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Satan in the Mall: Leisure and Consumption in Java's New Muslim Middle Class

Abstract Indonesia's "new" middle class first emerged in the early 1980s in the context of New Order educational expansion, economic growth, and bureaucratic consolidation. Among specialists of Southeast Asia, however, questions have emerged as to how to define this most fluid of social classes. Is the key to the definition political participation, economic mobility, or something else? The German sociologist Solvay Gerke, has suggested that the emerging middle class was identifiable by its consumption-oriented lifestyle and leisure habits that included shopping, sports, travel and watching Western movies. Adopting a Bourdieuan framework, she argues for an approach that considers socially constructed class experience or habitus as constitutive of the new middle class, and as distinguishing this social class from others (2000:146). Drawing on Gerke's suggestions, I examine the lifestyles and leisure habits of educated Javanese youth in the city of Yogyakarta. How is consumption understood and contested by educated young people as a particular mode of middle-class lifestyle and practice? An examination of the consumption practices associated with modern shopping malls and new youth publications reveal a far more varied menu of options for choice and individual expression than was previously available to young people. A popular discourse of Muslim self-help literature promotes the possibilities of fashioning new and cosmopolitan selves while simultaneously warning young people of the dangers of moral laxity, unbridled consumption, and spiritual vacuity. Warnings of these dangers, widely associated with westernization, are also regularly deployed by young people as a means to distinguish the "new" Muslim middle class from wealthy elites.

Keywords Indonesia, Islam, malls, morality, youth

This chapter takes up the discourses and practices of leisure and consumption that are associated with Java's newly emergent middle class. Writing in the late nineteenth century, Thorstein Veblen traced the history of leisure as a kind of status competition, a means of displaying one's position vis-à-vis others in the performance of social distinction.¹ Veblen, who is credited with coining the term "conspicuous consumption," focused his conceptualization of leisure on the idea of "waste." In particular, the ability to "spend" and "waste" time and resources on leisurely activities and consumption, in his view, emerged as visible markers of class status. More recently, Chris Rojek has proposed that in contemporary consumer capitalism, leisure and consumption have become increasingly intertwined, serving together as vehicles or symbols for the creation and expression of social relationships.² In the modern world, leisure has virtually become consumption or "leisure consumption." In Muslim Java, this intertwining of leisure and consumption is evident in the culture and life styles of the new middle class—but it is not without moral tension and societal concern. The tension has largely to do with more normative understandings of Islam and questions of what constitutes appropriate Islamic forms of leisure activities.³

My interest in this chapter is in examining leisure and consumption among university-educated Muslim youth in urban Java as an expression of new subjective understandings and identifications. Beginning in the early 1980s, like many areas of the Muslim world, Indonesia experienced a resurgence of interest in more normative forms of Islam. The impacts of this resurgence have been most evident among educated urban youth, many of whom have moved away from their rural homes for school or work. These young people are part of Indonesia's rapidly growing middle class, a middle class based on credentialization rather than on property ownership and trade. In her contribution to this volume, Sarah Frederick discusses a similar process in a different cultural context, namely the

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- 1 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Daniel T. Cook, "Leisure and consumption," in *A Handbook of Leisure Studies*, ed. Chris Rojek, Susan M. Shaw, and Anthony J. Veal (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 304–316; see also Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984), 310–311.
 - 2 Chris Rojek, *Leisure and Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 89–103; see also Cook, "Leisure and Consumption," 308.
 - 3 Johan Fischer, *Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping Among the Malays in Modern Malaysia* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008); see also Asef Bayat, "Islamism and the Politics of Fun," *Public Culture* 19, no. 3 (2007): 433–459; Lara Deeb and Mona Harb, *Leisurely Islam: Negotiating Geography and Morality in Shi'ite Beirut* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Greg Fealy and Sally White, eds., *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2008); Kenneth M. George, *Picturing Islam: Art and Ethics in a Muslim Lifeworld* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011); Samuli Schielke, "Ambivalent Commitments: Troubles of Morality, Religiosity and Aspiration among Young Egyptians," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39, no. 2 (2009): 158–185; and Schielke, "Being good in Ramadan: Ambivalence, Fragmentation, and the Moral Self in the Lives of Young Egyptians," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (S1) (2009): 24–40.

acquisition of social and cultural leisure skills as a path to upper class membership as depicted in the American movie *Stella Dallas* and its Japanese adaptation. Since the early 1980s, but especially over the past fifteen years, Indonesia has also experienced an explosion of modern leisure sites, including malls, restaurants, movie theaters, and coffee shops, offering young people a dizzying array of new spaces for enjoyment and self-expression. Building on Veblen's linkage of leisure and consumption as markers of class status and the more recent work on leisure in specifically Muslim societies mentioned above, I explore how these leisure and consumption linkages are expressed and debated in an environment of increasing consumer choice on the one hand, and Islamic normativity on the other. How is leisure-as-consumption understood and contested by young Javanese Muslims as a particular mode of middle-class lifestyle and practice? What are the available discourses for understanding "proper" Islamic leisure-consumption?

It should be pointed out that most mainstream Indonesian religious authorities see no inherent conflict between Muslim piety and the accumulation and display of wealth. Religious teachers and scholars associated with Indonesia's mass Muslim organizations Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama⁴ often point out that the Prophet's first wife, Kadijah, was a successful and wealthy businesswoman. Within Islam, wealth is viewed as a gift or blessing from God (Ar. *barokah*), which carries with it great responsibility. On the Day of Judgement, each individual will be asked to offer an account of their actions and how they used the gifts they were given. The concern with wealth, then, is not so much with having or accumulating money, but what one does with it.⁵ Most importantly: Does one tithe? Does one contribute to the poor and to religious foundations? Is one modest in one's personal behavior? In discussions of consumption, rather than highlighting the issue of money, religious authorities focus on the issue of

4 With an estimated 25 million members, Indonesia's Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Muslim social welfare organizations in the world. It is second in size only to the Nahdlatul Ulama ("Renaissance of Islamic scholars"), which has some 30–35 million members, the single largest concentration of which is found in East Java, see Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, National University of Singapore, 2009); Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam, and Modernity in Indonesia* (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1996); Andrée Feillard, *Islam et Armée dans l'Indonésie Contemporaine: Les Pionniers de la Tradition* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995); and Feillard, "Traditionalist Islam and the State in Indonesia," in *Islam in an Era of Nation-states: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia*, eds. Robert Hefner and Patricia Horvatic (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 129–156.

5 In his book *L'Islam de Marché* [Market Islam], the Swiss political scientist Patrick Haenni writes of the recent religious developments in Turkey, Egypt, and Indonesia that "piety, wealth and cosmopolitanism have been substituted for ideals of social justice and a frugal mode of life. [...] Poverty is presented as a vice and wealth as the path to God...but the wealthy are invited to avoid ostentation," see Patrick Haenni, *L'Islam de Marché* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2005), 61; see also Deeb and Harb, *Leisurely Islam*, 15.

immodesty and, more specifically, on the opportunities that the marketplace offers for impropriety and even immorality. In the case of modern shopping malls with their varied spaces for both conspicuous consumption and display, and private—sometimes even intimate—meetings, these opportunities are multiple. In Java they have given rise to intense debates over acceptable forms of Islamic leisure-consumption and new discourses of proper Muslim sociability.

