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# HYBRID SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOUS EFFICACY OF YOGYAKARTA SPIRITUAL CENTRES



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## Abbreviations

BKKI	Badan Konggres Kebatinan Indonesia [Congress Board of Indonesian Mysticism]
BK5I	Badan Konggres Kepercayaan Kejiwaan Kerohanian Kebatinan Indonesia [the Congress Body for Indonesian Faith, Parapsychology, Spirituality, and Mysticism]
BN	Bhakti Nusantara [lit. Devotion to the Archipelago]: one of the Spiritual Centres in Yogyakarta considered as transforming from occult spiritual practices to Sufi oriented spirituality
BPS	Badan Pusat Statistic [Central Statistics Agency]
ESQ	Emotional Spiritual Quotient
GBHN	Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara [Broad Outlines of State Policy]
GMB	Gus Muhammad Basis: founder and leader of Bhakti Nusantara
GMRP	Gerakan Moral Rekonsiliasi Pancasila [Moral Movement for the Pancasila Reconciliation]
HI	Heart Intelligent
HPK	Himpunan Penghayat Kepercayaan [Association of Faith Practitioners]
HPM	Human Potential Movement
ICNIS	Intensive Course and Networking for Islamic Sciences
IIMaN	Indonesian Islamic Media Network
Inpres	Intsruksi Presiden [Presidential Instruction]
JALAIS	Jamaah Lautan Istighfar [Congregation of the Ocean of Forgiveness]
KKA	Klub Kajian Agama [Club for the Study of Religion]
KITLV	Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde [The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies]
LaBEL	Laboratorium Religi dan Budaya Lokal [Laboratory of Religion and Local Culture]
LSPMTD BN	Lembaga Seni Pernafasan Meditasi dan Tenaga Dalam Bhakti Nusantara [Institute for the Arts of Breathing, Meditation, and Inner Power]

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MAS AIS	Majelis Samudra Istighfar [the Assembly of the Ocean of Forgiveness]
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat [People's Consultative Assembly]
MQ	Manajemen Qalbu [Management of the Heart]
NU	Nahdhatul Ulama [Lit. Awakening of Scholars:the largest traditional Muslim organisation in Indonesia]
NAM	New Age Movement
NLP	Neuro-Linguistic-Programming
NRM	New Religious Movement
NKRI	Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia [Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia]
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PAKEM	Pengawas Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat [controller body of the mystical movement of the society]
PIHTI	Padepokan Ilmu Hikmah Sejati [Centre for the True Wisdom Knowledge]
Permai	Persatuan Rakyat Marhaen Indonesia [Organisation for the Common People]
Perpres	Peraturan Presiden [Presidential Act]
PTT	Paguyuban Tri Tunggal [lit. Association of the Trinity:one of the Javanese Base Spiritual Centres in Yogyakarta]
PUSPA JATI	Pusat Penggalan Jati Diri [Centre for Character Building]
TAP MPR	Ketetapan MPR [Legislative Act of the People's Consultative Assembly]
TEKAJI	Terapi Kekuatan Jiwa [Soul Power Therapy]
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UUD 1945	Undang Undang Dasar [1945 Constitution]
ZIP JUS	Zikir Penyembuhan Jum'at Sore [Friday Afternoon Dzikir Healing]

## Notes for Non-English Words and Transliteration

This work contains many non-English words, in languages such as Indonesian, Javanese, and Arabic. I write the non-English words in italics, then provide an explanation in box parentheses ([ ]), for short meanings, or in footnotes, for long explanations. For writing Arabic words I use the transliteration system of the University of Paramadina, as follows:

a	=	ا	z	=	ز	f	=	ف
b	=	ب	s	=	س	q	=	ق
t	=	ت	sh	=	ش	k	=	ك
th	=	ث	s	=	ص	l	=	ل
j	=	ج	d	=	ض	m	=	م
h	=	ح	t	=	ط	n	=	ن
kh	=	خ	z	=	ظ	h	=	ه
d	=	د	'	=	ع	w	=	و
dh	=	ذ	gh	=	غ	y	=	ي
r	=	ر						

Short: a = َ i = ِ u = ُ

Long: ā = َ ī = ِ ū = ُ

Diphthong: ay = ِ اي aw = ِ او

## Abstract

This thesis discusses hybrid forms of spirituality and their social trajectories in the modernizing city of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Referring to three commercialised spiritual centres, the *Paguyuban Tritunggal* [PTT], the *Bhakti Nusantara* [BN], and the *Bioenergi*, I will show how spirituality is constructed, transformed, and commodified in this city.

The study addresses the following aspects: (1) The forms of hybrid spirituality of the centres, emphasizing the practical efficacy of spirituality for this-worldly success, rather than piety and morality for social control. (The centres emphasize instrumental rationalization, rather than value-ended rationality, as part of their strategies to respond to the challenges and opportunities of modernity). (2) Possible parallels between the Western Human Potential Movement (HPM) and the Eastern form of HPM in Yogyakarta spiritual centres. (3) The potential upsurge of subjective-life spirituality in a modernizing Muslim-majority society (such as has taken place in the West), in which something like the “subjective-life spirituality” develops alongside “life as religion” (Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). (4) Trajectories of spiritual hybridization resulting from the spread of globalization. (5) Trends of commodification of spirituality in this modernizing city, and their sociological consequences in relation to the durability of religion.

After discussing the historical transformation of spirituality and spiritual groups in Indonesia in chapter two, I then explore three spiritual centres, each with their unique responses to the challenges and opportunities of modernity. Chapter three examines how the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* reconstructs Javanese spiritual tradition as a means for cultural resistance. Chapter four examines the transformation of the *Bhakti Nusantara* from occult-based spirituality to Sufi oriented spirituality, and chapter five analyses the spiritual enterprise of the *Bioenergi*, and its objectification of spiritual efficacies in modern and secular landscapes. These spiritual centres all exemplify what I call ‘hybrid spirituality’, in which spiritual ideas are combined with other elements, such as Javanese spiritual legacies, Sufism, humanistic psychology, self-management and scientific justification.

Based on my ethnographic research, this study makes several findings. First, the hybrid spiritual centres in Yogyakarta mark the transformation of spiritual movements from piety promotion to spiritual efficacy, thus resembling businesses that sell spiritual efficacy, not just through training programs, but also through material

objects which are promoted as being spiritually powerful. Second, the development of Yogyakarta spiritual centres is, to some extent, equivalent to the Western Human Potential Movement [HPM] in terms of their charismatic leadership, their entrepreneurial character, their ever developing packaged spiritual training programs and material products, their combining of spirituality with humanistic psychology and other popular scientific considerations, and their promotion of spirituality as part of self-development aimed at acquiring prosperity in this world. These parallels indicate that the three hybrid spiritual centres in Yogyakarta exemplify, in certain respects, an Eastern form of HPM, however the Eastern forms differ from the Western, in that the former borrow popular science from the West and combine it with Eastern spiritual traditions, while the Western forms borrow Eastern spirituality to be merged with Western humanistic psychology.

Third, as can be seen from globalization studies, hybridization and glocalization of spirituality are apparent in the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres. The processes come about partly as the result of modernization and globalization that have taken place in Yogyakarta. The social dynamics of modernization in this city have created markets for various types of products, including in religious and spiritual fields, based upon the amalgam of traditions of both local and global origin. The blend of internal-local spiritual legacies with external-global ones in the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres demonstrates what Berger calls 'hybridization' (2002, p. 10) or what Robertson refers to as 'glocalization' (1992; 1995, pp. 25-44).

Fourth, referring to Heelas' and Woodhead's notion of 'subjective-life spirituality' versus 'life-as religion' (1996, 2005), Indonesia could be said to have what might be called 'life-as spirituality', instead of 'subjective-life spirituality', as a complement to 'life-as religion'. In this regard, Carrette's and King's (2005) prediction, that selling spirituality could silently take over organized religion, does not seem to have occurred in the spiritual commodification taking place in Yogyakarta. In Indonesia, instead of being taken over by spirituality, religion has successfully absorbed spiritual ideas, for the benefit of a higher degree of religious consumption by the population.

Fifth, none of the hybrid spiritual centres in Yogyakarta promoting spiritual efficacies intends to be an independent spiritual group, disassociated from the official religions of Indonesia. They are all 'ecclesial', claiming that their spiritual services are dedicated to developing the religiosity of Indonesian people. The higher level of consumption of spirituality, resulting from spiritual commodification, leads to a higher level of religiosity. The more religion and spirituality are consumed, the more the world will be re-sacralized, lessening the impact of secularization. It can be said, therefore, that the commodification of spirituality in Yogyakarta is another manifestation of the durability of religion in a society in the process of modernization.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This thesis discusses hybrid forms of spirituality and their social trajectories in a mid-size city in the process of modernization. Referring to three commercialized spiritual groups, I will show how spiritual efficacies are constructed, transformed, and commodified in various ways, in the city of Yogyakarta, amid the Islamic revival and “delimited religious pluralism” (Howell, 2003, 2004) of Indonesia.

The relationship between religion and modernization has a distinctive history in Indonesia. As recognized by Hefner (1998, 2000), there is a unique trajectory of religious change in this, the largest Muslim majority country in the world. Like many non-Western societies examined by Casanova (1994) and Eisenstadt (2002, 2003), where religion unexpectedly continues to play an important part in people’s lives, Indonesia still has a high level of religious participation, and the state itself actively supports religions, as required under the constitution.

Because the state has been involved in supporting and defending religion, Indonesia has its own distinctive categories for conceptualising religion. Unlike the term 'religion' as defined by social scientists, the term for 'religion' in Indonesian, *agama*, has since 1965 exclusively referred to 'world religions' and specifically to Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism, which, in accordance with *Perpres* [Presidential Act] 1965, the state categorizes as *agama resmi* [official religions]. Confucianism, originally included as an *agama* in the 1965 Act, was excluded from that category in 1967 by the New Order regime, but regained its identification as a religion after the collapse of the Soeharto regime in 1998.<sup>1</sup> Alongside the mainstream religious groups that are supported by the government, are groups whose religious expression derives from indigenous heritages, and spiritual groups that promote eclectic amalgams of local tradition and world religions. The latter were known in the early years of the Republic as *aliran kepercayaan* or *kebatinan*. Practitioners of some of these legally marginalized traditions have tried to have their faiths recognized by the state as religions; others have accepted their classification as merely expressions of indigenous cultural tradition, known as *adat*.

During the New Order era (1968–1998), the relationship between these marginal spiritual groups and the state, as well as between them and the official religions, became especially problematic, both politically and socially. In the early days of the regime, the New Order government treated marginal religious expression as a threat to its authority and to public order. Some proponents of the official religions, notably Islam, treated practitioners in marginal religious groups as heretical or subversive. However in 1973, after long debate, some groups were recognized as a *kepercayaan* [faith], legally equivalent to the official religions but not enjoying the same government facilities, financial support or indeed public acceptance.

In the *reformasi* [reformation] era, following the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, effective democracy was re-established and people began to enjoy more freedom of expression. Alongside fundamentalist Islamic groups previously suppressed by the authoritarian Soeharto government, a number of new spiritual groups found available a larger social niche. These groups include indigenous religious groups, home-grown eclectic spiritual groups (Anand Krishna's Anand Ashram and One Earth One Sky of Gede Prama), novel Sufi groups in urban areas, and international spiritual groups operating in Indonesia (*Falun Gong*, *Reiki*, and *Brahma Kumaris*) (Howell, 2004). Some of these spiritual movements are pietistic and non-commercial or only slightly commercialized,

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<sup>1</sup> Confucianism was listed in the *Peraturan Presiden* No. 1/PNPS/1965 as one of the religions commonly practised in Indonesia, but, based on the *Instruksi Presiden* No. 14/1967, the Soeharto regime banned the ritual and religious expression of Confucianism. In 2000, the third president, Abdurrahman Wahid, revoked the 1967 Presidential Act, replacing it with a new one, the *Keputusan Presiden* No. 6/2000, which gives Confucianism official acknowledgement as a religion.

whereas others are more overtly commercialized, selling spiritual techniques and objects valued for their material efficacy in, for example, healing, business achievement, and career advancement.

The early history of marginal religious groups has been relatively well documented. Java's *kebatinan* movements from the 1950s to the 1980s have been studied by, among others, Hadiwiyono (1967), Hamka (1971), Howe (1980), Howell (1976, 1998), Kroef (1961), Mulder (1978), Rasjidi (1974), and Stange (1982, 1986). *Kebatinan*, or Javanese Mysticism is a Javanese spiritual tradition combining ancient Javanese beliefs and practices with the mystical tradition of world religions—mainly Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Some *kebatinan* groups, like Pangestu, might also contain Christian elements (Howell, 1998, p. 62; 2010b, p. 282). From an ideological orientation, Kroef (1961, p. 23) classified the movements into three categories: first, groups representing a continuation or new elaboration of Javanese mystical tradition derived from the Javanese courts; second, groups reflecting a reaction against orthodox Islam in favour of a more heterodox form; and third, groups trying to resurrect pre-Islamic cultures by stressing nationalist points of view. The term *kebatinan* covers a broad range of Javanese spiritual practices, including those related to metaphysics, mysticism, psychology, and even magic. While some local Muslim scholars, like Hamka (1971) and Rasjidi (1974), tended to see the *kebatinan* from historical and theological perspectives, Western scholars tried to discern the movement from political, sociological, and psychological points of view (Howe, 1980; Kroef, 1961; Niels Mulder, 1978; Stange, 1986).

Recently, studies have been undertaken of a new kind of spiritual group that began to emerge in the 1990s, within the official religions (mainly Islam), which focuses on spiritual expression as a part of the piety-promotion projects of the official religions. The urban Sufi revival group is the best known of these, and is considered a part of the Islamic revival.<sup>2</sup> Howell (2001, pp. 701-702) notes that most studies of Islamic revival in contemporary Indonesia focused on the 'outer' form of religious expression and symbolic political activities and were therefore deficient in examining revitalization of the 'inner' form, namely the Islamic spiritual expression of Sufism. In fact, Howell asserts, "Sufism is part of [the] overall Islamic Revival" (2001, p. 723). Literature on

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<sup>2</sup> In contemporary Indonesia, Islamic symbols and identities are clearly abundant in daily life, fashion, printing media, movies, television programs, as well as in legislation. Many scholars, including Tamara (1986), Nakamura (1993), Liddle (1996), Hefner (2000), and Fealy (2008), have detected the dynamics of Islamic revivalism since the 1970s. This revival is the result of a long process of Islamization (Nakamura, 1993) that can be traced back to the 1850s, when a "more precisian Islam" emerged and "crystallized into an aggressive counter-tradition" (Geertz, 1968, pp. 66-67) or even, as recorded by Ricklefs (2007, p. 3), to the reign of Sultan Agung (1613-46) who reconciled Javanese and Islamic traditions.

the new expression of Sufism, often identified as ‘urban Sufism’ [*Sufi Kota*<sup>3</sup> or ‘*Sufisme Perkotaan*’] and sometimes also called ‘contemporary Sufism’, appeared following seminars on this topic in Jakarta, convened by Djohan Effendi from the Bureau of Research and Development of Religion (LITBANG AGAMA), Azumardi Azra, rector of IAIN [now UIN] Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and Julia D. Howell of Griffith University (Nuh, 2009, p. x; Sya’roni, 2009, p. 235). The term ‘urban Sufism’ has now entered popular discourse. For instance, in January 2009, the Paramadina University at Jakarta organized a Sufi conference and performances in a program called ‘Urban Sufism Days’. In this program, the Indonesian version of Bruinessen’s and Howell’s work, *Sufism and the ‘Modern’ in Islam* (2007), was released under the title *Urban Sufism* (2008).

In the Indonesian context, ‘urban Sufism’ now refers to the practice and exploration of the teaching of Sufism among urban Muslims beyond the Sufi order [I. *tarekat*; Ar. *ṭarīqa*], or within Sufi orders that have adjusted to affluent urbanites. Sufism outside the *tarekat* includes the executive Sufism classes such as those managed by Paramadina Foundation, IIMaN (Indonesian Islamic Media Network), and the activities of various *majlis dhikir* such as as the *Majlis Az-Zikra* of Arifin Ilham and the *Pedepokan Thoha* of K.H. Rahmat Hidayat. The popularity of urban Sufism discourse has stimulated its scholastic study. Darmadi (2001) notes that urban Sufism is a kind of reinvigoration of contemporary Indonesian Islam (Darmadi, 2001). From studying Arifin Ilham’s *zikir* activities, Yusuf (2007) infers that such popular Sufi activity is part of the promotion of piety in urban people. Zamhari’s (2010) research into the growing number of *majlis dhikir* in Kediri East Java revealed the resilience of urban Sufi groups in the face of present Sufi heritage teaching, despite their problematic position due to the suspicions of proponents of the Sufi *tarekat* and the Indonesian Salafi group.

Studies have also been conducted of the Islamic televangelism movement, which promotes Islamic piety by exploring Sufi teachings at a practical level. Television exposure of Sufi-derived teachings, as a part of programs on self-improvement and employee development, led to the commercialization of Islamic spirituality. The preachers were paid through contracts with the television studios, which in turn gained financial benefit from the sponsors of the programs. The preachers also engaged in exclusive cross-selling of their products, such as CDs, books, private training seminars.

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<sup>3</sup> In September 2008, *Tempo*, a national weekly magazine, reported new expressions of Sufism among urban Indonesians searching for meaning in modern culture. The report also described a number of spiritual centres mushrooming in Jakarta, ranging from those associated with *tarekat*, to eclectic home grown spiritual groups, and to the international spiritual organizations operating in Indonesia. On the cover of the magazine is the headline of the report, *Sufi Kota Mencari Tuhan* [Urban Sufism searching for God], and a picture of urban people, with their modern technology such as laptops and mobile phones, gathered with a Sufi sheikh.

One of the most popular innovations in converting Sufi themed Islamic predication into programs for personal development was Aa Gym's creation of 'spiritual' management training courses, known as MQ or *Manajemen Qalbu* [Management of the Heart] (Hoesterey, 2008, 2009; Howell, 2008; Nur'aeni, 2007), following his project of *bengkel akhlaq* [workshop on morality] in his *pesantren* (Solahudin, 2008). Hoesterey notes that the "*Manajemen Qalbu* was a psycho-religious self-improvement program to help Indonesian Muslims implement Islamic teaching in order to achieve worldly riches and heavenly salvation" (2009, pp. 263-264).

Almost contemporaneously, Ary Ginanjar Agustian, a figure from a business background, with no pretensions as a preacher, developed a similar program known as the ESQ Way 165. Since 2000, Ginanjar has introduced the ESQ training program, following his best-selling book on the ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Quotient). The ESQ claims to be an integrated and sustainable method of spiritual engineering for nurturing formidable character, that will increase human productivity and help people achieve meaningful lives (ESQ LC, 2011). Rudnyckyj describes the spiritual program of the ESQ Way 165 as "Spiritual Economies" (2009b)—a bridge, for upper middle class Indonesians, between Islamic ethics and neo-liberal economies, leading to the development of one kind of "Market Islam" (2009a).

Another newly emergent type of spiritual group, as yet undocumented, comprises 'businesses' that sell spiritual efficacy, not just through training programs but also through material objects which are promoted as being spiritually powerful. Such businesses will be the focus of this study. The spiritual programs of Aa Gym, Arifin Ilham, and the ESQ of Ary Ginanjar could be considered as 'piety movements', which aim for the achievement of worldly success and material benefits through building character by nurturing piety. *Reiki* and *Falun Gong* offer better health through gentle spiritual exercises and meditation. In contrast, the Yogyakarta spiritual groups I explore here promise 'instant' spiritual efficacy. The various material products and services of the Yogyakarta spiritual centres are dedicated to helping ordinary people to grasp the fruits of modernity, regardless of their character or spiritual purity. These groups do offer some spiritual 'training', but it is a noteworthy aspect of the spirituality they promote, that prosperity, health, and worldly success can be achieved not only by participating in their spiritual programs but also by consuming or using their spiritual objects. In addition, the programs and techniques of the Yogyakarta spiritual centres draw on spiritual techniques of both local and global origin, resulting in what I call 'hybrid spirituality'. Nevertheless, instead of just embracing the global spiritual markets resulting from modernization and globalization, the Yogyakarta spiritual groups prefer to promote their local spiritual legacies with the aim of finding their own niche in the international spiritual marketplace.

The Yogyakarta spiritual centres mark the transformation of spiritual movements from piety promotion to spiritual efficacy. Such a transformation is of interest, as it

allows spiritual centres to promote and propagate spiritual practices and objects that puritan Muslims may well assume to be occult or even magic, and therefore not religiously legitimate.<sup>4</sup> In the environment of Islamic revival in Indonesia, where a number of *dakwah* organizations continuously teach ordinary Muslims how to worship God properly and direct people's behaviour according to Islamic moral values, one could easily assume that the practice of such spiritual efficacy would be socially problematic. Moreover, the groups' exploration of local spiritual legacies would seem to be theologically problematic, because the puritan *dakwah* activists tend to see the local spiritual traditions as a source of *bid'ah* [heresy, Ar. *bid'a*]. While the Sufi revival groups that present urban Sufism or *tasawuf positif* [positive Sufism] are aware and careful of what may be considered as *bid'ah* in Islam, the Yogyakarta spiritual centres seem to eagerly explore and reproduce local spiritual traditions. Therefore, the questions arising from these issues are, how do the Yogyakarta spiritual centres reproduce and disseminate their spiritual efficacies amid the growing Islamic revival, and how do the groups respond to both the challenge and opportunity of modernity?

This thesis presents case studies of three spiritual groups in Yogyakarta—the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* [PTT], the *Bhakti Nusantara* [BN], and the *Bioenergi*. These centres exemplify the viability of commercialising spiritual efficacy through minimally demanding techniques and culturally hybrid religious concepts. Each promotes, in a distinctive way, the efficacy of its spiritual techniques and objects for this-worldly success. I examine how these groups engage with modernity through corporatization of spiritual centres, professionalization of their services, internationalization of their networks, psychologization of their programs, and scientification of their spiritual

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<sup>4</sup> The relationship between magic and religion and its significance to social life has been studied both by anthropologists such as Tylor, Frazer, and Tambiah, and by sociologists such as Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, and Weber. Referring to Durkheim and Mauss, Tomasino Pinna (2007, n.p.) states that "like religion, magic is a system of beliefs and practices relative to the sacred". Both religion and magic are bound up in the social environment. Magic differs from religion in that the first is characterized as "private, individual, secret, [and] mysterious" activities dedicated to creating concrete, utilitarian, material benefit through coercive ritual; the second is characterized as public, and "tends toward...the abstract and metaphysical" to provide the moral or ethical values of a community. Following Weber's logic concerning the relationship between magic, religious asceticism, and the growth of the capitalist economy, Pinna further explains: "[t]he overcoming of magic, or disenchantment... of the world, which happen particularly through ascetic Protestantism, leads to the rationalization and moralization of religious practices and belief and constitutes, with theological accentuation of the intra-worldliness of the profession, an essential instrument for the birth of modern capitalistic economy and for the development of technology (magic being an obstacle to the rationalization of economic activity)" (2007, n.p.). The Islamic term for magic is *siḥir*, encompassing the practice of both white and black magic, as well as contact with jinns. Although most of the Quranic references portray magic negatively, in practice, some Muslim communities, especially from the *ṭarīqa* practitioners, are tolerant of white magic (Esposito, 2007), considering it a *barāka* [blessing] or *fadīla* [efficacy] of spiritual disciplines.

products. All are culturally eclectic, but they combine elements in distinct ways and make somewhat different adaptations to the social and political environment. The PTT is an example of a Javanese-based spiritual centre, defending Javanese identity against Western modernity and the growing influence of puritanical and scriptural Islam; the BN exemplifies a spiritual group shifting from Javanese occultism to a hybrid form of Sufism; and the *Bioenergi* represents a spiritual corporation that promotes spiritual training programs and products in a secular landscape/environment.

The hybrid spiritual groups in Yogyakarta are of particular interest to sociologists studying the relation between religion and modernity. As my analysis shows, the workings of *Zweckrational* (*Zweckrationalität*) or instrumental rationality, in which religion and spirituality are rationalized in such a way that their ‘magical elements’ are removed, is replaced in these contemporary non-conformist religious expressions by “systematic coherence and naturalistic consistency” of thought (Weber, 1991, p. 51). In relation to the growth of a phenomenon like the “subjective-life spirituality” that Heelas and Woodhead found developing adjacent to “life-as religion” (2005, pp. 3-7), the Yogyakarta hybrid spiritual groups indicate an upsurge of subjective-life spirituality which is happening not only in Western society, but also in a Muslim-majority society in the process of modernization. Further, these three Yogyakarta spiritual groups represent an Eastern variant of the Western Human Potential Movement (HPM)—the HPM having been part of the broader spiritual movements of the last four decades (Puttick, 2000). Finally, concerning Kitiarsa’s “religious commodification” (2010), the groups I study represent Eastern spiritual groups resulting from the spread of globalization and global practices of religious and spiritual commodification.

### 1.1. Theoretical Framework

Religion has not disappeared from Indonesia. Both before and during the colonial era, religion has formed the basis of its national identity. Religion has been included in state legislation, and the government itself has actively managed the people’s religiosity, leading to the distinctive trajectory of the relationship between religion and modernity in Indonesia. Opposition between religion and spirituality, as seen in the West, does not play the same part in a country that heavily regulates religious behaviour. In order to understand the significance of the emergence of new types of spiritual groups in Indonesia, we need to appreciate how these groups have responded to both the pressures and opportunities of modern life. We need, therefore, to consider the studies by sociologists on the relationship between religion and modernity.

#### 1.1.1. Religion and Spirituality in the Modernizing and Globalizing World

The fact that secularization and modernization do not automatically eliminate religion from public life (as had been theorized by scholars such as Marx, Freud, and Weber), has stimulated other scholars to revise the homogenous, predictable, uniform

and standardized view of modernity. Scholars like Charles Taylor (1998), S.N. Eisenstadt (2002), David Martin (2005), and Philip Taylor (2007), among others, have criticized the concepts of secularization and modernization. Eisenstadt, for example, proposed a new horizon called “Multiple Modernity”, noting that in reality, modernity manifests itself in various ways around the world (2002, 2003; Smith, 2006). While organized religion is in decline in Europe, it is expanding in North and South America. A number of Eastern nationstates, such as Japan (Norbeck, 1970; Tanabe, 1999), South Korea (C. Kim, 2003), Vietnam (P. Taylor, 2007), China and Taiwan (Yang & Tamney, 2005), as well as Malaysia (Ackerman & Lee, 1988; Lee & Ackerman, 1997) also show religion flourishing, with people still strongly attached to religious, cultural and moral points of view. In these countries, modernization in fact enables religions and spirituality to be transformed, and even challenge each other in secular arenas in which “the process of rationalization and secularization [has] reinforced religious expression, giving new meanings and organization” (Lee & Ackerman, 1997, p. 134). This phenomenon is the “modernity of religious expression” (P. Taylor, 2007, p. 4), where religion is “the carrier of modernization and globalization” just like other, secular, institutions (Beyer, 2006, p. 300).

Instead of representing the trajectory of religion in modern times in terms of a binary opposition to secularization, Bryan Wilson considers that although secularization does not preclude religion from society, it has in fact led to changes in religious practices, institutions, and thinking (Wilson, 1966, p. x). For Wilson, secularization means the “process by which religious institutions, actions, and consciousness, lose their social significance” or “religion ceases to be significant in the working of the social system” (Wilson, 1983, pp. 149-150). However, he asserts that secularization has also stimulated religion to respond to the pressures of modernity, demonstrating religion’s resilience in modern times and its flexibility in adapting to its changing milieu. At the end of *Religion in Secular Society*, Wilson wrote:

It may be, that in response to the growing institutionalism, impersonality, and bureaucracy of modern society, religion will find new functions to perform—but that, perhaps, would be not the religion which accepts the values of the new institutionalism, the religion of ecumenism, but the religion of the sects. (Wilson, 1966, p. 233)

Individualism is among the essential features of modernity (Macfarlane, 2005, p. 681). The culture of individualism, along with a decline, in modern society, of the traditional authority of religion, has encouraged people to emphasize their personal religious understandings and practices, and to search for spiritual outlets outside organized religion, leading many people to distinguish between spirituality and religion (Wuthnow, 2003, p. 306). Sociologists call the above trend a “spiritual revolution”, by which they refer to a growing interest in spirituality and declining participation in organized religion within Western societies (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Tacey, 2004).

Heelas and Woodhead note the shift from “lifeas religion” (religious practices associated with certain congregations), to “subjective life spirituality” (spiritual experiences based on people’s unique, subjective spiritual activities). This subjectivelife spirituality can be attained via the New Age movement, meditation, mind-body-spirit, and many other alternative spiritual paths (Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). According to David Tacey (2004, p. 41), the Western spiritual revolution is the result of growing individualism, the assumption that individuals are the best judge of their own spiritual desires and needs.

In contemporary debate on the sociology of religion, the upsurge in modern times of a new spirituality, as well as new religious movements, can be read “as evidence both for and against secularisation” (Howell, 2006, p. 21). Some scholars regard the phenomenon as proof of secularization, in which organized religions are declining in favour of spirituality or self-religiosity (Bruce, 2002; Wilson & Cresswell, 1999 in Wilson’s introduction p.3). Others argue that the new spirituality, and any new religious movements that are appearing, are visible evidence that religion, although assuming different forms, is not declining (Greeley, 2003; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Martin, 2005; P. Taylor, 2007).

Studies on religion in modern society have also revealed the connection between economic growth, the new middle class, and the need for new religious meaning in a modern context. As noted by Lee and Ackerman, the process of modernity in non-Western countries has created a new middle class searching for fresh spiritual paths to accommodate their “new needs and perceptions of salvatory goals” (1997, p. 134). In some respects, religious and spiritual centres, led by charismatic leaders who offer intense spiritual experiences, are able to satisfy this new bourgeois spiritual thirst. In so doing, however, spiritual and religious institutions were influenced by ‘*Zweckrational* action’, or instrumental rationality, where participants expect specific results for their spiritual participation (1997, pp. 3, 5). Spirituality is transformed into commodities as a means to worldly success (healing, business consultation, and other empowering human resources). Religion and spirituality are thus rationalized in such a way that their ‘magical elements’ are removed and replaced by “systematic coherence and naturalistic consistency” of thought (Weber, 1991, p. 51). Weber referred to this as “rationalization of culture”, where “ultimate meanings of value are *disenchanted* or... *devaluated* and are replaced increasingly by the means-ends pursuit of material interest”. Value-oriented rationality [*Wertrationalität*] is subordinated to end-oriented rationality [*Zweckrationalität*] or ‘purposive rationality’, which is more calculating. At the same time, religious ethics and ultimate beliefs are framed in favour of rational calculation and applied to ‘this-worldly’ routine actions (Gane, 2002, pp. 2, 157-158).

Another kind of rationalization of religious expression, in an attempt to apply religion in modern culture, is seen, in almost all world religions, in the ‘piety movement’. In direct contrast to fundamentalist movements, that regard modernity as being in

opposition to religion, the piety movement seems to reflect a merging of religion and modernity. According to Turner, the piety movement shows “how people try to follow religious rules in their routine encounters with the secular everyday world” (2011, p. xxi). He further notes that the revival of piety movements in Muslim majority countries, in some respects, similar to Weber’s account of ascetic piety. The movements, a result of economic growth, represent an attempt at rationalization of the everyday world, by implementing pious norms among urban middle class people. The deregulated capitalist economies of Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia, for example, have resulted in more members of small urban classes attempting to combine personal wealth and piety (2011, pp. 288-289).

These practices of pietization tend to be ensnared within processes of religious commodification, in which religious traditions are treated as consumable and marketable goods. The packaging of religious knowledge, customs, practice, and symbols, in various training programs for character building, as well as the sale of objects promoted as having spiritual value, are examples of religious commodification. In such cases there is a reciprocal process—on one side, the market considers religion as a commodity, and on the other side, religious institutions, as well as religious figures, “take part in a market place and consuming culture” (Kitiarsa, 2010, p. 565).

Modernity indeed provides tools of revitalization, not only for mainstream religions and their new religious forms, but also for those religions that are classified as local, (appearing, for example, in traditional spiritual healing, mediumship, spiritual beliefs, and shamanism). Philip Taylor explores this trend in Vietnam, where local religions have not only survived, but also reflect political and socio-cultural expression in dealing with agents of modernity. Ancestor worship, communal house sacrifice, mediumship, and spirit possession are all spiritual expressions with various aims, such as reinforcing local and national identity, coping with intangible problems, providing a substitute for religions that have failed to deliver what they promised, giving solace for economical handicaps, responding to state hegemony, negotiating interests, and even resisting inequality of opportunities among marginal groups (2007, pp. 10-13). In South Korea, contemporary shamanism is a sort of ‘cultural rebellion’, among marginal groups, against Korean public culture that only produces various life burdens (C. Kim, 2003, pp. 149-152).

The intensification of globalization in the last few decades has also affected religious and spiritual life. Though it had been generally assumed that the local traditions, including religion and spirituality, of less populous cultures would finally succumb to globalization, this has not occurred. In fact, globalization has led to the emergence of new forms of both global and local traditions. Hence, rather than threatening the existence of the local cultures and beliefs, it actually facilitates and highlights the creation in the local culture of a hybrid identity, through the process of borrowing. In terms of religion or spirituality, borrowing of various traditions from global spiritual markets to

be immixed with local traditions, as noted by Turner (2010, p. 18), has led globalization to reinforce the hybridization of religious and spiritual traditions. Berger (2002, p. 10) calls hybridization “the blend of the internal and local legacies with the external and global ones”, whereas Robertson (1992; 1995, pp. 25-44) refers to it as “glocalization”. Thus, rather than uniformity, globalization has produced both religious and spiritual hybrids in various forms. Turner (2010, p. 19) writes “...perhaps the real effect of globalization is the emergence of heterodox, commercial, hybrid, popular religion over orthodox, authoritative, professional versions of the spiritual life”.

### **1.1.2. Human Potential Movement as a Spiritual Expression**

In the Euro-American context, modern expressions of religiosity flourish in various forms of the New Religious Movement (NRM) and New Spiritual Movement. Some NRMs are revivals of indigenous religions; some are Christian charismatic movements such as Pentecostalism; some take the form of New Age, alternative healing (Yoga, Holism, and Mind-Body-Spirit); and some constitute practices like the Human Potential Movement. All these movements emerged as responses to the perceived aridity of Western tradition in philosophy, science and theology (Puttick, 2000, p. 206).

Social science and humanities researchers introduced the term Human Potential Movement (HPM) to denote training centres or groups promoting self-help therapy that flourished from the 1950s to the 1970s. The HPM is “a broad umbrella of theories and practices derived mainly from Abraham Maslow’s humanistic psychology” and by definition “it is not in itself a religion” (Puttick, 2006, p. 286). The practitioners of the movement prefer to use the term ‘growth movement’ and avoid any labelling of their groups (Puttick, 2000, p. 203). The spread of the HPM was so pervasive that, according to Stone, in the early 1960s no fewer than seven million Americans were involved in the movements (1978, p. 66), through various personal growth programs such as meditation, encounter groups, biofeedback, assertiveness training, transpersonal disciplines, and ‘total awareness’ training. It was estimated that in 1970 the number of the centres around the USA was more than seventy and grew to several hundred by 1977 (Plumb, 1993, p. 20). The swift and widespread emergence of the HPM stimulated criticism from social scientists, such as in Edwin Schur’s *The Awareness Trap: Self-Absorption Instead of Social Change* (1976), Lawrence D. Plumb’s *A Critique of the Human Potential Movement* (1993) and Richard Mowbray’s *The Case against Psychotherapy Registration: A Conservation Issue for the Human Potential Movement* (1995). Schur, for example, excoriated that the movement “ignores social context (especially social class), blunts social purpose, and threatens to obliterate the last vestiges of social responsibility” (1976, back cover). The movements were also characterized as anti intellectual, (Plumb, 1993, p. xi; Schur, 1976, p. 192) simplistic and illusive (Schur, 1976, pp. 192-193) and “narcissistic and lacking social conscience” (Puttick, 2006, p. 286).

Worried about the negative impacts of HPM on social life, Schur even ended his book with the statement: “Popularizers of the awareness view often encourage this with their glib pronouncements and wildly excessive claims. They must not be allowed to go unchallenged” (1976, p. 194). Although a number of criticisms were addressed to HPM, Puttick describes it as “one of the most significant and influential movements of the counterculture of the sixties and seventies” bearing on both spiritualization and secularization (2000, p. 201) that has significant impact on the philosophy and practice of business and training programs (Puttick, 2006, p. 287).

Exploring the New Age Movement (NAM) as fostering efficacies of spiritual economics in their seminar and training programs, Heelas (1996, 2001) discusses groups such as Warner Enhard’s *est* [enhard seminar training, latterly known as Transformational Technologies], Esalen, Scientology, The Pacific Institute, Lifespring, the Living Games, and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s Transcendental Meditation. Heelas’ project concerned spiritual economics, in which he discerns a possible contribution by spiritual teachings and practices to economic efficacy, as well as to economic prosperity (Heelas, 2001, p. 52). Although he does not favour groups such as HPM over the NAM, the NAM clearly corresponds to Puttick’s classification of an HPM. In my opinion Heelas regards the 1960s–1970s HPM as the prosperity wing of the 1980s–1990s NAM (1996, p. 126).

According to Heelas, the prosperity wings of NAM are in fact spiritually efficacious in economic activities. Examples of the efficacy of the spiritual economics promoted by the movement are: (1) magical power as a means for motivating and focusing goals, (2) inner-directed wisdom in predict future business, (3) transformed character to upgrade personal skill, (4) work ethics that spiritualize worldly activities and (5) spiritual elements to handle stress caused by capitalism. Based on Heelas’ studies, these last three efficacies are able to provide ‘real’ benefit for business industries. For example, the programs are able to upgrade and transform the character of participants, making them “more empowered, more responsible, more creative, more focused, more energetic”, and “more inclined to set goals” that would lead them to be more productive in their work place. The programs also instil a spiritual ethic of work, in which “works are valued as spiritual discipline”. Finally, the programs help to minimize a potential “clash between the quest for personal authenticity or expression and the disciplined demands of the workplace” and help “to handle those stresses and other psychological problems generated by competitive, enterprise-culture, capitalism” (Heelas, 2001, pp. 67–69).

In essence, the Western HPM is characterized by the following features: first, it developed as a rebellion against arid Western traditions both in philosophy and theology (Puttick, 2000, p. 206); second, the features of self-awareness in the HPM are individualism (Schur, 1976, pp. 2–3) and rebellion against the conviction that human life is defined by one’s social role (Plumb, 1993, p. xii); third, HPM was managed professionally by implementing entrepreneurial principles (Puttick, 2000, p. 201;

Schur, 1976, p. 6) and creating gradual programs, which are packaged, promoted, marketed and commercialized in a highly profitable product (Schur, 1976, pp. 6-7); fourth, HPM was in some respects a spiritual movement borrowing foreign traditions from “the ancient disciplines of Eastern religion” (Plumb, 1993, p. 1), or from the Eastern spirituality of Buddhism and the Osho movement (Puttick, 2000, p. 203). Referring to Heelas (1996), Puttick stresses that the Western HPM is a manifestation of ‘self religion’ or ‘self-spirituality’ (Puttick, 2000, p. 205); and fifth, there was a correlation between charismatic leadership in the HPM and the successful combination of businesses, personal development and spirituality (Puttick, 2000, p. 214).

