children construct their identities, interpretations and social relations (Visano, 1990:139).

An analysis of a child's socialisation to the street is important, as it provides significant evidence for determining how children construct their collective identities as street children. As Visano (1990:140) informs us socialisation is often misunderstood in respect of street kids, as most literature describes them as having an absence of socialising influences. This is in keeping with the stereotyped notion that street children are dangerous criminals, who lead a disordered and non-socialised existence. On the contrary, however, once on the street, children engage in specific social processes which socialise them to street life. That which is considered as 'acceptable' on the street, may often not be the case in the family home. As Cresswell (1996:85) says: '...a lifestyle that is perceived as disorder is really...a different kind of order, a different set of priorities and expectations.' Similarly, due to the different environment in which they live, street children experience a different lifestyle to the average Indonesian child: they sleep, eat, play and work on the street. They therefore require and undergo a very different kind of socialisation.

Leaving Home

It is very rare for a child to arrive on the street unaware of what to expect. As discussed in Chapter 2, most children work or play on the street before they leave home, and get to know street kids in those settings. By observing homeless children, the working child sees how it is possible to survive on the street, and is often envious of the freedom and independence that these children have. Working children have to take home the money they earn during the day, and they see from the experiences of homeless children that, if they do not go home, the money they earn is their own, to spend on snacks, video games, or how they please. Further, as Schurink (1993:180) has noted in South Africa, street children who are still living at home are occasionally 'recruited' by homeless children to join in the group activities and are encouraged not to go home at night. Children are thus attracted to the subculture and start to see living on the street as a viable alternative to the existence they already have. This is especially true if a child is experiencing problems at home. Aptekar (1998:193), however, also describes how mothers in Colombia talk about how they had 'lost their children in an unfair competition with street life that had more to offer than they did.' Ultimately, the streets represent a place outside of family control and, as Aptekar (1998:198) says: 'for many children the streets offered the possibility of hope. It was, from their point of view, a type of quest that necessitated leaving the known family in order to seek an identity.'

When a child first makes the decision to leave home, however, he is not yet fully integrated into street life, and still has a lot to learn about living on the street. It is a source of self-esteem to homeless children that they are 'street wise', and know how to survive on the streets on their own. Thus, homeless kids see themselves as distinct from, and superior to, children who still live at home but work on the streets and refer to them as 'working children' (anak pekerja). Their superior attitude is related to the immense pride they hold in their independence and freedom, and can be clearly seen in one term of address homeless children have for working children: 'little one' (cilik).

Anak Baru

A child who has recently left home is referred to as 'the new kid' (anak baru) by the seasoned homeless children. As Visano (1990:149) notes of street kids in the Americas: 'Initially, newcomers experience considerable hardship in trying to fit into the street environment. They exist on the border of conventional and deviant worlds.' Similarly, the early part of the street child's 'career' in Indonesia is when a child tests the waters of the street. Typically, during these early stages a child drifts between his home and the street, and begins by spending one or two nights away from home before making the decision to leave for good.

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1 See for example government studies on street children in Ujung Pandang. (Nishih, et al., 1994).
2 See also Aptekar (1998:75) who notes a similar situation in Cali, Colombia where the working children (chupagramas) admire the homeless children (gaminas), and 'look on gaminas as the kind of people they'd like to be. Not only did the gaminas appear much more independent and less self-doubting, they also enjoyed their independence.'

3 I also met mothers who lamented the fact that they could not stop their child living on the street. I discuss this in Chapter 8.
When a child first meets up with other street kids he is usually asked where he is from: ‘anak mana?’ and what he wants. He may simply be chased away, but it is more likely he will be beaten up, or mugged of his possessions, clothes and money. As Suvi (15) said to me; ‘kalau anak jalanan baru, dipukul’ (‘if it’s a new street kid, they’re beaten up’). After that he is usually bought a drink and some food and invited to join the group. Often at this time he is offered advice by various children on how to earn money and where to go in Yogyakarta. On Malioboro, anak baru are sometimes lectured by an older street boy on the laws of working on the street. This special treatment of providing food, drink and advice is only until the child has settled and earned some money for himself. Then he is on his own. This is because although street children have a strong belief in helping each other (saling menolong) their fundamental value is individual survival and looking out for number one.

If a child arrives with a local boy, or a contact name, he may avoid being beaten or mugged. Momo (12), for example, told me the story of when he first arrived in Yogyakarta from Jakarta. He arrived at the train station, and made his way to the toilet on Malioboro. This is where he had been told to go by children from Yogyakarta whom he had met in Jakarta. He told me that when he got to the toilet: ‘Saya mau dikompas anak Rudi’ (‘Rudi wanted to mug me’). Momo then related the conversation which took place between himself and Rudi (pers. comm. February, 1997):

Rudi: ‘Anak mana?’ (‘Where are you from?’)
Momo: ‘Anak Jakarta’ (‘I’m a Jakarta kid’)
Rudi: ‘Asu walaupun di sini!’ (‘What are you doing here?’)
Momo: ‘Mau mengani’ (‘I want to mug’)
Rudi: ‘Tidak boleh di sini!’ (‘You can’t here!’)
Momo: ‘Saya teman Coco’ (‘I’m Coco’s friend’)
Rudi: ‘Ok, sudah’ (‘That’s OK then’)

The connection with Coco (an older and well respected street kid from Yogyakarta) was enough to be accepted: ‘Saya diterima, dikasih minum.’ (‘I was accepted and given a drink’). So, if a child has connections (koneksi) to the street world he is more likely to be accepted. Street children therefore have a selection and monitoring system which polices the group from within and excludes those who deviate:

Subordinate groups do their own patrolling... singling out anyone who puts on airs, who denies his origins, who seems about... sanctions brought against them may run the gamut from small gestures of disapproval to a complete shunning and, of course to physical intimidation and violence (Scott, 1990:120-30)

Similarly, if at any time a child is thought not to fit in, he will be beaten up and ‘evicted’ (diasut) from the group. Some children are not accepted as they are considered to be too rough (kasar), which usually means argumentative or unnecessarily violent. This kind of behaviour is not acceptable in Yogyakarta where the culture, even within the street kid community, is more refined (hala) than in other cities. Batak children (from North Sumatra) and children from Surabaya, for example, are often not accepted for this reason.

I also heard of a child who was banished because he had an enormous swollen tongue which, according to the children, smelt really bad and was covered with flies. The boys found the sight and smell of him repulsive and would have nothing to do with him. They claimed that he refused to go to the doctor because he could earn so much money begging with his tongue. Other reasons that children are not accepted into the group are if they are considered to be ‘stuck up’ (sumbong), or ‘spoilt’ (manja), and therefore not independent (as discussed later) is a necessary requirement in the Tkiyan world. Another boy I knew who begged at traffic lights around the city and in the train station was almost always on his own. The children did not want to have anything to do with him and said he was mad (gila). One reason for this could have been that the boy was deaf, and had difficulty in speaking. I did wonder, however, if he was ostracised because of his race as he was Chinese, and street kids, like the majority of native Indonesians (prthabum), disliked the Chinese. It was very rare to see Chinese street children, and while I was in Yogyakarta, I knew of only this one Chinese child living on the street. Children were also selected depending on their

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9 I also noticed that boys with darker skin, from Kalimantan or Eastern Indonesia were not so readily accepted, and boys were sometimes ridiculed for being black (hitam). This is the same in mainstream society, where being hitam is considered ugly. It is not, however, a bad thing to be thought of as hitam. If a young boy arrives on the street who is white (putih) he is thought to be clean (bersih) and therefore more attractive. This means he will be in demand by the older boys for sexual sex (mako’ed).

10 Unfortunately I could not talk to this boy as he was deaf and only spoke Javanese. It was explained to me by a priest at a Christian temple in Yogyakarta that the reason there were so few Chinese street children was because the Chinese communities are very close knit, and look after their own. Chinese children will also work in a family business instead of working on the street. The few numbers of Chinese on the street also have something to do with the fact that Chinese families in Indonesia are
assertion of authority. Exhibition of another’s power over one’s body appears to be the inevitable price of becoming a member of the group1.

Heri Bongkok (1995:46) in his autobiography about life as a street child, relates the story of how, when he first went onto the street, he was regularly sodomised by an older boy who looked after him. He was about ten years old at the time.12 Once he was older, he himself had anal sex with younger boys, who he called his amak-amak.14 At one point in the book he says: ‘maybe because I myself had experienced being sodomised, I sodomised Subur’ (Bongkok, 1995:71). Another boy told Giri workers of the first time he was sexually abused by an older boy:

I didn’t refuse because he fed me. I let him sodomise me although it was very painful because it was for the first time. After that it didn’t hurt anymore, and instead it became satisfying. Now I often enjoy anal sex with friends. It’s too late to change now.15

By saying ‘it’s too late to change’, the boy is confirming that it is now a way of life. Thus, although initially the practice of anal sex is usually not through desire, it is a survival strategy within the subculture, which the children gradually begin to enjoy. It is also a way for children to obtain affection and physical contact, something they so often lack. For street boys sodomi is not conceptualised as being violent, and neither, interestingly, is it considered to be a homosexual act.16 It is a normal and acceptable part of life for the boys, and an initiation process which most boys have experienced and also perform. Street boys have sex with each other for comfort, to alleviate sexual frustration (hazar), to express emotion, and for protection from older boys. With respect to initiation, the practice is not only to assert power but is also to introduce new kids to a fundamental behavioural aspect of the Tikyan community. To quote Rajani and Kudrat (1996:308) again: “It is explained as a way of telling new children that “our life is different from normal life” or, more specifically, that “we play by different rules.” As Hengst (1996:43) informs us, in reference to children’s constructions of collective identities: ‘Collective identity...is based on the

11 As discussed in Chapter 3, this activity is referred to as bo’ed in the street kids own slang.
12 See Bongkok (1995) when he expresses his disappointment that a younger boy has already been screwed by someone else. Heri Bongkok (his street name) is now close to 30 years old, and still lives on the street. He cannot read or write but his life story was transcribed from a tape recorder and interview notes, and published as a book, entitled Perjalanian dan Penulisan, ‘Struggle and Oppression’ (YLPs Humana, 1995). The book tells the story of his life living on the streets of Java, mostly in Jakarta and Yogyakarta. Heri is still living on the streets and is still highly mobile. He is an ‘editor’ for the magazine Jejal, and moves around the country meeting with street kids, and collecting their stories.
13 See also Andry’s story ’Masa Melayani diri’ in Jejal, (1991:20-21). Andry says that he had to ‘serve’ an older street boy four times a night, until he was able to escape the older boy’s influence.
14 This is street slang for a young boy who is used for sex by an older boy or homosexual.
16 I discuss street children’s sexuality and their attitudes to homosexuality further in Chapter 6.
construction of difference and equality...Membership in a particular (social) collective is experienced particularly through the perception of such differences.

Further, in a study of street kids in Jakarta, Childhope (1991:68) notes that a newcomer must reach an 'equal status' to other street kids before he is accepted into the group. Through beating, robbing, and sodomising a child, the initiation of a newcomer to the street can be interpreted as a form of what Scott (1990: 132) refers to as 'social levelling'. It is also an insight into Tikyan differences, and the first step of a child's socialisation into the Tikyan community. The offering of this collective identity represents a solution for many children's problems, and a refuge for children who have left home. The street is, therefore, a place where, as Apteke (1988:104) puts it, street children can 'seek an identity' for themselves, and where they can begin to counteract the negative identities with which they have been burdened. Subsequently, part of the socialisation process for a street child concerns the child's own personal identity transformation, by which he gains a shared social identity with other street children (see Turner et al, 1994).

Mapping Street Kid's Identities

When children first come on to the street they often wish to be anonymous. The city is by nature an anonymous place, but a child always has the danger of being spotted by someone who knows their parents, especially if their home or village is not too far away. Street children are naturally very suspicious of strangers or outside interference, as it usually means trouble. Frequently, they will often lie about themselves when they first meet someone, including their name, which they will change in order to protect their identity. Swart (1990:4), in her study of street children in Hillbrow, South Africa, noted that telling lies was one of the children's main survival strategies. She said that it was 'in order to keep people at a distance, to generate handouts and to preserve a sympathetic view of their condition'. It is also to control and influence people's actions. This is a common practice among all people on the street. As one boy said to me: 'you never give your real name on the street, because if there is trouble you don't want to be implicated'. Giving oneself a new name is also a form of resistance to being abused or abandoned, and a way of maintaining a positive self identity.

As a child begins to identify himself as a street kid, therefore, he often changes his name, or he is given a nickname by his peers. Edo told me that he changed his name because he wanted to break totally from the past, and did not want to think of himself as the same boy who had been thrown out by his mother. Mohamad is now called Ronny. When he first got to the street I knew him by his real name, but a year later when I went back to Yogyakarta, I found that he had changed his name to Ronny. When I asked him why he said that Mohamad was not a good name for a street kid and he felt uncomfortable with it. Why? 'It's a holy name-it's for the people who go to the mosque everyday and pray (sholat) five times a day, not for a street kid' (pers. 'om., December, 1996). He said that his life was too sacrilegious (haram) to befit such a revered name. It may also have to do with the fact that his father was looking for him, and he did not want to go home.

Almost all street boys are given nicknames by other children, which they accept as part of their inclusion in to the social group, even if they do not especially like it. One unusually fat boy, for example, was known by the other boys as Gendir (Patty), another who was not particularly dextrous was known as Peek (spastic). Sometimes boys have several different names in the one group, something which can be very confusing for a newcomer. Jono (12) had several names: his original name, his nickname, a name for Yogyakarta, and two different names for different groups he hung out with in Jakarta (I found this out when I met him in Jakarta). As Eratno (1996:12) has noted of street children in Yogyakarta: 'tidak jarang setiap pindah tempat mereka ganti nama' ('it is not unusual if every time they move to change their name'). Over time one may get to know a child's real name, although that is not always so. Mas Didi of Giri told me that he knew Heri Bongkok for fifteen years before he knew his real name.13 Changing one's name may be recognised as part of the psychological process of a child's re-personalisation, as his self identity undergoes changes and he begins to categorise himself in terms of a social identity (see Turner, 1985, 1994:455).18 In this way a child's 'self-categorization' assists him to break with the

13 As noted above, many of the children had street names which were related to their physical appearance. Eratno (1996: 11) notes that Heri got his name because he looked like someone else with the same name who had mysteriously disappeared, and Bongkok is his nickname.

18 Here I have drawn on Turner's concept of 'de-personalisation'. According to Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, 1985), when a person's perception of themselves changes to think of themselves as a member of a group they have become de-personalised, and de-personalisation occurs through the
past and his original self identity, and to redefine himself as a street child, an ‘anak jalanan’, and a member of a distinctive social group (ibid).

Collective Identity Construction

As part of the process of constructing a new identity and of learning how to present oneself to the group, a child must also learn ‘collectively articulated experiences’, which include reconstructing the reasons he is on the street (see Bondi, 1993:92). As Felsman (1989:75) has noted in Colombia, the most direct impact of how a street child views himself is in relation to his interaction with street peers, and other members of the street community. It is in this way that: ‘...the collective self reflects group and collective realities’ (see Turner, 1994:460). The children’s lack of traditional family accentuates these relationships, and a street child’s reality is affected by the ‘authenticity’ of their situation, and the interpretations of those with whom he shares his experiences (Felsman, 1989:75). In a similar way, Visano (1990:145) tells us that street children in North America are familiar with each others stories, and have learnt ‘socially approved vocabularies’ in order to express their situations and reasons for going onto the street (see also Breakwell, 1986:121-2; Berman, 1990).

Street children in Yogyakarta have also ‘learned’ each others personal histories, and recount them within the format of an approved vocabulary (depending on who is listening to them). They do this by externalising the reasons for their situation, and asserting, for example, that their circumstances are unjust (see Felsman, 1989:76-7). In this way street children learn to use their stories as ‘badges they flash’ (Visano, 1990:145), in order to reinforce their own interpretation of events, and to promote sympathy among their audience. As Berman (1999) argues in respect of the street children’s stories in Jejal, personal narratives are very important in identity production as they give the author the opportunity to have a sense of who they are, and how they have become (see also Revill, 1993:129). Autobiographical stories also play a part in self justification, as ‘stories we tell about ourselves are a means of transcending the fissures that separate past from future’ (Revill, 1993:129).

The children have mutual experiences of miserable family lives from which they have fled, and of hard times on the street, struggling for their existence. Their subcultures are thus created through feelings of shared experiences which are themselves a form of social solidarity. Being with people who are similar to yourself creates a feeling of belonging, and of being an integral part of the group. The reinforcement of each others anger, anxiety, and indignation at the situation in which they find themselves, creates a sense of inclusion, so that they have the collective thought of ‘it’s not just me’. Their ‘learned vocabulary’ is in effect the Tiloy’s collective control over another child’s ‘social landscape’ (Felsman, 1989:77). It is in this way, that the children form collective identities and strengthen their solidarity. Once they meet other street children in similar circumstances, they are happy to find others in the same position. As one boy said: ‘Di jalan jarang ketemu sama kompak’ (‘in the street you rarely meet solidarity’)(pers.com. January, 1997).

Shifting Identities

Compliance with peer norms and expectations is an essential aspect of Tiloy collective identity, and security and personal survival are subject to acceptance by the group. As already noted, sometimes younger children played up being ‘cute’ to win sympathy and earn money from adults (Figure 5.1).21

21 This is particularly true of children associated with Giri who learn about their rights through the NGO, and who have developed a kind of collective indignation about the way in which they are treated by state and society.

22 See also Apteek (1984:71-78) who discusses how younger children in Colombia ‘take advantage of being little’, and benefit most from contact with adults. He also tells of how older children will be heavily involved in street fights and then sit down and sulk their thumbs.
A street child has to learn to balance his collective identity with other fluid identities, often resulting in the fragmenting of the presentation of the self. As discussed in the previous chapter, this is due to the multiple identities street children present for various activities and needs across different spatial areas, and the contradictions between these presented identities.

Figure 5.1: Acting cute to earn a living

Carl (12) for example, looks much younger than his age, and performs a number of different identities. He acts tough and masculine when he is with older boys at the toilet, and they like him because although he is small he is also street smart. Sometimes, when he is busking, he assumes a more polite (zoono) and deferent identity. Other times he ‘acts cute’. I did not, however, always think Carl or the other younger children were putting it on. It seemed to me that sometimes they just enjoyed acting as a child, and being able to explore their child identities which they so often had to suppress.59

So, there are disparities between street children’s collective and multiple self identities, and commitment to the subculture is often in the form of the performance of an expected guise which may contradict the individual needs of a child. As Visano (1990:158) reminds us: ‘Identity is a conferred status replete with descriptive qualities’. Within the Tshwane shared social identity, childlike behaviour is not part of the projected image required by the group, and the tough, masculine adult-type behaviour or ‘assumed adulthood’ among street children has been described as a ‘lost childhood’ (Williams, 1993: 835; see also Niewenhuyse, 1998). Ernew and Milne (1989), for example, reiterate the image of a street child in Peru with a knife in one hand and sucking his thumb on the other, and use the term ‘proto-adults’.56

These constructions are based on adult (and therefore dominant) beliefs in the ‘innocence’ of childhood, and although street children may have lost their ‘innocence’, they have not necessarily lost their ability to play or behave like a child. A child’s individual identity is a presented state that is within his or her control, and which can be assumed like a disguise. Often on the street, however, a childlike identity must be suppressed, and one more in keeping with the collective identity of the subculture needs to be assumed.

Street Life: Specialised Positions and Social Relations

The Tshwane subculture offers a child who has left home a new identity as a street kid. Once accepted into the group, newcomers are taught the ways of the street and how to earn money and survive by shoe shining, busking, selling, parking or petty theft in the local market. As Visano (1990:160) notes of street kids in Canada: ‘experienced kids orient neophytes to various techniques of survival. Street kids are essential for learning the ropes and for developing a repertoire of manipulative skills’. As they construct their new collective identities, children are expected to adopt appropriate attitudes, values and perspectives, in order to conform to established street etiquette, and to continue to be accepted as a member of the group. As Schurink (1993: 181) notes of newcomers to the street in South Africa:

Children had to acquire more than just surviving skills and techniques to perform the job. If newcomers (who had the lowest rank) wanted to raise their status to street child they had to acquire expertise and become street wise. Furthermore, the newcomer had to learn

59 Carl (12), for example, was always very interested in the children in my kamp, and wanted to come to my house so as he could meet and play games with them. It was at these times, when he discarded his street image, that I really perceived him as a child.

56 Aptekar (1988: 47) says that this incongruent image of the small child roaming the streets without supervision causes ‘cognitive dissonance’ in many adults. This discord, Aptekar says, results in adults often over emphasising one aspect of the street child’s character (eg. being cute), to make it psychologically easier to cope with conflicting messages.
to earn the respect of the group and be accepted as a professional member capable of understanding their language, sharing their norms and values.

It is the same in Indonesia. In trying to make sense of the values and hierarchies of the street child subculture, it is helpful to heed Thornton (1995:10) who draws on the work of Bourdieu (1991), and his work on 'cultural capital'.25 Thornton (1995:11) suggests that a similar system exists within a subculture, where 'subcultural capital' confers status on the owner 'in the eyes of the relevant beholder'. She further asserts that there are particular spaces in which these subcultural distinctions hold their sway. In this way, subcultural capital can be objectified (in fashion of belongings) or embodied, in 'being in the know', or being 'cool' (Thornton, 1995:10-11). Within a street child subculture, speaking the recognised slang, being street wise, and displaying the expected attitudes, are all forms of subcultural capital.

Once a boy joins the Tikyan he is constantly watched and appraised by the other children who discuss his behaviour, and his ability to survive on the street. A child is assessed for his attitude, independence, strength of character and apparent adaptability to the street. The assessment is particularly intense when a boy first joins a street kid community, but it is a constant process which ensures conformity within the group. As Scott (1990:130) has noted among 'subordinate groups', these 'pressures for conformity' are expressing the 'shared ideal of solidarity' to protect the 'collective interest of the group as they see it'. There is a gradual process which assimilates a child into the street scene, until his identity has been thoroughly transformed and socialised to be a 'street kid', and a full-fledged member of the Tikyan community.

For new street children the early period is marked by trial and error as they are gradually caught up in the expectations of the street kid community. To understand what these expected values and norms are it is useful to consider Blackman's (1995:24) model for the interpretation of youth group's practices, and what he refers to as the 'specialised positions' of a subculture. In respect of street children in Yogyakarta, these are the fundamental values which the Tikyan adhere to and live out in their daily lives. They include the attitudes, rules, norms, beliefs, and forms of communication within the group, and relationships with other people outside of the group.26

Social Solidarity: Enforcing a Collective Identity

Brake (1980:175) tells us that subcultures provide an alternative social reality which offer 'symbols of solidarity'. Similarly, despite or (more likely) because of, the fundamental value of individual survival, the shared ideal of solidaritas (solidarity) is highly valued within the Tikyan subculture. Street children consistently emphasise their feelings of solidaritas, and keluargaan (functioning as a family), and of their mutual desire to help one another (saling menolong).27 As Scott (1990:119) tells us: 'a resistant subculture is necessarily a product of mutuality'.

Linguistic Solidarity and 'Rituals of Obscenity'

A key aspect in the construction of a social identity and of gaining respect from the group is the learning of 'socially approved vocabularies' (Visano,1990). This includes an understanding and use of the Tikyan linguistic devices that are essential for belonging, and which are 'symbols of solidarity' (Brake, 1980:175). A distinctive part of the street-child subculture is their use of slang, which they call 'the happy language' (bahasa senang). This language is often dirty (horok), involving a lot of swearing and the use of words which tend to horrify mainstream society who consider them offensive. The children call their slang bahasa senang because they enjoy talking in a way which shocks and disgusts outsiders. In this way the children are violating dominant norms and displaying the 'hidden transcript' (see Scott, 1990:129-30). Their language can also be seen as a defiance of the Indonesian state which seeks to promote the use of the national language, bahasa Indonesia, as a

25 Bourdieu (1977) subverts Marx, and says it is not only economic capital but different forms of capital, cultural capital (knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions) and 'symbolic capital' which is accumulated through upbringing and education. This cultural capital confers social status, and is the linchpin in a system of distinction.

26 Please note that I am using a revised version of Blackman’s model as, in this chapter I join together two levels of the model, ‘specialised positions’ and ‘social relations of the face’, to become one.

27 The use of the word keluarga, by the children can also be interpreted as a parody of the state’s discourse of itself functioning as a big family, keluargaan, with a father, the president, at its head (see Muller, 1996:62). It is also another way the Giri children are able to ‘embellish, decorate and parody’ their position (see Heiberg, 1979:139). In a similar way, Max Gird, Director (or ‘father’) of the NGO Giri, told me that when Giri first started in the mid 1980s, the children parodied the military and bureaucratic structures of government, and organised themselves hierarchically within the NGO, with a ‘cabinet’, ‘commanders’ and a ‘president’. After a few months, however, they abandoned the idea, as there were too many ‘couples’ (pers.com, August, 1996). See also Murray (1993b:37), who noted similar subversion of the military/bureaucratic system among the pekot (‘rough girls’) in Jakarta.
method of creating a united nation out of a disparate society. Their conversations are peppered with words, such as bastard (bayangan), and dog (Anu), which they utter with glee, enjoying the fact that they can swear out loud in public.

Street kids also engage in verbal contests or ‘rituals of obscenity’ between themselves, with the exchange of rude words and insults of a more-or-less jocular type: ‘joining’ as Hammerz (1969:129) calls it. As Hammerz found among young males in Harlem, these verbal fights usually occur in a social context, and are definitely considered to be jokes. The contests can be recognized within the context of socialisation and identity formation, as the children learn the accepted forms of interaction with other street kids. They are often about the opponent’s family or sister (e.g. saying that they live in Shoping, which is considered cheap, or pointing to mentally ill people on the street and asking if that is the other’s mother). They also joke about another’s suspected sexuality; e.g. being a homo, benci, wadam (transsexual) or wadon (female). Peak (spastic) was also a favourite insult while I was there. There were times when these ‘rituals of obscenity’ transformed into fighting, although that was quite rare (see Hammerz, 1969:129-133).

The children also have their own vocabulary which relates to events, activities and objects which are regularly used by the children (such as left over food: huyen, and police operations: garukan). As Matheson Hooker (1995:289) has found, young Indonesians are increasingly finding themselves constrained in what they ‘want’ to say when using ‘standard’ Indonesian and Javanese. Instead, they are creating their own forms of language to express themselves in a way that is far from baik dan benar (correct and proper). These new languages reinforce a sense of group identity to youth groups such as ABGs (Anak Baru Gede) which are appearing in Jakarta. Similarly, the Tikay language creates a realm of autonomy and solidarity, reinforcing a sense of belonging, and excluding outsiders who cannot understand. Further, just as cockney slang is known as the secret language of thieves in London, people on Maliohor are their own street code that they call the ‘upside down language’ (bahasa walikan) which prevents infiltration by outsiders (see Hebdige, 1979:136). The word used by the older boys for house-breaking, for example, is jera- an anagram of the verb kerja, to work.

As well as slang, the children also use specific Indonesian words and acronyms as a form of parody and passive resistance. Pusing (‘dizzy’ or ‘confused’), and malas (‘can’t be bothered’ or ‘lazy’), for example, are often used as barriers of resistance against that which the children wish to ignore or reject. In Javanese society, outright refusal is considered rude, and so it is easier to avoid certain situations or to answer particular questions, by saying that you are feeling pusing or malas. The children themselves taught me to say I was feeling pusing, if I did not want to do something, or talk to someone. Once they told me about this means of linguistic resistance, I often noticed that they used these words to avoid doing or talking about things. The children also have different ways of expressing themselves to resist authority. If they are stopped by a policeman, for example, who asks them: ‘what’s your name?’, they will avoid answering the question, and display a passive resistance to his authority by saying: ‘Oh I’ve already eaten, thank you, Pak’, or ‘I live over there’, while all the time remaining polite and deferent (pers.com., Milimo, Sept.1996).

Street children also have linguistic techniques to resist people in positions of authority, such as the police and security guards, who are shown respect in public encounters but are ‘showered with abuse and given nicknames behind their backs’ (see Scott, 1990:130). They also parody institutional structures by creating new meanings for established acronyms. The children say that they have an SHI (the acronym for a law degree, Sarjana Hukum) but then say it stands for Susah Hidup (a difficult life). Similarly Surgawong kids say that they go to the SP school, which, they say stands for Sekolah Perempuan (the traffic light school). In

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28 Some of the children’s families do in fact live in Shoping, but they do not take offense at the derogatory way such people are talked about by the children, and instead laugh about it themselves.
addition, the Maliboro kids say they attend the UGM. Instead of the well known Universitas Gajah Mada in Yogyakarta, however, UGM stands for Universitas Gelandangan Malioboro (University of Malioboro Vagrants).

Tiksan also use words to resist their marginal status. For example, cuek (‘don’t care’ or ‘so what’) is a word one often hears, and which personifies their whole externalised attitude to life on the streets. This approach relates to how they deal with things that they usually have no control over such as the view mainstream society has of them. The cuek attitude indicates a rebellious approach to life, and the children take it on so as to be able to cope with, and resist, their marginalisation and alienation. Thus, the Tiksan language creates a realm of autonomy in which people outside of the subculture cannot interfere. Through their use of slang and other linguistic devices, the children are publicly expressing a sense of identity and affiliation with their friends, and a sense of group solidarity and conformity is subsequently enforced (see Scott 1990:129-30). Such creative use of language can be recognised as the erection of ‘symbolic barriers’ against society, and a subversion of Bahasa Indonesia which is baik dan benar (see Willis, 1976: 107).

**Loyalty**

One of the first things I learnt about the children before I met them was that: ‘they may be suspicious of you at first, but once you are accepted and get to know them they are incredibly loyal’ (Laine Berman, pers. comm., April, 1995). I found this to be very true. Loyalty is an important aspect of solidarity and, although the children are very suspicious of all strangers, once someone is included in their group there are no questions, just acceptance.

Plate 5.2: Friendship.

They will also protect one another, particularly against hostile groups. I witnessed this on a on the street, and number of occasions. Once, for example, a boy I know was stabbed in the arm and chest while he was defending a younger boy against a gang on Malioboro. The boy was a busker, and his guitar-playing arm was wounded so he was then unable to work. He was looked after by his friends who provided him with money, food and cigarettes, until he was well enough to work again. 30 Street children face all kinds of risks in their daily lives, and they cope with these through various street ties and egalitarian arrangements which are reinforced by ideals of solidarity (see Thompson, 1997:147).

Tiksan are expected to look out for each other. During focus group discussions about friendships, the children brought up the issue of solidarity, as well as helping one another (saljing menolong) and borrowing from one another (saljing pinjam), and watching out for one another (saljing memperhatikan). 31 The notion of saljing memperhatikan was especially strong within a few specific friendships between pairs of young boys of the same age (usually about nine or ten). These boys appeared to be inseparable and went everywhere together, and often walked and sat with their arms around each other.

Plate 5.3: Chums

They had the same aspirations, and travelled, worked, ate and slept together. If I saw one boy, I knew that the other was not far away. There were pairs of children like this at the Alun-Alun, the bus terminal, on Malioboro and under the

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30 This reminds me of another time when a young boy was very sick with a high fever. When I urged him to take the medicine I had bought him, he said he wasn’t worried about being sick, as his friends would look after him and give him food until he could work again.
31 I often saw the same shirt or pair of trousers on several different boys in one week, and objects also moved freely within the group. I discuss this within the concept of style, in Chapter 6.
Surgawong bridge. Felsman (1989: 75) refers to such friendships between two street boys in Colombia as ‘chronship’ (Plate 5.3). He notes that the boys are usually of the same physical size, which was the case in all instances I encountered. They also ‘ressemble each other in words and acts’ and are ‘an equivalent centre of self’ (Felsman, 1989:76).

Among most of the children, however, I noted a complex web of shifting alliances between different boys. Friends one week would be rivals the next. As I noted in the previous chapter, the children’s perceptions of people, including each other, vary greatly according to circumstances and time. They will, however, always insist on another in the face of danger:

> Today I met Arik (12) in the late afternoon. I asked him why he wasn’t wearing (backing), as it was rush hour, and usually the time that the boys go to the traffic lights and on the buses. He replied: ‘tadak punya seman’ (‘I don’t have a friend’), with whom to go. I asked (naively), that surely he could make more money if he were alone, as he wouldn’t have to share his earnings. He said he was too many (shy), to stick on his own. Besides, he said, if the Kamab (security forces) come it’s easier to escape with a friend, and if you can’t escape, at least when you are arrested you have a friend to go didalam (inside) with (Fieldnotes, July, 1997).”

Another night I was chatting with Coki (12), and asked him if he had ever been ‘diangkap’ (‘arrested’). He told me about the time he was pick-pocketing with some friends at the zoo in Surabaya, his home town. Coki explained that he and his friends had a ‘jantian’ (pact) between them, which was: ‘kalau satu diangkap, semua diangkap’, (‘if one is arrested then all are arrested’). This meant that they would have to give themselves up to the police if one of them was caught. Sure enough, one of the boys was spotted and caught by the police. Coki was a little way off and saw that he had the opportunity to run away, but he remembered the promise and stayed. He told me that at the time he had thought to himself: ‘lebih baik dipukul di dalam daripada dipukul di luar’ (‘better to be beaten up inside than outside’). By this he meant, better to be beaten up by the police than by his friends when they were released. He said this

would certainly have happened if he had not kept his promise and shown solidarity by giving himself up, and it would have been a much worse beating than the one he actually got from the police. Coki was taken to the police station and held for two days with his friends. During this time he was beaten by the police, but ‘not too badly’ he said. There was no doubt in his mind that he had made the right decision. Similarly, another boy told me that if someone is arrested they will not say who their friends are: ‘Because if he tells then he is going to get beaten twice. Once in the police station, and the second time by his friends when he’s released’ (pers. com. September, 1996).

Individual Survival: Looking after Number One

Street children provide each other with emotional and physical support, and share their daily struggles and find strength in each other (see Felsman 1989:76). They are rarely alone. Solidarity between the children is not, however, exclusive to the Tkyan, and is actually a characteristic among the poor in Indonesia, particularly the urban poor. Jelinek (1991:53), has written about similar networks within kampung communities in Jakarta:

> They emerged mainly because individuals lacked resources and needed to help one another in the struggle for daily survival. The networks were a defence against the harshness of urban life. At the same time, however, these networks were highly vulnerable and threatened by the very economic and social insecurity which had brought them into existence. Kampung dwellers were well aware that these ties were fragile and that a balance had to be maintained between giving and receiving. Such ties were reciprocal rather than redistributive. Ultimately each family had to support itself.

The ties are similarly fragile between the children, and just as the family is ultimately expected to support itself within the kampung social networks so is the individual street child. This is because, as Scott (1976) explains, these practices are far from altruistic but are instead a type of hidden insurance, and a symptom of need and survival. Sullivan (1992:76) has also observed this system among the kampung communities of Yogyakarta, and remarks that: ‘the apparent spontaneity and generosity of...transactions screen rapid calculations of past and future returns’.

Similarly, Rapke (1990:78), in his analysis of the psychology of reciprocity, explains that all acts of reciprocity are in reality aiming to serve personal needs with the expectation of fair return. Thus, reciprocal exchange and mutual assistance only ever
really exist where there are chronic conditions of insecurity. Security networks emerge because individuals lack resources, and need to help one another in the struggle for everyday survival. Thus, despite the feelings of solidarity, individual survival is essential, and a street child puts himself first before all others.\textsuperscript{23} As one child put it:

\textit{Everybody knows, in the street it is the law of the jungle. Those who are strong succeed. The street world appears friendly, but in fact it is threatening. The connections between us appear very close, but in fact we stab each other in the back. Which means that those who are weak will certainly lose} (Nurrianto (13) pers.com., Yogysakarta, September, 1996).

Reciprocity and solidarity networks between the children are, therefore, a defence against their marginalisation and the harshness of poverty, and are methods of individual survival. In fact, they can be seen as a symbolic economy between the children which is constantly appraised and balanced in subtle ways through a system of social contracts and returns (see also Lette, 1996). It is vital for his personal survival that a street child harnesses himself to this economy, and learns to fully partake in expected actions and performances of solidarity. The fundamental value for all people living on the street is individual survival. Survival involves acquiring social networks, avoiding trouble, earning money, and most important of all, finding food: ‘for us food is everything’ (Iwan, 15, pers.com., Feb. 1997). Another child explained:

\textit{What is most important in the street is to look for food, you can’t afford to be lazy, if you are lazy you are hungry, and you can’t eat... we could die of starvation, it’s one} (Cetak, 15, personal communication, February, 1997).

Working is therefore vital in the children’s lives, and a significant part of the socialisation process. This is because it is the bedrock of their fundamental value—survival. Work was described to me by an ex-street child as an essential characteristic of the street-kid subculture, ‘Budaya anak jalanan itu budaya kerja’ (‘the street children culture, is the work culture’), Milton, pers.com., September, 1996).\textsuperscript{24} As described in the last chapter, a child’s work is strongly connected to his feelings of self worth and confidence, and street children change their income-earning activities frequently in response to the shifting (temporal, seasonal and circumstantial) opportunities available to them. Street children take enormous pride in earning their own money, and in the fact that they are not dependent on anyone. Competition to earn money is part of their lifestyle. As well as the hierarchy related to different types of work there is also a hierarchy related to personal wealth. A street kid with the highest status is the one who has money in his pocket, a full stomach and cigarettes, as it is an indication that he is totally self-reliant. This hierarchy, of course, is transitory. Schurink (1993: 188) noted a similar pecking-order in South Africa:

\textit{The most powerful street children with the highest status were the ones (usually the older ones) who had the most money and who were able to keep their money in their pocket because they were not afraid anyone would take it from them. Smaller and less powerful street children had to bury their money in the ground when no one was around, give it to a trusted adult for safe keeping or even put it in a plastic bag and swallow it} (Original emphasis).

\textbf{Unique Attitudes: Anak Bebas}

Earning one’s own money is linked to the pervasive ideology of individualism which permeates all street-boy relations, and within this ideology one is expected to take tremendous pride in independence. As previously noted, a person who is pitied is viewed as being spoilt (manja) and not yet independent, and freedom and independence are the main reasons that the Titiyan feel superior to working street kids who still live at home, and are still reliant on their parents. Titiyan are fiercely independent and do not want to be pitied, and they will often react quite strongly or aggressively if anybody tries. One of the first things I was taught by the children was not to ever say I wanted to ‘help’ them. That was patronising and insulting, and denied them their own ability to cope. Within the Titiyan ethos, it is considered unacceptable behaviour to ‘ask for something from someone’ (‘minas sama orang lain’), or to ‘enjoy being spoilt’ (‘suka manja’). The children do, however, value attention (perhatian), and appreciate the fact that one cares about their welfare.

The values of freedom and independence were repeatedly cited when I asked children what it was they liked about living in the street. The most frequent replies were: ‘we can be free’ (‘bisa bebas’), ‘we can be independent’ (‘bisa mandiri’), ‘there aren’t
any rules’ (‘tidak ada aturan’), ‘we can go wherever we like’ (‘bisa pergi ke mana-mana’), and ‘we have much more freedom and independence than kampung children’. This discourse of individualism is constantly reinforced between the children, and is one way in which they can remind (or convince?) themselves that their life is better than that they have left behind. Max Didid, the director (or ‘father’) of the NGO Girli, said that he feels the children actively ‘glorify their lifestyle’ (mempamerkan hidupnya) in order to make it more acceptable to themselves (pers. comm. November, 1996). They do this by saying things like: ‘street kids can eat with a spoon, just like kampung children’; ‘street kids can eat in warungs all the time’; and ‘street kids don’t need to know a beautiful woman because they can have free sex (sex ber-bayar) or sex with prostitutes whenever they want’. As Hebdige (1979:139) puts it: subcultures have ways of embellishing, decorating, and parodying their position, in order to ‘rise above a subordinate position which was never of their choosing’. Below, for example, is a conversation I had with Made (15) when I asked about living on the street:

Made: ‘Di jalan tidak ada yang memanggil dan tidak ada yang menyuruh...tidak ada aturan’ (‘In the street there isn’t anyone to call you or order you, there are no rules’)

Hattie: ‘Kenapa kamu pergi dari rumah Made?’ (‘Why did you leave home Made?’)

Made: ‘Lebih enak di jalan’ (‘It’s better in the street’)

Hattie: ‘Enaknya mana?’ (‘How’s it better?’)

Made: ‘Ya... bisa bebas, tidak ada aturan seperti di rumah. Kalau malam bisa bebas di jalan...pergi ke mana-mana. Mandiri...bisa tidur di mana inginkan rasa mampus mengurus diri sendiri.’ (‘well... you can be free, there aren’t any rules as there are at home. If it’s night time you can be free in the street...go to wherever you want. Independent... you can sleep where ever you like and feel as though you are looking after yourself’). (Field notes, January, 1997).

Two days after this conversation the same boy was beaten up and evicted (diasir) from the group, for calling an Ibu warung (Food-stall woman), whom all the boys respected, a ‘Dog’ (Anu): a huge insult in Java. When I met him later, with a black eye, and asked him what had happened, he said it was no problem and ‘it’s usual between the children, they were just playing’. He then complained, however, that he had not been doing anything, and the other boys had just jumped him. He left town a few days later. The other boys told me what had really happened. Despite his claims of there being ‘no rules on the street’, therefore, Made fell foul of the Tiloyan street code which is monitored from within the group. The way he was treated is a clear example of how street boys patrol the invisible boundaries of the group, and punish someone who does not conform to their own rules. The Ibu warung was generally very kind to the boys, and often allowed them to have credit (buahang) at her stall. By insulting her in such a way, Made was seen to be jeopardising a valued contact, and potentially ‘damaging the collective interests of the group’ (see Scott, 1990:130). It was not an entirely selfish action on the part of the boys, for they have a firm belief in being good to people who are good to you. Boys would often say; ‘if someone is good to me, I am good to them, but if they are bad to me then I do the same’.

Be Happy

Also considered to be bad form and transgressing acceptable behaviour within the group is complaining too much, and displaying too much emotion (emosi) in public, and thus boring others with one’s troubles. One is always expected to be happy, and to put on a brave face. It is accepted by everyone that life on the street is hard, but a street child is expected to keep a happy face, not to cry if beaten, and not to talk about the violence on the street, as it is normal (biasa), and part of life. Humour is a vital component of the subculture, and is one avenue for releasing tension which the children regularly use. There is a saying among the street boys: ‘The happy life is the lifestyle on the street’ (‘Gaya senang ialah gaya hidup di jalan’). This also conforms to Javanese culture, where the individual is not supposed to express emotion or to upset others, as it creates embarrassment for all parties concerned. As a result, any problem, including extreme grief or stress, is frequently dealt with by giggling and smiling (Maldor, 1996:166-7). The boys often said, however, that although a street child will not cry at any of the dilemmas he has to face on the street, he will cry if he sees a dog being fed. At first I thought it was a bit of a cliché, but I now understand it as a way of reinforcing the group’s

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collective anger and frustration at the way they are treated by society who will feed even a dog before them.\(^\text{36}\)

**Quest for Adventure**

Part of a street child’s enjoyment is their ability to go and seek excitement and adventure. Children said that they enjoyed street life as it satisfied their curiosity (*rasa ingin tahu*), or their desire to look for adventure (*cari pengalaman*). As already mentioned, high mobility is a particular characteristic of the street boy’s lives. Street children in Java have a slogan for themselves: ‘*Anak Bebas*’, (*Free Children*) and, unlike *kampung* children (due to parental authority and the *kampung* surveillance system), they can roam the country looking for adventure. As well as enjoying their independence and looking for adventure (as discussed in the previous chapter), this behaviour is also related to the children’s fundamental value of survival: By keeping mobile, street children are able to avoid police raids, escape harsh treatment from other children or *preman*, and go to places where money is easier to earn. Consequently, the children travel a lot, and when they return to Yogyakarta they tell their stories about their adventures. These travel stories also gain them prestige and status within the group and circulate among the boys on their return. As in the West there is a certain amount of glamour attached to travel in Indonesian society. Smith (1994:41) asserts that this is because: ‘the rich express their freedom by their ability to overcome space while the poor are more likely to be trapped in space.’ Just as the children relish the fact that they can buy snacks, eat in *warung* and spend their money on extravagant things, their ability to travel, which poor people in the *kampung* are less able to do, also gives them feelings of pride and freedom.