An examination of the leisure and consumption practices associated with modern shopping malls and the discourses of contemporary Muslim self-help tracts reveals that a far more varied menu of options for individual choice and self-expression is now available to young people than in previous generations. Rather than following the settled patterns of their parents and grandparents, Muslim youth selectively consume new “Islamic” products—Muslim headscarves, Islamic music and video sermons of celebrity preachers, halal foods, and Muslim ringtones.⁶ A popular discourse of Muslim personal and spiritual development promotes the possibilities of fashioning cosmopolitan selves while at the same time warning young people of the dangers of moral laxity, unbridled consumption, and spiritual vacuity in a line of argument developed by state and religious authorities since the “rational leisure” movement in nineteenth-century England, as discussed by Tim Oakes on modern China in this volume.⁷ In all of this I suggest there is evidence of a new Muslim middle-class subjectivity which self-consciously draws on the modern discourse of expressive individualism and self-making while attempting to ground both—not without points of tension or ambiguity—in new forms of Muslim sociability.

The new Indonesian middle class

The “new” Indonesian middle class emerged in the early 1980s in the context of New Order (1965–1998) educational expansion, economic growth, rapid urbanization, and bureaucratic consolidation.⁸ Among specialists of Southeast Asia, however, questions have arisen as to just how to define this most fluid of social categories. What, after all, is so “new” about the

6 Fealy, “Consuming Islam.”

7 See James B. Hoesterey, “Marking Morality: The Rise, Fall and Rebranding of Aa Gym,” in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, eds. Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2008) 95–112; Fealy and White, “Prophetic Cosmopolitanism: Islam, Pop Psychology, and Civic Virtue in Indonesia,” *City & Society* 24, no. 1 (2012): 38–61; Carla Jones, “Women in the Middle: Femininity, Virtue, and Excess in Indonesian Discourses of Middle Classness,” in *The Global Middle Classes: Theorizing Through Ethnography*, eds. Rachel Heiman, Carla Freeman, and Mark Liechty (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2012), 145–168; Daromir Rudnycky, *Spiritual Economies: Islam, Globalization, and the Afterlife of Development* (Athens, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

8 Hal Hill, “The Economy,” in *Indonesia’s New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Transformation*, ed. Hal Hill (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 54–122.

new middle class? Is the key to its identity higher levels of education, political participation, economic mobility, or something else? In answering these questions, many analysts have trained their attention on questions of political participation and democratization.⁹ A generation ago, classical varieties of modernization theory assumed that the rise of the middle class challenges elite monopolies and leads gradually to demands for democratic participation. In the case of the Indonesian middle class that emerged in the 1980s, however, this does not seem to have occurred, at least not on the scale anticipated. In their introduction to *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia* (1990), Richard Tanter and Kenneth Young described what they referred to as the "missing bourgeoisie" in Indonesia, and argued that it was one of the "socially distorting legacies" of colonial domination. Instead of the emergence of a politically assertive middle class, they write, in Indonesia one saw the rise of a military-dominated state as the agent of capitalist development.¹⁰ In a similar vein, the political scientist Richard Robison writes that the middle classes in Indonesia were so dependent on the state for jobs, careers, and patronage that they had little interest in challenging the bureaucratic class or calling for democratic reform.¹¹ Notwithstanding the active participation of a younger generation in the effort to remove President Suharto from office in May of 1998 and the subsequent rise of political Islam, the Indonesian middle class has maintained its reputation for social quiescence.

A somewhat updated version of modernization theory posits that the new middle class creates a civil society which provides the social networks and the Tocquevillian "habits of the heart" assumed to be vital for more widespread democratic participation. But this model too has been challenged by the Indonesian example. In a 2005 ethnography of wealthy Jakartans, Elisabeth van Leeuwen writes, building on the work of James Siegel,¹² that Jakarta's suburban rich view the lower classes with anxiety, as uneducated and not quite "civilized," and thus unable to understand how democracy works. Van Leeuwen's work explores the tacit understandings held by the suburban rich concerning those who are not-yet-ready to be admitted to suburban society and the "newly emerging exclusion mechanisms and technologies" used by the wealthy to keep the underclass

9 Howard W. Dick, "The rise of a middle class and the changing concept of equity in Indonesia: An interpretation," *Indonesia* 39 (1985): 71–92; Hilmar Farid, "The Class Question in Indonesian Social Sciences," in Vedi R. Hadiz and Daniel Dhakidae, eds., *Social Science and Power in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2005), 167–196; Hill, "Economy," 1994; Richard Robison, "The Middle Class and the Bourgeoisie in Indonesia," in *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile Phones, McDonalds and Middle Class Revolution*, eds. Richard Robison and David Goodman (London: Routledge, 1996), 79–104; Richard Tanter and Kenneth Young, *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990).

10 Tanter and Young, *Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, 12.

11 Robison, "Middle Class," 81.

12 James T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

outside the gates of their communities.¹³ These suburban elites, at least at the time of van Leeuwen's research in the late 1990s, were fearful of change and concerned with maintaining their privileged position within their suburban enclaves where "nothing ever happens" and residents hoped to keep it that way.

Whatever their political role, until the beginning of the twenty-first century the number of middle-class Indonesians was arguably never a great proportion of the larger population; it was smaller than in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore. Ian Chalmers and Takashi Shiraishi estimated that in the early 1990s the Indonesian middle class comprised only between 7 and 10 percent of the population.¹⁴ The largest and most distinct group within this emergent class were civil servants (*pegawai negeri*), many of whom had obtained their positions as a result of the rapid expansion of the educational system and bureaucracy under Suharto's New Order. By the first decade of the new millennium, however, the middle class began to expand at an unprecedented rate. Market research, including that conducted by the Japanese Bank Nomura, estimated that middle class households—defined as those with disposable incomes of over \$3,000 per year—had swelled to between 20 and 30 percent of the population.¹⁵ In 2010, the International Monetary Fund ranked Indonesia as a "middle income" country for the first time based on a US \$3,000 per capita GDP, "the growth of which was largely driven by household and personal consumption."¹⁶

An alternate framework for describing the new middle class has been put forward by German sociologist Solvay Gerke. In an edited volume on consumption in Asia, Gerke suggests that a lifestyle of consumption and leisure has become the defining characteristic of Indonesia's new middle class and that this aspiration has spread far beyond those identified as middle class by income or education to affect all people. She writes that as early as the late 1990s this aspiring middle class was identifiable by its consumption-oriented lifestyle and leisure habits that included shopping, sports, travel, and watching Western movies and that a distinctive array of consumption practices were gaining greater significance as markers of social rank in contrast to socio-economic criteria of classification.¹⁷

13 Elisabeth M. Van Leeuwen, *Lost in Mall: An Ethnography of Middle Class Jakarta in the 1990s* (Leiden: KILTV Press, 2005), 16–17.

14 Ian Chalmers, "Democracy Constrained: The Emerging Political Culture of the Indonesian Middle Classes," *Asian Studies Review* 17, no. 1 (1993): 50–57; Takashi Shiraishi, "The Rise of New Urban Middle Classes in Southeast Asia: What is its National and Regional Significance?" RIETI Discussion Paper Series (Tokyo: The Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2004). Accessed April 25, 2017. <http://www.rieti.go.jp/en/>.

15 "Indonesia's Middle Class, Missing BRIC in the Wall: A Consumer Boom Masks Familiar Problems in South-East Asia's Biggest Economy," *The Economist*. July 21, 2011. Accessed April 25, 2017. <http://www.economist.com/node/18989153/>.