Based on the above theoretical considerations, I discern the interplay of modernity and religious expression in the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres which are the subject of this study, in the following ways: first, the trajectory of religious and spiritual expression in Indonesia, as in other modernizing countries, is in part driven by instrumental rationalization or *Zweckrational* action (see Lee & Ackerman, 1997; P. Taylor, 2007); second, here, as elsewhere, there is a growing awareness of ‘subjective-life spirituality’ in contrast to ‘life-as-religion’ (Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005, pp. 3-7); third, the sociological context of the hybrid spiritual expression of Yogyakarta spiritual centres is the process of globalization; fourth, the entrepreneurial character of the HPMs in Western countries (see Plumb, 1993; Puttick, 2000; Schur, 1976) is mirrored in the Yogyakarta spiritual centres I have studied, and can be read as Eastern HPMs; and finally, religious commodification (see Kitiarsa, 2010) and spiritual consumption are evident in the Yogyakarta spiritual centres.

## 1.2. Methodology

This is a sociological study of religion, focussing on new forms of non-conformist religious expression in the city of Yogyakarta, Indonesia as the city undergoes modernization. First, this study addresses the issue of spiritual centres promoting the practical efficacy of spirituality for this-worldly success, rather than promoting piety and morals for social control. These efficacious spiritual centres utilize instrumental rationalization, instead of value-ended rationality, as part of their strategies to respond to the challenges and the opportunities of modernity.

Second, these centres formulate spirituality as a means for personal development, motivating people to acquire this-worldly success through a spiritual approach. In blending spirituality with humanistic psychology, the centres are reminiscent of the Human Potential Movement (HPM), which developed from the 1960s to the 1970s in the United States and then spread to Europe. Considering that a number of Western publications on personal growth programs have been translated into *bahasa Indonesia* during the past two decades, there are, presumably, parallels between Western forms of HPM and the Eastern forms manifested in the efficacious spiritual centres of Yogyakarta.

Third, individualism, which is the main feature of modernity (see Macfarlane, 2005, p. 681), tends to lead people to declare their authority in deciding which religious and spiritual expression is appropriate to them. Individually, people have the freedom to practise a spirituality based on their own subjective preferences. As Yogyakarta undergoes modernization, it is plausible to assume that there is a 'spiritual revolution' occurring in this city, as is happening in the West, in which 'subjective-life spirituality' co-develops with 'life-as religion' (Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). However, because the level of individualization in the West differs from that in Eastern societies, where communal culture still tends to be dominant over individualism, it is also reasonable to predict that the trajectory of the spiritual revolution in Yogyakarta will be distinctive.

Fourth, as elsewhere, the process of globalization taking place in the modernising society of Yogyakarta brings to the city a flow of global culture which then intermixes with local culture, resulting in what sociologists have called 'glocalization' (Robertson, 1992; 1995, pp. 25-44) or 'hybridization' (Berger, 2002, p. 10). Hybridization also occurs in the spiritual domain. To understand the process and social trajectory of the hybridization of spirituality in the Yogyakarta spiritual centres, it is worthwhile tracking both their local and global spiritual legacies, and how they are hybridized.

A final concern, and the major focus of this study, is trends of commodification of spirituality in the Yogyakarta spiritual centres and their sociological implications in relation to the durability of religion in a society in the process of modernization. With reference to Berger's notion on the durability of religions in third world societies—that religious communities have an internal capacity to adapt and even reject the so-called secular world (Berger, 1999)—I assume that commodification of spirituality is a kind of 'creative' response of religious groups to modern culture in order to compete with various secular institutions. I also consider Turner's thesis about the possible influence of economic culture in such religions, and the blending of the secular and the religious in what he calls "the commodification of religious life" due to economic globalization. Turner writes:

[W]ith the globalisation of religions, modern religious formations are profoundly influenced by the globalisation of economic life, specifically by the commodification of everyday life. Religion becomes part of the global economic system in terms of the circulation of religious commodities (amulets, prayer books, pilgrimages and so forth), by the creation and promotion of religious lifestyles (often associated with body management, veiling, diet and dining), by the adoption of modern communication technologies (the Internet, videos, cassettes, TV stations, computerisation and so forth), by the creation of religious youth cultures that among other things blend secular music with religious themes and probably, in the long run, by the commercial cultivation of the religious body. (2011, p. 279)

Borrowing Weber's proposition concerning the importance of 'rationally active asceticism' for 'mastering the world', Turner employs the above thesis in his discussion on the globalization of piety. The piety movements of world religions have led to a

religious disposition fitting Weber's 'active asceticism that is God-willed *action* of the devotion' for this-worldly prosperity. Unlike 'the contemplative *possession* of the holy as found in the mysticism', the 'active asceticism' of the piety movement is pro modern culture and therefore open to economic culture (Turner, 2010). In discussing globalization and religion, Turner proposes " 'Religious Accommodations to the World and their Directions'", as an alternative to Weber's "'Religious Rejections'" of the world (2010, p. 283).

In this study, I will show that economic culture occurs even in marginal religious groups which commodify spiritual efficacies, namely programs and material objects promoted as being spiritually efficacious. To this end, I undertook fieldwork in Yogyakarta for ten months, from October 2009 to August 2010, and then for a further month in mid 2011 to update the data. During my fieldwork, I conducted ethnographic research at three spiritual centres—the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* (PTT), the *Bhakti Nusantara* (BN), and the *Bioenergi*. In these centres, I engaged in participant observations involving their spiritual activities, healing services, and various training programs promoting personal growth, such as *ruwatan*, *tekaji*, *zikir masal*, *ruqyah penyembuhan*, *seminar*, and *gemblengan*.

I grew up in a modernist Muslim community that tends to criticize local spiritual traditions, but my subsequent experience as a lecturer at the Department of Comparative Religion, holding the degree of Master in Religious Studies, has given me the insight necessary for the objective study of various religious groups. In some respects, my explanation to spiritual leaders—that I was a lecturer at the Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, conducting research for a PhD thesis in /through an Australian university—led to some privileges and better access, as well as 'status', during the fieldwork. For example, in the *slametan* of spiritual graduation at the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*, Romo Sapto invited me to come forward and sit beside him amid his main disciples [*murid inti*], while his regular members sat about eight metres behind us. Before the rituals, he gave me opportunities for direct conversations with his disciples about their spiritual experiences. On one day, in the *Bhakti Nusantara*, the coordinator of the centre asked me to see and give support to his patient. On another day, the group invited me to be among the spiritual supporters for a special *manaqiban*<sup>5</sup> to help a national artist with a problem. After conducting an interview with Syaiful, the leader and founder of the *Bioenergi*, he offered me the opportunity to write a spiritual book and a forum for training classes. Explicitly, he said that he would be pleased if I could open a 'chambers' of his centre in Australia. Furthermore, my involvements in the centres' activities led to my receiving a number of text messages and emails from the centres about updated spiritual programs and products.

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<sup>5</sup> *Manaqiban* is a ritual of chanting certain Sufi Saints' hagiography.

In addition to participant observation, I conducted in-depth interviews with the founders, leaders, trainers, healers and members of the groups. I asked the founders and leaders about their life histories, their spiritual insight and networks, their points of view on religion and spirituality, their reasons for developing the spiritual centres and their visions and missions. My questions covered their arguments for establishing the centres in Yogyakarta instead of in other cities, the way they manage the centres, and their spiritual products. I also traced their relationships with other institutions, such as government offices, other religious organizations, educational institutions, and mass media. Of the trainers, healers and managerial officers of the groups, I asked questions regarding their engagements with the centres, their spiritual expertise, their relationships with their masters, and the method for packaging and promoting the centres' products. I questioned the members and other participants as to their motives for participating in the centres' programs, the duration of their involvement, and the spiritual efficacy they have earned.

As an additional line of research, I documented a number of publications by the three centres, such as books, CDs, brochures, flyers, and the centres' press releases in newspapers and magazines. The BN and the *Bioenergi* have published profiles explaining their history, development and current programs, in books, papers, and on websites. I use these official publications as important sources, along with my interviews with leaders of the centres. In the case of the PTT, which has not published its profile, I consider previous studies on the centre, such as that done by Burhan Ali (2006), as source of data.<sup>6</sup> After conducting fieldwork for ten months in Yogyakarta, I did further library research for three months at academic institutions in the Netherlands, mainly at the Leiden University library and the library of the KITLV (*Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*—The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies), in order to broaden and strengthen my historical data.

From this fieldwork I gathered data concerning: (1) the historical, social, and cultural context of Yogyakarta spiritual centres, and their spiritual trajectories; (2) the potential parallels between Yogyakarta spiritual centres and the Western HPM; (3) the typical 'intra ecclesiastical' spirituality in Yogyakarta spiritual centres that leads to the growth of life as spirituality rather than 'subjectivelife spirituality'; and (4) the process of hybridization and instrumental rationalization in Yogyakarta spiritual centres, and their spiritual commodification through the processes of corporatization of the spiritual centre, psychologization of spiritual programs, and scientification of spiritual objects.

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<sup>6</sup> It is worthwhile noting here that some of the spiritual programs in the centres have changed in recent years. The *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*, for example, has not performed its yearly *Kirab Pathok Negara* [the *Pathok Negara* cultural carnival] since 2008, so I could not participate in this event during my fieldwork. Instead, I collected data about this ritual, based on newspaper archives provided by the centres and interviews with the centres' leaders.

I then analysed the acquired data according to the theoretical frameworks discussed above, discerning the way Yogyakarta spiritual centres respond to the challenges and opportunities of modernity.

### 1.3. Yogyakarta: Field of Spiritual Centres

This study is based on my fieldwork in Yogyakarta, the capital of *Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta* [Special Territory of Yogyakarta Province], commonly abbreviated as DIY. The province is an amalgamation of two Mataram Islamic Kingdoms, *Kasultanan Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* [the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta] and *Kadipaten Pakualaman* [the Pakualaman Duchy]. These two kingdoms, which were de jure free from direct Dutch colonial control, joined the Republic of Indonesia a few weeks after independence was declared on August 17, 1945.<sup>7</sup> This strategic decision led to the Sultan of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, and the *Adipati* [Grand Duke] of Kadipaten Pakualaman, Sri Paduka Paku Alam VIII, having political privilege to rule and control their territory as governor and vice governor of the province until their deaths.<sup>8</sup>

DIY is now one of thirty-three Indonesian provinces. Geographically, it is located in the southern area of Central Java, bordered by the Indonesian Ocean to the south, by Klaten regency to the north, Wonogiri regency to the southeast, Purworejo regency to the west, and Magelang regency to the northeast (BPS, 2009, p. 3). Administratively, the province covers four *kabupaten* [districts]: Bantul, Gunungkidul, Kulonprogo and Sleman, and one city, Yogyakarta.

Demographically, based on the projection of the 2005 population survey, the population of DIY in 2007 was 3,457,491 persons, of which 49.42% were male and 50.57% female. The 2008 National Socio-economic Survey showed that the population of the province was 64.30% urban and 35.70% rural. With a total area of 3,188.80 square kilometres, DIY had a population density, in 2008, of 1,089 persons per square kilometre. Yogyakarta city had the highest density—in an area of only 32.50 square kilometres or about 1.02% of the total area of DIY—with around 14,059 persons per

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<sup>7</sup> Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX announced the decision to join the state to the Republic of Indonesia as a Special Province, on September 5, 1945 (Soeratno et al., 2002, p. 94).

<sup>8</sup> This did not happen to its counterpart city, Surakarta, which was also definitely a Mataram Islamic Kingdom and is even older than Yogyakarta. The two traditional rulers of Surakarta, Paku Buwono XII of Kraton Kasunanan and Mangkunegara VIII of the Mangkunegaran Palace did not play an active and positive role during the revolution. Even though accommodating more districts/regencies than Yogyakarta, Surakarta is not regarded as a special territory of a province, just as a *Karisidenan* without political authorization. It was also recorded that people, especially from the radical group, were disappointed in the Kings of Surakarta for failing to play significant roles during the era of the national struggle for independence. On June 1, 1946, due to the urging of Soedirman, the Indonesian guerrilla warlord, and the radical groups, the privileged rights of the Surakarta Kings beyond the palace were eliminated (Ricklefs, 2001, p. 274).

square kilometre. Gunungkidul Regency, covering 1,485.36 square kilometres—or 46.63% of the total area of DIY—had the lowest density, at 462 persons per square kilometre (BPS, 2009, pp. 5-6, 63).

Based on levels of welfare, in 2008 the population of DIY was classified as follows: 19.21% was *Pra-Sejahtera* [pre-prosperous], meaning economically poor, 22.51% was *Sejahtera I*, meaning able to afford basic daily needs, 23.48% was *Sejahtera II*, meaning economically stable, 28.84% was categorized *Sejahtera III* which is equivalent to comfortable middle class, and 5.95% was considered as *Sejahtera III Plus*, or prosperous (BPS, 2009, p. 106). Categorized according to religion, the population, as recorded in the National Census 2008, was 91.78% Muslim, 5.03% Catholic, 2.93% “Christian” Protestant, 0.20% Hindu, and 0.16% Buddhist (BPS, 2009, p. 104).

Culturally, people in Yogyakarta are active producers of, and participants in, various kinds of cultural expression—traditional, contemporary and religiously marked and unmarked. A number of villages still maintain traditional-popular art such as the magical horse dancing of *jathilan* or *kuda lumping*, and the *campur sari* music groups. Most hamlets also still practise harvest festivals of *bersih desa* [lit. cleansing the village], *merti bumi* [lit. preserving the earth] or *sedekah bumi* [alms for the earth]. People celebrate every new year of the Javanese calendar, or *Malam 1 Sura* (which is equivalent to the Islamic new year calendar of *1 Muharram*), with various religious-



Figure 1.1.

Mass protest marched at Malioboro Street on Sunday, December 13, 2010, opposing the Central Government's Bill on revision of special status of Yogyakarta (*Status Keistimewaan Yogyakarta*). Picture from Detik Foto <http://us.foto.detik.com/readfoto/2010/12/13/135804/1523306/157/1/demo-keistimewaan-diy> (Retrieved December 13, 2010).

cultural events, ranging from *ziarah* (pilgrimage) to sacred sites and Wali's tomb, doing *tirakatan* [contemplation] all night long, to barefoot *kirab* [carnival] of cycling round the fence of the Sultan's palace in *pasa mbisu* [silence, speechlessness].

Since the beginning of the reformation era, the status of the special region of Yogyakarta has been much debated. The Central Government in Jakarta proposed a new Bill, suggesting that the Governor and Vice Governor of Yogyakarta should be elected [*pemilihan*] as in other provinces, instead of these positions being automatically determined [*penetapan*] to Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono and Sri Paduka Paku Alam. Nevertheless, the majority of Yogyakarta people who favour the idea of *penetapan* oppose the Government Bill. To the Yogyanese, *keistimewaan* [special status of the region] entails *penetapan*. They have protested to the Central Government in Jakarta by staging cultural demonstrations, dressed in Javanese clothes, and presenting displays of performing arts.

Although the debate has been heated since the reformation era, and especially in 2010, the polemic on the special status of Yogyakarta is rooted in numerous political events that occurred before the reformation. These include: the death of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX in 1988 and the coronation of KGPH H Mangkubumi as Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X; the inauguration of Paku Alam VIII (who was the vice governor) as *Pejabat Gubernur* [acting governor] on December 19, 1988; the death of Paku Alam VIII in 1989 and the inauguration of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X as governor of DIY; the redefining of *Rancangan Undang Undang Keistimewaan Yogyakarta* [Bill of Speciality of Yogyakarta]; and the candidature of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X for the presidential election in 2008 (Soetarto, 2009, p. 3).

As the capital of the province, the mid-size city of Yogyakarta is known for accommodating a range of educational, scientific and cultural institutions, religious movements and Javanese traditions. The city also holds a number of national histories. It was the birthplace, in 1908, of the *Budi Utomo* (the first native political and nationalist organization), of the *Muhammadiyah* (the first Islamic socio-religious modern movement) in 1912, and of the *Taman Siswa* (a nationalist culture-based school) in 1924. When Jakarta, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia, was in danger from aggression by the *Pasukan Sekutu* [Allied Forces] aiming to re-establish Dutch Colonialism, Yogyakarta was the temporary capital of the new republic and was the base for the struggle for national independence from 1946 to 1949 (Mulder, 1978, p. xvi).

Yogyakarta has been recognized as a multi-cultural city, where people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds share their lives, work and retire. For its numerous universities and colleges,<sup>9</sup> Yogyakarta is recognized as *kota pendidikan* [city of

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<sup>9</sup> It was reported by BPS that in 2009 there were 10 units of state tertiary education, with 4,355 permanent lecturers educating 86,024 students. Meanwhile, there were 117 units of private tertiary education (of which 45.30% were academies, 29.06% were colleges, 15.38% were universities, 6.84% were polytechnics and 3.42% were institutes) that were staffed by 17,444 lecturers (BPS, 2009, p. 103).

education].<sup>10</sup> It is also known as the headquarters of the modernist-rational Muslim organization (the Muhammadiyah), as a city of cultural tourism, and, along with Surakarta, as the centre of Javanese tradition.

Like other cities experiencing modernization, Yogyakarta is growing and developing. In the past, the city was known as the *kota sepeda* [bicycle city] for its population was fond of riding bicycles. Traditional vehicles such as *becak* [trishaw] and *andong* [carriage] were the main modes of city transportation. Now, city buses, motorbikes and cars are dominating the roads, overwhelming the city with traffic jams. Yogyakarta is now a mid-size 'metropolitan' city with frequently congested streets.

Yogyakarta is one of a very few places in Indonesia where a Kingdom has been authorized to continue functioning, albeit within certain limits imposed by the Indonesian nation state. The palace routinely performs numerous traditional and cultural ceremonies, with thousands of people involved in the rituals, hoping for blessings. Although it provides no significant income, many citizens are still proud to be part of the *keluarga kraton* [palace's family] as *abdi dalem* [palace official, member of the kraton's administration]. Juxtaposed to the exotic-traditional scene of the palace, the uniform of the *abdi dalem*, and the rituals and artistic performances, are the modern sensibilities of the city. The Adisucipto Airport is now an international airport facilitating direct flights to and from Singapore and Malaysia. There are four magnificent malls (one of which is the biggest in Central Java), and a number of new shopping centres. In these malls are outlets offering international food and beverages—Starbucks Coffee, Pizza Hut, McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Texas Fried Chicken.

In the last decade, the international slogan has vividly appeared in health and education services. Providers of world class healing treatments offer their services in the city. In addition to the Jogja International Hospital (JIH), the city's first private international hospital, there are offices for Malaysian and Singaporean international hospitals providing information to potential patients. In education, a number of primary and secondary schools, supported by the Ministry of National Education, offer international standard curricula with English as the main language. Some well-known universities, like Gadjah Mada University, Indonesian Islamic University, and Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta also offer international programs in economics, technique, and international relations.

Many spiritual centres have emerged in Yogyakarta, corresponding to the Human Potential Movement in exploring spirituality for this-worldly prosperity. These in-

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<sup>10</sup> In 2008, the current Mayor of the City of Yogyakarta, Herry Zudianto, who has been in office for two terms, released his book entitled *Kekuasaan sebagai Wakaf Politik: Manajemen Yogyakarta Kota Multikultural* [Power as Political Endowment: Management for Multicultural City of Yogyakarta]. Among the issues discussed in the book are: *teposeliro* as a spirit of multiculturalism and tolerance in Yogyakarta; ethnic and religious diversity in twentieth century Yogyakarta; the contribution of education toward Yogyakarta's image as a city of tolerance; and Yogyakarta's vision of multiculturalism (Zudianto, 2008).



Figure 1.2.

Map of Yogyakarta showing the location of the spiritual centres

Adapted from: BPK RI Perwakilan DIY, [http://yogyakarta.bpk.go.id/web/?page\\_id=483](http://yogyakarta.bpk.go.id/web/?page_id=483);  
Desnantara Tamasya, <http://desnantara-tamasya.blogspot.com/2011/02/peta-kota-yogyakarta.html>; and  
Indonesia Map, <http://www.indonesia-tourism.com/map/indonesia-map.html>  
(Retrieved January 10, 2010)

clude the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*, the *Bhakti Nusantara*, and the *Bioenergi*. Other relatively small training organizations offer spiritual programs, or at least promote spirituality as part of human resource development, e.g. the *HI* [Heart Intelligent] of Synergy Leadership Training Centre, Spiritual-Motivation Training of *Pesantren Masyarakat Jogja*, Achievement Motivation Training and Outbound Training of *GOL Institute*.

In summary, Yogyakarta is a unique city where tradition and modernity blend: the Javanese tradition of the Sultan Palace is juxtaposed to the centre of the Muslim rationalist-modern movement; cultural and religious tourism [*ziarah*] operates close to centres of education and other secular symbols such as malls, shopping centres, hospitals, and universities. The uniqueness of Yogyakarta has led numerous academics, such as Mulder (1978)<sup>11</sup>, Peacock (1978), Selo Soemardjan (1962), Nakamura

<sup>11</sup> The book is based on Mulder's fieldwork in Yogyakarta, from March 1969 to August 1970, on the *Kebatinan* movement.

(1993)<sup>12</sup>, Woodward (1989), Hyung-Jun Kim (2007), and Daniels (2009), to do fieldwork in the city on social, religious, and cultural movements.

#### 1.4. Thesis Outline

The following chapters survey the historical context of the development of the three groups that are the main focus of this study, and then examine each group in detail.

Chapter two delineates the historical transformation of spiritual groups in Indonesia. This is background information about Indonesian spiritual movements. I start with discussion on the relationship of the marginal spiritual group of *kebatinan* with the state and official religions, and the growth of new spiritual movements in contemporary Indonesia. I then trace the historical usage of spiritual practices associated with occultism as a protest movement, and its problematic position in Islam. Finally, I explore the changing meaning of the words ‘*spiritual*’ [spiritual] and ‘*spiritualitas*’ [spirituality] in contemporary Indonesia, asserting the common adaptation of the words to world religions.

Chapter three discusses the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* (PTT), which cultivates Javanese-based spirituality as a means for cultural resistance. The discussion in this chapter covers historical development of the group, its soft-protest activities and the way the group commodifies its spiritual efficacies. Offering alternative healing services, public *ruwatan* [Javanese ritual of exorcism], cultural carnivals, and material arts, the group promotes Javanese based spiritual efficacy while resisting: (1) modernity, which, according to the group, has led to commercialization of so many social aspects of life, (2) the growth of literal-puritanical religion that tends to be less tolerant of religious pluralism, and (3) the ambiguous implementation of the state’s policies on freedom of religion. The PTT is a good example of how local spiritual legacies are explored by the agents of local traditions, as a means of response to the challenges and pressures of modern life. Although soft protest is dominant in the PTT activities, commercialization of spiritual efficacy also manifests in the group, whereby, in some respects, the group is comparable to the Human Potential Movement (HPM).

Chapter four explores the shift, in the *Bhakti Nusantara*, from *spiritual kasar* [tough spirituality] associated with occult practices to *spiritualitas alus* [gentle spirituality] associated with Sufism. After describing the historical context and development of the group, this chapter sheds light on the context and motives of the spiritual transformation from the ‘tough spirituality’ to the ‘gentle’ one. This transformation underlines two trends. First, it reflects the group’s strategy in adapting its spiritual practices to the idea of orthodox Islam that has heightened in the last decade. In this regard, the

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<sup>12</sup> Nakamura did fieldwork in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta for a period of nineteen months, between October 1970 and April 1972.

transformation is just a masking strategy for the group's survival. Second, it notes the continuous struggle by Muslim spiritualists to offer what they call more 'legitimate Islamic spiritual efficacies' amid burgeoning occult practices. It thus underlines the projection of Islam onto the sphere of magic and occult practices. The transformation has made the group more comparable to the Western HPM, and more commercialized in its promotion of spiritual efficacy, than the resisting group, the PTT. This chapter therefore shows how a spiritual group has changed its responses to modernity from resisting its challenges and the pressures, to grasping the opportunities inherent in it.

Chapter five analyses the reification of spiritual efficacy in a secular landscape, by a corporatized spiritual centre, the *Bioenergi*. Having describing the founder and development of the centre, this chapter scrutinizes the process of commodification of spiritual efficacy and traces elements of Human Potential Movements in the centre. As a spiritual corporation with modern management, the *Bioenergi* exemplifies what I call 'scientification of spiritual manufactured goods' and 'psychologization of Sufi-spiritual trainings'. The *Bioenergi* is an example of a hybrid spiritual group fully engaged with the opportunities and fruits of modernity. Compared to the two previous groups, the PTT and the BN, the *Bioenergi* is more commercialized.

Chapter six is a comparative analysis of the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres from the perspective of sociological theories on the interplay between religion and modernity. Here I explore possible parallels between Western HPM and the three Yogyakarta groups. I explicate the hybridization and instrumental rationalization of spirituality as a consequence of globalization, and examine the commodification and consumption of spirituality. Then, according to the precepts of classical secularization and rational choice theory, I scrutinize the theoretical significance of this study, arguing that although contemporary spiritual efficacy movements in Indonesia represent evidence of the durability of religion in the modern era, they also reflect religious change.

Chapter seven is the conclusion, summarizing the discussion and noting the future significance of this study.

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# Chapter 2

## Historical Transformation of Spirituality and Spiritual Groups in Indonesia

As stated in chapter one, the development of spiritual groups, in the Western context, is part of a response to the aridity and dogmatism of religion. More and more people are now proudly claiming to be spiritual rather than religious, indicating that for a growing number there is an opposition between spirituality and religion. Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead describe such an opposition by proposing two categories: subjective-life spirituality, that provides an opportunity to celebrate one's autonomy in terms of inner spiritual expression, and life-as religion, where people define their religiosity in accordance with certain religious traditions (Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). The opposition between religion and spirituality is, by nature, a result of a social process, in which modernity is a leading cause and where spirituality seems to be more sought after than religion. The high demand for the 'spiritual' in the Western contexts has even stimulated some scholars to predict the "taking over" of religion by spirituality (Carrette & King, 2005).

Historically, Indonesia also faced opposition between spiritual and religious expression. In the 1980s, for instance, the terms *spiritual* [spiritual] and *spiritualitas* [spirituality] were used by the Indonesian government mostly to refer to groups outside the official religions, namely the Javanese mystical tradition of *kebatinan*. These terms are now also commonly adopted by religious groups to express the inner dimension of religion, such as in teachings of *Sufism* blended with humanistic psychology and self-management, or just to express an experiential dimension of religious teaching in general. The words *spiritual* and *spiritualitas* are now gaining popularity in public, and are even frequently associated with things that are considered secular, such as business, education, career, and health. A number of spiritual centres promoting spiritual services and efficacies are also developing in urban areas.

This chapter describes the historical transformation of Indonesian spiritual groups, ranging from those categorized as the ‘old legacies’ of marginal religious groups of the *kebatinan* movement (with its problematic relationship with the state and with the official religion [*agama resmi*]), to the new trend of contemporary groups promoting spirituality. Because some aspects discussed in the next chapters deal with spiritual practices associated with occultism and its problematic position in Islam, I elucidate the issue as part of background information. Further, I trace earlier usage of the words *spiritual* and *spiritualitas* in Indonesian publications and then discuss their current (and still changing) meaning. After elaborating on the dynamic of spiritual groups and their trajectory, I will argue that, due to the common usage of the words *spiritual* and *spiritualitas* among world religions (mainly Islam) in contemporary Indonesia, ‘religion’ has even ‘taken over’ ‘spirituality’, instead of *vice versa*.

### **2.1. Agama, Kebatinan and New Spiritual Movements: Historical Overview**

The policy of official religion implemented by the Indonesian government, whereby all citizens must declare their affiliation to one of six recognized religions (Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) has restricted the development of marginal religious groups. Therefore, the practitioners of marginal religious groups, such as the Javanese mystical tradition of the *kebatinan* movement, have been in a problematic position not only in their relationship with the state, but also with the official religions.

As the expression of marginal religion outside official religion, *kebatinan* groups have been politically and culturally debated during the Old and New Order eras. The political debate on the *kebatinan* can be traced back to the status of Javanese mystical movements as a religious identity among Javanese people since national independence (Stange, 1986, p. 85). However, culturally, the religious ideas and identities of *kebatinan* were actually far more deeply rooted in the legacy of, to borrow Ricklefs words, the “mystic synthesis” which is “the fruit of many years of conflict and accommodation [between

Islam and pre-Islamic spiritual conceptions of indigenous Javanese traditions, Hinduism and Buddhism], and never constituted a formal or established orthodoxy that courts were able, or concerned, to enforce" (Ricklefs, 2006; 2007, p. 5).<sup>13</sup>

Many terms are used to describe this Javanese mystical tradition, such as *kejawen* [Javanism], *kejiwaan* [from the word *jiwa*, a Sankrit word meaning 'soul'], *kerohanian* [from the Arabic root *ruh* meaning 'spirit'], *kawruh kasunyatan* [knowledge of truth], *kebatinan* [from an Arabic word *batin* meaning 'inner spiritual sense of human life', as opposed to *lahir* or 'outer dimension'], and *aliran kepercayaan* [literally meaning 'stream of belief']. Each of these terms may have a specific meaning depending on its context, and certain groups prefer using one rather than another, giving a specific focus (Stange, 1986, p. 87). Whichever term is used, Stange (1986) notes that they all refer to the Javanese "mystical" movements which "emphasize experiential realization of the Absolute within the individual". However, they tended not to be associated with *klenik*, black magic and other occult practices. The movements nonetheless differed in their manifestations. Some were recorded as accommodating thousands of members implementing organizational principles, while some were identified as "small, local and ephemeral" groups. Many were "purely informal meetings of friends" and some even represent "study club [rather] than [a] context for mystical practice" (Stange, 1986, pp. 85-87).

The debate on *kebatinan* was heated during the Old Order and the first half of the New Order era, between the 1950s and 1970s, prompting a number of scholars to study this officially marginal religious movement, e.g. Hadiwiyono (1967), Hamka (1971), Rasjidi (1974), Mulder (1978), Howe (1980), Stange (1986), and Howell (1976, 1982, 1998). Some groups sought state recognition for their particular form of *kebatinan* as a religion, that would have, they hoped, the same status and state financial resources already enjoyed by the existing official religions.

Indigenous mystical expressions were disqualified from the definition of the Indonesian official religions (especially Islam and Christianity). The government even continued implementing the Dutch policy of control over the *kebatinan* movement, which in the past had frequently led to political riots. In 1954 the Indonesian government set up PAKEM [*Pengawas Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat*—the controlling body of the mystical movement of the society] to control its development, under the aus-

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<sup>13</sup> According to Ricklefs, the mystic synthesis is characterized by a "strong sense of Islamic identity" and "fulfilment of five pillars of Islamic rituals" but accommodates "an array of local spiritual forces" (Ricklefs, 2007, pp. 5-7). The synthesis, which is a result of the long Islamization process in Java, allows Javanese to accept the outer identity of being Muslim, but still retain their pre-Islamic "inner spiritual conception" (Ricklefs, 2006, p. 224). However, as Ricklefs has noted, the mystic synthesis, which was achieved in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, rested on fragile compromises, and was therefore easily challenged in the modern circumstances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (2006, pp. 233-234).

pices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. All mystical groups were urged to register with this superintending institution. In 1960, the PAKEM was moved from the Ministry of Religion to the Justice Department, indicating a further deterioration of the position and status of the mystical movement. Under the auspices of the Justice Department, PAKEM tended to treat the movement as potentially subversive and immoral, instead of as a religious expression, as defined by the Ministry of Religion (Howell, 1982, pp. 532-533).

For the supporters of the movement, the argument for gaining independent status for *kebatinan* as a religion was the 1945 Constitution [UD 1945] part XI, article 29 which stated: (1) The nation is based on faith in monotheism [*Negara berdasar atas Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*]; (2) The nation guarantees each citizen the freedom to choose his/her own religion and to pray according to his/her own religion or faith [*Negara menjamin kemerdekaan tiap-tiap penduduk untuk memeluk agamanya masing-masing dan untuk beribadat menurut agamanya dan kepercayaannya itu*]. The notion of the terms ‘*kepercayaan*’ [faith] and ‘*agama*’ [religion] in the second paragraph provided legitimatization for proponents of the movement to accommodate the group in an organizational body supported by the government. It is worth noting here that the inclusion of the term *kepercayaan*, in the second paragraph of article 29, was an initiative of Wongsonegoro (1897-1978)<sup>14</sup> who objected to the first draft, which did not include it. In fact, as argued by Wongsonegoro, *kebatinan* was guaranteed by the state during the discussion session of the constitution (Stange, 1986, p. 88). Wongsonegoro was credited by Stange as “the father of the political mystical movement during the fifties” and “the leading national spokesperson for *kebatinan*”. In 1955 Wongsonegoro founded an umbrella organization of *kebatinan* groups, *Badan Konggres Kebatinan Indonesia* [BKKI—Congress Board of Indonesian Mysticism] which actively organized seminars and congresses of *kebatinan* activists to broadcast their views worldwide, thus making *kebatinan* the most popular name of the movement during the 1950s to 1960s (Stange, 1986, pp. 87-89).

Since 1970, *kebatinan* has gained more political support, with Golkar, the ruling party of the New Order era, sponsoring the establishment the BK5I [*Badan Konggres Kepercayaan Kejiwaan Kerohanian Kebatinan Indonesia*—the Congress Body for Indonesian Faith, Parapsychology, Spirituality, and Mysticism] as a working group of the movement. At the end of 1970, the BK5I transformed to become the SKK [*Sekretariat Kerjasama Kepercayaan*—the Secretariat of Faith Cooperation], and by 1979 the SKK changed its name to HPK [*Himpunan Penghayat Kepercayaan*—Association of Faith Practitioners] (Howell, 1982, pp. 833-834; Stange, 1986, pp. 90-91).

<sup>14</sup> Wongsonegoro was a member of the committee for the preparation for the Independence of Indonesia [BPUPKI—Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia], as a representative of Surakarta region. He was also the Minister for Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia from 1951 to 1952.

In 1973, as stated in the *Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara* [GBHN—Broad Outlines of State Policy], the New Order government finally explicitly recognized *kebatinan* as an independent and legitimate expression of faith under the terms of *Pancasila*, which was based on the Legislative Act of the *Ketetapan MPR RI No. IV/MPR/1973* (Stange, 1986, p. 90). However, five years later, after a long debate as to whether the groups should be recognized as religious or as cultural expressions, the *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* [Council for Consultative People, House of Assembly] through another Legislative Act, the *Ketetapan MPR No II/MPR/1978*, and reinforced by the *Ketetapan MPR No IV/MPR/1978*, classified *kebatinan* groups as merely part of *adat*, indigenous expression of Indonesian spiritual belief [*kepercayaan*] in the One High God [*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*], not as an independent religious expression.

The above Legislative Acts basically reinforced state policy whereby, since the 1970s, the Indonesian government officially classified the movement as ‘*Aliran Kepercayaan*’ [stream of belief], administrated by the *Directorat Pembinaan Penghayat Kepercayaan* [Directorate for Educating Mystical Practitioners] under the auspices of the Department of Education and Culture, instead of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Although this classification did not give *kebatinan* equal status with official religions, at least it had been granted, by the 1945 constitution, recognition as a legitimate expression of faith (Howell, 2004, p. 4).

In addition to the struggle for political recognition of *kebatinan*, efforts were made to gain, for *kebatinan* groups, equal recognition with the independent religious groups on the cultural level. Subagya (1976, pp. 130-131) reported that between 1952 and 1972 there were more than 30 *kebatinan* groups explicitly using the term ‘*agama*’ [religion] in their names, such as *Agama Adam Marifat*, *Agama Suci Akhir Jaman*, and *Agama Jawa Sunda*, reflecting that they actually considered themselves to be independent religions (Howell, 2004, p. 3).

In this regard, the relationship between the groups and the official religions was problematic. The relationship was occasionally made worse when some of the official religious groups became suspicious, and continually accused *kebatinan* groups of having insulted other religions (Subagya, 1981, pp. 269-270).<sup>15</sup> Muslim scholars such as Hamka (1971) and Rasjidi (1974) tended to see the *kebatinan* movement from historical and Islamic theological perspectives, regarding its development as having been caused by too weak an understanding of true Islam among Javanese people, leading

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<sup>15</sup> While some groups were eager to gain the independent and autonomous status of a recognized religious group, many senior *kebatinan* figures, as recorded by Subagya (1976), frequently asserted that *kebatinan* was neither a new religion nor in opposition to world religions. Despite Subagya denoting *kebatinan* as the regeneration of the Indonesian ‘*agama asli*’ [indigenous religion] (1981, p. 251), most *kebatinan* practitioners, especially after the New Order fully implemented the politics of official religions, asserted that world religions were not their enemies and declared themselves as merely cultural-mystical groups.

them to express a syncretized form of Islam. Simuh, who studied the Javanese mystical text of the *Suluk Hidayat Jati* of Ronggowarsito, regarded *kebatinan* groups as being directly or indirectly a ‘deviation’ from Islam [*gerakan sempalan bagi agama Islam*]. Simuh even asserted that the relationship between *kebatinan* groups and Islam was like that between “*anak nakal dengan ibunya*” [brats and their moms]. Sometimes the relationships were fraught, as in the story of *Siti Jenar*, *Serat Darmagandhul*, *Gatholoco*, or there was tension, such as in the *Wedhatama*, and sometimes the relationships were mutually understanding, as in the *Wulangreh*, *Wirid Hidayat Jati*, *Suluk Sukma Lelana*, *Serat Paramayoga*, and *Centhini* (1989, p. 24).<sup>16</sup>

This less sympathetic view of *kebatinan*, among Indonesian Muslim scholars, differs slightly from that of some Western scholars who studied the movement. Although some researchers, like Hadiwiyono (1967) and Stange (1986), saw *kebatinan* as a conveyor of sophisticated Hindu and Islamic Sufi metaphysics, integrated with images from the local spirit world, the essence of Islam is still dominant. After studying spiritual practices and tenets of the major *kebatinan* groups in Solo and Yogyakarta, Stange even noted that *kebatinan* is evidence of the successful integration of Islamization into Javanese spiritual life, saying: “When we approach Islam as a mode of discourse and inner orientation, rather than in strictly doctrinal and ritual terms, it becomes evident that the Islamization of Java has reached farther into the recesses of Javanese spiritual life than we would otherwise suspect” (Stange, 1986, p. 107).

During the New Order era, *kebatinan* had been a political asset to the regime. The huge number of *kebatinan* followers had motivated the ruling party of the New Order era, Golkar, to protect it. It seemed there was a mutual relationship between the movement and the party—the ruling party politically protected the movement, and the party, in turn, received support from the *kebatinan* members. It was recorded that Soeharto’s religiosity, mainly in his early presidency, was closer to *kebatinan* than to orthodox Islam (Ricklefs, 2001, p. 356). The government even sponsored weekly national television programs on *Aliran Kepercayaan* teaching, as it did for other world religions.

The fall of Soeharto in 1998, and the coming of the reformation era, cut the privileges enjoyed by *kebatinan* groups during the New Order era. The groups then seem to have been re-marginalized, lost their impetus and faced further challenges in their problematic position. Among governmental reforms during the reformation era, the Department of Education and Culture [*Depdikbud*] was first renamed the Department of National Education and then the Ministry of National Education. The removal of cultural duties from the Department and Ministry of National Education placed *kebatinan* under the administration of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted here, that although *kebatinan* was frequently thought of as a deviation from, or at least a heterodox practice of, Islam, it did not mean that the *kebatinan*’s theology was less sophisticated.

[*Kementerian Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan*], and marked a further ‘put down’ of *kebatinan*, trivializing the group as just an old fashioned curiosity.

Although *kebatinan* groups have lost their ‘political patron’, especially after the fall of Soeharto, criticism of the groups continues. For example, Artawijaya (2010) regarded the movement as not purely Indonesian home-grown spirituality, but as linked to the development of the Theosophy movement in early twentieth century Indonesia. Many Indonesian figures, mainly Javanese aristocrats [*priyayi*], had been involved in the movement.<sup>17</sup> Applying a conspiracy theory, Artawijaya further notes that the Theosophy movement was in fact part of a Jewish project to devastate Islam in Indonesia. Comparing the *kebatinan* teachings and the Theosophy doctrines, he underlines their mutual relationship.<sup>18</sup> He also notes that *kebatinan* groups grew massively in cities where Theosophy was developed (Artawijaya, 2010, pp. 236-265).