**No Future**

It is part of street children’s lives to get up and leave on a whim, without any prior notice. This is necessary for their survival, and their desire for independence, but also comes from the unique attitudes that exist within the community related to instant gratification, spontaneity and a ‘don’t care’ (csek) attitude. The kids only think about their lives today, and react to every situation spontaneously as it presents itself. They are constantly thinking of the present and say that tomorrow they will think about tomorrow. Street children have very little concept of the future, and sometimes say ‘for street kids there is no future’. What they mean is there is no future in their thoughts, only today. They are also aware of the deeper meaning, and this statement does not lack irony. It is due to this attitude that street kids are not worried about getting sick, or contracting sexual diseases, and if they die tomorrow: ‘that’s life!’ (*ya sudah*!). One reason for this perspective is that the children are just trying to survive the day and do not know where they are going to sleep that night or where their next meal is coming from. Their lives are very unpredictable, and as the street can be so dangerous they have no idea what the next day will bring them. As Irawanto and others (1995b: 14) asserts: ‘there is a degree of resignation among street children that if they can survive the day that’s enough, because they do not know what is going to happen tomorrow’.

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\(^{36}\) This is especially galling for many Muslim street children who regard dogs as the lowest form of life.

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**Plate 5.4: Sharing**

Associated to this ‘live for today’ attitude, the children are also extravagant (*boros*) with the money they earn. By their own admission they earn more money than a *kampung* child, but will spend it on food, entertainment and each other straight away. This extravagant behaviour also stems from the fact that unless the children can find an adult who they trust, they have no where to keep money safe (*titip uang*).

If younger children in Yogyakarta cannot keep their money somewhere safe it is often forced from them by older children, or men on the street. As explained in Chapter 4,
in respect of the Alun-Alun boys, having money stolen by force by older boys and *preman* is something the younger children in Yogyakarta frequently complain about.\(^{37}\) They also lose money while they are sleeping, which is known as *ndis* in their own slang. It is quite usual for the children to steal from each other in this way. As a result of these dangers, I was often asked to look after money, and I noticed that a number of adults on the street (including stall owners, older *pengamen* and women) also performed this role. Being *boros* also stems from the ideal of collective ownership, and the *Tikyan* requirement for solidarity. If a child is known to have money and has already eaten, he is expected to share with other children. This conforms with the Javanese expectations of etiquette, where outward displays of generosity are always required (see Lette, 1996).

The obligation to share is also an example of group imposed social levelling, and how ‘internal differentiation in status or income that might diminish the community’s solidarity *vis-a-vis* the outside world’ is avoided (see Scott, 1990:132). For these reasons a child will prefer to spend the money he has earned on himself immediately, and enjoy it while it lasts, than have it taken from him, or have to give it away in a gesture of ‘solidarity’.

The conflict between individual survival and the social requirement for group solidarity is part of the *Tikyan* reality, and can be detected in numerous interactions. A further example, is how in Javanese society it is polite to say ‘eat’ (‘makan’), and offer food in a gesture to those around before you eat. It is the same within the *Tikyan* community, and often a child will invite others to *join* him in eating from his plate.\(^{38}\) Sometimes, however, if a boy is particularly hungry, he will make a display of spitting on the food, so no one will be very interested in taking him up on his offer. Similarly, during hard times when the children do not have enough money to buy food, they go to look for leftovers (*cari hoyen*), and it is common practice for the children to congregate and share between themselves what has been found. The children will always save the best bits for themselves (and their closest friend), and present the nasty leftovers (*bayan jelen*) to their other friends to share.

**Extended Families: Social Relations on the Street**

Solidarity and mutual co-operation are vital elements for individual survival in the street-kid subculture, and the children operate within a kind of family system (where individuals fight between themselves for dominance and self preservation).\(^{39}\) The children call the *Girli* NGO ‘The Big Family’ (Keluarga Besar) and, as a reaction to their exclusion from society and their inability to get a KTP (Identity card), the *Girli* children have devised an alternative: the *Girli* ‘Big Family’ Identity Card. This *Girli*-issued card assists the children in restoring their feelings of belonging and positive identity. The NGO *Girli* can therefore be understood as an assured place of support for the children and an important site of identification for many street kids in Yogyakarta (see Parr and Philo, 1995:214). To some extent it defines the identity of the street kids who visit them, as it is a familiar and safe place where they can retreat to and where they learn to internalise their identity as *anak jalanan* (street kid) and *anak Girli*.\(^{40}\)

In this way *Girli* is a central reference point for many individual *Tikyan* in Yogyakarta, although not all *Tikyan* are members of *Girli*. Some street kids identities are thus bound up in *Girli* or other NGOs in other cities, and they will immediately label themselves as *anak Girli*, *anak MMK*, *anak ISI*, etc. when you first meet them. Further, a child usually chooses to identify with an institution or NGO, even though he may have only visited it a few times and spends long periods of time away.\(^{41}\) Other children, like those at the bus terminal, in the Alun-Alun and at the train station, enjoy the fact they are free of NGO influence. These children have also adopted or reformed

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37 Bongkok (1995) often mentions how he was mugged (dikawas) while he was still small and working in Jakarta.

38 This is a significant gesture of friendship within the *Tikyan* community, and I was always very flustered if a child invited me to eat with him from his plate.

40 Anyone from a big family will not need any further explanation of the competition and rivalry which exists between siblings.

41 Cari, for example, called himself *anak MMK*, even though he spent the majority of his time in Yogyakarta with *Girli* kids. After only one visit of a couple of months at an NGO in Jakarta, *Amalia*, Heri Bongkok (1995:48) identified himself as *anak Amalia*. This can, however, also be seen as a way for the children to resist arrest. It is better for them to say that they belong to an institution if they are stopped by police, especially in Yogyakarta where *Girli* is well known.

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a kind of family system in their locales. This is common among street communities, and has also been observed by Arantes (1996:86) in Brazil:

A kind of intimacy inhabits the space at first sight invisible—of relations and affections of and in the street. The new relations in the public spaces assimilate (or reinterpret) the basic family network; the same basic terminology seems to structure new relations, possibly reterritorializing affections, conflicts and uprooted bonds. Street uncles and aunts, brothers, sisters, street fathers and mothers regardless of their age.

On Malioboro the children had various relationships which they referred to with these familial terms. Often an older boy treats a particular younger boy as his kid brother, by looking out for his welfare, giving him money and food, and calling him little brother (adik). In return the younger boy calls him his older brother (kakak). Usually in such cases there are no sexual ties. These relationships were recognized within the street kid community to such an extent that I was initially confused. This was because the boys would call another's somebody's 'little brother', and I thought the relationship was a blood one. Thus, for a while, I thought that most boys had left home and come on to the street with a brother.\(^{42}\)

Part of the children's survival strategy is not only maintaining the 'family' of Tikyan but also establishing relationships with anyone else they can find to care for them, and with whom they are able to establish a connection: either on the street or in mainstream society. For example, once I had gained the children's trust, I was also incorporated into this system. Older boys I was close to began to call me big sister (kak), and a number of younger boys called me their mummy (mami), or aunt (anant). These boys were referred to as my children, 'anakmu', by other boys, and in this way the relationship was recognized and reinforced within the group. The boys on Malioboro also had relationships with becak drivers, warung owners, buskers, guest house (losmen) owners, students, tourists, and shop security guards. Anyone in fact who was prepared to give affection and help them out a bit (Plate 5.5).\(^{43}\)

\(^{42}\) Although this is sometimes the case, for example, when children are escaping abusive parents together, it was not nearly as prevalent as I first thought. See also, Jellinek (1991:36), who notes a similar practice in the kampong of Jakarta, and says that in Indonesia it is actually rude not to include any neighbour or friend into this type of family-style relationship. Jellinek also writes that for a westerner the practice 'can create a false impression that all neighbours or acquaintances are related'.

\(^{43}\) I heard the story of one boy who 'chose' a family for himself, and every night he slept outside their house. He never begged them, but told them he was guarding their house for them, and smiled to them whenever they came and went. Eventually the family took pity on him, and asked him if he wanted a job. He accepted and moved in as their house boy. Most children, however, are not looking for this kind of relationship, but are simply looking for temporary care, attention, and food.

\(^{44}\) The ability to speak English was described to me as a model (capital or investment) by one of the street boys. This was because if you can speak English you can chat up the tourists and get more money and sell goods. Some younger boys learnt a few words so that they could shine shoes in Sosrowijayan area which was very lucrative if they could communicate with the tourists. It was not only for selling purposes that learning English was considered a good investment. Many of the adolescent boys wished to learn English so that they could meet a Western girl and woo and marry her, and thus be able to go 'there', i.e. abroad ('di sawa'). This was the dream of some of the boys on Malioboro, as well as other boys (and men) I met elsewhere in the city. It is not only a dream. I know of two young men (ex street boys) who now live in Holland and Melbourne, Australia. See Lente (1996) for an elaboration of the culture of 'guide' and guide-guide lur ('young entrepreneurs who derive their living and their entertainment from relationships with tourists'), and their western girlfriends in Yogyakarta.

\(^{45}\) This silver seller said to me that he was 'happy to be with him' ('senang sama dia'), and then added, 'but not like Robot', ('tapi bukan seperti Robot') referring to the man who had recently been arrested for killing 10 street boys after sexually abusing them.
who owned a lesem allowed him to take a wash (mandi) if there were no guests. Later on he was adopted by a family of Malieboro street musicians, and when I left Yogyakarta he was living with them.**

The Alun-Alun boys were well looked after by the women at the night warung, and the satey stall man, who let them sleep behind his stall at night. They also kept their few possessions and clothes with a woman who owns a warung in the Alun-Alun, and she sometimes gave them free bowls of food. These children also ate at the warung next to the traffic lights where they begged, and they had a good relationship with the Ibu who owned the stall. There was one Ibu who owned a night warung in the Alun-Alun, who particularly watched out for one boy, calling him ‘her’ boy. She gave him food and clothes, and he sometimes slept at her house. The Alun-Alun boys also had good relationships with the gay men and banci (transvestites) who hung out in the square at night, and the buskers (pengamen) who congregated at the food stalls. One of the pengamen told me of the time he had once paid for the boys to go to school, but after three days they dropped out, preferring life on the streets. ‘They don’t want to be helped, they just want to be free’, he told me. The boys themselves said they left the school because of too many rules and it was boring, and they wanted to be free and do as they wish.

The children at the bus terminal also had numerous relationships: with regular passengers, warung owners, pengamen, bus drivers, calo (passenger recruiters, many of whom are ex-street kids themselves), security guards, loket (ticket booth) owners and vendors. As one boy at the bus terminal said to me: ‘Di sini ada banyak orang yang mengasih dan melindungi kami’ (‘There’s lots of people who protect and take care of us here’). As well as urban niches in the city, particular relationships with different people on the street are also sources of security and identity for many children. The following story was written in Jejat by a boy, Topo (13), from Yogyakarta, who had been living on the streets since his parents split up when he was seven.** In the narrative he talks about going ‘home’, which is his grandmother’s

**I discuss Sorir’s life as a street child, and my relationship with him in Chapter 8.

**Topo (13) was unable to read or write so he dictated his story as another child or NGO worker typed it. This was quite common practice and I also wrote stories down for children who wanted to express themselves in Jejat but could not read or write.

... house where he was occasionally allowed to wash but not to sleep, as it was already overcrowded. I use the narrative to provide an insight into how the children move around the city, and interact with numerous people in one day:

While I was shoe-shining on Malieboroh I was invited by a man who tried to force me to have sex with him for 3,000 rps. I ran away and he chased me, but I straight away saw my brothers at the toilet and sat with them. The man pretended not to see me as he passed by. I slept there till morning. In the morning I went home, had a wash and ate and then went straight back to Malieboroh to shoe-shine. At the Ramai shop (a department store) I was told to leave by Satuiw [security guard] who said I couldn’t shoe-shine there, but his boss heard and got angry with him. I’ve got lots of friends at Ramai. I finished shoe-shining but that afternoon I shoe-shined again at a lesehan (food stall). I hardly slept and got 100 repul and then I went to Alamanda [one of the Girlil NGO open houses] and watched TV... Then I wanted to go to Malieboroh but didn’t have the money (for the bus), everyone as Girlil was stingy. I walked to Malieboroh, shined shoes and got 3,000 and saved it with Mas Ibu [a banker on Malieboroh who looks after the children for Girlil]. Later I was hungry and tried to get money from someone to eat, they’re all stingy with their money. “You’re shy, you get money and then save it all” they said. But Pendeke, the becak [pedicab] driver finally gave me some money. I slept in the tree near the toilet. Early in the morning I fell from the tree. Dewo and Syarif were sleeping under the tree and when I fell they were really surprised to be woken up by their little brother falling from the sky. I was taken by the boss of the toilet to Tukang [another Girlil house]. And I was asked “how did you fall, were you stoned on glue again?”... “yeah...then Mas Ibu came and was really surprised to see my bloody face. “What happened to you PO [name]?” “I fell”, “Rei from where?” “The tree”. Thank God I’m already better and I’m going straight to Malieboroh to shoe-shine again (Jejat, January, 1996:1).

Harmony and Solidarity on Malieboroh

So on the street very much depends on the maintenance of appropriate social relationships, and patronage is essential in social reproduction. The pengamen on Malieboroh are a ‘central link’ within this informal social network (von der Borch, 1988). According to von der Borch (1988), and Jansen (1995), it is the striving for traditional Javanese values, such as harmony and solidarity among the pengamen (especially the band the KPI, Kelompok Penyanyi Jalanan), which has determined the internal organisation and etiquette of the Malieboroh street

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**In 1983 the KPM (Kelompok Penyanyi Jalan Malieboho, The Street Singers Group of Malieboho, usually just called the KPI), was established in Yogyakarta. This group had a socially involved image, and encouraged the traditional Javanese values of polienness (sopan), mutual cooperation (goeng rayong, solidarity (solidaritas), and harmony (ruban) on Malieboho. In this way the KPI took the role of ‘producers’ for individual pengamen and the homeless kids. In particular, there was a strong relationship between the KPI and Girlil, the street kid NGO which was started around the same time by Mas Didid. For more information about the establishment of the KPI and Girlil, and the relationship between the two communities of musicians and street kids see von der Borch (1988) and Jansen (1995).
When I asked the street children on Malioboro why they thought that things had changed, they complained that the members of KPI no longer ‘cared’ about them, and no longer looked after them as they once did. Some children said this was because they now have wives and their own children to care about, and so no longer had time for them. As Lette (1996:202) tells us in respect of a group of local lads (cal-cah) in Yogyakarta: ‘the developing sexuality of group members is a risk to their solidarity’. This is also perceived to be the case among street children, who consider a member of their group getting married as the ‘loss’ of someone from the group. As a result of this lack of attention (perhatian), and role models to guide them, the children said that they get drunk more often and are more violent on the street.

It was felt by some people that the reasons for the perceptible changes on the street are to do with the widening gap between rich and poor, and the impacts of consumer capitalist development (Ernuto, pers.com, Oct,1996). The disparity was very evident to those living and working on the street, and made them frustrated about their own lives. Children on Malioboro tried to earn money, from tourists and rich people who went shopping in the shinny new mall or to the night club (which cost more to get in than they will earn in two days). These people were expensive clothes and ornate jewellery. They arrived in their ostentatious new cars, flashed large sums of money, and brandished gleaming lenses and video cameras. The Malioboro community had to constantly put up with having what they want, but cannot afford to look up to their very noses. Interestingly, Jellinek (1991:53-54) recorded similar complaints to the ones I heard on Malioboro, during her fieldwork in Jakarta in the 1980s:

Although kampong dwellers placed a high value on social harmony... they were convinced that social ties were breaking down with the passage of time, penetration of wealth and rapidity of change. They argued that twenty years earlier, when the society was less populous and more egalitarian, there was more mutual assistance and concern for one’s fellow man. Good neighbours made up for the lack of resources. The sudden and dramatic accumulation of wealth by some households meant that they tried to distance themselves from the rest to avoid dissipation of their wealth. There was a constant tension between the need to accumulate wealth for oneself and one’s own family and the tradition of sharing and exchanging with neighbours and kinsfolk.

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subcultures. As a result of these networks, the principal values on the street have been the desire to be courteous and polite, and to avoid open confrontation with authority and others in the community. These values have had a strong influence on the lives of the street children, and extend to all areas of their existence. This includes their relationships with their social environment (especially when they are working), and their position towards the authorities. The whole ideology was at its strongest and most successful in the 1980s which is when von der Borch (1988) wrote her study (Jansen, 1995).

Today, in the late 1990s, however, people feel that the principles of harmony and solidarity on Malioboro are losing their effect, and that they no longer have the influence they once did. Things have changed. The sense of community on Malioboro is deteriorating, and the KPI’s influence is now minimal. People complained that the current generation of youths and children, living and earning their money on Malioboro, no longer respect their elders, and that they are less focused on harmonious relations on the street. They said that the children take drugs and alcohol more than before, and that they are more involved in street violence and gangs. An older man told me he had been on Malioboro since 1969, and at that time there had been only one lesehan, outside the Beringharjo market. He said that by about 1975 there was an increase of lesehan and mobile food stalls (kaki lima) as the informal economy started to grow. Before that, he said, everyone knew each other on Malioboro and it was ‘more friendly’ (lebih akrab). He said that things really started to change around 1990, and that these days there are more and more strangers—including street musicians, criminals and troublemakers, whom no one knows—who have eroded the Malioboro climate of togetherness and solidarity. As a result, the ‘aturan kampung’ (rules of the street have declined’). By early 1997, concern in the community had got to the stage that there were regular meetings of KPI, and other influential Malioboro ‘leaders’, to discuss what could be done to make Malioboro how it used to be.

69 See also Jansen (1995) who, in her more recent study (to that of van der Borch) of the KPI/M, also notes the decline of the group’s influence on Malioboro.

70 This is around the same time as the ‘Green Revolution’ in Java, which resulted in more and more people migrating from the countryside to the cities. (Discussed in Chapter 2).
Moral values of street children

From my conversations with people on Malioboro, I understood that things were clearly not as they once had been on the main street. I also found, however, that in spite of the concern that traditional values have declined significantly, there was still a discernible street etiquette. While it is true that KPJ rarely came onto Malioboro, there were still older street boys, stall owners, and pengamen who watched over the children and reinforced the values of solidarity, harmony, and, to an extent, supervised their activities. Further, as is traditional in Javanese society, I noticed that the younger children did respect their elders on the street, and would listen to them, and do as they were told by them. They rarely argued with them or disagreed, even if they thought they were wrong. I also observed that the children did, in fact, share the moral values of the community, and that they were very polite when they were working and talking to strangers on the street.\(^{33}\) They had a good sense of community obligation, and many of them showed compassion for people who they felt were less well-off than themselves. A rule existed between themselves that they should never steal from the poor. If one of them does and is found out, then he will be beaten up by the others.\(^{34}\) I also saw children give money to beggars, particularly older people, and on a couple of occasions when I went into the countryside with children they would comment on how sorry they felt for the village people as they were so poor. Once I was on a train going to Jakarta with Topo (13), who was notorious for fighting and being drunk on the street. He was staring out the window, and as we passed some flooded fields he sighed and said: ‘Kasihan! Bagaimana mereka akan makan?’ (‘Poor people! How are they going to eat?’).

Contrary to the idea that all the children were violent deviants, with no sense of moral values, I observed that the children did have a good sense of community obligation, and respect for their elders. Further, the older boys and young men on the street would

often discipline the younger children if they felt that they were out of line. They would tell them off for being too drunk or for fighting; send them on errands (to carry drugs or buy cigarettes, alcohol, or food); and lecture them in the laws of the street, including the need for solidarity, harmony and politeness. Gappy (23), for example, a member of Giril, since he was seven, was often reminding younger kids of the street laws:

Tonight on Malioboro a fight started between Heru and Sori (two shoe-shine boys) in the middle of the road. It was almost immediately broken up by some older boys, including Gappy, a pengamen and ex-street kid himself. The kids were hauled up onto the pavement and told to sit. Gappy then demanded that they explain in turn what had happened. The boys started to cry and look indignant but explained and then became silent and listened to Gappy talk. He made them lock each other in the eye and shake hands, and then proceeded to lecture them. He said that it was important to maintain rukun (harmony), and solidaritas (solidarity) on the street. He made his point by continuously using and stressing the word Alto: “We are all in all this together, like brothers, and we must not fight each other. We are friends. Don’t fight each other. If we have a problem with one another then it’s up to us to discuss it, and talk about it- not fight” (Field notes, 17\(^{th}\) February 1997).

Men on the street are not anonymous individuals for the younger boys. They keep a watchful eye on their behaviour, and tell them if they feel they are playing dangerously or going too far. As Haus (1969:125) noted of a similar system among an urban community in Harlem: ‘Such action may lead the boys to experience the men as significant others and perhaps role models’. The children on Malioboro, at the Alun-Alun, and at the bus terminal all look up to the men who they see every day. This is because they see that these men have a detectable share of power and success on the street which gives them status and respect. When I asked young children what they aspired to be when they were older, many of the younger boys used men on the street as their example: ‘I want to be a pengamen’; ‘I want to sell cigarettes and water on the buses’; ‘I want to be a bus driver’; ‘I want to be a bus conductor’; ‘I want to be a train driver’.

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\(^{33}\) See also Swart (1990:6) who, in her study of street children in Hillbrow, South Africa, recorded a number of incidents of street children’s sense of community values.

\(^{34}\) There was a collective outcry among the children when a woman who lived next to the Giril open house had a large amount of money stolen from her house. This woman was always very good to the children, and cooked them cheap meals in her male-shift working. When the money was stolen the boys were furious and vowed to find out who had done it. Eventually one boy was severely beaten up and disavowed (evicted) from Yogyakarta. He continued to insist his innocence, but the other boys were certain it was him.

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Violence and Fighting

[The aim is to maintain honour and reputation whilst escaping intimidation and 'being picked on'. To achieve this you have to grapple with the complexities of 'hardness' in social performance... 'Hardness' can be both an inner and an outer quality. It is also related directly to masculinity, its codes and public honours (Willis, 1990b: 46).

Street children participate intensely and extensively in the male social life on the street. The 'hardness', Willis notes above within subcultures in Britain, is also very much a part of the street kid social world and is linked to the masculine expectations of the group. This is because the need to maintain a masculine reputation and a 'hard' image is vital for gaining status within the Tekyn subculture, and for ensuring individual survival. Despite the intense value of solidarity in the group the children often fight over various events, particularly when they are establishing themselves a place in the group hierarchy. As Scott (1990:131) asserts:

Solidarity among subordinates, if it is achieved at all, is... achieved only by means of a degree of conflict. Certain forms of social strife, far from constituting evidence of divisiveness and weakness, may well be the signs of active, aggressive social surveillance that preserves unity.

I noticed four different types of fighting between the children: symbolic or 'play' fighting; fighting between individuals in the group (usually to assert status); group 'discipline' over another boy; and fighting against the enemy (either individually or in a group).

Play fighting is a way of releasing aggression within the group, and I observed two different types. The first type is generally 'kung-fu' style, and a form of energetic fun, although it can be quite dangerous. One night on Maliboro, a boy kicked high and knocked another boy's teeth out, which then stuck in his foot. There was blood everywhere, but no animosity as it had been just joking around (sumo bersenda). The other type of play fighting is the verbal contests or 'rituals of obscenity' which I discussed earlier in context of the Tekyn use of slang (Hannerz, 1969: 129).

The boys will often deal with internal conflict by talking through problems between themselves, but there are times when they resort to physical violence. As Willis says

(1990:43): 'there are moments when no words will do but actions speak loud. Violence can have a symbolic as well as a physical part to play in social interaction'. Internal fighting is generally with 'empty hands' (tangan kosong), meaning without weapons. It generally involves wrestling and punching, and the worst casualties are usually just bloody noses and black eyes. The children will also fight over money or possessions or to settle a dispute. Group discipline is usually meted out collectively on a child who is believed to have broken the group rules. Kids who are beaten up for this reason usually leave town ashamed, but if the offence was not too serious they will come back after a few weeks or months. Boys will also fight in order to assert power and status over another child. As discussed earlier, this can happen as a form of initiation when a new child arrives on the street, but it also occurs between two boys of the same age who are struggling for a position in the overall hierarchy of the group. Such a fight will usually start as a conflict over something small or trivial as, for example, who will play a group-owned guitar while busking.

Although internal rivalry does exist within the group if an outside force becomes a threat (either from the state or society) the ranks will close and the danger is dealt with collectively. It is not only state authorities who represent a threat, the children say that there are lots of enemies (mabah) on the streets, many of whom are involved in 'mafia' gangs, as they call them. If the children are fighting with enemies on the street, it is not with tangan kosong but with weapons, usually knives. Carrying a knife is a criminal offence in Indonesia, although among the street children it is seen as vital for self protection, as well as a sign of being tough. Many of the older boys owned their own pocket or flick knives, of which they were extremely proud, and kept these concealed in their boots or strapped to their leg. If they do not own a knife and find themselves in a fight, then they will usually 'borrow' a cooking knife from a lesahan or warung. A woman who owned a lesahan near to the toilet on Maliboro,

... discussing the behaviour of one of the boys, a long-standing member of the group. They were telling him that his attitude to the other children was unacceptable and that he had to learn to be more friendly and less aggressive. I was struck by the maturity of this discussion between eleven and twelve-year olds, and had the thought that 'normal' children in mainstream society would be far less likely to go to these lengths of conflict resolution. They would be more likely to simply ostracise a child if they did not like his behaviour.

As Mide found out when he insulted the Rice warung.

There is a tradition of knife fighting on the streets between gang in Yogyakarta, and one occasionally hears of people being killed in such fights. The knives used in these fights are not the usual kitchen knives, but long curved blades known as Claris.
told me that she does not try to stop the boys taking a knife if a fight starts. She just tries to keep out of the way, and hopes there is not too much trouble or disturbance. The motivation to fight is often due to the ‘culture of revenge’ (budaya membalas dendam), which exists on the street, and discussed in the previous chapter. Street fights are sometimes spontaneous, although they are also arranged between the different factions. Rigid distinctions are made between different types of fighting, and arranged fights have a time and a place, pre-arranged with spectators (as with the type I mentioned in the previous chapter).

One night on Malioboro, a young street boy was very drunk and grabbed a knife from a stall and tried to stab someone from another street gang. The incident created quite a scene as people gathered to watch the commotion which ensued. The military arrived in minutes. They came running to the toilet area, and proceeded to kick and beat those children they could catch. The boy who started the furor was ordered to run away by older boys while they diverted the soldiers’ attention. They did this with ‘feigned ignorance’ and asking what it was they were looking for, and politely asking how they could help (see Scott, 1990:135). This behaviour to protect a friend can be seen as a type of resistance in the face of authority. I was at the toilet at the time, and was quickly asked by the boys to also say that I did not know anything. After the incident, however, the older men, mostly pengamen on Malioboro, complained that the street kids had gone too far and that they were often very drunk, violent, and out-of-control. They said that the children no longer had respect, and that they were creating a bad image for the rest of the people on the street.

In spite of the increased complaints about violence on the streets in Yogyakarta, and as discussed in Chapter 3, most children told me that it was more relaxed (lebih santai) in Yogyakarta than in other cities. They said that even though the money was better in Jakarta, and they could earn Rps 15,000–20,000 a day busking on the streets, there are ‘banyak pemang yang mengompas anak kecil’ (‘lots of thugs who force money off little kids’). The younger boys also said that they were often ‘beaten up by mafia’ in Jakarta, and that life there was harder (lebih keras). One boy told me of once when he was in the Ramhutan market his rubber thongs (flip-flops) were forced from his feet. As he did not have anyone to protect him he had to hand them over. If he had been on Malioboro, he said, it would not have happened, as his friends would have helped him membalas dendam. It seemed to me that there is less solidarity living on the streets in Jakarta, and a more ‘dog-eat-dog’ attitude prevails there.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered a child’s life on the street as a career, and has discussed how this career may be understood as mental and physical freedom from numerous negative experiences, and as a solution to a child’s personal troubles and ‘psychic alienation’ (see Bondi, 1993:85). The analysis reveals how through the various stages of assimilation to street life, street kids in Yogyakarta have been able to construct alternative identities and collective strategies between themselves as a form of resistance. The strategies provide a matrix within which street children can regain feelings of belonging and self worth, contest their marginalisation, and: ‘counteract the overload of identities attributed to them’ by the state and mainstream society (Cusimano, 1997:6).

In order to follow a successful career street children must be socialised to a series of norms, ideals, and group processes, and a distinct code of ethics which exist within the street-kid community and which control behaviour on the streets. These values include principles of solidarity, individual survival, freedom and independence, social hierarchies, the understanding of slang and street codes, and some unique attitudes to life on the street. The street children’s values and ethics can be recognised as their ‘hidden transcript’ and their ‘articulated feelings of anger’ at the way they have been consistently ignored and alienated from society and the ‘public transcript’ (see Scott, 1990:119). The street children’s social world is therefore a subculture with particular patterns of behaviour, and a discernible system of values and beliefs: the Tikun of Yogyakarta. These values and beliefs make up a distinctive ideology which is the ‘social property’ of the Tikun group, and which is disciplined by the children’s ‘shared experiences and power relations’ within that group (Scott, 1990:119). The

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59 See Scott (1990:132-3) who discusses how subordinates use ‘stereotypical deference’ and ignorance to ‘stutter elites and the state’.
60 See Bongkol (1995) who has numerous stories of being dikompas by older boys in Jakarta.
Tikyan ideology is essential in order to ensure continued participation in the subculture, and to give strength to the feelings of solidarity which characterise and underpin their daily lives.

The Tikyan’s actions, motivations and identities are complex and diverse, and the children have to negotiate their identities and adapt their activities and strategies in response to their changing environments. In their everyday lives street kids operate within a kind of family system which embodies other groups on the street, including ex-street kids, stall owners and elder pengamen. They therefore encounter an abundance of social spaces and experiences (other street kids, warung owners, people eating at restaurants or riding on buses, NGO workers, police, security guards, researchers, me), which influence their identities in different ways. As a result of these ‘fractured identities’ (on individual and group scales), blended with diverse geographies, there are sometimes contradictions between and within their various identities (see Parr and Philo, 1995:210). Such ‘interweaving of identities, space and place’ means that at different times the children will act on the fundamental value for individual survival, but at other times they must rely on the interdependence and solidarity within the Tikyan social group (see Parr and Philo, 1995: 213). This is because peer support is directly tied to personal survival. Such conflicts and contradictions between shifting identities, personal survival and the social requirement for group solidarity is part of the Tikyan reality.

As street children reach adolescence they find street life even tougher due to the changing perceptions of them by society. It is at this stage in their ‘career’, that street children start increasingly to resent the structural and economic restrictions placed upon them by the state and dominant society. As a result the children’s subculture further ‘distances the messages from the mass society which would wreck the reconstituted identity structure’ (see Breakwell, 1986:141). One way this is done is by positively reinforcing street life as the best way to live, by embellishing their lifetimes (menperindah hidupnya), and by scorning (menjelekkan) ordinary life. In the following chapter I continue to examine the Tikyan subculture and reflect on how as they get older street kids increasingly violate dominant norms, and reinforce their collective identity through the persistent assertion that ‘it’s great in the street’ (‘enak di jalan’).
Adolescence as a 'Career Crisis'

The transformation of street children's perceptions of their lives as they reach adolescence has been noted by a number of people working with them in the West, as well as in developing countries (see Aptekar 1988, Felsman, 1989; Boyd and Holden, 1991; Visano, 1990). James (1986:155) in her examination of youth in Britain discusses how being an adolescent is in itself an incredibly difficult social experience for a child, as s/he enters a 'nothing' stage when s/he is neither an adult or a child and 'is lost in between, belonging nowhere, being no one' (see also Sibley, 1995a:34). This experience is particularly intense for a street child who has developed and cultivated his identity on the street, only to find that as he gets older the goal posts are being moved.

In Yogyakarta I also observed that the street children's perceptions of themselves and their lives changed as they got older (or more specifically when they reached puberty and began to physically look older). Younger children appeared to genuinely like being on the street, but as they reached adolescence, they became more disenchanted, saying that they were bored (bosan) with street life. One reason for this is because their adolescent appearance influences how society perceives them, and consequently impacts on their daily lives, and how much money they earn. As Soleh (17) put it to me: 'young kids really don't care' ('anak kecil benar benar cuek'), but as they 'get bigger' ('mulai besar'), they simultaneously 'start to be ashamed' ('mulai malu') of their situation, their income-earning activities, and sleeping on the street. He said that before he didn't care what society thought, but now he was malu about sleeping on the street. While he was small people thought he was lucu (cute), and felt sorry for him, and often gave him money and food.

Now he is older people are more 'suspicious' (curiga) and alarmed by his presence. They see him as a preman and a threat. Aptekar (1988:47) has noted the same phenomenon among street kids in Colombia:

2 The fact that the old children no longer place value on their work is also to do with the pervasive growth of capitalism, corruption and globalisation in Indonesia. As a result of the New Order style of economic development, the children see lifestyles and opportunities around them (and on the TV and in the movies) which are not available to them. They see the informal sector as inferior to such a modern lifestyle, and their jobs as backward and demeaning. Patrick Guiness noted a similar attitude to the informal sector among youth in a kampung in Yogyakarta, where he did his research (1980), and which he revisited recently (1999). He said that for young men were unemployed and spent most of their days idle in the kampung, hanging out, drinking and taking drugs. One day they stopped him and asked him if he could help them find work. He suggested that they do what their parents had done (when he had conducted research there), and get involved in the informal sector, selling food or goods on the street. They were horrified and said that there was no way they were going to do work like that. What they were asking him for were connections (kontak) into a business or enterprise in which they could get involved (Guiness, pers.com. August, 1997).

As they got older, children I spoke with talked about how their present jobs of shoe-shining, scavenging (malang), or other informal sector jobs were of no value. This, I believe, is because mainstream society gives them no value. I also heard older street musicians (pengamen) say that they were embarrassed of busking (ngamen), as it was no better than begging. They said they wanted a honest (halal) job. Similarly, and as noted in Chapter 4, shoe-shining is a highly lucrative job, but it goes against the street code of ethics for older street children to beg or shine shoes. As Aptekar (1988) noted in Colombia, it is also made harder due to society's reaction to older street boys. This can be seen in the lament of one boy who is having trouble shifting his identity from cute shoe-shine boy to adolescent/ young adult:

1 Perhaps due to malnutrition, some children still looked very young (ten or eleven) even when they were sixteen. Usually, however, it was at about the age of fourteen or fifteen that children began to reach puberty and to subsequently feel malu about their occupation.

2

3 Supri is now about fifteen and has been on the streets since he was seven. He also complained to me that as he is no longer cute (lucu) that it is harder to earn money these days, and that he cannot work in the Storoewijayan area anymore because the tourists no longer find his appearance appealing.

As they got older, children I spoke with talked about how their present jobs of shoe-shining, scavenging (malang), or other informal sector jobs were of no value. This, I believe, is because mainstream society gives them no value. I also heard older street musicians (pengamen) say that they were embarrassed of busking (ngamen), as it was no better than begging. They said they wanted a honest (halal) job. Similarly, and as noted in Chapter 4, shoe-shining is a highly lucrative job, but it goes against the street code of ethics for older street children to beg or shine shoes. As Aptekar (1988) noted in Colombia, it is also made harder due to society's reaction to older street boys. This can be seen in the lament of one boy who is having trouble shifting his identity from cute shoe-shine boy to adolescent/ young adult:

I want to be a shoe shiner but I am too big. People don't like me any more and prefer smaller boys to shine their shoes. Now I am quite big and everything feels bitter, it's so difficult. I want to go back home, but I'm afraid of my mother and that she will beat me again (Supri, Jejak, February, 1996).

Visano (1990:155) describes adolescence as a time in their lives when street children in North America undergo a 'career crisis'. It is when they have to confront 'reality shocks' about their way of life, and 'begin to experience a sense of estrangement and frustration with their nomadic existence [as] the child's idealised image of the street clashes with their struggle for survival' (Visano, 1990:156).

This, as Supri mentions above, is when street children often consider returning to mainstream society and/or going home. Typically, Visano says, this will happen after a child has been on the street for a year, although this is not the case in
Indonesia where children can live for many years on the street before they become old enough to start feeling *malu* about their situation. The dilemma that they do face, however, which is different to street kids in the West, is their problem of not being accepted or established in the community due to their inability to obtain an identity card.\(^4\) Further, having experienced the freedom of living and working on the streets they are often unable to endure the strict discipline and time-keeping of home life, or formal sector employment (see also Miller, 1996: 39). Abandonment of the street is difficult, or even impossible for children who have been on the street a long time, as it has become a central part of their lives, and is the way of life with which they are most familiar.\(^5\)

*Homeless Not Helpless*

Once street children have decided, or have no option but to stay on the street, they rationalise it to themselves and each other via their ‘socially approved vocabularies’ (Visano, 1990:145). Peer group communication is particularly important in street boy’s lives, and due to their own requirements for personal survival the children do not want to break out of that connection. Thus, to cope with their negative social environment, the *Tikyan* increasingly ignore and distance themselves from the criticisms they receive from society by reinforcing communication and interaction with one another. They do this by drawing on their numerous values and ideologies, including solidarity, and by creating and dispersing their own messages to counteract those from the mainstream. In this way the children reinforce their loyalty to one another and immerse themselves in the subculture still further:

> Odd bits and pieces, phrases uttered through the body, the intimacy of gestures and activities raise and construct the symbolic walls of homes that may be, at first sight, invisible but they are nevertheless effective...The fragile nature of such symbolic borders might be interpreted as a necessary component of a way of life where crossing boundaries is experienced as a pleasurable and playful challenge, besides the fact of being justified as necessary for survival (Arantes, 1990: 86-88).

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\(^4\) One way of returning to mainstream society for street children in Indonesia is to find work in the formal sector, in a factory or a shop, but that requires a KTP (an identity card).

\(^5\) Some children do try to ‘go straight’ and go home, but they often feel compelled to leave for the streets again, disenchanted with what conventional life has to offer. This issue is discussed in Chapter 8.

As they get older and their alienation intensifies, the *Tikyan* characteristics and messages develop and multiply between themselves until the children have a whole array of ‘symbolic borders’ to erect against mainstream society. These barriers are a response to their experience of exclusion, and a form of ‘symbolic defiance’ and subversion of the outside world which prohibits them from participating in what it has to offer (see James, 1986: 156; Scott, 1990:196). The barriers are also ways in which the kids are able to structure ‘their own liminality’, by reinforcing their difference, strengthening their boundaries, and producing a collective identity and sense of belonging (see James, 1986:158). These external identifying characteristics can be seen as the *Tikyan* specific ‘signature’ or ‘subcultural capital’, with which the children reproduce feelings of solidarity, and thus ensure continued participation in the social group (Blackman, 1995:52; Thornton, 1996:10).

**Subversive Bodily Acts**

Amidst an almost universal feeling of powerlessness to ‘change the world’, individuals are changing what they do have power over: *their own bodies*. That shadowy zone between the physical and the psychic is being probed for whatever insight and freedom may be claimed. By giving visible bodily expression to unknown desires and latent obsessions welling up from within, individuals can provoke change— however inexplicably— in their external world of the social, besides freeing up a creative part of themselves, some part of their essence (Vale and Juno 1989:4).\(^6\)

Street kids in Yogyakarta use their primary site of identity— their own bodies— as vehicles for self expression and subversion, and as surfaces on which they can express their difference and assert their defiance to state and society (see Hebdige, 1979:3). By looking and acting differently they are deliberately shocking and rejecting the dominant culture and subverting mainstream norms. In this way they represent a challenge to the state and its principle of conformity and a contradiction to the New Order myth of unity.

Bodily style is viewed as an important aspect of subcultures by subculture theorists. Hebdige (1979:132) interprets subculture as a form of resistance ‘in which experienced contradictions and objections to ruling ideology are obliquely
represented in style'. I see the Tikyan subculture’s appropriation of bodily styles as a response to their experiences of social and spatial exclusion, and as a way for street children to construct and reinforce their difference, and express their inner creativity. As James (1986:169) tells us of adolescents in Britain: ‘Set aside from society they themselves set themselves further apart through using their bodies as a means of symbolic expression of and about their adolescent condition.’ Belonging to the Tikyan group is also about conforming to a particular bodily style. As Willis (1977:10) asserts, the body is the ‘source of productive and communicative activity’, and is a crucial site of knowledge for a community as it assists in producing meanings for the collective group. In this way the children use their own bodies as surfaces on which they ‘display their own codes’ (Hebdige, 1979: 101).

Part of the Tikyan internal surveillance involves a collective monitoring of the body, and whether individual members are able (and willing) to grasp and display the appropriate signs of a shared identity. Body conformity includes the requirement to adhere to a set of norms of the physical body and acceptable bodily styles and aesthetics (dress and body decoration). Part of bodily style also includes testing the boundaries of the physical body, through the consumption of forbidden substances (drugs and alcohol), and the demonstration of the correct bodily presence (through music, dance, performance and sexual prowess). Obligatory displays of masculinity are a prerequisite in all these bodily performances, and an essential element of the Tikyan signature and bodily style.

Rebel, Rebel: Masculine Style

As the children get older, exhibitions of masculinity become a vital aspect of the subculture’s solidarity. As explained in Chapter 4, the street requires boys to be even tougher than is usually expected of a Javanese male, particularly if the boy has not yet reached puberty. This is because it is essential to have a masculine and hard image on the street as it creates respect and thus gains status within the subculture. Street boys, therefore, have to consistently convince each other of their toughness and independency in order to remain accepted as a member in the group. Lette (1996:201), in her thesis of about a community of lads (cah-cah) and guides in Yogyakarta, lists the ideal features of masculinity which exist on the street in Yogyakarta. These are: honour (a preparedness to defend one’s position or to apologise if wrong); bravery; control of one’s emotions; the ability to handle liquor; and knowledge of the group’s shared moral imperatives. These desired masculine characteristics are the same within the normative structure of the Tikyan.

Street boys regularly participate in aggressive displays of masculinity between themselves, and consistently negotiate definitions of masculinity by discussing events that other boys have had a role in, and by commenting on their performance (see Lette, 1996: 201). The constant surveillance and monitoring of each other’s masculinity is part of the overall attempt to maintain conformity within the Tikyan group. As James (1986:162) found among youth in Britain, assertive displays of masculinity are vital in order to remain accepted by a male group:

‘If they do not swear and relace ribald tales, if they do not participate in feats of physical endurance, dare or feats, if they fail to join in... or smoke or drink they cannot be “one of the lads” and to be “one of the lads” means belonging.’

As already noted, through the gains from working life, money earned by the street children is invested in statements about self image, in order to define one’s identity and raise self esteem (see also Nieuwenhuys, 1998:275). Money is spent by the children for the overt consumption of consumer goods which are supplied by capitalism. This consumption is a status symbol within the Tikyan subculture. Consequently, displays of masculinity among street kids are often in the form of excess consumption. Even though their bodies are small, most street children adopt a form of ‘pseudo maturity’ as a sign of rebellion against the expectations of society. They do this by acquiring and displaying ‘adult male working class habits’ such as smoking (which they do ostentatiously if people are watching), getting drunk (teker), taking pills (penggil), gambling (judi), and indulging in free-sex (sex bebar) (see Willis, 1977:19). Anything, in fact that is considered to be inappropriate behaviour for a young boy, and which makes them feel ‘grown up’ and masculine.

7 Almost all boys smoked cigarettes and, as with other consumer items, owning and smoking cigarettes is a status symbol among street children and considered to be an adult-type performance. The more expensive the brand the better, and Western brands hold a particularly high status within the group. Most children I knew smoked, even if it was only sporadically.
Street boys and girls use their money to buy cigarettes, snacks, alcohol and pills, and also spend it on gambling, playing video games (main ding-dong), main billiard (playing pool), and going to the movies (nonton) (Plate 6.1).

Their favourite films include action, Sex, Cina, and India (which is linked to the popularity of Dangdut music). Street boy's leisure activities also include looking for and having sex with street girls, prostitutes or transvestites (cairi dan main rendan, niyang or benci). In addition to providing enjoyment, most of these activities also serve a variety of the children's psychological and physical needs. The cinemas and video-game halls, for example, provide escapism and respite from the street, and give the children somewhere to feel safe and sleep.

Plate 6.1: Playing Pool (Main Billiard)

These activities also provide protection from the external elements, especially when it is the rainy season and it is cold and raining at night. For these reasons the children especially like to go to the midnight movie shows after they have finished working. Gambling (main judi) is also very popular in the subculture, although it is illegal and they have to do it in hidden places. The fact that it is illegal (dilarang), however, also adds to the excitement and adventure of the pastime. As one long-term street kid NGOs worker said to me:

If something is dilarang, it is more likely that they will do it. They do whatever deviates from mainstream ways of dressing and behaving. From gambling to engaging in 'free sex'. This is part of their 'rebel identity' ('identitas pembangkulan') (Fieldnotes, September 1996).

'It feels fantastic!' ('Rasanya asyik'), said one boy when I asked him what the attraction was of gambling. The children enjoy gambling because it requires risk-taking, skill and concentration, and if they win their self-esteem and feelings of pride are raised (see also Felsman, 1989:70). It also gives them the opportunity to earn more money. With his winnings a boy can indulge in spectacular consumption, by eating, smoking, drinking, taking pills, and going to the movies and prostitutes. So, he gains a place at the top of the hierarchy—until the next game.