16 Jones, "Women in the Middle," 151.

17 Solvay Gerke, "Global Lifestyles under Local Conditions: The New Indonesian Middle Class," in *Consumption in Asia: Lifestyles and Identities*, ed. Beng-Huat Chua. London: Routledge, 2000, 135–158, on 136.

Adopting a framework based on the pioneering work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu,¹⁸ Gerke presents an analysis of the middle class that foregrounds practical experience and habitus; that is, the disposition to act in a particular manner as an expression of one's social group and socialization. In particular, according to Gerke, engaging in "symbolic consumptive acts" as part of what she calls—after Bourdieu—"lifestyling" allows individuals to signal their class aspirations without significant real expenditure. These aspirational practices, moreover, create opportunities for the development of the cultural skills necessary for navigating the modern, much more varied social landscape.

Leisure and consumption in Yogyakarta

The Special Region of Yogyakarta where I have conducted research on contemporary youth, Islam, and social change for the past fifteen years is located in the south-central portion of the populous island of Java in Indonesia. While Java itself has about 110 million residents, Yogyakarta has 3,594,290 inhabitants, 400,000 of whom live in the city proper.¹⁹ Yogyakarta is widely referred to as a "city of students" (*kota pelajar*). The area has 120 state and private religious and secular tertiary educational institutions and over 100,000 university students in residence. Its schools attract young people from all corners of the archipelago and increasingly (though still in relatively small numbers), from abroad. Historically many of the city's graduates have gone on to fill important professional and political positions both locally and in Jakarta, the nation's capital. The city is also a renowned tourist area. It is a center of classical Javanese art—batik, dance, drama, music, poetry, and puppet shows—and is home to the Sultan of Yogyakarta, whose palace or *kraton* is an important tourist site visited by Indonesian and international tourists alike. To this day the Sultan of Yogyakarta, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, continues to play an important role in the politics and cultural life of the region. In 1998 he was elected governor of the province. As a cultural and educational center, Yogyakarta has long been regarded as a trendsetter for the nation, second only to the capital, Jakarta, in influence.

My research focuses on the aspirations and identifications of Javanese Muslim university students who are currently attending or have recently graduated from one of Yogyakarta's many institutes of higher education.²⁰

18 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

19 Numbers are based on estimates extracted from Badan Pusat Statistik [Central agency on statistics], Sensus Penduduk 2010 [2010 Indonesian population census], accessed April 28, 2017, <http://sp2010.bps.go.id/>.

20 Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance: Changing Patterns of Courtship and Marriage among Educated Javanese Youth," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 1 (2005): 441–459; Smith-Hefner, "Reproducing Respectability: Sex and Sexuality among Muslim Javanese Youth," *Review of Indonesian and*

University-educated youth are assigned a certain social status and prestige by Indonesian society, but generally lack the economic wherewithal to take up a lifestyle suitable to their status. Significantly, the majority (between 68 percent and 75 percent) of the young people in my study are the first members of their families to obtain a college degree—with higher percentages of first-time degree earners among women students than men.²¹ Students uniformly expressed great anxiety about their future economic prospects. In Indonesia today a tertiary degree is necessary but no longer sufficient for secure or highly remunerative employment. Nonetheless, their families have high expectations that a diploma will translate into a salaried position and most make clear their hopes for some return on their investment in their children's education. "Lifestyling," that is, developing the practical experience and habitus identified with middle-class status, is viewed positively by both students and their parents. Nonetheless, activities surrounding consumption and leisure have become a focus of concern, not only for religious reasons, but for their potentially problematic relationship to the goals of achieving an academic degree and securing a middle-class life style.²²

Consuming Yogyakarta

In today's urban Yogyakarta, the signs of the new middle-class consumerism are widely apparent, and have been so since the sustained economic expansion of the late 1980s and 1990s. Although the broader district has some of the highest population densities in Java and is still one of Java's poorest districts per capita, the region's poor now live scattered across a landscape visibly transformed by a new global order of consumerism and varied lifestyles. Today where there were once verdant paddy fields, multi-story gated housing communities have sprung up. Coffee shops, ATMs, fast food restaurants, and western-style supermarkets now appear on most major intersections, and even in some congested suburban neighborhoods. Modern appliances, up-to-date electronic devices, and the latest fashions are featured on billboards and in store windows.

As in other modern societies, consumption and leisure in Yogyakarta have become ever more intimately linked. Malls and mall culture provide some of the more remarkable illustrations of this leisure-consumption linkage. Although it falls far short of Jakarta's 173 shopping centers (in a city

Malaysian Affairs 40, no. 1 (2006): 143–172; Smith-Hefner, "Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Java," *Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 2 (2007): 389–420; Smith-Hefner, "Youth Language, Gaul Sociability, and the New Indonesian Middle Class," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 17, no. 2 (2007): 184–203; Smith-Hefner, "'Hypersexed' Youth and the New Muslim Sexology in Contemporary Java," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 43, no. 1 (2009): 209–244.

21 Smith-Hefner, "Javanese Women," 411.

22 Smith-Hefner, "Reproducing Respectability," 146.

twenty times the size of Yogyakarta),²³ Yogyakarta boasts three popular shopping plazas and six modern malls with several more in various stages of planning and development. The oldest of the six, the *Malioboro Mall* located on Yogyakarta's main tourist drag, was built in the early 1980s. The *Ambarukmo Plaza* or *Amplaz*—where I spent many hours taking notes and drinking coffee—went up in 2006. I was also a regular patron and observer at the somewhat older but nonetheless comfortable *Galeria Mall* (built in 1995). Since my last visit to Yogyakarta in 2014, two new “mega” malls have opened. The *Lippo Plaza* is located next to the four-star *Hotel Saphir*²⁴ and the *Hartono Lifestyle Mall*, billed as “the largest mall in Central Java” is in a complex with the Yogyakarta Marriott.²⁵ Although not yet fully occupied, the *Hartono* will eventually have nine floors of shops and parking space for 1,300 cars and 350 motorcycles.

All of the malls are all brightly lit, multi-storied, air-conditioned structures with a large assortment of retail shops, cafés, regional and Western-style restaurants, and fast food chains, among them Wendy's, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and McDonald's, as well as less expensive food courts with mostly local fare. The newest malls are billed as lifestyle and leisure centers which feature, in addition to shops and restaurants, modern multiplex cinemas where the latest Indonesian, Indian, and American films are shown.

A characteristic feature of many Asian malls is their floor plan. All of Yogyakarta's malls are anchored by a large western-style supermarket in the basement and have at least one multi-level department store. More significantly, they are built around a large open public space on the first or ground floor level (or both) which is visible from all other floors. This open space is used for a variety of retail and entertainment purposes including computer, automobile, and furniture exhibitions, fashion shows, talent competitions, home sales, appliance rentals, and handicrafts fairs. Each of the malls also features several western-style coffee shops and dimly lit billiards or game rooms, often located on the upper floors. Not surprisingly, these are for the most part masculine spaces filled with young men who

23 In a recent article in *The Jakarta Post* (September 17, 2013) entitled “No more Malls in Jakarta: Jokowi” the governor of Jakarta, Joko “Jokowi” Widodo, promised that he would issue no more building permits for malls in the capital. He pledged, instead, to build more public spaces and mosques.