The conspiracy point of view, however, tends to overgeneralize, drawing a conclusion based on thin evidence. For example, Annie Besant, the Theosophy leader who visited Java in the colonial era of the early 1900s, was a member of Co-Freemasonry,<sup>19</sup> a form of Freemasonry that admits both male and female members. Because there is a common view among Indonesian people that Freemasonry is supported by Jews, everything related to Theosophy is considered as part of a Jewish project in Indonesia. Furthermore, portraying the involvement of some royal courts of Javanese *priyayi* in the Theosophy society as an indication that the *kebatinan* movement was a Jewish project is simplistic. In fact, the founders of four nationally prominent *kebatinan* groups studied by Stange—the *Pangetu*, *Sapta Dharma*, *Subud* and *Sumarah*—were “commoner people whose social origins were the lower states of the *priyayi* with a distant connection with the royal court” (Stange, 1986, p. 101) and had no record of interaction with the Theosophy movement in their spiritual quests.

Although government policy on religion has restricted the development of the spiritual tradition of the *kebatinan* movement, especially since the reformation era,

<sup>17</sup> Researchers on the Theosophy movement in Indonesia reported that Javanese *priyayi* were among *Bumi Putera* who were enthusiastically involved in the group. Tollenaere noted, “Indonesian FTS [Fellow of Theosophical Society] mainly came from Javanese princely families and others from the *priyayi* classes”. He listed Javanese aristocratic figures like Raden Mas Aryo Wuryaningrat of Surakarta, Raden Mas T. Sarwoko Mangunkoesoemo (the *patih* [prime minister] of Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII), Pakoe Boewono XI, and Paku Alam VII of Pakualaman Duke Yogyakarta. See Herman A. O. de Tollenaere (1996), *The Politics of Divine Wisdom: Theosophy and labour, national, and women’s movements in Indonesia and South Asia 1875-1947*, pp. 115–117. See also Iskandar P. Nugraha (2001), *Mengikis Batas Timur dan Barat: Gerakan Theosofi & Nasionalisme Indonesia*, p. 49–51.

<sup>18</sup> The notion about the influence of Theosophy Movement and Freemasonry on *kebatinan* has been also considered by scholars such as Bruinessen (2007, p. 97), but he does not regard it as proof of a Jewish project in the country.

<sup>19</sup> The biography of Annie Besant notes that in 1902, Annie introduced International Co-Freemasonry into England before she was elected as president of the Theosophical Society in 1907 (Grand Lodge of British and Yukon, 2002).

thirst for spirituality continues to increase among urban people. In the last two decades, with the ease of global communication and transportation, the new middle class Indonesians have started to search for their spiritual channel in the global spiritual market place. A number of promotions of spirituality have developed in urban Indonesia by various paths, ranging from executive Sufi study groups (KKA Paramadina, ICNIS, IIMaN, Tazkiyah Sejati), popular televangelism promoting Sufi elements (Aa Gym and Arifin Ilham), and *majlis dhikr* groups, to leadership training centres exposing spiritual intelligences [*kecerdasan spiritual*] (ESQ of Ary Ginanjar) (see Hoesterey, 2009; Howell, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007a; Rudnycky, 2009a; Zamhari, 2010). These provide a new spirituality associated with Sufism, known as Urban Sufism or *Sufi Perkotaan*. There are also groups promoting a spirituality which resembles that of global spiritual groups operating in Indonesia, such as *Falun Gong*, *Reiki*, and *Brahma Kumaris*. Other groups represent home-grown eclectic spirituality, such as Anand Krishna's *Anand Ashram* and One Earth One Sky of Gede Prama.<sup>20</sup>

This new spiritual group, the *kebatinan*, that began to emerge in the 1990s within official religions, mainly Islam, mostly focuses on spiritual expression as part of piety-promotion projects, by exploring Sufism teachings at a practical level. In this context, Sufi teachings are combined with self-management and humanistic psychology as a self-improvement and employee development program. The exploration of Sufi teaching on television programs since 2000, such as Aa Gym's *Indahnya Kebersamaan* [the beauty of togetherness] and *Manajemen Qolbu* [management of the heart], the *Zikir Akbar* [the Great Dzikr] of Arifin Ilham (Howell, 2010a, p. 52), and Yusuf Mansur's *Wisata Hati* [tour of the heart], has led to the subtle commercialization of Islamic spirituality. In such popular Sufi television shows, the preachers were paid through their contracts with the television studios, which, in turn, gained financial benefit from the sponsors of the programs. The preachers also engaged in exclusive cross selling of their products, such as CDs, books, and private training seminars.

The explorations of Sufi teachings become overtly commercialized when they are converted into programs for self-development. Aa Gym has developed one of the most popular of these. He created 'spiritual' management training courses, known as MQ or *Manajemen Qalbu* [Management of the Heart] (Hoesterey, 2008, 2009; Howell, 2008; Nur'aeni, 2007), following his project of *bengkel akhlaq* [workshop on morality] in his *pesantren* (Solahudin, 2008). Hoesterey notes that the "*Manajemen Qalbu* was a psycho-religious self-improvement program to help Indonesian Muslims implement Islamic

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<sup>20</sup> In urban Indonesia there are three types of contemporary spiritual providers, as classified by Howell (2004): (1) *international organisations operating in Indonesia*, such as *Brahma Kumaris*, *The Art of Living*, *Falun Gong* and *Reiki*; (2) *home-grown eclectic groups* like Anand Krishna's *Anand Ashram* and One Earth One Sky of Gede Prama; (3) *universalist Sufi groups*, such as *Yayasan/Padepokan Thoha* of K. H. Rahmat Hidayat, *Pusaka Hati's Kabir Sufism* and *Bishara*.

teaching in order to achieve worldly riches and heavenly salvation” (Hoesterey, 2009, pp. 263-264). Another notable figure is Ary Ginanjar Agustian, who developed a program called the ESQ [Emotional Spiritual Quotient] Way 165. Since 2000, Ginanjar has introduced the ESQ training program, following his best-selling book on this subject. The ESQ is claimed to be an integrated and sustainable method of spiritual engineering for nurturing strength of character that will increase human productivity and help people achieve meaningful lives (ESQ LC, 2011). Rudnycky describes the spiritual program of the ESQ Way 165 as “Spiritual Economies” (2009b)—a bridge, for upper middle class Indonesians, between Islamic ethics and neo-liberal economies. The ESQ, Rudnycky further argues, has led to the development of one kind of “Market Islam” in Indonesia (2009a).

According to Howell, the growth of new spiritual expression in contemporary Indonesia is in parallel with Western spirituality, and she notes that new middle class Indonesian Muslims are Western spiritual consumers (Howell, 2006, pp. 19-33; 2007b). To support her argument, Howell explores a term she calls the “new spirituality”, referring to a “form of ‘inward’ religiosity” or inner dimension religion

(1) that prioritises subjective perception of the sacred, (2) that arises in the society that has been drawn into industrial and post industrial patterns of social changes, and (3) that are discontinuous with the syncretised and magical underlay beneath rationalised, universalistic religions in those societies”. (Howell, 2006, p. 1)

Another newly emergent type of spiritual group in contemporary Indonesia comprises ‘businesses’ that sell spiritual efficacy, not just through training programs but also through material objects promoted as being spiritually powerful. Unlike the spiritual piety groups that aim for the achievement of worldly success and material benefits by character building through nurturing piety (as in the spiritual programs of Aa Gym, Arifin Ilham, and the ESQ of Ary Ginanjar), the spiritual efficacy groups tend to promote ‘practical’ spiritual efficacy. In their commodification of spiritual efficacy, these groups develop and package practical programs and material products which, to some extents, are framed as ‘instantly’ efficacious in helping ordinary people to grasp the fruits of modernity, regardless of character or spiritual purity. The spiritual efficacy thus promoted, such as prosperity, health, and worldly success, interestingly, can be achieved not only by participating in the groups’ spiritual programs but also by consuming or using their spiritual objects. Such ‘instant’ efficacy marks the groups as different from, for example, *Reiki* and *Falun Gong*, which offer better health through a long process of gentle spiritual exercises and meditation.

The spiritual efficacy groups are similar to piety groups in terms of borrowing and combining spiritual techniques from both local and global origins. But, instead of just targeting the global spiritual markets arising as a consequence of modernization and globalization, the spiritual efficacy groups prefer to promote their local spiritual legacies with the aim of finding a niche in the international spiritual marketplace for

themselves. Further, while the piety groups, such as exponents of ‘urban Sufism’, are highly concerned with purity and avoid any heterodox Islamic traditions, the spiritual efficacy groups tend to explore the heterodox and even practices associated with occultism, and then frame them with contemporary spiritual notions and scientific justification.

## 2.2. Occult-Spiritual Practices and Their Problematic Relationship with Islam

The Javanese historian Sartono Kartodirjo records that occultism was a part of religious movements in the colonial era. In his description of nineteenth and twentieth century Indonesian religious movements, Kartodirjo noted:

In all their varied forms, religious movements have been characterized by a deep-rooted belief in magico-mysticism (*ngelmu*). What people generally are craving for is the quality of invulnerability. They are spurred on to participate in the revolt with promise of invulnerability, or of immunity from the bullets of Dutch military forces. The belief in invulnerability has often been so strong that people abandoned all precautionary measures in confronting military forces; a tragic battle usually ensued which ended with a mass slaughter. In addition, it should be pointed out that there is a popular belief in the immortality of some particular leaders, regarded as saints. In short, faith in invulnerability intensified the aggressive potency of the population. (1976, p. 95)

The ‘magico-mysticism’ Kartodirjo described in the movements closely fits the definition of ‘occultism’ in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, given as “various theories and practices involving a belief in and knowledge or use of supernatural forces or beings...” and further, “...practices centre on the presumed ability of the practitioner to manipulate natural laws for his own or his client’s benefit” (Gilbert, 2011).<sup>21</sup>

During the colonial era, the Dutch government frequently asked the Dutch advisor on Indonesian Islam, Christian Snouck Hurgronje, how to deal with the practitioners of occultism (*sihir*, *jimat*, *ramalan*, [witchcraft, amulets, fortune telling] etc.)

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<sup>21</sup> According to the *Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology* (Jensen & Leopold), the word “occult”, from Latin meaning “to shut off from view or exposure”, currently refers to realities specifically hidden from common sight but that can be seen by an inner “spiritual” vision and/or grasped by psychic intuition. The occult is the opposite of “apocalypse,” which means “to uncover”. In this regard, many religious people, especially from the Christian tradition, tend to note the term “occult” in association with “the realm of Satan and his legion and demons” as an opposition to “what God has revealed”. Currently, the “occult” entails not only “techniques and practices originally designed and created to contact the extrasensory realm”, such as in magic and divination, but also various forms of meditation [whether it is associated with religion or not], and a legion of mysterious phenomena. The term “occultism”, which currently also called “paranormal”, encompasses “a wide spectrum of experience—from clairvoyance and telepathy to vision and dream, from ghost sighting to the pronouncement of mediums and channelers”. The usage of the term “occultism” in the *EOP*, however, refers to: “(1) the broad area of human experience (now called extrasensory perception, or ESP) that goes beyond the five senses; (2) the philosophical conclusions

who for sometime had been causing social unrest. (It seems that the colonial government was overwhelmed by such occult practices.) The compilation of Hurgonje's advice to the Dutch Colonial Government during his duties from 1889 to 1936 includes a chapter on *Mistik, Sihir, dan Tarekat* [mystical, magical, and Sufi order] and a chapter on *Jimat* [talisman]. To some extent, the chapters explore the dynamics of occult practices in pre-independent Indonesia, reflecting social, cultural, and even political expressions (Gobe & Andrianse, 1992, pp. 1263-1320).

Dutch archives also record the practices of amulet selling, the teaching and learning of invulnerability, and the use of magic for healing, as part of religious movements in the first three decades of the twentieth century. In his letter to the Governor General, on January 14, 1907, the Resident of Priyangan reported a riot in Karang Tengah, Sukabumi, led by Bapa Rahmah who was claiming to be "the King of Harbour" and teaching invulnerability to his students. In 1919, officers of the local government in Southern Semarang and Surakarta reported a messianic movement led by Gusti Muhammad Herucokro, known as a traditional healer and mystical teacher in Ungaran, Semarang. People came to him for medicine and amulets. On March 13, 1923 the Assistant Resident of Berbek wrote a letter to the Resident of Kediri about a man named Kyai Bulkim, who claimed to be *Ratu Adil* (Just King), and was selling amulets to the public (Kartodirjo, 1981, pp. 181-183).

During the era of struggle for independence, immunity from the bullets of the Dutch military was a concept popular with the Indonesian army, as depicted in Indonesian patriotic movies. Shouting "*Allâhu Akbar..!*" Indonesian guerrilla forces bravely attacked Dutch army posts that had more modern combat equipment. A good example of this scene is in the movie *Janur Kuning* [yellow young coconut leaf], a film produced in 1979 by Alam Rengga Surawijaya, describing Indonesia's struggle to regain independence from the Dutch allies. Historical archives also record the use of *dhikr* and *tasawuf* gathering as a tool for protest against the Dutch Colonial administrators. For example, in Banjarmasin South Kalimantan, a number of protests were reported (such as the Muning movement and Barotib Bamaal movement (1861) in Hulu Sungai Tengah and Hulu Sungai Utara regencies, Amuk Hantarkung (1899) near Kandangan Hulu Sungai Selatan regency, and the Hariyang revolt (1937) in Tabalong), where participants practised *dhikr* before the class or shouted "*Allâhu Akbar*" during the war. *Dhikr* was an effective method of motivating people to go to war (Usman, 1985).

In Surabaya there was a mobilization of *Jagoan Kampong* [village heroes] who possessed extraordinary powers, such as invulnerability, and mastered traditional

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drawn from consideration of such experiences; and (3) the social structures created by people who have had extrasensory experiences, who attempt to produce and cultivate them, and who believe in their vital significance for human life" (see Melton, 2001, pp. vii-viii). In spite of the broad coverage of the word in the EOP, I restrict my use of 'occultism', in my thesis, to its meaning as described in the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

martial arts and the use of amulets, charms and many others magical formulae in order to become members of BPRI [*Barisan Pemberontakan Republik Indonesia*—Insurgent Corp of the Republic of Indonesia]. Bung Tomo, leader of the Corp, was always shouting *Allâhu akbar...! Allâhu akbar...!* in his opening broadcast, to encourage the spirit of the people of Surabaya (Anderson, 1972, pp. 156-157).

There is a common perception, among ordinary Muslims, that the Indonesian religious leaders who first spread Islam in the archipelago, such as the *Wali Songo* [the nine Muslim Saints considered the earliest Islamic preachers in Java], were extraordinary figures who had supernatural powers [*kesaktian* (Jv. *Kasekten*)].<sup>22</sup> Sunan Kalijaga, for example, was described as someone who could change gold to stone. Purwadi narrated from the *Babad Cirebon* [the chronicle of Cirebon] that Sunan Kalijaga once settled in Cirebon, or, more precisely, in Kalijaga village, about two and a half kilometres south of the city of Cirebon. Once upon time, when Sunan Kalijaga masqueraded as a cleaner at the Kasepuhan Palace Mosque, he met Sunan Gunung Jati. It was reported that Sunan Gunungjati deliberately tested Sunan Kalijaga with a hunk of gold, which is placed near the *padasan*, a place for taking *wudhu* [ablutions, Ar. *wuḍu*]. Recognizing that he was being tested, Sunan Kalijaga then changed the gold into a brick, and used it as a pedestal of wooden sandals for people who wanted to take *wuḍu*. Sunan Gunung Jati was amazed at the *kesaktian* of Sunan Kalijaga, and bestowed his sister, Siti Zainab, on Sunan Kalijaga in marriage (Purwadi et al., 2006, p. 148).

To those who believe in *kasekten*, it is logical that people who already have a close connection to God should have supernatural power that could be manifest in daily life. Due to their piety and submission, God would send down upon them His *karomah*,<sup>23</sup> to help them spread Islamic teachings. The *karomah* was used as a tool for fighting against crime and other bad behaviour. Such a notion is repeatedly described in popular religious movies or television series depicting the extraordinary character of a *kyai* or an *ustadh* [religious leaders of a Muslim community, considered as the guardians and preachers of Islamic teachings] who are able to do miraculous things such as curing diseases with water and *dhikr*,<sup>24</sup> causing rain in the middle of the dry season, and defeating criminals.

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<sup>22</sup> Historically, there was an amalgam of Sufi traditions with practices of the magical and supernatural. As noted by Bruinessen, “Sufi ideas... were easily assimilated to pre-existing systems of classification and magical control of the word. Sufi exercises—recitation, breathing techniques, methods of meditation and contemplation—were added to an already vast repertoire of techniques for acquiring spiritual power, martial power and invulnerability” (Bruinessen, 2007, p. 94).

<sup>23</sup> *Karomah* is a concept of supernatural power possessed by pious Muslims due to their obedience to God. The concept is equivalent to the *muʿjizat* [miracle], which is reserved for God’s messenger [*nabi* and *rasul*].

<sup>24</sup> *Zikir* (Ar. *dhikr*) is “repetition of the names of Allah and certain religious formulae as means of demonstrating piety or, in the case of mystics, also to induce a mystical trance” (Federspiel, 1995, p. 295).

This popular reasoning—that the more pious religious leaders are, the more extraordinary power they will have—is rooted in the tenet that the prophets have *mukjizat* [miracle], the saints [*wali*] and other pious figures may have *karomah*. Such reasoning continues to prevail in contemporary society, supported by a number of institutions, ranging from the practices of individual *dukun* [shaman, local healer], *kyai*, and *ustadh* to those of magico-spiritual groups.

Of course, the exploration of supernatural power and ‘magical control of the world’, under the umbrella of Islamic spirituality, is not new. Historically, there was an amalgam between Sufi traditions, with their magical worldviews, and the practices of supernatural power. As noted by Bruinessen, “Sufi ideas... were easily assimilated to pre-existing systems of classification and magical control of the word. Sufi exercises—recitation, breathing techniques, methods of meditation and contemplation—were added to an already vast repertoire of techniques for acquiring spiritual power, martial power and invulnerability” (Bruinessen, 2007, p. 94). Anthropological research by Douglas S. Farrer also underlines the continuing practice of blending Sufi Mysticism and Martial Arts, giving rise to what he calls *occulturation* which is “[t]he attribution of sacred or mystical power to secret esoteric skills” (Farrer, 2009, p. 249).

### 2.3. The Changing Meaning of *Spiritual* and *Spiritualitas* in Contemporary Indonesia

The words *Spiritualitas*, an Indonesian term derived from the English noun ‘spirituality’, and ‘*spiritual*’ from the English adjective ‘spiritual’, are now commonly used in Indonesian. The terms appear more and more frequently, in Indonesian literature, in newspapers, magazines, periodicals, and books.

According to the *Kamus Bahasa Indonesia* [The Dictionary of Bahasa Indonesia] (2008, p. 1373), ‘spiritual’ means “*berhubungan dng atau bersifat kejiwaan (rohani, batin)*” [something associated with the psychiatric (spiritual, mental or ‘inner’ life)]. The dictionary also lists two nouns related to ‘spiritual’, namely ‘*spiritualisasi*’ and ‘*spiritualisme*’. The first refers to a formation of the soul and inspiration (*pembentukan jiwa* and *penjiwaan*), whereas the latter denotes: (1) a school of philosophy that prioritizes spirituality (*aliran filsafat yang mengutamakan kerohanian*), (2) a belief system for summoning the spirits of people who have died (*kepercayaan untuk memanggil roh orang yang sudah meninggal*), and (3) *spiritisme* that, according to the dictionary, means: (1) worship of spirits, (2) a belief that spirits can communicate with living humans, and (3) teaching on ways to summon spirits (“1 *pemujaan kpd roh*; 2 *kepercayaan bahwa roh dapat berhubungan dng manusia yg masih hidup*; 3 *ajaran dan cara-cara memanggil roh*”).

None of the above meanings of the word ‘*spiritual*’ nor of the other three related words, ‘*spiritualisasi*’, ‘*spiritualisme*’, and ‘*spiritisme*’, are explicitly associated with religious teachings in terms of the traditions of world religions, or of official religions in

the Indonesian context. Most of the meanings refer to belief systems and practices that are anthropologically associated with animism, whose practices tend to be condemned by world religions, especially by the puritan groups. The meaning of ‘*spiritual*’ in the Bahasa Indonesia Dictionary is a little bit different from the meaning given in Webster’s English Dictionary. The latter defines ‘spiritual’ more broadly, ranging from meanings concerned with religion (mainly the Christian tradition) to soul, to phantom.<sup>25</sup> Webster also defines ‘spirituality’ in a broader context that includes something [i.e. property, income, body] related to church: “things of the spirit, the quality of being spiritual belonging to the church, an ecclesiastic person, or religion, or a whole ecclesiastical body”.<sup>26</sup> The *Kamus Bahasa Indonesia* does not cover any meaning of ‘*spiritualitas*’, although the word is now in common public use.

The increasing availability of literatures on Sufism and spirituality in Indonesia, even those are connected to international publications, has been detected since the 1970s (Howell, 2001). Among Indonesian publications, Osman Raliby’s work, *Islam dan Kehidupan: Mental, Spiritual, Material* [Islam and Life: Mental, Spiritual, Material](1975), is considered the earliest Indonesian book using the term ‘*spiritual*’ in its title, while the first magazine [*majalah*] explicitly declared as a spiritual periodical was *Mawas Diri* [literally meaning ‘introspective’], first published in 1972. The magazine was initiated and led by S. K. Trimurti, a journalist and national liberation fighter for pre-Independent Indonesia, and one of the *kebatinan* proponents during the New Order era (Ilyas, 2010). Beneath the title of the *Mawas Diri*, there was a note in the old version of *bahasa Indonesia* saying: “[M]ajalah bulanan jang bersifat mental spiritual, mengarah kepada sila Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa. Berisi: masalah dan analisa kedjiwaan, dipandang dari sudut: ilmiah, filsafat, pschologi, keagamaan dan aliran-aliran kepertjajaan [A spiritual monthly magazine in accordance with belief in monotheistic principles, that covers issues and analyses of spirituality as seen from perspectives of science, philosophy, psychology, religion and Javanese mysticism]. Due to the high cost of production, and competition within the publication industry, the magazine ceased publication in 1999.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the word ‘*spiritual*’ was commonly used by government publications, mainly of the Department of Education and Culture

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<sup>25</sup> The meanings of ‘spiritual’ in Webster’s Online Dictionary are, among others: “concerned with sacred matters or religion or the church; concerned with or affecting the spirit or soul; lacking material body or form or substance; resembling or characteristic of a phantom” (Webster’s Online Dictionary).

<sup>26</sup> The meanings of ‘spirituality’ according to Webster’s Online Dictionary are: “1. Property or income owned by a church; 2. Concern with things of the spirit; 3. The quality or state of being spiritual; incorporeality; heavenly-mindedness; 4. That which belongs to the church, or to a person as an ecclesiastic, or to religion, as distinct from temporalities; 5. An ecclesiastical body; the whole body of the clergy, as distinct from, or opposed to, the temporality” (Webster’s Online Dictionary).

[Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan], in documentation of, or research reports on, the *Kebatinan/Aliran Kepercayaan* movement. Examples of such publications are: *Pembinaan Organisasi dan Pelestarian Budaya Spiritual* [fostering of organizations and preservation of spiritual culture] (1985), *Pengkajian Nilai-nilai Luhur Budaya Spiritual Bangsa Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta* [assessment of the noble values of spiritual culture of the people of the special region of Yogyakarta] (1990), *Naskah Pemaparan Budaya Spiritual Yayasan Sosrokartono* [manuscript of spiritual culture of the Sosrokartono foundation] (1991), *Budaya Spiritual dalam Situs Keramat di Gunung Kawi, Jawa Timur* [spiritual culture of sacred sites in Gunung Kawi, East Java] (1994).<sup>27</sup>

It is interesting to note here that the usage of the term '*budaya spiritual*', in government publications, referring to *Aliran Kepercayaan/Kebatinan* belief and practice, highlighted and underlined the perception that such traditions were not religious. These terms, therefore, illustrate that the *Aliran Kepercayaan* was not a religious tradition, just a cultural expression. Thus, the government used the word '*spiritual*' as a contrast to 'religion', denoting that spiritual tradition was outside the domain of world religions.

Nevertheless, after early 1994, in addition to those published by the Indonesian government, some Indonesian books began to use '*spiritual*' in their titles. The word was used by Indonesian writers in its broader meaning, not only to refer to the spiritual culture of the *Aliran Kepercayaan* belief and practice, but also to world religious traditions, as in: *Spiritualitas, Pluralitas dan Pembangunan di Indonesia* [Spirituality, Plurality and Development in Indonesia] by Victor I. Tanja (1994), *Teologi dan Spiritualitas* [Theology and Spirituality] by Tom Jacobs (1994), *Dialog dengan Jin Muslim: Pengalaman Spiritual* [Dialogue with a Muslim Genie: A Spiritual Experience] by Muhammad Isa Dawud (1995), *Gerak-gerak Allah: Sejumput Hikmah Spiritual* [The Movement of God: A Pinch of the Wisdom of Spirituality] by Danarto (1996), *Al Qur'an: Mu'jizat, Karomat, Maunat dan Hukum Evolusi Spiritual* [Al Qur'an: Miracle, Karomah, Ma'unah and the Evolutionary Law of Spirituality] by Ace Partadiredja (1997), and *Kutemukan Tuhan di Balik Penyakit Gagal Ginjal: Otobiografi Spiritual Handjojo Nitimihardjo* [I Found God Behind my Kidney: Spiritual Autobiography of Handjojo Nimitihardjo] by Handjojo Nitimihardjo (1998). Other books used the word '*spiritual*' in the context of occult practices, such as *Penipuan Berkedok Spiritual: Waspada! Trik dan Sihir* [The Fraud of Impersonated Spirituality: Beware of Trick and Magic] by Teguh Prana Jaya (1999), and *Sukses Profesi Spiritual: Etika Konsultasi yang Berwibawa* [Success of the Spiritual Profession: The Ethic of Charismatic Consultation], by Masruri (1999).

<sup>27</sup> There were Islamic and social studies books published in the late 1980s using the word '*Spiritualitas*' as a title, but most of them are translated books, such as *Spiritualitas Islam: Ensiklopedia Tematis* by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1985), *Spiritualitas dan Seni Islam* by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1987); and *Visi-visi Postmodern: Spiritualitas dan Masyarakat* by David Ray Griffin (1988).

Since 2000, the words ‘*spiritual*’ and ‘*spiritualitas*’ have been used with more extensive meanings. Numerous Indonesian publications, in various genres ranging from the scientific, to manuals, novels and biographies, use the terms in their titles. The KITLV library in Leiden, The Netherlands, considered as holding one of the most complete collections on Indonesian history, records more than one hundred titles of Indonesian books explicitly using the word ‘*spiritual*’. Most of them are by Indonesian writers, but with the advance of information technology, allowing people easy access to the global spiritual market, many are translations or adaptations of Western New Age and similar spiritual publications.

The current trend of Indonesian spiritual publications can therefore be classified in four categories. First, books that expound applied spirituality, exploring spirituality for this-worldly prosperity. This includes ‘how to’ or self-help spiritual development, which is described along the lines of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). Examples of such publications are: *The Power of Spiritual Intelligence: Sepuluh Cara Jadi Orang yang Cerdas Secara Spiritual* [The Power of Spiritual Intelligence: Ten Ways of Being Spiritually Intelligent People] by Tony Buzan (2003), *There is a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem* by Wayne W. Dyer (2005), *Spirituality in Business: Pencerahan Hati Bagi Pelaku Usaha* [Heart Enlightenment for the Business Person] by Muhammad Abdul Ghani (2005), *Spiritual Capital: Memberdayakan SQ di Dunia Bisnis*, by Danah Zohar and Ian Marshal (2005), *Spirituality@Work: 10 Cara Menyeimbangkan Hidup Anda di Tempat Kerja* [10 Ways for Balancing Your Life in the Work Place] by Gregory F.A. Pierce (2006), *Spiritual Based Management: Memimpin dan Bekerja Berbasis Spiritual* [Leading and Working Based on Spirituality] by Lukman Hakim and Wikayanto (2007), *Spiritual Thinking: Sukses dengan Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) dan Tasawuf* [Success with Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Sufism] by Priatno H. Martokoesoema (2007), *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne (2008), *Membangun Kecerdasan Finansial dengan Nilai-Nilai Spiritualitas* [Developing Financial Intelligence with Spiritual Values] by Eko Pratomo (2008).

Second, spiritual publications that explore Islamic teaching on a practical level, concerning the psychologization of religion and self-management, as well as contextualization of religious doctrine, such as: *Rahasia Sukses Membangun Kecerdasan Emosi dan Spiritual ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Quotient): Berdasarkan 6 Rukun Iman dan 5 Rukun Islam* by Ary Ginanjar Agustian (2001)<sup>28</sup>, *Jelajah Diri: Panduan Psikologi Spiritual Membangun Kepribadian* [Exploring the Self: A Guide to Spiritual Psychology for Self Development] by Syaikh Fadhalla Haeri (2004), *Ramadhan dan Pencerahan Spiritual* [Ramadhan and Spiritual Enlightenment] by Muhammad (2005), *Online dengan Allah: 24 Jam Membangkitkan Kembali Spiritualitas Anda* [Online with Allah: 24

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<sup>28</sup> In 2005, Ginanjar released his English version of the book entitled *The Islamic guide to developing ESQ emotional spiritual quotient: applying the ESQ way 165: 1 value, 6 principles and 5 actions*.

Hours Reviving your Spirituality] by Teguh Purwadi (2007), *Mukjizat Shalat Malam: Meraih Spiritualitas Rasulullah* [The Miracle of Night Praying: Grasping the Spirituality of God's Messenger] by Sallamah Muhammad Abu Al-Kamal (2009),<sup>29</sup> and *Spiritual Quantum Smile: Raih Sukses Dunia Akhirat dengan Senyum Dahsyat Memikat* [Achieving This- Worldly and Hereafter Success with a Powerful and Attractive Smile] by Puji Hartono and Pranowo (2010).

Third, Religious-Spiritual Studies like *SQ, Memanfaatkan Kecerdasan Spiritual dalam Berfikir Integralistik dan Holistik untuk Memaknai Kehidupan*<sup>30</sup> by Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall (2001), *Pendidikan Spiritual dalam Tradisi Keislaman* [Spiritual Education in Islamic Tradition] by Abudin Nata (2003), *Gerakan Spiritual Syekh Siti Jenar* [Spiritual Movement of Syekh Siti Jenar] by Purwadi (2004), *Sains & Spiritualitas—Dari Nalar Fisika Hingga Bahasa Para Dewa* [Science and Spirituality—from the Logic of Physics to the Language of Gods] by Roy Budi Efferin (2006), *Spiritualitas Tanpa Tuhan* [Spirituality without God] by Andre Compte-Spoville (2007), and *Perlindungan Lingkungan: Sebuah Perspektif dan Spiritualitas Islam* [Environmental Protection: A Perspective on Islamic Spirituality] by Sunardi (2008).



Figure 2.1.

Samples of Indonesian Spiritual Books

<sup>29</sup> This is a translation from an Arabic book entitled *Qiyam Al-Lail wa Munajat 'inda Al-Sahr*. The original title of the book does not use any Arabic word meaning 'spiritual', but in its translation into Indonesian, 'Spiritualitas' was added as part of its subtitle.

<sup>30</sup> The book is a translation work from Zohar's and Marshall's *SQ, Spiritual Intelligent, the Ultimate Intelligent*, which was first published in 2000. The Indonesian edition of the book is widely appreciated by the public in Indonesia. Almost all local writers on spirituality after 2001 used this book as their reference.

In addition to books in the above three categories, there are numerous publications of memoirs, biographies, and novels which include the word ‘*spiritual*’ as part of the title or subtitle. This can be seen, for example, in *A Journey to Islam: Pengembaraan Spiritual Seorang Muslimah Australia* [Spiritual Journey of Australian Muslim Women] by Shifa Mustapha (2004), *Catatan Spiritual di Balik Sosok Sobron Aidit* [Spiritual Notes behind the Figure of Sobron Aidit] by Sobron Aidit (2005), *Kyai Multitalenta: Sebuah Oase Spiritual KH Tholhah Hasan* [Multi-talented Kyai: A Spiritual Oasis of K. H. Tholhah Hasan] by Nasaruddin Umar (2006), and *Kasidah-kasidah Cinta: Novel Spiritual Keajaiban Cinta* [The Songs of Love: a Spiritual Novel of the Miracle of Love] by Muhammad Muhyidin (2007).

Some of the above publications are translations, either from the English books (such as those written by Tony Buzan, Donah Zohar and Ian Marshal, Wayne W. Dyer, Rondha Byrne, and Andre Compte-Spoville), or from Arabic (like the works of Sallamah Muhammad Abu Al-Kamal and Syaikh Fadhalla Haeri). Interestingly, in the last two decades, there have been more English than Arabic publications on spirituality translated to *bahasa Indonesia*. This fact underlines, as Hoesterey (2009) and Widodo (2008) have indicated, the increased acceptance, by middle class Indonesians, of Western literature on spirituality, New Age, popular psychology, self-help and ‘chicken soup for the soul’.

Some of the above publications deliberately put English words in their titles (such as ‘*Spiritual Management*’, ‘*Spiritual Intelligent*’, ‘*Spirituality@Work*’, ‘*Spiritual Side of Golf*’), although their contents are in Bahasa Indonesian. This ploy shows that the writers and the publishers want to attract more customers from the upper middle urban class, and shows that spirituality is in fashion for modern people.

It is also worth noting here the way current Indonesian publications ‘Islamize’ Western personal development books, or at least link them to religious considerations. Western spiritual publications rarely use the word God explicitly. For example, *The Secret*, by Rhonda Byrne (which is among international spiritual mind-management books which have sold well in Indonesia), uses the word ‘Universe’, with a capital U, instead of ‘God’, in explaining the Law of Attraction. When the book was cited in Indonesian publications, or used by personal development trainers in their spiritually oriented seminars and training programs, their translations changed the word ‘Universe’ [*Semesta*] to ‘God’ [*Tuhan*]. This is interesting, since in the West, Christian writers criticize the books as being a danger to religion because they tend to encourage an atheistic point of view. People are directed by the book to rely on the power of mind instead of the power of God, in order to achieve success.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, the book is appreciated in Indonesia as ‘Islamic’ and ‘religious’. This is a clear example of the eclectic

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<sup>31</sup> Such a criticism is levelled, for example, by James Walker and Bob Waldrep (2007), two apologetics experts who wrote a book entitled *The Truth behind the Secret*, as their response to the success of Rhonda Byrne’s *The Secret*.

character of current Indonesian spiritual movements. The increased usage of ‘*spiritualitas*’ and ‘*spiritual*’ among Islamic publications in Indonesia indicates that Muslim scholars, as well as Muslim readers, are no longer averse to the words, even though they were not originally Arabic terms.

In contemporary daily usage, the words ‘*spiritual*’ and ‘*spiritualitas*’ may have various meanings, depending on their context and who is using them. In addition to referring to eclectic homegrown mystical traditions, inner dimensions of religion, and the psychological state of the human spirit, they may denote occult practices. ‘*Spiritualis*’ [literally meaning ‘person who masters spiritual techniques’]<sup>32</sup> is used in terms of a person who has supernatural power, the paranormal. The *Posmo* tabloid, which is considered as a spiritual and paranormal tabloid, launched a yearly program called the ‘Posmo Award’ which is dedicated to the appreciation of *spiritualis*, paranormal and alternative healers, who have contributed much to its development and continuation. In 2005, the tabloid published a book entitled *Profil Spiritualis Penerima Posmo Award 2005* [Profiles of Spiritualists, Recipients of the 2005 *Posmo* Award]. An examination of the list of the awardees shows that many of them are people who are considered masters of occultism, and are known as paranormals, magicians, and shamans (*dukun*).

There is also a group that employs the word ‘spiritual’ in contrast to ‘religious’. In this group, organized religions are criticized. Because public criticism of religions would be socially and politically problematic and could potentially draw an accusation of religious blasphemy, such groups mostly operate via the internet. An example of the group is the mailing list discussion forum of *Spiritualitas Indonesia*. In this group, religions are not only criticized but also derided. Since anyone can post his/her view on the internet without restraint, we can find there, the opinions of various kinds of people, ranging from religious, to secular, agnostic and atheist.

Among growth training centres that promote Spiritual Intelligent, ‘spiritual’ and ‘spirituality’ refer to the experiential dimension of religion. Spiritual training centres like the ESQ Way 165 of Ary Ginanjar, the Heart Intelligent (HI) of Synergy Leadership Centre, and the *Bioenergi*, explore their training material based on Islamic teaching and Sufism. When I asked the founders of the HI and the *Bioenergi* for clarification, they asserted that in their group the meaning of ‘spiritual’ is the practical usage of Sufism. Nevertheless, although their spiritual teachings are based on Islamic tradition, they claim that their spiritual programs are universal, suitable for all people, regardless of religious and cultural background. It seems to me that the use of the term ‘*spiritual*’ and ‘*spiritualitas*’ in these groups is part of their strategy to broaden their potential customer base.

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. the meaning of ‘spiritualist’ in Webster’s English Dictionary which is given as ‘someone who serves as an intermediary between the living and the dead’.

In the *Bhakti Nusantara*, the meaning of spiritual, as clarified by the group coordinator, is all things related to God that will lead people to God's way. In practice, the words '*spiritual*' and '*spiritualitas*' in the BN refer to the Sufi tradition of *dhikr* and the practice of *ziarah* [pilgrimage] to the scared tombs of *wali*. The word '*spiritual*' in the BN also refers to the practice of contacting spirits of the saints, in order to access their exalted position as a means for getting closer to God.

Among Javanese spiritual movements like the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*, the word '*spiritual*' means 'a state of mentality that nurtures human identity'. According to Sapto, '*spiritual*' and '*spiritualitas*' are derived from a word 'spirit' meaning *semangat* or passion, vigour, of people. Then, for Sapto, *Spiritualitas Java* means a cultivation of three human elements, which are *cipta* [creative force, thought or idea], *rasa* [sense], and *karsa* [intention]. Considering the relationship between Javanese identity on one hand, and religious identity on the other, Sapto said: "I do not want to lose my Java. It does not mean that if I already state my religion in the state ID, then I throw away my Javanese identity" (Interview with Sapto Raharjo, September 6, 2009). Again, for Sapto, Java is the spirit of mental revival. Whenever people separate themselves from their spirit, they are no longer consistent.

In summary, the meanings of '*spiritual*' and '*spiritualitas*' in actual usage vary, depending on context. Their usage covers: (1) the religious sphere, (2) a mentalstate that nurtures human identity, (3) occultism and supernatural practices, and (4) devotional practices to the sacred, beyond organized religion.

## 2.4. Conclusion

To summarize the earlier discussion, I will draw the following conclusions: first, the historical fact of the problematic relationship between marginal spiritual expressions and the state and the official religions, as can be seen in the case of the *kebatinan* movements, does not hinder people from searching for new spiritual paths in contemporary Indonesia. A number of new spiritual channels have appeared, ranging from eclectic-local spiritual expressions and global spiritual movements operating in Indonesia, to the piety projects of Urban Sufi groups.