Sex Bebas: 'Free' Sex

Enjoying 'free-sex' (sex bebas) is one of the main aspects of street life which the children frequently cite as reasons for it being 'great in the street' ('enak di jalan'). Sexual activity, even for young street children, is an intrinsic part of street life, and having sex is an important part of the street kids' constructions of masculinity and dominance in the group. For street children sex is as natural as shoe-shining, going to the cinema, playing video games and taking drugs, and they engage in an array of sexual activities and identities with a diverse range of motives.

When the children arrive on the street they often first learn about sex from the older boys and from films and videos.8 As discussed in the previous chapter, sexual favours are often performed between street boys as a form of initiation into the group, and the children often have sex between themselves through mutual consent, as it fulfills a need for comfort and protection, and it also releases sexual desire or frustration (harat). Street boys do not, however, only have sex with their peers. As they get older and approach adolescence they engage in survival sex, comfort sex, casual sex and romantic relationships, with multiple partners from both within and outside the street world. This is in order to fulfill multiple needs: to assert their virility and dominance in the group; to relieve sexual frustration; to earn money or protection; and to find affection, pleasure, and solidarity.

8 This is obviously not the case for children who have been sexually abused at home, which is one of the reasons that they left.
Sex with Females

In contrast to sex with each other or with transvestites (bancl), sex with women is seen as adult behaviour and 'real sex' by the street kids, and is important in distinguishing one from the 'boys'. Having sex with prostitutes (main niyang) raises self-esteem for street boys, as it is a symbol of masculinity, adulthood and affluence. Thus, as street boys get older they start to have sex more often with prostitutes, in order to assert their masculinity within the group. As discussed in Chapter 4, the boys from the Alun-Alun and Malioboro often visit Gerbong for sex at night-time. They also sometimes have sex with prostitutes in Sarker, or Gang III, the red-light area, where it costs Rp.10,000 (US$ 5) for the prostitute, 3,000 (A$1.50) for the room and 2,000 (A$1) for the becak. The boys often go to a prostitute in groups, as it is cheaper with the cost split between two or three of them. The prostitutes on the railway tracks in Gerbong are cheaper (as little as 2,000 (A$1) with a young girl, or an older woman), and they have to go with them in the bushes or into the empty carriages (gerbong).

Street boys also have sex with street girls (rendan) in exchange for money or, more often, a meal. This is usually in dark places and wasteland in and around Shoping, in the Tanon, or behind the cinema on Malioboro where there is some wasteland and a mattress. The boys do sometimes attempt to have sex with rendan without paying, although it is considered unwise, as the street girls can become very angry. Occasionally, a relationship will strike up between a street boy and girl, although street boys usually only want to have sex with street girls, and seek 'real' girlfriends from the kampung. Hadi, for example, told me that he wanted a kampung girl as a girlfriend, not someone who has already been taken, like a rendan. He said that he already had a kampung girlfriend who was bored of the kampung boys (anak kampung) and liked him because he was different. Topo had two girlfriends: a kampung girlfriend and a street girlfriend, and so did Kirik.

9 See for example Wahid's story in Jejak, September, 1995 when he and two friends go to Gerbong and have sex with a prostitute for Rp.7,000 (about $4).
10 I sometimes heard the joke among the street boys: "What is the definition of fear?". "Having sex with a rendan when you haven't got any money".

(15). Street boys sometimes keep photos of their current girlfriends in their wallets which they show off to their friends.

A street boy's female partner will vary, but relationships rarely lasted longer than a few weeks, although some street couples were attached for longer, and even got married. Iwan told me that the girls in Jakarta are easy to go out with as they are given money by their parents to go out (jalan-jalan) and that they pay for him when they go out. He says that in Yogyakarta it is different and harder to go out with girls as they expect you to pay. He complained that the girls would only go out with him if he had money and complained that they were material girls (cewek materi). All the boys said that they hated cewek materi, and said that more and more girls were becoming that way. This was another reason that they disliked rendan, as they would only have sex with them for something in return. They saw all rendan as cewek materi.

However, these feelings are hypocritical as girlfriends are actually something of a material possession for the boys themselves. This is because they are seen as a status symbol, and a sign that they have enough money to keep them, and generally take care of them. Sex with women and having a girlfriend therefore provides power and status for a street boy as it symbolises masculinity and economic strength which are the expected characteristics for a 'real man' within the Tiksan group (see also Radsani and Kudrat, 1996: 311). Yet, quite often if a girlfriend gets pregnant they do not want the responsibility and they will dump her and find a new one.

11 Many boys do aspire to get married. A number of ex-street children have married girls they met on the street or in a local kampung. One now lives with his wife's family and another has two rooms in the kampung on the river edge where he lives with his wife, two small children and mother-in-law. Boys can only get married, however, if they have a KTP. For example, Yanto (aged 17), was trying to get a KTP so he could marry his girlfriend.
12 In this respect, street boys lose credibility and are looked down on by other boys if they do not provide properly for their girlfriends. On one occasion, for example, a street boy, Roy (16) was trying to persuade a street girl to leave her boyfriend as she often went without food, and he was obviously not providing for her properly. Roy told her to leave him and to go out with him, as he would take care of her properly. She refused him.
13 I discuss this issue from the girls' perspective in the following chapter.
Commercial Sex

I found that there was a reluctance to talk about commercial sex and very few boys reported that they themselves had sex for money (other than with the banci). There was a much higher incidence of street girls having sex for money, although this was generally hidden from the street and so was not so easy to evaluate. The street boys did talk about other children who have sex with older men or tourists for money. They told me, for example, about the boys who sell themselves at the Tugu train station, by lifting their shirts under which they are not wearing any clothes, and saying: ‘Do you want to buy this Mas?’ (“Mas, mau beli ini mas?”), although I never witnessed this happening. One boy Edo (16) did tell me of the times that he had sex with tourists in Bali. Once, when he was twelve, he had sex with a friend in front of a video camera for a German paedophile. He said that Dutch and Germans were the most common in Bali. Not all the children were willing to do this and they avoided the Sosrowijayan area for precisely this reason. Coki (13), for example, once returned from the Hotel Asia Africa in the Sosro area and told us (myself and the boys I was with) of how he had been invited back to a Dutch man’s room, with the offer of Rp. 20,000. At first he did not realise the reason, but once he got to the room it became apparent why he was there. He got scared and ran away (pers. comm., August, 1995). This story frightened many of the younger boys who after this avoided the Sosro area, particularly as the Dutch man was seen around for a while after the event, and sometimes followed them.

I knew one street boy, Boao (16) who regularly had sex for money, and solicited on Malioboro or in the Sosrowijayan area, and I sometimes saw him go off with men in their cars. He was known as ‘Homo’ by the other boys, and was ostracised by them. Other children who hung out in Sosrowijayan were also suspected by the boys of getting their money from sex with tourists, and were subsequently said to ‘like homosexuals’ (‘suka homo’). In their jokes the children exhibited considerable homophobia, and called each other ‘homo’ for having sex with men for money or pleasure.

There appeared to be a reluctance in admitting gratification from anal sex (unlike ‘real’ sex, with rendan, lonte or even banci). If a child admits that he likes it then he is seen as a homo and looked down on, teased, harassed, and called names such as homo or sempit (see also Purnamawati and Damanik, 1993: 26). A ‘homo’, in the Tikun’s understanding, is someone who enjoys having sex with men or who does it for money. Interestingly, Radjani and Kudrat (1996:310) found a similar phenomenon among the street boys of Tanzania who have sex between themselves but where: ‘Anyone willingly and actively pursuing homosexual relations is seen as mhanesi (the cultural equivalent of faggot) or “man turned woman”’.

Sex with each other is not regarded as a homosexual activity or as ‘real sex’. It is simply accepted as a necessary part of life to relieve tension and sexual frustration (harrar). Neither is sex with banci considered to be homosexual sex. This is because street children, like the majority of Indonesian society, accept banci as an acceptable and normal part of society, and do not view them as men, ‘gay’ or homosexual (see Octomo, 1996: 259-69). Banci dress and act in a specific way as a third gender (neither man nor woman), and in the eyes of ‘straight’ men in Indonesian society they hold a different gender construction to that of gay men (ibid). Thus, as with most men who have sex with banci, the children know very well that banci are not women, but do not consider themselves to be ‘homo’ when they have sex with them (see Octomo, 1996: 263).

The children also considered it acceptable to have sex with an acquaintance or someone who was part of the street network of relationships (which includes banci), as part of their everyday survival. This type of sex was also not regarded explicitly as homosexual sex, but was seen as taking advantage of an opportunity, and as a necessary part of street survival. For example, the boys told me about a church in the south of Yogyakarta where they are sometimes permitted to sleep, and where they are offered Rp.10,000 to allow the priest to have anal sex with them. Some boys said that they obliged.

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14 Wadans (Wanitas Adjar/’man turned woman/ transexual) is a similar word used in Indonesian, and was also a frequent insult among the boys.
15 Octomo (1996:260) in his discussion of gender and sexual orientation in Indonesia asserts that “Banci” are part and parcel of Indonesian society”, and further states that ‘It is interesting that men who love “banci” fiercely refuse to be labelled as homosexuals” (ibid: 263).
It is in this way that the paedophile can be seen to represent a solution to street children’s problems, and not as a problem in itself. The church priest offered the children a safe place to sleep, as well as money, in exchange for sex. It is the children’s choice if they do it or not. Often, therefore, children will have sex with someone they know on the street who they see as their benefactor. As when they have sex with older boys, the boys typically describe sex in the same way with adult men on the street (and thus in their own socioeconomic group) as taking place in exchange for money, food, clothing or protection. This type of sex is seen as acceptable among the children as it provides them with the affection and protection which they so desperately seek, and which has often been denied them by their parents. Sex with a ‘benefactor’ is not necessarily perceived as homosexual sex, but as survival sex.\(^{16}\)

The best example I have of this attitude is when in July, 1996, during their investigations of the street children murders (discussed in Chapter 3), the Jakarta police questioned street children about paedophiles with whom they had contact. They gave the name of one man, nicknamed ‘Babe’ (meaning Father), an adult scavenger who they all knew. The reason that they gave his name was not because he had sex with the children (which he had). It was because unlike other men on the street with whom they also had regular sex, and who they saw as ‘good men’ (‘orang baik’), Babe had not met his side of the bargain. He had consistently failed to provide the children with money, food, or protection and so the children did not feel obligated toward him, and turned him in.\(^{17}\)

\(^{16}\) Oetomo (1996) has observed that homosexuals are perceived as ‘more Westernized, middle-class, wealthier men’ among street communities in Indonesian society. He accounts for these perceptions by proposing that there are differences in the social construction between two socioeconomic groups in Indonesian society: the “baba” as the lower class construction, and the homosexual as a middle- or upper-class construction.”(ibid. These constructions may, therefore, also explain the street children’s notions of what is homo and what is not. The male acquaintances on the street; the baba and the benefactor/prostitute, fit the lower class ‘traditional’ construction (and sexual relations with them are therefore more acceptable), while the more Westernized men with whom some children have sex with for money; the touristic, Om and middle class, wealthier men, fit the upper-class construction, and are classified in the children’s minds as ‘homosexual’ (homo) (Oetomo, 1996:260).

\(^{17}\) Personal communication with a Jakarta pendamping (street kid NGO worker) who knew some of the children who were interviewed by the police (September, 1996).

Rape

Both boys and girls report rape from other people on the street. This is because street kids live in public spaces and are vulnerable to advances from older street boys, passers by and other street people. In most cases they are attacked when they are sleeping, and this is one reason that they sleep together, to ensure safety in numbers. Sexual violence often happens from men on the street and outside the community, but it also comes from inside when the children are raped by other children, either by force or when they are asleep. The street boys sometimes complained that they woke at night to find that they were being sodomised (dikerja) by another child relieving his frustration (hasilan) on them, and they were unable to do anything about it (Purnawati and Damank, 1993: 26).\(^{18}\)

I also heard about street children being forcibly ‘invited’ (‘dialjak’) by ‘uncles’ (‘Om’) in the market and in Shoping, and there were stories of some children being victims of sexual exploitation when they were arrested by the agencies of the state (aparat).

Music

Kita dibahirkan sebagai anak kandung kapitalisme dan dipinggirkan dalam struktur masyarakat ini.

...BONGBAR!

SMASH IT UP!

(Iwan Fals and SWAM)\(^{19}\)

Street children are able to mediate and display their masculine style, as well as claim actual space for themselves on the street through their music. Music is very much a part of the street style in Yogyakarta, and the street children’s ability to play music gives them a sense of empowerment and pride. While I was in Yogyakarta many of the younger children desperately aspired to buy a guitar and become a street musician (pengamen). This was because pengamen commanded a

\(^{18}\) Dikerja in mens literally ‘worked on’.

\(^{19}\) Bongbar (‘Destabilis’ or ‘destroy’) is a song that the children often sing on the street when they gather in groups, on Malicloho for example. It is not, however, a song that they will sing when they are busking (ngamen), as it is considered subversive, because it refers to demolishing or smashing the present capitalist system.
tremendous amount of respect on the street (throughout Yogyakarta), and they were often regarded as role models by younger boys, particularly on Malioboro, in the Alun-Alun and at the bus terminal.

As discussed in the previous chapter, there are networks of solidarity between the pengamen, street children and other groups, and a vital link within these networks is music. Playing music is usually a collective activity and ‘creates and articulates the very idea of a symbolically creative community’ (see Willis, 1990:26). In their songs the pengamen (in particular the KPI), often advocate ‘correct’ moral behaviour, the curbing of commercialism and materialism, and the rejection of some of the present structures of Indonesian society (van der Borch, 1988:29-32). These socially aware lyrics are strongly influenced by the poet Rendra, ‘the father figure of modern Indonesian theatre’, who was very influential in ensuring that pengamen were respected by society (Murray, 1991b:3).20

When they are working on the buses and at the lesehan, the children often play well known songs which are good for earning money, such as the Beatles and Bob Marley songs. When they are together as a group, however, they much prefer playing those which are popular on the street, especially subversive songs written by the KPI and the Indonesian rock star Iwan Fals, who started his career as a pengamen in Jakarta (Murray, 1991:11-14). Rendra, the KPI and Iwan Fals, have all contributed to a cultural acceptance of pengamen in Yogyakarta, and a raising of their status on the street, which is one reason why many street kids on Malioboro aspire to own a guitar and to become a pengamen themselves. The children gain empowerment from singing songs about their lives and situations in public, and as a group. As Murray (1991b:13) says of Fals’ songs:

The songs seem to strike a chord with all the people suffering under the present regime... they are used to express active involvement, solidarity and resistance, rather than passive consumption of music as a commodity.

20 Rendra was (and still is) very outspoken on social and political issues. In the 1970s he started the theatre group Bengkel, who initially made their income from busking in the streets, using Rendra’s poetry for their lyrics (Murray, 1991; van der Borch, 1988:29). This was the beginning of a distinctive pengamen subculture in Yogyakarta, which could most clearly be seen on Malioboro (van der Borch, 1988:29).

Playing music is not only a way of earning money, but also plays a vital role in the construction of street kid’s identities. Music is an effective retreat for the children, as it is where they can express themselves and communicate personal feelings. As Willis (1990:22) says: ‘Songs can be used to cope with, manage and make bearable the experiences of everyday life’. In this way music has the capacity to produce meanings and understandings for the children, and is a way of strengthening solidarity between them.

At night, after working on Malioboro, the children often gather outside the Toilet, or at a lesehan, to play music and sing together.

Plate 6.2: A music workshop at Girli

It is at these moments that they can sing songs together at the tops of their voices, thus asserting their presence on the street and expressing their objection to the rest of society who denies them their very existence. They sing about the harshness of street life, about Jakarta, about their ‘Big Family Girli’, about their mothers, their desires to go home, and about their mistreatment by society. They also sing about politics.

A popular song while I was in Yogyakarta was about Megawati, the leader of the PDI party and former president Sukarno’s daughter. The boys also enjoyed singing more frivolous songs and reworded the lyrics of the popular Junior song ‘Hati Senang’ to become ‘My heart is happy even though I don’t have a rendan (street girl)’ (‘Hati senang, walaupun ngak punya rendan’). Girli, and other NGOs in Jakarta and Malang have music workshops, with their own bands which perform on
Malioboro and at events (if the authorities allow them), to raise money and public awareness of the street children’s existence (Plate 6.2).

Plate 6.3: Dancing at the Toilet

Some nights, if they were in high spirits, the boys danced to Dangdut music, which they played on guitars and drums (Plate 6.3). The style of dancing to which they all adhered was the Jogor style, a highly controlled but sensual movement of the body, popular at all Dangdut performances.21 Dancing is the usual way music becomes realised through the body, and its 'direct courting of sexuality generates a heightened sense of self and body' (Willis, 1990:22). The older street boys (and girls) would sometimes go to the THR (Public Entertainment Park) to jogor or what they called 'trip' to Dangdut at the front of the dance floor, and to look out for the possibility of a sexual encounter.

Bodily Subversions

Learning to belong to the Tikoy subculture is not only about acting or dancing correctly, playing the correct music, asserting masculinity in culturally defined ways, displaying sexual prowess, or conforming to expected norms and behaviour patterns. It is also about the displaying of signs and symbols through which individuals and groups seek to establish their presence (Willis, 1977:2). Hbdige (1979:17), for example, sees that objections to hegemony are often expressed by subcultures at the level of appearances, in style and signs. Tait (1992:13), however, challenges the use of subculture theory as a credible framework for understanding street kids in Australia. She says it is impossible for street kids to establish a style, as they have to wear what-ever is available to them: 'There are no grounds for a common decoding of their styles of dress, since necessity rather than choice is the most likely determining criterion.'

This assertion is contrary to my experience of street kids in Yogyakarta. I found that in Indonesia street children certainly do covet, search for, and appropriate particular objects and appearances, and despite the fact that the children are very poor, style and a certain 'look' is very important to them. Street children want to be stylish and clothes are an important component of their identity construction; like most young people, they are very adept at developing their own styles. They seek out certain items such as baseball caps (worn back-to-front) and Western-style clothes, and steal, 'find' or buy jeans, tracksuits and shirts of particular styles and colours (black was very popular while I was there). Anything that was made di sania (overseas) was highly sought after. It did not matter if it was made in England, Australia or Banekok. What was important was that it was not Indonesian which they viewed as 'backward' (belum maju). Cheap Indonesian clothes are looked down on and often referred to as pakasia shopping (clothes from the cheap market, shopping) by the kids.

The children's desire to be modern and stylish, however, did not always conform with their lifestyles, and street children often do wear dirty clothes because many of them only have one set.22 As a result they usually wear their clothes until they are totally filthy or worn out and then throw them away and buy or steal some more. They also have to learn to dress appropriately for different social contexts (see Willis, 1990a:87). One day Hadi (12) went shoe-shining in a new T-shirt and jeans. He was not gone for long before he came back and complained that no one would let him shine their shoes, as he looked too affluent. He changed back into his grubby shorts and T-shirt and went back to work bare-foot. He had a successful

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21 Jogor is also the name given to a classical Javanese dance accompanied by the gamelan.
22 Some children do have another set of clothes which they keep safe (tidip) with a becal driver or an ibu warung at their stall, otherwise they will lose them.
night after that. So, one reason for being filthy and scruffy is from necessity (due to living on the street and the need to earn money), but I also see it as necessary for survival and a deliberate act of symbolic defiance of conservative mainstream society.23

It is necessary to emphasise Hebdige’s (1979:3) observation that the construction of style in subcultures can merely be a ‘gesture of defiance or contempt, in a smile or a sneer. It signals a Refusal’ [sic]. In a similar way, bell hooks (1992:116) talks of an ‘oppositional gaze’, as a subversive sign, and reminds us of how Foucault: ‘invites the critical thinker to search out those margins, gaps and locations on and through the body where agency and resistance can be found’. I would argue that in addition to their lifestyles signalling a refusal to the ‘expected’ way to behave, street children also contest, resist and subvert the discipline and constraints imposed on the physical body by the Indonesian state and society. They do this by using the ‘power to disfigure’ their own bodies (see Hebdige, 1979:3).

Street Style

The Tiykan style gives the alternative culture its vitality and energy and the kids create trends for themselves, which are an indication of their group identity. Often, one or two boys within the group will adopt a ‘look’, and the others will follow and imitate that style. These ‘trendsetters’ are almost always the same boys who are recognised within the group as possessing ‘subcultural capital’. This means the boys are street-wise, ‘in the know’, and are respected on the street (see Thornton, 1995:10-11).24

Most trends are seasonal styles, worn for a while, and then dropped just as quickly, saying that they are ‘bored’ or ‘over’ (bosen) that look. The Tiykan appropriate (and subvert) styles which they see in films and on TV, and on tourists and mainstream kids who they see on Malioboro and going to the Mall. Styles of older boys and men whom the children see on the street are also imitated, particularly the pengamen (street musicians), and university and art school students who the children think are cool (hebat). Other trends which they adopt, such as a passion for Indian music, often come from Jakarta.

Plate 6.4: Street Style

They also respond to needs and external forces in their style. For example, when the ‘Basement’ nightclub opened on Malioboro all the parkir boys wanted leather shoes with closed toes, so they could enter the club.25

The children also ‘raid and rehabilitate’ styles from other subcultures and, while I was in Yogyakarta in 1996-7, I noticed that there was a distinct punk revival emerging on the streets (see Hebdige, 1979).26 Some of the children began to adopt and develop a retro punk style, by experimenting with Mohawk hairstyles and safety pins, and one young boy spray-painted ‘Anak Punk’ (Punk Kid) on his jacket. Particularly noticeable, however, were the number of street children (and other people on the street) who borrowed the cultural influences (the colours, signs and music) which signify the Rastafarian culture. Many of the older kids used

23 The children were able to wash themselves and their clothes in the public toilets at the NGO for free, but many of them chose not to wash their clothes, preferring to stay dirty. One reason for not washing their clothes was because it was a considered a pain having to wait for the clothes to dry once washed. They also got more money when working if they looked dirty and unkempt.

24 See also Blackman (1995: 34-5) who discusses ‘Style Leaders’ (or ‘SL’) in subcultures.

25 Although the children could not afford to pay to enter the nightclub, they were allowed in to dance free of charge in the Ian half hour (3.30-4am) if they were wearing the correct footwear.
pictures of marijuana leaves and the red, green and gold colours of the Ethiopian flag in their jewellery, clothing, knitted hats, bracelets, and also tattoos. Others grew dreadlocks, and were described as 'orang rasta' ('Rastaman'). This cultural connection with Rasta is 'an expression of solidarity or of a desire to belong to something believed in' (Massey, 1998:125).

Today I asked Arek (15) why he had red, green, and yellow lines tattooed on his chin, and why the street kids seem to like the Rasta colours so much. He replied: Arek: 'Untuk anak jalan rasta cocok' ('The Rasta [style] suits street kids.')
Hattie: 'Kenapa?' ('Why?')
Arek: 'Karena anak jalan rasta menciptakan seperti Bob Marley. Tahu Bob Marley kan?' (Because street kids aspire to be like Bob Marley. You know Bob Marley right?)
Hattie: 'Ya, tapi mengapa seperti dia?' ('Yes, but why like him?')
Arek: 'Karena dia anak jalan rasta. Dia nongkrong di jalan, mengisi ganga, main gitar. Dia bebas, seperti kami. Karena ini kami mau seperti dia' ('Because he was a street kid too. He hung out on the street,sorted ganga, played the guitar. He was free, like us. Because of that we want to be like him') (Fieldnotes, March, 1997).

The children often wanted to borrow my Western-bought clothes, especially my jeans, boots, T-shirts and shirts. There were also scooters over who would carry my daysack (small rucksack). Any misconceptions of the boys being chivalrous were quickly dispelled when I realised that the rucksack was a 'sign' of western style and modernity (Barthes, 1972, Hébdige, 1979). The same went for my camera which they wanted to carry, slung across their chests whilst sporting my sunglasses.28

To an extent, therefore, street kids are materialistic in their lives, and have been influenced by the penetration into Indonesian society of a bourgeois capitalist consumer culture, and the commodification of lower-class society (see Murray, 1991:125). They can be seen to be using the capitalist system for their own purposes, and making a rational choice in response to their economic prospects in the city. As already discussed, having their own money (uang sendiri) to spend how they please is very important to them, and the money they obtain allows them to satisfy consumerist aspirations, and thus gain prestige within the group.26

![Plate 6.5: Looking Cool on Mainboro](image)

Thus, through the consumption of Western goods and artifacts they have immersed themselves in popular culture as part of their own subculture. What is important, however, is the ways in which these commodities are 'used' and 'arranged' by the children to make their own personal liberating meanings through their consumption, and how they 'mark the subculture off from more orthodox cultural formations' (see Hall and Jefferson, 1976:55; Hébdige, 1979:103). The children do not have a wide selection of apparel to develop their styles and they construct their style from what is available to them, by appropriating particular 'normal' objects and subverting their meanings as an act of 'bricolage' (see Hébdige, 1979:103-4). As Willis (1990:14) informs us, seemingly 'humble' objects can be obtained or stolen by subordinate groups and 'symbolically appropriated to have a cutting edge of meaning'. These items express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination (Hébdige, 1979). An example of this is the use of wrist watches which street children steal or buy from

26 One reason for this was due to the presence of a punk revivalist, political activist and tattoo artist, Adik, and his friends from the ISY (Institut Seni Yuwana- The Art Institute), who were very much admired by the street kids.
27 Hébdige (1979:144) tells us how in Britain dreadlocks: 'became the most readily identifiable signifier of a meaningful difference'; Hébdige (1979:65) also noted how different subcultures (in particular punks) 'labeled Rasta style' (along with green, ie marijuana), and how the Ethiopian colours and 'Rasta rhetoric', 'began to work its way into the repertoires of some punk cultures'. Similarly, Massey (1998:125-6) notes how the use of Rasta colors 'from Boston to Rio, from London to Cape Town' are a deliberate 'visible sign of belonging, maybe even of commitment'.
28 As well as donning sunglasses and cameras, the children also liked to have their picture taken in front of shiny new cars and motorbikes. I have dozens of pictures of young boys looking terrified whilst nonchalantly leaning against cars and bikes parked on Mainboro.
the stalls on Malioboro and then deliberately wear on their left wrist, in direct contrast to mainstream society.  

Similarly, Arek (15), was acting as a bricolueur when he appropriated a sign of being a devout Muslim: a muslim hat of black velvet (the peci), which he wore at a jaunty angle, thus subverting its original devout meaning, while he was parking cars on Malioboro (see Hebidge, 1979:104). I also observed that if the children were given clothes or T-shirts by benefactors, it was not long before they altered the style to suit their own tastes and change its meaning. Generally, the kids do not place much value on items of clothing they have been given and will usually lose them or disfigure them quite quickly. Frequently, this was done by redecorating the items with brightly coloured batik designs when they were at the Girli training house.  

Street kids value something much more if they have bought it for themselves or if it is considered to be a desired object within the group, and to hold subcultural capital. Some items of clothing are especially valued among the children, and these are washed and kept safe. They also frequently borrow clothes from one another, and I often saw the same shirt or pair of trousers on several different kids, particularly if it was a coveted object. It was part of the Tikyan practice to borrow from one another (saling pisjam), but the rule was if you borrowed an item of clothing you had to wash it before returning it, and if an item of clothing is lost then the borrower is responsible for paying for its replacement. There was a constant circulation of objects (clothes and possessions) between the children, and these items gained value as they circulated, particularly those which were

29 Something I never noticed until it was pointed out to me, is that all Indonesians (in the mainstream) wear their watch on their right wrist.

30 Street children also sometimes wear the peci when they are begging at traffic lights or in the market, to make people think they are from a religious organisation, and therefore give them 'donations'.

31 In July 1995 the shoe polish company Kiwi came to Yogjakarta and gave all the shoe-shine boys Kiwi baseball caps, T-shirts, shoe-polish and shoe-shine boxes. The boxes were immediately painted in bright colours, and the white T-shirts were covered in batik until the Kiwi logo was totally obscured. Similarly, in October 1996 the Government welfare organisation BKJKS had a special charity day for all Yogjakarta’s street children Jumpan Anak Jalanan (‘Street Children’s Meeting’) where they gave out T-shirts and food. The children accepted the T-shirts and took them to Girli and covered over the ‘Jumpan Anak Jalanan’ logos and pictures with batik designs.

32 See Lette (1996) who noted a similar economy among the cab-cab (local kids) in Yogjakarta.

33 For similar reasons I still have a huge pile of stolen goods from Malioboro (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, rings) given to me by dozens of street kids. I am not, however, cynical enough to believe that they were all given to me with ulterior motives, and know that some of them were given as a sign of genuine affection and friendship.

recognised as having subcultural capital (see Hebidge, 1997, Thornton, 1996:10). As a result the children were often involved in fights and disagreements over items of clothing and possessions.

Objects of Belonging

Some objects within the group are far more powerful than others, and hold meaningful signs which may be invisible to outsiders. Those which are thought to possess subcultural capital are particularly coveted and sort after, and are usually things which are known to belong to someone who is admired on the street, or which have travelled long distances (from overseas or through circulation within the group). They can be understood as ‘tokens of power’ within the subculture and are attributed a higher value accordingly (see Errington, 1989:50). The children seek these objects so that they can gain status within the group by creating a ‘fragile architecture’ for themselves (see Hebidge, 1997). In this way the objects give meaning to their lives, and make them feel as though they have a connection with the Tikyan group.

Certain articles hold significance for the Tikyan, and are frequently used within their own symbolic economy. Within this economy the giving and receiving of goods is calculated and balanced in subtle ways through a system of obligations and payoffs. If a child gives away a bracelet or necklace, for example, then they generally expect something in return. The children also learnt to do this with outsiders, particularly when they were seeking sympathy. Suwil (15), for example, told me that when he was smaller he used to steal handicrafts, especially friendship bracelets, from the stalls on Malioboro, and then give them as ‘presents’ to white tourist girls staying in the Soawijayan area. He did this deliberately to make them feel obligated towards him, and calculated (often rightly) that out of this feeling of obligation they would either have their shoes shined, give him money, or buy him a meal (Suwil (15), pers.com, October,1996).
Hair
Travely in Southeast Asia: ‘hair was the crucial symbol and emanation of the self’ (Reid, 1988: 79), and carried some of the power of the person concerned. In the seventeenth century the cutting of hair became an important symbol of adherence to Islam, and was seen as the greatest sacrifice to the self (ibid). Similarly, in New Order Indonesia dominant culture dictates that hair should be short and neat on boys, and the head has become a site of control. In recent years young men with long hair have been arrested in police and military sweep operations, for being suspected of being a preman or goli (see Bourchier, 1990).

Hairstyles have had a central part to play in a variety of subcultural expressions, and are a medium for significant statements about the self. For street children the head is one spot where they are able to secure ‘symbolic control’ by using it as a site of subversion (see Willis, 1990:x:87). As already mentioned, some children cultivated dreadlocks, or punk hairstyles, which can be seen as their way of attempting to discover and express a new sense of self. Older children grew their hair long and adopted the gendong hairstyle which is also considered subversive behaviour in Indonesia.

Some kids also cut out zig-zag marks along the side of their scalps or shaved their heads. I saw this particular action as a sign of ‘reverse discourse’ and resistance as well as an expression of group solidarity (see Foucault, 1977). One reason for this is that kids’ heads are shaved if they are caught and detained in a police sweep. In Javanese society close cropped hair is a mark of inferior status and the shaving of the head is often used as a punishment by those in authority, including the police (see Reid, 1988:81). Such an action by the police can be seen as a display of absolute power and as: ‘...a policy of terror: to make everyone aware, through the body of the criminal of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign’ (Foucault, 1977:49). Street children subjected to this fate return to the street with a shaved head (and often a beaten body), thus bearing the sign of the justice that had been ‘meted out on him’ by the absolute power (Foucault, 1977: 43). By shaving their heads the kids are subverting the dominant groups use of power as well as asserting their solidarity with the child who has been arrested. In this way, the street kids used precisely the site which the state designated as a site for displaying power (the head), in order to defy and subvert the meaning of the state and as an expression of group solidarity.

Body Adornments: Tattoos and Body Piercing

Vale and Jano’s (1589:4) assertion that body modification is a sign of control over our own bodies does not consider regimes which attempt to limit an individual’s ‘control’ over their own body (Bell and Valentine, 1995:152). As Douglas (1973:98) contends: ‘The scope of the body as a medium of expression is limited by controls exerted from the social system’. Body modification is often criminalized in Indonesia, and the modified body can be regarded as a ‘subversive’ or ‘political body’, in the sense that its presence may provoke reaction from agencies of the state (see Bell and Valentine,1995:152).

The Indonesian state dictates what the body should look like, how body modifications should be carried out (and by whom), and brutally punishes those who do not conform. Historically, tattooing and ear adornment were bodily art forms characteristic of Southeast Asia and were extensively used as talisman in Java (Reid, 1988: 77). The practices also held ritual functions, and were marks of bravery and a rite of passage for young men. Tattooing, for example, conferred ‘special powers’ on the bearer, such as invulnerability (ibid). With the introduction
of Islam in the seventeenth century, however, these practices were suppressed due to Islam's opposition to magical representations (ibid).

The Indonesian state has continued this construction of the acceptable modern and 'civilized body', by actively suppressing and punishing anyone who has been found to deviate from it (see Grosz, 1995:34). Modifying or adorning the body in Indonesia is taken by the state to be a sign of subversion, which means that through their body decorations street children are seen to be committing a 'transgressive act' (see Cresswell, 1996).

I heard numerous accounts of people being arrested by the Indonesian authorities for possessing long hair or tattoos, particularly during the Petrus killings of the early 1980s (see Bouchier, 1990). As a result, some people burnt their tattoos off with lime or acid, to avoid arrest or murder. These stories of state control cannot, however, be relegated to the history books. I myself witnessed a number of scars on young men's skin where in more recent years they had burnt off their tattoos during mustin garukan ("police operation season"). Such control was especially intense in Jakarta during 'Operation Preman', when anyone who looked like a preman (by possessing long hair or tattoos) was arrested, shaved and often put into a re-education camp. One young man, Hari (17) had a particularly large patch of scar tissue on his upper arm which he said had been a marijuana leaf tattoo that he burnt off with acid during a mustin garukan in Medan, where he had been living on the streets in 1995 (pers.com, February, 1997). Further to this, in early 1997 many boys with tattoos complained to me that to avoid arrest they could not work during the day, and that they had to wait until night-time, when their tattoos and long hair were not so conspicuous.

In some subcultures tattoos are used as a form of initiation, although this is not the case within the Tikyam, where it is a matter of personal choice (see Govenan, 1988: 210). Within the Tikyam subculture, however, tattoos are a status symbol, and are seen as kebot (cool). If a child was not tattooed it set him aside from other members of the group. There was, therefore, a certain amount of peer pressure to have a tattoo, although some younger children were proud of the fact that they were still 'clean' (bersih). Once the children reached adolescence they usually succumbed to peer pressure and Tikyam style, and got a tattoo. The street kids often said that they had got their tattoos and body piercings as 'art' ('seni'), although Dede (12) (who did not have any tattoos himself) scoffed at this when I suggested it to him. He believed that the boys with tattoos had 'thoughts like thugs' ('pikiran preman'). Other children, however, said that their tattoos were a 'show of force', as they wanted to appear more masculine and 'hard', and thus invulnerable. Still others said that they got their tattoos when they were 'stressed'. Sometimes the boys will visit a tattoo artist, but they generally cannot afford to do so.

The boys have their own tools to make tattoos. These are usually made from a battery powered rotary machine connected to a rubber band and a needle to pierce the skin, which vibrates up and down a ball-pen tube (Plate 6.7). They also make tattoos with needles and razor blades and black ink.

Plate 6.7: Homemade tattoos.

Usually, the making of tattoos is performed through an exchange system where someone works on one boy, and then they return the favour. Many of the boys also had

34 Bouchier (1990:186) notes that during Petrus (mysterious killings) in the early 1980s, the newspapers would frequently report the findings of mayat bereato (tattooed corpses) in the street, who were victims of these government sponsored murders.

35 They said this in English. I do not know from where this phrase originated, although a lot of the children used it.

36 One boy, Kritik (14), for example, told me that he had got his tattoos due to jers when I went home after my first visit to Yogyakarta (in 1995). I have no way of telling if this was true, although we did form a close relationship during my first visit when he was still young (13) and quite clingy. The second time I went, almost a year later in 1996, he had reached puberty and was far more distant. I thought it was just his age, but when I asked him why he replied: 'What the point of getting close to someone when they are just going to leave you again?' Another boy had 'Hani' tattooed on his hand which he said he had made because he was sad when he went home.
anting-anting (earrings), and while I was in Yogyakarta they began to pierce their mouths, noses, eyebrows and nipples.\[37\]

They usually pierced each other's skin with safety pins, and if they did not have anything to wear in their holes, they inserted small pieces of wood or pieces of cotton to keep the holes from closing up. Body piercing was very popular in Western popular culture at that time, and one boy (who seemed to start the trend among the boys) said he had got the idea from a German tattoo magazine at a tattoo artist's studio. The children also saw a lot of young Western tourists come through with pierced faces, and would try and get their earrings or nose rings from them. At one point some children's faces appeared to be literally covered in metal, although for some reason this 'trend' did not last long.

Tattoos among the Tikyan (and the Malioboro boys in particular) are a kind of ritualistic practice which signify a rite of passage for those who have reached adolescence. They also demonstrate a commitment and affiliation to the group and reinforce the individual's identity as a street kid. In this way body adornments provide street children with a reinforced identity, and are status symbols within the group which give them feelings of pride. They communicate masculinity and 'hardness', and demonstrate courage and strength.

Plate 6.8: The 'hard' masculine image

Tattoos among the Tikyan (and the Malioboro boys in particular) are a kind of ritualistic practice which signify a rite of passage for those who have reached adolescence. They also demonstrate a commitment and affiliation to the group and reinforce the individual's identity as a street kid. In this way body adornments provide street children with a reinforced identity, and are status symbols within the group which give them feelings of pride. They communicate masculinity and 'hardness', and demonstrate courage and strength.

The children know that they can be arrested for having tattoos but do it anyway: which is a further example of their cool (don't care) attitude, and part of their tough masculine image. Acts such as tattooing with such a socially defined stigma demonstrate an attitude of rejection of mainstream 'norms' imposed by dominant society on the individual body. The fact that the children choose to 'inscribe' their bodies despite the restrictions and control dictated by the state, can be seen as 'subversive bodily acts' (see Grosz, 1995). In this way the skin is used by the Tikyan as a medium for social expression, and is a social barrier which subverts the state's control of the body. The street kids have tattoos and body piercing due to their desire to be provocative, rebellious and to the outside world and each other, and their body adorns can be seen as symbols of discontent and dissatisfaction with their lot in life. Body adorns within the Tikyan community 'articulate a politic of dissent', and operate as a kind of 'shock tactic' to the outside world (see Curry, 1993). The children are 'marking themselves as people apart and doing so with commitment and relish' (Curry, 1993).

Today I asked Rudi about the rings through his nose and lower lip, and why he had put them in. He explained 'Saya suka tiruan wajah, saya suka tiruan wajah!' ('Art, I was born for Art'), I then asked him if that was the only reason, he said: 'Orang berpikir saya aneh, saya suka itu.' ('People think I am strange, I like that'). (Fieldnotes, January, 1997).

As well as professing his creativity, Rudi was asserting his difference, and how he enjoys 'watching reactions to the show' (see Bell and Valentine, 1995:152). Tattoos and body piercings belong to a whole set of 'performatives strategies' within the Tikyan group, and body symbolism can be understood as a strategic subversion of mainstream norms, and a performative statement of self-conscious 'othering' (ibid).

**Altered States: (Ab)Use of Drugs and Alcohol**

Alcohol, drugs, and inhalants are used habitually by street children in Indonesia. This is partly because drug use is structured by the concept of style and masculinity within the Tikyan subculture, and participation is a prerequisite for belonging to the group. Most consumption is for the primary purpose of getting as drunk or stoned (mabuk) as quickly as possible. 'Social' drinking or drug use is not a concept easily explained in Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim society, where alcohol and drug
consumption is severely frowned on. If you are seen to be drinking or taking drugs it is perceived as for one purpose only: to get *mabuk*. The word *mabuk*, covers a variety of drug-induced states, either from drugs, glue or alcohol. It can mean drunk, stoned (on glue or marijuana), high or 'tripping' (on hallucinogens or pills). There are also slang words which the children use for these states: *tesor*, and *tevwak* which, basically, mean 'out of it' or 'passed out'.

By taking drugs and alcohol, the children are testing the boundaries of their physical bodies, sometimes in a competitive process. Different groups, however, have contrasting drug 'styles', which include the types of drugs they take, and their rituals in taking them. The Malioboro boy’s drug 'style', for example, involved drinking heavily, occasionally smoking marijuana, and consuming various illegal pills to get high. The older *pengamen* at the bus terminal were particularly involved in taking different doctor-prescription pills, which were sold illegally on the street. The younger boys at the terminal did not appear to be involved in this pill-popping practice. In contrast to all the other groups, the street boys in the Alun-Alun did not drink, smoke, or take pills. Their drug 'style' was sniffing glue, and they almost always had a glue pot concealed beneath their T-shirts. In addition to these drug habits, all the children experimented with other forms of getting high, including the smoking or drinking of seeds from a particular tree, eating 'magic mushrooms', and experimenting with other cheap ways of getting stoned.

**Alcohol**

For young men, drinking defeats boredom and seems to open up symbolic and real possibilities not available in normal life. They view drinking as that which sets up a situation, an atmosphere, where anything might happen (Willis, 1990b:45).

Alcohol was particularly popular among the street boys on Malioboro, and I recognised this to be an essential element in their displays of a masculine and 'hard' identity. It also signalled a refusal to the outside, predominantly Muslim world for whom alcohol is supposedly prohibited. As Willis (1990, 1976) informs us, alcohol often functions to augment prestige among young men and within subcultures, and 'excess consumption certainly emphasises public gender identity' (Willis, 1990b:44). Similarly, drinking is seen as an exciting pastime for street boys as it creates an 'existential freeing of the self' *(ibid)*. They usually drink sweet red herbal wine *(Anggur Obat* or *'AO')*, and Vodka or *Drum* whisky, mixed together with *Kratingdaeng*—a Thai energy drink which has taurine in it. The alcohol was easily obtained in the small kiosks near the station. Being out of control, however, was not considered acceptable behaviour on the streets, and one was expected to hold one's drink as a sign of masculinity. Some nights there were boys who were very drunk on Malioboro, and the others told me to ignore them or keep away from them. If a boy crashed out on the pavement they moved him away out of sight, usually behind the tourist office wall by the toilet.

**Pills**

For the most desired effects the boys took pills *(ngepil)*, usually by mixing alcohol with illegal drugs which they call 'crazy medicine' *(obat gendeng)*, or 'poor mans ecstasy'. *BK* pills were the cheapest and most popular when I first arrived in Yogyakarta but, over time, a proliferation of others emerged on the street, and *BK* tablets were seen as inferior to the new brands being produced.\(^{39}\) There are numerous different types of pills *(pil)* which the children now take, most of which are some sort of doctor prescription *(daftar G)* drugs for mental health disorders, stress, insomnia, depression or epilepsy.\(^{40}\) *Robynol* *(for stress)*, for example, was very popular for helping the children forget, as was *Naphacin* *(for breathing)* mixed with Sprite, alcohol or coffee 'to get high straight away' *("sehingga langsung tinggi")*. Pills varied in cost on the street, but a strip *(ik)* of ten *Robynol*, for example, cost Rp.10,000 (ASS). The kids would usually consume everything they had bought, and sometimes took twenty or thirty tablets at a time. They also experimented with mixing different pills together, to create different 'trips'. The pills were often called *ecstasy* by the children, although at Rp. 30,000-40,000

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\(^{39}\) *BK* is an acronym for *Bandung Kinesifbriek*, a pharmaceutical company in Bandung (Miller, 1996: 41). The pills, when taken in large enough quantities, made the children very 'stoned'.

\(^{40}\) Just as Heldige (1979:135) found *Molds* to be functioning as *bricolleurs* when they used medically prescribed pills for the treatment of neurones as 'ends-in-themselves', so too are street kids *bricolleurs*, by subverting the 'original straight meaning' of *Daftar G* (doctor prescription) pills.
(A$20) for one tablet. Ecstasy itself was too expensive for them. It is, however, manufactured in Jakarta, and is readily available on the street if they can pay for it.  