24 The Lippo Plaza has replaced the former Saphir Square Mall, which went up in early 2000s and underwent bankruptcy in 2010 due to its inability to compete with the larger Ambarukmo Plaza Mall and concerns relating to its environmental impact, see “Sederet Mall Baru Siap Berdiri, Yogyakarta dalam Masalah” [A series of new malls ready to go up, Yogyakarta faces problems], *Kompasiana*, May 29, 2012. Accessed July 25, 2015. <http://regional.kompasiana.com/2013/05/29/sederet-mall-baru-siap-berdiri-yogyakarta-dalam-masalah-564128.html>.

25 “Mal Terbesar Se-Jawa Bagian Tengah Ada di Yogyakarta!” [The largest mall in all of Central Java is in Yogyakarta!], *Kompas*, December 6, 2013. Accessed May 12, 2014. <http://properti.kompas.com/read/2013/12/06/1635320/Mal.Terbesar.Se-Jawa.Bagian.Tengah.Ada.di.Yogyakarta>.

congregate to smoke, watch passers-by, or simply pass the time hanging out with friends (*nglencer, nongkrong*). In the evenings and on weekends (especially *malam minggu* or Saturday night) the malls are filled with married couples, young parents with small children in tow, the occasional befuddled senior citizen being shepherded along by an eager grandchild, and, above all else, throngs of young people—most of them, it is important to note, in small, same-sex groups. Young women in Islamic headscarves, long sleeved tunics and wide-legged pants or maxi skirts navigate the crowd arm-in-arm, avoiding eye contact with male passersby. Others, less demurely dressed in tight jeans, talk on cell phones and giggle with girlfriends. Larger groups of young people congregate in the food courts to eat snacks and sweets; those with more money enjoy a chicken and rice box at “Kentucky” or an ice cream cone at McDonald’s. Aside from the occasional small purchase and quick meal, many young mall-goers merely engage in window shopping, checking out the various goods on display, perhaps taking note of prices, and enjoying the ambiance of the colorful, bustling, air-conditioned atmosphere.²⁶

As a number of consumer theorists have noted, modern leisure and consumption require that actors acquire a new and distinctive set of social skills, which is to say, a consumer habitus. Of course, not everyone is familiar with the requisite code of behavior and self-presentation.²⁷ Here in Yogyakarta, those who are *au courant*, are referred to as “already developed” (*sudah maju*) and “modern” (*modèren*); those who are not (or not yet), are deemed “less developed” (*kurang maju*), “old-fashioned” (*masih kuno*), or *kampung* (“newly arrived from the village”). The (for the most part unstated) behavioral expectations of modern Indonesian malls include prohibitions on squatting, spitting, sarongs, plastic sandals, bare chests and bare feet, haggling, and the use of regional languages when speaking with mall personnel. In this modern environment, western-style jeans are the unspoken dress code and the use of the national language, Indonesian, is deemed most appropriate. Security guards are stationed at the entrances to monitor the crowds and to turn away those who do not meet minimum standards of presentability.²⁸ However, there also appears to be a high level of self-discipline and even self-censorship: most people

26 In the early 2000s, news articles raised concerns about window shopping and the economy. Some surveys indicated that as many as 70% of mall goers did not buy anything, see “Malls for All?” *The Jakarta Post*, February 7, 2004, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2004/02/07/malls-all.html>. This situation raised questions about the economic viability of the growing number of malls in Indonesian cities, particularly but not only in the capital. Planners, however, indicated an awareness of the importance of Indonesians developing a mall habitus and insisted that when their economy improved, window shoppers would be primed to buy. See Lyn Parker and Pam Nilan, *Adolescents in Contemporary Indonesia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Van Leeuwen, *Lost in Mall*.

27 See Haenni, *Islam de Marché*; Jones, “Women in the Middle.”

28 Indonesian friends from Jakarta reported that in the early 2000s, security guards at some Jakarta malls offered shoes and appropriate clothing to those inappropriately dressed.

recognize the mall as a specially marked cultural space, and they are eager to behave accordingly. Those who lack the proper clothing or modern sensibilities—like the man who served as the driver of the run-down mini-van I use when visiting Yogyakarta—confess that they just don't feel comfortable in the malls, any more than they do at the related spaces of modern consumption and self-identification, western-style restaurants and modern cinemas. For these still largely rural and working-class Javanese, malls are too expensive, the food is too foreign, and their air conditioning only makes for headaches and chills.

In addition to its bright and bustling palaces of modern consumption, Yogyakarta also has a modest night scene (*dugem*) of discotheques, hotel bars, and clubs. Individual establishments tend to come and go, all the more so in recent years because some of these morally murky places have been targeted by working-class Muslim vigilantes. Since the early 2000s, Muslim militias have taken to attacking such sites on the grounds that they are centers of "moral impropriety/vice" (*maksiat*)—a vice which is almost always portrayed as "made in the West." As one young Yogyakarta clubber explained to me, "When the anti-*maksiat* groups begin to make threats, the clubs close for a while until things quiet down. Then they reopen, sometimes in the same building, sometimes in another location with a different name."

Cosmopolitan subjectivities: The individual as project

If not among the working class vigilantes, among the new middle class a much remarked upon new cosmopolitan social style has emerged that both parallels and builds on recent developments in consumption and leisure. The new style is referred to in Indonesian as *gaul* (pronounced like howl) which means "social/hip."²⁹ At its most basic level *gaul* designates someone who is both socially at ease in and socially savvy with regard to the modern landscapes of malls, theaters, restaurants, and universities, all of which lie outside the established hierarchies and disciplines of the rural countryside. *Gaul's* associations with a modern cosmopolitanism and hip sophistication are nicely captured in the following comment made by a young Javanese college student in response to my question, "So, what is *gaul*?"

Gaul means someone who is self-assured and good at adapting socially. A kid who can talk to older people or to people from the village or to city people or modern people is a *gaul* kid. They're "up-to-date" (*tidak ketinggalan jaman*), developed, and "advanced" (*maju*). *Gaul* is modern. I think whoever or whatever is not *gaul* is just not modern (*tidak modèren*).

29 See Smith Hefner, "Youth Language."

In the late 1990s and early 2000s Yogyakarta's bookstores were flooded with handbooks on how to cultivate the mysterious but alluring habitus of this new *gaul* style. These books, which are modelled very much on similar advice books in Europe and the United States for aspirants to middle class status which we see reflected in the stance taken by the film *Stella Dallas*, see Sarah Frederick in this volume, had titles like: *All about Gaul!*;³⁰ *Gaul Smart with the World*;³¹ and *Gaul: Take Advantage of More Opportunities*.³² The authors of this last book state that *gaul* is "any activity where one has an opportunity to meet people who are interesting and to invite them to engage in a relationship."³³ They assert that, furthermore, "experts" have now determined that *gaul* is the best method for achieving social success, both personal and professional.

Gaul has now become an important value/skill in everyday life as well as at work. Those who are not *gaul* (*yang tidak gaul*) are considered not really ok. Why? The impression is that they are not trendy (*tidak trendi*). This might be surprising because usually trendiness is judged by outward appearance—does he follow the latest fashion trend or not. But now *gaul* has also become a measure of trendiness.³⁴

Personal and professional success in the face of rapid urbanization requires new forms of social interaction across ethnic, religious, regional, and gender lines as well as new understandings of the self. *Gaul* ideology encourages flexible, open, and ostensibly "democratic" (but in practice thoroughly apolitical) interactions. It is meta-ethnic rather than ethnically marked. Like the new horizons of consumption to which it is linked, *gaul* posits the modern individual as an on-going project ever in need of self-making improvements. The improvements have first and foremost to do with oneself as a product and presenter. All individuals, these *gaul* self-help books explain, have both strengths and limitations (*kelebihan dan kekurangan*). The point is to be aware of one's own personal qualities, to learn to minimize one's limitations and "optimize" one's strengths (*ngoptimalin bakatnya*) in social interactions. This emphasis on self-understanding and on self-development as a continuous and quasi-career enhancing process is a central theme of the *gaul* guidebooks, exemplified in the following excerpt from *All About Gaul!*

30 Adi Kurnia, *All about Gaul!* (Bandung: Simbiosia Rekatama Media, 2005).

31 Wining Rohani, *Gaul smart Dengan Dunia* [Social smarts for interacting with the world] (Yogyakarta: Gloria Graffa, 2004).