Second, the changing meaning of the word '*spiritual*' is apparent in the current spiritual publications in Indonesia, where proponents of the world religions are no longer averse to using the words '*spiritual*' and '*spiritualitas*'. This indicates a shift in the meaning of spirituality from the ideas and practices related to the indigenous and eclectic-cultural expressions outside official religions to one that is closely associated with religion. This also underlines that from time to time, in the Indonesian context, 'spirituality' and 'religion' are getting closer and are not in a totally oppositional relationship. This trend is a little bit different from what has happened in the West, where extra-ecclesiastical subjective-life spirituality has developed as a response to the aridity of life-as religion (Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). The growth of spiri-

tual providers and the increasing number of people claiming to be 'spiritual', rather than belonging to a religion in the Western context, has raised the question as to whether spirituality has 'taken over' religion (Carrette & King, 2005). The adoption of words and ideas of the *spiritual* and *spiritualitas* among world religions in Indonesia has two possible meanings: (1) It indicates the eagerness of organized religions to frame the words in the context of religious teachings. (Indonesia, then, seems to have a reverse trend, where religion has successfully 'taken over spirituality'. (2) Institutionalized religions which had excluded their experiential dimensions and practices tried to recover the experiential when they found an institutional form of spirituality separate from religion. This means there is a contest between practitioners of life-as religions and the proponents of subjective-life spirituality, regarding spiritual authenticity.

Third, although Indonesia has its own trajectories in terms of the relationship between spirituality and religion, the development of Indonesian spiritual groups cannot be separated from the current global spiritual markets. The growth and influence of global spiritual markets, as can be seen from contemporary Indonesian spiritual publications, inspires the development of hybrid spiritual groups that blend local legacies with global ones.

In the next three chapters, I will explore three contemporary Yogyakarta spiritual centres, ranging from the local 'born-again', to the transformative, and then to the hybrid. The 'born-again' represents a spiritual group that uses Javanese based spirituality as acultural power to resist modernity, the transformative indicates the shift from 'hard occult' practices to the 'soft' one which is linked to orthodox Islam, and the hybrid marks the creative actions of a spiritual firm in promoting spiritual efficacy in a secular landscape. The three Yogyakarta spiritual centres I studied represent the emergence of a new type of Indonesian religious group, namely spiritual efficacy groups. These groups also exhibit differences in terms of their practices of commodification of spiritual and religious efficacies, thus varying in their responses to the challenges and opportunities of modernity.

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# Chapter 3

## Spirituality as Cultural Resistance in the Paguyuban Tri Tunggal

This chapter describes the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* [PTT], a contemporary Javanese-based spiritual group acting as a protest movement, while at the same time attempting to revitalize Javanese tradition and offer the efficacy of its spiritual activities. However, the PTT's resistance is different from that represented in the history of early modern Indonesia. First, in its resistance activities, the PTT does not use a political institution, as the *Permai* did in the 1950s (see Geertz, 1960),<sup>33</sup> nor does it implement violence such as was commonly used by resistance movements in the colonial era (see Kartodirjo, 1976).<sup>34</sup> Second, the PTT is critical of modernity, which has led to the commercialization of so many areas of social life,

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<sup>33</sup> Based on his fieldwork in Pare Kediri, East Java, in the 1950s, Geertz reported a group called Organisation for the Common People, the *Permai* [*Persatuan Rakjat Marhaen Indonesia*] trying to evoke Javanese tradition, which was to be cleansed from the influence of Islam. Islam, according to the *Permai*, was an alien and imported tradition that only 'polluted' the Javanese way of life (Geertz, 1960, pp. 112-118).

<sup>34</sup> According to Kartodirjo, occult spiritual practices had been common in the Indonesian rebel movements during the colonial era. Among twenty four reports of the Dutch

such as health and education, and that has caused lower-income people to struggle, as they cannot meet the cost. The PTT sees this as de-humanizing. Third, the PTT is responding to the growing number of literalist and puritan religious practitioners that tend to have a low level of tolerance towards diversity.

The cultural resistance of the PTT represents 'soft protest' in challenging the religious policy of the state, which has allowed certain religious traditions to be marginalized, despite the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion. The PTT uses cultural performance as a means of protest and public re-education, with cultural events such conducting public *ruwatan* [ritual of exorcism], *slametan* [ritual meals], and *kirab* [cultural carnival], and it maintains alternative healing services. Institutionally, the PTT also frames itself as the *paguyuban* [community] rather than as an organization or *yayasan* [foundation]. Although soft protest is dominant in PTT activities, commercialization of spiritual efficacy is also evident, making the group in some respects comparable to the Human Potential Movement.

### 3.1. The Founding of the PTT

*Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* (PTT) was founded in Yogyakarta, on August 22, 1995, by Sapto Raharjo. In the beginning, the group actively advocated *prana* exercise and meditation, as a means for nurturing inner power, but finally, after considering what media to use, Sapto Raharjo chose healing as the main path to revitalizing Javanese spiritual legacies.

Sapto Raharjo, was born on November 8, 1974, in Yogyakarta, where he still lives with his family. His father, A. Y. Sutarman, a retired lieutenant colonel, was a member of the Indonesian National Army, and had a close relationship with the King of Surakarta Kingdom, Sinuhun Pakubuwono XII. Due to his father's military activities, Sapto grew up in Kartosuro, Sukoharjo, Central Java, about four kilometres west of Solo city. He pursued his elementary and secondary school studies in Kartosuro. In addition to his formal education at the schools, when Sapto was eleven years old, his

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local government in Java about rebel movements, fifteen related to religious or spiritual groups (Kartodirjo, 1981). In his study on nineteenth and twentieth century religious movements in Java that led to social and even political protest, Kartodirjo (1976) characterized the movements as having charismatic leadership with 'magico-mysticism', as having elements of messianism, militarism, nativism, prophetism, and as being anti foreigners, especially Chinese and European. Kartodirjo categorized the movement as having charismatic leadership with 'magico-mysticism' because the leaders were usually described as *orang sakti* [powerful people], distributing amulets to their supporters to protect them from any misfortunes'; messianic, because the leaders claimed to be the *Ratu Adil* [Just King] and to uphold justice; militaristic, in the sense of proclaiming that the future life is better than the present one; nativistic, because their teachings were based on local indigenous religious and spiritual traditions; and involved prophetism, because the leaders claimed that their actions were based on divine revelation (Kartodirjo, 1976, p. 101).

father introduced him to spiritual trainings, sending him to the *Paguyuban Kalacakra*,<sup>35</sup> a spiritual group in Surakarta dedicated to perpetuating Javanese spiritual culture and customs. After finishing his secondary school education, Sapto returned to Yogyakarta to undertake a Bachelor degree in International Relations at the *Universitas Pembangunan Nasional* [National Development University] (Ali, 2006, p. 191).

Sapto is a believer in the universality of the Javanese culture. The print media refer to him as a *budayawan muda* [a young observer of culture] and a conservationist regarding local customs and spiritual traditions (*Kedauatan Rakyat*, November 18, 2009; *Bernas Jogja*, November 18, 2009; *Harian Jogja*, November 22, 2010; *Seputar Indonesia*, November 19, 2009). His spiritual name is *Zatguru Sabdo Langit IV*<sup>36</sup> but his community prefers to call him Romo Sapto. Although Sapto is considered as *orang sakti* (a person with various spiritual efficacies), he does not want to be associated with *dukun* [shaman]. One night, during the shadow puppet performance for the closing ceremony of his painting exhibition at the Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, he protested to the guest *dalang* [puppeteer], who had called him 'dukun Sapto'. His protest at being associated with *dukun* is understandable, because in contemporary Indonesia *dukun* is portrayed as a symbol of backwardness, heresy, and black magic. So, describing him as *dukun* in a cultural event could undermine his reputation both as a painter, and as an arts and cultural activist. Therefore, on his business card with the PTT letterhead, he describes himself as "*pendekar budaya*" [the warrior of culture].

Among the PTT community, Sapto is considered a figure with supernatural powers. His people hold him in the highest respect, and their reverential behaviour towards him is evident. When I interviewed Sapto, one of his assistants approached him, standing up in front of him at a distance, in a posture of full respect. Cupping his hands under his belly and and bowing slightly, he said in *krama inggil*<sup>37</sup> [a polite language style of Javanese], that the ritual for healing would start soon. Then, Sapto, replying in *ngoko*,<sup>38</sup> ordered his assistant to lead the ritual. In PTT meetings, I witnessed Sapto's

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<sup>35</sup> The *Kalacakra* was built by, and under the direct supervision of, Sinuhun Pakubuwono XII, King of the Kasunanan Surakarta Kingdom.

<sup>36</sup> *Sabdo Langit* literally means a speech from the sky. Terminologically, because it refers to the descendant of people who have the power to control nature and the obligation to deliver noble teachings, it means anything spoken can become a reality (*sabda dadi*). *Sabdo Langit IV* is a *trah* (genealogical) title from Sapto's ancestors. *Sabdo Langit I* is Ki Ageng Giring, *Sabdo Langit II* is Bondan Kejawan, *Sabdo Langit III* is his father, (Ret.) Lieutenant Colonel A Y. Sutarman, and *Sabdo Langit IV* is Sapto Raharjo himself (Ali, 2006, p. 192).

<sup>37</sup> *Krama Inggil* is the polite style of Javanese language, usually spoken by low ranking, ordinary people to the *priyayi*, or by the younger person to the elder, or to someone whom people highly respect.

<sup>38</sup> *Ngoko* is the Javanese style spoken by the common people. It is usually spoken between people of same stratum, by the higher-ranking person to the lower-ranking, or by the older person to the younger.

students, some of whom were older than he is, also speaking in *krama inggil* and being hesitant to take a seat close to him.

In the early development of the PTT, Sapto created a spiritual structure and a hierarchy in the group, starting from the *zat*<sup>39</sup> *guru* as the centre, then *zat jati* as the second ring, *marga* as the third, and finally *warga*. This hierarchy reflects rings of command, where *zat guru*, Sapto Raharjo or Sabdo Langit IV, is the central leader and supervisor for all PTT activities. The *zat jaties* are Sapto's main assistants in managing the group, including participation in rituals and healing activities. The *marga* are the closest people to *zat guru* and *zat jati*. They are mostly senior students who have a close friendship with them. *Warga* are PTT students who learn in the group (Ali, 2006, p. 194). Nevertheless, when I tried to clarify the workings of the above hierarchical structure, Sapto said that, since 2007, he has reorganized his group, removing all kinds of structures and hierarchies, in order to make the relationships within his community more egalitarian. In his opinion, the hierarchy had made his community highly dependent on him, something that is counterproductive to his original mission, which is to revitalize Javanese traditions and empower his people.

Although Sapto has thus tried to develop egalitarian relationships his community, he still holds status and authority, both of which increase his charisma as a *budayawan muda* [young humanist], a guardian of local traditions, an alternative healer, an artist, and a nationalist campaigner. Sapto's charisma is continuously reinforced by people around him, thereby allowing him to maintain control, as well as deepen his insight and understanding of the Javanese legacy, Western philosophical discourses, and contemporary issues. His assistants, *murid inti* [main students], and other *warga*, who always support and even glorify him, are among his important 'agencies'. These agencies work, for example, by depicting Sapto as a busy person, and restricting ordinary people from having direct access to him. One day I made an appointment for another interview with him. Upon arriving at the clinic, I asked the receptionist whether Romo Sapto was at home, but he did not reply to my question directly. He called Sapto's assistant, Mas Sumbo, in order to explain that there was a guest who wanted to do an interview. Unfortunately, Mas Sumbo was out of the clinic and was not sure when he would return. The receptionist offered to make me an appointment for an interview on another day. I assured him that I already had an appointment with Sapto for the interview that afternoon, but he was still dubious. He asked me to show him the text message which Sapto had sent to my mobile phone, adding: "Sorry, but I don't dare let you see Romo without proof that you have an appointment with him" [*maaf, saya tidak berani menemui Romo langsung kalau tidak ada bukti sudah*

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<sup>39</sup> In PTT documentation, *zat guru* and *zat jati* are written with 'z', but in actual use, the community and patients of the centre usually pronounce 'z' as 's', so 'zat guru' is pronounced as 'sat guru'.

*janjian*]. After reading Sapto's text message, he went into Sapto's house and after a while asked me to follow him, taking me to the *pendopo* for the interview.

In addition to running the PTT, Sapto is known for his activities in the arts and in social services. Socially, he is known as the founder of, and an activist in, various study and action groups, such as *Aliansi Masyarakat Uni Kebangsaan* [Nationalist Society Alliance], *Gerakan Moral Rekonsiliasi Pancasila* [the Moral Movement for Pancasila Reconciliation], *Studi Taman Sari Dunia* [the Taman Sari Dunia Studies], and as the chief of *Gerakan Masyarakat Pancasila* [the Movement of Pancasila Society]. These groups, established after the PTT, are Sapto's study clubs for discussing a series of subjects, including philosophy, multiculturalism, pluralism, nationalism, and their relationships in an Indonesian context. To some extents the groups also give Sapto a platform for voicing PTT opinions through demonstrations.

The group claims that it has thousands of participants and that hundreds of thousands of people have accessed its spiritual services. The name of the group, '*PaguyubanTri Tunggal*' (which is literally equivalent to the Christian term 'the Trinity'), and the chosen name of its leader, '*Romo*' (which is a Javanese term meaning 'father' and is currently mainly used to denote a Christian priest), have led hardline Muslim groups to be suspicious that the PTT is a Christian movement spreading Christianity. Romo Sapto has frequently been accused of performing *misa* [a Christian prayer] in his house and trying to convert Muslims to Christianity. It was also reported that, due to such suspicions, one of the PTT chambers in Sukoharjo, Central Java, was vandalized by an angry crowd. In fact, though, Sapto said, many Catholic figures blame him for sponsoring heresy through his spiritual and cultural activities.

Among the main activities of the PTT are healing services, *ruwatan*, and cultural carnival (*kirab budaya*). In next sub-chapter, I will explore PTT's soft protest in its organizational choices, and Sapto's views on Java and spirituality. I will also look at activities of the PTT through which it criticizes and resists the commercialization of social life, but at the same time commodifies spiritual efficacies.

### **3.2. Soft Protest in the PTT's Organizational Preference and Sapto's Arts Works**

In practice, the PTT prefers to be called a group rather than an organization. From a sociological perspective, a community is '*Gemeinschaft*' or '*community*', whereas an organization (in Indonesian, a *yayasan*), in Max Weber's terms, is '*Gesellschaft*' or formally constituted society. As a community, '*paguyuban*' refers to a group with informal interaction, no exact structure and hierarchy, and fluid programs and activities. In contrast, '*organization*' indicates a body with formal legal structure, administration, and systematized programs. According to Sapto, what people in his group need for their social life is a group like *paguyuban*.

Unfortunately, as Sapto further testified, the Indonesian government does not officially recognize local spiritual groups of the *paguyuban* category, who just want to get

together for spiritual activity. Constitutionally (as stated in the UUD 1945), every citizen has the right to practice his or her beliefs, as well as to come together in a group. In practice, however, the government still regards only official world religions as giving legitimate expression to each citizen's obligation to be religious, and marginalizes local religious/spiritual expressions. The government regards local spiritual expression as merely cultural expression, instead of as a system of religious belief.

Under the Indonesian state's policy of 'delimited religious plurality' (Howell, 2003, 2004) it does not sanction the promotion of local religious heritages by groups that promote them as distinct identities. The state restricts any local expressions of religious belief to the category of *adat* [custom and cultural expressions] which do not rate as 'religious' and which are subject to state regulation. In order to be legal, these cultural groups must adopt the structure of a *yayasan* (a formal organization or foundation). A *paguyuban* (community or *Gemeinschaft*) is not recognized. Such a regulation is typical of the Indonesian state and is a government strategy to control its people. In Sapto's opinion, it is a result of state adaptation to modernity, which has regard only for *agama* [religion], not for *spiritualitas* [spirituality]. So far, Javanese spirituality is *rakopen* [neither able to live nor die] (Interview with Sapto Raharjo, May 27, 2010).

Sapto explained that, legally, he had to choose either a *yayasan* [foundation] or an *ormas* (*organisasi masyarakat* [mass organization]) when he wanted to register his group with the government, although neither of these choices relates to his group. In dealing with such a regulation, the PTT's strategy is to register legally with a notary office and the government as a *yayasan* [foundation], but still keep the term '*paguyuban*' as part of its name. So, its official name is *Yayasan Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* [the Paguyuban Tri Tunggal Foundation], instead of only *Yayasan Tri Tunggal* [the Tri Tunggal Foundation].

Sapto's criticism of the government regulation, that impels him to legally adopt a foundation status for his group, is understandable. Being a foundation means his group has to pay taxes on its business activities.<sup>40</sup> He was jealous of the official religious groups that are not required to form foundations, meaning their religious rituals are free from tax. In contrast, he and his people have to pay taxes just for performing spiritual activities.

Sapto also emphasizes the independence of his group. He claims never to have accepted (and does not want to accept) any donation except from his community. He

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<sup>40</sup> As stated in the tax law of the UU PPh, KMK 604/94, KEP-87/PJ./1995, SE-34/95, and SE-39/PJ.4/1995, a foundation is subject to taxes for its business activities that result incomes such as in education and healing services. The earnings of a foundation are free of tax if they came from donation. From this perspective, the income from the healing activities of the PTT is, by definition, subject to taxes. Nevertheless, as I will explore in the next sub-chapter, the PTT states that its alternative healing services are free, although the group accepts any donations for them.

testified to the financial independence of the group saying: “I was offered donations by foundation groups in Dubai, Oman, and Suriname, but I rejected all of them, even the offer from the Department of Internal Affairs [of the Indonesian Government]”. In Sapto’s opinion, any such donation would only damage the group’s independence, and thereby restrict him from expressing his thoughts freely. “It is about consistency”, he explained.<sup>41</sup>

During the course of many personal conversations and discussions with Sapto Raharjo, I was able to gain some interesting impressions about him. First, he is able to cultivate a rational understanding of the world through the study of social, economic and political issues. He discusses the country’s current problems and the dynamics of the local community from both historical and philosophical points of view. His insights on history and philosophy range from Javanese tradition of the past to classical and contemporary Western philosophy. He frequently quotes Western philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, and Habermas.

Second, Sapto is able to adapt his discussions according to his audience. In front of university students, for example, he asked them not to try and understand Javanese tradition merely from its rituals. Such an understanding, he explained, would only lead to Javanese culture being seen as occultism [*klenik*, *perdukunan*, etc.]. Javanese culture, therefore, should be seen from broader perspectives, emphasizing the Javanese identity and worldview that covers Javanese cosmology, mythology, theology, and ethics. When I asked him why the PTT’s flyers still portray him with a weird picture, in which he looks like a Javanese *dukun* [shaman], Sapto smilingly replied: “Our grassroots community still needs such symbols” (Interview with Sapto Raharjo, September 6, 2009).

To Sapto, being Javanese is an identity and part of national character. His aim is to promote this identity amid the flood of foreign culture promoting hyper-reality, the ‘simulacra’ of popular culture. In undertaking this task, Sapto and his allied groups implement a strategy he calls ‘lobbying-discourse-grassroots’. ‘Lobbying’ involves the PTT elite carrying out discussions with other elite groups; ‘discourse’ means spreading ideas and activities to the general public through forum discussions, publications, media, and mass action; and ‘grassroots’ means working at the level of the common people.

Sapto’s background as an alumnus of International Relations Studies at the National Development University in Yogyakarta, and his interaction with national and cultural figures, has broadened his pluralistic view on religious and spiritual expressions. His interaction with national figures is important not only in terms of broadening Sapto’s view on national issues, but also for strengthening the position of his group,

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<sup>41</sup> Sapto’s statement in Panel Discussion on *Spiritualitas Nusantara di tengah Pasar Global Agama* (Spirituality of Archipelago amid the Global Market of Religions), organized by *Laboratorium Religi dan Budaya Lokal* (LaBEL–Laboratory of Religion and Local Culture), Faculty of Ushuluddin, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, April 2010.

which has, a number of times, been censured as being an aberrant group and has had property vandalized by hardliner groups.

Third, amid his students and members of the community, Sapto seems to be an honoured and charismatic figure. His students always obey him, and a further indication of their respect is that they never interrupt when he is speaking. They consider meeting with him in person as a great privilege. His authority is even stronger when he leads rituals involving hundreds of people.

In Sapto's speeches and discussions, he tries to revive, or at least maintain, the Javanese identity, amid the wave of Western and popular cultures spreading into the country due to modernism and globalism. Nevertheless, he never refers to Java as a territorial island, in terms of either the people or the land, nor to the ideal of Java in the era of the Majapahit and Mataram kingdoms, but speaks of Java as being an open culture representing local identity, while, in the same way, representing the spirit of all people in the archipelago. When he was invited as a speaker in a panel discussion on *Spiritualitas Nusantara di Tengah Pasar Global Agama-agama* [the Spirituality of the Archipelago amid Global Religious Markets],<sup>42</sup> a participant questioned his 'Javanese Project'. The questioner expressed concern that Sapto's project would repeat the hegemonic character of Soeharto's regime, that had abused Javanese tradition to co-opt other local traditions. In reply, Sapto explained his definition of Java, saying: "What we mean by Java is neither in a sense of territory, nor Javanese occult practices, nor do we see Java as being the Majapahit and Mataram Kingdom. In our view we understand Java in terms of an open culture which is the spirit and identity of the people of the Archipelago".

In the global era, when local and global cultures intermingle, Sapto argues that the Javanese identity should be the base for building national character. He does not, however, want to create a Javanese enclave, restraining its people from global interaction. He even urges them to actively synthesize Javanese with others elements. For him, the Javanese are free to use whatever 'clothes' they want—whether they be Western, modern, international, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, or Islamic—as long as their spirits are still Javanese.

Considering the relationship between Javanese identity on one hand, and religious identity on the other, Sapto said: "I do not want to lose my Java. It does not mean that if I state my religion in the state ID, then I throw away my Javanese identity". Again, for Sapto, Java is the spirit of mental revival. Whenever one separates oneself from it, one can no longer be consistent. Sapto, therefore, criticizes the current development of religious symbols, saying:

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<sup>42</sup> The Panel Discussion was organized by the LABEL [*Laboratorium Religi dan Budaya Lokal* (the Laboratory of Religion and Local Culture)], Faculty of Ushuluddin, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, in April 2010.

In Indonesia what is happening now is not spirituality, but religiosity. This violates the foundational platform of the state. It is clearly stated in the constitution that Indonesia is a unified country, the Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia [NKRI]. It is composed of various tribes and ethnic groups, each of which has their own myths and ethics. All ethnicities unite on the basis of their mythology. It is clear that the foundation is about spirituality, where no boundaries exist... In reality it is not spirituality but religiosity, as a result of the structural hegemony of an organization... The state does not provide enough space for spirituality to grow, which is basically building a national character. The state even imposes a disciplinary mechanism on the levels of structure, which only recognizes five official religions, one of which has to be declared on every citizen's ID. (Interview with Sapto Raharjo, September 6, 2009)

Asked about the *kejawen* [Javanism] element in the PTT, Sapto explained that, for him, *kejawen* is about *kejiwaan* [mentality]. He further said: "I do hope my mentality will mature based on Javanese values. Why are people suspicious of us in managing our emotions and maturing our souls based on the *kejawen*?" To Sapto, the marginalization of the Javanese was rooted in anthropological and sociological discourses on Java, that tend to miss its true definition and meaning. Sapto said "they [anthropologists and sociologists] have constructed Java according to their own wishes, so the true voice [of Java] is missing" (interview with Sapto Raharjo, September 6, 2009).

Sapto further explained the philosophical meaning of his group, the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*. *Paguyuban* literally means 'groups' in terms of community, whereas *Tri Tunggal* literally means the 'three unified in one'. The three are *cipta* [creative force, thought or idea], *rasa* [sense], and *karsa* [intention]. The essential aspiration of Javanese culture is to mature human souls and to search out and to unify the three elements of *cipta-rasa-karsa*, through spiritual cultivation. "That is *Spiritualitas*," said Sapto. In this regard, again, Sapto asks people not to understand or define Javanese spirituality merely from its rituals (which are usually about burning incense, *keris*, pilgrimage to ancestors' sanctuaries, etc.), as this would miss the point. In fact, *kejawen* is about micro and macro consciousness/awareness and about how to understand body and spirit. *Kejawen* is, Sapto further explained, about the balance of life—how to deal with matters of ecology and ecosystems, and economics. Unfortunately, people tend to fall into reductionism, understanding *kejawen* just through its rituals.

The above explanation clearly shows how Sapto criticizes modernized people and literalist religious practitioners who tend to regard *kejawen* merely as occultism. On the contrary, according to Sapto, *kejawen* is about active spirit and mentality that can be used by all people, regardless of their religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Painting is another method Sapto uses to express his points of view. At the end of 2009, Sapto held an exhibition for his seventy paintings, at the *Taman Budaya Yogyakarta* [Yogyakarta Cultural Centre], from November 20 to 26, 2010. His paintings illustrated his criticism of modernity and globalization, including their supporting mechanisms such as colonialism, secularism, world religions, and technology. For

Sapto, all these foreign elements have contributed to the loss of national character. He therefore reminded people to look again at their own identity. The king of Yogyakarta, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, and the governor of Yogyakarta Special Territory, who is known as the guardian of the Javanese tradition, came to Sapto's exhibition and appreciated his artwork. Print media reported the exhibition extensively. Some of them interviewed Sapto and wrote reports filling half-pages of their newspapers.

All Sapto's paintings were about *kerbau* [buffalo], depicting the buffalo as a symbol of agricultural identity, Indonesia being one of the major agricultural countries in the world. Unfortunately, Indonesian people are now neglecting their own cultural background. Sapto's paintings, therefore, reflect his spiritual and cultural rebellion against the hegemony of *budaya asing* [foreign culture] that is currently spreading massively through popular cultures among Indonesians. The *kebo* [Jv.] or *kerbau* [Ind.] are now less popular than the *onta* [camel] or *beruang* [bear].

When asked the reason for holding the exhibition, Sapto said that painting was part of his cultural critique and evaluation of the current policies of national leaders (*Radar Jogja*, November 21, 2009). The title of his exhibition was *Srati Kebo*, which, literally, means 'herding the buffalo', but terminologically *Srati* is an abbreviation of *strategi* [strategy], and *kebo* of *kebudayaan* [culture]. Sapto further explained:

*Srati Kebo* is about *Strategi Kebudayaan* [cultural strategy]. So far, Indonesian cultural strategy is not clear... that leads to the country's disorientation. In fact, cultural strategy provides vital guidance of the nation to direct people where to go. My paintings remind the public to understand the spirit and philosophy of the nation such as tolerance, cooperation, faithfulness, and sincerity. All of them are symbolized by the characters of the *kerbau* [buffalo]. Unfortunately, the current buffalo is struggling against foreign cultural imperialism that appears like a savage lion, which is cruel and ferocious. (Sapto's statement in *Radar Jogja*, November 21, 2009)

Sapto frequently asserts the importance of national character building, stating it should be based on indigenous resources, not those alien to the country. He therefore criticizes the current trend of popular cultures. He regrets the facts that people tend to idolize whatever appears on television, when, in fact, some things that are popular are a result of self-crisis. Sapto's paintings basically reflect his criticism concerning the current condition of Indonesia.

For Sapto, people have to learn from the buffalo, an animal frequently stigmatized as dull, stupid and lazy, but which has actually made a large contribution to agricultural civilization. Unfortunately, buffalo are now less popular, even among Indonesian peasants, due to the development of technology. People do not realize that technology in fact only causes human chaos. In one of his paintings, Sapto depicts a group of buffalo in a pasture, with a city in riot in the background—burning buildings, cars rolled over, with panicking people running to and fro. The painting is a satire saying: "Look, the buffalo you regard as dull and stupid are living in peace and harmony, while you modern people always create conflict".



Figure 3.1.

One of Sapto's paintings exhibited in Yogyakarta Cultural Centre, showing a group of buffaloes living peacefully in a pasture, in contrast to panicking people in a burning city

Sapto's paintings also reflect his criticism of the hegemonic character of world religions that tend to undermine local traditions. His artwork entitled *Rembug 1 Millenium* [the 1st Millennium Summit] depicts three Abrahamic religions [Judaism, Christianity and Islam] fighting against Javanese people.

Interestingly enough, although criticism of modern and Western ways of life frequently appears in his paintings, speeches, and actions, Sapto used imported products for his paintings and appreciated their quality. He said: "My painting techniques are palettes on canvas with acrylic paint. Both the paint and canvas are imported products that guarantee the quality of the painting" (*Radar Jogja*, November 24, 2009). It seems to me there is a paradox in his statement, because he criticizes Western cultures but at the same time uses Western products and acknowledges their quality.



Figure 3.2.

Sapto's painting entitled *Rembug 1 Millennium* [1stMillennium Summit], depicting world religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) fighting local Javanese people

### 3.3. Soft Protest and Spiritual Efficacy in PTT Activities

In the PTT, the expression of protests against the government's policy on religion and against the puritanical points of view of world religions is abundant. The PTT's soft protest appears in both the group's activities and Sapto's statements, representing the group's response to the challenge and pressure of modernity. Interestingly, besides expressing its protest, the group also offers spiritual efficacy through its activities, thereby encouraging people to come and participate. To show how the group conveys both the messages of protest and spiritual efficacy, I will describe the PTT's cultural carnival [*Kirab Pathok Negoro*], public *ruwatan* [ritual of exorcism], and *slametan* [meal ritual].

#### 3.3.1. Kirab Pathok Negoro

One of the Javanese holidays is *Suran*, which is the New Year festival in Javanese-Islamic calendars. Javanese people celebrate the New Year in various ways, such as performing *tirakatan* [gathering all night long while engaging in introspection], partying with the neighbouring community, going to the southern beaches for contemplation, and participating in the ritual of *mubeng beteng* [silently walking barefoot around the Yogyakarta Palace hedge].

Since 2004, the PTT has proposed new ways of celebrating the *Suran* by organizing the ritual of *Kirab Pathok Negoro* [the Pathok Negoro spiritual and cultural carnival]. Followed by thousands of participants, two *gunungan* [a mountain of food made from various fruits and vegetables], and the group's heirloom collection of one hundred and fifty spears and fifty swords were brought to the carnival. Before the *kirab*, all these traditional weapons were blessed through *ruwatan* in the PTT centre.

During the *kirab*, all participants brought lighted incense to be distributed to the spectators standing along the roadside. Eclectic elements appeared in the carnivals. For example, in 2006, a Muslim *haj* led a *mujahadah* [Islamic prayer] and Romo Sapto read a Javanese incantation of *Mantraweda Nusa Jawi*. The carnival ended with ritual dancing (Sugiarto, 2006).

Historically, the term '*Pathok Negoro*' refers to four mosques built in the reign of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono I (1723–1819). All the mosques were located outside the Sultanate's capital territory, about five to ten kilometres from the palace. The four mosques of *Pathok Negoro* represent the four corners of a square—one in the west (Mlangi mosque), one in the north (Ploso Kuning mosque), one in the east (Babadan mosque) and one in the south (Dongkelan mosque)—along with the Grand Mosque [*Masjid Gede*] in Kauman as the centre. In the reign of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono IV (1812–1843), another mosque was built in Wonokromo Bantul, and subsequently this mosque was also included as one of the Pathok Negoro Mosques<sup>43</sup> (Al-Mudra, 2010–2011).

'*Pathok Negoro*' means both the 'state boundaries' and 'the pillar of state'. The first meaning argues that the mosques were built to mark the Sultanate's capital territory. In this context, the word '*pathok*' means '*tapal batas*' [boundary], and '*negoro*' means 'state'. The second meaning refers to the fact that the Pathok Negoro mosques, whose position is one level below the Grand Mosque of Kauman, functioned also as centres of religious education and activities as well as the religious judiciary. In this second context, '*pathok*' means '*tiang penyangga*' [pillar].

In his press release to the local newspaper, for the 2008 carnival, Sapto admitted that he deliberately adopted the term '*Pathok Negoro*' for his *kirab* from the above concepts, but he was also exploring the meanings of the term from a spiritual perspective. He argues that the four mosques were part of the Yogyakarta Sultanate's strategy to provide spiritual fortresses and pillars in order to make the Sultanate prosper-

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<sup>43</sup> The Pathok Negoro mosques are special because they only exist in Yogyakarta Sultanate. Based on their locations, the mosques are considered as community mosques, which were constructed in a special land called *tanah perdikan*, which was free of tax. In addition to their being a place for Islamic ritual and a centre for Islamic preaching, a *kyai* or *ulama* was appointed to them, by the Sultan, to act as the *penghulu* [chief of religion functionary]. The Pathok Negoro mosques were, by definition, the pillars of the *Kraton*, supporting the Sultan both religiously and politically (see Budi, 2005, pp. 6–7; Dewan Kebudayaan Kota Yogyakarta & Pusat Studi Kebudayaan Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2006, pp. 287–288).

ous and harmonious. Since the beginning of their Kingdom, according to Sapto, the Yogyakarta Sultans have fully understood the importance of having a balance between material and spiritual pillars for society. The *Kirab Pathok Negoro*, Sapto further argues, was their effort to situate the philosophical meaning of the *Pathok Negoro* in the context of the modern state. Through the *kirab*, he tries to remind people of the importance of the spirit of the *Pathok Negoro* (Daryanto & Budhiarto, 2008 in *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, October 27, 2008)

The carnival route was designed to circle Yogyakarta city anti-clockwise—a flash-back to a symbol of the past for the restoration and cleansing of the soul and body. The total length of the carnival route was about fifteen kilometres. Starting from the PTT hall in Tambak Bayan, the carnival would pass through Solo Street towards the intersection at the Tugu monument, then turn left into Mangkubumi Street, continue left towards Kota Baru, then go back again to Solo Street and end at the Tambakbayan hall. Before the end of the carnival round, the *gunungan lanang* ['male' mountains made of various local fruits] and *gunungan wadon* ['female' mountains made of various local vegetables] were placed in front of the Ambarukmo Plaza, the biggest mall in Yogyakarta. People came to grab them, struggling for *berkah* [blessing] from them (*Meteor*, Saturday, January 20, 2007; *Seputar Indonesia*, Saturday, January 20, 2007).

Sapto explained that when he initiated the cultural carnival in 2004, there were only a few hundred participants. Because the *Kraton* of Yogyakarta already organized a similar ritual, known as the *mubeng beteng* [cycling around the fence of the palace], Sapto was suspected of having a hidden agenda for running the *Kirab Pathok Negoro*. After showing his consistency in organizing the carnival, suspicions began to disappear. Eventually, the PTT carnival program received more attention, not only from Sapto's community, but also from cultural groups outside Java. Even the local and national media paid attention to PTT events and routinely published reports of the ritual. The number of participants increased dramatically in the following years. Sapto claimed that in 2008 hundreds of thousands of people participated in the carnival.

In their social and political context, the public rituals and cultural carnivals, as seen in the *ruwatan* and the *Kirab Pathok Negoro*, are a kind of response, by the PTT, to *anomie* and an unjust situation. As an 'organic group' adopting *Gemeinschaft*, the appearance of the PTT in public, to support and organize indigenous traditions promoting harmony, reconciliation, and pluralism, exemplifies the PTT's protest at the failure of the state and other modern agencies to promote a harmonious life for society.

Unlike other Javanese communities, who celebrate the *malam satu Sura* with the *mubeng beteng* [cycling the fence] ritual, *sedekah sura* [the Sura almsgiving] in the Yogyakarta monument, *labuhan sesaji* in *Laut Selatan* [offering ritual in South Sea of Java], and other *tirakat* [contemplation] considered solemn and quiet, the PTT organizes the *kirab Pathok Negoro* on a massive scale, reflecting the group's revitalization

and its cultural protest. Sapto explained that the huge ritual, in which thousands of people from various backgrounds participated in the *ruwatan* and *kirab*, was dedicated to saving the nation and reconstructing ancestral culture that, today, tended to be neglected. The *Ruwat Pathok Negero*, Sapto further asserted, would provide freedom of cultural identity, for social control, as a means of self-transcendence, and for the guidance of both the macrocosmos and microcosmos (*Meteor*, February 11, 2005; *Bernas*, February 1, 2006; *Radar Jogja*, January 31, 2006).

The route taken by the cultural carnival included business areas in Yogyakarta. Solo Street now has three malls, which are symbols of secular centres—Plasa Ambarukmo, Saphier Square, and Galleria Mall—in addition to several banks, hotels, universities, and a hospital. Passing through these areas of modern and secular symbols, the *Pathok Negero* carnival, along with its thousands of participants in local costumes and with local symbols, marched for fifteen kilometres, reminding people that local tradition still lives on amid the growth of modern and secular activities, and finally attracting more public interest. By providing a forum for the re-actualization of indigenous legacies, the rituals also became a good way of spreading the views of the PTT.

Considering that from 2004 to 2006 numerous tragedies occurred in Indonesia, the *ruwatan* and *Kirab Pathok Negero* were part of the PTT's spiritual efforts to evade disasters and to protect Indonesia from misfortunes. Sapto gave the following reason for conducting the 2007 carnival:

This country is crying out for help, overwhelmed by grief caused by various disasters, such as the eruption of Mount Merapi, the Yogyakarta 5.9 SR earthquake that buried thousands of lives in ruins, the emerging of hot mud in Porong Sidoarjo, flash floods, landslides, hurricanes, etc. All happened as recently as 2006. We expected that all of them would be over by early 2007. Unfortunately we are facing yet more disasters. The loss of the Adam Air plane carrying hundreds of passengers and not yet found, the sinking of the Senopati Motor Sailor carrying nearly a thousand passengers, in the North area of the sea of Jepara, the starvation of Indonesian pilgrims in Mecca—ironically, when they asked for food from other pilgrims they were turned away like a dog. Oh my God, what signs are these? Maybe God was angry with the people who always forget Him... Due to these facts, it is even more important for the Pathok Negero carnival to be conducted. We are starting this sacred month with a ritual to show our prayers to the Almighty. May God forgive us and be willing to defuse His hard warnings. May God be eager to fulfill our prayers although we have asked Him for too many things. (Sapto's statement in *Meteor*, Friday, January 19, 2007)

Sapto's statement underlines the fact that the failure of the state to provide real security and harmony, and its silence on the issue, have led the group to promote hope through spiritual ways. No matter how effective these ways are for common people in their material lives, at least the PTT has provided them with spiritual hope and peace. From a human potential perspective, such a spiritual condition is an important element in stimulating internal motivation, encouraging optimism in facing the future.

It is interesting to note the way the PTT presents the spirituality of festivity, instead of the silence commonly adopted by other Javanese spiritual groups, like the

*Sumarah, Saptodharmo, Pangestu*, etc. In addition the *Kirab Pathok Ngoro* at the new year of the Javanese lunar calendar, the group organizes other public spiritual and cultural events, such as the *Ruwatan of Nyepi*, *Grebeg Tayuh Maulud*, and *Ruwat Agung Lailatul Qodar*. The choice to present such a ‘noisy spirituality’ is part of the PTT strategy in voicing its views. Public spiritual events are also part of the group’s efforts to spread its ideas at the level of discourse. By appearing in public, the group’s activities may be reported by the media, and then may finally be recognized by the state, or by the people at grassroots level. Sapto asserts that: “*Jika kami melakukannya secara diam-diam, maka kami tidak akan di dengar*” [If we did it silently, nobody would hear us].<sup>44</sup>

In the context of the current development of world religions in Indonesia, the PTT public rituals and cultural carnivals, which are based on Javanese spiritual culture, indicate not only persistence, but also the response of indigenous tradition to the overwhelming presence of Islamic symbols in the country’s politics, pop cultures, and media. In this regard, the PTT public rituals are a good medium for the group in competing for Indonesian public space, which is now dominated by the modern and Islamic.

In 2009 and 2010, the PTT did not hold the *Pathok Ngoro* carnival. When I called Sapto by phone to clarify the reason for this, he just replied: “Let the *Kraton* conduct the event”. However, in a subsequent personal conversation with him, Sapto explained that he just conducted a test case, to find out how the community would respond to the absence of the ritual. From the huge number of enquiries he received, Sapto concluded that, in fact, the demand for such public spiritual and cultural events was still high in Indonesia.

### 3.3.2. Slametan

*Slametan* or *selamatan* is a celebratory feast or ritual meal asking for God’s blessing, held to mark an important occasion. In the PTT, *slametan* is usually performed at midnight, as part of the celebration for spiritual graduation. Actually, there is no precise name for the graduation ritual. Some of Sapto’s disciples call it *slametan*, but others prefer *tumpengan* [from a Javanese word ‘*tumpeng*’ meaning ‘cone rice’].