With some pills the children become immobile and cannot do anything. Mogadon and Rohypnol, totally incapacitates them, sometimes for days at a time.42 Many of the children described to me how you can ’lose’ two or three days at a time, and said how much they enjoyed this aspect of pill-taking. They would ‘wake up’ after three days and not remember anything, but their friends would tell them what they had done (including being involved in fights and motorbike accidents). The children enjoyed the feelings of being invincible and not feeling pain when they were high on drugs. Many showed me scars and wounds from when they had been in drug-induced fights or accidents, and had not felt a thing. Coco (13) told me that he prefers taking pills to drinking alcohol (minuman keras), as he gets a headache from drink. When I asked him about pills, don’t they give him a headache? He just replied ’No, they make it better!’ (’Ngok, sembuh’). Wiwit (16), however, said that you have to be careful taking drugs if you want to continue working. He learnt to take enough to give him the courage to work on the buses (as he was shy), but not too much otherwise he could not bunk (ngamen). Some children complained, however, that alcohol and tablets made people aggressive and made them pick fights (as they did not feel pain). They said that they preferred ganja (marijuana), as it just made them relaxed.

The kids liked going to Jakarta as the pills were much cheaper there, and a few kids made their money by doing drug runs from Jakarta to Yogyakarta, and even as far as Bali. The further east one travels in Indonesia, the more expensive drugs become, and the more money one can earn trafficking, particularly ganja, which originates in Aceh (North Sumatra). Drugs are often ordered by older boys and men on Maliobororo, who give children money to go to Jakarta for them. Cecak (16) was one boy who did this, and he told me how he had started drug running in Blok M, Jakarta when one day he was told to help by taking a package to someone. It was a bag of ganja. After that he got involved in running messages and carrying drugs for preman in Blok M which also guaranteed him protection on the street.

Alternative Highs

The kids knew of other ways of getting high, if no pills were available or if they had no money. One way was to grind up the seeds of a Kecabang tree (a large green seed) and mixing them with coffee or smoking them. This made them feel happy and as though they were flying. The children also experimented by drinking Autan (mosquito repellent) and coffee, and by smoking cigarettes dipped in Autan and dried out. Anything in fact to get the desired effect of being high (seler).

Great stress was laid on knowledge of various drugs and their effects, and drug knowledge on the street was highly respected. Lette (1996) and Jansen (1995) both note how maturity towards drugs is expected on Maliobororo, and how boasting and an exaggerated focus on drugs is considered childish. This is the same among the street kids, although they enjoyed experimenting with different drugs and telling me about their experiences. Coki (13) talked to me about taking mushrooms, and how it depends on your state of mind, and how you must not take them if you are unhappy. He told me that at lebaran (the Muslim holiday), he and some other boys took mushrooms which they picked in a field near the university. Once they had eaten them they started crying, missing their mothers and lamenting the fact that they could not go home (pers. com, March, 1997). On another occasion, Suvil mixed Rodrex (a flu tablet) with tobacco and smoked it before going to bus on the buses. He said he passed out and so could not work which had not been his intention.

41 In 1996 there was a minor panic about the prevalence of the drug Ecstasy in Indonesia (see for example Forum Keadilan, April 25, 1996, Jakarta Post, December 6, 1996, Geneva, 27 July, 1996).
42 Rohypnol is a sedative which in the United States is known as ’Roofies’ or the ’date rape drug’, as it causes black outs, although the person can still function physically. Once consciousness is regained the person experiences complete memory loss about what has happened to them. As a sedative it is ten times stronger than Valium.
Lem

The young boys in the Alun-Alun were addicted to glue (lem), and bought their pots of Alun glue from Shaping, and sniffed them underneath their T-shirts.\footnote{Other addiction is said to be a psychological rather than a physiological addiction (Kanbur, 1996).}

The boys say that they enjoy being high on glue as it gives them hallucinations which make them feel as though they are ‘flying’, and that they can really ‘touch their dreams’ (pers.com. December, 1996). ‘It makes us feel as if we can hold the stars in our hands’ said another boy (see the Kampi film, 1995). The boys’ consumption of glue varies but the youngest boy Agus (9) sniffs the most and finishes between six to eight cans a day. Glue stops hunger pains and makes the children feel ‘full’, although at 900 rupiah a can of glue (50c), the Alun-Alun children spend far more a day on glue than other children spend on food.\footnote{At the time I was in Yogyakarta (prior to the crisis), a plate of rice and vegetables from a food stall was about 600rp (ASO: 40). If you had chicken or fish it would cost about 1,000-1,500 rupiah (75c to 95c). A sweet child will eat between one and three times a day, depending on how much money he earns, or if he can get someone else to buy him food.}

The Alun-Alun children never took their glue with them when they were begging at the traffic lights, however, as they said it that would get them arrested.

Other boys who talked about the Alun-Alun children said that they were ‘naughty’ because they sniffed glue. The NGO Grid\footnote{In Bandung for example, where the ‘glue culture’ (‘bodiye lem’) is quite strong, there is a distinct divide between the glue-sniffers and the other street boys who do not sniff glue.} would not tolerate boys doing this, and if they were discovered they were given a lecture on the health dangers, and told not to come back to the NGO unless they had stopped the habit. One day a group of boys were found sniffing glue at the open house and an NGO worker grabbed the cans and burnt them in front of them. This was another reason that the Alun-Alun boys were not willing to go to Grid. They themselves will only allow boys into their group if they sniff glue, as it is a form of initiation to their group. According to NGO workers, this is also the case in other cities.\footnote{In Bandung for example, where the ‘glue culture’ (‘bodiye lem’) is quite strong, there is a distinct divide between the glue-sniffers and the other street boys who do not sniff glue.} Glue sniffers do have a discernible style on the street, which is recognised by other children. One night when I was taking photographs on Malindo, some of the younger children said ‘Wait! Wait! Let pretend that we are sniffing lem for the photos!’ They then huddled in a corner and pulled their T-shirts up over their faces, pretending to sniff a pot of glue, as is the usual style of boys who sniff glue. When I asked them why they wanted to do this they just laughed and said it was ‘cool’ (‘hebar’).

Reactions

...[drugs] facilitated passage through a great symbolic barrier erected over against ‘straight’ society (sic). On the straight side of the barrier was the world of personal responsibility, grey colours, gauntness and lack of style, on the other side was the world of freedom, lack of responsibility and stylishness (Willis, 1976:107).

In a similar way to the hippies in Willis’s study, street kids regularly take drugs and alcohol as a form of diversion and escapism. In this respect it can be seen as a hedonistic pastime which assists in opening up a world of freedom, and lack of responsibility. Further to this, by taking the pills and alcohol, and getting high together, the children can also be seen to be performing a kind of collective ritual: a ritual of escapism (see Mallarangeng, 1996: 33). Taking drugs and alcohol within the Tikun culture, however, is not only a form of diversion and enjoyment. As discussed, street children also regularly take pills, alcohol and glue in order to suppress hunger and inhibitions, to assist in releasing anxiety, stress and depression, and to help release anger, frustration and dissatisfaction with their marginalised roles.

Sometimes the kid’s external worlds are so depressing that the only way they can survive is by creating their own reality. They do this with drugs and alcohol. Due to their means of livelihood, their social environment, and their constant exploitation on the street, street children do not feel safe in their daily lives. They face threats from the police and the military, and are regarded as the ‘scum of society’ (‘sampah masyarakat’). The children know what mainstream society thinks of them, and say that it hurts their feelings (sakit hati) when they see people looking at them with suspicion. Sometimes, they just want to escape this situation and taking drugs is the easiest way of doing so. The drugs and alcohol are ‘symbolic barriers’ which the kids use to distance themselves from mainstream perceptions (Willis, 1976:107). In this way being mabuk (drunk or stoned) is an emotional crutch on which they can rest, and a ‘weapon’ with which they can meet (or ignore)
all their needs, blot out their feelings of powerlessness and inferiority, and feel stronger. Further to this psychological protection, if they are hit by the police it does not hurt them physically if they are *mabuk*.

Taking drugs, like other bodily styles is also about asserting power over one’s own body. Smoking, drinking, and taking different drugs represents the testing of boundaries between ‘self’ and ‘other’. One reason for this is because the substances are either illegal or legally restricted. Drug use is heavily punished by Indonesian law whatever the drug is and one can be sentenced to seven years in prison for just possessing a small amount of marijuana. As it is forbidden (*dilarang*), however, it is immediately appealing to the kids and their *cwek* (‘don’t care’) mentality, and it is part of the *Tiksan* subculture to demonstrate their bodily style through the appropriation of forbidden substances. In this way drug consumption is linked to the street kid subculture norms and is part of their everyday lives.

There are, therefore, a complex range of reasons for street children’s habitual drug use. During focus group discussions I asked a number of children on Malioboro the question ‘Why do you get drunk?’ (*Kenapa mabuk?*), and was given a variety of responses:

- Topo (13): ‘Saya pingin mabuk terus.’ (‘I want to be drunk constantly’).
- Hattie: ‘Kenapa?’ (‘Why?’).
- Topo: ‘Lebih baik mabuk daripada pusing. (It’s better to be drunk than confused (or worried)).
- Coki (13): ‘Ya! Kalau baru bangun, pusing, beli lagi, mabuk lagi!’ (‘Yeh! When I first wake up I’m confused, so I buy some more [alcohol], and get drunk again’).
- Rinto (14): ‘Biar santai saja.’ (‘Just to feel relaxed’).
- Ceca (16): ‘Kalau malas kerja aku mabuk.’ (‘If I don’t feel like working I get drunk’).
- Wir (15): ‘Sebelum ngamen, ya mabuk dulu biar tidak malu.’ (‘Before bungking, yeh - I get stoned (on pills) first so I’m not ashamed [bungking].’)
- Hattie: ‘Kenapa harus mabuk?’ (‘Why are you ashamed?’)
- Mul (16): ‘Karena ada semacam gengsi.’ (‘Because there is a kind of pride’).

(*Fieldnotes, January, 1997*).

The boys at the Alun-Alun said that they enjoyed being high on glue as it helped overcome their inhibitions when they were begging at the traffic lights, which was also the reason many other children gave me for why they get stoned *on pills before they went on the buses*. In addition, Coco (10) told me that by sniffing glue: ‘You no longer feel hungry, and you do not have to worry about eating. You can just sleep, dream, or fly (*terbang*), and forget!’ (pers.com, November, 1996). *Lem* is therefore a release from all the children’s worries so that, temporarily at least, their problems are solved. As one NGO worker said of boys who sniff glue: ‘Glue, according to the children, is a kind of weapon […] All their needs are met by sniffing glue’ (NGO worker, Bandung, pers.com, Sept, 1996).

Substance abuse is therefore integrated into the children’s life styles and relates to a number of their survival needs at both individual and collective levels (see Lucchini, 1993: 30). Street children usually start taking drugs through particular rituals within the group, and most are influenced by their friends on the street, and learn about drugs and ways of taking them from their peers. This is why different groups of street children have various ‘styles’ of drug taking. There is a ‘collective character of consumption’, where the purchasing and consuming of various stimulants is a communal activity, and strong peer pressure exists that you ‘have to take part’ (*harus join*) in drinking and pill-taking rituals (Lucchini, 1993). This contributes to the group’s feelings of solidarity (*rasa kekompakan*) and can be seen as a collective sign of defiance to their stigmatisation. As Lucchini (1993:39) noted in the context of street kids in Latin America: ‘The children claim a collective identity as street children, but contest the stigmatisation which is attached to it. The collective and public consumption of drugs is closely linked to this fact.’

From my own observations and conversations I saw that street kids take drugs (usually alcohol, doctor’s prescription pills or glue) to help them ‘perform’ at work, and at play. Drugs and alcohol are ‘compensatory’ devices for the children since they help relieve hunger pangs, feelings of *malu* and boredom, and because they help the children to fill a void in their lives, enabling them (at least temporarily) to

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46 Similarly, in his autobiography Bengkok (1995:108-9) recounts a time when he met a boy in Jakarta who sniffed glue, and he asked him how it felt: ‘*Ginana rasanya mabuk lem enak mana sama minumnu?*’ (‘How does it feel to be high on glue compared to drink?’). 'Enak ngamen mas’ (*Glue is nicer, Mas*); ‘kenapa?’ (‘Why?’); ‘Rasanya kaya minyak, yah tidak-tidak aja-aja. Jadi mina-mina burani aja’ (‘It just feels like lovely dreaming. So you’re brave enough to beg’).
forget their daily concerns. They also enable sleep. Drug use, however, is also about seeking enjoyment, reinforcing solidarity, and creating a sense of belonging and status within the group. Moreover, it is about contesting and protesting their own stigmatisation as street children and thus claiming power over their own bodies.

Health Implications

Finally, it is important to discuss some of the health implications of street children's lifestyles and activities, and the ways in which they treat their own bodies. There have been several studies on the psychological and health impacts of drug use on street children (Kaminsky, 1996, WHO, 1995). Studies have shown that drug use is related to violence or an accident which occurs when they are under the influence of the substance (Kaminsky, 1996:82). It is difficult for me to say how glue afflicted the Alum-Alum children's bodies as they had already been taking it for some time when I first met them. One boy, however, was evidently permanently damaged by it. His memory was terrible, his eyes were red and watery and he could barely speak. Another child writes about sniffing glue in Jejal (March, 1996) and says that he now wishes that he was not addicted as it can ruin your lungs and although before he used to enjoy his hallucinations, they now disturb him. The boy from the Alum-Alum who fell from the roof of a train and died was most likely stoned on glue at the time.47

Due to their active sex lives, multiple partners, high mobility, and lack of education, street children are a high risk group for infection with Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS. There is a high incidence of STDs among street youth, and I personally knew many boys who had some kind of STD at one time or another.48 Recent surveys have shown 20-100 percent STDs among street kids in Indonesia (Murray, 1993:3; Irwanto et al., 1995; Jakarta Post, 1995). The majority of Indonesian society believe that only a very few people in Indonesia have contracted the HIV virus, and that it is only transmitted if one has sex with a foreigner or a prostitute. This misconception is reinforced by the media, and there is very little information about the number of cases of HIV/AIDS which truly exist in Indonesia.49

It is therefore impossible to determine the extent to which HIV exists among street children in Indonesia, but indications in the West show that it is spreading at an alarming rate among street kids in the United States (Bond, 1992:14). One reason for this is that children are increasingly sought out by sexual exploiters in the mistaken belief that they are less likely to be HIV positive.50 In reality, children are most vulnerable to STD and HIV infection because they are physically unready for sex and have little power or education to demand safe sex or to refuse unsafe sex to adults. Further to this, physiological trauma (bleeding or sores) are more likely to occur if young children have anal sex or vaginal intercourse with bigger adults. This substantially increases the risks of HIV infection (see also Bond, 1992:13-14).

It is important not to put too much emphasis on adult offenders. As already described, street children will often have sex willingly and they will also refuse to use condoms (with street girls for example). Like many members of Indonesian society, and due to mass media misinformation, street children believe that they are some other type of STD. Similarly, children who had bad coughs would complain that they had 'TB'. This was not such an unlikely ailment as the province of Yogyakarta has one of the highest TB rates in Indonesia (Yogyakarta Dalam Angka, 1997).

It is widely known that the 'first' AIDS case in Indonesia was a Dutch man who was diagnosed in Jakarta, 1983. According to government statistics, since then only 501 people of Indonesia's 200 million population have tested HIV positive with 4 cases in Yogyakarta (Jakarta Post, 9th January 1997). A survey report published in an Asian health forum, however, warns against official complacency, and predicts that 'The AIDS epidemic in Indonesia could be similar to ...Thailand' and could 'grow to 750,000 by the year 2,000' (see Jakarta Post, 10th October 96).

50 UNICEF (1994) in its annual Progress of Nations publication, reports that '...more and more tourists and businessmen from the industrialised nations are seeking out child prostitutes [...]. Many travel because there is less risk of exposure or jail, or in the hope that sex with young children means less risk of AIDS [...] In the age of HIV/AIDS, the sexual demand for younger children, who are the most vulnerable, is growing. Indonesia is not yet considered a popular destination for Western paedophiles in Southeast Asia. This situation is changing as some Asian governments (e.g. the Philippines, Thailand and Sri Lanka) are clamping down on foreign paedophiles and imposing stricter penalties against them. As a result paedophiles are seeking countries with less stringent laws and a lower prevalence of HIV and AIDS.
safe from HIV/AIDS if they have not had sex with a bule (a foreigner). There is also a common belief in Indonesian society that one cannot get sexually transmitted diseases from bencol (see also Oetomo, 1996: 263). The implications of such national delusions vis-à-vis HIV/AIDS goes without saying. In my conversations with the children I found that they also adhere to this fallacy. This ignorance, together with the notion among street children that sexual disease will 'heal itself' and that they are immune, can lead to dangerous behaviour, and puts them at a high risk of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.\footnote{51}

Further to this, in Indonesia there is no 'safe sex' campaign promoting the use of condoms as in other nations, and street boys have no sex education. This is because the government (and the media) believes that a safe sex campaign would encourage promiscuity, and that 'consumers who do not have the need should not be tempted to convert' (see Susatyo, 1996).

Similarly, many street kid NGO workers do not want to condone or encourage sex before marriage (pers. com., Sept. 1992).\footnote{52} In addition, when I went to visit Lentera (an HIV/AIDS organisation in Yogyakarta), they said that as yet they did not have any programmes working with street children as they were a difficult group to reach (pers.com. July, 1997). They did say, however, that street girls sometimes come and ask for advice and condoms, but never street boys.

One Lentera 'outreach' worker on Malioboro told me that he found it very difficult to talk about sex with the children, although another Lentera woman did have a good rapport with the Malioboro boys, and distributed AIDS awareness stickers and T-shirts, and chatted to them regularly (Plate 6.9). The boy's knowledge, however, was fairly poor. When one sexually active boy was shown a condom, he asked: 'who puts it on, the man or the woman?', and when I asked another boy if he knew about AIDS he said 'it's about changing shirts and stuff isn't it?'. Another boy just scoffed when he was shown a condom and threw it to the floor, declaring it a cess.\footnote{53} Street children's lack of sex education is one of the biggest dangers to their health, and sexually transmitted diseases are the biggest threat to their lives. As well as sexually transmitted diseases, street children frequently suffer from skin diseases and itching of the skin (gatal), including scabies and lice.\footnote{54} Many of the children also had open and infected sores on their arms and legs, and most of them had bad and blackened teeth from smoking and obvious lack of dental attention\footnote{55}

Plate 6.9: 'Stop AIDS' T-shirts

There is also a high incidence of respiratory diseases from working in the polluted streets all day, and many of the children had bad hacking coughs. I also noted that a lot of children are sick during the rainy season (musim hujan) with high fevers, coughs and respiratory problems. The kids are also susceptible to getting sick when they look for leftovers (cari hayan), if they eat something old or bad. This happened

\footnote{51} Many street boys adhere to traditional Javanese beliefs in remedies for sexually transmitted diseases. Quite a few boys I spoke to were not worried about contracting STIDs, as they believed that the genital changes will 'heal itself' if they put cooking oil on them (pers. comm., Topo (13) and Idrus (15)). Syphilis is easily and completely curable with antibiotics but the children hardly ever went to the doctor with their sores. They said doctors were too expensive and they did not have any money to pay for the doctor or for the medicine. They also said that they were frightened of doctors, as they were scared of injections, and preferred to take traditional Javanese herbal medicine for any ailments. The implications of these beliefs are worrying, particularly with syphilis, which can cause blindness, brain damage, paralysis and death. Further, syphilis often goes away and seems to have 'healed', but in fact lying dormant, and the person or child is still infected, and can still infect others. I did hear stories of street children having died from not treating these STDs.

\footnote{52} There is one comic book produced by the NGO entitled Awar AIDS ('Beware of AIDS'), which warns street children about the dangers of unprotected sex and sex with strangers. Although I saw it lying around, I never saw it being used for educational instruction.

\footnote{53} As already mentioned, within their 'live for today' attitude, street children are also fatalistic about their lives and do not worry about illnesses. They feel that death is the same, whether it is in an accident, from AIDS or from syphilis (see Irawanto et al., 1995:33).

\footnote{54} These are particularly common among the children, and are unavoidable. They are also very difficult to get rid of, particularly as the children only have one set of clothes and are always in close physical contact, sleep together and share each other's clothes. I myself was victim to both scabies and lice on a couple of occasions. Both afflictions required scrupulous medication and the washing of all my clothing to get rid of. The children had neither the money, facilities or the inclination to do this.
more during the rainy season when it is harder to earn money and the children have to rely on finding leftovers to eat.\textsuperscript{55} I would not say, however, that the children suffered from malnutrition. In fact most of them said they ate better on the street than they had at home, which is another reason they said it was ‘nicer on the street’ (‘lebih enak di jalan’).\textsuperscript{56}

Conclusion

In the last two chapters I have discussed the process of socialisation to the Tikyan world and I have presented street children’s lives on the street as a ‘career’. In this particular chapter I have focused on how, as street children reach adolescence, they are increasingly alienated from mainstream society, which they respond to by actively challenging their marginality. Specifically, I have discussed street children’s behaviour patterns and activities as a complex combination of the necessity for survival, the determination to subvert and defy the dominant culture, the urge to find enjoyment, the desire to accumulate and display ‘subcultural capital’, and the aim to reinforce allegiance to the group. It is in these ways that street children construe and socialise themselves to conform to the group’s norms, behaviour patterns and bodily styles. Such actions result in them being alienated still further by dominant society:

People violate the rules of a society because the very act of conforming with their own way of life forces them into conflict with the culture of the dominant society[...] They act in accord with the expectations of their own reference group[...] but one’s sub-culture’s values may easily differ from and conflict another’s. The dominant political group may come to define the behavior of the subordinate groups as deviant (Sutherland, 1947).

As street children get older the contradictions in their lives begin to intensify. Simultaneously, and as is common among adolescents, they also become acutely self-conscious. Where as before they didn’t care what anyone thought of them, when they reach puberty they start to notice how society reacts to them, and they start to feel ashamed about their predicament. When the kids realise that they cannot get a KTP and return to the mainstream and get a ‘proper’ job, they become frustrated or stressed (stres) with their position and how society views them. With the increased alienation from society, the inability to earn a ‘legitimate’ income, and the lack of alternative opportunities available to them, the children often have no option but to turn more and more in on their subculture for mutual support. They do this by subverting dominant streams of thought, reinterpreting their exclusion, and by positively reinforcing street life as the best way to live: ‘it’s great in the street’ (enak di jalan).

Within this philosophy, the cuek attitude among the Tikyan indicates a defiant approach to life, and the children take it on so as to be able to cope with and subvert their powerlessness and marginalisation. Being cuek helps the Tikyan contest their imposed exclusion in the world and transform what exists to them through the creation of their own ‘specialised semiotic’ (Blackman, 1995). In order to maintain their own identity and self esteem, the Tikyan have created a symbolic means of self identification, which is easy to maintain as it is based on the human body. The Tikyan’s ‘specialised semiotic’ is their main elements of bodily style, and include their overt displays of masculinity; their shifting sexual identities; the music they play and listen to; their acts of bodily subversion or dissent (in the form of dress, tattoos, and body piercing); and their pursuit of altered states of consciousness.

This, then, is the Tikyan’s ‘style of belonging’ which helps to inscribe their lives with meaning and provides them with a ‘symbolic means of escape’ (James, 1986; Breitbart, 1998: 306). By singing subversive songs in public places and reordering the use of their own bodies, the children are challenging the source of their social problems and playing out power relationships through the medium of their bodily techniques (see James, 1966:166; Breitburi, 1998:3-6). The Tikyan style is primarily a reaction to street kid’s powerlessness, and an example of how despite their subordination, they are able to express themselves and create their own meanings. In direct defiance of dominant society, street children are taking control of their own bodies as expressions of their freedom and symbolic creativity, and as sites of contestation, pleasure and empowerment (see Willis, 1977:12). In addition

\textsuperscript{55} In his autobiography, for example, Hongkok (1995: 80) tells a story about the time he was ill from eating decaying hayon. He was very sick and slept in a gerbang (train carriage) at the station for four days, with his head throbbing and his mind flying, waiting for the illness to go.

\textsuperscript{56} The children delighted in the fact that on the street they had their own money to eat what they liked, when they liked. They said the food at home was boring, and as their parents were poor they never got chicken or fish with their rice. Eating at a warung was a source of pride for them, and made them feel affluent, dewasa (adult), and superior to kampung children.
to these objectives, the children's sex and drug lifestyles are practiced as ways for ensuring survival, seeking comfort, finding pleasure, and dealing with the psychological problems they have to face through their alienation, and which intensify as they reach adolescence.

Paradoxically, however, by creating and strengthening their symbolic boundaries of belonging, street children are simultaneously enforcing their marginality by increasingly repelling society. This is because the Tikyan's attempts to cope with their problems, adhere to their subcultural norms, and present themselves as active agents instead of a social problem, only serve to reinforce dominant society's stereotypes of them. The very fact that street kids smoke, drink, take drugs, indulge in free sex and have tattoos and body piercing, immediately puts them on the periphery. Their defiant stances and actions thus cause dominant society to look on with disdain and label them as 'deviant' or problem children, and to alienate them still further.

Vagrants Wearing Make-Up: 'No Place for a Girl'

(Chapter Seven)

Plate 7.1: Street Girls

Almost from the beginning, the presence of women in cities, and particularly in city streets, has been questioned, and the controlling and surveillance aspects of city life have always been directed particularly at women. Urban life potentially challenged patriarchal systems (Wilson, 1991:14).

All street children are marginalised by the state and mainstream society. In this chapter I seek to explain how street girls in particular suffer discrimination, and how their social position is even more marginal than that of street boys. Street girls in Yogyakarta constitute only a small minority of children living on the streets, and as in other ‘developing’ countries, are far less visible and easy to meet than the boys.1

1 In most developing countries estimates of girls as a proportion of street children populations are generally between 9 percent to 25 percent (Lucchini, 1994:a:1). Childhope states that in Southeast Asia 'girls comprise between 3 and 30 percent of the population of working and street children in a handful of cities where data is available' (Barker, 1991: 1). In the Philippines street girls are said to constitute 19 percent of the street children population (De Silva,1990). The figures for Southeast Asian countries, however, especially for Thailand and the Philippines, often include girl prostitutes. This is because although they are not synonymous the terms 'street girl' and 'child prostitute' are
This chapter illustrates how ‘ invisibility’ and other resistance tactics are necessary survival strategies for street girls in the male-dominated street world. By using the state’s ideological construction of femininity as a starting point, I discuss how social processes influence spatial behaviour on the street and, how through a process of ‘shifting marginalities’, street girls in Yogyakarta have been pushed to the margins of the street kid subculture by the Tityan (see Munry, 1990). Further, the analysis endeavours to question the notion offered by feminist subcultural theorists that ‘signs and codes...conducted through style do not really speak to women at all’, and challenges the claim that subcultural options are a male prerogative (McRobbie, 1991: 25).

By examining the lives and experiences of a group of street girls in Yogyakarta, I discuss how, despite their subordinate street status, subcultural options are available to them. I explain their behaviour patterns as survival mechanisms and strategies of resistance, which are articulated through street girls’ discourse, style, and income- seeking and leisure activities, in response to their subordinate street status. The chapter also explains how street girls negotiate different social and personal spaces for themselves, and how they have succeeded in creating their own gendered space within the street-kid subculture. I see this produced space as a ‘microworld’ which exists beside, and interconnected with, the dominant male subculture (Wulff, 1988: 21). These socio-spatial patterns are presented as ‘geographies of resistance’, and as a response to the pervasive patriarchal discourse within Indonesian society, a society which believes that girls, in particular, should not be on the street (see File and Keith, 1997). Through such an approach I hope to invoke the girls’ values of self determination, which are consistently evident in their behaviour and conversation.

Girl Subcultures

Many feminist approaches to youth subculture have criticized subcultural theory for ignoring feminist issues, and point to the masculine and sexist elements of subcultures which marginalise girls (McRobbie and Garber,1976; McRobbie and Nava, 1984; McRobbie, 1990, 1996; Taylor, 1993). In addition, and central to the concept of a ‘culture of femininity’ (McRobbie and Nava, 1984) among feminist subcultural theorists, is the contention that girls negotiate a different social space to boys, and that those girls who enter the male territory of the street do so on male terms, as girlfriends, appendages or whores (Carrington, 1993: 30). McRobbie (1991:25) in particular has stated that subculture itself may not be a place for ‘feminine excitement’:

Women are so obviously inscribed (marginalized and abused) within subculture as static objects (girlfriend, whorish or ‘gaghoo’) that access to its thrills...to drugs, alcohol and ‘style’ would hardly be compensation even for the most adventurous teenage girl.

Street girls in Yogyakarta are similarly marginalised and abused by street boys, who call them rendan in their own language, coming from kere berdandan, meaning ‘vagrants wearing makeup’. In this way the boys assert their difference from the girls, constituting them as powerless objects of sexist discourse and as inferior ‘others’ (Walkerdine,1991:5). Street girls are therefore at the bottom of the subcultural hierarchy, pushed to the margins of the street culture by boundaries created by street boys within the subculture.

By drawing on arguments posited by Carrington (1993) and Miles (1997) I contend that street girls are not ‘static objects’ or ‘mere appendages’ to street boys within the Tityan subculture (see Carrington,1993:30). Street girls do not passively accept their inferior position on the street, but actively attempt to subvert their situation through various psychological and spatial resistance strategies. They successfully play with subcultural identities and are active agents who participate in the spectacle of the street-kid subculture. For example, street girls in Yogyakarta reject

frequently used interchangeably in academic an NGO literature, and also by society. The same applies for street girls in Yogyakarta who are often viewed as prostitutes by society, an issue which will be discussed later on in this chapter. There are few figures for the number of street girls in Indonesia, although studies involving interviews with groups of street children in Jakarta report that participants were between 88 percent to 94 percent males (Landried, 1990; Soedjjar, 1989). Street girls in Yogyakarta informed me that there were ‘about fifty’ like themselves living homeless on the streets of Yogyakarta, although there are many others who live with their families in Sleman, on the streets, and in the markets.

1 In order to retain a small scale perspective within subcultural ethnography, Wulff (1988) employs the concept microculture to mean a ‘small group culture’ or a culture within a subculture, when writing about a group of twenty girls in London. She states that: ‘Although subcultures are regarded as segments of a larger, multiform culture such as...an entire society, it can yet have a large scope involving thousands...of people’.

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the label rendam as they see the word as offensive, saying that it 'hurts their feelings' (sakit hati), to be called this. Instead the girls refer to themselves as 'street kids' (anak jalanan) or the 'Park kids' (Anak Taman) which is where they live. Street girls have created their own gendered cultural space on the street, which they use as a site of autonomy and of resistance to the dominant, patriarchal forces in society and the street subculture of Yogyakarta.

The lives of street girls cannot be fully explained, however, without first appreciating why they are treated the way they are by mainstream society and street boys. It is necessary to comprehend the social environment in which street girls live; an environment which is dominated by the state's ideological construction of femininity which, in turn, is reproduced through mainstream society's discourse (Suryakusuma, 1996; Wolf, 1994; Gerke, 1993). More specifically, it is important to recognise how ideological constructions are played out on the street, and how street boys have appropriated patriarchal attitudes, despite their own alienation from mainstream society. Such an understanding of gender inequality and patriarchal power relations in Indonesian society helps to explain the stereotyping of street girls as prostitutes, the mistreatment they receive from society, and their subsequent need for 'invisibility' on the street.

State Iluism

Femininity is an experience of Otherness, and is embedded within discourse and ideology (Miles, 1997:70).

As previously explained in Chapter 2, one of the ideologies constructed by the state in the pursuit of power is a sex and gender ideology, known as State Iluism (Suryakusuma, 1987; 1990;1996). The term ilu has been re-worked and promoted by the state, and 'initiated' into a modern patriarchal state ideology, reflecting priyayi elite values, where priyayi women have been traditionally dependent on their husbands.

State Iluism represents women by placing them in a subordinate position to men, and emphasising the 'traditional' role of women as weak, passive wives and mothers, who care for their family and the state without demanding any power or prestige (Suryakusuma, 1990;1996:47). As a result of this patriarchal ideology, girl children are socialised differently to boy children and assume many adult responsibilities, including looking after younger siblings and housework, and most girls in Indonesian families take on a heavy domestic burden from a very early age. Cultural norms in Indonesia dictate that girls are 'born to marry', and are trained from an early age with the concept of how a 'good girl' should behave, and how to become 'good' wives, mothers and housekeepers (Geertz, 1961:42). By the age of six, girls receive modesty training and are taught domestic chores (Geertz, 1961:42). A girl child is expected to be very quiet, shy, deferent, and to never complain. She is kept at home, and is relatively isolated, as sociability interferes with chores (Sullivan, 1994). Sexism is also promoted in schools, where boys are encouraged to be more active and girls are punished for 'unfeminine behaviour' such as speaking out when not spoken to (Donahue, 1994:70-71). Gender role stereotyping is also being learned in schools through text books and curricula which have been approved by the government (Shirahiti,1995:169-183).

Recent studies show significant inequalities in the gender distribution of household chores in most countries, and in some cases the difference is as much as 85 per cent more hours (UNICEF, 1990: 212). In these studies it was found that girl children in Java spend at least one-third more hours per day working at home than boys (UNICEF, 1990: 212-3). This situation is especially common in poorer households where girls are expected to help their mr ber, who may well be out working all day (and night), or may even be working in a different city or country.

The reason that girls are not so visible or prolific in numbers as boys on the street, can possibly be understood in terms of the girl child being socialised differently to the boy child in Indonesia. As discussed in Chapter 2, girl children in Indonesia

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2 Childhope states that girls are now living and working on the streets in greater numbers than before. The cause, they suggest is due to 'traditional family structures which once kept girls more protected than boys are breaking down in the face of long term economic difficulties' (Baxter, 1991:1). The street girls in Yogyakarta also told me that there are more and more girls living on the streets, a sentiment that workers at Girl's agreed with. In addition to girls being socialised to stay at home, other reasons there are less homeless girls on the street have been researched by Arikar (1988: 169-171), who in his study of street children in Colombia notes several different hypotheses to explain why there are fewer girl children on the streets. One reason given is that pandemics have forced the boys out of the home, so they can be left with the girls without other mates in the house.
are not socialised to spend time on the street, or to work in the public sector, and are usually kept close to home and assigned domestic roles and duties from a very early age (Geertz, 1961, Sullivan, 1994:84). This restriction of mobility is rooted in social codes which also control access to the female body. Girls grow up with a limited spatial experience, and an internalised fear of the street as they are frequently warned against the ‘dangers’ of the streets—so they appear less appealing as an option (Katz, 1993: 88-106). The focus on ‘dangers’ such as drugs, however, may actually seem exciting to a young teenage girl stuck at home, and could compel her to leave home in search of adventure.

_Tidak Boleh_.

Social stigma and stereotyping are key mechanisms which back up and reinforce many of the restrictions placed on women in Indonesian society. Society dictates that women in Indonesia cannot _tak boleh_ go out after 9.30 in the evening, they cannot go where they please, they cannot drink alcohol, they cannot smoke, they cannot have sex before marriage, they cannot wear ‘sexy’ clothes, and they cannot leave the house without permission. They must be good, nice, kind and helpful, and stay at home to do domestic chores and to look after their children or younger siblings.  

So, women are oppressed by sex-role stereotyping in New Order ideology which limits the options available to females. There is a distinct distrust of women who break any of the unwritten rules, act independently, or leave the ‘traditional sphere’ of home and family. Male dominance is reproduced through pervasive stigmatisation and, in Indonesia, a woman without a home defies all mainstream conventions. She is seen to be ‘naughty’ (nakal), to be crossing boundaries, and to be challenging the patriarchal view of the ideal family. Thus, girls who do not conform to the female stereotype of staying at home, to be the passive ‘ideal girl’, are regarded with suspicion and are stigmatised and labelled by mainstream society (Walkerdine, 1990:51).

_Sphinx on the Street_

Due to the very nature of their existence street girls are mistrusted by mainstream society. The moral message is that the city is a dangerous place for women, and the actions and lifestyles of street girls fall outside acceptable behaviour (Wilson, 1991). Any single woman seen on the street after 9.30pm is viewed by society as sexually permissive and a ‘bad woman’ (perempuan nakal) or a prostitute, and prostitutes are officially labelled by the state as ‘women without morals’ (WTS or Wanita Tuna Suster). The way the label ‘tramp’ is interpreted when applied to women compared to men reflects similar stigmas which exist in our own society. As Lucchini (1994a:8) says of street girls in Argentina, but which is equally relevant for street girls in Indonesia:

_The street world is before all masculine. The presence of girls in the street upsets the values and representations of adults. Unacceptability takes place, and the explanation of this presence goes through a pathologisation of the girl and her family. The marginal girl and the delinquent girl are soon associated to sexuality._

Men on the streets of Yogyakarta adhere to these same patriarchal beliefs that the street is fundamentally a male space, run by men. Along with other street codes, they pass these beliefs down to street boys who hold a contemptuous and dismissive attitude towards street girls, calling them all ‘rendan’, which can be seen as a form of sexual labelling in the Tiksan discourse. Street boys feel that if girls want to live on the street then they have to comply to their rules and values, which are necessarily masculine and tough, as it is a male space. If they do not like it, then they should not be there.

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(Anatkar, 1993: 171). As Anatkar notes, however, the males would probably await the girl after leaving home. I found this was the case with a few girls I knew, who left home because of sexual abuse by a male relative.

2. See Cindi Katz (1993) for a fascinating discussion on children's spatial experience in the USA and the Sudan, the nature of restrictions on female mobility in these countries, and its gender implications for the control over and the production of space.

3. This list of things women cannot do was compiled by talking to girls and boys on the street, and asking them what was expected of women in Indonesia. Their answers clearly illustrate that gender roles are internalised at a very early age.

4. The girls were obviously one group who the boys felt they had power over on the street, and their dismissive attitude of the girls was displayed if I asked the boys the name of a particular girl. They would say ‘her name is rendan’. I would ask ‘do her real name’, to which they replied ‘that is her name, we don’t know their names, they are all rendan’.

5. Lucchini (1994a) has noted that street girls in Argentina similarly show courage and tact, in order to gain more respect from street boys. He states the ‘by taking risks identical to those of a boy, she ceases to be simply an object of desire’ (1994a:23). Childlifelope, the organisation for street girls in Argentina, was established in 1987 to support and encourage girls who were involved in street work. The organisation has been instrumental in bringing about changes in the social attitudes towards girls in the street.
Producing Margins: Tikyan versus Rendan

Street boys do not see street girls as being the same as themselves, even though they are often on the street for similar reasons. The boys feel that it is acceptable for them to be on the street, as it is a masculine space, but they strongly disapprove of girls living on the streets and think that they should be at home. Street girls are thus viewed by most street boys as being a different group and ‘other’ to themselves, and as being more comparable to prostitutes than to street children. As McLennan and Garber (1976:217) point out, males in most societies have divided the female world into ‘women-with-hearts-of-gold—who-look-after-them, and prostitutes’, and the idea that women are either virgins or whores (Walkerdine, 1990). This dichotomy is the focal point of the state’s gender ideology, and street girls are caught in its pitfalls and contradictions.

Ibu Kartini

The street boys’ attitude toward rendan is clearly illustrated in a cartoon in Jejal (Figure 7.1), which positions rendan as being entirely ‘other’ to an almost mythical figure in Indonesia, ibu Kartini or ‘Mother Kartini’ (‘Mbah Boro’ cartoon, Jejal, April, 1997: 30). In the nineteenth century, Kartini lived in a town, Jepara, which is not far from Yogyakarta. As part of the New Order State’s ideological construction of femininity, Kartini is represented in government discourse as the epitome of the ‘good woman’ with a ‘heart of gold’ in Indonesia. She has been officially sanctioned by the Indonesian government as the ideal Indonesian woman, wife and ‘mother’, and is perceived as having possessed all the nurturing, self-sacrificing qualities that a woman should desire (Tiwon, 1996:57). The cartoon suggests that if a girl does not behave in the correct and proper way, in the way Kartini is believed

to have behaved (by adhering to dominant patriarchal ideology), she has no rights, least of all equal rights to men.

![Figure 7.1: Positioning street girls as 'other'. The cartoon reads: Street boys: 'Mbah...are 'Rendan' allowed to join in Kartini day celebrations?'; Mbah: 'Say! Who says they can't?'; Girl: 'Mbah...they say that Kartini wanted women to have the same rights as men...'; Mbah: 'BUT REMEMBER KARTINI WAS NOT A "RENDAN"'.](image)

What is interesting about this cartoon, is that the history of Kartini has been reworked and her words ‘rearticulated’ by the State (Tiwon, 1996: 56-7). In reality, Kartini was a young woman who wanted to rebel against the shackles of ‘tradition’ (adat), marriage and family. She wanted to be free and independent and to not be dependent on her father or her husband, but only herself. She wrote these desires in her now famous private letters to a friend in Holland (Tiwon, 1996: 56-57). Kartini understood that it was wrong and ‘sinful’ to have such yearnings and, eventually, succumbed to the pressures of elite society by marrying a man she did not want and, subsequently, dying in childbirth aged twenty-five years old. When reading the words of Kartini: ‘I long to be free, to be allowed, to be able to make myself independent, to be dependent on no-one else...happiness is freedom’

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1 See Tiwon (1996:47-70) for a discussion on the history of Kartini and how the state remodeled her, and 'rearticulated her words' to become 'subsumed in the suffocating formulas presented to a new generation, formulas that insist on seeing the unmarried woman only as potential wife'.
(Tiwon, 1996:53), I am reminded of the same sentiments which were frequently expressed to me by street girls in Yogyakarta, almost a century after Kartini died.

Material Girls

When I first went to Yogyakarta, it was my intention to study only street boys as a subculture. Therefore, by positioning myself with the boys at first I only met street girls when they visited the Toilet thus seeing them from the boys perspective— as passive and silent, and as objects of the Tokyon gaze. The boys explained to me that rendon were street girls who were not ‘yet’ prostitutes, but who had lots of different boyfriends. They were described as ‘material girls’ (cewek materi) who only wanted money, and who would agree to have sex with them for money or a meal. Sometimes at night a boy would bring a girl with him to the Toilet, or one or two girls came on their own to visit particular boys. The girls would often go behind the tourist information office wall, beside the Toilet, with two or three boys, or off in a becak with one other boy, to a ‘dark place’, returning an hour or so later. The boys said that although they didn’t want to pay, in exchange for sex they would have to give the girls money, or pills, or buy them a meal. When the girls came to the Toilet the boys displayed a mixture of fascination and contempt, mocking them and calling them names, and even sometimes kicking or hitting them. At other times it seemed the boys felt sorry for the girls, and they sometimes gave them food and pills. They would say ‘poor them’ (kaisihan mereka), ‘it’s OK for boys to be on the street, but not for girls. They are still small and should be at home.’

'No Place for a Girl'

During group discussions and informal interviews, I asked the boys to explain why they thought it was OK for them to be on the street, but not the girls. The overwhelming response was that the street was ‘no place for a girl’. Many of the boys expressed this sentiment, and one boy said to me: 'If my little sister lived like that I would kill my father for allowing it to happen, as she should not be allowed to be on the street' (Made, 14, pers. comm., February, 1997). The boys felt that the girls should seek good jobs which are ‘more honourable’ (lebih mutia), such as a

being a domestic help (pembantu). There were also boys who felt that the girls were ‘lazy to work’ (mulus kerja), as all they did all day was ‘sit, eat, sleep, sit, eat, sleep...continuously’ (‘duduk, makan, tidur, duduk, makan, tidur terus’). This was an interesting point of view, as it is exactly the same attitude so many people in mainstream society have towards street boys.

The boys also told me that many girls lie about having a job when they do not. For example, girls will often say that they have a job at a warung, or in a shop. This is because they do not like to admit that they are living on the street, and being kept by their boyfriends. Street girls use anonymity as a means of survival, and develop elaborate techniques to hide their real identities. They will often lie about where they come from, and like the boys they invent new identities for themselves by adopting new street names. Niki (16) says this is because in the city you expect to be anonymous, but there is always the risk that someone will know you, or know of you. This is due to the many connections between the street and the villages in Central Java, as villagers, including circular migrants, come to sell goods in the market or to look for work. While they are in Yogyakarta, they often sleep on the streets or in Shoping, and learn of street stories and gossip. As the girls do not want people at home to be aware of what they are up to, they call themselves different names, so that people they know will not identify who the stories are about when they hear them.

The boys also believe that girls should not live on the street unless they are prepared to face the risks and consequences of such a decision, and accept the lore of the street. This includes the expectation that the girls will have sex with them,  

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12 The girls themselves do not want to be pembantu, and look down on girls who have this job. They say that they have done enough housework already, and do not want to do someone else’s. One day at the Tamon one of the girls turned up wearing a skirt and top, and she did look fairly normal. The other girls fell about laughing, mocking her clothes, saying that she looked like a pembantu, which I gathered was not a good look to have! This bourgeois attitude towards maids is also an indication that the street girls considered themselves to be ‘above’ such an occupation.