32 Eileen Rahman and Petrina Omar, *Gaul: Meraih Lebih Banyak Kesempatan* [*Gaul: Take advantage of more opportunities*] (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004).

33 Rahman and Omar, *Gaul*, 9.

34 Rahman and Omar, *Gaul*, 6.

Why [are you less than impressive in front of people]? We could say that it happens because you maintain several negative characteristics. Or you just haven't developed a strategy to rid yourself of those characteristics [...] like egoism, stubbornness, and thinking you're always right. Everyone has an ego, but don't become egotistical; that's dangerous you know! The effects of these characteristics are simple. You become too self-confident and in the end, conceited. Or you become too self-effacing/self-conscious (*minder*), and in the end, overly timid. Of course other people don't like these characteristics. If you exhibit them, people will stay away from you. But you don't have to give up. *You should remember that life is a process that never ends. Everything that you are and everything that you know will continue to develop, as long as you believe that everything is a process.*³⁵

Unthinkable or unattractive under the earlier scheme of Javanese social style and self-presentation, with its heavy emphasis on ascribed social classifications and identification with ethnically marked communitarian categories and consumption, the achievement of "personal style" is critical to the new *gaul* habitus. Yet, as the above quotation makes clear, personal style is not viewed as something that just happens through interactions with one's family or natal community; it requires conscious reflection, cultivation, and self-making work. And that is what the proliferation of *gaul* handbooks is about. These handbooks take as their focus, not the recognition of a communal, ethnic, or local identity, but the cultivation of the individualized self-confidence and ego-centered social skills required for interacting outside of one's circle of family and close friends. *Gaul* orients one to a distinctive social world, but it is a world made up of expressive individuals rather than tradition-minded communities.

Thus, the authors of the new *gaul* guidebooks offer tips on how to make friends, how to be a good listener, how to express oneself, and how to make the most of one's individual abilities and talents. The small guide whose title translates as *The Secret to Successful Social Interaction*, for example, suggests that the reader should always "be present" in social interactions, should put the interlocutor first, and act like an equal partner in conversations rather than like a parent/elder—all skills identified as necessary in navigating the modern, socially varied, landscape. To underscore this focus on direct, more democratic interactions, authors often address the reader with the youth slang equivalents of "bro" (*brur*) or "dude" (*bo, coy*) and will regularly interrupt their narrative to ask rhetorical questions: "What do you think will happen if you continually exasperate people? I'm sure you know the answer." "What do young people today find so

35 Kurnia, *All About Gaul*, 14–15, emphasis added.

engrossing in just hanging out in coffee shops or in the malls? What do they accomplish that way? Nothing."³⁶

The intended audience for these guidebooks is the young people, eager for middle-class status, who have arrived in urban centers in large numbers in order to take advantage of new educational and employment opportunities. Many are living on their own and away from close parental supervision for the first time or commute daily to schools or work sites some distance from their homes. The publications hold particular appeal for those in their late teens and early twenties who have grown up in villages or small towns, in socially conservative or closely monitored backgrounds. And although the authors tend to take males as their focus, according to publishers and authors as many if not more females than males buy and consume these publications. The books speak most directly to those young people who feel insecure and uncertain in the new urban environments of high school and college campuses, internet cafés, modern offices, cinemas, and shopping malls. These modern environments require the employment of cosmopolitan interpersonal social skills and poised self-confidence in interactions with individuals from widely varied backgrounds—including, most importantly, members of the opposite sex.

Sex and modernity

The deep insecurities that many young people feel in interacting with members of the opposite sex may be difficult for the casual observer to comprehend. Javanese women are not sequestered or kept out of public view. On the contrary, middle-class or aspiring middle-class parents actively encourage their daughters to pursue an education. In 2011 according to World Bank statistics, the ratio of Indonesian female to males in tertiary institutions had reached 85 percent and by 2012 had surpassed the percentage of males.³⁷

Classrooms, with the exception of the Muslim boarding schools, are not sex-segregated, though students nonetheless tend to self-segregate into same-sex groups. Socializing outside of school also tends to take place in single-sex groups with taunts and teasing back and forth as the most common form of interaction. Young people report having "boyfriends" or "girlfriends" in high school or even middle school, but this may consist of little more than passing notes or innocent flirtation.³⁸ A surprising number

36 Wishnubroto Widarso, *Kiat Sukses Bergaul* [The secret to successful social interactions] (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1997).

37 In 2012, the ratio of females to males in tertiary institutions in Indonesia reached 103.5% and has only risen since that time, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ENR.TERT.FM.ZS/countries/1W-ID?display=graph>.

38 Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance"; see also Linda Rae Bennett, *Women, Islam and Modernity: Single Women, Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Contemporary Indonesia* (New York: Routledge, 2005) as well as Parker and Nilan, *Adolescents*.

of students, by college age, have had relatively few opportunities to interact with members of the opposite sex in other than a superficial manner, and certainly not in an intimate one-on-one situation like a date.

Since Indonesia's 1974 marriage reforms, the notion that young people should not be forced into arranged marriages has become widely acknowledged. Yet "dating" is a highly contested means of getting to know possible marital partners. Dating is particularly risky for young women whose reputations depend on the appearance of chastity and whose behavior is constantly being evaluated by neighbors, friends, and community members.³⁹ Parents regularly request that their children, particularly their daughters, wait to have a serious boyfriend until they have finished their educations. Dating is also an important focus of the required religious education that all young people receive in the schools. This education teaches young people that "there is no dating within Islam";⁴⁰ there is only chaperoned meeting for the purposes of negotiating marriage. Despite concerns over dating and mixed-sex socializing, marriage is nonetheless viewed as compulsory—preferably as soon as possible after graduation.⁴¹ How and where to find an appropriate marriage partner without overstepping the bounds of Islamic propriety has thus become a point of tension for many young people and particularly for many young women.

Back to the mall: Satan, sin, and consumption

As noted earlier, not everyone views the new cosmopolitan life styles and leisure-as-consumption as unambiguously positive. There are ripples of discontent even among established members of the middle class. Jakarta-based newspapers and glossy women's magazines lament the lack of physical exercise and creativity among urban youth who prefer to spend their afterschool and weekend hours hanging around the malls socializing with friends. A 2009 article in *The Jakarta Post* describes a program called *Wiken Tanpa ke Mall*, which literally means a "weekend without going to

39 Bennett, *Women, Islam and Modernity*; Parker and Nilan, *Adolescents*.

40 See Salim A Fillah, *Nikmatnya Pacaran Setelah Pernikahan* [The pleasure of courtship after marriage] (Jakarta: Pro-U Media, 2005).