Tri Nugroho (29 years old), a member of the PTT from Blimbingsari, Yogyakarta, who is now living in Magelang, Central Java, said that he was at the ritual because of his job. One of his hopes from the PTT midnight gathering was to have direct contact with Romo Sapto, although he had to wait until midnight. Together with other colleagues wearing Javanese clothes, Tri waited for his spiritual teacher, sitting on the

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<sup>44</sup> Sapto’s statement in a discussion forum on *Spiritualitas Nusantara di Tengah Pasar Global Agama* [The Spirituality of the Archipelago amid the Global Market of Religion] at LABEL (*Laboratorium Religi dan Budaya Lokal* [the Laboratory of Religious and Local Culture]), Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

plastic carpet, in a group at the back area of the hall. Other groups behind them, some of them teenagers in casual clothes, are friends of the group, who had not joined the PTT as members. When I asked them their reason for attending the gathering, one of them explained that they were in the meeting to accompany their father who was a PTT member.

While waiting for Romo Sapto to make his appearance in the forum, I heard members behind me discussing the progress of their spiritual learning, the rigours of the spiritual disciplines such as *pasa mutih*,<sup>45</sup> *pasa ngalong*,<sup>46</sup> and *pasa ngebleng*.<sup>47</sup> A man in the group questioned his own progress, doubting what he had done so far. His colleague tried to convince him that the efficacies he would receive are equivalent to the spiritual disciplines he had practised. If one tried to cheat the disciplines, perhaps skipping over one or two of the steps, one would be taking a risk.

Tri Nugroho, who joined the group after his father became a member, said that his activities in the PTT are part of *nguri-uri tradisi lan kabudayaan Jawa* [preserving Javanese tradition and culture], in addition to providing a medium for maintaining health and enhancing *daya linuwih* or *kesekten* [spiritual efficacies or supernatural power]. For Tri, the PTT is interesting because it also offers various training methods for healing. With spiritual disciplines in the PTT, Tri explained, one can achieve one's dream, but of course this should also be backed up by hard work. He asked me whether I already had a wife or girl friend, then he sought to convince me that the wish to have a sweetheart could also be easily realized through the support of supernatural powers.

The members of the PTT had been waiting in the hall for Romo Sapto for almost two hours. Some of them looked sleepy, lying down on the carpets. According to Tri, the time to begin the *slametan* depended entirely on the will of Romo Sapto, but usually it started at midnight.

Nevertheless, it was just 11.30 pm when I saw Romo Sapto tell his fifteen disciples, one of whom was female, to prepare for the *slametan*. He asked them to come forward, bringing their *ubo rampe* [ritual offerings], which consisted of *tumpeng* [cone rice], *inkung* [whole cooked rooster], *pisang raja* [plantain], and *jajan pasar* [snack]. Romo Sapto wore a white and brown motif *jarik* [Javanese *batik* cloth tied around the waist] and a black t-shirt with a picture of *wayang* [shadow puppet] on the front. All the male graduating disciples wore black *beskap* [Javanese style jackets] and *blankon* [Javanese hats], and the female graduates wore black *kebaya* with white and brown motif *jarik*.

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<sup>45</sup> *Pasa mutih* literally means 'white fasting'. One who performs *pasa mutih* is only allowed to consume white coloured food like rice and water, without additional dishes.

<sup>46</sup> *Pasa ngalong*, literally meaning 'bat fasting', is fasting by consuming only fruit for a period of time.

<sup>47</sup> *Pasa ngebleng* is a fast from midnight until the following midnight, for several successive days [usually for 1, 3, 7 or even 40 days]. The only food allowed during this ritual is a glass of water and a fistful of rice at midnight.

Before the *slametan*, Sapto asked his students to explain their experiences while performing the spiritual disciplines. Pak Waluyo (fifty-two years old), a civil servant in Magelang, told us that his spiritual sibling appeared to him at midnight, asking him to do this and not that. Another student, Suparti (forty-eight years old and the only female student), said that in order to be successful in all spiritual disciplines she had to get permission and support from her family members. When I asked Sapto's students what efficacies or spiritual benefits they had received from their spiritual disciplines, most of them replied that they are now more humble, patient, and calm, whether in family life, social life, or in the workplace.

The *slametan* ritual represented a hierarchy in the PTT. The leader of the ritual, Romo Sapto, who chanted the Javanese *tembang* [song], was the central figure, although he only wore *jarit* and a black t-shirt. Around him were fifteen senior students, who had just finished a series of spiritual disciplines, and were wearing complete Javanese attire. Romo Sapto and all the graduates sat cross-legged on the floor, forming a circle in the main hall, while other regular members sat at the back of the hall. The differences in sitting location and in the clothes the disciples wore on the night of the *slametan* represented differences in obligation for providing the *ubo rampe* [ritual offerings], which were served only by the graduate students. Romo Sapto frequently asked other students to come forward and join the graduates, but they seemed hesitant, and preferred to sit at the back.

To make the scene more magical, all the lights in the hall were turned off, and the entire audience remained silent. Incense was burned near Romo Sapto. The only light in the hall came from five candles in front of him, as lighting for him to read the *tembang* and other Javanese prayers. He frequently urged his disciples to understand, and even feel, the meaning of every word in the *tembang*. For example, after chanting some verses of Javanese *tembang*, he said, "*Rungok-ke, rasak-ke...!*" [Listen and feel...!], before continuing with the next verses.

At first glance, the *slametan* of the spiritual graduation ritual looked similar to psychological therapy, where the psychologist urges his patients to nurture and resurrect their mental health. Or, taking an extreme perspective, the practice was equivalent to a magician trying to drive out evil spirits, and to heal his patient through narrating mythological stories. But, when it came to the meaning of the *tembang* being chanted, I got an impression of the spirit of submitting to almighty God, instead of to the spirits.

About forty-five minutes later, the ritual was completed and all the lamps were turned on again. Romo Sapto ordered his students to eat the blessed *ubo rampe*. The students who had graduated invited their families and colleagues, who were in the back, to join them. About four to six people circled the *tumpeng*. Romo Sapto left the hall. He did not participate in having supper with his students. However, I saw one of the students taking a tray of the *ubo rampe* into Sapto's room. Playfully, Romo Sapto

frequently asked his students to finish the food, but I saw them eating without appetite. Many were too shy to have more, especially of the chicken. Because there was plenty of food remaining, they intended to take it back to their families at home.

When I joined in the group for supper, I asked Pak Waluyo how hard he had found the spiritual disciplines he had undertaken. He explained that one of the hardest is what he called *poso ngebleng*, which is fasting from midnight until the following midnight, for several successive days. The only food allowed during this ritual is a glass of water and a fistful of rice at midnight. He then said that “only fasting from dawn to dusk, where you are allowed to consume a variety of food at night, was easy”, as if to say that the spiritual disciplines in the PTT were harder than those of the Muslims’ Ramadan fasting.

Although, from his fieldwork in Yogyakarta, Woodward (1988, 2011)<sup>48</sup> concluded that the *slametan* is an Islamic expression of conceptual *syukur* [gratitude] and *sedekah* [meal alms], I could not find any Islamic elements during the *slametan* rituals in the PTT, except for some female family members of the spiritual graduates wearing *jilbab* [veil]. During the *slametan*, Romo Sapto read Javanese *tembang* and continuously burned incense. None of the Arabic terms were read as a *doa* [prayer]. There was also a guest who, I later discovered, was Pak Agung, a representative of an Indonesian Buddhist organization. When Romo Sapto asked him to introduce himself to the audience, he just read a greeting, as usually given by a Buddhist monk. Thus the PTT *slametan* ritual was close to the *slametan* as described by Beatty (1996), in which it facilitates the meeting of various religious traditions—a syncretization ritual, in terms of the attendants.

Furthermore, the PTT *slametan* which I saw, is different from the popular *slametan* in Javanese Muslim families. In the latter *slametan*, a *modin* or local Islamic scholar usually leads the ritual, with strong emphasis on Islamic prayers, indicating that this *slametan* has been deeply Islamized. In the PTT *slametan*, however, the Javanese style dominated over the others. The PTT *slametan* is, then, a clear example of a Javanese ritual which has gained its own space and authority.

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<sup>48</sup> Refuting Geertz’s notion that *slametan* is an animistic rite of a primarily village ritual to reinforce solidarity, based on Javanese culture (see Geertz, 1960, pp. 10-15), Woodward argues that *slametan* is “a locally defined Muslim rite and that: (1) the criteria Geertz employs to distinguish Islam from animism are misleading; (2) the *slametan* is an example of a ritual complex that links blessing (A., *barakah*) and food and extends from Arabia to Southeast Asia; (3) that it is not primarily a village ritual; (4) that its religious and social goals are defined in terms of Islamic mystical teachings; (5) most of the modes of ritual action it employs are rooted in universalist texts including the *Qur’an* and Hadith; and (6) that elements of the *slametan* derived from pre-Islamic traditions are interpreted in Islamic terms” (Mark R. Woodward, 2011, p. 113).

### 3.4. Commodification of Spiritual Efficacy in the PTT

The distinct commodification of spiritual efficacy in the PTT can be found in the group's alternative healing clinics and *ruwatan* program. To attract people, the PTT advertises its programs with flyers, press releases in local newspapers, statements on the group's website, or announcements during the group's radio and television shows.

Because the group, legally, is not a firm, its commercialization is subtler than that in the two other groups I studied. The PTT never explicitly states charges for its services in its publications. Usually the centre's advertisements only state that the cost is a voluntary gift, and provide contact details for further explanation. However, when I asked Mas Sumbo, one of the PTT healers, he replied that the group actually has a standard tariff. He said that the standard rate for participating in the *ruwatan* is Rp. 500,000.00 per person. Nevertheless, if a participant is not able to afford the standard rate, the cost can be negotiated. For on-the-spot consultancy, the centre just recommends that the patient make a voluntary contribution in the donation box located in the clinic. For acute illnesses that require treatment through transferring the disease to a lamb, the standard rate is Rp. 1,750,000.00 (around A\$ 205.00, with a currency exchange rate of A\$ 1 = Rp. 8,500.00). Around Rp. 1,500,000.00 from the tariff will go to buy ritual equipment, such as a lamb (Rp. 500,000.00), zavaron oil (Rp. 700,000.00–Rp. 1,000,000.00), incense and flowers (Rp. 10,000.00). The margin between payment and expenditure is considered as PTT income, of which some will be allocated to the group for social activities and some to the healer. Nevertheless, Mas Sumbo added, patients are allowed to bring their own ritual equipment and then just give a voluntary gift to the PTT as a service cost (interview with Mas Sumbo, August 9, 2011).

#### 3.4.1. Holistic Healing

One day, at about 2.00 pm, I was on my way to the PTT secretariat in the northeast of Yogyakarta. I was interested in visiting the centre after reading a flyer promoting alternative healing by the PTT clinic. At the top of the flyer, in capital letters, were the words: '*ANDA YAKIN, ANDA PERCAYA, ANDA SEMBUH*' [You believe, you trust, you heal]. These arresting words were followed by three testimonials from patients who had been healed by the centre. The leaflet was printed on both sides. The front page showed pictures of the cured patients, their testimonials, and details of personal information. At the foot of the front page was a note in capital letters stating: '*JASA TERAPI: TALI KASIH SUKARELA. Sithik Ora Ditampik – Okeh Yo Kepoleh*' [Therapy Cost: Voluntarily Contribution. Small gift accepted – Larger one welcomed]. The back page of the leaflet gives the address of the centre, with a detailed map.

What impressed me with the flyer was the notion that the patients had been cured through spiritual means alone. The hope of a cure, according to the flyer, is directly related to the degree of submission by the patient to the healer and the centre. "As long as the patients believe in the methods performed by the centre, they will be cured," said Mas Jeje, one of senior healers in the group.



Figure 3.3.

PTT's website advertising the weekly program of *Ruwatan Sukerto*, daily consultation for the business person [every night], and the weekly class of Javanese mysticism [*Ilmu Kebatinan Jawa*] <http://paguyubantritunggal.net/> (Accessed October 20, 2011)

Even though I had heard about the PTT and knew of its publications through print media, from its local television show, and from its cultural activities, I had never visited its clinic and *sanggar*, the secretariat and main location for the activities of the centre. On my way to the clinic, having tried to follow the directions on the map, I got lost. I decided to ask a lady standing in an alley-way. Before I opened my mouth, she said spontaneously, as if she had known what I was looking for: “*Balai Pengobatan?*” [Are you going to the clinics?]. I replied: “Yes mom”. Then she showed me the way I had to go.

I continued my journey, following the lady's instructions. Evidently, finding the main PTT activities was not overly difficult. Once I arrived in front of the secretariat, a man stood up and showed me where to park my motorcycle, in a neighbour's yard. As I approached the building, a young lady wearing traditional Javanese clothes (*jarit*<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *Jarit* or *Jarik* is batik fabric worn as clothing, wrapped around a woman from the waist down.

and black *kebaya* [traditional blouse-dress]), welcomed me with questions: “Have you been here before? Who is sick?” I replied: “Not yet,” and explained my intention. She then asked me to wait for a moment, indicating a bench.

While waiting for my turn, I read some brochures. Suddenly, a man approached me, so I moved up to give him space. The waiting room smelt strongly of incense, which I found rather disconcerting, as normally such a practice is used to conjure up spirits. A creepy, unsmiling officer came out of a room. A male guest went into the same room and came out again a minute later, saying farewell. As soon as he came out, another young man came into the reception area and showed his treatment card to the officer.

About five minutes later, a man known as Mas Jeje came out from a corridor, asking me to go into the same small room that I had been observing previously. I explained that my purpose was to carry out research on the PTT. He questioned me about my research topic and then asked me to request a research permit from Romo Sapto, the founder and leader of the PTT. I thanked him and said goodbye. When coming out of the room, I saw a very big man, who looked very strong, waiting in the reception room, and wondered if he had come to here to obtain *kasekten* [a supernatural power].

The alternative healing clinic is one of the PTT’s main activities. The clinic is well managed by the receptionist, and has a waiting room, as well as therapy rooms. It opens seven days a week, from 8 am to 4 pm. About fifty to a hundred patients come every day. In order to monitor the progress of patients, the PTT documents their personal data in folders, just as medical records are filed.

The PTT prefers to align its healing method with holistic and meditation health therapies, claiming to consider not only physical treatments but also spiritual.<sup>50</sup> One of the famous methods used in the clinic is transferring human diseases to animals, usually goats, lambs, or rabbits, depending on the severity of the illness. The more severe the disease, the bigger the animal required.

As commonly happens in occult practices and alternative healing services, the PTT also works with distance therapy. This service is usually performed on television and radio shows. It also frequently happens that patients cannot make the journey to

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<sup>50</sup> Believing in the unity of mind, body and soul, and also in a profound submission to God, PTT uses various methods and mediums in the healing process, such as water, sound, photos, and animals, to transfer energy to the patients or remove disease from them. Ali describes the work of the holistic healing: “As long as there is “a triangle” that connects the patient, the healer and God, the healing can be attained. From this holistic perspective, *ruwatan*, as one of the main rituals of paguyuban, is considered basically as the action of healing because it tries to relieve people from a spiritual illness that [is] making his/her life full of difficulty or contains bad luck” (Ali, 2006, pp. 197-198).

the clinic due to their acute illness. In such cases, a representative of the patient comes to the clinic bringing the patient's photograph and other data, such as date of birth, *weton* [the day of birth based on Javanese calendar], and a sample of the patient's clothes. The healer then diagnoses the patient to decide what action should be taken.

For example, one day four people came to the clinic to perform transferring a disease to an animal, a lamb. According to Mas Jeje, they came on behalf of their father, who had a very acute disease and could not attend the clinic himself. A five-month-old lamb, with all four legs tied, was laid down on the floor, held by a PTT staff member. Four family members representing the patient, two women and two men, sat cross-legged beside the lamb. Mas Jeje, who led the process of transfer, sat cross-legged, facing the lamb and the representatives of the patient's family. Another PTT staff member was burning incense on a traditional stove. Mas Jeje began reading Javanese mantras and prayers. The smoke continued steaming from the incense, producing a strong aroma and creating an atmosphere of sacredness. The patient's family solemnly listened to Mas Jeje's prayers. I was standing about three metres from him, but could not catch the exact details of the spells and prayers, because he was speaking very quickly. Having read the prayers, Mas Jeje moved his right hand from the bodies of the patient's family onto the lamb's body several times, as if he was pulling something very heavy from the person's body and putting it into the body of the lamb. Occasionally I heard Mas Jeje breathe deeply, as if he was holding a heavy weight, and his body became wet with sweat.



Figure 3.4.

Ritual of transferring disease to a lamb

About 10 minutes' later, the transfer process was complete. Mas Jeje then invited his colleague, a rough fifty-year-old man, to slaughter the lamb, then dissect the stomach and take it out. Mas Jeje explained to us the signs that the disease had been transferred. These were, among others, blood clots in the heart, the pale colour of the heart instead of a fresh red colour, a number of clots in the intestine, and several of the lamb's organs that were still moving even though it was dead. According to Mas Jeje, this movement was powered by the disease, since the bacteria and viruses of the patient had been transferred to the organs of the lamb. Insisting that the method of transferring disease is not a fake, Mas Jeje said: "With all this evidence, how can anyone claim our method is false?"

Apart from on-the-spot treatments, the PTT also organizes visiting treatments called *anjangsana*. The practice consists of a visit by a healer or representative of the group to the patients at their home, to check on their progress after the therapy. The *anjangsana* is usually done at night.

To promote its spiritual efficacies, the PTT publishes patients' testimonials, in local weekly newspapers, brochures, and on the group's website. The testimonials mostly consist of four parts. The first is a description of the history of the patient's suffering from a chronic problem or acute illness, which has been treated for a long time in hospital, at a high cost but with no significant progress. Some testimonials also explain how the patient found the clinic. The second part is a testimonial noting that the problem has been solved, or the acute illnesses cured, after undergoing therapy in the PTT's clinics. The third is a statement of gratitude to the PTT healer who has helped the patient, and the fourth, the details of the patient's address and phone number, to let readers verify from the patient that that the testimony is true.

Below is an example of patients' testimonials, from someone who recovered from lung cancer.

...Having been under observation in hospital for three days, a doctor said that I had got a lung cancer. As a low-income person, I was shocked and of course could not afford the cost of an operation. I then decided to go home.

I overheard rumours in my village that one of my neighbours had been cured after being treated in the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* without any medical treatment and at a reasonable cost. I therefore decided to find out more about the group. They explained to me that the method of transferring diseases to animals was the best method for me. With all my belief and submission, *Kangmas* Jeje, as the appointed PTT healer, then transferred my disease to a goat.

*Alhamdulillah*, shortly after the treatment, I felt better. My coughing immediately lessened and I felt fresh and regenerated. Even so, I could hardly believe all the good things happening in myself. My curiosity drove me to have a medical check up. The X-ray result showed that the cancer had gone. *Subhanallah*, I was so happy. Unbelievable, what an incredible experience..." (Budi Maryono, Samar RT 03 Sewon Bantul, Yogyakarta, quoted from *Minggu Pagi*)

Another testimonial concerns a couple who had a baby after the therapy. They had been married for about eight years, but had not yet had a baby. Following their treatment with holistic healing in the PTT clinics, a healthy baby was finally born to them.

Thanks be to God, after waiting for years since I got married 8 years ago, and having been treated with *ruwatan* and other routine therapies in the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*, on 7 April 2008 we finally got our new born son. We named him Gama Pamenang Jati, a smart and talkative boy. We are so proud of him. Thank you *Satguru Romo Sapto* and *Kang Mas Jeje* (Gatot and Haryanti, Jlatren, Jogotirto, Berbah, Sleman).

Yet another is from a patient who is now a healer, after participating in training for holistic healing.

I was a patient at the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* as a hyperuricemia, or gout, sufferer. I never thought that the therapy process, which is followed by participating in forty-five minutes of the *babahan hawa sanga* [controlling nine holes of human body] training program for the basic and the first level, would finally heal my gout. The training was so worthwhile for me in terms of accelerating healing and increasing my insight. I was so enlightened. My mind and soul have become so peaceful. I have even succeeded in helping my relatives by healing their strokes, as well as paralysed and brain nerves in a short period of time. I thank *Satguru Romo Sapto*. (Mudiono/Nanang (38), Sleman Permai II E8 Sanggrahan Tlogoadi Mlati Sleman).

The above testimonials would be an effective means for the PTT to advertise that the group's spiritual services are efficacious, and so attract many people to the clinic.

In the same way as do other spiritual centres, the PTT also promotes spirituality as a problem solver for all manner of illnesses, both physical and non-physical. To some extent, this kind of promotion even undermines medical treatments. For example, an advertisement on the internet, with pictures demonstrating how certain diseases can be transferred to a goat, states: "If medical treatments fail, we are ready to transfer those diseases into animals, either remotely or on the spot".<sup>51</sup>

Seen in the context of the current development of medical services in Yogyakarta, and in Indonesia in general, the alternative healing activities of the PTT are basically part of the group's protest and resistance to modern practices of medical treatment. In Yogyakarta, as in other modern cities, there is a trend toward shifting from healing services to healing industries. In the past, governments or religion-based foundations operated hospitals as part of their social services. Currently, due to the growth of the medical industry, the government has permitted private companies to manage hospitals. There are even international hospitals operating in Yogyakarta. The transformation of healing services from government or religious foundations to private companies marks the shift of healing from social services to business industries. As business institutions, hospitals are now doing their best to meet the needs of those who can

<sup>51</sup> See <http://kangmasjeje.blog.friendster.com/> (Accessed April 7, 2009).

afford the cost. The more hospitals provide medical treatment based on such a tariff, the less low-income people can afford the services. The PTT's healing activities are, therefore, the group's effort to provide alternative healing services to low-income people who feel overwhelmed by the increasing cost of medical treatments. When I attempted to clarify with Sapto, whether the alternative healing service of the PTT is the group's protest against the capitalization of health services, he replied quietly: "*Ya memang*" [Yes, it is].<sup>52</sup>

Claiming to be the first holistic healing service, the PTT asserts that its treatment is more complete than regular medical treatments, because it covers both the physical and the spiritual. The fact that the group does not accept billing payments, only donations, at first glance indicates that the treatment is on the basis of a social service, rather than for accumulating material profits. However, when I sought confirmation of this from the PTT healer, it emerged that there were, in fact, such 'transactions' for the healing treatment, although not exactly in the terms of regular commercialization. As stated by Mas Sumbo, the standard rate for the treatment of transferring disease to a goat is Rp. 1,750,000.00 (about A\$ 205.00, with currency exchange rate of A\$ 1 = Rp. 8,500.00), although this is never published in the centre's advertisement. This shows that the service is not free at all, meaning that the centre is trying to avoid a financial deficit. The notion that the service is based on a voluntary contribution still encourages patients to spend a certain amount of money.

### 3.4.2. Ruwatan

*Ruwatan* is a ritual of Javanese exorcism, for the protection of threatened people, who are covered by dangerous magical radiation and are thereby open to attack by the god Kala (Groenendaal, 1998, p. 114). Normally, in a complete form, the ritual was held with a *wayang* performance entitled *Murwakala*.<sup>53</sup> In the PTT, *ruwatan* is

<sup>52</sup> Sapto's statement in the monthly discussion at the Laboratory of Religion and Local Culture, Faculty of Ushuluddin, Religious Studies and Islamic Thought, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University of Yogyakarta, April 2010, where I was the moderator.

<sup>53</sup> The origin and meaning of the *ruwatan* is embedded in the *wayang* [shadow puppet] story entitled *Murwakala*, describing the demonic god Kala, who is the ill-begotten son of the god Guru, and wants to eat human flesh. The god Guru therefore banishes Kala to the Middle World, accompanied by the goddess Uma. Kala and Durga (the demonic aspect of Uma) live at the field of death called *Setra Gandamay*, and they want to eat *sukerto* people. To protect mankind from being devoured by Kala and Durga, the gods Narada, Brahma and Visnu descend to the earth, telling the people about the true identity of Kala and Durga. The three gods perform a *wayang* show, masquerading as a drummer, *gender* [musician], and a *dalang* [puppeteer]. The *wayang* story is about *murwa* [birth or beginning] of Kala. Another chronicle, *Tantu Pangelaran*, describes the same notion of the danger of Kala to mankind, but it tells of different actions of the gods who are involved in the story (Groenendaal, 1998, p. 114). Another story referring to the origin of *ruwatan* is *Kidung Sundalama*. Subadilinata explains that the *Kidung Sudamala* is among the classical texts explaining the story of *ruwatan*. The text describes the exorcism of Batari Durga. She was the ugly-giant goddess and became

held in a modest way and is promoted as a means to avoiding any potential misfortunes of *sukerto* people, as well as to heal certain diseases. The spiritual process of *ruwatan*, it was believed, would clean up negative energy that had been observed in the human body, mind, and spirit. After having a *ruwatan*, people will find harmony in their entire lives, in all kinds of situations, as well as being protected from misfortunes.

The PTT routinely conducts *ruwatan bersama* [collective exorcism ritual]. To invite more people to be involved in the program, the group publishes flyers as advertisements, or sometimes gives press releases to the local newspapers. Below is their description of the *ruwatan*.

In its flyers and on its website, the PTT offers seven types of *ruwatan*, each of which has specific efficacy. The first is *ruwatan* for people who have 'hot' magical energy [*ruwat orang-orang sukerto*], such as an only male child [*ontang-anting*], an only female child [*anting-unting*], two sons in a family [*uger-uger lawang*], two daughters in a family [*kembang sepasang*], a family with five sons [*pendhawa*], and a family with five daughters [*pendhawa ngayomi*]. The second is healing exorcism [*ruwat penyembuhan*] to heal both magical and medical illness. According to the PTT, this kind of *ruwatan* is suitable for sufferers of prolonged sickness that is difficult to cure. The third is prestigious exorcism [*ruwat wibawa*], to increase human dignity in relationships, in family, business, and career. This *ruwatan* will help people to find their spouse, solve their family problems, and raise their standing, and is suitable for the businessperson, salesperson or artist, who has just started a business. The fourth is misfortune exorcism [*ruwat pengapesan*], which will protect people from being cheated, slandered, stressed, and from other bad luck. This package of *ruwatan* is recommended for women who have difficulty having a child, university students who want to have a better future, as well as ex-convicts who want to clear their name. The fifth is business exorcism [*ruwat usaha*] for businesspersons who are experiencing problems. The sixth is magical protection exorcism [*ruwat pagar gaib*] that will magically protect any company or personal property. The seventh is unseen assault exorcism [*ruwat pengisian kesekten gaib*], which has among its efficacies protecting people from any physical and magical attack such as from a sharp weapon, witchcraft, or criminal hypnotism [*gendam*].

On the night I was there, about thirty people were exorcized. Most of them were common people, intending to cleanse themselves of any *sukerto* [misfortunes]. They had heard of the program from relatives or colleagues who are actively active involved in the PTT, or from the group's flyers. Usually, people who wanted to become members or spiritual pupils of the group were also initiated by such a *ruwatan*. During

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again the angel Dewi Uma after she was exorcized by Sadewa. Through the *ruwatan*, the ugly face of Batari Durga and her bad life in *Setra Gandamayu* was replaced, she became beautiful and had a happy life (Subalidinata, NY, p. 64).

the ritual, they wore casual clothes. Some females just wore housedresses, or t-shirts with shorts or culottes, while the males wore shorts with t-shirts. Some were even shirtless.

The *ruwatan* was led by Sapto's assistant. According to one PTT member (who wore *jarik*, a black *beskap* and *blangkon*), Romo Sapto usually leads the ritual himself. Only if he has other more important agendas does he delegate the ritual to his main assistant, Kangmas Jeje. This delegation also frequently happens in PTT rituals at other cities outside Yogyakarta.

Other people attending the ritual were PTT members who were also members of the program committee—one as a photographer, four as incense burners in the four corners, one who spread flowers, rice and *zafaron* oil—and others were *pengombyong* [supporters].

Before entering the *ruwatan* room, participants were annointed with flower-water and *zafaron* oil, just like a *wudhu* for Muslims before performing *shalah*, although not in exactly the same way. I got the sense that the group tries to connect the ritual with religious teaching, as nothing that they performed was in contradiction with religion. When I asked one of the committee whether the ritual had begun, he replied that they were preparing for the ritual, changing clothes and washing their feet. "They are taking a *wudlu* [ablution]", he said.

The ritual was held in Sapto's big house, in a hall about ten metres by thirty metres in size, where Sapto usually paints. The hall consists of two parts and is divided by two small fishponds and a path a metre wide. The south side is about the size of a badminton court and is the main area for rituals, whereas the north is for PTT members. In the east hall, lined up from the south are three bathrooms, an altar with a statue of Buddha and Hindu, and a *mushalla*. According to a PTT activist, below the hall is a cave for meditation.

Next to the hall, on the north side, there is a *pendopo*,<sup>54</sup> a square room about eight metres by eight metres, decorated with a giant picture of the Yogyakarta King, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, and his empress. In the middle of the *pendopo* is a set of aristocratic style chairs, and dozens of spears surround the room that, according to Sapto, include collections from the Majapahit era, in the seventh to eighth centuries. On the night of the *ruwatan*, families and relatives of the *ruwatan* participants who came to give support were in this *pendopo*.

The *ruwatan* began at about 8 pm, but most participants had come to the centre an hour before the ritual. People from outside Yogyakarta were even already in the centre by 5 pm. Some of them came to the centre individually, by motorcycle, and some came in groups, by car. Judging from the brands and types of cars parked in the

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<sup>54</sup> *Pendopo* is a Javanese large open veranda that serves as an audience hall and for other common activities.

parking lot, most participants were economically from the lower middle classes. And from the police serial numbers of the cars, I knew some of them came from Sleman, Bantul, Kulon Progo, Magelang, Solo, Boyolali, and even East Java.

During the *ruwatan*, all lamps in the hall were turned off. All participants lay down on the floor, covered by *jarit*. The only light in the hall came from a five-watt light bulb on the left of the front area and a few candles on the floor. In an atmosphere created by the sound of raindrops outside the building, the darkness of the room, the silence of the audience and the aroma of zavaron oil blended with burning incense, I heard Mas Jeje faintly chant some Javanese mantras.

The ritual was completed at about 10 pm. The atmosphere dissipated soon after all the lamps in the hall were turned on. Participants got up from the floor. Some of them rubbed their eyes as if waking from sleep. Behind me, a committee member wearing Javanese clothes said to his colleague that he had heard participants snoring during the ritual. Other committee members tidied up the *jarit* used for covering participants. Others collected participants' clothes which had been worn during the *ruwatan*. Families and relatives of the participants came out from the *pendopo*, rushing into the hall and giving them a change of clothes.

According to PTT staff, the clothes used by participants during the *ruwatan* should be removed and then be immersed [*dilarung*] in the *Laut Selatan* [South sea of Java]. Participants have to change into other clothes and wear them for at least twenty-four hours after the ritual. At this time, the committee do the *larung* ritual together, so participants just put their clothes in a plastic wrap and stack them near the fishpond in the hall.

The *ruwatan* participants then said goodbye to each other, and to the members of the community, one by one. The non-member participants left the group with a collective goodbye. The members of the PTT left the forum with special farewells, shaking hands with hands clenched like a couple about to do armwrestling. This special gesture reminded me of the gesture of pro-democracy activist university students when they meet each other, signifying that they are in mutual understanding and hold the same ideology. Some of the remaining members in the hall were Sapto's spiritual disciples with their families, waiting for the next event, namely *slametan* for spiritual graduation.

It is interesting to analyse why many people are still fond of performing the *ruwatan* in order to avoid misfortune and to have a better life in the future. It is well-known that there are a number of modern groups, considered as growth movements, actively promoting seminars and training programs on achievement motivation, smart investment, wealth management, mind navigation, spiritual quotient, and many other seminars and training programs dedicated to giving smart formulas for a better life. However, there are still a number of people who prefer to rely on the *ruwatan*, rather than on the modern techniques, as a means of achieving a better future. Growth groups mostly provide formulas for success based on 'exogenous formulas', such as self-

management, humanistic psychology, neuro-linguistic-programming, and many others, which offer methods and techniques for self-development, positive thinking, and other practical skills. In contrast, the PTT offers indigenous formulas of spiritual tradition for nurturing the human heart, in order to develop positive thoughts and logic. By participating in the *ruwatan*, people tend to feel as if they have been reborn and regenerated, with new energy and a full spirit of life. Because their *sukerto* [misfortunes] have been exorcized in the *ruwatan*, they have more positive attitudes towards their future. Hence, the *ruwatan* is not about developing thinking skills and practical formulas for a better life—as are usually provided by the various spiritual-managerial-psychological programs of the modern and religious-based growth movements—but is more about providing a ‘sense of well being’ for the participants.

One might still argue that the goals of both the managerial-spiritual-psychological growth programs and the *ruwatan* are basically the same, namely to encourage people’s optimism in dealing with their lives and futures. Nevertheless, the two have significant differences. First, the optimism engendered by the managerial-spiritual-psychological growth programs is gained through active involvement by the participants during the training programs, in which they have to pay attention to the trainers and practise the skills and formulas in their daily lives, whereas in the *ruwatan*, participants tend to be passive, because everything is done by the spiritual master. Second, to participate in the spiritual program of the former, participants have to spend a certain amount of money, that the lower-middle classes cannot afford. To participate in the latter, participants are only supposed to donate as much as they can. Third, as a self-help therapy, the former programs build the capacity of the participants to handle psychological and managerial problems which are inherent to humans, such as laziness, negative thinking, miscalculation, pessimism, a sense of inferiority, and so forth, while the latter frames these problems as being caused by something beyond the human, namely bad spiritual powers, regarded as negative energies.

In summary, I would say that the continued practice of the *ruwatan*, amid the popularity of modern growth movements, is a good example of PPT’s response to some of the challenges of modernity. In the huge market of these growth movements in Yogyakarta, the PTT offers *ruwatan* as a formula to reach a sense of well-being and a better future, based on human *rasa*<sup>55</sup> and *nalar*.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the persistent practice of the *ruwatan* in a modernizing city is a kind of strategy by the PTT to bring the Javanese spiritual tradition—which is now vulnerable to being relegated to the periphery—back to the centre of modern consciousness.

Based on the explanation given above, it is clear that the practices of alternative healing and *ruwatan* in the PTT exemplify commodification of spiritual efficacy. The

<sup>55</sup> *Rasa* is Javanese for ‘sense’.

<sup>56</sup> *Nalar* is Javanese a term meaning ‘logic’.

sociological embodiment of the PTT as a *Gemeinschaft* [*paguyuban*] does not mean the group is free from commodification of spiritual services. In fact, in addition to being the means for soft protest, the PTT has treated efficacies of spiritual practices (healthy and successful life) as ‘commodities’ and then marketed them to the public. In return, people who want to access spiritual efficacies promoted by the PTT are persuaded to ‘purchase’ the services. The group’s notion that the services are based on voluntary gifts does not mean they are noncommercial. I would even argue that the commodification of spiritual efficacy in the PTT is an example of commercialization of spiritual efficacy in a broader context. It is true that the PTT is not actually a commercial organization in the narrow sense, since the group does not pay taxes on the sale of goods and services, but it still accepts income from donations and even has a standard tariff for the services, although this is negotiable.

Finally, when we consider the PTT according to the Human Potential Movement parameters, we can find some HPM elements in the group. The charismatic leadership, the entrepreneurial character, and the group’s exploration of spirituality as a basis for self-help programs for acquiring this-worldly prosperity, are among the PTT characteristics which are comparable to those of the Western Human Potential Movement [HPM] (Puttick, 2000; Schur, 1976). However, unlike the Western HPM that borrows Eastern spiritual traditions from Buddhism and the Osho movement (Plumb, 1993; Puttick, 2000), the PTT reproduces local spiritual traditions of the *kejawan*.

### 3.5. Conclusion

The PTT’s effort to revitalize Javanese spiritual tradition, and the exploration of its efficacy as a means for protest, exemplifies how a local-based spiritual group responds to the challenges and pressures of modern life. The cultural resistance of the PTT is directed towards both the state and the puritanical wings of world religions, mainly Islam. This is because these two institutions are among those supporters of modernity that have forced the local-spiritual traditions to the periphery of modern tradition. In empowering Javanese spiritual traditions, the resistance of the PTT to the pressure and challenges of modernity can be categorized in the following soft protest: (1) criticizing the state, which has not provided equal opportunity to local traditions to exist and cultivate their spiritual legacies; (2) criticizing the literal-puritanical point of view of Muslim groups, that fails to foster social harmony; and (3) resisting modernity, secularization, and globalization that uproot Indonesian people from their national character so that they fall into accepting capitalistic points of view.

It is interesting that in the PTT’s soft protest, under the banner of the revival of local tradition, ‘superstition’ is recycled as a valued spiritual heritage and promoted as an efficacious means for combatting the problem of modernity. With its entrepreneurial, charismatic leadership, and packaged spiritual programs for this-worldly prosperity, the group is also, to some extent, comparable to the Western HPM. Al-

though the PTT might be best categorized as a group combining protest and efficacy as a means for resisting the challenges of modernity, it is not immune from the practice of commodification of spirituality. In the next chapter I will explore the transformation of a spiritual group from occult-based spirituality to an orthodox Sufi and modern orientation, indicating the change in response of a Yogyakarta spiritual centre from resistance to, to involvement in, modernity.

# Chapter 4

## From Kasar to Alus: Hybrid Spirituality in the Bhakti Nusantara

The current commodification of spiritual efficacy in the *Bhakti Nusantara* [BN] looks Islamic, although the group, in fact, grows out of a highly problematic cultural complex within the tradition of *kejawen* [Javanese spiritual practices], *klenik* or occultism. The spiritual efficacies of the group have been reshaped as ‘modern and Islamic’ by linking them to the notions of ‘spirituality’ and Sufism. It seems that ‘spirituality,’ loosely associated with Sufism and therefore with Islam, is now being used by the group to legitimize and popularize occultism.

This chapter presents an analysis of the *Bhakti Nusantara* [BN] as a new type of spiritual centre shifting from *spiritualitas kasar* [tough spirituality] associated with occult practices, to *spiritualitas alus* [gentle spirituality] associated with Sufism. I will show how the spiritual tenor of the group changes from, ‘hard occultism’ (promoting *kanuragan* [martial arts and supernatural power], *kekebalan* [invulnerability], *kesekten* [extra ordinary power] and *tenaga dalam* [inner power]), to ‘soft occultism’ by proposing soul power therapy based on Sufi litanies [*dhikr*]. The group is re-linking to Islam, practices which had become dissociated from it. As a result, spiritual products and services are promoted as being more Islamic and socially appropriate to modern lives. In a broader context, the transformation indicates the changing responses of the spiritual group to modernity—from resisting its pressures and challenges, as the PTT did, to getting involved in the opportunities presented by modern life.

#### 4.1. The Founding of the *Bhakti Nusantara*

The main figure behind the *Bhakti Nusantara* is Muhammad Basis, born in Brebes, Central Java, in 1966. Basis is a well-educated middle-class person who was attracted to the fringe of Javanese culture. He was able to gain some social prominence as a counter cultural figure but he was smart enough to avoid linking himself too closely to concepts (e.g. *tenaga dalam* [inner power], *klenik*, occultism) that would attract criticism from the mainstream middle class from which he came. He was also able to adapt his teaching in his group to appropriate new concepts and religious trends emerging as popular culture changed.

Basis claims to have started training in the supernatural and martial arts when he was in the fifth grade of elementary school. Initially his parents did not allow him to learn occultism, because in his village many people used occult formulas, such as *gendam* [magic-hypnotism], *anti bacok* [anti jabbing], and *bisa menghilang* [disappearing] mostly for criminal actions. Without his parents' approval, Basis secretly kept going to learn, seeing almost all *orang sakti* [magic man] in Brebes. He would leave his home in the middle of the night and return in the morning. To finance his training in the supernatural, he stole neighbourhood property, such as mangos, bananas and rice, and sold them in the market (Interview with Muhammad Basis, May 18, 2010).