13 One girl, Niki (15), told me that she was studying English at university when I first met her. Others often said they lived in a boarding house (kuat), and had money sent to them from their parents. This is the story that many girls told the kampung and university boys who they met on the street. These lies can be seen as a form of resistance against the social stigma the girls entail if they tell people, including the university or kampung boys, that they sleep on the streets. I think it was also for these reasons that street boys mocked the street girls, as they felt they knew who they really were, and how they lived, although they often fooled others.
sometimes by force. It was seen as, ‘their own fault’ (salah mereka) if a girl experienced violence or was raped on the street, as she should not be there in the first place. This attitude is similar to how rape is depicted in the local media, where women are often portrayed as the ones at fault, as men cannot control their natural sex drive (hasrat). 14

Despite the fact that street boys are powerless children, marginalised and ill-treated by the control of an oppressive system, they are also perpetrators of patriarchal social relations, and street girls are one group to whom they feel superior. The boys ‘stake a claim to the mainstream’ (Murray, 1996:15), and create new margins within the street-child world. They do this by asserting their differences from street girls through male performance identities and labelling them as rendan or ‘Other’, thus assuming a moral authority over the girls, and ‘seizing power’ (Walkerdine 1990:6). As a result ‘a process of shifting marginality accommodates them while further alienating others and maintaining power at the centre’ (Murray, 1996:15). As Walkerdine (1990:5) asserts: ‘An individual can become powerful or powerless depending on the terms in which his/her subjectivity is constituted.’

Cari Rendan: Looking for Street Girls
When I first met the street girls they were occupying a male space, the Toilet– the street boy’s space. The girls were only ‘visitors’ to the Toilet, and stopped by for short periods of time, in small groups of twos or threes. The girls had tattoos and scars on their arms, they wore torn jeans, baseball caps, and cultivated a certain ‘look’ which was not dissimilar to the street boys. They said that the scars were because they were ‘stressed’, but I wanted to know more about their lifestyles and their ‘aggressive’ responses and forms of resistance to their social environment (McRobbie and Garber, 1976:210).

When they visited the Toilet, however, I found it very difficult to communicate with them as they appeared drugged on pills and alcohol, and were hard to talk to. They would just smile shyly and tell me their name and then remain silent, sitting on the pavement or the wall under the tree. One reason was because I am a bulu, and they would have had little experience of interacting with foreigners, but I also feel it was because I was a friend of the boys. In this respect I think McRobbie and Garber (1976: 209-10) are correct to suggest that the girls hanging out with the motorbike gang, identified by Willis (1972) as being ‘with the boys’. McRobbie and Garber (1976: 210) report that Willis found the girls responded to him by ‘giggling, a reluctance to talk, and by retreating into cliquishness’. I found a similar reaction among the street girls when I met them at the Toilet, and believe that this was because they identified me as ‘with’ the street boys, as I obviously knew them well. I feel that it was due to these circumstances that they behaved in a very passive and defensive way.

I also agree, however, with McRobbie and Garber’s (1976: 210) suggestion that the girls’ responses to Willis were ‘characteristic of the ways girls customarily negotiate the spaces provided for them in a male dominated and defined culture’. I could see that the Toilet was a very uneasy space for the girls to occupy, and that they did not feel ‘themselves’ in such a male-defined space.

Girls– especially young girls– may retreat from situations which are male-defined (where they are labelled and judged sexually) in to a ‘groupiness’ or cliquishness of which ‘giggling’ is one overt sign. In other situations–group solidarity between girls may push them into more aggressive response, where they use their sexuality to open avenues… The important point is that both the defensive and aggressive responses are structured in reaction against a situation where masculine definitions (and thus sexual labeling, etc) are in dominance. (McRobbie and Garber 1976: 210).

My ‘entry point’ to the girls’ social world outside of the Toilet was the street boys who seemed reluctant for me to meet them. The boys did not want me to accompany them to Shopping on their nocturnal visit to look for rendan (cari rendan) for sex, as they said it was dangerous, and unsafe for me to go with them to the places where the rendan and banci hang out. I also think it was because my presence would have cramped their style, as their sole reason for going was to have sex. Further, the boys could not understand why I was at all interested in going to meet the girls, as they could only think of the girls in one way– as sexual objects. They would look at me in amusement saying; ‘What! You want to watch?’; or they

14 See Berman (1997) for a discussion of ‘Narratives of Rape’ which exist in Indonesian society and the Yogyakarta press.
would joke with me saying 'Hattie wanna become a rendan'. I determined that I had to meet the girls in their own space, when I was not with the boys.

I began my search by going to Shoping and Beringharjo markets on my own to look for street girls. On my visits I met much younger girls (aged five or six years) who were usually on their own begging, sitting on the pavement by traffic lights or mingling with shoppers in the market. Their mothers were not far away, and they were operating under their parent’s instructions. These girls still live with their families, and are taken by their parents to the traffic lights to do a day’s work begging, sometimes with their younger siblings, and are collected in the evening. They usually ‘dress down’ into rags and dirty faces, in order to instill pity in passers-by who are more likely to give to young ‘poor’ looking children (Hardiono and Anwar, 1992). Their parents are very poor and are homeless, living in Shoping (where they have a market stall), or in very cramped conditions in the poor kampung near to the river. One girl I met frequently sat all day at the traffic lights near to the market. She only spoke Javanese (which I do not speak) but it was explained to me by the boys (who know all the families living in Shoping) that her father was a becak driver and her mother a prostitute. The boys would always feel sorry for her and give her money when they passed.

Taman
The boys often told me that the girls were at Shoping, but if I went there—day or night—rarely found any girls who I had previously met at the Toilet, and never gathered in a group as I imagined they would be. It was not until I got to know one girl in particular at the Toilet that I was invited to visit the girls in their own territory, at the City Park (Taman), to the south of Malioboro, on the opposite side of the road to Shoping. It was here that finally I met the girls in their own space, and viewed their lives and attitudes in a completely different light to when I saw them at the Toilet.

Plate 7.2: The Taman

Taman is a gathering and sleeping place for a group of about twelve street girls (aged between 13-20 years). The girls sleep and keep their possessions in a small house at the gates of the park, and during the day they hang out in a sheltered part of the building and in other parts of the park (Plate 7.2).

Plate 7.3: Hanging out at the Taman

The Taman is a space the girls can call their own, and a place to which they can retreat if they have had enough of the outside male-dominated street world. The girls who live in this park say that they are ‘from’ the Taman, and call themselves
the ‘Park Kids’. (Anak Taman). When they are in this space, their behaviour is very different from when they are in the male dominated space of the Toilet, as they are far more vocal, gregarious and confident.

Resistance to Patriarchal Social Structures

Women are not passive victims of circumstance locked inside a private sphere, unable or unwilling to make a difference in their own lives. Instead...women occupy multiple and shifting sites, employ a range of strategies, and experience a wide variety of spatial relations...Women are able to negotiate spatiality in a variety of ways: while some do largely in their spaces of confinement, some as a strategy of resistance are able to breach the boundaries imposed on them (Huangs and Yeoh 1996: 107).

As a result of the social environment they live in—one dominated by patriarchal discourse—street girls adopt particular styles, behaviour patterns and discourse in their everyday lives. These are integrated into their lifestyle as survival strategies, and as strategies of resistance to their marginalisation and sexual subordination in a male-dominated street life.

Tonight I was sitting at Yu Siem (the lesehan opposite the Toilet) with two girls, Sia and Ely. I had just finished dressing Sia’s hand that had 4 stitches after a friend cut her with a knife because of ‘too much emotion (anak)’ it’s normal for friends’, she told me. Krik (one of the park kids aged about 14) came and sat beside me and said ‘this is a rendan’ pointing at Ely and then, ‘this is also a rendan’, pointing at Sia. Ely bit Krik’s leg, while Sia just laughed at him, got up and walked back towards the Toilet. I asked Krik ‘don’t you like rendan’, and he said he didn’t know them, to which I replied ‘that’s not true, you have lots of friends who are rendan’. He smiled and said yes he did know them but that he didn’t really like them, that they were nakal, naught v, which is normal for boys, but girls shouldn’t be like that as they are still small (wanita kecil, he used his hand to demonstrate how small they are). Ely sat and glared at him and then, mid-sentence, he got up and left. Once he had gone back to parking I asked Ely if she minded being called rendan. She said she didn’t really care, but that the girls themselves don’t call themselves rendan, just ‘anak jalanan’, street kids. She said that mainstream society (‘masyarakat aman’) think that any girl who is out on the street at night ‘after 10’o’clock’ is like all bad women (‘perempuan nakal’); a prostitute. I asked her how that makes her feel, and she replied ‘biar aja’, (let them!). She then said that although people thought that, it was still far better being on the street than being ‘samped’ (stiffed), in the house where you “hunam-nunuran kecil” (see really fed up). I then asked: Nickie: ‘Kamu senang di jalan?, (‘Are you happy (living) in the street?’)

Ely: ‘Senang dong! (‘Of course I’m happy!’).

Ely: ‘Itu kita (‘That’s so nice about (living in) the street’),

Ely: ‘Bebas mandiri, tidak ada dimarahin. Di rumah sibuk terus...harus kerja loi, kerja lu..kerja-kerta. Buat com di ruang. Waktu saya pulang saya dimarahin, sehingga nak mau pulang lagi. Lebih enak di jalan’, (‘You’re free and independent, there isn’t anyone to tell you off. At home you are constantly busy,

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you have to do this job, do that job, working, working all the time. It’s boring at home. When I went home I was shouted at so now I don’t want to go home again. It’s much nicer in the street’). (Field notes, 24 January, 1997).

Leaving home itself can therefore be seen as a rebellion, and as a street girl’s first refusal of ideological constraints placed upon her. Many of the girls came from small towns and villages in the Central Java district, particularly the very poor areas of Wonosari and Wowoso. Boys also come from these areas, but jokingly refer to them as, ‘the rendan place’ (tempat rendan), as so many girls come from there.

The city offers many attractions and more opportunity than the village, and is often a source of liberation for the girls, as the factory is for Wolf’s (1992:1996) ‘factory daughters’. In Indonesia girls are excluded from public spaces and are forbidden from leaving the house; to compensate they often watch television avidly. They are fascinated by soap operas, and consume media and TV images of the bright lights and glamorous city lifestyles which seem so much more inviting to them than their boring domestic existence. With the pervasiveness of communication media into the villages, almost all girls in Indonesia have been exposed to the powerful and glamorous female images of the Nineties portrayed as free and independent, such as Madonna, Sarinah, and Dangdut stars. These women have become strong role models for young girls. Although it is difficult to assess the direct effect of mass media on the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, the images of global youth culture in magazines and on TV, are far more pervasive than even the government’s ideological construction of femininity, and much more appealing as an agent of socialisation to a young girl.

Street girls in Yogyakarta told me that there are now more girls living on the streets than ever before, a sentiment with which the NGO Girls agrees. The organisation Childhope also states that girls are now living and working on the streets in greater numbers than before. The cause, they suggest, is due to "traditional family structures which once kept girls more protected than boys are breaking down in the

Sarinah, a glamorous Indonesian film star who was often in the news when I was there, as she had escaped from prison after being accused of having huge quantities of the drug ecstasy in her house. She was later discovered in a supermarket in Los Angeles, USA.
face of long term economic difficulties' (Barker, 1991:1). Although there is no doubt that the style of economic growth is affecting families in a detrimental way, I also feel that there are more girls living on the streets in Indonesia due to the impact of globalisation. Girls, in particular, are restricted by the culture of conformity and sexist role stereotyping which exists in Indonesia, and are rebelling against it.

The phenomenon of 'loose girls' (perek) in Jakarta is an example of the way in which Indonesia's youth is being effected by the process of globalisation. Perek are young middle-class girls who are taking control of their own lives, expressing their self determination, and 'experimenting' with their sexuality and new-found independence (Murray, 1993a). As Murray (Murray 1993a: 5) says of perek, but which can also apply to the street girls in Yogyakarta:

These girls are influenced by the commodification of society and rising expectations created by the media and advertising, and reject the superficial morality which would curtail their ability to fulfil those materialistic expectations. They emphasise their autonomy, [and] have sex with whoever they feel like.

Girls at the Taman told me of how they left home because they were 'bored of being stuck in the house all day' doing domestic chores, and not being allowed out. They wanted to escape, to be 'free as a bird', and stressed how much they enjoy living on the street with friends who feel the same way, being able to make their own decisions, to be independent and living as they please. Kartini expressed herself similarly in her letters, but due to her class and the era she lived in, she did not rebel. Also like Kartini in her time, street girls are very aware of existing social rules and the image which they create by living as they do. As illustrated in my field notes, however, they have chosen to ignore these social constraints and say it does not bother them. They say they 'could not care less' (cuet) about society's attitudes, and to biarir. Such responses are one way the girls resist the claims of dominant groups in mainstream society.

Violence

Other girls told me that they left home because of violence or abuse. Once on the street, and having escaped the stifling conditions of home life, girls find, however, that they are still not 'free as a bird' from the constraints of patriarchal culture, and that the street-kid subculture is not 'magically protected' from dominant gender constructions (see Miles, 1997:71). Instead, they find that it is the same ideology which rules the street as the home, and that the relationship between street boys and girls is by no means egalitarian. On the street the girls also face the very real threat of violence and rape, and are far more vulnerable physically than their male peers. I heard many stories of the girls being beaten by their boyfriends, as well of rape and attack by men on the street. One girl was once forced to have sex by a security guard in shoping, in exchange for not being arrested for not having a KTP. Like the street boys, many of the girls do not have identification, and are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse of their human rights by authorities. The girls told me that if you were caught without your KTP, you would be arrested for two or three days, during which time you would be beaten or raped, and then released. They also said it was 'common' to be raped or to be forced to have sex without any payment. Street boys are often the worst perpetrators.

Street girls often live in fear of particular men who want them to be their 'girlfriend', and who are angry and become aggressive if they do not agree. Without a boyfriend to protect them the girls are vulnerable to attack from these men, who really just want sex. This is one reason that girls take boyfriends, as a

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16 See Murray (1993a:5; 1993b:36) for a discussion on perek, an acronym for 'perempuan eksperimenal', or 'experimental girls'.
17 See also Wolf (1992) who had similar findings among 'factory daughters' in Central Java. The girls are 'bored at home' (1992:1) and of their domestic chores, and seek factory work on their own initiative without asking their parent's permission. Wolf states that the girls 'resist being pushed to the narrow edge circumscribed by patriarchal norms that bind women to their children and families' (Wolf, 1992: 261), and instead rebel against their parents who try to make them stay at home and look after the household. They do this because they want to be independent and take control of their own lives, so that they have their own money to buy makeup and clothes. See also ' A Decision' (Bisnoi, 1995), a short story of a girl who defies the pressure of friends, family, and society and moves to the city to take control of her life.

18 The closest translation to biarir in this context would be 'let people think what they like'. This attitude towards a judgemental society was quite usual among the girls in the Taman. As with the street boys, the words cuet and biarir peppered the street girls conversations.
19 Sia (14) told the story of how since she was about 12 she was often beaten by her stepfather for being naughty and spending too much time out of the house. This only resulted in her spending more time on the street.
form of protection. It is considered better to be with one boy and protected, rather than be vulnerable to all boys and men on the street.

The worst attack which happened while I was in Yogyakarta was when one of the Taman girls, Ade (15), was abducted by eight kampung boys with whom she had been drinking one night, near to the Alun-Alun. The boys got her very drunk on whisky and then forced her to swallow a huge quantity of pills, about 40 red ones she said (these were probably refusil, pills for epilepsy, that are bought cheaply on the black market in order to get stoned). That was the last she remembers, and the Taman girls were very worried when she went missing. Finally, she turned up on Malioboro one afternoon three days later, dazed and confused. She ‘woke up’ when she hit the ground having been thrown from a fast-moving car which she remembers as being white. Her arm was broken from when one of the boys slammed it in a door at a house she was kept at. She remembers little else, apart from being kept in a room somewhere. Her body was covered in cuts and bruises, and she was noticeably traumatised by the incident and very much needed help.

There are no rape crisis centres or counselling services in Yogyakarta but, thankfully, the new street girl NGO, HaatSwasti, was able to look after her.\textsuperscript{39} Going to the police was out of the question, and the girls said she would probably be raped again if she went there.

**Girl Power**

It must be recognised that street girls are often seeking freedom from the stifling constraints of home life, but end up embracing one form of oppression (the street culture) while escaping another (the home). As Miles (1997:76) suggests, however: ‘Subcultural space as such does not guarantee freedom from constraint, but for some it does provide a site of reflection and negotiation’. For the girls their subculture is a site of resistance to challenge ideas of femininity and the feminine subject positioning of the New Order state. The street girl subculture is a space which is used to understand and reassess the self, and to feel that one belongs in a family of like-minded people. It is also a space in which to express disenchantment with society, its lack of opportunities, and its apparent dismissal of women by men.

Once on the street, the girls are forced to negotiate their place and identity politics, by developing various strategies for survival and safety through different productions and uses of space in the city. As a response to their male dominated environment they have erected and maintain a group boundary (physically located at the Taman). By banding themselves together they can enjoy relative safety, as they realise that, other than taking a boyfriend, the only way of protecting themselves on the street is to form a gang. McRobbie (1976:221) who, in the past, has commented on the fact that girls do not ‘need groups’, or have the masculine desire to ‘hang around together’ has recently stated that: ‘Gangs are part of the disconnected fragmented expressions of dissent that characterise feminism in the Nineties’ (Brinkworth, 1997:133). This phenomenon is powerfully illustrated in Brinkworth’s (1997) work on girl gangs and street violence in Britain. She notes that girls are actively involved in street crime, robberies and drug deals and, where

\textsuperscript{39} In November 1996 a new NGO for street girls called HaatSwasti was started in Yogyakarta by several women’s organisations, and with an advisory role from Giri. Girls have always been reluctant to take in street girls, as they have anticipated problems between the boys and girls (including bongak boys, lots of babies), and also from the kampung authorities who would not tolerate girls and boys living in the same house. There was also the fear that any house for street girls only would be regarded as a brothel by the authorities and local community, and may even be used as such. For these reasons it took a long time for the NGO to be created, and for an open house for street girls to be established. HaatSwasti started with an ‘open house’ near to the Taman, and an older girl was nominated as the house mother. She helped herself and others to find street girls to tell them about the open house. Many girls were reluctant at first to stay in the house, as they wanted to sleep with their boyfriends in the Taman (the kampung authorities would not allow men visitors in the house between the hours of 9pm and 6am. This rule is the same for most kampungs, and my kampung had the same rule). The girls would visit the house in the daytime to have a meal and to rest. Still at the experimental stage, the NGO is the first of its kind in Indonesia, and is experiencing teething problems, such as the girls wanting to bring their boyfriends back and many girls becoming pregnant. The street boys responses to the new NGO were interesting as many boys were upset about the new open house, and there were some problems of jealousy and anger from the street boys because of the rumah rendas as they called it (the rendas house), a place which was a defined female space where they could not go. The boys felt that they had a right to visit the house when they wanted, although the girls did not always wish them to. One Malioboro boy in particular became very angry when he learnt about the house, demanding to know where it was, and would not accept the argument that street girls were entitled to their own open house, as they were not permitted to sleep at the Giri houses. It occurred to me that by providing the girls with a place for refuge and protection from the street, as well as the provision of occasional meals (which they cooked themselves), the open house meant that they were not so dependent on the boys for their livelihood and protection. I feel that the open house changed the power dynamics between the street girls and boys, as it gave the girls a sense of identity. After the house opened I noticed a significant increase in the confidence of the girls who went to the house; it gave them a sense of belonging. The girls “belonged” to the NGO, and chose its name which increased their feelings of identity and self worth. Some of the boys did not like this change, as the girls were one group who they felt they had power over, and the open house eroded some of this power. This attitude of men feeling that their power is threatened due to the actions of NGOs empowering women is not an unusual one in the developing world, but is a difficult one to deal with.
as in the past, they would have been 'hangers-on of notorious male gangs', today they form their own gangs and cultivate the reputation of being 'hard' as a method of survival for: 'If you can't work a reputation on the street, people will see you as a piece of dirt'. 21 Similarly, the street girls in Yogyakarta have seen how aggression and the male approach commands respect on the street and in the home, and they copy it, thus gaining more confidence as well as status on the street. Particular behaviour patterns and ways of dressing are therefore 'integrated' into the girls' lifestyle as a survival strategy (Lucchini, 1994a).

Style and Survival: Sex, Drugs and Dangdut
As discussed in Chapter 5, style is viewed as an important aspect of subcultures by subculture theorists, and style and a certain 'look' is also very important to street girls (see Hebdige, 1979:132; Willis, 1977:10) Street girls almost always wear jeans, men's shirts, and cut their hair short, or hide it in baseball caps, simultaneously 'refusing' the construction of femininity in Indonesian society, and creating a 'hard' image (Hebdige, 1979:3). Street girls also identify being female with being vulnerable, and for these reasons reject female clothing. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate a girl from a boy when dressed this way, which is also a survival strategy for the girls as it makes them less visible, and less a target for attack. The girls also adopt masculine attitudes and behaviour in order to assert themselves in a male-dominated society, and to adhere to the street culture which is vital for survival.

Drugs
As with the boys, drug taking is integrated into the street girls' lifestyles and they regularly take drugs and alcohol to suppress inhibitions, as a form of enjoyment, and in order to face dangerous or unpleasant situations or challenges. 22 The Taman girls smoke cigarettes in public (something 'not done' by women in Indonesia), drink vodka or whisky and, as a form of diversion and escapism, they take pills which they buy off the becak drivers or Malioboro boys. 23

Pills help you to forget bad thoughts and problems. They make you fly, sometimes for as long as three days, depending on how many you take. When you wake up you can't remember anything of what you did, it's great! (Rana, (15), pers. comm., November, 1996).

The alcohol and pills help the girls release rage, frustration and dissatisfaction with their circumscribed female role, and assist in reducing anxiety and stress. Sometimes they also take morphine or heroin, administering it through razor cuts in their arms as they do not have needles. They mix it with their blood and then suck; 'it tastes nice' ('rasanya enak'), the girls explained to me. Although I often heard the girls talk about it, I never saw them take anything through their cuts. They said that heroin was not 'very common' ('begitu marak'), but if they do buy some, they share one packet, costing about Rp. 40,000 ($20) between five or six of them.

Bodily Style

Like street boys, many of the girls had tattoos on their arms and torso, and they liked to tattoo their boyfriend's name on their hand as a sign of love.

Plate 7.4: An 'Act of Refusal'

As well as tattoos and body piercing, the scars from the razor cuts on the girls arms are a sign of their subculture and present a tough image (Miles, 1997:71). The girls often said that the scars are due to stress, and that they made them with razor blades

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21 Brinkworth (1997: 132) quoting a seventeen year old 'Peckham Rude Girl', a member of a notorious Southeast London girl gang.
22 The girls told me that they take pills about three times a week, or more often if they can afford it.
23 Some of the older street boys make regular drug runs to Jakarta to buy ecstasy and other pills. They bring them back to Yogyakarta and sell them on the street to local youth, students and rich night-clubbers on Malioboro.
in order to be able to 'feel pain'. I also found that the girls were quite proud of their scars as it made them appear tough, and they often wore short sleeved tops so that the scars and tattoos were readily observed, and directly readable. Almost all the street girls have these scarifications, and I read them as 'a social inscription', which can be understood as 'a public collective, social category, in modes of inclusion or membership' (Grosz, 1994:140-1); as a sign of belonging to their culture.

Miles (1997: 69) states that 'subcultural space, especially where it provides objections to ideologies and ways of being, is never outside of discourse', and similarly, street girls' identities are mediated in relation to the sexual discourse in Indonesian society. In the context of body piercing, Miles (1997:68-9) refers to Hedige's (1988) work on semiotic readings, and how women play defiantly with signifiers, and 'play back images of women as icons'.

Here the female body was viewed as a site of empowerment, a place where power can be appropriated within sexual discourse...a symbolic means of reinscribing the body...and if the body is the bottom line, then piercing becomes an act of refusal- a tactical block, a place to regain control. (Miles, 1997:69).

Piercing, tattooing and scarification can be seen, therefore, as acts of refusal and as objections to dominant ideology which seeks to control women's bodies. Bodily style is often a response to the experience of exclusion for adolescents, and as a method of erecting and maintaining group boundaries, and for establishing a 'fixed social position' and group identity (James, 1986: 156). 'Set aside from society they set themselves further apart through using their bodies as a means of symbolic expression' (James,1986:156-158). By piercing or scarring themselves, girls take control over their own bodies as sites of contestation, pleasure and empowerment.

Street girls' style of dress and body adornment is very similar to street boys, as they are identifying themselves with the street kid subculture. It is part of the street scene to look and act tough and not too feminine, and such a look is essential if girls wish to remain and be accepted on the street. By wearing men's clothes, drinking alcohol, taking pills, and cutting her arms with a razor, a girl is displaying how tough and 'hard' she is, thus 'working a reputation on the street', and placing herself on a more equal level to both her female and male counterparts, who respect such a display (Brinkworth, 1997). This is particularly true when the girls go to Malioboro and visit the street boys areas.

When they are in the Tamans, however, or at the entertainment park (THR) where they go to dance to dangdut music and look for boyfriends, the girls wear sexy clothes, including short skirts and sleeveless shirts which show off their tattoos and scars. At other times the scars on their arms would concern the girls, particularly if they were talking about the possibility of returning to mainstream society, as they feared they would not be 'accepted' because of these. One girl wanted to go home but said that she couldn't and was ashamed (malu) to travel on the bus because of her arms. I pointed out that she was never malu when she wore sleeveless tops to the entertainment park or Tamans. She said that was different, and when she was with 'normal society' she wanted to look like them, and not to stand out as a 'bad girl'.

Sex and Prostitution

Within the street-kid subculture, a street girl is able to use her sexuality as a weapon, and as a means of gaining power over the boys; something she would not be able to do in the mainstream. For example, although the Toilet was a place where the street girls often experienced ridicule and contempt from street boys, at other times they were desired by the Talyan, due to the possibility of sex in exchange for money or a meal, which the girls sometimes do.

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24 See Batty (1998:20) for a discussion on how cutting oneself and self harm can be a survival strategy, and a way in which people are able to release distress, especially women who have suffered years of physical, sexual and mental abuse. 'People only harm themselves when extremely distressed and are much calmer afterwards. It's a way for them to express unspeakable emotions, often related to trauma like sexual abuse'.

25 Short sleeved tops are rarely worn by women in Indonesia, as the upper arm is considered to be a very sexual place that should remain unexposed in Muslim society.
Street girls are often perceived by Indonesian society to be prostitutes. In reality, however, prostitution is only an occasional way of obtaining an income for street girls, and it is not something practiced on a regular basis, while some girls never do it. Some, for example, are still constrained by residues of their home culture and believe that they should not have sex, or if they have sex with one boy they feel they must marry him. Prostitution is simply one survival strategy and the girls do not regard themselves (or each other) as a prostitute if they occasionally trade sex for money or, more often, a meal. As Lucchini (1994a:6) states: "While it is true that the girls living in the street sometimes turn to prostitution, it is incorrect to identify them as professional prostitutes."27

There is the possibility that girls will move from the street world to prostitution, as they have something to market and may choose to sell their bodies rather than live as street children (Aptekar, 1988: 166). The two worlds of street children and prostitution are separate, however, despite the fact that they are often seen as synonymous in government, society, and NGO rhetoric.28

Two girls I knew at the Taman, Emny and Rama, made the decision to go into prostitution. They had been approached on Malioboro by two pimps (germo), a man and a woman, and were invited to Sarkem, the red light district to the north of Malioboro. Once there they were given new clothes and were encouraged to become prostitutes.29 Some months later when I returned to Yogyka for a short visit, these girls had already moved to the beach and were living in a brothel. The

Taman girls who had visited them there told me that they have to pay 2,000 rupiah (about US$1) a day for a room in the 'madame' (Ibu Rama) of the house. Some girls were considering joining them, as they 'earn their own money', something which all the girls would love to do, in order to be independent.

The girls also told me that Emny and Rama would not be able to return to Malioboro as it would be 'ugly' when they met with the Girli boys, who would ridicule them. It seemed that once a girl has decided to go into prostitution, she can no longer inhabit the street as a street girl. However, if she chooses to leave prostitution it is possible to return to the street, as two other street girls I knew had been prostitutes before they came to live on the street.

Besides prostitution, other survival strategies for street girls include busking (ngamen) on buses, at food stalls, or in the market. While I was in Yogyakarta I only saw one street girl ngamen with a guitar on a regular basis along Malioboro. In general, girls would say that they earn money ngamen, but it was not true, and they would only occasionally go to ngamen if they were invited to do so by boys. Usually, they hung out at the IMKA bus stop with the pengamen boys, but did not participate. The boys sometimes permit the girls to join them in busking as it means they get more money due to public sympathy for the girl, as it is unusual to see young girls singing for money. Often, however, the girls complain that they have no 'skills' by which to earn their own income, and they have to rely on being given money by other people and their boyfriends.30

Boyfriends

'Kera bordana' (Vagrants wearing makeup) they laughed as they put on their makeup (pale powder and lipstick) before I took their photographs (parrot) in the Taman: sitting on concrete mushrooms and leaning against concrete deer. Alone and together, but always serious. Sylvia was crying when I arrived, and showed me a letter from Yalidi, her boyfriend. He had left it by her hand, so she found it when she woke up in the hut. It said that he loved her but he had to go, not home but some place else, and he could not be with her anymore. She was crying and after comforting her for a while I started talking to Rama.

27 It is not known how many girls prostitutes there are in Indonesia, and UNICEF cite the difficulty of obtaining data as one of the major factors hampering its efforts to effectively cope with child prostitution in Indonesia (Journal Peet, 13 September 1995). A local NGO (SAMIN) in Yogyakarta is currently conducting a survey on child prostitutes in several Indonesian cities, including Yogyakarta. The report, however, is experiencing problems with its data collection (personal communication with SAMIN director, December, 1996).

28 I knew of one group of girls who hung out in the daytime in Beringharjo market on the second floor, where a Dutch social worker, Rolandt Orakken, had since then curtailed the year (Orakken, 1996). She told me precisely where I could find the girls, but when I got there I found they had moved away. I later found out that a few girls had gone to Batam to become prostitutes, and another girl had gone home because she was pregnant. Some time later the girls who had gone to Batam returned to Yogyakarta on 'holiday'. They were wearing expensive clothes and jewellery and told stories of their frequent trips to Singapore which intrigued the Taman girls who knew them. Later, some of the Taman girls discussed their decision with consorts, and said that the girls had 'changed' since they had been in Batam, as they used to be so nice, but now they were sumbong (drunk-up). Other girls, however, were impressed and wanted to go with them to Batam.

29 Personal communication with Emny and Rama, March, 1997.

30 The girls often compared themselves with other people living on the streets, particularly street boys, who did have 'skills' by which they earned a living. Owing to the gender division of labour on the street, however, girls could not shoe-shine boots or make handicrafts or bask which is how many people earn their living on the streets of Yogyka. (In Jakarta, however, there were girls busking on the buses). Without these income-earning opportunities, street girls were forced to rely on their boyfriends for survival, unless they made the choice to go into prostitution.
Boyfriends are street girls' principal form of income and protection. They are sought after to buy regular meals and clothes and generally to take care of them. Having lots of boyfriends is known as being a cewek mauter and, as Ratna above, the girls openly call themselves that. Boyfriends are often university boys, local kampung boys or street boys from different areas in the city. Although there is a lot of status conferred to 'going out' (pucuran) with a Maliobaro boy, they are not considered to be so desirable, as they are well known for sleeping with the girls and then not giving them money or a meal. They are also liable to ridicule the girls and call them names the next day.

Boyfriends often sleep with the girls at the Taman. This is considered to be totally unacceptable behaviour by mainstream society in Indonesia, where sex before marriage is taboo, and living together out of wedlock is illegal. Sylvie (14), who slept at the Taman with her boyfriend, a street boy, was on the street because she wanted to be with him. She did not have any problems at home but decided to leave so she could be with her boyfriend.12 Not long after that her elder sister followed her, as she had visited her sister at the Taman and was attracted to the street life, and just wanted to follow (ikut-hutan saja) (pers. comm. with Ety (17), Sylvie's elder sister).

12 Some girls I met claimed to have a kus but said that they never sleep there and sleep on the street with their friends. Although this may have been a lie to cover the fact they were homeless, it may have been true. One reason for this is that all kus (boarding houses) are single sex and have a curfew of 3pm, so if the girls want to stay out after this time they cannot go home until the morning. This was the rule in my kus, and I often had to sleep with the boys at the open house when I was locked out and had failed at trying to wake up (by shouting and ringing on the door bell) any of my tenan kus. I eventually moved because of this. Further, boys are forbidden to enter girls' kus and if girls have boyfriends and want to sleep with them, the only place to do so is on the street (as even if the boys do have a kus, the same regulations apply to time and girlfriends apply). The other alternative is to finesse or cheap hotel, not only is this expensive, but many families do not allow unmarried couples.

There is always a lot of talk about boyfriend at the Taman, with emotional dramas being played out daily, involving constant splitting up, writing love notes and getting back together again. The girls are in a weak position as they have no economic strength, but as long as he has money, a boy can dump one girl for another without any trouble. I found that the main form of rivalry between street girls is over boys, but that the girls also feel it is very easy to find another boyfriend if they lose one. They will also finish with one boyfriend if they get 'bored' of him, or if he does not give her enough money to eat and buy clothes. In this respect, boyfriends are usually judged on how well they provide for a girl. A boy is seen as 'good' if he gives her food everyday and buys her new clothes. Usually, however, the girls have two or three boys on the go, so as this means they are assured regular meals and an income, as well as more opportunities for going out at night.

Nuning (15) told me that she would really like to go out with a bule (white boy), and said everyone would, as they are all handsome and rich, and she would love to (go there) ("pergi ke sama"), meaning overseas. She lamented the fact that she could not speak English, and so was too shy to go to the Bordelob Bar (near Sororwiyahan) to find herself a tourist boyfriend. She had recently ditched her kampung boyfriend of a year, because he did not like her sleeping on the street, or drinking alcohol and taking pills. Similarly, another girl had frequent fights with her street boy boyfriend because he did not like her being drunk on the street at night. Once he threatened to leave her, and she wrote him a love letter, begging him not to, and saying if he did she would just drink more. In the end he left her for another girl. She was heartbroken, and things were made worse by the boy ridiculing her in the street, calling names after her, and saying things like 'I've tasted you, I know what you're like', in front of his friends.

It was for these reasons Ety told me that despite the physical dangers involved in being alone (namely lack of protection), she was sick of the nasty side of going out with a boy (keburukan pacaran). She said she did not want a boyfriend as they started off being really nice to you but it is not long before you see a nasty side come out, a side that likes to get drunk, and to fight. Ety complained that boys only
want one thing, and that they were nice to you until they got it, but once they had it, it was not long before you were 'ridiculed constantly' ('diejek terus'). She told me how this had happened to many of the girls, including herself. Soon after this conversation, however, she started pacaran with one of the Girls boys and slept with him every night at the Toilet. Ety was really happy, and told me that she now felt safe at night, as she had had a lot of problems with one man in the Alun-Alun who had hit her and tried to 'force her' to be his girlfriend. She had run away, but as a result she had stayed away from the square for weeks, in order to avoid this man.

Sex can therefore be seen as a survival strategy for the girls, as they consent to sex in return for protection on the street, as well as the provision of food and occasional clothing. There are, however, risks involved in these arrangements, namely pregnancy and disease, including HIV/AIDS. This is because girls are in a weak position economically and seek intimacy with their partners in order that they will stay around and continue to protect them and buy them food. A street girl does not insist on the use of a condom, for if she does she 'impedes the achievement of intimacy', and the boy is less likely to stay with her for long (Law, 1997:115). If she refuses sex without a condom, the boy is unlikely to comply, and he can either force her anyway, or go and find another girl who will not insist. Girls who become pregnant are often dumped by their boyfriends who do not want to face the responsibility. They then face the options of going back home (which some of the girls do, facing the anger of their parents and the social stigma in the village); marrying whoever will have them; undergoing an expensive, illegal and dangerous abortion; or going into prostitution so they can be assured an income to care for their child.33

32 See Law (1997) who discusses the same phenomenon among girls in Cebu, Philippines. Bar girls do not use condoms as they seek ‘intimacy’ with their Western clients whom they view as a possible ticket out of the sex industry.
33 One 14 year old, Sita went missing for a long time after she discovered that she was pregnant and her boyfriend of a year (a street boy) dumped her. She was heart broken as although he often hit her, he was very good about buying her food and clothes. She had been with one other boy before this one, but had dumped him because he did not look after her or buy her food often enough. When she discovered that she was pregnant she walked here foot to Borodolair (40 km away), hoping that she could improvise a miscarriage, but to no avail. When another street boy discovered she was pregnant he declared to me that he was in love with her and wanted to marry her, and take care of her. He announced his intentions to her, stating that they would get a house together and she and the baby

Spaces for Street Girls: Geographies of Resistance

Space is neither dominator nor liberator: it does, however, provide a context within which occur struggles to dominate and overcome domination (Breithaupt, 1984:72).

Due to the social environment they inhabit street girls have a different perspective of the city to street boys, and specific ways of negotiating and using social and personal spaces for their everyday survival. As described, street girls have been firmly characterised as ‘other’ by society, as their lifestyles fail outside acceptable behaviour, they are seen to be crossing unacceptable boundaries by living on the street, which is seen as a male space. Despite their stigmatisation, however, street girls have managed to carve out their own niches in the city, as a resistance to the alienation they experience every day. One way they have done this is by constructing their own gendered gathering space at the Tamans; a female dominated space, to which they can retreat if they have had enough of the outside male world.

The girls gather in a fairly large group at the Tamans but when they are not hanging out there, they move around the city in twos or threes.34 Partly, this is to be less visible in the masculine street world due to the threat of violence or rebuke. Besides the need for invisibility, however, girls also move around the city in small groups because they do not have the same masculine dependency on groups or solidarity as street boys. This is something that McRobbie and Garber (1976:221-2) note when discussing the reasons for the ‘invisibility’ of girl subcultures.35

34 Sometimes there were up to 10-15 girls hanging out at the Tamans.
35 As mentioned earlier, however, McRobbie has also recently noted the tendency for girls in the nineties to adopt masculine styles and form gangs as an expression of dissent, and due to their need for protection and to survive on the street (Brinkworth, 1997).
Gendered Geographies

The effects of these geographies of resistance are multiple, fluid, dynamic and in some ways unsustainable or at least unintended (File, 1997:27).

When comparing the mental map drawn by Emy (15) to the maps drawn by the boys in the previous chapter, it can be seen that street girls occupy different areas in the city to street boys (Figure 7.2). This is because the girls use the city differently to street boys. For example, as well as sleeping and ‘hanging out’ at the Taman, the girls visit different places in the city including THR (the public entertainment park), the ‘BB’ (The Borobudur Bar, a tourst bar where sex workers operate), ARMA (a radio station where young people hang out- nongkrong), SE (a supermarket), and the Mutiara Hotel on Malioboro, where they nongkrong at night.

![Map of Yogyakarta](image)

Figure 7.2: Emy’s (15) map of Yogyakarta

During the daytime the girls are much less mobile than street boys, partly due to their lack of income earning activities, and they usually just hang out and sleep at the Taman, eat at one of the warungs in the Alun-Alun, or go wandering around Shoping for entertainment. At night they are highly mobile and move around the city far more than the street boys. This is because unlike street boys, who usually only mix socially with each other, street girls move between different social groups in Yogyakarta, in order to find different boyfriends and sources of income.

The girls do identify themselves as ‘street kids’ and sometimes hang out with street boys, but an integral part of their daily coping strategies involves moving across social spaces to socialise with different groups in their own territories. These groups include becak drivers outside Shopping; pengamen in the market, at bus stops or in the Alun-Alun; university and college students on Malioboro; ‘uncle’ (Ono), outside the hotel; and local kampung boys at the entertainment park.36 When they are out at night the girls go dancing to dangdut music at the THR (which they get into free by scaling the wall), they hang out with university boys outside the Mall and along Malioboro, and they sometimes go on trips away with university or kampung boys on their motorbikes, to Paris (the nickname for the beach Parangtritis), and to the hill resort Kaliurang. They also sometimes go for a ride in a becak (becak-becakans), around the city with one of the becak drivers from Shopping. One girl, Sylvie (14), explained to me how each girl at the Taman has her own special becak driver friend, a special friend, who takes them around the city. When I asked how the girls pay for these rides, she said; ‘well the becak drivers have money and we don’t right? So they give us money or something to eat in exchange for our friendship, and we compromise’.

All these different groups of boys and men are potential sources of income, alcohol, drugs, or a meal, and every night the girls move around the city creating and maintaining these contacts. They shift their identities according to where they are in the city, and with which groups they hang out. As well as forming relationships with these males, the girls also form friendships with female stall owners on Malioboro and in the markets with whom they find companionship and sometimes protection.37

The Taman girls do know, and occasionally spend time with the Malioboro boys, but they seldom visit the Toilet unless invited, because they do not feel welcome or...

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36 Ono (uncle) was the name given by the girls to middle aged men who come and visit the girls and offer them a meal or money, in exchange for sex (sometimes at an hotel if they are well off).

37 Most of the Taman girls were friendly with Yu Sien who owned the Lasheen across the road from the toilet, and they would often sit and chat to her late into the night, getting food on credit. One girl I knew slept under a woman’s stall on Malioboro during the day time, and she often used it as a place to hide if she saw someone coming who she did not want to talk to (her boyfried for example).
comfortable there. The maps do show, however, that there are some spaces which the girls share with street boys, including IMKA (a bus stop), THR (entertainment area), the lesehan Yu Siyen on Malioboro, outside the Mall, and the Alun-Alun (main square). None of the girls identify Gerbong (the transvestite and prostitute area) in their maps, as they never go there. Further, their knowledge of the market (pasar) and Shopping area is far more extensive than that of the boys', as it is where they spend much of their time when they are not in the Taman.

Due to their social and spatial exclusion street girls are forced to create spaces within which they can survive. Such socio-spatial patterns can be seen as survival strategies for the street girls. Further to survival, their movements through the city across different social spaces, although perhaps ‘unintended’ as geographies of resistance do mean that the girls blend into the city and are harder to detect than street boys (see Pile and Keith, 1997).

Conclusion
This chapter argues that street girls particularly encounter abusive discrimination on the street, because they are seen to be committing an ‘heretical geography’, by violating ideas of femininity in state discourse, and by ‘invading’ the street which is a male space (Cresswell, 1996). I have shown how although street boys are themselves powerless children, suppressed by the control of an oppressive regime, street girls are one group whom they feel they are superior to and have power over. For these reasons street girls suffer ill-treatment from many street boys, who believe that girls should not be on the street.

In this way, street girls endure a type of multiple-stigmatisation as they are victims of contempt, not only from mainstream society, but from within the street subculture itself. Through their discourse street boys use difference to divide and rule, by accommodating themselves and alienating street girls, thus creating ‘boundaries of shifting marginality’ within the street kid subculture (Murray, 1996:15). This is done by refusing girls their status as street kids, and by labelling them as rendan or ‘other’. Consequently, a street girl’s existence on the street is even more marginal than that of a street boys, as she is at the ‘bottom’ of the subcultural hierarchy, pushed to the margins of the street culture by boundaries which are created from within an already marginalised group (see Murray, 1996).

Such reproduction of mainstream patriarchal attitude has affected social processes and everyday street behaviour. The chapter has shown, however, that street girls are not passive victims of the male gaze, or mere appendages of street boys, but have been successful in negotiating the street kid subculture to produce their own gendered sense of space. In response to their social exclusion and ‘doubly-structured subordination’, street girls actively attempt to subvert patriarchal ideology by rejecting the sexist label rendan, identifying themselves instead as ‘street kids’, and the same as the boys (see Powell and Clarke, 1976:226). In one way this is done by drinking, smoking, taking drugs, having tattoos and razor slashes, wearing boys clothes and talking and acting tough, thus ‘refusing’ the conventional notions of femininity in dominant discourse. The girls can thus be seen to be participating in the spectacle of street kid subculture, by ‘working a reputation’ for themselves by seeking visible identities and styles that are at once similar to the style of street boys, and outside mainstream respectabilities.