41 The Australian sociologist Gavin Jones, and his colleague, Bina Gubhaju, describe Indonesia as following the pattern of "universal marriage," defined as a country where less than 5 percent of women are still single in their late forties. In Indonesia in 2005, they write, only 2 percent of Indonesian women were never married in their late forties, see Gavin Jones and Bina Gubhaju, "Trends in Age at Marriage in the Provinces of Indonesia," Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 105 (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2008), 11. Although this pattern has shifted in many areas of South and Southeast Asia and may shift with later generations in Indonesia as well, marriage is still taken for granted by the vast majority of Indonesian youth. According to this near-universal norm, women who reach their mid-twenties and are not yet married are considered "old maids" (*prawan tua*) and anxious concern is expressed over their "marketability" and, in particular, their declining fertility.

the shopping mall," organized by several local groups in an attempt to get young people in Jakarta to go to the zoo rather than hanging out at the malls. Among the parents interviewed for the story was a father who said he agreed with the effort because, "Going to the mall has become like an addiction for many people living in the capital, including children. The kids should be involved in more creative activities."⁴² It was a comment I often heard from parents of young people in Yogyakarta as well. *Nglencer* "hanging out, doing nothing" has become a key worry of parents, teachers, and community leaders and is the focus of similar concerns voiced by Malays and Singaporeans (where the term used for this activity is *lepak*).⁴³

These middle-class anxieties aside, the strongest critiques of the new leisure and consumption life styles come from conservative and even some mainline Muslim groups who identify the new consumerism with westernization pure and simple. Consumption in this view is a subtle form of (Western) re-colonization that captures young people's bodies and minds through the alluring but superficial devices of new trends and fashions. In recent years, a stridently moralizing religious counter-discourse has emerged in opposition to the new leisure-as-consumption. This discourse depicts the new consumption-oriented lifestyles as materialistic and hedonistic and cautions against the opportunities for sinful activities that malls and other modern leisure sites provide.

Among the most fiery of these critiques are the copious works of the Muslim entrepreneur Abu Al-Ghifari, printed by his personal publishing house, Mujahid Press.⁴⁴ Al-Ghifari blames the moral corruption of today's youth directly on media and consumptive flows from the West.⁴⁵ He points to American movies and television shows which are widely watched by Indonesian youth (offering the anachronistic examples of Bay Watch,

42 "Jakartans Enjoy Non-mall Weekend Recreation," *The Jakarta Post*, June 14, 2009. Accessed June 22, 2014. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/06/14/jakartans-enjoy-nonmall-weekend-recreation.html>. This same parent lamented the lack of opportunities for healthy outdoor activities in the capital, saying he takes his young daughter to the mall because there are so few alternatives. Yogyakarta parents made similar complaints about the shrinking green spaces in the city, the traffic gridlock, and increasing levels of pollution associated with mall expansion.

43 Fischer, *Proper Islamic Consumption*, 67.

44 Among Al-Ghifari's works are: *Kudung Gaul: Berjilbab Tapi Telanjang* [Trendy headscarves: Covered but naked] (2002); *Remaja dan Cinta: Memahami Gelora Cinta Remaja dan Menyelamkannya dari Berhala Cinta* [Teens and love: Understanding teen love and safeguarding them from the love of teen idols] (2003a); *Pacaran Yang Islami, Adakah?* [Muslim dating, does it exist?] (2003b); *Selingkuh, Nikmat yang Terlaknat* [Cheating, a damning pleasure] (2003c); *Gelombang Kejahatan Seks Remaja Modern* [A wave of modern teen sex crimes] (2004a); *Roman-tika Remaja: Kisah-Kisah Tragis dan Solusinya dalam Islam* [Teen romance: Tragic stories and solutions in Islam] (2004b)—all of which have been published in multiple editions. Note too, the top-selling Islamist magazines, *Hidayah* [God's guidance] and *Sabili* [Fighters for the holy cause] which recently stopped publication and then reemerged in 2014 as *Sabiliku Bangkit* [Sabili revived], which offers a similar message.

45 Al-Ghifari, *Gelombang*, 47.

Beverly Hills 90210, and Melrose Place) as contaminating young people with ideas of free sex and promiscuity as an individual right.⁴⁶ He describes Western youth as behaving “like animals” and free sex as an extreme form of “narcissism which develops into a wandering lust that can never be satisfied, eventually becoming an insatiable sexual hunger.”⁴⁷ The outcome is a condition he calls “hypersexuality” which, in the case of women can be understood as a type of “pathological masochism.” When sexual freedom has gone too far and can no longer be controlled, the only solution, Al-Ghifari and other authors writing in this genre write, is to quickly marry.⁴⁸

The works of Al-Ghifari and others writing in this genre are uniform in their condemnation of Western immorality and their appeals to young people to avoid situations that offer the temptation of *berzina* (illicit sex). Satan, these authors remind young readers, is in all those places (cinemas, night clubs, bars, discothèques, and malls) that create opportunities for *berkholwat* (being alone together with an unrelated member of the opposite sex) and lead quickly to other immoral acts like being too close together, or holding or touching each other. The best defense is to avoid such places altogether.⁴⁹ An even more radical course of action—that taken up by Islamist vigilantes—is to force such places to close down.⁵⁰

Sociable but *Shari'a*-minded

Muslim resistance to the dangers of mall immorality also takes other, less militant, forms. Indeed, some of this resistance adopts the trappings of mall cosmopolitanism, becoming an accommodating and hybridized variety of Muslim consumption, similar in some respects to the *Islam de*

46 Al-Ghifari, *Gelombang*, 110–113, 117–121.

47 Al-Ghifari, *Gelombang*, 40–41.

48 Al-Ghifari, *Remaja dan Cinta*; Al-Ghifari, *Pacaran Yang Islami*; M. Fauzil Adhim, *Indahnya Pernikahan Dini* [The beauty of early marriage] (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2002).

49 Al-Ghifari, *Remaja dan Cinta*, 48.

50 Because of their well-trained and muscular security personnel, large malls are rarely the target of Islamist vigilantism. However, since the overthrow of the Suharto regime in May 1998, other centers of middle-class cosmopolitanism, including cafés, bars, and discotheques, have been the targets of repeated attacks, not least by the nationally organized militia known as the Islamic Defenders' Front (*Front Pembela Islam*), see Ian D. Wilson, “As Long as it's Halal: Islamic Preman in Jakarta,” in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, eds. Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2008), 192–210. On the rise of various Islamist groups in Indonesia, see Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, *Joining the Caravan? The Middle East, Islamism, and Indonesia* (Sydney, NSW: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2005); Noorhaidi Hasan, *Islamist Party, Electoral Politics, and Da'wa Mobilization among Youth: The Prosperous Justice Party in Indonesia* (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Working Paper, 2009); Yon Machmudi, “The Emergence of New Santri in Indonesia,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 2, no. 1 (2008): 69–102; Machmudi, *Islamizing Indonesia: The Rise of the Jemaah Tarbiyah and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)* (Canberra: ANU e-press, 2008).

marché (Market Islam) described by Patrick Haenni. Haenni sees in this the “embourgeoisement” of the process of Islamization; that is, a disengagement from the political and a corresponding refocusing on personal development and upward mobility.⁵¹ He notes the appearance in the 1990s of a new pamphlet genre in many areas of the Muslim world which focuses on topics of self-cultivation and improvement, but within an Islamic frame, “a form of predication closer to coaching than theology.”⁵²

In Indonesia, among the books on *gaul* sociability that flooded the bookstores in the late 1990s and early 2000s, were those that offered an alternative, Islamic sociability (*gaul Islami* or *gaul syar’i*) based on a distinctive blend of Muslim piety and individual self-expression—where the self-expression that is prescribed is more systematically responsive to religious norms than typical in more mainstream *gaul* culture. These more moderate Muslim tracts include such titles as *The Gaul Era: Tips for Muslim Youth on Becoming Sociable without Losing Your Muslim Identity*,⁵³ *Sociable but Shari’a-minded*,⁵⁴ *Becoming Friends with Islam*,⁵⁵ and *Sufi Funky: [How to] Be Gaul and Pious*.⁵⁶ These books, like those of more conservative Islamist authors, lament the current state of the world and its negative effects on today’s youth and counsel young people against being drawn into sin and immorality. However, rather than rejecting this new world of materialist consumption outright, they offer the believer tips for how to enter more effectively—but also ethically—into its dizzying corridors.