When Basis was in the second grade at the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* [Islamic Junior High School], he demonstrated his supernatural power and martial arts prowess by eating glass and stabbing his stomach with a sabre<sup>57</sup> at the school farewell ceremony. His father, who was the principal of the school, was shocked. He summoned Basis and interrogated him about his ability to perform such acts. After hearing the explanation of Basis's motives for learning and mastering occultism, his father agreed to Basis's study.

After finishing junior high school in Brebes, Basis went to Yogyakarta for his senior high school and university education. He graduated from the *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri* [the State Islamic Senior High School] 1 Yogyakarta in 1985, and from the undergraduate program of the Department of Arabic Literature, Faculty of Art and Literature Gadjah Mada University in 1991. In 1993, Basis finished his MBA (Master of Business Administration) program from HIPMI-IBMI Jakarta.

At school and at university, Basis was known as a student activist, involved in a number of student organizations. He was a chief of OSIS (*Organisasi Siswa Intra Sekolah* [the Inter-School Student Organization]) at his junior and senior high schools. At university, he was the university student senate chairman [*ketua senat mahasiswa*], and the chief editor of a student magazine, *Nafiri*.

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<sup>57</sup> Such a demonstration of invulnerability is common in shows of magical-performing art, known as the *jathilan* and *kuda lumping*, that are popular among Javanese villagers as part of *kesenian rakyat* [magic folk arts].

While at senior high school and university, Basis continued to hone his spiritual and occult capability through various spiritual training programs, such as *ilmu membuka mata ketiga* [opening the third eye] and *indra ke enam* [the sixth sense], and also studied at various *pesantren*. His spiritual journey continued after he graduated from university. Basis said: “After graduating from college, I went on studying *Ilmu Hikmah Sejati* [the true wisdom] in several areas of Cirebon, Kediri, Madura, Yogyakarta, Cianjur and various other cities” (Koesmoko et al., 2005, p. 46). Basis also noted that he joined a *tarekat* [Sufi order] group in Jombang, East Java, the Shidiqiyah Sufi order, until fourth grade (Interview with Muhammad Basis, May 18, 2010).

The *Bhakti Nusantara* group was based on an *ilham* [vision] he had in a dream, before 1995. In his dream, Basis met his late grandfather, K.H. Darmawangsa, who asked him to practise and promulgate his spiritual capability by setting up a *perguruan*, a spiritual training centre (Koesmoko et al., 2005, p. 46). In 1995, Basis started to initiate his group, and named it *Bhakti Nusantara* (literally meaning ‘devotion to nation’).

An official document of the group, entitled *Sebuah Perjalanan Dinamisasi Bhakti Nusantara, Dulu, Sekarang dan Yang Akan Datang* [A Dynamic Journey of the Bhakti Nusantara: Past, Present, and Future], written by Deni R. Sopandi, the current BN coordinator, records that Basis founded his group officially on April 15, 1998, in Yogyakarta. The document also records that the group has changed from one name to another, indicating the changing of its main focus.

In the beginning, the official name of the group was *Lembaga Seni Pernafasan Meditasi dan Tenaga Dalam Bhakti Nusantara* (LSPMTD BN [Institute for the Arts of Breath, Meditation and Inner Power]). In this era, the focus activities of the group were promoting aerobic gymnastics, meditation, and inner power, both as a means for attaining health and for mastering supernatural power.

In 2001, LSPMTD BN changed its name to PIHTI or *Padepokan Ilmu Hikmah Sejati Bhakti Nusantara* [Centre for True Wisdom Knowledge of Bhakti Nusantara]. During the PIHTI era, as can be seen from its new name, the BN expanded its services to include true wisdom knowledge, which, according to Gus Muhammad Basis (GMB), is noble and wisdom knowledge inherited by *walis* [Muslim saints] and then passed down through generations via the mechanism of *pengijazahan* [direct authentication and certification from a spiritual Guru to his disciples]. The BN also offered alternative healing services, accommodating various alternative healers, such as *tabib* [folk healer usually based on Arabic and Indian methods], *sinse* [folk healer based on Chinese tradition], and *ustadh ahli hikmah* [master of wisdom knowledge]. In addition to healing services, the group offered training programs for alternative healers. As a balance to the alternative therapies, under its commercial institution, the Bhakti Nusantara Inc., the group started to produce and sell various herbal medicines packaged in capsules, powders, etc., as well as many other health and spiritual products.

Finally, in early 2005, the BN changed its name to PUSPA JATI or *Pusat Penggalian Jati Diri* [Centre for Character Building] *Bhakti Nusantara*. In this era, the BN introduced the TEKAJI or *Terapi Kekuatan Jiwa* [Soul Power Therapy] training program, which is a self-management class combined with *dhikr* litanies, humanistic psychology, and meditation. The TEKAJI is now the main brand of the BN training program. The centre also established MASAIS or *Majlis Samudra Istighfar* [the Assembly of Ocean Forgiveness] whose main activities include performing collective *dhikr* and organizing *ziarah* [A. *ziyâra*, pilgrimage] to sacred sanctuaries of local and national Muslim saints.

In recent BN publications, Basis is introduced as GUS<sup>58</sup> MUHAMMAD BASIS, abbreviated as GMB. His full name and title, Dr H. Muhammad Basis, MBA, MRI, is usually written below his given name. A number of attributes indicating his authority and competency in spiritual and psychological training and consultancy, in spiritual and alternative healing, as well as in Islamic music and poetry, are also frequently described, such as: the grand master of character exploration [*Guru Besar Pusat Penggalian Jati Diri Bhakti Nusantara*]; nationally reputed trainer of soul power therapy [*trainer nasional 'Terapi Kekuatan Jiwa'*]; shepherd of the Assembly of Ocean Forgiveness [*Pengasuh Majelis Samudra Istighfar*]; master of divine and revealed therapy [*ahli terapi Ilahiyah dan ilhamiah*]; master of the *ruqyah*<sup>59</sup> for self-cleansing [*ahli ruqyah akbar 'tazkiyatun-nafs'*], and shepherd of the Islamic Music Group [*pengasuh group nasyid 'Eling Karepe'*]<sup>60</sup> for which his poems were composed as lyrics. The *Posmo* tab-

<sup>58</sup> Gus is an appellation to sons of *kyai*.

<sup>59</sup> *Ruqyah* [A. *ruqya*] is a therapy method involving recitation of certain verses of the Holy Quran. It is dedicated to supplications and is used as a means of treating sickness and other problems, mainly those caused by bad spirits, demons, and also physical diseases (Mission-Islam, 2010). Some Muslim groups consider that the *ruqyah* is an Islamic therapy method practised by the Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>60</sup> GMB's resume lists a number of books he has written, published by the Bhakti Nusantara Inc. His works show GMB's exploration of the efficacy of *dhikr* (in *Kedahsyatan Zikir* [The Virulence of Dhikr]), the importance of living in God's way (in *Hidup Menuju Jalan Allah* [Life to God]), management of the self (in *Manajemen Jati Diri* [Character Management]), and *Renungan Jati Diri* [Self Contemplation]). He has also released a series of audio cassettes and CDs showing his exploration of *dhikr* litanies, the power of the mind, and meditation as means for self-healing, character-building, and gaining success and prosperity in this world. These include: *Manajemen Jati Diri* [the management of character]; *Meditasi Penyembuhan Diri* [meditation as a means of self healing]; *Menemukan Jati Diri melalui Meditasi Zikir* [zikir and meditation as means for character building]; *Raih Sukses dengan Kekuatan Pikiran* [maximising the power of mind for success]; and *Penyembuhan Stress dengan Meditasi Jati Diri* [self meditation as a means of stress management]. In addition, GMB is also described as Managing Director of the *Lembaga Latihan Kerja Cipto Bhakti Husodo* [Bhakti Husodo Institute for Employee Training] Yogyakarta, President of *Himpunan Lembaga Latihan Seluruh Indonesia (HILLSI)* [Association of Indonesian Training Institutions]), Chief of *Institut Ju Jitsu Indonesia (IJI [Institute for Ju-Jitsu Martial Arts])* Yogyakarta region, Chief of 'ZAM-ZAM' guidance group for Hajj and Umrah, the President of *Majelis Persaudaraan Penyembuh Alternatif & Spiritualis Cinta Indonesia* (MAPPATI SUCI [the Assembly Fellowship of Alternative Healers and Spiritualists of Cinta Indonesia]), and a national instructor of the workshop on 'Alpha Energy – Essential Human Consciousness'.

loid<sup>61</sup> attributed Basis as an internationally reputed master of the *ruqyah* [*Ahli Ruqyah Internasional*] (Koesmoko et al., 2005, p. 45).

Among his community, GMB is considered as a special figure, holding a number of spiritual powers, because of which, people come to him asking for help. Deni Aden, current coordinator of the BN and GBM's main assistant, explained his experience before joining the group. Deni came to meet GMB about ten years ago. Deni said that he frequently lost his brand-name sandals and shoes. One day, while he was on the city bus, he read a flyer about GMB and the BN. Interested, he decided to meet GMB and ask for a solution to his problem. But Deni was disappointed, because GMB just said that his problem was a result of Deni's giving few *sedekah* [alms] and his infrequent *dhikr*. Deni had expected that GMB would tell him the name of the person who had taken his belongings. Although many people consider GMB as a charismatic figure, with various *daya linuwih* [extraordinary powers], in a number of forums GMB asserts that he is not a *dukun* [folk healer associated with occult practices], nor a *paranormal* [magician], nor a *kyai*. He prefers to be called just a *spiritualis* [spiritualist], who is not affiliated with any religious or *tarikat* groups.

#### 4.2. From *Kasar* to *Alus*: The Transformation of the BN

In 2005, the *Posmo* tabloid awarded GMB the 'Posmo Award 2005',<sup>62</sup> along with thirty-four *Spiritualis Indonesia* [Indonesian spiritualists]. In his profile, GMB was described as a figure who had been transformed from street spirituality to the Muslim way [*dari spiritualitas ilmu kejadugan ke jalan Muslim*]. When I clarified with him the meaning of his transformation, GMB explained it in the context of his spiritual centre. He drew an analogy between his centre's development and car speed-transmissions. GMB noted that the LSPMTD era, when the BN offered training on invulnerability and occultism [*kekebalan, anti bacok, anti api, anti duri, terawangan*, etc.], was the era of *kejadugan*. To GMB, this kind of occultism [the *ilmu katosan* and *kanuragan*] was a *spiritualitas kasar*, literally means 'tough spirituality', which is a very basic level of spiritual knowledge and practice, just like the first gear of a car.

<sup>61</sup> *Posmo*, is a weekly tabloid first published on March 15, 1999, amid the uncertainty in Indonesia after the decline of the New Order era in 1998. The word '*Posmo*' was taken from '*Posmodernisme*' [Postmodernism]. The idea behind publishing the tabloid was to provide alternative information, when the public was overwhelmed by political news. The main contents of the tabloid are about *suasana batin, spiritual, ritual dan agama* [esoteric dimensions of human beings, spiritual, ritual and religious]. As stated by the editor, the tabloid addresses, as its main readers, the religious community, Javanese centrists, *spiritualis* [spiritualists] and *paranormal*, religious people, *budayawan* [humanists, cultural activists], historians, and academics.

<sup>62</sup> The Posmo Award is a yearly award by the *Posmo* tabloid, dedicated to spiritualist, *paranormal* and alternative healers, that according to the editor, have contributed much to the development and continuation of the tabloid, by for example, advertising their spiritual programs and products in it.

Based on the LSPMTD's having operated successfully for a number of years, GMB upgraded its level to 'second gear', the PIHTI (*Padepokan Ilmu Hikmah Sejati* [Centre for the True Wisdom]), which promoted *ilmu hikmah*, the wisdom knowledge from Muslim saints. At this second level, the BN still offered *kanuragan* [supernatural power and invulnerability] but this was only thirty per cent of its teachings, the other seventy per cent being about the *ilmu hikmah*. According to GMB, the spiritual knowledge offered in the PIHTI, such as knowledge about opening *indra keenam* [the sixth sense] and *mata bathin* [inner consciousness] or *mata ketiga* [the third eye], was more refined than that offered in the LSPMTD. After running well in this second 'gear', the centre raised its level to PUSPA JATI (*Pusat Penggaloan Jati Diri* [Centre for Character Building]) and then to the MASAIS (*Majelis Samudra Istighfar* [the Assembly of of Ocean Forgiveness]). GMB asserted that the PUSPA JATI and MASAIS are kinds of '*spiritualitas alus*' [gentle spirituality], exploring people's inner potencies and self-awareness, as well as the power of the soul.

GMB therefore underlined the fact that the development of the BN was basically a transformation from *spiritualitas kasar* [tough spirituality] to *spiritualitas alus* [gentle spirituality]. GMB also compared the development of his group to the four spiritual stages in the *syari'at*, *tarikat*, *hakikat*, and *makrifat*. The LSPMTD era was equivalent to the *syari'at*, the PIHTI era was the *tarikat*, and the PUSPA JATI era is the *hakikat*.<sup>63</sup> The top level of spiritual stages in the BN is MASAIS. Why is MASAIS considered as the pinnacle of BN spiritual development? Because the main activity of MASAIS (which is an abbreviation of *Majelis Samudra Istighfar* [the assembly of ocean forgiveness]), is *dhikr*. Along with the *tahmid* (saying *Alḥamdu Lillâh* [Praise to be God]) and *tasbîḥ* (glorification of God by saying *Subḥâna Allah*), the *istighfâr* (saying *Astaghfiru Allâh* [I ask forgiveness of God]) is the most important litany intoned by the congregation during the ritual of *dhikr*. GMB asserts that asking God's forgiveness [*istighfâr*] is considered the best way to purify human's sins:

Human beings, since they were in the womb, and then are born, live, and die, naturally seek forgiveness. Whoever they are, *santri* [student of Islamic boarding schools], *ulama* [Muslim scholars], *wali* [Muslim saints], etc. if they leave the *istighfar*, they are useless. In my opinion, the nature of life is to purify God [*tasbîḥ*]. Purifying God means purifying oneself. To purify ourselves [from sins], we use *istighfar*. (Interview with GMB, May 18, 2010)

<sup>63</sup> GMB's analogy between the development of his groups and the spiritual stages in Sufi heritages is interesting. The terms *Syariah* [Ar. *Shari'a*, the Sacred Law], *Tarekat* [Ar. *Tariqa*, the Path], *Hakikat* [Ar. *Haqîqa*, the Divine Truth], as explained by S. H. Nasr, are interrelated concepts of Muslim's spiritual stages of transformation from the 'outward' religiosity to the 'inward' one. In Islamic mysticism, the final spiritual journey is called *Makrifah* [Ar. *Ma'rifa*], which is the esoteric knowledge of God, or Gnostic. These spiritual stages refer to spiritual journeys of individual Muslims who want to transform from the exoteric expression to the esoteric one. GMB, however, explores them in the context of his institution.

GMB further asserted that the changing focus of his teachings in the BN was nothing to do with the marketing strategy of the centre. The transformation was neither to adjust to market demands nor to follow contemporary trends. To GMB, all kinds of spiritual formulas and efficacies can be sold, depending on how they are packaged and marketed. “The transformation was rooted in [my] deep philosophical consideration,” he added.

Nevertheless, in the light of broad social changes at the time, and the emergence of other similar ‘spiritual training’ programs, the transformation of the BN from LSPMTD to PIHTI, and then to PUSPA JATI cannot be separated from the national milieu surrounding the group. It is worth noting here that since the early and mid 2000s, various publications, including spiritual manuals, self-help therapies, and other books, have explored the importance of Spiritual Quotient [SQ] for human success (e.g. *Rahasia Sukses Membangun Kecerdasan Emosi dan Spiritual ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Quotient): Berdasarkan 6 Rukun Iman dan 5 Rukun Islam* [the secret of developing ESQ (emotional spiritual quotient): based on the 6 principle of faith and 5 pillars of Islam] by Ary Ginanjar Agustian (2001); *The Power of Spiritual Intelligence: Sepuluh Cara Jadi orang yang Cerdas Secara Spiritual* [ten ways of being spiritually intelligent people], by Tony Buzan(2003); *Jelajah Diri: Panduan Psikologi Spiritual Membangun Kepribadian* [exploring the self: a guide to spiritual psychology for self-development] by Syaikh Fadhalla Haeri (2004)). The social, religious, economical, and political problems in Indonesia which came about as a result of the reformation in 1998, have, to some extent, caused national instability and raised people’s awareness of the need to search for their true identity. Exploring Sufi teachings, some popular Islamic preachers, like Aa Gym, Arifin Ilham, and Yusuf Mansur, emphasized their *dakwah* on the importance of introspection, self-management, and self-empowerment. A Jakarta based spiritual-psychological training centre, the ESQ Way 165 of Ary Ginanjar, also started offering, nationally, an Islamized hybrid of the Emotional and Spiritual Quotient training program.

GMB’s notion about the shift in his group from *spiritualitas kasar* to *spiritualitas halus*, also indicates the shift from ‘hard occultism’ to ‘soft occultism’ which is framed with practical Sufism, that makes the centre appear even more Islamic than before. The BN’s iconic program is no longer based on breath control or cultivating one’s inner power and other supernatural powers [*kanuragan*], but on TEKAJI (*Terapi Kekuatan Jiwa* [Soul Power Therapy]) based on *dhikr* litanies for this-worldly success. The TEKAJI program coordinator, Helmi Santoso, in his press release about the training program, explained that TEKAJI is dedicated to uncovering the secret of human character through cultivating spirituality, in order to strengthen self-awareness and self-control, to attain soul serenity, and to optimize the mind and the spirit for success. Hilmi further added that the training is also effective as a way of solving various problems, such as feeling sickly, nervous or restless, and for eliminating bad habits, such as laziness and lack of discipline (*Kedaulatan Rakyat*, Thursday, April 15, 2010).

About the trend that is now making the BN more Islamic, Deni Aden, the BN coordinator, explains:

Having witnessed numerous events and activities, I think there have been quite drastic changes since the era of *Puspa Jati Bhakti Nusantara*. In the past, BN used to offer *gemblengan* and *pengisian* [supernatural training and recharging], which is more on *kanuragan* [invulnerability] trainings, but these have been slowly reduced. This is not because of a decrease in enthusiasm. There are even still many people who want such invulnerability programs.

After GMB performed Hajj, in around 2005, there was a kind of obligation [to appear more Islamic]. Thousands of people have participated in various BN programs and activities, so why don't BN use them as media of *dakwah* [Islamic preaching]? All BN committees are Muslim, although the followers or members are not necessarily so. It is therefore understandable if the image of BN is now that of an Islamic institution. I think such an image is better rather than BN being considered as an unclear institution... Nowadays, almost ninety per cent of BN activities are Islamic. (Interview with Deni Aden, BN coordinator, 3 November 2009)

The face of Islam also appears on the BN's name board. As can be seen in the following picture, the group deliberately puts the words *Islami* [Islamic] and *syar'iyah* [appropriate to *shari'ah*] after programs and products of the BN, such as *Pusat Penggalan Jati Diri Islami* [Centre for Islamic Character Exploration], *Pelatihan Penyembuhan Alami & Islami* [Training for Islamic and Natural Healing], *Sedia Kaset-Kaset Zikir/Spiritual Islami*, and *Majelis Ruqyah Syar'iyah* [Assembly for *Ruqyah Syar'iyah*].



Figure 4.1.

BN name board and its list of programs with the words '*Islami*' and '*Syar'iyah*' added

Aden also confirmed that since the PUSPA JATI era, under coordination by MAS AIS, the BN introduced collective *dhikr* as one of its healing techniques. The assertion of the importance of individual *dhikr* was actually already implemented in the era of the LSPMTD and the PIHTI. However, since the PUSPA JATI era, the BN has implemented the healing *dhikr* in more systematic ways, organizing the ritual regularly and collectively, and spreading the formula of the healing *dhikr* through audio CDs and other means.

The MASAIS activities for organizing collective healing *dhikr*, when examined in a broader context, cannot be separated from the mushrooming of *majlis dhikr* groups in Indonesia since 2005, some of which have been aired on national televisions. Among popular groups and figures are Arifin Ilham of *Majlis Dhikr Az-Zikra* and Ustadh Haryono of *Majlis Dhikr Nurul Jannah*.

Another colouration of Islam appears in the BN program of *ziarah* to the graves of the *wali* [Muslim saints]. In Javanese society, pilgrimage to the ancestral sanctuary is part of spiritual efforts to solve “problems of everyday life that cannot be solved in the usual social environment” (Guillot & Chambert-Loir, 2007, p. 357). The Javanese spiritual world, basically, cannot be separated from the activity of this pilgrimage.<sup>64</sup> Understanding the needs of its congregation, the BN has, on a number of occasions, successfully organized collective *ziarah* to several *walis*’ tombs, giving new meaning and purpose to the *ziarah*.

*Ziarah* is commonly performed for the purpose of *ngalap berkah* [asking blessing]. Some pilgrims follow orthodox practices, asking for blessing from God, but many ask for it from their ancestors. They ask for this-worldly success, such as gaining *keprajan* [rank and degree in career],<sup>65</sup> being successful in business, or acquiring a certain spiritual power. According to the BN, the true purpose of *ziarah* is not to request blessings from the ancestors or *wali*, but from God. The prayer during *ziarah* should be directed to God, instead of to the ancestors. GMB explains that the reason for performing *ziarah* is to look for the place which has the highest spiritual energy. Muslim saints’ sanctuaries are, according to GMB, among locations accommodating high spiritual energy that make the prayers conducive to a response from God [*mustajab*]. Before the *ziarah*, GMB frequently reminded his congregation of its right meanings and purposes, so that they would have the correct intention [*niat*] and avoid misunderstanding of the BN *ziarah* program.

<sup>64</sup> Among the Javanese, either *santri* [devoted Muslim], *priyayi* [aristocrats], or *abangan* [ordinary people with a lessening devotion to Islam in favour of local customs] (to borrow Geertz’s trichotomy of Javanese socio-religious polarization), *ziarah* is an important spiritual journey to gain *barokah* (God’s reward transmitted through the *wali*), *keprajan*, or *perolehan* (inner worldly success). It was believed that every sacred tomb had a specific efficacy. Some people feel *cocok* (compatible with) and *jodo* (in partnership with) toward certain sacred tombs but not others. If one gets *perolehan* [gain a result] after doing *ziarah*, it means the particular sacred tomb attended is compatible [*cocok*] with her/him. For further discussion on various meanings of *ziarah* in Java, see ‘The Meaning Interpreted: The Concept of *Barokah* in *Ziarah*’ by Jamhari (2001).

<sup>65</sup> Javanese society believes that every sanctuary is beneficent in several ways. It is commonly understood that those who want to acquire *keprajan* [preferment], should do *ziarah* to the *Petilasan Parangkusumo*, a stone in Parang Kusumo beach believed to be the meeting point of Panembahan Senopati, the ancestor of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom in Yogyakarta, and the *Ratu Kidul*, which literally means the ‘Queen of South’, the spiritual guardian of the South Sea of Java (Gatot Murniatmo et al., 2003).

In his paper, entitled ‘*Ziarah Wali Songo*’ [pilgrimage to the nine Muslim saints], GMB argues that *ziarah* is not *syirik*<sup>66</sup> (A. *shirk*, heresy) and, furthermore, that it is recommended that Muslims do the *ziarah*, especially to the tombs of Muslim saints. However, he also admitted that there are many *ziarah* practitioners who perform falsely.

It is understandable that there is a stigma which prejudices some people against *ziarah* rituals. We do not close our eyes to the fact that many people do commit heresy, even *syirik* in their *ziarah*. They go to the tombs bringing offerings. As such, it is, *Insha Allah*, heresy. Worse still, they are crying, appealing to the body that lies in the grave. That is a serious *syirik*. According to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, one who goes to the tomb is obliged to: (1) say *salam* [greeting] to the deceased in the grave; (2) pray for the occupant of the tomb; (3) read the prayers that are taught of God through His messenger; (4) pray fervently for the sake of goodness in the world and the hereafter. The Prayer is intended only to God Almighty; do not plead to the occupant of the grave... Praying at the tombs of the saints of God is an effort to make our prayers efficacious. We pray to God in the holy tombs, in order that our wishes may be granted by Allah SWT. (Basis, 2008)

The above quotation implies that GMB asserts the BN *ziarah* program to be legitimate, free from heresy, unlike the *ziarah* usually performed by Javanese practitioners of occultism. In addition to explaining to the public that the BN *ziarah* program is not in contradiction to Islamic principles, GMB teaches his congregation how to perform *ziarah* correctly. This is important in the context of Yogyakarta, where a number of puritan Muslims and Salafi oriented groups still argue that *ziarah* rituals tend to lead to *syirik* practices.

Based on the above explanation, it is fair to say that in its social context, the transformation from *kasar* to *alus* has made the public face of the BN appear more Islamic, resembling orthodox Sufism. What does the BN’s transformation from *spiritualitas kasar* to *spiritualitas alus* mean in the context of Indonesian Islamic revival? At first glance, it shows the BN’s strategy in reshaping its occult practice in order to be included under the ‘brand’ of orthodox Islam. But why should the BN do this? To understand, we need to consider the historical conflict between Javanese occult practices and modern life in Indonesia.

In its March 12, 1983 edition, under the title ‘*Praktek Dukun Modern*’ [The Practice of the Modern Shaman], *Tempo*, a top national magazine, reported the use of occultism for secular activities, such as recruiting employees, mapping oil mining fields, finding lost airplanes, predicting the composition of a new cabinet team, as well as relieving diseases that doctors could no longer handle.

<sup>66</sup> *Syirik* (A. *Shirk*) is associating or putting something or someone in the place of God thus deviating from the principle of *tauhîd* or monotheism in Islam (see the meaning of *Shirk*, in the Oxford Dictionary of Islam).

Among several figures implementing spiritual practices and efficacies in business industries, is Sabdono Surohadikusumo, owner of real estate, catering, and general trading companies. In his interview with *Tempo*, Sabdono testified that mystical meditation had saved him from bankruptcy in the 1970s (*Tempo*, March 12, 1983, p. 65). Because of his experiences, Sabdono hoped the Indonesian government would use the spiritual efficacies mastered by Indonesian spiritualists [*paranormal*]. Sabdono was, in fact, one of the initiators of an organization of Indonesian *paranormals*. He was the leader of the *Yayasan Parapsikologi Semesta* (literally meaning ‘the foundation of universal parapsychology’).

*Tempo* also reported on business managers, who met at Jakarta, not for discussing the business prospects or assets of the company, but for meditating in order to meet their ancestors. The managers reported to their ancestor’s spirits, who came to them in a vision, on the development of their company, and asked about the possibilities of future plans. The meditation even went so far as to discuss with the spirits when the company should hire new employees. Sabdono, among businessmen pioneering the implementation of both modern management and mystical meditation, said: “If we want to hire someone for the level of staff managers, we also meditate. Vibrations we got from the meditation often suggested that these people should not be accepted because they were spendthrifts. It would be better to hire another person who is more reliable”. Sabdono further testified that running his business based only on modern management skills was not a guarantee for success. “Operating by normal business procedures caused my company to suffer the loss of two billion rupiah in 1976. Later on, I implemented meditation, which was used to attain peace of mind in my business” (*Tempo*, March 12, 1983, pp. 65-66).

*Tempo*’s report indicates the blending of something like occult practices with modern management, in a modern capitalist enterprise. The practice, however, seems to be rooted in non-specific religious traditions. It reflects the practice of Javanese spirituality of the *kebatinan*. The absence, in the report, of any reference to Sufi elements, might be because Sufi heritage practices in the early 1980s were still mostly carried out in a number of *pesantren*, established in rural areas. Furthermore, Indonesian discourses of Sufism, in this era, were still dominated by the notion that Sufism was incompatible with modern culture.

Currently, Sufi heritage traditions are flourishing in urban areas, manifested in the various hybrid groups of the Islamic spiritual centres, such as the *majlis dhikr* groups and other urban Sufi groups trying to avoid their spiritual expressions being considered as heresy. Many of these urban Sufi groups are even depicted as pro the modern culture. It seems to me, therefore, that the popularity of orthodox Sufi groups in the last two decades in Indonesia has pressured the heterodox Islamic spiritual groups to change their orientation, giving their occult based spirituality a more orthodox appearance.

In the context of Indonesian Islam in general, the shift from occultism to Sufism, as happened in the BN, indicates two possibilities. First, the transformation is a furtherstep, or at least a different path, towards fuller engagement with normative Islam, rather than merely a dialectical process between the Javanese *kebatinan* and Islamic spirituality, as indicated by Stange (1986, 1998). Unlike Subagya (1981) and other scholars who regard *kebatinan* as a ‘rival’ of Islam, or another dimension of Islam, instead of being an integral part of it, Stange asserts that Sufism, both at an esoteric level and as a philosophical mystique, has been absorbed in the inner dimension of the Javanese (1998, p. 244). He also notes that the Islamization of Java has reached even to the “recesses of Javanese spiritual life”:

When we approach Islam as a mode of discourse and inner orientation, rather than in strictly doctrinal and ritual terms, it becomes evident that the Islamization of Java has reached farther into the recesses of Javanese spiritual life than we would otherwise suspect. (Stange, 1986, p. 107)



However, if Islam has already been absorbed into the deep religious practices of Javanese people, why should a spiritual group like the BN still be trying to Islamize Javanese occultism? Perhaps the answer to this question can be traced back to the unclear theological status of the boundary between occultism and Sufism-mysticism. While the practice of teaching and learning about supernatural powers, invulnerability and many ‘magical’ formulas is still broadly performed by popular Sufism-mysticism, under the umbrella of *ilmu hikmah*, the Muslim reformers tend to see the practice as *syirik* [deviationist], indicating a blending of magic, sorcery, and Islamic mysticism. The government, as one of the sponsors of modernization, also regards magical practices as backward (Farrer, 2009, pp. 52-53), potentially hindering state development. From this perspective, the Islamization of occultism in the BN seems to be about contesting whether occultism is lawful and permissible in Islam.

In the case of the BN, when I sought to confirm from GMB the matter of transformation from occult to the more Sufi oriented practices, he did not explicitly answer from a perspective of Islamic theological discourse. Rather, he explained it from his *dakwah* strategy, saying that in the past, occult practitioners were close to criminals. People studied invulnerability and other supernatural powers to facilitate their criminal actions—for example, swindlers, pickpockets, thieves, and robbers. To GMB, mastering occultism was a starting point for his *dakwah*. It was just another way to call people to Islam. Once they were in the BN members group, they would be led to the ‘true Islam’ (Interview with GMB, May 18, 2010).

Thus it can be said, that Islamization, in terms of increased Islamic expression, occurs not only in political arenas and in other symbolic appearances in public spheres, but also in the inner dimension of spiritual expression associated with occult practices. The more visible picture of Islam in Indonesian public life, after the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998, has driven a number of Islamic groups to present their version

of 'true Islam'. Interestingly, the contest is taking place not only in the political field and in people's outer appearances, but also in their inner spiritual world. Based on his fieldwork, Timothy Daniels (2009, pp. 55-80) finds what he calls 'Contesting Islamic Discourse' among alternative healers in Yogyakarta associated with Javanese occult *dukun*, Sufis *kyai* and *salafi*-oriented *ustadh*. Even alternative healers associated with *dukun*, *orang pintar* or paranormals, whose practices are totally rooted in *kejawen* occult science, claim that their services are 'Islamic'. To convince the Muslim community of this, they go so far as to adopt Islamic instruments in their alternative clinics.

Although in a more symbolic way, the Islamization of Javanese occultism also occurs among other Indonesian *paranormals* promoting their spiritual efficacies in tabloids or magazines. For example, the *Liberty* magazine shows a woman with *jilbab* [headscarf] advertising her spiritual centre, the *Padepokan Mama Hajjah Sri Maslachah*, and promoting *ruwatan* services to solve various problems in areas such as career and love. The insertion of 'Hajjah' before her name asserts that she is religiously good, because she has performed a pilgrimage to Mecca. Likewise, another advertisement depicts a woman spiritualist with *jilbab*, known as *Mama Sri*, promoting her ability to provide services for *pagar gaib* [supernatural protection], *pengasih* [attracting love], and *kemakmuran* [increasing prosperity] (*Liberty*, July 12-20, 2010, pp. 94, 119). Such symbolic Islamization is not exclusive to female spiritualists. For male spiritualists, Islamization was achieved, for example, by adding 'Gus' [son of a *kyai*] before their real name, wearing a turban, holding chaplet for *dhikr* (*tasbeih*) and other Islamic symbols.

The second possible meaning of the transformation from occult based spirituality to the more Sufism-oriented spirituality is that it shows a continuation of the contest between Islamic spiritual efficacies and local occultism, in the secular arena. Looking at advertisements in local publications in Yogyakarta, such as *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, *Merapi*, and *Minggu Pagi*, one will easily find advertisements promoting various occult products like *pengasih*, *penglaris*, *buka aura*, *pasang susuk*, *tolak bala*, [attracting love, attracting customers, opening one's aura, installing spiritual implants, protecting oneself from any misfortunes] and other alternative healings. To Muslim spiritualists, these promoted occult spiritual products are regarded as unauthentic and, for some orthodox groups, are even categorized as *shirk*. Nevertheless, their caution is not effective in protecting the ordinary Muslim from dealing with these occult practices. Having transformed to Sufi oriented spirituality, the BN, as an Islamic spiritual centre, tries to provide spiritual efficacies which are claimed to be more Islamic, more religiously valid, and better, than the regular 'occultisms' offered by *dukun* and *paranormal*. Some Indonesian Muslim spiritual practitioners, like GMB, dream of transforming Indonesian public life from *dukun* to Islamic spirituality.

#### 4.3. Commodification of Spiritual Efficacy in the BN

Unlike the *kebatinan* groups, that mostly consider exploitation of spiritual efficacies for helping other people as a controversial issue<sup>67</sup>, the BN is a spiritual centre with modern management, representing the corporatization of spiritual services and efficacies. Settled in a permanent building, equipped with receptionist table, waiting room, therapy room, production room, as well as staff and committee rooms, the centre opens daily, from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm.

BN programs are well managed, representing the professionalization of a spiritual centre by implementing rational calculation and planning. Before being launched to the public, BN programs are discussed and assessed by BN committees, to ascertain their feasibility and running costs. The BN coordinator explained that the committees would calculate how much money the centre should spend for training kits, promotions and accommodation, as well as for honorariums for trainers and staff. Having established the operational cost, the group then determines how much participants should pay for taking part in the program. Usually, the BN publishes its agenda through local newspapers and radio stations, a national tabloid, and flyers and brochures from the centre.

So far, the BN has carried out public programs such as seminars and discussions concerning issues of alternative healing, including *Reiki*<sup>68</sup>, *totok*<sup>69</sup>, *pernafasan* [breath exercise], herbal therapy, acupuncture, meditation, and spirituality. In addition, the centre manages various training programs, like training for *sholat khusus* [solemn prayer], *pelatihan penghusada profesional* [training for professional healers], *terapi kekuatan jiwa* [training of soul power therapy], *pengijazahan* [certification and authentication] of spiritual skills and symbols, organizing collective *ziarah* or pilgrimage to sanctuaries of Muslim saints, and performing regular *ruqyah masal* [collective *ruqyah*] and *zikir penyembuhan* [healing dzikir].

Combining training programs, healing, religious services, and business industries, elements of Sufi heritages appear saliently in the group. One of the current famous and iconic BN training programs is *TAKEJI* or *Terapi Kekuatan Jiwa* [training for Soul Power Therapy]. Up to April 2009, the group had conducted at least forty-four *TEKAJI* programs. The goals of the program were to train participants to recognize basic char-

<sup>67</sup> Although the *Sapta Darma* and *Susila Budi Darma (SUBUD)*, among the biggest national *kebatinan* groups, considered curing people ‘through mystical surrender and prayer’ as an obligation for advanced members, other groups regarded the practice as totally taboo, because it would foster a ‘feeling of pride’. The ‘purist and intellectual’ of the *kebatinan* group, the *Paguyuban Ngesti Tunggal* or *Pangestu*, even warns very strongly against the practice (Niels Mulder, 1978, pp. 33-34).

<sup>68</sup> *Reiki* is an alternative healing system originating from the Japanese Buddhism tradition, that was built around the use of the universal life energy, known as *ki* (Melton, 2001, p. 1299).

<sup>69</sup> *Totok* (full-blooded) is an alternative healing technique originating, from ancient Chinese tradition, of massaging certain parts of the human body.

acter traits, to direct goals in life, and to master auto-hypnotism for self-healing. The *TEKAJI* is dedicated to analyzing and exploring the secret of the power of human soul, and the training materials are developed from the essences of various practices, including *Reiki*, *prana*<sup>70</sup>, self-healing, auto-hypnotism, *dhikr* healing, ergonomic calisthenics, and the activation of *chakra*<sup>71</sup> and *daya batin* [inner sense].

To take part in a one-day *TEKAJI* training program, participants pay Rp. 245,000.00 (for ordinary people) or Rp. 199,000.00 (for students). For this, they get: (1) a module and other seminar kits; (2) a certificate; (3) lunch; (4) a blindfold; and (5) High Power Water. My observations below describe the *TEKAJI* training in which I participated, in one of the buildings of Gadjah Mada University.

The night before the *TEKAJI*, I received a text message from the BN notifying all participants to: (1) check in before 8.30 am; (2) wear white clothes; (3) bring a *sajadah* [prayer rug]; (4) bring two bottles of water; (5) have breakfast in the morning, because lunch would be served at 1 pm.

After I had registered and checked into the program, the receptionist gave me a bundle of papers and a piece of black fabric to use as a blindfold for meditation. The bundle consisted of the *dhikr* module, GMB's article on the combination of IQ [Intellectual Quotient], EQ [Emotional Quotient], and SQ [Spiritual Quotient], and a flyer advertising a new album by the *Sapu Jagad* religious music group, a music group which is part of the BN management.

Twenty-five people—eight females and seventeen males—most of whom were over forty years old, participated in the training. From their faces, I knew that some of them were BN members who had participated in the previous BN programs, like *gemblengan*, *muhibbah spiritual* [spiritual journey], and *ZIPJUS* or *Zikir Jum'at Sore* [the Friday afternoon *dhikr*]. They wore white clothes and sat crossed-legged on the floor of an air-conditioned room of about eight by twelve metres. All tables and chairs had been taken out of the room and replaced by prayer mats. The room was equipped with an LCD projector, a screen, laptops and an audio set.

The *TEKAJI* started at 9.30 am, thirty minutes behind schedule. Deni Aden, the BN coordinator, led the opening ceremony, describing agendas and schedules of the oneday *TEKAJI* training program. After that, Ustadh Habibi led a *dhikr* ritual for about one and a half hours. While waiting for the lunch break and *dhuhur* prayer, BN staff showed a short movie about the profile of GMB and the BN.

After lunch, the program resumed at 2 pm. Prof. Dr H. Damarjati Supadjar, one of the BN Board Advisors, and a retired professor of Javanese Philosophy at Gadjah Mada University, gave a speech on the contextualization of Javanese-Islamic Mysticism.

After the lecture, there was a forty-minute break for *ashar* prayer. In the prayer room, I saw GMB meditating. Having performed *ashar* prayer, participants returned to the meeting room. While we were waiting for GMB, Deni invited participants to exercise using the Kundalini gym method [*Senam Kundalini*]. Suddenly, the lights of the room were turned off. Participants were asked to wear their blindfolds. GMB came into the room, and sat on a chair in a corner of the room behind the

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<sup>70</sup> *Prana* is subtle vitality in the air that can be managed by maximizing breathing techniques (Melton, 2001, p. 213).