Further to these general resistance strategies, there are also spatio-temporal geographies of resistance involved in the range of survival mechanisms adopted by street girls in Yogyakarta, and the girls negotiate a different production and use of space to their male counterparts in order to survive. The girls with whom I spent my time had attached themselves to a particular site in the city, the Taman, and refer to themselves as the ‘Taman kids’, thus creating a positive self identity for themselves as a street-girl culture. I see this place attachment as a survival mechanism as well as a geography of resistance. The Taman is a site of liberation for the girls, where they can dress and act as they like, because it is their own space, a place which gives them a feeling of belonging, and where they can go if they feel unsafe. In addition to this place attachment the girls experience a wide variety of spatial relations over a number of different social sites. These socio-spatial patterns are survival strategies, as well as additional geographies of resistance in a society which seeks to restrict the mobility of single women in the city, especially at night. The tactics of resistance which street girls have adopted in
the face of their multifaceted marginalisation can be recognised as a production of their own separate culture, which exists beside and interacts with the street boy, Tikyan, subculture, and which I see as a ‘microculture’ within the street kid subculture of Yogyakarta (see Wulff, 1988:21).

Going Home: Subculture versus Dominant Culture

(Chapter Eight)

“When did you last see your mother?” someone asked me. Someone who was walking with me in the city. I didn’t want to tell her; I thought in the city a past was precisely that. Past ... ‘Don’t you ever think about going back?’ Silly question. I’m always thinking of going back...People do go back, but they don’t survive, because two realities are claiming them at the same time. Such things are too much. You can salve your heart or kill your heart, or you can choose between two realities. Going back after a long time will make you mad, because the people that you left behind do not like to think of you changed, will treat you as they always did, accuse you of being indifferent when you are only different (Winterson, 1985: 160-1).

This chapter focuses on street children’s various perceptions of their homes and families. By drawing on Scott (1990) and Sibley (1995a, 1995b) I examine the conflicts which exist between the ‘hidden transcript’ of the Tikyan subculture and the public transcript of the family home. During interviews, focus group discussions, and the drawing of mental maps, the children often talked about their feelings for home, and of missing their mothers and younger siblings. I found that street children experience an array of emotions about ‘home’ (fear, anxiety, aversion, excitement, desire) which are all connected to their personal experiences of that physical space (see Sibley, 1995b:124). This chapter concentrates on what it means for a child who wants to go home and the circumstances which sometimes trigger their desire to return there. Within this context I examine their problems and fears about going home and facing the boundaries imposed by parental control. In particular, I focus on six children’s experiences when they took me to meet their families, and why they did not want to stay there.

Two Realities

The majority of street kids start their lives on the street as ‘ordinary’ mainstream children, and slowly become socialised and imbued in the street life and subculture. Over time their identities shift and accord with the expectations of their own reference group, as they become socialised to alternative values and ways of existing. These behaviour patterns of their subculture represent a challenge to the dominant culture’s rules and values. The children are not, however, completely isolated from Javanese culture. This is because they still interact with the external
world of mainstream society which socialises them with the appropriate ‘Javanese’ ways to behave, and reminds them of a cultural ‘alternative’ to their own existence. As a result, two sets of standards are presented to the children which can create a clash of values within them, as ‘two realities are claiming them at the same time’: their subculture and the dominant culture (Winterson, 1985:161).

Through various people on the street, NGO workers, and the mainstream cultural apparatus (films, radio, TV, video games, and a diverse mass media), street kids are instructed in dominant cultural ‘norms’, with the attendant prescriptions of the ‘proper’ behaviour for young men and women. This constant contact with external socializing influences creates a kind of parallel socialisation, which Hannerz (1969:137) calls ‘bicultration’.1 Bicultural happens when mainstream definitions are stated with such authority that they have a pervasive impact on subcultural groups, who sometimes want to participate in the mainstream consumer culture and conform to the ‘alternative’ world which most of them once knew. In short, they sometimes wish to be ‘normal’.

As explained in Chapter 6, street children’s perceptions of themselves and their lives change as they get older and gradually start to see their life as the mainstream sees it. It is at this time that they often feel as though they are not living a good life, and that it is a sin (berdosa). Many experience a kind of nostalgia about their family lives, and want to repent and ask for forgiveness (minat ma’af) for their lifestyle. One Muslim boy, Roy (12), for example, was so mortified by his behaviour of being stoned on glue that he started to pray (sholat) five times a day.2 Arek (15), told me that when he was younger he did not care (cukut) about what people thought of him sleeping on the streets, but now when he wakes up late morning (siang) and sees people staring at him, he feels ashamed (malu). Other children said they were ashamed of things they had done, and wanted to change.

2 This did not last long as he found it difficult to get up for the early morning prayer. He also said to pray properly you are supposed to have religiously clean (puh) clothes and prayer mat. He had neither, as the clothes he wore were the only ones he owned. He therefore felt as though he was sinning before he even started, and eventually gave up praying at all. Another child told me that because of the way they live, street children’s whole lives were a sin, so there was no point in even trying.

Iwan (17), for example, had been on the street since he was a small boy. He said he felt that he had taken revenge (nembalas dendam) for his terrible childhood, and now that it was balanced out he wanted to stop his bad ways (theiving and housebreaking) and be good. Topo (13) had a three-day drinking spree and afterwards said to me that he wanted to be clean (bersih), took out all his earrings, and lamented the fact that ‘there is a voice inside of me that says “minum” (“drink”).’ Interestingly, the desire to conform and return to the mainstream is particularly strong during the period of Puasa, or Ramadhan: the Muslim fasting month. Many children attempt to fast at this time, although it often proves to be impossible as they have to work in the hot sun and need to drink.3 It is also during Puasa that some children contemplate going home to ask forgiveness for their sins (minat ma’af) from Allah and their parents, which is a tradition during Lebaran (the religious holiday following Puasa). Other factors can also trigger a street child’s desire to return home such as a particular relationship which reminds them of their mother or siblings.

Maps of ‘Home’
While I was collecting the children’s cognitive maps of Yogakarta (see Chapter 4), some of the children only wanted to draw maps of their home towns or villages. It seemed that these were places with which they identified more readily than the city in which they lived — even though some of them had been living in Yogakarta for a long time, sometimes years. Dede (15) for example, has lived in Yogakarta for several years but still strongly identifies with his home town, Wonosobo and always signs his name as Dede W.S.B. (Wonosobo). When I asked him to draw me a map of Yogakarta he declined and asked me if he could draw a map of Wonosobo instead (Figure 8.1). This led to other children wanting to do the same thing. Before long I had a whole collection of maps of different children’s home towns: Bantul, Medan, Banjarmasin, Palangka, Jakarta, Surabaya. With these maps I also had a new perspective on their lives.

3 I knew a number of children who tried to fast during Puasa, but they found it incredibly hard to work and fast during the day. None of them managed to last the whole month. Other children asked why they should have to fast, as it is something that they have to do on a regular basis anyway, when they do not have enough money to eat.
Central to Dede's (15) map is the Wonosobo market (Pasar Wonosobo) where he used to work shining shoes, and where he spent the majority of his time with his friends. He has also marked his parent's kampung, and the nearby warung where he liked to eat. The main square (Taman), the terminal bus, the Alun-Alun, a cinema (Biaskop[sic]) and other kampung areas in the town are also marked, as well as the perkotaan kota, the built-up urban areas. Dede has also drawn in the village (desa) and rice fields (sawak) on the edge of town where he and his family used to work.

In Figure 8.2, Hari (15) has drawn a map of his home town Medan, where he has not been for a couple of years. Central to Hari's map is KKSP, a street kid NGO. He has also drawn in his house (Rumah Hari); the police station (kantor polisi); two markets (pasar); the police watchpost (Waspadia) by the traffic lights which he had to check for police before he could busk), the main mosque (Mesjid Raya), the Medan palace, a water tower (Tirai nadi), the stadium and a monument beside it.

In Figure 8.3 Idrus (13) drew me a map of his home town Bandung. He drew a cinema (Plaza studio); the stadium; a new shopping complex (Pertokan 3g.baru); a market (Pasar P. Kosambi) where he used to sell cakes between 9 and 12 every morning; and the train station where he eventually boarded a train to Yogyakarta with other street kids. As in other children's drawings the railway track is prominent in his imagination and runs through the centre of the map.
Later in this chapter I tell the story of when I went with Wiwit (16) to his home town of Palembang. Figure 8.4 is the colourful picture he drew of Palembang. It was a thank you card for taking him to see his family.

Figure 8.4: Wiwit’s drawing of the bridge in Palembang

The main bridge which crosses the river in Palembang is a major landmark in Wiwit’s mind. The bridge links his poor kampung by the river’s edge with the central part of the city. Wiwit walked across it everyday on his way to work in the market.

In Figure 8.5 Iwan (15) has drawn a map of Jakarta. Although it is not his home town, he wanted to draw a map of Jakarta rather than Yogyakarta or his home town of Tangerang, as he said he felt more at home there than he did anywhere else. Iwan’s map is an illustration of his highly mobile life as it is dominated by roads, the railway track (Rel Kereta Api) and numerous road intersections across the city. The most detail in his map is around the RR: the street kid drop-in centre for the NGO MMK. Iwan has also drawn in the traffic lights (Lampu Merah) and zebra crossings (in three separate places) which are the traffic intersections where he busks in between the cars. Next to the traffic lights he has drawn a police detention centre (Ramah Tahanan). He has also marked the two markets where he sometimes busks: Pasar Genjing (Pramuka) and Pasar Bawang, behind which is the police station (Kantor Polisi).

I recognised the children’s desire to draw maps of home as a form of ‘regressive nostalgia’, as by recreating home in their imaginations and in their maps they were remembering what it was like to live there (see Bammer, 1992:x). It was comforting for them and gave them a ‘sense of belonging’ (see Matthews, 1992:202, Bammer, 1992:xi). Each child wanted to discuss their maps in detail and took time to explain everything to me; where they lived and went to school; where their relatives lived; where they had worked on the street; and where their friends hung out. In this way the maps acted as a kind of catalyst and enabled me to learn more about their personal stories and how they had lived before they left home. The activity also started me wondering what this meant in respect of the children’s identities. What were their feelings about home? Did they miss their families? Did they want to return there?

Relph (1976-6) informs us that to combat feelings of ‘placelessness’ people have needs for associations with significant places and, at the deepest level, there is always a subconscious association with place. Places are important in the construction of individual identity and are sources of security and identity for both individuals and communities (ibid). For street children this identity construction begins with which town or region they are from though to the places they then occupy in the city. This is because even though they are highly nomadic they still
identify with particular places and construct their individual and communal identities in terms of where they are from (their ‘home’) and where they work and hang out in Yogyakarta (see Chapter 4). Thus, even though many street children have made the decision to leave their family home as a solution to a personal predicament, their sense of identity with that place continues to inform his or her subjectivity and is part of their lived experience.

Street children need to remember home to remember who they are, as ‘home serves as a boundary of the self’ (Sibley, 1995a: 94). It is an image which they have constructed in their minds as a comfort zone and as a form of refuge against the outside world. Home is the ‘stable physical centre of one’s universe – a safe place to leave and to return to’ (Rapport, 1995:268). It is a point of orientation, a centre of safety and security, and a realm of trust and protection (see Relph, 1976:83). Sibley (1995a: 92-94), however, warns against such a ‘cosy’ and idealistic view of home and notes that due to power relations within the home it can actually be ‘another space of exclusion’.

Missing Mother

As they reach adolescence (and are increasingly alienated from society) many street children experience homesickness and a desire to return home, especially to their mothers. Sometimes I saw a boy looking perplexed or upset and asked him what the matter was. The answer would often be ‘pikiran pulang’ or ‘pikiran ibu’ (‘I’m thinking about going home’, or ‘I’m thinking about mother’). They also said that they missed their younger brothers and sisters. In Jejak the boys and girls often write about missing their mothers, wondering where she is and what she looks like. Some children are able to go home and visit their mothers, and do so fairly regularly. Others, however, cannot as they do not have any parents or do not know where they are. Still others do not want to go home because they were abandoned by their mothers or they have been rejected by their parents when they have tried to return in the past:

4 See for example, Yenny’s (a street girl’s) story in Jejak ‘Melalui Tanpa Meme’ (“My life without Mummy”) (April, 1997:26); or Ely’s story Membelah Bulu “Remembering Mother” (December, 1997:10-15).

Mother

Ma... my mother who threw out that which you never loved
Now living in the street

Ma... I drag my feet
carrying on my back the scraps of people’s left over food
I... like a wild dog
jogging along the street
I... miss being given love
but where can I get it?

Cecak’s mother abandoned him when he was still small. She remarried and had more children with her new husband, and he feels very bitter about it. He told me he wants to kill mothers who have not protected their children and that he hates all mothers as they are like Satan for abandoning their children (pers.com, Feb,1997). This is not an unusual attitude. Another boy told an NGO worker that if he became a policeman the first thing he would do would be to put his mother in prison for not protecting him from his father who beat him (Adidiana, pers.com, August,1995). Significantly, he did not want to punish his father, as in Javanese society such behaviour is expected and tolerated from a father. In the child’s eyes it was his mother who was to blame because she failed to protect him and allowed such a thing to happen to him. Once on the street, however, the children miss being given love (as in the song) and receiving care and attention. They even sometimes miss the discipline of the family home. As Danil (on ‘Planet 8’) writes:

There isn’t a time when I remember my mother and I’m not sad. If I am feeling fed up I like to have my parents. Now I can’t see my parents again as I feel as though I’ve been really bad and committed a huge sin against my mother. Why did I choose this road which is so very bitter? Is it my fault or just my fate to be like this, and now I’m thinking about my past. Before I was loved by my parents and I was really proud. And if I was told off I often cried. Now who wants to be angry with me and who wants to give me advice? And right now I feel for the first time that this life is really very hard (Danil Planet 8, Jejak, December, 1997:4). 6

5 This song was composed by a group of children when I was in Yogyakarta. I took the lyrics down as they sang. It had a beautiful, sad, nobby.

6 Danil was the only boy to complain about not having anyone to tell him off or perhatian (pay attention or take care of) him. In fact it was a common theme among the street boys and discipline seemed to be something they missed. Some children actually asked me to tell them not to drink, take drugs or to stop breaking, and said that they needed someone to perhatian mereka (take care of them), otherwise they would get drunk all the time and behave badly. I refused to do this on ethical grounds and said that it was up to them how they behaved, and that although I cared about
Sometimes an event or a chance meeting will trigger memories and familiar feelings for this kind of attention. It may be from watching a film or publicity about National Mother’s day, or from forming a close relationship with a mother figure. Street boys have few interactions with females on the street, other than with prostitutes or street girls, and rarely have the opportunity to form a non-sexual relationship with a woman. My own friendship with the children gave them a different perspective of women and reminded many of them of their mothers. As a result of such relationships many children start to think about their own families. This was especially true when a German social worker, Anni, visited the NGO Girli for a few months in 1995: Anni lived with the children in the open house and spent all her time with them. Anni was a mother figure for the children and cared passionately about them. She taught them to clean the open house and themselves, and to care for their health. She also taught them English, and maths so that they were better equipped to earn money on the streets every night. Most of the children had not experienced such care and attention for years, and it reminded them of their own mothers. When Anni left the NGO to return to Germany many of the children also left and return to their villages; they said that Anni had made them miss their mothers and home.

Girli

Street children do miss being looked after and receiving love and advice. For these reasons their attachment to an NGO can trigger fond memories and remind them of aspects of living at home which they miss. In this way the NGO Girli is like a surrogate family for many street children and can cause some to start thinking about their own families for the first time.  

says of the NGO Girli: ‘rasanya seperti keluarga sendiri’ (‘it feels like one’s own family’) and writes about how he dreamt about his mother for the first time in years as a direct result of observing Mas Didid’s relationship with Budi, a young street child. The experience made him determine to go home to his mother in Jakarta, where he had not been since he was very small. On the way he wondered: ‘What will my parents reaction be? Will they acknowledge me or not? This is what I ask for. If they don’t accept me then I am not ever returning to my kampung birth place again, as long as I live’ (Bongkok, 1995:119).

Hari Raya Lebaran

It’s so quiet everywhere. Lots of kids have gone home; to Jakarta, Bandung, Malang, or Surabaya. Some have gone to Jakarta where the money is better. Ast wants to go home to Medan but can’t afford it. Idrus doesn’t have anywhere to go. Ceki has family in Surabaya, his mum and step dad, but he says he is not really wanted there. Budi says he’d like to go home and minta ma’af, but that he is never going home again after his last experience (when his stepmother beat him up for not bringing home any money) (Fieldnotes, January, 1997).

The religious festival Lebaran is an occasion when street children think about going home. This festival marks the end of the fasting month and is the time when once a year people are expected to (and will always make the effort to) go home to their village (pulang kampung), spend time with their family, and ‘celebrate their kampung community and communality’ (Sullivan, 1994:24). This custom comes from the Islamic religious tradition although non-Moslems also take part. It is a very special time to be able to ask forgiveness (minga ma’af) from one’s parents and siblings for all one’s mistakes over the past year, and to bring home money and gifts to the family in the village (Eranto, 1996:17; Sri, 1997).  

During Lebaran, Yogyakarta is practically deserted as thousands of people pour into the countryside to visit their home towns and villages:

This custom, known as mudik, when bares and trains threaten to burst at their seams and traffic jams build up all over Java, has the very important function of not only keeping old ties alive, but especially of providing an opportunity for [reaffirming] identity (Maulder, 1996:148).

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7 The children told me of how Momo (13) burst into tears when they went to see the film Jumanji which was about a happy family.

8 As already mentioned, some of the smaller children called me ‘mummy’, while the older boys and girls told me that I was like their older sister or aunt.

9 Girli fulfills the concept of home for some children to such an extent that they did not see the point of going home as they felt that Girli was now their family, and they had no reason to go back. This leads me to ask the difficult question of whether NGOs are making it easier for children to stay away from home, or perhaps even making it possible for them to leave homes where there are no problems. This is a complex issue which needs attention, but I do not specifically address it here.

10 People working in the cities are expected to bring gifts and money home with them at Lebaran, working on the principle that ‘Life is hard in the city but it is even harder in the kampung’ (Sri, 1997).
I was warned by the NGO Giri workers and the children themselves that there would be a mass departure of people from Yogyakarta before Lebaran, as everyone returned to their villages and their families. At this time the children get caught up in the festive fervour, and many of them talk about going home to ask for forgiveness (ma’af-ma’afan) for all their sins. Subsequently, there is a mass exodus of children from Yogyakarta which is evidence that external influences of mainstream cultural traditions do make an impression on street children, and that they do still retain some memories about that way of life. Lebaran is a reminder of what a child should be doing: going home and asking for forgiveness. If they do not go home, however, they often go to Jakarta where the income-earning possibilities are better during the holiday season. Others ‘hide’ until after the holiday period. Some of the kids told me that this is because they are ashamed to be seen alone, as it is a sign that they have nowhere to go and that they are unwanted. One NGO worker commented to me that for their first few years most street kids do not care about Lebaran, and it is only later when they get older that they miss taking part in the tradition: ‘This is because as he gets older a child’s memory will trigger old values’ (Ertanto, pers.com.Sept, 1996).

Problems with Going Home
Although many street children desperately want to go home at Lebaran they often face a number of dilemmas, even before they get there. Some, for example, do not know where their parents live, either because it has been so long since they left home, and they cannot remember, or because their parents have moved without a forwarding address. This was sometimes the case with street children from poor families whose kampungs had been evicted or razed (diasir) during government-sponsored programmes. Other children’s parents survive in the informal economy and their lives are equally transient as their children. Alec (12), for example, wanted to go home to Surabaya at Lebaran, but his father was in prison and he did not know where his mother lived anymore. When he eventually found her she was living and working in a brothel. His sister had been given away (dikash orang) as his mother could not afford to keep her.

A number of children are afraid to go home because they fear rejection or retribution for something they did wrong in the past. Children I knew had stolen money, jewellery or a bicycle to sell in order to get the money to leave, and were adamant that they could not return, as they would not be forgiven for such a misdeed.11 Soeh’s (14) parents lived in South Yogyakarta but he was not welcome there because when he first left he had stolen his grandmother’s wedding ring. One day he went home but his brother came out of the house and shouted at him to leave (pers. comm., August, 1996). Wicked stepfathers or mothers (Rapok or Ibu riti) were also a dominant reason for many children’s fear of home and, all too frequently, children told stories of being beaten up by their (step) parents, uncles or elder brothers.

Thus, although street children sometimes fantasise about returning home, once they get there they often find that in reality it is another excluded space. This is particularly true if they come home looking poor and dishevelled. There is a Javanese saying: ‘A father is responsible for his child’s behaviour’ (Rink polah bopo kepdrad) and, in Indonesian society, the father is often held to blame for a street child’s circumstances (Ertanto, 1996:19). Far from being greeted as the ‘prodigal son’, therefore, a street boy will often be punished should he return empty handed and dressed as a vagrant (gelandangan) because he is shaming the family’s reputation.

One way in which a child can exonerate himself is by returning to his kampung bearing gifts and displaying signs of wealth and improvement, in accordance with the culture of merantau (discussed in Chapter 2). This is usually in the form of bringing home money, wearing new clothes and carrying gifts (oleh-oleh).12 Boys

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11 Other children, however, used this same reason as an excuse for not going home when really they were not welcome there for other reasons. For example, when Win (16) tried to go home a few years ago his mother told him not to come back as he was no longer wanted, even though he had not done anything wrong. He told his friends, however, that he had stolen Rp.100,0000 from her house, and that he was too scared to go back because of that. It was easier for him to tell his friends and other people this story rather than the truth: that he was not wanted.

12 In Wonosari (Central Java) during the month of Lebaran there are signs across the road welcoming ‘tourists’ from Jakarta. In reality these ‘tourists’ are families returning to Lebaran bringing with them money and goods from the city. Wonosari, an extremely poor region, relies on this income.
would often complain to me that they wanted to go home but that they could not afford to do so. It was not only the cost of the bus or train which bothered them but family expectations. They felt that had to have proof of their own advancement, that they were ‘making it’ in the city, and doing well for themselves. One child explained to me that: ‘There’s a kind of culture of shame if you go home without having succeeded’. The children also told me that it was not only their own personal pride that stopped them from returning to their kampong but that their parents would be furious if they returned empty handed.

Frequently, I heard children recount tales of confronting angry parents when they went home. During Lebaran in 1997, Rian (12) went back to his parents in Malang. Even though they had not seen him for over a year the first thing his stepmother said to him was: ‘Where’s the money? I don’t see you for a year, and then you come back tangan kosong (empty handed).’ Another boy, Danang (12), had a similar story: ‘Saya langsung dimarahin waktu pulang karena masalah uang’, (‘I was immediately shouted at when I got home, because of the problem of money’).

Edo (16) and his younger brother Didi (12) will always remember the occasion when they went back to see their parents. They had left for Yogyakarta a year before and had become Tikam in shopping. Their mother was happy to see them but their stepfather was silent. He went into his room and came out with an axe and threatened them. Edo and his brother fled, and have not been home since. It later transpired that Edo’s father had heard that he had become a criminal. Another boy, Rudi, was thirteen when he returned for the first time in years. Straight away his mother asked him what he was doing there: ‘What are you doing here? Just go away and be a tramp.’ Little Budi (11) was very upset one day when he went home to Tegal and his stepmother told him to leave again. He came back to Yogyakarta and at the Girli training house he drew a batik picture of the event (Figure 8.6).

If it is a daughter who has run away the punishment may be more severe when they return. One Taman girl, Sita (14), for example, had the misfortune one night to be picked up by the DEPSOS (social welfare) authorities. Although she begged them not to, they called her stepfather, who was angry and ashamed that he had to collect her from the government social welfare department. When he got her home her stepfather beat Sita, but ‘worse than that’, she said, he shaved all her hair off. This was too much for Sita to tolerate, and she left home, and has not returned since (pers. comm., October, 1996).

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13 In Islamic law if a daughter has shamed herself then she also shames all the men in the family. In some Islamic societies it is believed that the only way to clear the family name, and for the men to regain their honour, is to kill the daughter. Such killings are known as ‘ Honour Killings’ and happen throughout the Islamic world (Brooks, 1996:49-53). They are better documented among Palestinians than elsewhere due to the Israeli occupation. See, for example, the story of a 15 year-old ‘runaway’ Arab girl who was arrested in the Israeli-Arab town of Ramle by Israeli police. Even though she begged the police not to return her to her family as they would kill her, they took no notice. Not long after, she was found murdered (Brooks, 1996:53). In Indonesia, however, it is more likely that a ‘runaway’ girl will be beaten, locked up and her head shaved.

Figure 8.6: Budi’s (11) batik drawing of being evicted by his stepmother: The caption reads ‘Budi is evicted by his mother’ (‘Budi diusir ibunya’), with his stepmother shouting ‘GO!’ (‘Pergi!’).

If a child does decide to go home, he is usually very careful with his appearance, is anxious to look clean and presentable and to take back gifts. Once there, children often lie to their parents about what they have been doing to make themselves sound more successful. Bangkok (1995:121), for example, tells us that he lied to
his mother about his job in Yogyakarta. He says this was because: 'I was ashamed to say that I'm still a street kid. I lied to my parents and said that I was a road sweeper in Yogyakarta'. It was partly for these reasons that a number of boys asked me to go with them, as it is quite normal in Javanese culture to take with you an impressive friend to show that one's connections are good (Entanto, 1996:18). As a white foreigner (bule) I was something to take home which the children knew would give them prestige in their village. Once, for example, I told two street boys that I would go back with them to their village near Yogyakarta. Unfortunately, something unexpected came up and I could not make it: they were upset and said that they could not go unless I went with them. When I asked why, one of them said that he had met his brother in the market and told him he was coming back with a bulu; now he could not go without me as he would lose face. As well as an impressive connection, however, I was also a form of protection for the children as they knew that their parents were unlikely to be angry with them in front of me.

Below are the stories of six boys who decided to visit their families and who gave me the privilege of allowing me into their lives and inviting me home with them.

Homeward Bound: Six Boys, Six Homes, Six Familles

Suwili

I don’t know how old I am. Maybe sixteen. I was about nine when I started selling cakes in the market near my home in Tangerang. I didn’t like school, and I skipped school a lot, playing in the sawah (rice fields), or at the neighbour’s house instead. I was lazy, and stopped khi dar (going up a class) until finally I dropped out. My mother was often angry with me because I didn’t want to go to school, and she once accused me of stealing money from the teacher. She used to twist my ear. My father died when I was still very small but we took a stepfather. I often visited my grandmother’s house. She used to defend me against my mother, and said she would walk naked in the streets if I had stolen any money. Eventually, I was ordered to work in the market, carrying vegetables. I was in the market for half a year, but I wasn’t strong enough to carry the vegetables, as I was still small. My elder brother got lots of money as he was stronger. Sometimes I would sleep in the market at night with my big brother, but if I had money I would go home. But I rarely got money, and sometimes I was shouted at by my mother for not bringing money home. I was lazy, and I couldn’t think about my parent’s lives as I was still young. I have an older brother and sister, and a younger brother and sister. My eldest sister used to work in a factory nearby. She’s married now. My stepfather was a truck driver, carrying sand for construction sites. I never even spoke with him. He has three wives in three different houses in Tangerang. One day I met a man in the market who said that he was looking for his older brother. I was invited to help him find his brother. I felt sorry for him and went with him. We got on a train to Bandung. In Bandung we had a fight as it turned out that he was lying and that actually he was a Home. He wanted to do it to me. I refused and we fought. After two days he got on a train and left. I felt happy and free when he left. In the station I lived with the street kids and looked for plastic bottles to re-sell, and hokan (left over food) to eat, which we split between us. I wasn’t long in Bandung before I was invited by some street kids to go to Yogyakarta.

In Yogyakarta I spent three months in the station looking for plastic bottles and spoons with the street kids. One day I went to the cinema with a friend, outside the cinema there were three boys: Topo, Kirik and Baldy. I was stared at by Topo. He was suspicious of me and said in Javanese: “where are you going?” I didn’t speak Javanese so couldn’t answer. Then Topo started to beat me up, as new kids are always beaten up. Eventually, the fight was stopped by Kirik and Baldy. They were my friends. I was invited to sleep with them outside the cinema. The next day they took me to Shopping and taught me how to steal fruit from the trucks and sell it cheap. In the daytime we went and played video games. I spent a year on Maliboro before one day I met Mas Ibu from Girl who invited me to join Girl and gave me shoe shining equipment. I started shining shoes in Sorojwijayan, and used the money to eat and play video games. In Soro I was brave (berani) and got to know tourists. I was cute, like Soro now, but he talks too much and bores people! But I always sleep with girls. I’ve only been with a boy once. I never got sick, not like Topo, and I’ve always bought new shirts so I’ve never had campes (scarlets). One day I wanted to go home, and went back with Muhak Ningrum (a worker at Girl) as I was too scared to go on my own. My mother was really nice when Muhak Ningrum was there, but once she had gone she became angry. I was living at home for 3 months, working in a shoe factory. But when Muhak Ningrum was there, I was the only child. It hurt my feelings and pikiran berubah (changed my thoughts). I got Rp.27,600 every week from the factory which I gave to mother. I also worked with my father, collecting sand and stones, but he didn’t ever pay me. ‘Ihu main tangan, sayu balas, dhih pernah lu. Dia talah sama says” (“My mother liked to hit me. One day I hit back, I’d never done that. She was frightened of me after that.”). One day I went to the cuboard where there was a book where they kept their money. There was lots of money there, maybe Rp.50,000. There was a Rp.50,000 note but I was too scared to take that. I took Rp.40,000 and left (Interview notes, Yogyakarta, December, 1996).

I first met Suwili in July 1995, when he was shining shoes on Maliboro. He used to work in the Soro area, until the tourists did not think he was cute anymore and he moved to Maliboro to shine shoes. Once he became too big he stopped shoe shining and started busking with a guitar, but he was very ashamed (mala) as (by his own admission) he has a terrible voice. He was too embarrassed to be seen by people he knew in Yogyakarta and so he began busking in Jakarta where he did not know anyone. He also started taking pills so that he was brave enough to busk in public. In Jakarta he lived under a bridge near the Rambutan market with a group of

14 Putu is not the boy’s real name, and the picture has been changed to protect the child’s identity.
15 Entanto recounts the time a street kid takes a student from the Gajah Mada University home with him, in order to impress his family with his good connections.
of about ten children. He eventually went back to Yogyakarta with some other boys from the bridge community, and started the Surgawong Bridge gang, described in Chapter 4. Suvil was the leader of that gang, and led the boys busking at the traffic lights, and playing video games at night.

It had been two years since Suvil had gone home with Mboak Ningrum, although he had kept in contact by letter. His mother sometimes wrote to the Giril address, and he would answer, often apologising that he did not have any money to send her.16 One day Suvil received a letter from his mother asking him to come home and visit. She sent photos of his younger brothers and sisters, and his sister’s new baby: his first nephew. She apologised for not being able to pay for his fare, as ‘life is very difficult’. He showed me the letter and told me that he wanted to go home to get the paperwork for a KTP, because although he was not sure how old he was he thought that he may be seventeen soon. He asked me to go with him, as he said he was scared his mother would beat him if he went on his own.

Before we left Yogyakarta, Suvil busked and saved as much money as possible to buy presents (oleh-oleh) for his family. He said he could not go home without presents and went to Shopping to buy piles of sweets, snacks, toothpaste, soap, pens, and exercise books for his younger siblings still at school. We took a train to Jakarta, and then a bus from the city centre to Tangerang, and then changed to a mikrolet (coilt). When we arrived at his kampung his mother was sitting outside the house (a small concrete single storey house). She invited us inside to sit on the sofa in the front room. The entire kampung crowded in and sat on the floor around us. Her name, she told me, was Tina. She was a big, loud, humorous woman, always laughing and cracking jokes. Tina was very dominant and overpowering; a sort of matriarchal figure, who appeared to be larger than life. I could immediately believe all Suvil’s stories about her ferocious nature. (Suvil had told me that one reason he left home was because he could not take the stress and the pressure of his mother, and the way in which she controlled him). He appeared slightly wary of her, and laughed at her jokes while pulling faces behind her back.17 Tina wanted to know all about me; how old I was, was I married, what I was doing, how I knew Suvil, and how long I was staying. In return for my information, she told me her age (36), and that she had five children; three by her first husband who died when Suvil was still young, and two (aged about eleven and eight) by her present husband. Suvil is the third child. She introduced me to her eldest son, Enrique, who is still at school, and Suvil’s younger step-brother and sister.

Tina asked me if Suvil was naughty in Yogyakarta, and said that he was renowned for being a troublemaker in the kampung, and was nicknamed ‘Bandel’ (‘Naughty’). She said he often stole money, and that if anything went missing in the kampung he was always the first to be accused, and that had caused her a lot of stress and problems with her neighbours. Suvil interjected to say that she had been very fierce and mean to him and that she used to hit him, and that was why he had left. Tina did not deny it, but just gave him a cool look. Remembering when he first ‘ran away from home’ (‘kabur dari rumah’), Tina said that Suvil had been very young, and pointed to her youngest son (aged about eight) to give an indication of how old he had been when he left. I asked her how old, and she had no idea. I then asked her how old he was now. Still no idea. Tina turned to the other women from the kampung who had crowded into her front room when we arrived and were sitting around us. They attempted to help, by saying he had been in the same class as another boy, and then speculated about how old that boy was. Maybe fourteen they said. They thought that he may have been born in December but they were not sure. I asked if Suvil had a birth certificate but she said that none of her five children had been registered at birth. She qualified this by saying that none of the children in the kampung were registered. The other women around sitting nodded in agreement. They said what was the point? It was an expensive and unnecessary hassle as far as they were concerned.18

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16 Suvil could not read or write and so other people would write his letters for him as he dictated.
17 These are often tactics adopted by abused children instead of direct rebellion. See Kitzinger (1990:162) who notes how ‘children employ the strategies of the most oppressed, dispossessed and victimised: joking and gossip, passive resistance and underground rebellion.’
18 This was not unusual. Thousands of children, including street children, are unregistered and do not know when their birthdays are. There is no way of estimating how many children are unregistered in Indonesia or what proportion of the population they make up. See Section Four (Social Practices and Catalysts and Key Challenges and Concerns) of Appendix 1.
Suvil’s mother wanted us to go and visit her daughter in the next kampung over the rice fields (sawah), and so we hired two motorbike taxis (ojek) to take us there. Suvil’s eldest sister, Dini, is about nineteen and lives with her husband who makes rubber flip-flops/thongs (sandal). When we arrived the whole house was filled with them. Dini was really pleased to see Suvil, and he was happy to see her and his new baby nephew. His sister told me about how upset she had been when Suvil first ran away and that she and her mother cried a lot, and they had been scared as they had heard so many stories in the newspapers of children being killed or abused. She described how she had gone to Jakarta and looked for him for days (‘until I was exhausted’) in the Rambutan and Senen markets, where she knew a lot of children worked. She could not find him and eventually she gave up.

After we had visited his sister we jumped in a mikrolit (small minibus) to go and visit Suvil’s grandmother, Tina’s mother. The idea was to find out if his grandmother remembered when Suvil was born, as it had been in her house. As we sat on the mikrolit, Tina told me that she used to have a sewing business with her husband but now they were both unemployed and finding money hard. She said that everyone in the kampung earns money by working in the sawah or in the local textile and shoe factories, but that she cannot do so because they will only have young women working there. She told me that Suvil had been too lazy to work in his grandmother’s sawah, so she had sent him to the market to earn money instead.

When we arrived at Suvil’s grandmother’s house she was sitting in her front room, surrounded by her four other daughters and grandchildren (I immediately saw from where the matriarchal air of Suvil’s mother originated). The grandmother invited us to sit down, and immediately set about the task of working out Suvil’s age. When I asked the year, she said, categorically ‘1981’. She then worked through the months of the year and, by a process of elimination related to events and rice production: ‘No. It wasn’t the Puasa (fasting) month or Idul Fitri (Lebaran) month, nor was it the rice-planting month, etcetera.’. She was certain that he was born in the seventh

(rice-harvesting) month: July. I then asked if anyone could remember the day, to which his mother said ‘it was the twelfth’. So we finally worked out that he was born on July 12th 1981, which made him fifteen years old. I had first met him when he was thirteen. When I asked Tina about Suvil’s brothers and sisters, she said of his little sister: ‘She was born on the ninth’. ‘Of what?’ I asked. Tina looked exasperated at me: ‘Kampung kids don’t have birthdays’, she said.

While we were at his grandmother’s house, one of Suvil’s uncles arrived home from work. He took one look at Suvil and pointing to his earrings said ‘throw these away’ (‘nil dibuang’). Without hesitating or complaining, Suvil took out his silver earrings and lobbed them out of the window. His uncle looked at me, and as an explanation said: ‘We are a close family’. We sat and chatted with Suvil’s uncle and aunts, and had something to eat. Suvil’s uncle worked for the Catatan Sipil (Civil Administration office where births, deaths and marriages are registered). He said he would try to get Suvil a birth certificate, so that Suvil could have a KTP when he reached seventeen years of age. I was secretly amazed that despite his job his entire family had not been registered at birth.

Finally, it was time to get the last bus back to Jakarta. Suvil said he would come with me. I said that there was no need, and I could give him the money to return the next day if he wanted. He said that there was no way he was going to stay if I was leaving. Later he told me that if he had stayed without me he would have been beaten when his stepfather got home. So we left together. On the way back into the city he was very quiet, thinking about his family. At one point I asked him if he would ever live at home again. ‘Never’ he replied, ‘why would I want to live like that?’; ‘Like what?’ I asked. ‘All they do is sleep and work’ he said.

Aat

Aat had invited me to visit his family who lived in the Bantul district, near Yogyakarta. Before we left he took some time deciding on what shirt to wear. In the end he decided against the loud shirt in favour of the more conservative option. Aat was very tired. He had not slept all night as he had been busking to pay for the trip home and for oleh-oleh for his family. We set off, and it only took twenty

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19 See Wolf (1992,1996) for a discussion of young women working in factories in Java, and how the factories only employ young, unskilled women, who pay very low wages.
minutes to get from the bus station to the runoff to his village, followed by a short ojek (motorbike taxi) ride. Aat insisted on paying for everything, saying that I was his guest that day.

Aat’s father died when he was still small. His mother was from Sumatra and when his father died she went back to Padang (West Sumatra) to re-marry but she would not take Aat with her. Aat than lived with his uncle (his father’s brother) and his family. He left home when he was nine years old as he was bored in his village, and there was no work to do. Aat said he did not want to work in the sawah, which is all anyone else did in his village. He said lots of boys felt the same way as himself and he gave me a long list of names of street boys I knew who came from the same area as him. Aat had heard about Yogyskarta from others in the village, and one day took a bus into town to find out for himself. Like many boys who begin their life on the streets in Yogya, he got off the bus and began his street life stealing fruit and vegetables in Shopping. He lived there for two years before progressing to Maliobero to shine shoes. Occasionally, he went home to visit his uncle’s family, but as time went on he went home less and less.

Aat’s uncle greeted us at his house, but did not seem very pleased to see him. We had brought lots of snacks and oek-boko which were put away, and we had a short chat. He said that all the women were still working in the sawah, including Aat’s aunts, cousins and sisters. We then went and visited one of Aat’s cousins and her two young children. She did not seem surprised to see Aat and did not ask him any questions. She was more interested in myself, and showing me her wedding photos which we discussed at length. Later the women came back from the sawah and sat with us to drink tea. Aat played with his younger cousins and seemed quite relaxed in the company of the women folk, much more so than he had been with his uncle.

When we returned to Yogyskarta Aat said that he wanted to pay for a proper stone for his father’s grave, and talked about having to save Rp.100,000. He said that he would nmom every day from then on to save the money, and also talked about going to Padang to find his mother. A few months later Aat became a movie star. He acted in Nugroho’s (1998) popular new film, Daun di Atas Bantat, about three street kids in Yogyskarta.20 With the money he was given for his role in the film he went straight to Padang to find his mother.

Arief
Arief is a pengomen in Yogyskarta. He is about sixteen. His family live in Salatiga, a small town two hours North of Yogyskarta. Arief’s father left home when he was ten years old. His mother is a domestic servant (pembantu). She used to work in Salatiga for a famous professor, but then went to Saudi Arabia as a domestic servant for two years which was when Arief left home (when he was fourteen). His mother is now in Brunei for a further two years and sends money home regularly. When Arief took me back to visit his family house I met his two sisters, who are both at the local school, and his elder brother who is a teacher at the same school. They all look after their grandmother who is bed-ridden on a mattress in the kitchen. She cannot walk and her legs are covered in sores. When we arrived they had run out of medicine as it had been a long time since her daughter had sent money from Brunei. They seemed happy to see us, especially as we brought some food.

Arief was visibly disturbed to see how sick his grandmother was and how poor his two younger sisters were. He told me that he is always so sad to see how poor they are and that he feels guilty because he does not provide for them. Arief’s story is similar to a number of boys who told me they left home as they could not stand seeing the poverty and hardship their family had to face. Arief also said that it is boring in his village with nothing to do and no way of earning money, and that he feels happier on the street where it is nicer (lebih enak) and where he can be with his friends and forget his family’s problems.

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20 The film Nugroho’s film Daun di Atas Bantat (Leaves on Pillows) featuring the movie star Christian Halim was released nationally in mid-1998. It tells the story of three Yogyakarta street boys who have died in the last few years due to various unfortunate circumstances. One of the dead boys actually featured in an earlier Nugroho documentary about street kids in Yogyakarta: Kacel (1995). The children acting in the film are all real street kids from Yogyakarta. The film is a great success in Indonesia, and has been screened across the country. It has also received international acclaim, and was the opening film at the recent international film festival in Rotterdam, Holland. It has, however, received mixed reviews in the press, and the children themselves are said to be
Wiwit

I first met Wiwit in Jakarta when he was busking on buses. He later moved to Yogyakarta to attend the ‘street university’. During the school’s ‘vacation’ Wiwit asked me if I would be willing to go with him to his home town of Palembang in South Sumatra, where he had not been since he had left three years before. I think that he made the decision to go home as he felt good about himself for attending the university and, before we left, he made sure that he took his university ‘student’ card to show his family. Wiwit also asked me to tell his family that he was at school in Yogyakarta, and that I was an English teacher at the school. He said that his family would be really angry with him if they knew he was a gelandangan, and that it was important that I did not tell them that he lived in Jakarta, as his brother already busks on buses there and the family disapprove. Before we arrived Wiwit took out his earrings and put on a long pair of jeans and a clean T-shirt which he had bought in the market before we left.

Today, we arrived at Wiwit’s house in his kampung on the outskirts of the city. The houses in the kampung are big wooden houses on stilts, built over murky stagnant swamp water, with pathways made from wooden planks running between the houses. The reception was pretty overwhelming when we arrived at the entrance to the kampung. Lots of women and children followed us as we walked across the pathways towards his house, and there must have been close to fifty people following us when we finally arrived at Wiwit’s mother’s house. She wasn’t in and so we let ourselves in through the wooden downstairs door, and the entire kampung of children piled in after us. Once the room was full they peered in through the shuttered windows and doors, and through the cracks in the walls. I was invited to sit down and everyone crowded around us and stared at us intently. Hundreds of little brown eyes, staring. It was totally overwhelming. One girl sat beside me, and explained in Indonesian that they had never seen a bulat (white person) before, and that they were kepet (shocked) to see me. Wiwit was really shocked and embarrassed at everyone’s reaction, and kept apologising for their behaviour. He took me upstairs and locked the hatch door so as to keep everyone out. Still, about ten members of his family and friends came upstairs and gave us fizzy drinks and bread, as (Wiwit told me) that is what they think bulat eat. Eventually Wiwit’s grandmother, aunt and mother arrived (Fieldnotes, 10th January 1997).

Plate 8.1: Wiwit’s kampung in Palembang

When their father died the three eldest boys left school. The eldest son left home and is now living on the street as a pengamis in Jakarta. Wiwit’s other elder brother is married with a baby boy and still lives in the kampung. He is a passenger recruiter for buses (calo) in the city. Wiwit has five younger brothers and sisters. I did not meet two of the sisters, however, as they are in an orphanage. His mother said that since her husband died she cannot afford to keep them. The other children still live at home with her. Owing to polio when he was younger, his youngest, a four-year-old boy, does not have the use of his legs and she has to carry him everywhere. Before her husband died she used to sell cigarettes in the market but now she stays at home as her crippled son needs constant care, and her elder calo son supports her and her children. Before his father died Wiwit went to school in the mornings and in the afternoons worked on the streets in Palembang, selling newspapers and cigarettes in the market by the river. He also shined shoes. After his father died he spent a year working on the streets and still living at home,

disappointed in it as they feel that it does not properly portray their lives. I have not yet seen the film as it was released after I left Indonesia.

21 Wiwit was sent by the NGO MMK in Jakarta to attend the Universitas Jalanan (the ‘street university’) in Yogyakarta, a vocational school where the boys learn batik, silk screening and other artistic skills (see Beaman and Beasley, 1997).

22 This was a kind of ‘white lie’ as I did teach English to the boys at the school once a week.
before deciding to go to Jakarta to find his older brother. Wiwit got the money by stealing and selling a friend’s bicycle.