In *Sociable but Shari’a-minded*, for example, the author, Muhapi, writes,

In this book I want to help youth to understand an era which is becoming so much more complex and more challenging, and some say, more crazy (*edan*). *Don’t get pulled into ignorance, laziness, let alone drown in the world of darkness that is immorality, that is considered “gaul!”*⁵⁷

Their broader message, however, is one that links a principled sociability (*gaul yang berprinsip*) with personal success.

Typical of these tracts is the small book *Make your socializing more sociable: The secret to great socializing that’s still acceptable*, by Alwi

51 Haenni, *Islam de Marché*, 9.

52 Haenni, *Islam de Marché*, 76.

53 Muhammad Najib Salim, *Zaman Gaul: Tips Menjadi Gaul bagi Remaja Tanpa Kehilangan Identitas Keislamannya* [The *gaul* era: Tips for Muslim youth on becoming sociable without losing your Muslim identity]. (Yogyakarta: DIVA Press, 2004).

54 Muhapi, *Gaul Tapi Syar’i* [Sociable but *shari’a*-minded] (Jakarta: Penerbit Karya Ilmu, 2006).

55 Teguh Iman Perdana, *NgeFriend sama Islam #2* [Becoming friends with Islam #2] (Bandung: Mizan, 2004).

56 Thobieb Al Asyhar, *Sufi Funky: Menjadi Remaja Gaul yang Saleh* [Funky Sufi: Become a young person who is *gaul* and pious] (Jakarta: Gema Istani, 2005).

57 Muhapi, *Gaul Tapi Syar’i*, emphasis added, 24.

Alatas.⁵⁸ In its opening chapter, entitled "Leisure and Pleasure," the author offers the usual litany of leisure activities that modern young people find pleasurable, but that often make others unhappy. These activities include aimless hanging out with friends, smoking and taking drugs, going to clubs and discotheques, wasting time at malls, and reading and watching pornography. Most of these activities, the author admits, are enjoyed more often by males than by females; however, young women are hardly immune from the lure of modern sociability. Alatas describes how recently an increasing number of teenage girls have lowered themselves to taking pictures of their breasts and naked bodies with their cell phones and sending them to friends or posting them on the internet for everyone to see. But "self-confidence," he writes, "does not mean selling oneself so cheaply." Those things that are free and enjoyed by everyone clearly lose their value. As support for his argument, he cites the example of the virgins in heaven, described in Islamic *hadith* as being as beautiful as coral and rubies because they have never been touched by humans or *jinn*. More importantly he reminds his readers, "Pleasure does not guarantee happiness. Only Allah can give us true happiness."⁵⁹

Instead of leisure as pleasure and consumption, these Muslim *gaul* authors propose a "principled sociability" (*gaul yang berprinsip*) and religious study (*ngajitarbiyah*). Principled sociability is sociability that is responsive to and based on an understanding of the requirements and prohibitions of Islam. Religious study is the means to obtain that knowledge. Young people are encouraged to use their free time to seek religious knowledge, including, most importantly, knowledge of Islamic law (*shari'a*). It is only by organizing one's free time and *habitus* around God's commandments that one can learn how to resist things forbidden by religion. The model at work here is not that of the self-expressive individual consumer. It is that of the pious believer, whose piety is defined with reference not to the expressive celebration of personal feelings, but to knowledge of God's commands.

Sociability that is truly "OK" is that which is principled.

[. . .] We have to hold on tightly to our religious principles. If our friends invite us to go against the requirements of God or to do something forbidden by our religion, we have to refuse. "Sorry, this is against my principles. I can't go along with it." But if they still press us, what do we do? [If they say,] "Oh you act so pious. Have you become an *ustadz* (religious scholar/teacher)?" If they say that, don't be surprised. Just respond, "Better to act pious than to act like a *kafir* (unbeliever)!"⁶⁰

58 Alwi Alatas, *Bikin Gaulmu Makin Gaul: Kiat Bergaul yang Asyik dan Oke* [Make your socializing more sociable: The secret to great socializing that's still acceptable] (Jakarta: Hikma Press, 2006).

59 Alatas, *Bikin Gaulmu Makin Gaul*, 26–27.

60 Alatas, *Bikin Gaulmu Makin Gaul*, 97–99.

What is of particular interest in this discourse is that, even while occasionally railing against the West, these authors do not suggest that Muslims seal themselves off from the social world or from the changes linked to globalization. While there are dangers associated with Westernization, "Muslims have to keep up with the latest in order to develop and advance so that we are not left behind."⁶¹ In fact, these authors liberally quote Western figures throughout their works, urging young people to take their inspiration from people like Henry Ford, Helen Keller, and Albert Einstein, in order to overcome difficult odds and to make a difference in the world. Like the new Muslim celebrity-preachers described by James Hoesterey,⁶² these authors draw on western psychological models from Freud to Howard Gardner to "buttress their claims to modern authority while encouraging new forms of religious experience." Also like Hoesterey's celebrity preachers, the *gaul* authors are themselves entrepreneurs who, in addition to writing books, typically write advice columns in newspapers and magazines, work as consultants, offer educational seminars, and participate in television and radio talk shows. As a result, their message of principled sociability has an influence that extends far beyond the readership of their books.

Modern Muslim subjectivities

It was to this discourse of "principled sociability" that the students in my study consistently referred in describing the temptations of consumption and, especially, interactions with members of the opposite sex. An example of this discourse as applied to shopping arose early in my research in a discussion with a second year dentistry student from Gadjah Mada University. In response to my queries about her weekend, she described with obvious embarrassment having gone with a small group of girlfriends to a student bazaar where she just couldn't restrain her "urge to consume" (*jiwa konsumsi saya*). She had spent the equivalent of US\$12.00 (Rp. 100,000) on ethnic crafts like Papuan ashtrays and Balinese carved wooden wall hangings. Next time, she vowed, she would be more disciplined (*lebih disiplin*) and "hold to her principles." When asked if she considered shopping wrong or sinful, she cited the example of the Prophet who didn't avoid the marketplace, but never lingered. Ideally, she said, one should have a specific aim or objective in mind when going out to the market or mall, purchase what one needed, and then quickly return

61 Muhapi. *Gaul Tapi Syar'I*, 37.

62 Hoesterey, "Marking Morality," 2; see also Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003) and Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

home. She, however, would not return to the student bazaar because—she laughed—in that environment, “women just can’t keep their desire to consume under control.”⁶³