<sup>71</sup> *Chakra* is the subtle energy centre in the body, associated with spiritual development and the psyche, which is rooted in tantric thought (Melton, 2001, pp. 213, 248, 267).

participants. He gave a course from the back of the class, starting by asserting that closing one's eyes during listening to the course is part of nurturing *ilmu laduni* [God's knowledge to special people], which is based mostly upon listening skill. According to GMB, closing the eyes is an effective way of achieving self-concentration, because open eyes can frequently cause distraction.

GMB then explained the four types of brain waves—*empat macam gelombang otak* [Beta, Theta, Alpha and Delta]—and gave us tips for maximizing them, in praying and achieving a successful life. GMB noted that spirituality without religion, or being unaffiliated with any particular organized religion (as was the case with Anand Krishna), could leave one open to problems. GMB reminded us that Krishna was being accused by his female students, of sexual assault. According to GMB, in terms of the level of brain waves, spirituality without religion is only able to develop to the Theta stages, while the theistic spirituality associated with religion is able to develop one step further, to the Alpha stage.

GMB also taught new spiritual *ilmu*. He called out, “*memutar 20% kelopak mata ke kanan searah jaruh jam*” [turn the eyelid twenty per cent to the right, clockwise] and “*mempertemukan 3 ujung jari*” [bring together three fingertips]. GMB said, “this *ilmu* should be practised every morning for at least three minutes, and if you can, the longer the better. One who practises this *ilmu* will be facilitated by God to acquire all of his/her needs, even more than just the needs that come up in your mind”. He then asked participants why the practices should be done in the morning, from 5 am to 6 am. Participants gave various answers, but according to GMB, none of them were correct. He then explained that in the morning, from 5 am to 6 am, the human mind is in the Theta and Alpha modes, so morning is the best time to do meditation, *dhikr*, and contemplation of God.

GMB emphasized that the *ilmu* he taught in the TEKAJI was a special one. He had never taught such an *ilmu* in any previous *gemblengan* programs. The *ilmu* was also never taught publicly, such as in *mushalla*, mosques, or even in any religious classes. “Nobody would believe in the efficacies of this *ilmu* if it was delivered in public lectures”, he said.

GMB then explained the importance of spirituality as a means to attaining success in life. Using power point for his presentation, with quotes from international public figures, such as American artists, scientists, and researchers, he underlined that every successful person has been spiritually good.

Then there was a pause in the training for *maghrib* prayer, which was led by Deni Aden. After *maghrib*, participants were instructed to practise the new *ilmu* and perform the *zikir assyifa* ritual. GMB led the practice of the *ilmu memutar 20% kelopak mata ke kiri* and *ilmu mempertemukan tiga ujung jari*. He also asked the participants to put their own bottles of water in front of them and to remove the lids.

GMB further encouraged participants to believe [*yakin*] in the efficacies of the *dhikr*. He gave examples of BN members who have enjoyed success and benefitted from *dhikr*. He mentioned Ustadh Anam and Ustadh Deni, who met their wives through *dhikr* activities in the BN *dhikr* forum. He also noted a member of his congregation, a widowed mother who had been just a vegetable seller, but who is now married to a police officer in Borneo.

After practising the *ilmu*, participants were invited to watch Harun Yahya's movie on the human life cycle and the visualization of *kiamat*, the day after tomorrow.

GMB then led the *ruqyah*. He asked participants to remember their parents, and all the sins and mistakes they have committed towards them. Participants were also asked to recall all their mistakes and sins in the face of God. GMB then asked participants to pray, saying ‘*astaghfirullâh...*’ as many times as possible, solemnly and sincerely, until they feel goose bumps [*merasa merinding*], which are, according to GMB, a sign of *khusûk* [solemnity].

GMB said that he did not want participants to vomit [*muntah*] in this *ruqyah*, but he asked them to cry, shedding their tears as a sign of releasing sins, errors, and various diseases from within them. While participants were repeating ‘*astaghfirullâh...*’ over and over, GMB asked BN staff to splash water on their backs. One by one participants began to cry, and soon the room was filled with the sound of crying and the shrieking of the *istighfâr*. Two male participants in front of me cried so loudly and emotionally that an *ustadh* had to approach them and calm them down.

The training ended with the *zikir assyifa*, led by Ustadh Deni. After the *zikir*, the *TEKAJI* was officially closed. All participants came out of the room and went to a table displaying their certificates.

On my way to a parking lot, I met a forty-year-old female participant. I asked her how long she had been involved in BN activities. She replied that this was her first time. I then asked her about her motives. She replied, “I am a heart disease sufferer. My husband, who has taken part in many BN activities for a while, asked me to participate in this program”. Finally, I asked her how she felt after the *TEKAJI*. She replied, “*lumayan, terasa lebih ringan*” [it was not bad, I feel better [dealing with my heart problem]].

Besides consultation and healing services at the office, the BN also organizes regular mass-healing programs, such as *ZIP JUS* or *Zikir Penyembuhan Jum’at Sore* [the Friday afternoon healing *dhikr*] and collective *ruqyah*, which is organized by the *Majelis Lautan Istighfar* (MASAIS [the Assembly of Ocean Forgiveness]), one of the BN units. The flyers of the program, and *ustadh* who led the *dhikr*, frequently assert the beneficial result and efficacy of performing the *dhikr*—for example, as a medium to get close to God [*taqarrub ilallaah*], to strengthen *imân* [faith] and *taqwa* [piety], to balance human inner energy, to make friendships and increase income, to obtain *ridhâ Allah* [God’s blessing] in life, family, and sustenance, as well as to prevent and cure various diseases, both physical and mental.

Like the *ZIP JUS*, the collective *ruqyah* is conducted every Friday afternoon.<sup>72</sup> The *ruqyah* is dedicated to getting rid of handicaps or maladies caused by evil spirits, that could be seen in, for example, black magic, witchcraft, or in someone possessed by spirits, someone who suffers from anxiety, insomnia, ill fortune, an acute or ‘incurable’ illness, or has difficulty in finding a spouse.<sup>73</sup> Although both the *zikir* and *ruqyah* use Qur’anic verses as a tool for therapy, the two differ in orientation. According to the

<sup>72</sup> Since 2009, the *ZIP JUS* is run fortnightly, on Friday evenings.

<sup>73</sup> The practice of *ruqyah* is somewhat equivalent to the Javanese exorcism ritual of the *ruwatan*. Both practices have the intention of removing bad spirits that may reside in the afflicted person. It seems to me that the *ruqyah* is another example of the BN’s transformation in its attempt to be more Islamic. It was recorded that the BN, before 2005, conducted a program called *Ruwat Akbar* [the great exorcism]. But, since 2005, the groups prefer to use *Ruqyah*, which is more Islamic. It is worth noting here that after 2000, many Muslim groups, mostly from the *syariah* supporters, have introduced a health technique they call *Tibbun Nabawi* [the prophet’s healing methods]. Among the popular methods are *ruqyah* and *bekam*.

BN, *zikir* intends to maintain the balance of body energy, self control, and inner peace, whereas *ruqyah* aims to remove the root of disease or body interference, especially the non-physical.

In addition to its training, consultation, and healing services, the BN has produced and sold herbal products, *bioplasmik* pure water, and a series of audio CDs. The BN also manages a religious music group, *Eling Karepe* (*EK* [Lit. remembering God's will]). Among the herbal products are *kapsul gurah*<sup>74</sup> [capsule *gurah*], *tangkur lanang*, *sirih legit* [the sticky betel], *kunir putih* [zedoary, Lat. *curcuma zedoiria*], *getah kesambi* [*schleichera oleosa* oil], *makuto dewo* [the crown of gods, Lat. *phaleria macrocarpa*], *the benalu* [epiphyte tea], and *minyak kobra* [cobra oil]. All these items have specific healing powers, ranging from treating influenza, stiff joints, hypertension, stress, stroke and tumours, to being an antidote to black magic. The merits of the *makuto dewo*, for example, as stated in BN's publicity, are its effectiveness in healing cancer, tumours, muscle cramps, fatigue, insomnia, and migraines, whereas the strengths of *getah kesambi* include: (1) cleansing and protecting the human body from black magic, (2) as a formula for self defence and 'hedge' magic that will protect people from misfortunes, (3) increasing charisma, and (4) frightening bandits and criminals.



Figure 4.2.

Samples of BN products: Audio CD on Self Healing and high-energy *bioplasmik* pure water, *Maunah*

Likewise, *bioplasmik* pure water, which is branded as *maunah*, helps in the cases of both physical and non-physical diseases, such as stroke, kidney problems, diabetes,

<sup>74</sup> *Gurah* is a healing treatment in which a herbal formula of *srigungu* [Lat. *clerodendron ceratium speng*] is inserted into patients' nostrils to remove their mucus. The treatment is to cure sinusitis and can produce good and clear voices for singers and for the professional Quran reciters [*Qari*].

haemorrhoids, insomnia, stress, anxiety, brain weakness, and the effects of black magic. The water is considered as having high energy not because of its rich nutrition, as in the case of some isotonic drinking water used in sport, but because of the power of *doa* (prayer). The flyer of the *bioplasmik* pure water claims: “*Air murni 100% yang bebas dari zat-zat berbahaya bagi tubuh plus disuplai energi bioplasmik dan daya spiritual/doa tinggi*” [The 100% pure water that is free from dangerous substances for the body, infused with *bioplasmik* energy and the spiritual power/high prayer].<sup>75</sup>

The BN audio CD is a recording of GMB’s speech on spiritual practices, such as healing *dhikr*, meditation, exploration of inner power, and self-help therapy, and gives tips for protection from witchcraft and black magic. Like a business organization, the centre puts a specific cost on these products. Customers are able to purchase them from the BN main office and other designated agents or via the post, through bank transfers.

The BN religious music group, the *EK*, was dedicated to promoting Islam using what GMB calls ‘*musik malaikatik*’ [angelic music] and ‘*mahabbatullah*’ [God’s love]. The group, which consists of five men, has released three albums and many video clips, has won awards in several religious music festivals, and has performed in a number of cities around Indonesia. Moreover, in collaboration with cell phone providers, the *EK* management also supplies religious songs that can be downloaded to mobile phone as ring tones. Since 2009, the *EK* religious music group has changed its name to the *Sapu Jagad*, which literally means ‘the broom of the world’.

The BN, in common with other spiritual centres, also makes an announcement in its flyers and on its website, promoting spiritual panacea for all problems, accepting all people from various backgrounds regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, and religion. Beside using flyers, the BN also actively advertises its programs in local newspapers and national tabloids. The BN soul power therapy [TEKAJI] training program was advertised in the Yogyakarta local newspapers, whereas the *ziarah* and *pengijazahan* programs are advertised in the tabloid *Posmo*. The BN advertisement explains the detailed programs, their spiritual efficacies, the cost of participating and the facilities provided. The group calls the tariff for participation in the TEKAJI training ‘*biaya*’ [cost] whereas for the *ziarah* and *pengijazahan* it names it ‘*mahar*’ [dowry].

The BN also promotes programs by sending text messages to its alumni. During my second term of fieldwork in Yogyakarta, I received a message about a spiritual training program called ‘*Gemblengan, Zikir & Ruqyah Khusus*’ [exclusive spiritual trainings, *dhikr* and *ruqyah*]. In addition to giving details of the venue, date and time, the message listed the training materials, indicating its amalgams of Sufi teaching and other

<sup>75</sup> The flyer also describes the recommended dosage of the water and the rules for drinking it, in order to get the highest benefit, saying: for physical disease one to five bottles a day. For non-physical illnesses: read *basmalah* and *hamdalah* seventeen times for Muslims, and “in the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Merciful” and “Praise be to God, the Sovereign of the universe” for non-Muslims.

popular spiritual and alternative healing methods, such as ergonomic yoga, aligning the backbone, and detecting disease through the pulse, eye, tongue, and palm. The invitation also noted that participants would receive training kits, food, all training materials and a certificate of course completion, as well as lifelong mentoring [*pendampingan*]. The interesting thing about this invitation was that the BN explicitly used the term '*investasi*' [investment] for the tariff to participate in the program, instead of '*mahar*' [spiritual dowry] as was usually used in previous events.<sup>76</sup>

In essence, by implementing rational institutionalization and combining Sufi teachings with scientific and psychological validation, the BN commodifies its spiritual efficacy in the following ways:

First, the BN establishes a spiritual centre amid secular symbols, and manages the centre using modern methods of management. The centre has a permanent office, skilled, uniformed staff, organizational structures, and systematic programs. Under BN management, spiritual products and services are corporatized, packaged, and then offered to the public. The BN welcomes all people, regardless of their religious, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. The group claims that its clients come from all backgrounds—from lower classes to the upper echelon of society. One day, I received a short message from the group, inviting me to participate in a special *manaqiban*<sup>77</sup> ritual as part of the BN's efforts to help a client, a national artist who was facing a big problem. It was as if the BN wanted to show me that it had a famous client. The message said: "... BN invites you to a *manaqiban* at the Bhakti Nusantara mosque for an artist Aura Kasih, this afternoon, 4.00 o'clock? This is a limited invitation, please confirm..."<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> The original Indonesian text of the message was: "*Bhakti Nusantara (BN) sungguh undang bapak/ibu untuk ikuti Gemblengan, Zikir & Ruqyah Khusus bersama Gus Muhammad Basis (GMB) + Prof. Dr. H. Fudholi, DEA, Apt + Dll, SABTU BESOK PUKUL 3 SORE s/d 10 MALAM, di BN, Jl. Rejowinangun no. 15 Yogyakarta. Materi: Tafakur Scanning Diri + Obati Diri & Orang2 lain + Yoga Ergonomis + Ruqyah + Pemberian Ilmu: Pembinaan Tulang Belakang, Bekam, Herbal, Deteksi Penyakit Lewat Denyut Nadi-Mata, Lidah, Telapak Tangan, Dll. Fasilitas, a.l: Sertifikat Resmi + Modul2 + Pendampingan Seumur Hidup + Konsumsi + Dll. Investasi (bisa pilih): Rp. 150rb / 200 rb/ 250rb/350rb. Mohon berkenan ikut (dengan SMS nama) demi SEJAHTERA kita ke depan, Nuwun.. Wassalaam*" (BN text messaging, (with some spellings changed, in order to be more easily understood), July 28, 2011).

<sup>77</sup> *Manaqiban* is a ritual reading of the *manaqib*, which is a hagiography describing extraordinary events concerning Muslim Saints [*wali* or *syaiikh*, such as Saikh Abdul Qadir Jailani, Syaikh Syaman Al Madani, etc] during their lives. The *manaqiban* was usually performed collectively as part of an annual commemoration of the *syaiikh*. Nevertheless, it is also common to perform *manaqiban* when a family has a specific *hajat* [hope]—for example, in order to pass a final exam, to gain success in starting a business, or to solve a certain problem—or as an expression of gratitude [*syukur*]. For further discussion on the *manaqib* see Julian Millie (2009) who writes about the ritual reading of the *manaqib* in West Java.

<sup>78</sup> The original Indonesian text read: "*Ass.wr.wb. mengundang kehadirannya untuk manaqiban di surau Bkati Nusantara untuk artis Auara Kasih, jam 16 .00 wib sore ini, bisa rawuh tidak ya? Ini undangan terbatas. Terimakasih. Was.wr.wb. Mhn bls*".

Second, administratively, the BN is legally registered with local and national governments. To persuade people of its legal status, the BN displays its registration numbers on the centre's nameplate.



Figure 4.3.

BN's banner showing the legal status of the group, its address and contact details

The BN's banner shows that although the centre's programs are related to alternative healing and spirituality, which the public tends to categorize as 'gray areas', the BN is a legal institution, holding registration numbers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the local Yogyakarta government, notary's documents, and the NPWP [tax file number]. The centre is registered both as a foundation [*yayasan*], for social and religious services, and as a company [CV], as a business unit. All these documents indicate that the BN is, legally, just the same as other secular institutions. Its legal status, then, strengthens the centre in its corporatization of spiritual products and services. The BN is, therefore, a good example of a hybrid institution, blending the secular and the spiritual.

Third, structurally, the BN has the *Dewan Penasehat* [Advisory Board], comprising political, cultural, and intellectual figures. The BN advisory board members are: Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, King of Yogyakarta and the governor of the Special Territory of Yogyakarta; Prof Dr H. Damarjati Supadjar, a retired professor of Javanese Philosophy at Gadjah Mada University; Professor Dr H. Fudholi, Apt, a professor of pharmacy at Gadjah Mada University, and a rector of Slamet Riyadi University, Surakarta; and Professor Dr H. Johar, M.S. a former rector of the State University of Yogyakarta. By listing a governor and three university professors, it is as if the BN is asserting that, although the centre promotes spirituality, it is, in fact, politically and academically approved, thereby demonstrating that its spiritual services and products are not in contradiction with science or secular activities.

Furthermore, to convince its members, and society in general, that BN activities are scientifically approved, the BN explains its spiritual program, such as the healing *dhikr*, from a scientific perspective. In his Audio CD on *dhikr* healing, GMB tries to argue that the *dhikr* is scientifically approved saying:

*Zikir* is one of the greatest forms of healing that God has taught us. We do *dhikr* for healing both physical and mental illness. While doing *dhikr* we should be sincere, because with sincerity we will have peacefulness, tranquillity, and inner peace. With the serenity and tranquillity, our biorhythm and cortisol hormone will be stable... As we know, the imbalance of the hormone cortisol in the human body triggers stress, and [then] the stress will bring on a variety of diseases... *Dhikr* is the final solution to everything.

The above quote notes *dhikr* as an effective way to balance the level of the human hormone, cortisol, thus reducing stress. Because stress is a root cause of human diseases, both physical and non-physical, preventing stress factors, by maintaining the balance of the hormone through *dhikr*, means attaining good health. Further, in his speech GMB also quotes some research findings by Western medical practitioners, who studied the health advantages of meditation and *dhikr*.

The BN claims that the systematic formula of *dhikr* healing is typical for the group. The efficacies of *dhikr* are explained before and after the *dhikr* ritual by the *ustadh* who leads the ritual.<sup>79</sup> The BN audio CDs of *dhikr* healing also include GBM's admonition reminding people not to make pirate copies of his product, saying: "Please do not copy, duplicate or pirate, because Allah is the Witness to all our actions" [*Mohon, Jangan Mengcopy / Menggandakan / Membajak, karena Allah Maha Melihat*].

<sup>79</sup> The BN *dhikr* healing [*zikru asy-syifa*] is performed in three stages. First, it is performed collectively, led by an *ustadh*. If the ritual is relayed through a loudspeaker, the heart should be kept respectful and solemn, concentrating on hope from Allah. Second, the litanies [*kalimah thayyibah*] to be chanted are: (1) *Asyhadu anlâ ilâha illa Allâh, wa asyhadu anna Muhammadan Rasûlullâh* [I testify that there is no God but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah]; (2) *Astaghfiru Allâh al-'azîm* [I ask forgiveness from Allah, the Greatest God]; (3) *Salla Allâhu 'alâ Muhammad, solla Allâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* [peace and blessing of Allah be upon Muhammad]; (4) *Lâ hawla walâ quwwata illâ bi Allâh* [there is no initiative and capacity except from Allah]; (5) *Subhâna Allâhi wa al-hamdu li Allâhi walâ ilâha illâ Allâhu wa Allâhu Akbar* [the glory and praise are to Allah, and there is no God but Allah, and Allah is the Great]; (6) *Hasbuna Allâhu wa ni'ma al-wakîl, ni'ma al-mawlâ wa ni'ma al-naşîr* [Allah (alone) is sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs (for us). He is the best Lord we can have and the best One to advise us]; (7) *Yâ hayyu, yâ fattâhu, ya rozzâqu, yâ qowwiyyû* [O Every Living, O the Opener, O the Provider, O the Most Strong]. Third, the *dhikr* is then closed with a *do'a* [prayer].

In practice, before chanting the *syahâda* [litany no. 1] three times, the congregation was asked to recite *al-fâtiha* [the first verses of Qur'an]. It should then chant the other litanies [nos. 2–7] eleven times each, followed by *tahlîl* (thirty-three times), recite the last three verses of the Quran [*al-ikhlâs*, *al-falâq*, and *al-Nas*] once each, and then end by reciting *al-fâtiha* again.

## NASKAH DZIKIR BERSAMA

- Sebelum Dzikir bersama, diawali dengan taushiah singkat tentang tujuan dan manfaat Dzikir, oleh **Pemandu Dzikir**.
- Dzikir harap dilakukan dengan bersuara, tetapi tetap menjaga hati untuk selalu takzim, penuh harap dan khushyu kepada Allah SWT.
- Adapun kalimat-kalimat Dzikir adalah sebagai berikut :

... أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ...

- Ashaduanlaa ilaahailallaah, waasyhaduanna Muhammadarosulullah...

... أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ ...

- Astaghfirullaahal azhim...

... صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ...

- Shollallaah 'alaa Muhammad shollallaah 'alaihi wasallam...

... لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ...

- Laahaulaa walaa quwwata illaa billah...

... سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ...

- Subhanallaah walhamdulillaah walaa ilaaha illallaah wallaahu akbar...

... حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ...

- Hasbunallaah wani'mal wakiil ni'mal maulaa wani'mannashir...

... يَا حَيُّ يَا قَاضٍ يَا رَزَّاقُ يَا قَوِيُّ ...

- Yaa hayyu, yaa fattaahu, yaa rozzaqu, yaa qowwiyuu...

- Dzikir diakhiri dengan membaca **Surat Al-Fatihah + Al-Ikhlash (7x)** secara bersama-sama.
- Dzikir **ditutup** dengan **DOA PENUTUP**, oleh seorang (atau lebih) kyai/ustadz yang telah ditentukan/ditunjuk.

Yogyakarta, Agustus 2007  
TTD

**GUS MUH**  
Pengasuh/Penyusun Zikir



**Pusat Penggalian Jati Diri (Puspa Jati)**  
**BHAKTI NUSANTARA**  
J O G J A K A R T A

Kantor Pusat : Jl. Rejowinangun No. 15 (100 meter Barat Pempatan Rejowinangun)  
Yogyakarta. Telp./Fax. 08180426344 / (0274) 7825040

- Ijin Depkes, Nomor : 215547.02096
- Akta Notaris Publikasi H. SH, PPL, Nomor : 3/VI/2/1998
- Rekomendasi Pemda Yogyakarta, Nomor : 198/S/2/1998
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- Ijin Praktek Pengob. Tradisional, Nomor : 505/10/10
- Ijin Praktek PAPATI SUK, Nomor : 001/PP/MS/2001
- NPWP, Nomor : 7.127.256.2.541
- Papan Penghargaan Menteri, Nomor : 2/11/11998
- SK, Pensiologi, Nomor : 2002.001.28096

Figure 4.4.

Text of *Dhikr* composed by Gus Muh or GMB

In the BN's collective remembrance ritual [*zikir berjamaah*], participants were encouraged to bring their own bottled water and to open the lid during the *dhikr*. The idea behind opening the lid is to allow the energy of *dhikr* to flow into the water. The BN justifies this technique with Massaru Emoto's findings on 'The Miracle of Water'<sup>80</sup>, where it was said that words are able to affect the 'quality' of water. Good words make water's molecular structure look like a diamond crystal, when it is seen in a photo at molecular level. Conversely, bad words cause water's molecular structure to look ugly, irregular and amorphous. Thus, the *kalimah thayyibah* [Ar. *kalīma al-ṭayyibah*, Lit. the word of purity], expressing praise and admiration for the Omnipotence of God, begging for His forgiveness, revealing one's sense of gratitude for His gifts, and requesting His blessing chanted by participants in collective remembrance, are God's noble words, capable of creating positive energy in the water. The BN's production of the *Maunah bioplasmik* water, as described above, was based on the belief that the efficacy of *dhikr* can be transferred through the medium of water.

Fourth, in its training and consultancy activities, the BN combines Sufi teachings with self-development and humanistic psychology. Spiritual therapy is considered as a motivational step towards solving clients' problems. Unlike the healers or masters in centres dealing in occultism, who do everything for their clients, BN therapists request active involvement from their patients. GMB frequently asserts that spiritual efficacy is not an instant process. It requires the performance of a series of disciplines. Deni Aden, the BN coordinator, told me that, like GMB, if a patient came to the centre asking for a therapy, he usually advised them to read several *doa* [prayer] or do *dhikr* every day. If, one day, the client returned to the centre, complaining of a poor result, Deni usually asked whether she/he had performed the discipline as requested. "What I give to my patients is basically just a motivation through *dhikr* and *doa*. I ask them to perform *dhikr* and *doa* every day in order to be calm, so they are able to face their lives wisely," he said.

The BN's current spiritual activities are in some respects equivalent to the Human Potential Movement [HPM]. Among the characteristics of HPM are entrepreneurialism, charismatic leadership, development of packaged training programs, and the promotion of spirituality blended with humanistic psychology as efficacy, as a means of self-development for worldly success. These programs were developed as a response to the aridity and puritanical points of view of religiosity and modern life (Plumb, 1993; Puttick, 2000; Schur, 1976). These characteristics can be found in the BN in the following ways.

First, the BN is entrepreneurial, in that it has material products, promoted as spiritually efficacious, and spiritual programs, which are 'sold' to the public for a

<sup>80</sup> Since 2006, Emoto's works on water have been translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*, and have been positively received by the Indonesian public. Among them are: *The Hidden Message of Water* [*Pesan Rahasia Air*] (2006a), *The Secret Life of Water* [*Menguak Rahasia Mengapa Air Dapat Menyembuhkan*] (2006b), and *Mukjizat Air* [*The Miracle of Water*] (2007).

specific ‘tariff’. For the material products such as CDs, cassettes, and high-energy water, the group specifies a price [*harga*], but for the spiritual training and *pengijazahan* [giving the licenses] of spiritual formulae, the BN provides choices of amounts of *mahar* [dowry]. Whatever the name, all of these transactions encourage people to spend money in order to procure the product or service. Second, the BN is led by a charismatic figure. Among his community, GMB is a special leader who is spiritually mature, and holds certain extraordinary spiritual efficacies, that can be used to help people. Members of the group deeply respect him. The ability of the BN to develop, and to attract a huge number of participants, as well as extend its networks with national figures cannot, in fact, be separated from GMB’s charisma. Third, the BN’s spiritual programs and products are the result of amalgams of Sufi heritage spirituality, humanistic psychology, self-management, management of the mind, and other alternative healing techniques. Finally, the BN, like the PTT and the *Bioenergi*, is developing in Yogyakarta, known as the city of education and the capital for rational-puritan Muslims, the *Muhammadiyah*. Some scholars consider that the *Muhammadiyah* tend to negate the spiritual domain of religious practices.<sup>81</sup> The campaign of the BN, concerning the importance of spirituality in this modern city, is a kind of subtle ‘rebellion’ against the arid religious tradition and the puritan points of view of some Muslims who tend to undermine spirituality.

Apart from these similarities between the Western HPM and the BN, there are dissimilarities as well. Studies on the Western HPM show that the main features of self-awareness movements are individualism (Schur, 1976, pp. 2-3) and rebellion against the conventional idea that human life is defined by one’s social role (Plumb, 1993, p. xii). Referring to Heelas (1996), Puttick stresses that the Western HPM was a manifestation of ‘self-religion’ or ‘self-spirituality’ (2000, p. 205). The BN, as far as I can see, is different, in that both homogenization and communalization of spirituality are highly emphasized. Instead of encouraging BN community members to develop subjective-life spirituality, the group embodies ‘life-as spirituality’, by following the spiritual guidelines of the masters or the institutions. This can be seen, for example, in the way the BN’s patients, clients and *murid* are encouraged to participate in weekly or fortnightly collective *dhikr*. Furthermore, besides recording brief CVs of people who

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<sup>81</sup> James L. Peacock, for example, classifies *Muhammadiyah* as a purist Muslim group that “eschews Sufi mysticism,” working from text and doctrines, and then developing mandates to be executed (Peacock, 1986, p. 349). For further discussion on the *Muhammadiyah*’s Puritanism, see James L. Peacock’s (1978) ‘Purifying the Faith: the *Muhammadiyah* Movement in Indonesia’. Although since early 2000 the organization has developed a new concept called *Dakwah Kultural* [Cultural Dakwah], that calls for its members to appreciate local culture, and a concept of ‘Spiritualization of the *Syariah*’, which underlines the importance of the spiritual dimension of Islam, an impression still prevails that *Muhammadiyah* is spiritually dry and less than tolerant to any kind of local religious expression. Some *Muhammadiyah* members who have a strong background of puritan points of view still criticize, and are hesitant to accept, the idea of cultural *dakwah*.

come to the centre for spiritual help or to participate in spiritual programs, the centre maintains its own internal community.<sup>82</sup> The centre routinely sends short messages to its alumni to inform them of new programs and products, or to give further advice on spiritual practices which the students recently learned from the training. Some of the alumni are even appointed as BN representatives in their regions. The BN also helps their alumni by creating an association of alternative healers.

#### 4.4. Conclusion

The BN's transformation from *spiritualitas kasar* [rough spirituality] of occult-based spirituality to the finer spirituality [*spiritualitas alus*] which is linked to Sufi spiritual practices, has led the group to package diverse spiritual programs and products, shaped in line with the current development of spirituality in Indonesia. The adoption of a formal organizational structure in the BN, as a foundation with business units, has shown that here, spiritual efficacies are more overly commercialized. With this trend, the BN differs slightly from the PTT—which, as explained in the previous chapter, is ambivalent about adopting the structure of a formal organization—in terms of levels of commercialization. While the BN explicitly describes specific tariffs for its spiritual programs and products with the labels 'dowry' [*mahar*], 'investment' [*investasi*], and even 'price' [*harga*], the PTT prefers to base its 'contribution' on voluntary gifts, without a specifically designated tariff. The BN's entrepreneurial character, its capability of developing various packages of spiritual programs, its promotion of spirituality amid a rationalistic and puritan Muslim majority, and its charismatic leadership are comparable to the HPM.

The BN's organizational transformation, and the change in its focus of spirituality from the *kasar* to the *alus* was, in some respects, driven by the logic of presenting spiritual heritages that are practically appropriate for modern life and which also fit religiously with orthodox Islam. These changes also underline the distinction between the BN and the PTT, marking the BN's change in response, as a spiritual group, from resisting the challenges and pressures of modern life, to active involvement in the opportunities of modernity.

In the next chapter, I will present my finding on the *Bioenergi*, as exemplifying a spiritual group which engages in the opportunities of modernity by adopting a corporate model. I will show how the corporatization of spirituality has marked the *Bioenergi*, as compared to the PTT and the BN, as the most 'commercialized' of the spiritual efficacies among hybrid spiritual groups in Yogyakarta.

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<sup>82</sup> The BN organizes its community not only for the group's spiritual disciples but also for its clients and patients. One day while I sat in a BN reception room, waiting for an interview with the centre coordinator, I read a note, written at the bottom of a white board, stating: "*Prinsip: Pasien adalah murid, murid adalah pasien*" [Principle: the patient/client is a disciple, the disciple is a client]. This notion asserts the BN's intention to unify both its patients and *murid* in one community or congregation.

# Chapter 5

## **Spiritual Efficacy in a Secular Landscape: The Spiritual Enterprise of the Bioenergi**

This chapter discusses another spiritual centre in Yogyakarta, the Bioenergi, which epitomizes the hybrid spiritual centre, with its interpretation, modulation, and contextualization of Sufi heritage teachings in order to suit a modern-secular landscape. Like the two previous groups discussed, the Bioenergi resembles the Eastern form of the Human Potential Movement, in terms of its entrepreneurialism, charismatic leadership, pre-programmed self-help spiritual programs, and its combining of spiritual elements with humanistic psychology and scientific justification. As a corporation of spirituality with a modern management, the Bioenergi exemplifies what I call 'scientification of spiritual manufactured goods' and 'psychologization of Sufi-spiritual training', through which its spiritual efficacies are promoted to help ordinary people grasp secular prosperity, in areas such as career, business, and health. The Bioenergi is an example of a hybrid spiritual group which has fully engaged with the opportunities and fruits of modernity. Of the three groups I studied-the PTT the BN and the Bioenergi-the Bioenergi is the most commercialized.

### 5.1. The Founding of the *Bioenergi*

Developed fifteen years ago by Syaiful M. Maghsri [b. 1968], the *Bioenergi* is a centre for training, healing, and business consultation. The motto of the centre is ‘*Menjadi Akhir Segala Solusi*’ [be the final solution] (i.e. of various problems, such as those concerning disease, career, business, and family), and ‘*sehat*’, ‘*sukses*’, ‘*kaya-raja*’, ‘*dan bahagia*’ [healthy, successful, rich, and prosperous] are among terms often used in its promotion.

Syaiful attended elementary and high schools at Tegal, Central Java. After graduating from the *Sekolah Guru Olahraga* (SGO [School for Sports Teachers]), he undertook an undergraduate program in Educational Psychology at the Muhammadiyah Institute for Teacher Training and Pedagogy (IKIP [*Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Muhammadiyah*]), Yogyakarta, currently the University of Ahmad Dahlan, one of the leading *Muhammadiyah* universities in the city.

Syaiful was a practitioner of Sufism. He belonged to the *Naqsabandiyah* Sufi order [I. *tarekat*, A. *ṭarīqa*] in Cirebon under the *mursyid* [Ar. *murshīd*, spiritual guidance] of Syekh Muhammad Alkaf. His father had introduced him to the *tarekat* when he was twelve years old. When he moved to Yogyakarta for the undergraduate program, Syaiful continued visiting his *Syekh* [A. *Shaykh*] monthly. Initially, Syaiful explains, he did not understand the meaning of the *tarekat* teachings. All he knew was how to perform rituals, like *dhikr* [repetitive litanies], night-time praying, Qura’nic recitation, and so on. Later on, he testified that his involvement in the Sufi order was part of his “*proses pembersihan jiwa, proses spiritual lewat pelajaran-pelajaran rohani*” [process of soul cleansing through spiritual teachings] (Maghsri, 2008, p. 346).

One day, his *Syekh* asked Syaiful to cancel the monthly stipends he received from his parents. Confused by the request (and wondering how he could survive during study without financial support), he questioned the reason for it, but the *Syekh*, as happens in a traditional teaching method, just replied, “*Ya nggak apa-apa, pokoknya lakukan saja*” [no problem, just do it]. When Syaiful visited his *Syekh* the next month, the *Syekh* questioned him as to whether he had complied with his request and Syaiful replied, “not yet”. In the third month after the request, Syaiful met his *Syekh* again. Knowing that Syaiful had not obeyed him, the *Syekh* asked Syaiful not see him anymore. The following dialogue illustrates Syaiful’s (Sf) confusion about the request from his *Syekh* (Sk).

- Sk : Well, next month, do not come here again.  
 Sf : Why Syekh?  
 Sk : You do not trust me anymore; you cannot trust me, so what am I your teacher for?  
 Sf : [Crying] Oh no, please...I trust you but I am confused.  
 Sk : If you do not want to be confused, then fulfill my requests.

Eventually, Syaiful did as his *Syekh*'s ordered. From Cirebon, he went to Tegal to see his parents, and told them not to send him money anymore. His mother cried, worrying about what would happen to him. However, his father, who was also a *tarekat* member, understood that this was an instruction from the *Syekh*.

While undertaking such a discipline, Syaiful was starving. He had no money, so he went from friend to friend just to get a little food. Later on, when his colleagues understood that he made friendships just to procure provisions, they slowly became reluctant to receive him, and so, for a number of days, he fasted during the day and drank just water at night. During his financial crisis, he received an offer from his lecturer of some work typing documents, whereby he could earn a little money for food and accommodation.

Later on, Syaiful was appointed as the president of the departmental students' association [*Himpunan Mahasiswa Jurusan*]. He maximized students' research activities, and earned some money from the research. Following his success in leading the HMJ, Syaiful was appointed, the next year, as the president of the governmental students' association of the university [*Senat Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi*], where he had more opportunities to build a wider network.

Syaiful's entrepreneurial talent also developed while he was at the university. Learning from his visits to *bakul jamu* [herbal sellers] at the Beringharjo market, he started producing a herbal extract [*jamu*], packaged in a capsule. To support this production, Syaiful set up a company, CV. Mahkotasari Ryamasindo.

Syaiful said that his dream was actually to be an *ulama plus*<sup>83</sup> [Muslim scholars plus], who can combine Islamic teachings with science. Therefore, while he was in Yogyakarta, Syaiful still made weekly visits to a *pesantren* in Kaliwungu Kendal, Central Java. He was also involved in groups practising martial arts, breathing exercises, and *tenaga dalam* [inner power] such as the *Merpati Putih*, *Prana Sakti*, and *Satria Nusantara*. Due to his active involvement in the *Satria Nusantara*, the groups appointed Syaiful as a fellow in *Litbang* (*Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengembangan* [bureau of research and development]) so that he could conduct research on the developments that led him to understand 'the secret' behind *tenaga dalam* ['inner' and 'supernatural' power].

In 1994, while he was performing *tafakkur* [night vigil for contemplation], Syaiful had a vision. In this vision, he saw eighteen thousand images of *alam* [world], composed of twenty-seven levels of energy, which can be categorized in four classes of natural energies, which he called: *alam fisik* [the physical world], *alam rohani* [the spiritual world], *alam spiritual* [the spiritual world], and *alam ilahiah* [the realm of God]. Specific creatures inhabit each of these worlds, one being humans. Maghsri came to such a vision gradually, through his regular Sufi practices, *tafakkur* [night vigil for contemplation] and *dhikr* [repetitive litanies], which he performed between 1 am and 2.30 am (Maghsri, 2008, p. 347).

<sup>83</sup> *Ulama plus* was a term popular in the 1980s and 1990s among *pesantren* students. It refers to a Muslim scholar who masters both Islamic knowledge and science.

As a *tarekat* practitioner who had been involved in *tenaga dalam* [inner power] groups, Syaiful asked himself why Muslims were eagerly studying Hindu meditation, and Buddhist *Prana* and *Yoga*, which are not originally Islamic. In Syaiful's view, Islam also has a spiritual legacy, the *tasawuf* [Sufism], even though so far, unfortunately, it was normally taught only as philosophy and ethics. Syaiful felt that Islamic spirituality [*spiritualitas Islam*] should be practically implemented.

To address that issue he set up, in 1996, a group named the *Bioenergi*. Although the name does not make reference to Islam, Syaiful claims that it is based on Qura'nic philosophy.

In fact the basis of *Bioenergi*... [is] more on Quranic philosophy... So it is Islamic, you know... However, if I named it *tarikah*, I would have some opposition and people would blame me as speaking heresy. If I named it with something related to Islam, it could not be universal [knowledge]. I therefore searched on the internet and found a word 'Bio-Energy', which was an electronic medical product. It was in 1995. If I had called it *tenaga dalam* [inner power], it would not be right. So, briefly speaking I just translated the [English] word 'Bio-Energy' to *Bahasa Indonesia*, '*Bioenergi*'. Then I patented *Bioenergi* as my brand in 1996. I also did a formulation of it, and, because I wanted to teach and spread it, and in order for it to be an '*ilmu*' [knowledge, science] that is easily understood so everyone can transmit it to others, I systematized it. Finally, I named it '*ilmu Bioenergi*'. (Interview with Syaiful, June 4, 2010)

Under the *Pelatihan Bioenergi* [*Bioenergi* training] brand, Syaiful started his activities in both spiritual and physical healing. His method was mostly *ceramah* [giving lectures]. Initially the training he gave was free, where everybody could come and be involved. He set up the *Yayasan Pengobatan Alami Indonesia* [Foundation of Indonesian Natural Healing] and promoted the *Club Alami* [Natural Club] for students in several Yogyakarta universities.

Although his club had developed well in several places, Syaiful disbanded it in 2000, because after running it for a while, he realized that people tend to never be satisfied. Initially, his intention in setting up the *Club Alami* was to provide peace, harmony and success, but people wanted more than that, asking for the inclusion of something like metaphysical sciences related to *klenik* [occult practices] and magic. For example, although they were taught the recipes of herbal formulae, people kept asking Syaiful to teach about invulnerability, fortune telling, and other supernatural powers. Syaiful also felt that when he performed programs free of charge, nobody appreciated his knowledge and formulae. He even found that various people were suspicious of the motive behind his free programs. Syaiful further testified that in the beginning, from 1996 to the early 2000s, he felt that he was not welcomed by the Yogyakarta people. He did not get any support, either from the local government offices or from formal educational institutions. "Although many people and institutions rejected me, I was so fortunate because Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X supported me", he added (Interview with Syaiful, June 4, 2010).