It was the start of Puasa when we arrived. During Puasa practising Muslims cannot eat, drink, have sex, or smoke between the hours of 4.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. (sunrise and sunset). The nights were very noisy. Everyone in the kampung used the surrounding water as their toilet, bathroom and laundry, and each other’s houses as their own. When I walked through the kampung I felt like the Pied Piper, with dozens of small children running behind me and calling my name.

Everybody was so kind and hospitable. I was treated like an honoured guest and invited into people’s houses, to sit on their plastic covered sofas and drink tea. At Wiwit’s house we had lots of visitors, and there was a constant flow of people coming to look at the bulu. Even the RT and RW came to meet me on my first night. Wiwit was really shocked by the way his kampung reacted to me. He found it excruciating and was highly embarrassed at the way people reacted to me when we walked through the kampung.

On our first day Wiwit took me into the city and showed me round the market where he used to work. He commented on the fact that there are no pengamen and few street children in Palembang. He said it in a negative way, as if it was boring.

On the second day Wiwit said that he wanted to go and visit his father’s grave which was a few hours away in his father’s village. The family had not been back to the village or grave since the father had died four years before. I agreed to pay for the hiring of a small mini-bus to take the entire family to the village. We took Wiwit, Wiwit’s older brother and wife and child, his younger sister and brothers, his mother and paternal grandmother and a few close friends. When we arrived we went straight to the grave for a grave-cleaning ceremony, where a religious leader (Mullah) recited something from the Koran and poured holy water over the grave. Once this was done the family set about cleaning and weeding the grave. It was a very emotional experience and as they went about this task everyone wept, including Wiwit. Next to the father’s grave there were four small graves. These, Wiwit’s mother told me, were Wiwit’s brothers and sisters. She had given birth to twelve children in all and eight had survived.

While I was staying with his family I hardly ever saw Wiwit and spent most of my time with his family without him. He never came home at night and his mother complained that he spent every night out with his friends. He said that he missed his kampung friends and wanted to catch up. His older brother told me that as a colo he was learning to drive the buses and that he could easily get Wiwit a job doing the same thing. Wiwit said he was not interested as it was boring work. His brother just sighed and said he had no choice as he has a wife and baby to feed, as well as his mother and younger brothers and sister to look after. When we finally left on a bus for Jakarta, the whole family came to see us off. Wiwit seemed quite sad on the journey back. He asked me for a pen and paper and drew the picture above (Figure 8.7). The inscription reads:

My city is a place that has been
tailed by Indonesian society and
I like Jakarta and
I also like living in
the street.
Topo
When I first met Topo he was wearing a pair of filthy, torn trousers, and had a bare torso and grubby face and feet. Topo was loud and aggressive but sometimes wore the cheekiest smile which showed off his broken front tooth. He was often stoned or drunk. Topo used to shoe-shine or busk with a tambourine at the traffic lights on Mataram street, and slept in a tree outside the toilet. When I first met him he appeared very wild and hostile, and difficult to get to know. Slowly, and over time, however, he warmed to me and we established a close friendship. He used to call me Mami and often gave me small presents. In turn I would sometimes take him to the cinema and invite him to my house, to eat Supernie, hang out, chat and sleep.23

One day Topo took me to meet his family who lived in the poor kampung on the river bank. I met his maternal grandmother, an uncle and aunt, his cousins, and his little step-sister from his father’s second marriage. He said he often went back to his grandmother’s house to wash and change his clothes. He never slept there, however, as his grandmother only had one small room. Topo’s parents split up when he was seven. His father was a pengamen and motorcycle parkir at the train station. According to Topo he was a bad tempered alcoholic who often hit Topo which is why he no longer lived with him. I never met him, but other people on the street said that he had a large tattoo on his face and looked seram (mean). They said he was ‘like Topo’, and that ‘he likes women and is only ever interested in pleasing himself.’ He was also described as a drunkard, and ‘a difficult man to teach anything’. Topo’s mother lives in Jakarta with her second husband, a Muslim man, who works there. Topo told me that his stepfather (Bapak tiri) was very strict and cruel, and so he did not go with his mother and younger sister when they went to Jakarta. He told me that he sometimes visited his mother, but in the daytime when his stepfather was at work.

One day Topo asked me if I would go with him to visit his mother and little sister. I agreed to pay the train fare and one morning we met very early at the station. Topo turned up looking the cleanest and tidiest I had ever seen him. He said he wasn’t going to take his earnings out, however, as he wanted to look ‘scary’ (seram), because his stepfather was also seram. The night before he had worked hard busking to earn enough money to buy his sister a present (a furry toy). When we were on the train Topo told me more about his life and why he did not live with his mother or father. He said he hated his stepfather as he was fierce and beat him up. He also said that his stepfather was a Muslim, and that he, Topo, was a Christian,

23 We always had a large supply of Supernie (noodles), bread and cheese in the house which I shared with Ingo, a Dutch social worker who worked at Giri. After a night on the streets, or before the Surodung boys went to work at the Demanggung traffic lights, the children would often come to our house to hangout, mandi (wash), chat, sleep, and cook themselves Mie or sit on the floor by the open fridge, guzzling bread and cheese.
and did not want to become a Muslim. Topo also told me that he was a bit perplexed about his age and that although he told everyone he was fifteen, he did not really know how old he was. I suspected that he was considerably younger. He asked me to ask his mother when we got to her house. Topo said he had been to visit his mother a few months before, and had told her that he had a londo (bule) friend. She thought he was lying so he said that the next time he came home he would bring me. Before we arrived at his mother's house Topo told me that he would leave when I left, as if he stayed on his own he would be 'beaten up constantly' (dipukul terus) by his stepfather.

Topo's mother lives in a small two-roomed unit in Depok, South Jakarta, with Topo's younger sister (who is nine) and her second husband- Topo's stepfather. When we arrived at her house his mother was really surprised to see us. I shall call her Ida. She invited us in and apologised for the mess, although the house was well looked after with some signs of affluence and a lot of Islamic artifacts on the walls and surfaces. Ida's husband works in insurance in the city (she gave me his card). Topo's little sister came home from school and was delighted to find Topo there. The two of them disappeared into the back room to play while I chatted to his mother and drank iced tea. Unlike Suvil's mother Ida had an amazing interest and memory for dates. She told me her and her husband's birthdays and asked me when I had met Topo and when my birthday was. She was in her early thirties. The date she gave me for Topo's birthday made him thirteen, not fifteen as he told everyone.

Ida said that she had met Topo's father when she was nineteen. She had never married him but lived with him in her mother's house in Yogyakarta. Ida brought out a photo album of her life in Yogyakarta before she married and moved to Jakarta, which helped me to understand her much more. Topo's father was a pengamen, and she had hung out with him and his friends who were all pengamen on Malioboro. After a few years, however, once Topo and his sister were born, he began to drink heavily and to beat her. Ida said that they were not well suited. She said that Topo was brought up more by his grandmother than her and that he was very naughty and stubborn (keras kepala) at school. Topo never graduated from the first class of primary school and eventually dropped out when he was seven. His mother said it was not because he was stupid that he left school, but because he was difficult and the teachers could not handle him. As is the case with many of the riverside kampung children, after Topo dropped out of school he spent his time on the street and started to earn money by begging at the train station.

Topo's mother saw a way out when she met a Muslim man who wanted to marry her and take her to Jakarta where he worked. She converted to Islam and they were married and moved to Jakarta in 1993, when Topo was nine. Ida said that Topo was told that he could go with them if he also converted to Islam. They thought he could learn by reading the Koran at home (although in reality Topo could not even read). Topo did not want to do this and Ida said that he was very naughty and did not get on with his stepfather. Eventually, Topo was left behind as her husband only wanted her daughter with them. I said it must have been hard to leave Topo, but she said not really as he was always with his grandmother or on the street earning his own living which she thought was admirable. Ida then said that she was glad that he had met someone who got on with him (me), as he was a difficult personality, and she asked me to teach him to read and write and to be a good boy. I said that I was happy to spend time with him but that, unfortunately, I was not going to be able to be with him for long, as I had to go back to Australia. Ida said she would like it if I could take him with me. She thought he could be a good person if he respected other people and learnt to be polite to them. She also complained that Topo is always filthy, and said that he should be clean as people respect you if you are clean. Finally, she said that she was pleased that he could earn his own money as it was important that he could look after himself, and not have to rely on other people.

Topo appeared quite relaxed in his mother's company but was very quiet and just listened to our conversation or played with his sister. As it became darker, however, and nearer to six o'clock, he started agitating to leave, before his stepfather came home from work. On the bus back into the city, he was very pensive and started to complain about tooth ache. I asked him what was wrong and he said that it was the same tooth that his stepfather had broken when he had beaten him. He was very quiet and obviously upset and confused by the visit. I thanked
Topo for taking me home with him and said that his mother seemed like a good person (baik hati). Topo said that she wasn’t but that it did not matter as he loved his sister and was happy to have seen her. He did not want to talk anymore. The next day I met Topo in the street. The whole left side of his face was swollen, and I thought he had been in a fight. Topo said no he hadn’t, it was just tooth ache. When I looked into his mouth, I could see what had happened. He had gouged a big hole where the broken tooth had been until it was sore and bleeding. I suspected that it was to remind himself of the pain.

A few months later Topo went missing, just before his fourteenth birthday: March 27th, 1997. The last time I saw Topo was in Yogyakarta in early March, prior to Lebaran. He told me he was upset because his grandmother’s house was empty, and all his family from Yogyakarta had gone away for Lebaran without him. He said that he was going to Jakarta for Lebaran. I thought nothing of it as so many other children were leaving at that time. I gave him a hug and said I would see him soon. Four months later he had still not come back. This was strange as he only ever went away for a couple of weeks at the most, and although he knew Jakarta, he regarded Yogyakarta as his territory and home. The other boys were also worried and tried to find him. We tracked any leads we could, but no one had seen him, including his family. Far-fetched stories began to circulate about his whereabouts: that he had been taken to the United States by a benefactor or he had gone to Kalimantan. Another rumour said that he was washing buses in Blok M, in Jakarta. Cecak, however, (a street kid from Jakarta) said that he knows everyone in Blok M, and if Topo was there he would know. The street-kid grapevine eventually established that he was last seen on a train bound for Semarang from Jakarta. After a few months the story that Topo had fallen from the roof of a train began to hold more credence. I still do not want to believe it.

Sorio

It’s possible to live in economic poverty where there is love, but not in emotional poverty where there is no affection... perhaps the most significant shortcoming of these children’s ‘home’ is not so much the physical infra-structure as the almost total lack of affection (Harris, 1996: 7-8).

The families I have described so far were all extremely poor. This compounded the children’s problems at home and certainly contributed to the reasons they left. However, not all street children come from poor, working-class families living in poverty, and some children do end up on the street for other reasons. Sorio was such a case. I first met Sorio late one night near the train station in Yogyakarta. He was very small and shy and told me that he was an orphan from Medan, North Sumatra and that he had been travelling with an uncle but had lost him in the train station. He did not know his ‘uncle’s’ address or telephone number. This was in September 1995, just before I went back to Australia after my first visit to Yogyakarta.

Almost a year later I returned to Yogyakarta, and Sorio was still there. He was shoe shining in the Sosrowijayan area, and spent most of his time befriending tourists.24 At night a kindly becak driver let him sleep in his becak parked near to the train station. Sorio seemed a lot more confident and self assured than the first time I had met him. He talked a great deal, and had an opinion on almost everything. He told me that he was saving money to buy a motorbike, and that he had an ‘account’ at a local bank, and showed me a book which they had given him. It seemed that he had managed to talk a compassionate employee at the bank into doing this for him, and every few days he would go in and deposit money with the same man. When he was not with tourists or adults I noticed that Sorio was often alone and rarely spent time with the other children. It appeared that although he knew them he did not like spending time with the Giri boys, and said to me that they were ‘stuck up’ (sombong). He also refused to go to the open house, as he said he had been beaten up by the children there the year before. I suspected that the older Giri children attempted to extort money from him, and had demanded anal sex, as he was young.

24 When I first went back to Yogyakarta I stayed in a jamun in the Sosrowijayan area before I found a house to rent.
and white skinned. I also thought that perhaps he was extracted by the younger girls boys because he was so opinionated and keras. 22 The younger boys told me that they thought that he was spoilt (manja) and boosy.

When I returned to Yogjakarta Sorio remembered and befriended me, and I spent a lot of time with him in the first few weeks. Sorio would follow me everywhere and used to wait for me outside my room in the morning, sometimes sleeping on the doorstep. He did not tell me much more about his background, but I knew not to push the issue, as it would come out over time. However, I began to realize that he was better educated than other street boys his age (11): he could read and write well, and he was quick with numbers. Sorio also picked up the English language quickly, so as to converse with tourists. In addition I noticed that he took more care with his appearance than the other children, and would wear clean shirts, tucked into his trousers.

It was because of my close relationship with Sorio that I took him with me (along with some other street boys) to an 'International Conference on Street Children', being held at a local university in Yogjakarta. 23 The conference was run by BKKKS, a government welfare department, and received a lot of publicity due to

22 See Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion on the cultural expectations of the street. The boys felt that Sorio did not adhere to their culture which, like the Javanese culture, was more salia (reared). As Sorio claimed that he was a Batak person, from Northern Sumatra, who are renowned for being forthright and keras (brash), this did make sense.

23 The International Conference on Street Children was held at the University of Senaka Dharma, Yogjakarta, September 10-13, 1996. It was originally to be held by the NGO Giri, and a national organization of NGOs working with street children: the Consortium for Indonesian Street Children, together with the US Consortium of Street Children. When the government heard about the conference, however, they hijacked it by putting it under the auspices of the Indonesian Council on Social Welfare (BKKKS). This undermined the whole nature of the conference, turning it into an exciting opportunity for some progressive ideas to be voiced to a broad stage show publicity stunt for the Government and TV cameras. The Sultan's wife was invited and there was a lot of hand shaking and back slapping by government officials. The presence of Ismail (Indonesian Intelligence), famous for their disregard of Human Rights, was an intimidating reminder of what they are capable of doing to people who step out of line. This meant that people did not feel able to speak out or really about the atrocities facing street children in Indonesia, or to be able to address some serious issues relating to street children NGOs. Indeed, people were cleverly silenced by the 'Chair' if they attempted to do so. This was unmarked by the non-Indonesian speaking International 'guests'. Further, although the Conference had the illustrious title of 'Empowering Street Children', it took place one week after NGO workers and children were brutally disempowered, intimidated and harassed by Intel officers and security forces, when a street children's Exhibition which was planned to take place in Medan was cancelled by the authorities (this issue is discussed in the Conclusion).

24 As it happened, Sorio's grandmother was sitting at home in Jakarta watching TV when she saw this item of news. As she watched the programme, she wondered to herself if any of the children milling around the conference could be her grandson, Sorio, who had run away from home a year before. As the camera focused on a young boy chanting to a kule (me), she realized it was her grandson. She was thrilled, and quickly called the TV company to find out where the conference was taking place, and who the organizers were. She then booked herself an Executive class ticket on the train to Yogjakarta for the following night. The conference organizers asked me to meet her when she arrived. I found Sorio and told him what had happened. At first he seemed to be OK about the idea of his grandmother arriving. As the day drew on, however, his behaviour became stranger and stranger, and more frantic. He was obviously very stressed.

Later that night Sorio started to tell me the truth about his situation, and said that I was not to be cross with him, but that he had lied to me about his parents: he wasn't an orphan, and his parents were both still alive in Jakarta. Sorio said that his mother was Batak, originally from Medan, and his father was a Bawali (from Jakarta) and
that he (Sorio) was born in Jakarta. He used to live with his Batak grandmother (nenek) in her house, which he liked, but then he had to live with his father again which he hated as his father beat him until he was black and blue. Sorio said that he eventually left home because he could not stand seeing his father beat his mother when she was pregnant. He also said that I was not to tell his grandmother that he smoked or drank alcohol. I was also not to be surprised when I met her, as she was very rich. I asked Sorio if he wanted to stay the night at my hotel, so that he could be there when his nenek arrived. He said that he did not want to, and that he was going on to the street opera on Malioboro, and remarked to me that if he got arrested then his nenek would not be able to get to him.

The next morning Sorio's nenek arrived. In my imagination the word nenek had conjured up a tiny, grey-haired, soft-spoken woman in traditional batik clothes. Nothing could have been further from reality. She was a very stout woman of about forty-five years, with a large round face and short black hair, cut in a severe bob. She wore trousers, and sat with legs-apart, chain smoking cigarettes. I greeted her and told her that Sorio had gone off so we would have to go and find him. She said that was fine, but first she would like to check into a hotel. She looked into the most expensive hotel in the area. We then set off in a taxi to find Sorio. After some searching around all the regular haunts, we finally found him curled up asleep in a pile of other children at the Girl's open-house where he hardly ever went. We woke him up, and he stared at us blearily before jumping up to greet his grandmother. Sorio's grandmother said that she wanted to spend some time with him. He agreed, provided I went along too, and we went off in a taxi to eat. We spent the day doing all the things Indonesian tourists do when they visit Yogyakarta: going to the zoo, riding in horse-drawn buggies (angkong), and eating nasi gudeg (the traditional local dish) on Malioboro. We also went shopping to buy Sorio new clothes. During this time Sorio hardly said anything, and his grandmother talked a lot. She asked me a lot of questions about Sorio, and also interrogated him about what he had been doing. She was a very bold and confident woman. She told me that she was a

'business woman', involved in supplying government building projects in Jakarta. When I tried to address her in the polite term 'Ibu', she told me to call her Rini.

Sorio agreed to stay with his nenek at her hotel, and the first night he was there he slept fifteen hours straight through. He was very quiet and deferent in his grandmother's presence, but he did appear to be fond of her. He obviously looked up to her, and asked her permission to do anything. The second night he was there he asked if he could go and visit his friends on Malioboro, and she said that he could, provided he came back by midnight. After he had gone, she said to me that she realised that she had to take things slowly if she wanted to be able to gain his confidence, and take him back to Jakarta. Sorio had agreed to go back to Jakarta on condition that I promised to visit in a few weeks.

While Rini was in Yogyakarta I spent a lot of time chatting to her, and learning about Sorio's family. She told me that she was not really Sorio's nenek, as she had never married. She was his maternal grandmother's (who lived in Medan) younger sister, and Sorio's mother was her niece. Sorio's parents married at nineteen because his mother was pregnant with him. His father did not have a job at the time, and once Sorio was born they found things very difficult. When Sorio was three his father asked Rini to look after Sorio for them because he did not feel as though he could be a good father when he did not have a job. Rini was happy to have Sorio live with her, and she took him off on her many business trips around the country, flying on aeroplanes, and staying in the best hotels. In this way she got used to travelling and became familiar with many of the cities around the country, including Cirebon, Yogyakarta, Bandung and Medan. Sorio lived with his 'nenek' from the age of four, until he was nine, when his father asked for him back. Within six months of living with his parents he had already run away (kabur) from home. The first time it was only for a day, then it was two days, and finally he went for two weeks. Rini was furious with Sorio's father, and suspected that he was beating Sorio, and asked for him back.

When Sorio went back to live with her, Rini said that he had changed, and that before he had been open and friendly, but now he hid things, told lies and had
secrets. Within a month he had left again, and this time he was gone for three months. On his return Sorio said he had been in Cirebon, where he had been ‘living in a house’. He returned to his grandmother’s for three months, in which time he refused to see his father. Eventually, he left again in September 1995, exactly a year before Rini saw him on TV at the Street Children Conference. We worked out that it was at this time that I first met him at the train station in Yogyakarta, when he said he had lost his ‘uncle’. Rini said that after he left she was frantic trying to find him. She went to the police with photographs of him, and put advertisements in the paper. The police had been very unhelpful and she was beside herself when she learnt about the Robot killings in Jakarta, terrified that one of the murdered street boys was Sorio.

When I asked Sorio what happened when he first left home, he said that he went to Pasar Minggu (a market in Jakarta, near to his home) and played video games with other children there who taught him how to sell newspapers. After a few weeks they invited him to go with them on a train to Cirebon. After three months in Cirebon he missed his grandmother and returned home. When he went back Sorio refused to live with his father and insisted on living with his grandmother. He said he left again because he was bored, not because he didn’t like living with his grandmother. Sorio went straight to Yogyakarta, which is when he met Rini. After I left Yogyakarta he said he went to the Girli open house, but was beaten up by the other children, so he fled. From Yogyakarta he went by train to Bandung, where he met a man called Iwan who he thought he could trust.

Iwan offered him a nice place to stay, in a ‘big house’ where he could go to school. Iwan also told Sorio that if he was good Iwan would buy him a car. Sorio believed the man and went with him to his house. It is unclear what happened next but, not surprisingly, the man was lying. Sorio was vague about his time with Iwan, but told me that he was kept tied to a table and locked up in a room for three months. Sorio was beaten regularly by Iwan and still has the scars on his arms and legs which he showed me. He said that there were other children captured there as well, some of them girls. Iwan scared Sorio and the other children by telling them that he was a member of the Mafia and had lots of friends who would catch them if they tried to escape. I could not get Sorio to tell me what else happened there. Eventually, he managed to escape from Iwan’s, and found his way to a Peseanren where he was sick with a fever for two months. The Peseanren let him stay for free and nursed him back to health. He then left and went and worked in a garment factory in Bandung, sewing sleeves on shirts. Later he left the job because he said it was boring and he did not earn much money. Sorio returned to Yogyakarta and started shoe-shining in Sosrowijayan. Soon after that I turned up again.

After about a week Sorio and his nenek went back to Jakarta, and I went to visit them a few weeks later. Rini lived in Pondok Indah, a very salubrious part of town. When I arrived in Jakarta I found her address hard to find on the map, and so I went to the huge glitzy Mall to call her and get directions. Sorio answered the telephone, and told me to wait outside the Mall and he would come and get me. I waited outside, looking out for a small boy running through the parked cars. To my surprise, a Toyota Landcruiser pulled up beside me, loud music blaring, and Sorio leapt out and rushed towards me. The driver of the vehicle was exactly that, a driver, and Sorio helped me get into the flash vehicle. We went back to a lovely, air-conditioned house in Pondok Indah. As I had tea and chatted with his grandmother, Sorio settled down to playing games on his computer. Rini said that was all Sorio had done since he had got back.

Sorio had been his parents twice since his return, but refused to stay there. Rini said that she had not yet got him into a school, and was having difficulty as he had missed a year. She was contemplating bribing a head teacher to let him in on the next class, so he would not have to go back a year. School and education were her main subjects with Sorio, and she kept telling him that education was important if he wanted a bright future. Rini asked him what he thought the other children he had left behind on the street were going to do for a living without an education. When I asked her if she was worried if Sorio would return to the street, she said not at all and that he was fine at home with her. Rini said that she knew some street children

29 Peseanren are schools for Keromic studies for children and young people, most of whom are boarders. They are often free of charge as they are funded by Islamic charities and Muslim organisations. Some other street children I knew went to live in a Peseanren near to Yogyakarta for a while, and I actually went to visit them there. They did not stay for long, however, as they missed the street life.
enjoyed the streets, but that Soria was not like the other children who she had seen in Yogyakarta.

I had my doubts. In the few days I spent with Soria in Jakarta I found him to be very different to the happy, loud boy I knew in Yogyakarta. He rarely spoke, and seemed quite sad. I also worried because his grandmother was a very bossy woman, and was always ordering him around. She told me that most people are scared of her, and that she cannot stand seeing children cry, as she sees it as a weakness. I thought that Soria would not stay around for long with such a lack of understanding.

Soria’s going through major adjustments at home. He seems much quieter, reserved and ‘child-like’ than in Yogyakarta. He obeys instructions, doesn’t talk unless spoken to (including to me), and just answers ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to any questions. He is not really spoken to that much by nenek. When I try to talk to him he’s uncommunicative, and will not tell me how he is feeling. I expect he is worried that I will tell nenek. I have told him that I am still his friend, and that I have kept his ‘secrets’ which he asked me to keep. He is evidently enjoying being driven around by a chauffeur, and playing games on the computer. He is also anxious to get out of the house whenever he can, to buy cigarettes for his grandmother or anything else that might be needed. Otherwise he is in the house all day. I think he is bored. The family are commenting on how he has changed and how he now eats differently with his hands. (Before he used his fingers like a Batak person, as they all do, but now they say that he eats like a Javanesi). He says he misses Yogyak but that he wants to stay at home and go to school so he can become an architect, like his uncle. He refuses to live with his mother and father. I’ve met his mother and siblings once. His mother was very quiet and thanked me for looking after her son. Soria is quite friendly with her. It is his father who he hates. I did not meet him, but he drives ojek (motorbike taxis) in the city. It seems to me that Soria was used to living with his nenek until he was nine, and as her economic status and lifestyle is very different to his parents, it was difficult to adjust. Nenek also has different values. Soria says that she ‘only’ hits him when he has done something wrong, which he says he understands. His father, he says, hits him for no apparent reason, and is just saka matanak (bad tempered). (Fieldnotes, October 2nd, 1996).

Nine months later I was on Maliboro and was told that ‘a friend’ was waiting for me behind the Toilet wall. It was Soria. He looked the same, just a little bigger than I remembered him. Soria told me that he was still saving for a motorbike, and that he was working and living with a family of street musicians. I knew the family he was talking about and his story was confirmed later when they came to pick him up in their van. Soria told me that he had left home the month before as he had been forced to live with his father again. He said that he could no longer stay with his grandmother as she was moving around on business too much. Further, when he went to live with his parents he had more trouble with his father and his mother said to him ‘if you want to be a street kid just go’, so he did. Soria said he was happier living on the street. I suggested that he call his grandmother to let her know that he was safe, as I knew she would be worried about him. We tried to call, but the telephone number we both had was out of order. Instead, he decided to write a letter:

For Nenek, who I love: [...] Nenek, there’s no point being worried about Soria’s situation in Yogyakarta. Soria is very happy here and Nenek needn’t bother coming here because Soria is going to school in Yogyakarta. If Nenek really loves Soria then Nenek won’t take the trouble to come to Yogyakarta, because Soria doesn’t want to be bothered. If Nenek wants to send Soria some snack money, you can send it in an envelope to alamsana (Girl open house) [...] From your grandson in Yogyakarta. Don’t say anything to Mama or Father. Please!!! (translation of letter, 21, July, 1997).

**Observations**

None of the boys (apart from, perhaps, Soria) had any intention of returning home for good. All of them, except Soria, came from very poor families, but when they returned to their kampung they judged their homes with their new city eyes. They all told me that their home lives were dull, backward or boring. When Topo took me to his riverside abode, for example, he said: ‘My house is crap isn’t it Hatie?’ (‘Ramaah saya peok, ya Hatie?’)30, and Wiwit was really shocked at how ‘backward’ his village was and how poor his family were. He viewed his city as a ‘failure’. Arief told me that he did not like going home as he could not stand seeing his grandmother and siblings so poor and in need. Further to this, Suvil, Aat, Arief and Dede all said that they did not want to work in the rice paddies (or in Wiwit’s case, on the buses), because life at home was boring and all people did there was work and sleep.31 All the boys told me they were happier on the street than at home.

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30 peok was a favourite word of Topo’s. It is slang for impaired, and literally means ‘spastic’ or ‘handicapped’.

31 Mandayam and Surya (1991) have noted a similar attitude to farming among rural youth (aged 10-29) in three villages in Yogyakarta. Analyzing a study carried out by Professor Mulyayutu at the Centre for Regional Village Development (P3PK), Mandayam and Surya write that youth in rural areas are drawn to the city as they are disillusioned with farming life and go to the cities to find excitement. The youth in the study view farming as having a low social status and would prefer to be sellers or work in the service sector or factories than work in the rice fields.
When they went home, however, all of the children attempted to conform to the 'performance' which was expected of them. Some children even lied (or fabricated the truth) about their circumstances (Wiwit and Bongkok). This was partly for their own pride as they wanted their kampung and parents to think that they had made something of themselves. All the children took care with their appearance, bought presents for their parents and younger siblings, hid their tattoos, took off their earrings (other than Topo who wanted to be 'scary') and put on clean clothes. By wearing earrings and tattoos on the street the children are making a statement and are communicating a gesture of defiance to the outside (and anonymous) world. They do not necessarily wish to present this same defiance to their own families, or else they dare not. In this respect, one thing which particularly struck me was the changing identities and personalities of the children when they got home. In every case the boys reverted to a child-like identity and became much quieter and deferent in front of their parents. At home they discarded their street image and, with the air of self-confidence gone, they were very unlike the assertive, loud, know-it-all youngsters I knew on the street.

All the boys with whom I went home still had mothers (although three of them had been 'abandoned' by her in some way: to re-marry or to work overseas), and my interactions with the boy's families were mostly with women: either mothers, grandmothers, sisters, cousins or aunts. The mothers I met all thanked me for 'looking after' their children, although overall there appeared to be a lack of emotional concern about their sons. I actually felt that the boy's families were more interested in me than in their son. I suppose that this was not so surprising (as a tall blond bulu I was a bit of an unusual sight in the kampung), and it was certainly another reason the boys took me home. They knew my presence would be a novelty for the family, that they would gain some esteem in the community for bringing me with them, and that it would succeed in deflecting attention from themselves (although in the case of Wiwit the response was a bit more than anticipated).

Some parents, however, were anxious to keep in touch with their children, although the only woman I met who seemed to want to get her child off the street for good was Sorio's nenek. His mother, in the brief meeting I had with her (and by Sorio's own account) did not have the same concern. Most of the relatives I met told me, however, about how upset they had been when their son or sibling had first kabur. They searched through the markets, asked around, and went to the hospital if an unknown child died. A lot of anxiety was caused by the Robot case. The authorities were very unhelpful, and not interested in missing children. This is very unlike England or Australia, where if an 11-year-old boy goes missing it is reported in the national newspapers daily, even if he has 'run away' six times before. In Indonesia it appears that the only time the police will pay any attention to children living and working on the streets is when they are 'cleaning them up', in order to tidy the image of the city. Even when they take them into custody they do not attempt to find out where the children are from, and usually just hold them for a night or two, often abusing their human rights, and then tell them to 'go home'.

The boys were subdued in front of their mothers and aunts, but far more relaxed at these times than in comparison to when an adult male was in the room (eg. an uncle or stepfather). None of the boys I went home with had a male relative with whom they felt comfortable. In fact some of them expressed extreme anxiety about meeting their father or stepfather and actively attempted to avoid such a confrontation. Interestingly, however, the two boys whose fathers had died had a

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32 My choice of the word 'deferent' is deliberate: As Scott (1990:24) tells us: 'Acts of deference... are intended in some sense to convey the outward impression of conformity with standards conveyed with superiors'.

33 From my own experience I know how one's identity can change and regress back to old ways, when one visits the family home. When we are with our families we tend to revert back to old childhood behaviour, and in a way become a child again. Although I am now in my thirties I still find myself behaving quite differently when I go home to visit my family, especially when all my sisters are there. We often (inadvertently) take on the childhood role, and act out the character and personality which we have developed in the family. This is simply because it is 'learned' behaviour within the family. In a similar way, the children with whom I went home were reverting back to their childhood identity when they were with their mothers and siblings. In much the same way as I mysteriously 'lose' my adult identity when I go home, I witnessed the children 'lose' their street identity in the family home and become quite, obedient and docile.
tremendous respect for their dead father, and both boys wanted to pay homage to their father’s grave). This was consistent with stories I heard from other street children about their fathers. Boys who go home often complain that their father never talks to them, and that they are angry, scary or silent. ‘He’s just silent’ (‘Dia diam saja’) or ‘he doesn’t pay me any attention’ (‘dia tidak perhatikan saya’) was something I heard frequently about fathers or stepfathers. Sibley (1995b:131) has noted that problems at home often arise in families where parents have oppressive or alienating relationships with their children. He describes these families as ‘positional’, which means that power is vested in position in the family (Sibley, 1995b: 131). In Javanese households Bapak (‘father’) signifies power as he is the ‘true man of power’ (Sullivan, 1994:144). Traditionally, in Indonesia a father is distant and cool from his children and relates to them in an authoritarian manner (Sullivan, 1994:84). This attitude can manifest itself in the imposition of arbitrary rules and in the issuing of instructions and punishment without explanation (as Sorio complained of his father) 35. These power relations have a direct impact on how the children experience home:

   The home is one place where children are subject to controls by parents over the use of space and time and where the child attempts to carve out its own spaces and set its own times. The possibilities of conflict here are considerable. Children may find the domestic regime oppressive because of rigid parental control of space, the availability of space in the home may limit opportunities for children to secure privacy (Sibley, 1995b:129).

For many street kids one rule is too many. This is because they fiercely value their independence and there is a pervasive ideology of individualism within the Tjihay philosophy. When children go home they complain that there is too much discipline and that they cannot fit in with the temporal and spatial restrictions placed upon them. As Arek (12) once complained to me when he returned to the streets after going home: ‘There’s so many rules at home. There’s a time for getting up, a time for eating, a time for washing, a time for praying, a time for school. There is too much discipline’ (pers.com, January, 1997).

Thus, as Huckleberry Finn found, living a ‘regular’ existence can be very dull and restrictive:

   The Widow Douglas, she took me for her son, and allowed she would civilize [sic] me; but it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn’t stand it no longer, I lit out. I got into my old rags and my sugar-hogshead again, and was free and satisfied (Twain, 1876:11)

Similarly to Huckleberry Finn, street kids are unable to tolerate the strong boundaries enforced by their ‘positional’ parents, particularly when they have become used to the freedom of the streets and living as they please. They find home too restrictive and long to be free again. All street kids seek adventure and freedom. This desire increases the longer they have been living on the street, and as their Tjihay boundaries are reinforced they shift further away from those which are deemed ‘acceptable’ in the home. Danang (12) who has been on the street since he was seven explained to me: If a child has been on the street for only a few months then there is a good chance that he will be able to live at home again. If, however, it has been as long as a year since he left home, then it will be very hard for him to stay there. He will miss his friends and become ‘bored at home’ (bosan di rumah), and will long to go back to the street life and be free (pers.com, September, 1996). 36

35 There is little information about the traditional role of men as fathers (or stepfathers) as household members and the effect of these roles on children’s lives in Indonesia. As yet, men are not part of UNICEF’s situation analyses, and UNICEF recently stated that areas which are necessary for further investigation include the effect of the traditional role of the father on health and nutrition status, the relation of fathering to childhood development, and violence against women and children in the family setting.

36 Danang (12) made this comment in relation to Sorio, when I asked him if he thought Sorio would stay at home after his grandmother came to get him. Danang said that as Sorio had been living on the streets for over a year it was unlikely he would stay at home for long. He said that Sorio would get bored and miss his friends, and that he would leave again. Danang was right. Danang himself had been living on the street for years. Once he was adopted by a kindly middle-class woman in Yogyakarta, to whom he introduced me. She told me that he had found it very difficult to live with her and to stay in one place. He became bored very quickly and missed his street life. Eventually, he left her home and went back on to the streets, although he does go and visit her every so often (pers. com, August, 1995).
Conclusion

He feels at ease nowhere. In the institution he cannot, or does not want to respect the rules imposed on the children, because he keeps his identity of street child. He cannot remain at home because the space is too limited and material resources inadequate. He cannot bear to see his mother in need. In the street he feels more at ease, but with some limits, which might be attributed to the loyalty he maintains for his mother [...]. The boy finds himself in a conflictual situation because no single field suits him (Lucchini, 1996:245).

In this chapter I have discussed street children's feelings about 'home', and how they experience a variety of emotions when they contemplate going there. Even after living on the streets for a long time many street kids still maintain a strong emotional attachment with home, and the occasional desire to return. Sometimes this desire is triggered by a particular event such as Lebaran, or a special relationship which reminds them of their mothers or siblings. At other times (particularly as they get older) they may be sick of life on the street and wish to conform to mainstream society, and to 'go straight' and be 'normal'.

Most street kids have constructed their own identities to belong to a place (a village, a town or a house) which they call 'home'; an image to which they sometimes retreat in moments of loneliness or despondency. The children's imagery of home, however, is usually through rose-coloured spectacles and is shattered if they try to return there. Often if a street child goes home they find that their parents are angry with them, and that they are beaten and chastised for coming back without money and looking like a tramp. They may even find that they are not wanted. Due to the negative experiences some children encounter when they return many of them eventually stop trying to go. Instead, they develop an intense hatred for their home and families, and vow that they will never return. The responses I witnessed when rejected children returned from a visit were various. Some got drunk or stoned on pills, others tattooed their bodies, or hurt themselves by slashing their arms with razor blades, or (as with Topo's tooth) inflicting pain on themselves in some other way. Other reactions were verbal: Cekak asserted that all mothers are Satan, and Hari swore that he will never go home again after he was thrown out by his stepmother. These are the children's ways of dealing with their frustration and are forms of resistance to their rejection, thus making it easier for them to stay away and not to be homesick.

If they do not have problems with violence or rejection children who return home may face other difficulties. They often find, for example, that home life is too quiet and boring, with too many constraining rules meted out by their 'positional' parents (see Sibley, 1995a: 123-37). Many children I spoke with claimed to be better off on the street than they or their siblings were at home. This was because living at home usually meant having no money to spend, feeling out of place and isolated, being beaten or verbally abused, facing poverty and horrid food, missing one's friends (and feeling alienated and 'different' from old ones), and having to witness one's mother and siblings suffering in poverty.

The children also discover that the 'Tikyan' boundaries and values they have developed on the street are not acceptable in the family home. Instead, they have to carry out an 'onstage performance' or 'public transcript': a different identity which is expected of them by their families (see Sott, 1990:123). It is extraordinarily difficult for street children to maintain this 'public transcript' for long. After a while (a few months, weeks, days, or even a few hours) they cannot stand it any more. They long to return to the 'hidden transcript' of the street world, and to their street kid identity with which they are more familiar. In her study of street children in South Africa, Swart (1990:126) concluded that 'given the opportunity' street children would live normal lives in established society. In respect of the street children in Indonesia I disagree with this notion. This is because although (as Swart found) children may feel that they want to go home and be 'normal' children, and talk about getting established jobs in mainstream society, once they are 'given the opportunity' and get there they find that living at home is impossible. This is especially true for children who have been living on the streets for some time. They miss the vibrancy and action of the street as well as their friends who care about them, and with whom they have formed an ersatz family: the Tikyan.

37 See also White (1990:118) who discusses 'close neighbourhood surveillance' of young people in Northern Adelaide as one reason that they 'migrate away from their local residences in search of alternative social spaces'.
As described throughout this thesis, the Tibetan family has a strong claim on street children as only other street kids can really understand them and their view of the world. It is a family which individual children do not want to leave behind. Thus, street children who attempt to ‘go straight’ usually end up by being disappointed with what ‘regular’ life has to offer, and return to the street where they can be with their friends and where they do not have to be bothered with the imposition of temporal regulations and spatial boundaries of the home.

Life on the street represents a space outside of family control. It is a physical release from the strain of the ‘onestage performance’ which is required in the home (no earrings, tattoos, scruffy clothes, smoking, bad language, taking drugs etc.), and the necessary control of the body, voice, and facial expressions that entails (see Scott, 1990:123). There comes a time when street life is the easier option for children who start to accept the street and all it represents (friendships, NGOs, support networks) as ‘home’. As bell hooks (1991:149) has noted, at times of estrangement or alienation:

‘Home is no longer just one place, it is locations. Home is also place which enables and promotes varied and ever changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference.’

Thus, people recreate feelings of home on the street and as time goes by ‘home becomes more of a concept than a material space’:

In the context of interconnected borders and places, ways of living are created. These provide the sociabilities that give shelter to young fugitives from the more clearly bounded ‘anthropological places’ such as the family home. Despite the fact that leaving behind those ‘traditional borders usually implies exposing yourself to risks and dangers, the supposed lack of protection in which they live while in the streets seems to be experienced also as the pleasure of being allowed to move around in a universe of choices and alternatives. It seems that in this environment the social places do not bind as much as the households which they ran away from and to which they sometimes try to return (Arames, 1996: 88).

There is no easy resolution to the contradictions which street children experience within themselves. Some children do try to go home, but as Winterson (1985: 161) wrote in her novel, ‘they don’t survive’. They are caught between two realities which are ‘claiming them at the same time’ (Winterson, 1985:160). They have to make a choice, and, as I have shown, will usually opt for the street. This is because despite the violence, dangers and oppression which exist there, it is often the more realistic option for street children, and eventually becomes their ‘home’.

38 My own emphasis.
Conclusion

A Trip to Medan (Transgression and Suppression)

It is not conventional to include new information in a conclusion, especially in a thesis. Nevertheless, I shall end my account of street children’s lives in Indonesia with an anecdote. This is a story which brings together the key themes of the thesis: power, domination, spatial and physical oppression, and resistance. It is a tale that must be told.

27 July 1996

The story is about the cancellation of an experimental Exhibition for Street Children in Medan, in September 1996, when 74 street children and youth were intimidated and harassed, physically removed from the city of Medan in North Sumatra, and returned to Jakarta by force.

It all started on 27 July 1996, when riots involving the Indonesian Democratic Party’s (PDI) office in Jakarta, rocked the nation and grabbed international attention.1 Two days later I arrived in Indonesia to begin my fieldwork.2 The children in Yogyakarta had their ears to the ground, and were already discussing the ‘incident’ when I arrived.3 To this extent the children were politicised, and while I was there they often voiced anti-government, anti-Suharto and pro-Megawati rhetoric. Some of the older boys were the red and black colours of the PDI party, and displayed gestures of defiance by ‘signalling’ the Mega salute in public, even...
though it was viewed as subversive behaviour (Hebdige, 1979). A few children told me of how they had been in Jakarta at the time, and had become involved in the riots. They had seen it as an opportunity to take to Jakarta’s streets and express their anger about their lot in life.4

One street youth, Tono, aged 19, told me of how he took part in the rioting and looting. He said that he enjoyed it as it gave him an opportunity to vent his anger and frustration at those with money. Tono broke shop windows, helped overturn cars, and set one on fire. Lots of street children took part, he said. That night, after the riots, he was walking through the streets and saw ‘many’ bodies, wearing the red and black colours of the PDI, lying dead on the streets. Tono saw bodies been taken away in trucks by the army, out of town. He said that there must have been a big grave somewhere.5 Before he got back to the street kid NGO, MMK’s open-house, where he was staying, Tono was picked up by the army who arrested him for being a suspected rioter. He was taken to a football stadium in an army truck full of other arrested people. When they arrived the stadium was full of hundreds of people who had also been detained by the security forces during the riots. They were all forced to sit on the ground, and were held there for hours. Tono said that everyone was terrified, and people were praying, and weeping. A cement mixer was standing in the centre of the stadium. An army officer was shouting at them all, warning them not to resist superior forces, or to speak out against the government. Those who dared would face harsh punishment. To drive the message home to the

‘subversives’, Tono told me how three soldiers grabbed a man, and forced him, head first, into the cement mixer.

Everyone began to scream, and many people fainted. Tono was lucky, he said: because of his tattoos and long hair, the army thought he was a mere preman (thug) and not a political activist. For once, his unconventional style was a benefit to him in the eyes of the authorities, and he was released. He said that he does not know what happened to the people he left behind in the stadium that night (pers. com. February, 1997).

Backlash

The New Order regime reacted with force to the events of 27 July 1996 and, as was seen on TV screens across the world, the army took to the streets in their thousands. The Soeharto government publicly determined to eradicate the country of political subversives, and began a high profile witch hunt, for those responsible for the riots. There was talk about foreign backed assistance, Maoist groups and liberation theologians.6 ABRI officially blamed the riots on ‘Communist insurgents’ and a small student organisation, the Democratic People’s Party (PRD) was branded as the communist mastermind behind the riots (Lloyd Parry, 1996). The government said that the PRD was backed by Australian Trade Union organisations (Praesetyohadi, 1996). Fear and xenophobia was intense.

The government machine was vehement in its actions against individuals and groups, particularly NGOs which were perceived as a threat to the state, and presented to mainstream society as being dangerous for the country’s ‘stability’. In the period after the riots, dozens of students and activists were arrested, went missing, or ‘disappeared’. Some of them went into hiding, but others later reappeared and testified that they had been detained and tortured by the army. Still others were never seen again. A number of NGOs were said to have been involved in the riots. The government claimed that some NGOs had a hidden agenda, and

4 The power of the street has been dramatically demonstrated in a number of revolutions: against the Shah’s regime in Iran in 1978; during the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua which ousted the Somosa regime in 1979; and during the collapse of the communist regime in East Germany in 1989. In all of these revolutions most of the demonstrators were young people. In Managua theSandinistaconfoundedtrainedsoldierswiththeevents:‘ThebattleforManagualastforthemostpart,achildren’scrusade;manystrippersweremenagers,andsomewasonlyasyoungas12’(GilbertandGugler,1995:210-11).AnditwastheincrediblyoungpeopleinEastGermanywhichcontributedtotherapidcollapseoftheGDR,whenthousandsofyoungpeopletookthestreetsinthewinterof1989(Smith,1998:296).Similarly,theriotsofthe1998‘MayRevolution’whichsweptIndonesiaandledtoSoehartos’downdagwerealso dominatedbystudents, but also children and youth. Newspapers reported that many of the rioters and looters were young men and boys (see for example Sydney Morning Herald, May 8, 1997).