Nonetheless, by 2010, spending time at the mall had become an important and valued leisure activity for a majority of middle-class and aspiring middle-class youth. The newer malls like the *Amburukmo Plaza* were so crowded on weekends that there were long lines of cars and taxis snaking down the street waiting for a parking spot to open up. Even much older malls like the *Malioboro* were often so packed with mall-goers that it was difficult to navigate the escalators. Young people reported that in addition to offering a comfortable, clean, and modern environment where one could browse the latest fashions and lifestyle trends, going to the mall had become an enjoyable way to pass time with friends “hanging out” or “showing oneself off/putting oneself out there” (*mejeng*). They readily admitted that *mejeng di mall* or hanging out at the mall included the exciting possibility of seeing and being seen by members of the opposite sex. However, rather than spaces of sin or immorality (*maksiat*), they argued malls were “safe” spaces (*tempat yang aman*) where their acts were controlled and surveilled both by their friends and by a watchful public eye. While they conceded that a certain amount of flirting was also a possibility, they were quick to add that it was done in such a way that it did not violate religious norms (*tidak melanggar batas agama*). Interactions, they pointed out—if they occurred—typically took place between groups. None of the young women I knew would ever consider going to the mall alone, but always went with a female friend or friends. Young men too typically moved around the mall in small same-sex groups. The groups were, nonetheless, very much aware of each other, and group members would exchange discreet glances or smiles or even, in some cases, attempt to deliberately cross paths. Among younger groups of mall-goers, in particular, joking and even calling out to one another is not uncommon, though most of the calling and joking tends to be from young men to the groups of young women, who do their best to pretend to ignore it.

In their article on youth and mall culture in the nearby Javanese city of Solo, authors Pam Nilan and Michelle Mansfield describe a similar pattern among high-school aged youth they studied. They focus their research during the fasting month (Ramadan) when young people flock to the malls in the late afternoons to spend time with friends while waiting to break the fast together. Texting has become an integral part of mall interactions, they observe, enhancing and supplementing the physical interactions taking place between groups of young people. “Observed reactions [on the part of the young people involved] indicate that at least some, if not the

63 See Jones, “Women in the Middle.” Especially damning to women is the label *cewek matre* “material girl” or *mata uang* (literally, “money eyes”) both designating a woman who is only interested in money or involved with a man only for his money.

majority, of text messages were exchanged flirtatiously," they write.⁶⁴ The young people they spoke to emphasized, however, that what is important "is not to diminish the religious merit of fasting" (*yang penting nggak mengurangi pahala puasa*). While enjoying the atmosphere and each other's company, young people supported one another to insure that no one broke the fast early. Nilan and Mansfield's respondents were somewhat younger than my own; nonetheless, the concerns they expressed with socializing in a manner that was fun but did not violate religious norms or limits were in line with those expressed by the young people in my study.

Leisure, consumption, and the new Muslim middle class

In embracing a principled, religiously-informed sociability, young people draw on widely available discourses that address and express the major concerns in their own lives. For the university students in my study and the majority of Javanese youth, these concerns have everything to do with the anxieties that surround achieving and maintaining middle-class status: how to stay clear of the enticements of the urban social scene; how to avoid serious sexual involvements; and how to stay disciplined and focused, all so as to finish their educational program and obtain a college diploma. Liberally sprinkled with borrowings from contemporary youth slang (*bahasa gaul*) and making major concessions to popular interest in self-expression and self-making, this principled sociability comes across as thoroughly modern, even trendy. It is a mechanism of principled integration into, not segregation from, the allures of the marketplace. It is, in Patrick Haenni's terminology, a key feature of *l'islam de marché*: an Islam accommodated to rather than rejecting modern consumption and capitalism, but accommodated on terms that remake and yet restrain individual habitus—while not challenging the larger economic system as a whole.

Significantly, young aspirants to middle-class status referred to this theme of principled sociability not only to differentiate themselves from the perceived hyper-individualism of the West, but also from wealthy Indonesian elites like the Jakartan suburbanites described by Van Leeuwen. The general consensus among Muslim Javanese college students is that sexual experimentation is associated with wealthy, urban individuals who did not have a good family life and moral upbringing. The stereotype is that sexually "looser" women and men attend expensive private schools and that many of these wealthier individuals come from families that didn't give them sufficient love and attention while they were growing up. I was frequently told that these young people are the products of "broken homes" (due to divorce or separation) or of families in which the parents were too

64 Pam Nilan and Michelle Mansfield, "Youth Culture and Islam in Indonesia," *Wacana* 15, no. 1 (2014): 15.

busy with their professional careers or consumer lifestyles to spend time with their children. Not surprisingly, there is also an assumption that these young people had insufficient religious training. As further evidence for these generalizations, students pointed to the recurrent stories in newspaper and magazine articles of Indonesian media stars who described their broken home life and lack of religious education, their flirtation with sex and drugs, and their eventual turn to a life of Islamic piety. These examples were widely cited by parents and young people as moral lessons for those who would be tempted to go astray. Islam, in other words, has become a defining feature of the new middle-class habitus, one which separates the new middle class from both the unenlightened and uneducated lower classes, but also from the morally suspect wealthy elites who have been tainted by excessive Westernization.⁶⁵

In approaching the new Muslim middle class through the optic of leisure and consumption, we get glimpses of new and contested Muslim subjectivities. However, by paying more attention to the moral debates raging in and around the mall, so to speak, we can also appreciate that the nature of these contestations is not limited to economic or political concerns, as some of the early literature on Asian middle classes implied. As the religious sphere increasingly shifts away from the settled world of "tradition" and established religious hierarchies, new options for individual "choice" and expressivity have appeared. At the same time, the individual is confronted by a host of public groupings trying to woo or pressure him or her toward their way of being. There are more options, more choices, but also a painfully enhanced awareness that many groups are trying to convince one to follow *their* way. The contest and deliberation reaches down into the most intimate spheres of the individual.

The Javanese example speaks to the question: Is individualism an inevitable aspect of the globalization of consumption, of modern lifestyle choice, of the development and spread of new middle classes? The idealized model of consumption and lifestyle in the liberal West is one that emphasizes the autonomy and self-expressivity of the individual. The reality of course is more complicated. Our market places and our social worlds are sites of powerful and perpetual social communication, both by advertisers and businesses and by masses of consumers. Not surprisingly then, the autonomous individual of liberal consumption theory turns out in fact to be a heavily socialized being—socialized through and for consumption. He or she is, in Patrick Haenni's terms, an *individu du marché*.

While one might expect Muslim consumers to reject this capitalist model outright, the trend across the Muslim world is more hybrid and accommodating than it is oppositional. If the consumerist West is populated by *individus du marché*, the Muslim world is giving rise to, to borrow Haenni's phrase again, an *Islam de marché*. This is to say, that rather than

65 Mark Liechty, *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-class Culture in a New Consumer Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

rejecting capitalist production and consumption outright, the main currents of thought and practice in the Muslim world are developing their own models of capitalist consumption. These are for the most part system-accommodating rather than system-rejecting.⁶⁶ But they attempt to embed the mall, so to speak, in a world of religious ideals – albeit ideals in dialogue with markets and market culture.

All this is to say that Indonesia's new middle class is being redefined not just with reference to shopping, fashion trends, or even social activism, but also in relation to a new and more individualized, but still thoroughly normativized, profession of Islam. As young people experiment with new ways of practicing and experiencing the city through leisure sites like modern shopping malls, their understandings of self and of morality are being challenged and reshaped. What I have tried to suggest is that, even at the heart of modern consumerism's cathedral, the mall, Islam is nurturing alternative forms of middle-class modernity.

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66 See Haenni, *Islam de Marché*; Deeb and Harb, *Leisurely Islam*; and Fealy, "Consuming Islam."

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