5 The Indonesian government maintained that only 5 people died, 28 were injured and 74 went missing during the July 27 riots.

6 See Garra, 31 August, 1996 (Special issue on Romo Sandy); January 18,1997.
were in fact groups of power hungry communist subversives who were either backed by foreign mercenaries, or who were selling Indonesia's poverty to foreigners, and using foreign funds in order to become stronger (and overthrow the government). Suspicion intensified towards any foreign aid to NGOs being used for anything that 'went against the national interest', and attempts were made to regulate this funding (Prasetiyohadi, 1996). Thirty-two NGOs were blacklisted as 'problematic' organisations, and the government determined that it was going to investigate their activities, as well as all of Indonesia's 8,000 NGOs (Lubis, 1996; Mahendra, 1996).

In the weeks following the riots Giri was under constant surveillance by Intel (Indonesian Intelligence), the workers were followed and harassed by threatening phone calls, phone and fax lines were tapped, and private mail was read. In addition, Romo Sandyawan, a Catholic priest and the Director of a Jakarta based NGO for the urban poor and street children, Institute Sosial Jakarta (ISI), was arrested. The reason was because he had harboured four of the political activists from the student organisation PRD, which was officially held responsible for the riots.

Exhibition

Six weeks later, the Consortium of Indonesian Street Children, a group of NGOs (who have no affiliation to the government), went to the city of Medan in North Sumatra, to hold an 'exhibition' ('pameran'), which it had organised a year before. The theme of the exhibition was 'Non-physical Violence against Street Children'. There was to be a one day seminar (for an academic adult audience), followed by a three day public fair, in the centre of the city, where the children would display their paintings, drama, music and other artistic talents. The pameran was being hosted by the street kid NGO, KKSP, and had been approved by the authorities in Medan. All the correct documents had been obtained, everything was reported and legal.

The pameran was seen by the Consortium as an opportunity to protest the Indonesian social system, which is based on physical violence, and which it sees as being responsible for the way street children are treated by government and society. The desire was to educate the public about street children, to try and eradicate stereotypes that the children are deviant and dangerous, and to create a climate of social, economic, and cultural justice. It was a coherent active group of resistance, and a means of advocating that there are better ways to deal with street children than the use of physical violence.

Each NGO (including Giri) invited ten to fifteen children to attend the exhibition. In Yogyakarta there was great excitement in the weeks leading up to the event, even among those who were not going. The children and young people at Giri were consumed in a flurry of music practices, drama workshops, paintings, craft making and poetry reading, preparing themselves for the exhibition. They wrote songs and poetry about life on the street, they practiced short plays about being arrested and beaten up by the police, and they talked about their excitement of going so far away to meet other street children, and to perform in public, where people would listen to them.

**Medan**

**Prisoners**

We were lined up like escorted prisoners
The hot sun was a witness
to everything
They gobbled away, we were silent
Nobody answered
We are not prisoners who must be oppressed
God
Help us here
in the city of Medan
Witness that we are not
Animals that have to be
put down

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7 The Consortium of Indonesian Street Children consisted of eleven NGOs: Banjarn, from Pematang Siantar in Sumatra; KKSP, Medan; YAB Banda Aceh; Giri, Yogyakarta; Kolempok Serang, Central Java; Hiyayun Anak Merdeka, Bandung; Nusal, Malang; Sontal, Mataram (Lombok); Institute Sosial Jakarta (ISI); (the NGO run by Romo Sandyawan); and MDK (Masyarakat Koa), Jakarta.

8 KKSP NGO, Kolempok Kesja Studi Perkotaan (Urban Studies Working Group) is based in Medan.
A delegation of seventy-five street children from Java and Lombok took a three day trip by ship from Jakarta to Medan. (I had made the same journey a week earlier with a smaller contingent of NGO workers, to attend a four day workshop on a social analysis of Indonesian street children.) Later, the children reported that they had attracted a lot of attention on the ship, and were asked many questions by passengers about their reasons for going to Medan. These ‘passengers’ were particularly interested in where they got the money to fund their trip, and whether they were going to Medan to stage a demonstration. Three of the older boys were called to see the captain and interrogated about their activities in Medan. When they went to the captain’s office, also present were some of the ‘passengers’ who had been asking questions. They were now wearing the white ABRI uniform, and one was in the Brimob (mobile brigade) uniform (Jejal, October, 1996:11).

Eventually, the ship arrived in Medan, but the children were stopped from disembarking by the captain of the ship. Instead, they were ordered to wait. Waiting for them on the docks were the military: forty armed men in uniform, to guard seventy-five children. The children were taken into a room on the ship and interrogated individually about the reasons for being there (especially about the funding for the trip), and their belongings were searched. They were held for hours, and were tired and hungry, especially after their three day journey. The children were shocked and frightened by their treatment, and many of the smaller ones began to cry.

It was about 12.30 pm when we arrived at Balawan port. We were held until 4.30. We were asked questions, we were corrected (dikoreksi), we were searched like objects...we were suspected. They thought we were going to make a commotion like the 27 July story. But all that isn’t possible because we are under age and don’t know anything about politics. We can be silent, we can gasp for breath, and we can look for food. But making problems like that isn’t possible, and isn’t ever going to happen. Then we were taken in buses to the exhibition camp. Everyone there was on edge, they were all suspicious and uneasy (was was), everyone was scared. We were held for four days. We didn’t see any of the workers from the NGO. Then we were sent home, unconditionally, on buses. All the children cried, brother Topan cried, our pendamping (NGO worker) brothers cried, everyone lost out. Lost time, lost power and lost all (Kunzet, Jejal, October, 1996:22-23).

The children were escorted to the camp planned for the exhibition by dozens of armed soldiers and army vehicles. Once there, they were held under armed guard and intimidated by the soldiers. Some of them were beaten and their few possessions (including guitars and other materials for the pameran) were confiscated. Many of the children complained about losing their possessions and clothes when their bags were searched. However, the children kept their spirits up while they were held. At the camp they made friends with Medan’s street children, and played music, performed drama sketches, made handicrafts and sang songs. Some of the children sang Megawati songs, in front of the soldiers. Cecak (15) from Yogyakarta was hit across the face for doing this. I was unable to see the children while they were in Medan, and was forbidden from visiting the camp.

While the children were detained, the KKSP and Consortium members who had organised the exhibition were also dealing with harassment and intimidation from the authorities. The day before the children arrived the phone calls started. The authorities were calling in by the police and the army to explain what the exhibition was about, who was paying for it, and why there were foreigners involved. At the time there was myself and an American woman, Sarah Whitmore, who ran the Jakarta NGO, MMK. We were both staying at KKSP with the other pendamping and street children from Medan.

The Director of KKSP was interrogated over a number of days and threatened with seven years imprisonment for having a foreigner stay without having not only reported it to local kampung leaders (which he had done), but also to the local police (a minor immigration law they found somewhere). He was warned to be careful during such a politically volatile time, and threatened with ‘the same fate as Romo Sandiawati’ (KKSP, 1996:4). They were looking for faults so that they could put pressure on the Consortium to stop the event. The authorities (both army and police) told him that the Consortium could not have the exhibition if there were foreigners involved (or they would press charges).
To cut a long story short, people staying at KKSP were followed by Intel and the
Consortium organisers were questioned and intimidated by the authorities over a
number of days. The police knew about Sarah's presence, and ordered her to go to
the office where she was interrogated for hours and forced to endure harassment
and sexual innuendos. It was decided that we (the bute) should leave. One night
Intel came to the KKSP house to examine people's papers, and I was hidden in an
attic until the early hours of the morning, and then smuggled out to a 'safe' house.
Yet once we had left (and gone to hide in separate hotels where Intel continued to
haunt us), the army still created problems for KKSP and the plans for the pameran.
First they said that the seminar on violence against street children had to be
cancelled, and eventually they said that the entire exhibition had to be called off.
They said that the event had strayed from its original conception (described in
the original proposal and letter to the police) and because of this they were revoking all
permits. They also said that they did not want premam kecil (small thugs) in their
city and that the children had to go back to Jakarta. The guards told the pendamping
as the camp that they feared the children had come to Medan to demonstrate. They
also suspected that the activities were related to Sri Bintang, and had been
infiltrated by foreigners (KKSP, 1996).9

The same night that the exhibition was cancelled by the authorities, the children
were forced onto military buses by the army and police to be escorted back to
Jakarta. At the time there was considerable fear for the children's safety: that any
'accident' could happen on a three-day journey under military supervision. The
Legal Aid Institute (LBH, Medan) was made aware of the situation, and advised
KKSP on the best strategy for action. It was decided that it was impossible to resist
the authorities, even though their decision was illegal and an abuse of human

9 Sri Bintang is an NGO activist who was arrested after the July 27th riots, charged with subversion.
In hindsight, the fact that Romo Sandiawan's organisation ISJ was involved in the pameran, and
that bute were also taking part, was enough for the Medan security forces (who after the April riots
of 1995, were fearful of having another disturbance on their hands) to use their full force to stop
any of what they called macan-macan (monkey business) (Sarah Whitmore, pers.com, Sept, 1996).

10 In an atmosphere of hysteria and resistance the children were put on the
buses and forced to leave Medan, under armed guard. Resistance by the children
continued to the very end. They were extremely disappointed and were crying
hysterically (KKSP, 1996:10; pers.comm. Sept 3, 1996). When the military tried to
put them on the buses to go back to Jakarta, some children threw things at the
guards and shouted 'Long Live Street Kids' ('Hidup Anak Jalanan'). Others cried
and clung to their new friends and 'brothers'; the street children of Medan who they
had recently met (Kunter, Jejal, 1996). When they were put on the buses they
climbed out of the windows to rejoin their friends, as they did not want to go back
to Jakarta without them. Finally, however, the buses left with the children on board.
The next day it was reported in the newspapers that the pameran had been
cancelled. The reason given was that the children had been arrested for starting a
fire in a warehouse, a fire which had in fact started the day before their ship even
arrived in Medan.

It is difficult to recount the atmosphere of extreme intimidation and fear at that
time. Suffice to say that the children (and workers) who were involved in the
'Medan' episode were traumatised by the event. They felt angry and disempowered,
and punished for something they had not done. They were treated as prisoners or
'animals to be put down,' even though they had committed no crime.

When I returned to Yogyakarta I met up with the children. They were disillusioned
and offended at the way that they had been treated, and they reacted in the only way
they knew: they got drunk, cried, and took excessive amounts of pills and alcohol
to forget their anger, indignation and frustration. Later, some of the children vented
their disappointment by writing in Jejal about their experiences in Medan.11

The authorities in Medan used intimidation and force to ban the pameran, even
though the organisations had all the correct official permits to go ahead. As well as

10 The UNCRC contains two articles which are of particular relevance: Article 12 'The opinion of
the child', and Article 13 'Freedom of Expression'.
11 See the October 1996 issue of Jejal.
providing a first-hand account of the extremes to which the Indonesian apparatus will go to suppress a group of children, this story emphasises that in addition to their subcultures, NGOs are also safe spaces or ‘in between spaces’ for street children (see Davidson, 1996). They are places where they can find refuge and find comfort away from the harsh existence on the city streets. They are also places where the children can be themselves, and where they are not constrained by state imposed boundaries.

The 27 July Incident was an opportunity for the state to ‘clean-up’ NGOs. Although KKSP, Grip and the other NGOs associated with the Consortium for Indonesian Street Children were not involved in this political incident, they were nevertheless victims during the fall-out from it. These NGOs have not been silenced, in spite of intimidation and constant surveillance. Organisations such as Grip continue to stage plays and events which allow the children to express themselves, and the problems they face from security forces and mainstream society. As Dinnenstein (1991:71) has said of people working with street children in Brazil: ‘People working with street children defy the law of silence at great personal risk’.

Broken Promise: The Rights of the Child
The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), ratified by Indonesia in 1990, states that children have the right to: shelter, nutrition and medical care; to protection from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect or negligent treatment; to free education; to be heard; to make choices and to free legal representation (UNICEF, 1990). None of these basic rights are being recognised or enforced in respect of street children in Indonesia. Officially, street children do not exist, and the only time that they are formally acknowledged is when they are in trouble with the police, or when they are ‘swept up’ off the street. Street children detained by the police have no legal protection against violence and abuse, and their lack of a KTP (and their disqualification from ever obtaining one) is a further way in which the children are denied their rights. It means that they are excluded from the benefits of state acceptance such as the right to state recognition, to an official identity, an education, a home, health care, rented accommodation, school registration, marriage, formal work, a proper burial, or any other basic rights specified by the UN Convention (Ertanto, 1993).12

In July 1995, a delegation of about thirty children from several cities in Java, including Yogyakarta, went to KomnasHAM, the Human Rights commission, and to the Houses of Parliament (MPR), in Jakarta, to complain about ‘torture, injustice and harassment by officials and police officers’. The children were told to try and ‘keep out of trouble’.13 This incident, together with the Medan event (where the children were also protesting their harsh treatment by state and society), reveals street kids as agents in identity politics. Both episodes can be seen as examples of active resistance, and as ‘inversions’, as the children actively challenged the state by using its own hegemonic structures, and going to parliament (at the ‘centre’), to complain about violence against street children.14 Inversions occur when those usually on the margins occupy the centre, and ‘dominant society is cast in the role of spectators’ (Sibley, 1999a, Radcliffe, 1993). The acts can also be seen as ‘intentional transgressions’, which are forms of resistance that create a response from the establishment (see Cresswell, 1996:22). At other times, however, street kids’ actions are not necessarily ‘resistant’, but they are still perceived as transgressive, even if it is only through their ways of earning money or enjoying themselves (ibid).

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12 See Mari Singerambon (1993), and the story of Dodo, a Yogyakarta street boy who was killed in a case of mistaken identity, and was then denied a burial by local authorities due to his lack of KTP, even though his friends and adopted family could identify him.
14 See Radcliffe (1993: 102-116), and her discussion of how the Madres de La Plaza de Mayo moved from the traditional space of the private home into ‘the space occupied by the most potent symbol of the military regime’, and appropriated the centre, as a ‘coherent active group of resistance’ against the disappearance of their loved ones.
Freedom, Transgression, Alienation

...alienation is the necessary price of individual freedom. In that case, the desire to have both individual freedom and the security of ‘being at home’ in society...is doomed to disappointment (Berger, 1977:205).

Street kids are excluded, but they also exclude. Throughout this thesis I have illuminated the ways in which children living on the streets are marginalised by the state and mainstream society, yet how simultaneously, through their actions, attitudes, survival strategies and bodily styles, they also intentionally set themselves apart.

In summary, this thesis has argued that street children in Indonesia are both socially and spatially marginalised by the state and mainstream society for being deviant and ‘out of place’. It has shown how they are viewed as a threat to economic policies for ‘development’, and as a challenge to the public transcript constructed by the state. This is because their presence on the street and their constant mobility is a subversion of the elite’s patriarchal view of the ideal family, home, and model child. Unlike those people living in the mainstream, who are constrained by the state imposed surveillance systems, street children move around constantly, in a way that people within the system cannot. Such difference is seen as deviant and as a transgression of the state imposed moral boundaries. Their very presence on the street also violates the Indonesian development dream, and sullies the image which the state and dominant society wishes to portray to potential investors and tourists. Consequently, they are perceived as a hazard to the regime’s overall preservation of ‘security’ and power via ideological discourse, which it uses for social control. These threats are accentuated by the state and media to legitimate the social and physical oppression of street children.

The state’s attempted exclusion of street children from public spaces is often in the form of verbal abuse, evictions, arrests, beatings and torture while in police custody, and other excessive infringements of the children’s basic human rights. These abuses must be emphasised as it is such treatment which has contributed to their alienation, and led to the strengthening of a street kid subculture, the Tiban, as a group response of subversion, solidarity, and as a means of survival. Street children, therefore, are not merely passive victims of the state and mainstream society. Instead, they contest their exclusion through the appropriation of specific places in the city, and by constructing alternative ‘geographies of resistance’ which subvert state ideologies and actions at a series of scales, from the body to the street (see Pile and Keith, 1997; Smith, 1998:296).

Street children challenge the Indonesian state’s intentions by moving within the margins of official geographies, and by creating a network of entwined niches and relationships for their everyday survival. They do this by moving between multiple sites around the city, and by employing an expansive range of survival strategies across diverse social and spatial relations. It is the ‘fluidity’ of these marginal spaces, and the flexibility of the children to ‘jump scales’ from one location and identity to another, which ensures their survival (see Massey, 1994; Smith, 1994).

The kid’s produced spaces reflect more social marginality, and are places in which they can earn money, obtain food, feel safe, and find enjoyment, despite the hostility of outside forces. The children inscribe these peripheral places with their own meanings. They are territories in which identities are constructed, and where the hidden transcript can grow. Even the smallest social space may allow a resistant subculture to form, and although ‘solitary dissent’ is ‘extraordinarily difficult’, a single companion is often sufficient to break the pressure to conform, and to construct an alternative community (Scott 1990:118-9). Places such as the Toilet and the Taman create a strong sense of belonging and a positive self-identity for the individual street child, and are places where shared solutions are created. They allow the children to look beyond the dangers of being homeless in the city, and to feel safe. In effect, certain spaces have become a ‘home in the public space’, and help a child to survive, and to feel as though s/he belongs and exists in a world which would rather s/he did not (see Arantes, 1996:80).
Once on the street, children assimilate themselves to a subculture which assists them in rejecting what society has to offer, and in subverting the obligation to be in 'harmony' with the mainstream. The Tikyan subculture creates a social space from which street children can challenge dominant society, and where they can create their own collective reality. Bodily styles and 'deviant' behaviour patterns provide a symbolic means of escape for children who might otherwise feel trapped within the confines of the state which attempts to limit an individual's control over their own body (see Breithart, 1998:306; Cresswell, 1992). Through displaying signs and symbols street children are able to express their moral outrage and subvert the way they are treated by state and society. It is their way of establishing their presence in the world, as a challenging reminder to the outside (straight) world that they are not going to go away, but are here to stay.

All street children are powerless when suppressed by an oppressive regime. However, in Yogyakarta street boys feel superior to street girls. Consequently, a girl child is pushed to the margins of the street culture by boundaries which are created from within an already marginalised group (see Murray, 1996). Street girls particularly suffer abusive discrimination on the street because they are seen to be committing an 'heretical geography', by violating ideas of femininity in state discourse, and by 'invading' the street which is a male space (see Cresswell, 1996). Many street boys believe that girls should not be on the street, and this reproduction of mainstream patriarchal attitudes affects social processes and everyday street behaviour. In this way, street girls face a 'double-structured subordination' and are often forced to negotiate their various survival strategies and identity politics through a different production and use of space to their male counterparts (see Powell and Clarke, 1976).

In addition to their gendered geographies, street girls also subvert patriarchal ideology by contesting definitions imposed on them, and by transgressing the behavioural 'norms' for women dictated by the mainstream. In fact, the tactics of resistance which they adopt in the face of their multifaceted marginalisation can be understood as the street girls creation of their own separate subculture: a 'microculture' within the street kid subculture of Yogyakarta (see Wulff, 1988:21).

Street boys and girls have therefore found numerous ways in which to protest and refuse their exclusion and, by consistently moving in the margins, they have developed a network of socio-spatial and bodily strategies in order to survive. Sometimes such techniques are suppressed by the state, but the children are used to persecution and will respond, by moving to another location, marking their bodies with more tattoos, getting mbak (drunk or stoned) in order to forget, or by simply finding solace in one another.

Peer group communication is extremely important in street children's lives and, due to their own needs for personal survival, they do not want to break out of that connection. To remain accepted an individual child must conform to the expectations, norms and values of the group. Such values include shifting hierarchies and a rigid surveillance from within, and although in many ways street kid subcultures are safe spaces, they are also riven with internal rivalry, violence and oppression. These elements exist in order to preserve the unity of the hidden transcript, and sometimes the expectations of the group go against a street kid's own personal needs. Such contradictions are part of the Tikyan reality.

As they reach adolescence street youth find that they encounter even more disapproval and discrimination on the street. In order to cope with their negative social environment, Tikyan and street girls attempt to ignore and distance themselves from the hostile messages they receive from the mainstream. They do this by creating and dispersing their own messages to counteract those from dominant society, and by immersing themselves in the subculture still further. As they get older, they are increasingly socialised to conform to group norms, behaviour patterns and bodily styles, and they learn not to deviate from the values which they have constructed and share with one another. In this way they reinforce loyalty to their subculture, to guarantee continued interaction with one another. As
one homeless woman in London said: ‘Homelessness is not just a situation, it’s a state of mind’ (Grant, 1996).

**What next?**

I am often asked what happens to street kids when they become adults. My usual answer is that they generally stay involved in street life, working in the informal economy. As with any generalisations, however, there are always exceptions. Some ex-street kids I know have been ‘lucky’. Two boys I knew in Yogyakarta are now living overseas: one in Melbourne, Australia. The other in Holland. Both have married foreigners. The Australian connection was made when Rikki (19) went to Bali, the tourist ‘mecca’, to earn money busking, playing the violin. There he met and fell in love with an Australian girl. She paid for him to come and live with her in Australia, where they now reside, the proud parents of a baby girl. The other young man is Aris (21). He also fell in love, with a Dutch *bule* woman he met in Jakarta when she was working for the street kid NGO where he hung out. I have visited both couples, and I would be reluctant to say that either of the young men are entirely happy with their new lives. Not only are there immense cultural and language difficulties which have to be faced, but they also miss the street life and their friends. These examples of an expanding street-kid diaspora probably raise more questions than they answer.

Other ex-street kids have also attempted the conventional life, in Indonesia. If they have the connections and money some young men manage to buy a *KTP*, get married, and rent a small place in a *kampung*. One man I know bought a *bocak* with money he saved. He was happy for a while, until his *bocak* was stolen. Now he has nothing and is very disillusioned with life. At the age of thirty he still calls himself *anak jalan* (street kid) as at least that gives him a sense of belonging. Many other ex-street kids become involved in crime (usually housebreaking, pick-pocketing or drug running), as it is the only way they can continue to survive. Still others try and return to the formal sector and work in factories or small enterprises. Often, though, they return to the street, dissatisfied with what ordinary life has to offer.

Abandonment of the street is therefore difficult, or even impossible, as it is a central part of their lives, and a way of life with which they are most familiar. Once they have been living on the street for a long time it is very difficult for street children and youth to go home or to re-assimilate into mainstream society. Even though they know what is expected of them by the mainstream (and sometimes they wish to conform to those expectations), ultimately they do not feel the moral pressure of the dominant culture as strongly as the obligation to conform to their own subculture. Over the months or years the children have learned to interact and comply with the expectations of their own group, and are more influenced by it. They have made a concentrated investment in the subculture to which they belong, where they have gained individual status, a position in the hierarchy, valuable connections and a specific role for themselves. They have also developed intense emotional bonds. In mainstream society they have nothing. This compounds their problems of making a transition to the mainstream.  

For most street kids, therefore, the street becomes their preferred choice of two realities (the mainstream or the street), and remains their ‘home’, although they may spend time living away from it. The street may not necessarily be the way of life that the children want to engage in, but it becomes their preferred option. Often, they are fleeing poverty or abusive home situations and on the street they find other children with similar experiences to their own. These companions become an alternative family, which has its own values, emotional support and a kind of empathetic understanding that they do not find at home. The *Titiyan* community enables a street child to establish a new identity, and is a means through which they can voice their collective indignation at the way they are treated by the state and dominant society, and from where they can actively refuse and subvert state ideology.

Street life, however, is riddled with contradictions, and although street kids regularly trespass or transgress the rules set by the state and dominant society, they

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15 See also Hanners, (1989:194) who observed a similar dilemma for young men caught up in the ghetto culture of Harlem.
are not always acts of intentional resistance (see Cresswell, 1996:23). Often street children’s transgressions are merely in the pursuit of survival and a sense of belonging to their subculture. The paradox is that in the very act of conforming to the codes of the Tikson hidden transcript (so that they continue to be accepted by their peers), they simultaneously violate the legal and moral boundaries of the public transcript. It is the results of their actions, the fact that they are ‘noticed’ as being out of place, which means that they are repeatedly perceived as being deviant and dangerous (ibid). It may be that alienation from the mainstream is the price they have to pay for inclusion in the ‘substream’.

EPILOGUE

‘Total Crisis’

Indonesia is in crisis. Street children’s position in the Indonesian economy is such that they are the first to experience and adapt to impaired economic and social conditions. This has been especially true since the onslaught of Krismon (Krisis Moneter, The Monetary Crisis), or, as it is has been more recently named, Krisol (Krisis Total, or “Total Crisis”). Of the five countries most affected by the Asian crisis, Indonesia was the hardest hit, and the country is now facing enormous social and economic stresses. In 1998 it experienced a negative growth rate of 15 percent and its currency lost over 80 percent in value, causing unemployment and rapid inflation, especially in basic commodities. Since the start of the crisis in late 1997 prices for food stuffs have doubled, and more and more people have gone onto the street in order to eke out an existence from the rapidly deteriorating economy. This situation is only going to get worse. Economists have predicted that in the next few years, Indonesia will experience another 20 percent shrinkage in its economy. In addition, foreign investment, considered by many as being vital for the turn around of the economy, is avoiding the nation until there is an end to the political turmoil currently rocking the nation. A continued ailing economy will only effect street children and their social networks in a detrimental way.

Education systems invariably suffer in times of crisis. This has been seen in Latin America during the 1980s, and during an economic downturn in Indonesia over a decade ago. The effects of the current economic crisis are now being felt in many schools in Indonesia, particularly in poorer communits. This is a result of reduced incomes, increased prices and higher unemployment. Further, fixed rates of public funding for education, higher costs, and the enhanced need for children to work

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17 During the economic downturn of 1986-87 school enrolments fell steeply, all of them children from poorer households (Ting and Walsh, 1998:10).
rather than go to school so that they can assist their parents with economic activities, are causing an increased decline of enrolments in primary and junior schools (UNICEF, 1998; Ting and Walsh, 1998). According to UNICEF, more than 30 percent of the country’s children are at risk of failing to complete primary school (UNICEF, 1998:40). School principals have reported that families are having difficulty in paying parent association fees, and that absences have increased as a result of children spending more time supporting their families. On August 5 1998 the Indonesian Education Minister announced that the 1998 school year enrolment rate was 54 percent, compared to 1997’s rate of 78 percent (Ting and Walsh, 1998:10). Increased-drop out rates are also being reported, and the government estimates that four million children could drop out of primary school (SD) and lower secondary school (SMP) in the next year, if no special measures are taken.

The IMF and Indonesian government have devised a number of structural impositions, in order to ‘save’ the region. However, as is usually the case with IMF austerity measures, or ‘Structural Adjustment Programs’ (SAPs), street children, and other poor sections of society are the first to endure the fallout from such ‘rescue’ packages (see Jackson1990:112). This is because often when cut backs are made in public spending (the usual IMF ‘prescription’), unemployment soars, food prices rise, poverty increases, and social indicators stump (Clark, 1991:197). Consequently, even more adults and children end up working on the streets, competition intensifies and the general public have less disposable income to give to buskers, shoe-shiners and others working in the informal economy.

A significant increase in the numbers of young children living and working on the streets is already being reported in Indonesia’s major cities, and they are much younger than ever before (Adidana, .pers.com. 1999). What will the state and society’s response will be to this increase? Will they start to exterminate them in a more open manner, as in Latin America?

18 See Apelkar (1988) who notes that IMF impositions led to a substantial increase of children on the streets of countries in Latin America. Robson (1998) also notes how children from poor families in Zimbabwe particularly suffer the detrimental effects of SAPs (Structural Adjustment Programs).

Violence

Street kids frequently reflect the opinions which exist on the streets, and quite often they are simply voicing what they hear around them. The changes and increased violence people talked about on Malioboro in 1997 (discussed in Chapter 6), were to do with pervasive global capitalism, and the spectacular consumption ideology promoted by the state during the ‘development era’. These ideologies created a growth in individualism, a decline in reciprocity, a shrinking of public space, and a widening gap between rich and poor. As a result, more people had to make ends meet in the informal sector. This created increased competition and rivalry on the street.

![Figure 9.1: Mbah Boro: Competition on the Street](image)

A group of buskers are telling Mbah Boro how quiet (sepit) it is on the street:

- 'It's really hard now, Mbah, there are less of kampung people joining in busking. It was useless them getting a higher education if it turns out they have to busk. It's all because their parents have lost their jobs."

- "PHK victims": Now being a kere (street kid) is really hard. The proof is that those busking at the traffic lights are not all street kids, but also kampung kids who are mostly the consequence of PHK.

Since the economic crisis the growing numbers of people working on the streets are a sign of the dwindling opportunities in the formal sector. Younger children are being pushed out of their territories by adults and older boys from the kampung and outside

19 PHK (Putus Hubungan Kerja), literally means "broken work ties", and refers to people who have been sacked, or have lost their jobs.
the city. Such difficulties were recently expressed in the Mbah Boro cartoon in Jejal (April, 1998) (Figure 9.1).

Escalating violence, rioting and social disintegration often accompany economic collapse, as poverty levels surge and the gap between rich and poor widens. Today, in mid-1999, the feeling on the streets is one of increased discontent, indignation and a determination to subvert outside forces. In the current climate of economic, social and political crisis, expectations are high but opportunities are less. Street children and youth are increasingly turning to crime, prostitution, alcohol, drugs and violence, as a means of survival or as a form of escapism.20

Chronic unemployment in Yogyakarta and elsewhere is leading to a growing number of disillusioned and frustrated young people, and the rivalry between people struggling to survive has created even more violence and crime on the street. This is particularly evident in Jakarta, and is becoming more apparent in Yogyakarta (Adidananta, pers.com, February, 1999). The increased violence among the street boys is simply an indication of the T'bayan's collective adaptations, which are vital for their continued survival in their changing social environment. The children are attempting to look at the world in a way that gives it some meaning, and are constantly seeking values and ways of existing which are credible in their complex lives.

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20 A number of people have reported to me the visible increase in violence and the use of drugs among young people in Yogyakarta and Jakarta (Berman, pers.com, March 1999; Kerzermakers, pers.com, February, 1999; Adidananta, pers.com, February, 1999). Also of interest, and worthy of further research, is the increase of violence and fighting between rival gangs of school children and football supporters in Jakarta, which on a number of occasions have resulted in death (see for example Kompas, April 1, 1999; and Jakarta Post, 20 October 1996 which states that 'At least 12 students have been killed in various brawls during the first six months of this year'). I personally witnessed three such 'brawls' on separate occasions, when I was in Jakarta in 1996/7. The 'students' are school children in uniform, aged between 12-16 years old. Armed with sticks and metal bars and throwing rocks they take over the main streets in broad daylight, sometimes fighting on buses and in between cars. Most analysts seem to agree that student violence may be linked to rapid social and economic change. Criminologist Dr Sutono, however, believes that it is the culture of conformity in Indonesia which is behind the student unrest. He says that the mass oriented Indonesian education system does not recognise an individual's aspirations, so that young people have no opportunity to express their individual identity. As a result, Sutono believes that they 'pick a label', most likely their school, 'to assert a group identity within the system' (Williams, Sydney Morning Herald, May 8 1996). By claiming an allegiance to the T'bayan community, this is also what street children are doing.

Jellinek (1998:8) has recently argued that in some ways those in low income communities are actually benefiting from the crisis in Indonesia, as they are able to squat land abandoned by construction workers, from which they would have been evicted in the past. She also asserts that the informal economy is thriving and that police harassment of street vendors has decreased (ibid). This, the theory goes, is because police and security guards have been less vigilant in restricting informal sector operations, due to their fear of causing social unrest (Hull, pers.com, January, 1999).

In spite of Jellinek's optimism, during times of national crisis Indonesian authorities are well known for adopting a hard line policy, in an attempt to silence critics (and eradicate unsightly groups), especially during periods of increased violence and social unrest. It is also rumoured among senior officials in ABRI that the current political disturbances in the provinces are being created deliberately, to legitimate a military response.21

What will happen if the current violence in Kalimantan, Ambon and East Timor spreads to Java? It could be that the escalation in violence and crime will provoke the state and/or the army to take up absolutist positions in order to man the moral boundaries set by the public transcript. From Aceh to East Timor, and during the numerous riots which have spread rapidly throughout the country, human rights violations have continued to occur at the hands of security forces, despite the presence of a new president, Soeharto may be gone, and things may be about to change, but New Order policies and ideologies have been so successful at penetrating to the core of the Indonesian psyche, that such a construction will take decades of reformasi (reform) to reverse. What will this mean for children living and working on the streets?

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21 Crouch in an interview with Stuart, Canberra Times, April 2, 1999:7 (as previously mentioned, there are some people who believe that Soeharto could be behind the troubles in East Timor and elsewhere).
Appendix 1:
Country Report to ASIANET and the NGO Committee on UNICEF:
Unregistered Children in Indonesia
(by Harriot Beazley/ Girli ).
Country Report to ASIANET and the NGO Committee On UNICEF:

Unregistered Children in Indonesia

A: General Situation

1) Demography

30 years ago Indonesia’s population consisted of about 70 million people, 71% of whom lived on the island of Java. At that time there was a birth rate of 4.0 per 1,000 women and a child mortality rate of 166 per 1,000 births. Today the population is estimated at 190,000,000, with about 60% living on Java. The current birth rate is 2.7 per 1,000 women and the child mortality rate 52.1 per 1,000 births (1999 figures). The New Order Government’s Familys’ Planning Program has been successful in reducing birth rates, and a national goal of reaching a fertility rate (TFR) at Replacement level (TFR of 2.3) by the year 2000-10 has been stated. In 1999 the percentage of married women pregnant at birth was 35.1%. However, for reasons to be discussed below, the above figures appear to be neither accurate

2) The Civil Registration System

Civil Registry in Indonesia is compulsory, but there is still some debate about which department officially handles the issue of civil registration and there is no integrated information system. Complications have also arisen due to recent changes in the structure of relevant ministries, and also changes in policy which have created big problems in bureaucratic outreach. Responsibility is currently split between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Population and Environment. There is an National Registration Office and registration statistics are held at the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, Jakarta) and are also reported to a section of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Population registration (which appears in the form of reports as births, deaths and population movements in each Kecamatan (sub-district)) is reported from the data to the national level via the Eksamen (district), Kabupaten (regional) and provincial levels through the national census system of population, and from there integrated into a list of duplication and a large margin for human error. There is consequently a lack of qualitative statistics information regarding children registration in Indonesia.

B: National Law and Policy

"Population Administration" in Indonesia covers: population registration (births, deaths, marriages, divorces and moving between/within an area); the provision of necessary papers and the gathering and processing of data on the population. The birth registration system is based on 7 mail boxes, regulated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Menteri Dalam Negri), including Population under

Every family should own a family card which lists members of the household, and every citizen over 17 years old, or who is already married should own a national identity card (KTP). It is the responsibility of every family head to report any changes in the composition of the household to the village authorities (RT/ RW) and the Village Head (Lurah), including any births. Having a birth certificate and subsequent family card and KTP gives a person access to State health, education and financial services, formal work, the military service (ABRI) and a passport.

It is stated in the Population Law that all children born must be registered as a live birth, even if the baby only shows signs of life for a few moments. A baby is to be registered as ‘Lahir Mati’ (still born), if it shows no signs of life and is born after 7 months of conception. The general Birth Act gives a time frame of 60 working days in which births must be reported (3 days for Europeans). Failure to comply with these laws can result in a penalty of Rp 50,000 (US$25) fine or three months in jail.

C: National Mechanisms

1) Procedures

Authorized doctors, hospitals, midwives and traditional doctors are responsible by law to make an official report on the birth of a child (surat keterangan). However, this report alone is not enough to register the birth, and although almost 50% of births take place in hospitals, hospital records are not linked to the central registration.

Having obtained the official statement a report of the birth is then made by the head of the household to the Lurah and to the Kecamatan (District Head) in order to obtain a birth certificate. The report must be made in the village where the mother is a registered citizen, even if the baby is born elsewhere. Certain documents are required to be presented before a birth or still born certificate can be obtained. These include: a ‘surat keterangan’ (official statement of birth) from the hospital, a doctor, a registered/authorized midwife or dukun (traditional doctor); parent’s marriage certificate and proof of parents citizenship; if born out of wedlock, proof of mothers citizenship (father is not registered), an official letter from the lurah (within 14 days), and the signature of two witnesses. A form consisting of 3 parts in filled in (see attached- Surat Kelahiran), one part is kept by the village head, one part by the Kecamatan (district head), and one part is kept by the family. The household head must also go through procedures to update the necessary information about changes in the composition of the household on the family card (see attached Family Card Form- Kartu Keluarga).

If the time frame of 60 days has been exceeded the legal procedures for registration are the same as the general birth act, but with the additional requirement that there is a Court verdict on the status of the child. The Vital Statistics office (Catatan Sipil) researches the papers before making an official
request to the court. Having pronounced a verdict on the status of the child, the court then contacts
the Catatan Sipil to register the verdict, who then issues a certificate.

If registration laws are not complied with there is a punishment of up to 3 months in jail or a 50,000
rupiah (US$25) fine. However, there is no monitoring system other than the periodic demand by the
state to see KTP cards. Those without KTPs on demand are subject to punishment. If someone is
found to be living in the city of Jakarta for more than 6 months and registered in another part of the
country, they are forced to leave. Further, some people have more than one KTP as they are
registered twice or more in different areas.

2) Records
The birth certificate is presented to the family and records; 6 types of data about the baby (name,
sex, date born, if a twin/triplet etc., place of birth, birth attendant (noted under doctor, midwife,
traditional healer, others); 4 types of data about the mother (name, address, place of birth,
nationality, 'wife of,'); and 4 about the father (name, place of birth, nationality, number of family
card and national identity card). If the child is born out of wedlock the father’s details are not
registered. If the father is not registered himself (and therefore does not have a family or identity card
number) the child is registered under the mother’s name. This is effectively stating that the child is
illegitimate, or “anak haram”, a stigma in Indonesian society.

The family card records every member of a household and contains information such as connection
to head of the household, education, profession, religion, marital status, nationality, number of KTP
etc, and must be changed every time there is a birth. The required form is split up into four parts, for
the household head, the RT, the kelurahan (village) and the kecamatan (district) levels.

The National Identity card (KTP) is based on the information recorded in the family card and is given
by the Camat (district head) in the name of the Bupati (regional head) and must be renewed every 3
years. If it is lost it can be replaced upon receipt of a police report.

A death certificate requires similar information, including the number of the deceased’s identity
card (KTP).

All this information must be reported to the higher authority from desa/kampung level, through the
Kelurahan (village head office), kecamatan (district office), kabupaten (regional office) and provinsi
(provincial) office before being reported to the centre. At the village level 9 reports are expected to
be completed each month, and some of the forms are almost identical and duplicate a lot of
information. Having compiled all the population registration forms from each area, monthly reports
are required from village to provincial level and are supposed to be completed and passed on to the
next level by the 5th of each month (see attached ‘Mechanisms for Monthly Reports’). However,
the large amounts of paperwork and duplication involved in the heavy traffic of information results in
over-burdened workloads for officials who have other reports to fill in, some of which have more
financial incentives than the population registration reports. Often reports are delayed at least 3
months in between each level, taking months to make it to the center. Mistakes made at any level will
be duplicated all the way up. Further, if for example one village fails to present a report on time, the
whole process is delayed as a Kecamatan or Kebupaten cannot submit a report until they have compiled all the necessary data. This has resulted in some officials presenting the same data month after month in order to complete obligations, as they have been unable to collect new figures or they are too overworked to analyze new data.

3) Resources and Personnel
As yet there is no computerized integrated information system for registration, although a number of pilot programmes have been run by the government in a few regions, the results of which have not yet been analyzed. The registration system is therefore entirely manual and registrars at the bottom (village) level of the registration system have the most difficult paperwork and information to supply. There is a problem of the ratio of registration officials to the large numbers of the population, and it is often the officials at this level who are less educated, untrained in the benefits of registration, overloaded with work and poorly paid. They are also mostly unaware of the importance of the information they are providing, which leads to a lack of dedication and discipline in completing tasks, and forms are often filled in with the wrong data. The quality and speed of reports therefore very much depends on the monthly village report. In order to save paperwork one frequent error is a baby that was actually born alive will be reported as still born if it later died, or not reported at all. This obviously results in the provision of false or low quality data.

4) Social Practices and Catalysts
A further huge problem which has been stressed in the system of population registration is the low participation of society and the passivity in reporting of changes in the household, including birth registration. People living in the village often see little point in going to the laborious trouble of reporting a birth through the filling of difficult forms, as they cannot see how it benefits their lives. They are more concerned about their personal needs in the short term, and are also not inclined to assist in the state apparatus of power.
Social practices also effect child registration in Java, as it is tradition that a child will not be named until it is 35 days old, when a naming ceremony is held. Up until that day many new born children in Java do not have a name, and if they are registered within 35 days of the birth, the name box is often left blank on the form. This traditional practice actually violates the Convention of the Rights of the Child, article 7, which states that the child has the right to a name from birth. It is unlikely, however, that such a tradition will cease in the near future, so the government should make provisions for the practice. Further to this, in remote areas children are often born without the presence of an authorized birth attendant, in which case the parents will not receive a surat keberkatan (official statement of the birth) which is required for a birth certificate.
Also as a result of social practices and discrimination is the problem in the failure of registration of babies born to single mothers, due to the shame entailed in having a birth certificate that effectively brands the child as illegitimate as it does not list the fathers details.
Migrant parents who are working in the cities (seasonal or permanent), but have not notified officials of their move and are still registered as a citizen in the village, also often fail to register a child's birth. Many children born to migrant workers in the cities are therefore not registered due to geographical distances from the appropriate registration office. Geographical distances are also a problem in remote areas, and the costs involved in traveling on difficult roads is a further disincentive.

D: Key Challenges and Concerns

The three biggest obstacles in child registration appear to be:

1) Society's lack of knowledge and interest in registration issues, particularly in rural areas; alienation from government policies; the lack of knowledge about their individual rights, and especially the rights of their children.

2) The gap between policies and practices (both social and official), due to lack of knowledge, the inability to meet obligations, the taking of short cuts, traditional practices of naming and the stigma of illegitimacy.

3) An overburdened, inefficient and rigid bureaucratic system which results in false or poor quality data, the exclusion of large sections of the population, and a society which believes still less in the whole process.

There is no way of estimating how many children are unregistered in Indonesia, or what percentage of the population they make up. They are nonentities, people that do not have a number, a name or a sex in the eyes of officialdom. Street children make up a large number of these unregistered children, who for numerous reasons have lost contact with their families and places of origin. They therefore do not belong to any household, village or piece of paper. This denies the unregistered child to fundamental basic rights in Indonesia, including the right to an identity, to a nationality, to schooling, to rent a house, to get married, to an official job, to rent a bocak or trading stall, to be officially acknowledged as a father, or even to an official burial. Often such children are refused admission to live in kampungs, and have been labeled by village officials in Yogyakarta as 'anak-anak liar' (wild or unauthorized children). Despite the fact that Indonesia has ratified the Convention of the Rights of the Child, article 8. sect. 2: "Where a child is deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, State Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to speedily re-establishing his or her identity", this is not yet the case for street children in Indonesia.

It can therefore be seen that there are numerous problems surrounding Child Registration in Indonesia. Some of these problems have been addressed by the government, who have acknowledged short comings in the registration system, and have attempted to find ways of overcoming the barriers. However, these adjustments have so far not been extreme or far reaching enough. The whole system needs to be simplified and streamlined, and to make allowances for children who for whatever reason have not been registered and have no access to their family records.
(birth certificate or family card). In respect of the issue of street children in Indonesia, many of the children living on the street have lost all contact with their family, have forgotten where they came from and therefore find it impossible to get the right documents to become a registered citizen of Indonesia when they reach 17. They are not registered in any area or on any family card, and if they die no report is required. This not only denies them access to many services and positions in the community, but also leaves them vulnerable to abuses from both state and society.

E: Proposed Action and Strategies to Improve the Registration Process in Indonesia

Awareness raising and education in the rights of the child and the benefits of child registration are needed, and can be implemented through mass media campaigns, the training of registrars and other government and local officials. For example, the government currently has huge programmes for ('universal') child immunization and to train traditional healers and midwives in safety and hygiene at birth. They do not however link these projects to other related issues, or train these people about rights and registration, which is something that could be done to disseminate information. Similarly other state organizations such as BKKBS, the Women's Groups (Dharma Wanita) and PKK (Family Welfare Organization) are also close to the population and could be trained in awareness raising of the community on the importance of child registration.
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