Acting on a suggestion from his colleague, Syaiful tried to professionalize his products and services. He rented a hotel room in Kusumanegara Street, Yogyakarta as his

office. It was unfortunate that the progress of his business in Yogyakarta was slow. According to Syaiful, at the time when he started operating his centre in Yogyakarta, people tended to consider that something from a big city, or even from the capital of the country, was better than anything from a mid-size city. It was also assumed that any products coming from Jakarta could easily be spread to the entire archipelago. Therefore, in 2000 Syaiful opened a *Bioenergi* branch office in Jakarta, renting a hotel room for four years. Fortunately, people in Jakarta were interested in his seminar programs. Even though he charged Rp. 450,000.00 per participant, around a hundred people attended his training every Sunday. He operated the Jakarta office until 2004. In 2003 Syaiful built his magnificent office in Yogyakarta, and once it was finished, in 2004, he moved his activities into the new building, called the *Bioenergi Centre*.

*Bioenergi* publications depict Syaiful as the ‘*Penemu dan Formulator Ilmu Bioenergi*’ [inventor and formulator of *Bioenergi* science] as well as the owner and founder of the *Bioenergi* group. His full name, with all his accreditations, like Dr Syaiful M. Maghsri DN, Med., M.Ph., or just Bapak H.M. Syaiful M. Maghsri, frequently appeared in centre publications. A number of examples of status and activities indicating his success were also listed, such as: owner of herbal company [*Perusahaan Jamu*] Mahkotasari Reymasindo, Commissaries of PT. *Bioenergi* International, Spiritual Consultant of Suzuya Corp. Japan and Hong Kong, Founder of Natural Healing Foundation Indonesia, Shepherd of *Majelis Ilmu Spiritual Indonesia* (MISI [the Assembly of Indonesian Spiritual Knowledge]), ‘*Tawakal*’ [trust in God], and founder of *Bunga Melati* Foundation, which focuses on education for Down syndrome and autism (Maghsri, 2008, p. 348).

For his success in developing the *Bioenergi* centre, Syaiful was recognized as a young billionaire, and received the ISEMBIA Award, from the Indonesian Ministry of Cooperation and Small-Medium Business, in 2007, based on an account in a ‘Finance and Entrepreneurs’ magazine. In 2005 and 2007, Syaiful was also nominated for the Posmo Award from the Posmo tabloid (Ala, 2005).

Although it was reported in the centre’s publications that thousands of people from various backgrounds and cities around Indonesia have gained benefit from *Bioenergi* products, and the centre continuously maintains that *Bioenergi* products are scientific, natural, and approved by the religious authorities, suspicions about the *Bioenergi* surfaced. In 2005, a *ruqyah* practitioner, Perdana Ahmad, wrote a book entitled ‘*Membongkar Kesesatan Praktik Sihir pada Reiki Tenaga Dalam dan Ilmu Kesesatan*’ [Dismantling the Deviant Magical Practices of Reiki, Inner Power, and Deviant Esoteric Knowledge], in which he pointed to Syaiful’s use of magic in his spiritual practices. Judging himself defamed by the book, Syaiful took the case to court and brought charges against the writer. The court found Perdana guilty and gave him a two-month sentence. However, Syaiful was also punished for his ‘persecution’ of Perdana. Dissatisfied with the court sentence, a group of people wearing Arabic robes, turbans, and carrying swords—self-confessed *Lascar Jihad* [warrior of *jihad*] who were in sym-

pathy with Perdana Ahmad—terrorized the *Bioenergi* centre, vandalized Syaiful's house, and damaged his car (*Suara Merdeka*, February 6, 2006).<sup>84</sup>

In order to spread its products, the *Bioenergi* centre actively engages in technological development. The centre manages an official website, [www.bioenergicenter.com](http://www.bioenergicenter.com), as a medium to promote the products. As well as on the official website, Syaiful's articles and product advertisements appear on: <http://www.bioenergicenternews.com>, <http://www.bukusolusi.com/>, and <http://solusisukses.com/>. However, criticism and oppositional blogs concerning Syaiful and *Bioenergi* also emerge in the virtual world. Blogs like <http://bioenergicenter.wordpress.com> and <http://bioenergicenter.blogspot.com> are among those which oppose and broadcast the 'errors' of the *Bioenergi*.

## 5.2. From Piety to Efficacy

Syaiful claims that what he is doing in his centre is just explaining Sufi teachings, such as *shabar* [Ar. *ṣabâr*, patience], *sukur* [Ar. *shukûr*, gratitude], *ikhlas* [Ar. *ikhhlâs*, sincere], and *tawakal* [Ar. *tawakkal*, trust], at a practical level, for the direct purpose of achieving this-worldly success. In doing so, he explores the concept of the progressive Sufi spiritual paths of *syariat*, *tarikât*, *hakikat*, and *makrifat* [Ar. *sharî'a*, *ṭarîqa*, *ḥaqîqa*, *ma'rifa*] by developing a formula he calls '*Pola Kecerdasan Terpadu*' [Integrated Intelligent Pattern] or '*Bioenergi Quotient*', abbreviated as BQ. The formula, which is a combination of elements of Sufism and neuro-linguistic-programming, incorporates the concept that to be successful and lucky, people should integrate their four brains, namely *otak kiri* [left brain] which is the base for the *syariat*, *otak kanan* [right brain] for the *tarekat*, *otak spiritual* [spiritual brain] for the *hakikat*, and the *otak universal* [universal brain] for the *makrifat*.

Syaiful's explanation of the BQ is suggestive of his borrowing from globally circulating popular psychology concepts such as 'left and right brain,' just like contemporary movements that develop in Jakarta (Hoesterey, 2009; Howell, 2001, 2005; Rudnycky, 2009b).<sup>85</sup> Syaiful explains that to gain success, people should first optimize their left brain function by gathering as much information and knowledge as possible about relevant practical methods and strategies. Syaiful notes that the left brain is characterized as the analytical and scientific brain, and that this step, in religion, is called *syariat*.

<sup>84</sup> When I asked Syaiful to clarify his strategy for avoiding another potential instance of vandalism, he replied that he had made contact with the leader of the Muslim hardliner group. In fact, Syaiful further explained, one of the leaders had been his close mate in university. Since then, Syaiful has been saved from any further vandalism.

<sup>85</sup> When I asked Syaiful about the similarity between his *Bioenergi Quotient* and the ESQ (Emotional and Spiritual Quotient) of Ary Ginanjar, Syaiful said that he had actually developed his formula earlier, before the surge of the ESQ in the early 2000s. However, considering the fact that Syaiful's earliest book explaining the BQ was '*Pencerahan*', published in 2006, whereas Ary Ginanjar released his ESQ book in 2001, one might assume that BQ is, in fact, just a modification of the ESQ.

Second, after gathering the information and knowledge in the left brain, the function of *otak kanan* [right brain] should be maximized. The scientific methods and strategies that have been stored in the left brain should be practised constantly in daily life. In order to have automatic and natural success, based on *ridha Allah* [Ar. *riḍā Allāh* [God's blessing], the practices should avoid any burdening rituals that might lead to *mistik*, *klenik*, and *syirik* [mystic, occult, and heretical] practices. According to Syaiful, this is an intuitive step of the right brain, or *tarik* process.

Third, the work of the left and right brains should be supported by the *otak spiritual* [spiritual brain], in order to accelerate the fruition of all the wishes and hopes. After thinking the knowledge with the left brain and practising it with the right brain, one should approach God by praying and doing *dhikr* as part of submission to God's will. Prayer and *dhikr* are needed because everything in the world is under God's command. This third step, Syaiful explains, is called a *proses spiritual* [spiritual process], a utilization of *qalb* [spiritual centre located in the area of the heart] or the *otak spiritual* [spiritual brain], which in the *tasawuf* equates to the *hahikat*.

Fourth, believing in God's omnipotence, and that all success and fortune come from Him, people should not think and worry about how their hopes and wishes could be fulfilled, because the left brain is not capable of finding the answer. Syaiful asserts that all of those things are within the domain and the mystery of God; so let God do His best to answer people's wishes and hopes. What people should do, is deal with all God's blessings with sincerity, gratitude, patience, and a belief in His unlimited mercy and grace. This step is called *otak Ilahiah* [universal brain], which in the Sufi tradition is called *makrifat* [gnosis]. Having reached the *makrifat* stage, people will easily experience a successful life, in which fortune will always smile on them, wherever they are.

According to Syaiful, the *otak Ilahiah* [Divine-universal brain] is about happiness—everyone, as long as they cultivate their Divine brain, will gain happiness. Due to the happiness they have gained, the drunks and nightclub lovers are, according to Syaiful, basically among those who already have high divine spirituality, but for them it is meaningless. Therefore, he asserts, in Islam the Divine brain is nurtured by the Sufi ethical disciplines of *bersyukur* [being grateful], *bersabar* [being patient], and *bertawakkal* [trusting in God], in order to gain real happiness through a meaningful life.

Therefore, to be a success, people should fill their four brains: the left brain with knowledge, the right brain with action, the spiritual brain with prayer, and the Universal-Divine brain with happiness, thus enjoying life, which in Islam, according to Syaiful, is through *ridha* [accepting whatever God wants] and *ikhlas* [sincerity]. Syaiful claims that Muslim scholars have frequently described the terms '*ikhlas*,' '*sabar*,' '*syukur*,' and '*tawakkal*' in their religious preaching, but only according to theoretical principles—how to practise the concepts is still in question. *Bioenergi* explains these happiness concepts for practical purposes (Interview with Syaiful, June 4, 2010).

All of the above processes, Syaiful explains, are simultaneous and integrated in one action. There is no hierarchy among the four brains. He further explains:

While we are enjoying life, improving our actions and working hard, broadening our knowledge and information, and continuously doing praying and *dhikr*... later on we will automatically obtain our sustenance, [then] our heart will be calm and attain tranquility, and we will be able to solve all kind of problems... [A]t that moment the four [brains] are already very well balanced... the person [is] reaching consciousness, or the *pencerahan* [enlightenment]. (Interview with Syaiful, June 4, 2010)

Although many of the words and concepts explored by Syaiful are taken from Islamic teachings, he underlines that the *Bioenergi* is applicable to all people, regardless their religious, ethnic or cultural background. Whoever maximized their four brains would achieve success. Conversely, those who developed only their left brain would be secular; those who developed only their right brain would justify any means to an end [*menghalalkan segala cara*]; those who developed only their spiritual brain would become self-righteous [*sok suci*]; and those who developed only their Divine brain would fall into an extravagant but meaningless way of life. Syaiful explained the reason why the Japanese are successful: they can fulfill their four brain functions: their left brains are filled with knowledge; their right brains are filled by hard work; their spiritual brains are expressed in meditation and self-suggestion; and their divine brains are developed from a yearly vacation.

The work of the *Bioenergi* integrated brain is depicted in the following diagram.

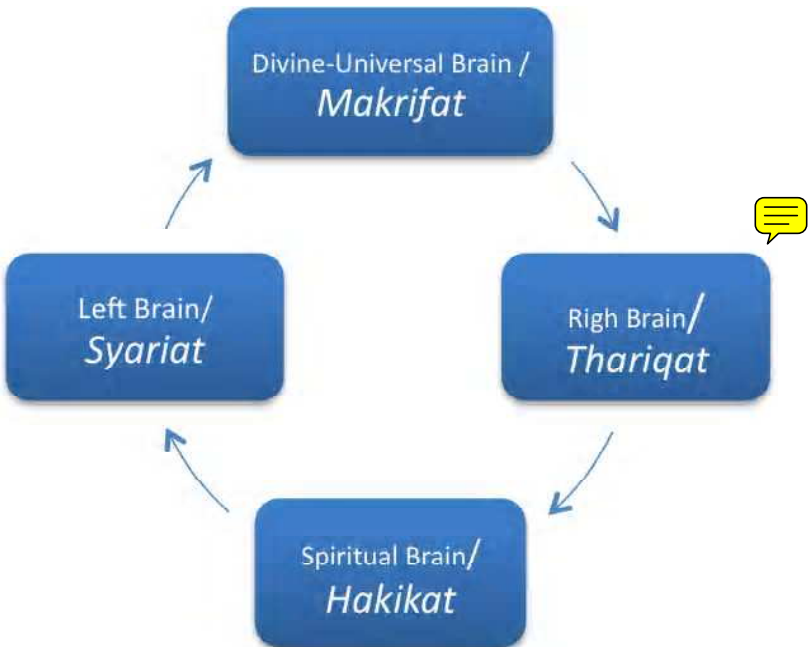


Figure 5.1.

Diagram of the four integrated brains of *Bioenergi* for human success

Syaiful's elaboration on the BQ is interesting because he tries to model a universal formula for success, based on Sufi teaching, which is claimed as being suitable for everyone, regardless of their religious background. He was very proud when, in 2004, he had about fifty Buddhist monks studying in his centre. The monks were amazed, saying, "*ini luar biasa*" [this is amazing], and recognizing the universality of Islam. Aware that his mix of customers of different religions could potentially be denounced by anti-pluralism groups as heresy, Syaiful reiterates that *Bioenergi* is not a new religion and does not contradict any religious teachings.

*Bioenergi* is spiritual cultivation that universally crosses religions, cultures and traditions. *Bioenergi* is not a religion, but is not against and contradictory to any religion, just like science and technology, which are not associated with any religion. Science and technology are the result of *ijtihad* [efforts] of the faculty of human rationality, while the *Bioenergi* and other spiritual techniques are a result of *ijtihad* of human spiritual faculties. Thus, *Bioenergi* is not in conflict with religion, even it is useful for the practitioners' religiosity, spread through whatever religions and countries. (Maghsri & Ginting, 2006, p. 271)

However, although Syaiful has explained that the *Bioenergi* is not a new religion and is not in contradiction with any religions, in a society which imposes a delimited pluralism, such a 'universalism' (as that, also, of Ary Ginajar's ESQ (Howell, 2012; Rudnycky, 2009a, 2009b)), can still potentially lead to tension with orthodox groups. Furthermore, the BQ could be problematic when analysed from the Sufi orthodox point of view. For example, as for the ESQ (Howell, 2012), Syaiful's explanation of the *otak spiritual* has displaced the spiritual centre from the 'heart' to the 'brain' area. Also, his notion that *otak Ilahiah* is equivalent to the *makrifat* stage in Sufism implies his reductionism in equating the 'process or experience' of the *makrifat* with the brain, which is a 'thing'—the reduction of the spiritual to the material.

When I asked Syaiful to clarify what he means by the word '*spiritualitas*' [spirituality] in his speeches and publications, he said that it refers to *tasawuf* in its practical meaning. He deliberately does not mention words like '*tasawuf*' or '*Sufism*' and other Islamic terms as part of the name of his centre. However, reading his book '*Pencerahan*' (2006), for example, we can find Sufi teaching in it. In addition to narrating Syaiful's spiritual journey, the book describes modes of enlightenment [*pencerahan*] as an outcome of the cultivation of spirituality and the management of mind and social life. The explanation of spirituality in '*Pencerahan*' draws on *tasawuf* teachings, by referring to Syekh Abdul Qadir Jailani's spiritual stages: *Tobat*, *Ikhlas*, *Tawakal*, *Syukur*, *Sabar*, *Yakin*, dan *Jujur* [repentance, sincerity, trust in God, gratitude, patience, confidence, and honesty].

In his publications, Syaiful strongly emphasizes the importance of *spiritualitas* [spirituality], elucidating the relationship between spirituality, heart, mind management, and the power of positive thinking, for human success. For example, he writes:

Through a spiritual understanding and awareness, we will be able to develop a new attitude. Our consciousness about God, about prayer, about everything in good condition (health and success), will be reflected in the experience of life through the *Bioelektromagnetik* law. The *Bioelektromagnetik* law is the law of attraction and repulsion of dynamic energy, where energy will follow the direction of one's heart and mind. If one's heart and mind lead to the good, the goodness will happen. On the contrary, if one's heart and mind, albeit unconsciously, lead to problems or failures, then the handicaps and the failure will happen. (Maghsri, 2010, p. 4)

Syaiful also emphasizes that the *Bioenergi* is part of a spiritual tradition, a complement to religious life, to increase the quality of human life. Human life is qualitatively good if people are physically fit and aware of both their psychological existence and transcendental spirituality. The work of the *Bioenergi* for human success, according to Syaiful, can be called a “scientific magic [*saintifik magis*] because it couples religious spirituality [*spiritualitas agama*] with spiritual technology [*technology spiritual*] to make a formula for natural phenomena to create techniques [*teknik-teknik*] for a successful life” (Maghsri & Ginting, 2006, p. 270).

Syaiful has written a number of books. His works represent an explanation of his spiritual journey (e.g. *Pencerahan* [Enlightenment] and *Revolusi Hidup* [Revolution of Life]) and an exploration of the concept of *Bioenergi* science [*Ilmu Bioenergi*] and its application to reaching this-worldly prosperity (e.g. *BQ: Kecerdasan Bioenergi Jalan Spiritual Menuju Kesembuhan & Kesuksesan* [BQ: Bioenergi Quotient—Spiritual Ways to Health and Success], *The Solution: Saatnya Anda Mendapatkan Solusi untuk Kesehatan, Kesuksesan, Kekayaan, Kecerdasan, Keharmonisan dan Kesadaran Spiritual* [The Solution: It is Your Time to Gain the Solution for Health, Success, Wealth, Intelligence, Harmony, and Spiritual Consciousness], *Explorasi Kekayaan Bioenergi: 7 Langkah Spiritual Menuju Kaya dengan Mudah Tanpa Batas* [Exploring the Wealth of Bioenergi: 7 Spiritual Steps to Becoming Easily and Limitlessly Rich]). Others of Syaiful's works argue that magical spiritual efficacy is suitable for modern people (e.g. *Zimat: Dhikr Menuju Alam Transendensi* [Zimat: Dhikr Towards Natural Transcendence] and, *Metafisika: Solusi Hidup Orang Modern* [Metaphysics: The Solution for Modern People]).

In short, the above description emphasizes that Syaiful, with his *ilmu Bioenergi*, is trying to shift the focus of *tasawuf* teachings: (1) from cultivating normative Islam to a formula for producing prosperity; (2) from the quality of one's relationship with God (subjective experience) to material benefits; and (3) from Islamic spirituality to universalistic (non-denominational) spirituality. All these shifts point to the change in the focus of exploration of Sufi teachings from philosophical and ethical piety to practical efficacy.

### 5.3. Scientification and Psychologization of Spiritual Products

The trend of psychologization of spirituality seems to be common in the current development of spiritual groups in Indonesia. As noted by Howell, some new urban Sufi groups in Jakarta have adopted personal growth legacies from the global spiritual

markets of New Age movements, and then assimilated their spiritual techniques for releasing stress and increasing concentration in work through the process of psychologization and medicalization (Howell, 2007a, pp. 238-239). However, the trend in the *Bioenergi* seems to go further. Not only does the process of scientification and psychologization occur in the spiritual concept of *Kecerdasan Bioenergi* [*Bioenergi* Quotient] explained above, but it also presents in the *Bioenergi* training programs and material products promoted as spiritually efficacious. The products and services of the *Bioenergi* vary, ranging from psycho-spiritual books, herbal medicines, audio spiritual CDs, and spiritual gadgets, to spiritual consultations and trainings programs. Most of Syaiful's books explore the importance of spirituality, *manajemen diri* [management of the self] and positive thinking for this-worldly success. He explains the meaning of *Bioenergi*: "the energy of life in this world that infiltrates and moves the entire activities of life in which the ultimate source is God Almighty" (Maghsri, 2008, p. 2). According to Syaiful, the *Bioenergi* has its own 'intelligence' [*kecerdasan*] that flows and moves, naturally following the order of universal law. In the human body, *Bioenergi* can be influenced, either consciously or not, by the direction of people's minds and hearts, which can affect the pattern of life in a positive or negative way (Maghsri, 2008, pp. 3-4).

As the inventor and formulator of the *Ilmu Bioenergi* and the master who can manage and optimize the *Bioenergi* for a variety of worldly successes, Syaiful, who claims to have succeeded in implementing the formula, is eager to spread his knowledge and experience to others. In order for it to be easily applied, he creates a series of *latihan* and *gemblengan* [training] programs, which are the practical elaboration of his books. Among the programs offered by the centre are: (1) *Bioenergi Entrepreneur Power* [BEP], a program intended to train participants in finding a shortcut to being a rich, healthy, and successful businessman. According to the centre, the program is a fast and easy way to become a millionaire. (2) *Gemblengan Ilmu Metafisik*, a program dedicated to those who want to be healed from various diseases, be freed from their problems, know the secret of metaphysical knowledge, have harmony in life and be close to God, be able to help other people with their problems and cure their disease, as well as gain prosperity, charisma, and success in their career. During the training, participants are promised by that they will gain the ability to pass through the dimensions of space and time [*menembus dimensi ruang dan waktu*]. (3) *Master Penghusaha* program [MPh], which trains participants to master spiritual solutions in life. (4) *Eksplorasi Kekayaan Bioenergi* [EKB], a program dedicated to those who are motivated to explore, utilize and develop sources of wealth that have been provided in this world by God. Through this program people will be able to realize their dream and achieve wealth and success. (4) *Zona Kaya* [Rich Zone], a seven hour training program to enter the dimension of the limitlessly rich, where money will come fast and easily. (5) *Quantum Success*, a program dedicated to leading participants to *semakin dekat dengan Tuhan*

[get closer to God], to expedite business, and to solve all problems. And (6) *Bioenergi Parenting Power*, a special program for parents or candidates for parenthood, in order to learn better methods and models for parenting, nurturing childrens' development and intelligence and so gaining harmony in the family.

The important part of the training program is what the centre calls '*Bioenergi Adjustment*' [*Penyesuaian Bioenergi*]. This step causes the *energi alam* [energy of the universe] or *Energi Illahi* [Divine Energy], that spreads in the human body, the environment, in plants, animals, and the entire universe, to be cleaned, balanced, and then united with the power and will of God. The adjustment will lead participants to feel, distribute, and maximize the life-energy surrounding them for their own purposes (Maghsri, 2008, p. 344). According to Syaiful, the reason for the adjustment is that, in the past, human energy was actually perfect. But, because of a negative mindset and attitude of heart, the quality of the *Bioenergi* is reduced and constrained from being maximally utilized. To re-synchronize the energy, people need help from the master.

The adjustment process combines spiritual and psychological elements by declaring *niat* and *berdoa* [intention statement] for adjustment saying: "Oh Lord, by Your will and power I will retrace *Bioenergi* adjustment with Bapak [Mr] Syaiful M. Maghsri. Please cleanse my body from any physical and mental illness. Open our door for your mercy, bless our piety, and bestow on, all your creatures, sustenance from various sources. Oh my God, please bring about our healing, health, strength and protection".<sup>86</sup>

After the *doa*, participants are asked to keep relaxed for about fifteen to twenty minutes, feeling whatever sensations may come. It is recommended that they perform *dhikr* or remembrance of the name of God according to their own religion. Listening to soft music is also allowed. After this process, participants are asked to move their heads, arms, and legs to soak up the energy throughout the body.

In exploring the power of positive thinking, the centre emphasizes that after the adjustment process, participants are supported in *perubahan* [change], improving their mindset, attitude, work, and efforts. "*Anda harus berubah menjadi lebih baik karena energi mengikuti arah hati dan pikiran serta cara bertindak; semakin sempurna Anda bertindak semakin bagus hasil dari pemanfaatan Bioenergi*" [You have to change to be better, since the energy follows where you direct heart and mind and how you act; the more perfectly you act, the better results you will get from utilization of *Bioenergi*].

The *Bioenergi* adjustment is reminiscent of initiation rituals marking the transition from childhood to adulthood. Having undergone the life cycle ritual, the young person is considered ready to assume adult duties. Anthropologists note that initiation is part

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<sup>86</sup> The centre also offers remote *Bioenergi* adjustment [*Penyesuaian Bioenergi Jarak Jauh*]. The guideline for the long distance adjustment is attached in *BQ Bioenergi Quotient* book (Maghsri, 2008).

of the life cycle ritual practised in most societies. According to Victor Turner (1967), it consists of three phases: separation, liminality, and re-aggregation. From Turner's perspective, the *niat* and *doa* at the beginning of the *Bioenergi* adjustment is the separation phase, where participants are invited to come into the spiritual arena, leaving their physical world; the process of taking calm, relaxed minds and letting them enjoy whatever sensations they may feel, is the liminal stage; and moving participants' bodies from head, arms to legs, soaking up the energy throughout the body during the final process of the adjustment, is the re-aggregation phase.

The adjustment process is also equivalent to the initiation-like ritual of *bay'ah* [I. *baiat*, oath of allegiance to a spiritual guru] in Sufi orders [*tarikah*], in the sense that participants would follow all the advice of the Master, but it is not equivalent in the meaning of selling oneself to a spiritual master in exchange for the spiritual knowledge which the *Syekh* gives, as usually happens in the *tarikah* group. In the case of the *Bioenergi*, the *guru-murid* relationship seems looser than that in the *tarikah*. Furthermore, the adjustment is in parallel with *ruwatan* [ritual of exorcism] in Javanese tradition—where the negative energies of participants are exorcized and replaced by positive ones—but it differs in procedures and equipment.

For me as an observer, the most important step for gaining success is not the process of the adjustment but the moment of personal change [*perubahan*], becoming a better person than in the past, maintaining a new positive mindset and attitude and working hard after the adjustment. The adjustment process, then, psychologically provides personal stimulation, improving participants' motivation and increasing their self-confidence, thus improving their lives. After adjustment, participants feel they have been spiritually guided by God and that their negative energy has been replaced by positive energy.

According to Syaiful, in addition to being taught in class training programs, the *Bioenergi* can be managed and transferred into objects, through which people can access its efficacy by using or consuming them. Therefore, the *Bioenergi* centre produces manufactured goods promoted as spiritually efficacious and sells them to the public, such as *Kartu Bioenergi* [*Bioenergi Card*], *Kapsul Bioergi* [*Bioenergi Capsule*], *Biochip*, and *Biosound*.

As stated in the *Bioenergi* flyers and brochures, the *Kartu Bioenergi* is a programmed card that has various benefits for improving the quality of life of the holder. It comes in three variations: *Kartu Explorasi Kekayaan* [wealth exploration card] for opening doors to opportunities or attracting sustenance from various sources; *Kartu Penyembuhan* [healing card] for healing acute diseases without having any side effects; and *Kartu Kecerdasan* [intelligence card] for students, to increase their spiritual intelligence, creativity, and achievements.

The *Kapsul Bioenergi* is described as a *kapsul yang telah diprogram* [programmed capsule] to be consumed, that then automatically operates the *medan biolektro magnetik*

[bio-electromagnetic field] of the consumers, based on their hearts and minds, in order to fulfill all their hopes. Like the *Kartu Bioenergi*, there are three kinds of capsule: *Kapsul Kecerdasan* for students, *Kapsul Kekarya* for success in career, and *Kapsul Penyembuhan* for all kind of disease.



Figure 5.2.

Samples of Bioenergi spiritual products: the *Biochip* and the *Biosound* of audio CD healing

The *Biochip* is a gadget to be stuck onto a cell-phone to aid communication and attract more customers for the businessperson. The *Biosound*, that comes in four series—*CD Kecerdasan* [Intelligence CD], *CD Kesuksesan* [Success CD], *CD Sex* [Sex CD], and *CD Kesembuhan* [Healing CD]—is the *Bioenergi* soundtrack program, claimed to be a reliable audio-spiritual technological tool for enhancing human intelligence and creativity, success and prosperity, passion and harmony, and healing.<sup>87</sup>

These hyperbolic assertions, that the *Bioenergi* material products are spiritually and miraculously efficacious, tend to lead people to assume that the products work just like an amulet. Nevertheless, Syaiful argues that they are not amulets, noting that the power and efficacy of the products were the result of the cultivation of the *Bioenergi* that already exists around people. Consuming the products, along with encouraging positive thinking, would allow people to maximize the benefit of their *Bioenergi* and achieve whatever they wished.

<sup>87</sup> The work of the *Biosound* was described as stunning and marvellous. The centre also describes the *CD Kecerdasan* as “audio-spiritual to increase intelligence, memory, creativity, and to stimulate interest for studying hard;” the *CD Kesuksesan* is “spiritual-therapeutic music to stimulate and permit potential success in various fields;” the *CD Sex* is “audio-spiritual to help enhance passion and harmony with spouse;” and *CD Penyembuhan* is “audio-spiritual to normalize the function of human organs, that works by stimulating the brain and neural systems and accelerating regeneration of cells in the body that [finally] would hasten the healing process of various diseases, including chronic ones” (*Bioenergi*, 2010b).

Besides books, training programs, consultations, capsules, cards, and CDs, *Bioenergi* also released *Bioherba*, which is *jamu* [herbal medicine] packaged in various types and for various purposes. Among the herbal products are: *Biosel* for tumours and cancer, *Bio Q* to assist the growth of intelligence, *Darbio* to normalize blood pressure, *Ragalin* to heal acidic muscles and rheumatism, and *Bio X* to enhance sexual desire. *Bioherba* is presented as a capsule, pill, and liquid (syrup). To convince its customers of the quality of the products, the centre attaches certification of the *Bioherba* from the Department of Health, Republic of Indonesia.

The notion of the combination of scientific exploration, herbal-naturalism, and the religious approach is frequently described in *Bioenergi* products. The terms *Ilmiah*, *Alamiah*, and *Ilahiah*, almost always appear in its publications, stressing that the products are scientific, natural, and religiously approved. To some extent, the claims are too bombastic and could possibly lead to criticism from educated people. This can be seen, for example, in the product description of the *Kapsul Bioenergi* [*Bioenergi* Capsule]:

[A] capsule contains atomic powder that has been heated up to 22.000 degrees in a Japanese nuclear reactor. The ingredients were combined through a spiritual process that is not contradictory to any religious teaching, and were processed scientifically, naturally, and religiously... You only have to consume one capsule, dependant on your business. It has no contra-indications. The capsule functions for a lifetime and it will not falter at the end of life. Having been consumed, the bio-electromagnetic domain will work automatically according to your heart and mind, and, at the will of God, it will fulfill all your hopes easily. (*Bioenergi* Brochure)

Likewise, to show that the *Biosound* product is scientific, the centre quotes experts' opinions on certain matters that support the products. For example, the *Biosound* brochure cites Dr Vincent Giampapa, MD, a member of the American Society of Anti-ageing Medicine and the International Longevity Institute, as considering that audio therapy dramatically affects three hormones related to human longevity and stress (i.e. cortisol, DHEA and melatonin). The back cover of the *Biosound* audio CD gives more detail as follows:

The *Biosound* is a *Bioenergi* soundtrack program, which is an extraordinary advanced audio-spiritual technology for healing, success, and prosperity. It works by stimulating the brain and nervous system and accelerating the regeneration of cells in the body, resulting in rapid healing of various diseases including acute ones. The *Biosound* will reduce the production of the hormone *cortisol*, so functioning to cure stress and aging, will increase the production of the hormone DHEA to maintain body immunity, giving strong resistance to disease, and will increase the hormone *melatonin*, producing quality deep-sleep. The *Biosound* will increase people's spiritual frequency, that would affect all the frequencies of their lives, such as easily overcoming problems and neutralizing handicaps in business and career, improving the balance of energy at home, in the office, and any other places, as well as balancing emotional relationships that would upgrade the potencies of success. (*Bioenergi*, 2010a)

The above exaggerated claims by the *Bioenergi*, that its products are scientifically grounded is, to some respects, comparable to Western Sufi movements, in which scientific explanation is assimilated to Sufi teaching (Werbner, 2007, p. 207). It might be

best to describe the *Bioenergi*'s scientific justification as 'scientification of spiritual products'. In fact, this process of scientification<sup>88</sup> actually started when Syaiful named his group and formula '*Bioenergi*,' a term that is commonly used in science, which is a combination of the words 'bio' and 'energy'. It is interesting to note again that the vision Syaiful received from his spiritual discipline is not of a meeting with his *Syekh* to establish a new group—as were those of Romo Sapto (chapter 3) and GMB (chapter 4)—but about knowledge of the universe and energy, something that is closer to scientific issues.

The *Bioenergi* continues the process of scientification by naming its spiritual products using English words that have scientific connotations, such as *Biosound*, *Biochip*, *Bioenergi Wisdom Card*, *Biomoney*, *Bioenergi Entrepreneur Power*, and *Quantum* program. In describing the capsule product as containing "atomic powder that has been heated up to 22.000 degrees in a Japanese nuclear reactor," for example, Syaiful confirms to the public that his products are not talismans and that they are suitable for modern people. It is even declared in the centre's brochures that the products are '*tanpa azimat, khodam plus ilmiah, alamiah*' [without amulets, genie, plus scientific and natural]. Introducing the notion of Japan, instead of other countries, is also a good ploy for engaging and getting involved with modern lives, since people see Japan as a leading country in nanotechnology production. It is assumed that high technology products are among the more expensive manufactured goods. Through this marketing strategy, the scientification of spiritual products would give the public a reason to understand why *Bioenergi* products are expensive.

In addition to the scientification of spiritual products and formulae, the centre also epitomizes the psychologization of spiritual training. In the *Bioenergi* seminars and training programs, as well as in his books, Syaiful claims that what he does is explore the teachings of Sufism via practical methods, for practical purposes. To be easily understood by those who are not familiar with Islamic terms in general and Sufi terms in particular, Syaiful elucidates the teaching from a rational point of view. He explains, for example, that using *doa* and *dhikr* for gaining success in business is a practice of mind navigation, to make it better concentrated on what people are doing. *Sabar* [patience] and *syukur* [gratitude] are the keys of happiness, that lead to peace of mind, and improve positive thinking so that people can be released from their sickness. Syaiful's descriptions blend humanistic psychology, self-management, and 'how-to' books (like *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne, that explores the power of the mind and the importance of brain management), overlaid with Sufism teaching. In this regard, what Syaiful has effected, as in the hybrid Sufism trend in the West, is the 'psychologization of spirituality'.

<sup>88</sup> According to the Urban Dictionary, scientification is "The act of turning a non-scientific entity into an enhanced scientific property" (Urban Dictionary, 2010).

#### 5.4. Commodification of Spiritual Efficacy in the *Bioenergi*

Compared with the other two spiritual centres in Yogyakarta, the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* and the *Bhakti Nusantara*, the *Bioenergi* is more commercialized. The centre is not only in the business of corporatization of spiritual products and services (as is the *Bhakti Nusantara*), but the centre itself is a ‘Spiritual Corporation’ adopting *Perseroan Terbatas* (PT [Lit. limited company, a firm]) instead of *yayasan* [foundation] as its legal status.<sup>89</sup> The centre commercializes its spiritual efficacies, as Syaiful said, by following the mindset of modern people. The centre, therefore, deliberately promotes itself and its products as internationally reputed, advertises its programs and products through modern media, and justifies the logic behind the high prices of the programs and products by invoking modern economic culture. Thus, spiritual programs and products are treated as commodities. They are packaged and sold to the public with specific prices. The clients, in order to acquire their spiritual efficacy, have to purchase them.

The process of internationalization in the *Bioenergi* is already manifest in the centre’s name through the use of the word ‘international’: *PT. Bioenergi International*. In addition to using English terms for naming its corporation and products, the *Bioenergi* claims that its products have spread internationally and been used in such places as Hong Kong, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, USA, and Europe.

Internationalization of the *Bioenergi* is supported by the modernization of its spiritual services through the implementation of efficient and rational management in running the centre, both in its organization and transactions. Organizationally, a director leads the centre’s day to day activities, accompanied by a production manager, training manager, public relations officer, and other staff that, according to Evi, the current director, number up to seventy. The centre offers both on-the-spot and on-call transactions of the products. In the on-the-spot transaction, a receptionist will serve customers at the magnificent office, whereas the on-call transaction allows the public to purchase *Bioenergi* products via bank transfer.

In order to get public exposure, the centre actively advertises its programs and products in local newspapers and national magazines, as well as on the centre’s flyers and banner. Describing itself as ‘the final solution’ [*akhir dari segala solusi*], the *Bioenergi*’s advertisements tend to exaggerate the material, spiritual, and health problems faced by people, and then offer practical methods and strategies for handling the problems. To convince potential customers, the advertisements show testimonials from the *Bioenergi*’s clients who have gained benefit from the products. For example, the *Bioenergi Kapsul* advertisement displays a testimonial saying: “*Berkat kapsul Bioenergi*

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<sup>89</sup> The legal name and status of the centre is PT *Bioenergi International*, training and business consultant company founded on July 29, 2003, based on the notaries act of Pandan Nurwulan S.H, M.H and endorsed by the Director General of General Legal Administration of Yogyakarta, number: C-24 052 HT.01.01. TH.2003, Date: October 9, 2003.

*Karir dan Bisnis Meningkatkan Semua Penyakit Sirna*” [Thanks to the *Bioenergi* capsule, [my] career and business increase, all diseases are cured], followed by a testimonial from a thirty-three year old employee who got a promotion as a branch manager a week after consuming the capsule.

Another thing to be noted on *Bioenergi* advertisements is the depiction of white people as symbolizing success, prosperity, and wealth. The *Quantum* program, for example, portrays a white family (father, mother, son and daughter) walking along a riverbank with the caption “achieve a healthier life, rich, successful and prosperous”. The *Bioenergi* advertisement for consultancy training depicts a group of white executive managers in a business meeting, and the advertisement for *Biosound* has a picture of a meditating white man wearing earphones. Pictures of indigenous people appear only along with their testimonies on the *Bioenergi* products.



Figure 5.3.

The *Bioenergi* banner of the Quantum training program saying: *Dengan Kedahsyatan Quantum, lebih dekat dengan Tuhan, usaha kian lancar, semua masalah teratasi dengan cepat* [With the ultimate Quantum [training program], closer to God, business growing smoothly, all problems resolved quickly]

Concerning the pictures of white people in *Bioenergi* advertisements, Syaiful said again that it is just a marketing strategy following modern Indonesians’ secular way of thinking. It does not mean to insinuate that white people are spiritually better than others. In Syaiful’s words:

Actually it was only following the secularity of Indonesian minds. We do not think that Western people are spiritually more advanced than Indonesian. It is true that on the cognitive level, Westerners are better; but in practice Indonesians are extraordinary. What we need are both spiritual practices and knowledge that should be always upgraded. Indonesians lack such a combination. (Interview with Syaiful, June 4, 2010)

Amid the multi-dimensional crises of Indonesia, where people have difficulty finding jobs and earning money while social services such as hospitals and educational institutions are tending to succumb to capitalism, the *Bioenergi* programs seem to offer a pana-

cea. In such a socio-cultural context, people are eager to come and participate in the centre's programs to gain spiritual efficacy, hoping for a miraculous result. One critic said that the *Bioenergi* centre is only articulating human problems, and then offering various packages of solutions, for which participants are charged a specific tariff.

Although the *Bioenergi* gives an impression of rationalization, modernization, and internationalization of spiritual products and services, the centre does not rely on modern clients and customers who think rationally and systematically. Syaiful fully understands that a number of his customers are ordinary people who are fond of mystical thinking, exaggerating supernatural powers and hoping for miracles. The centre therefore, in promoting its programs, hyperbolically describes the efficacies of the products and services. To gain the attention of such customers, the centre adds information that meets their needs. For example, the *pelatihan* [training] programs are also called by a Javanese word, *gemblengan*, which is commonly used in Javanese mystical groups to refer to training in cultivating supernatural power. Another name for the *Bioenergi* capsule is *susuk* [implant]. In Javanese culture, *susuk* is commonly understood as a kind of amulet, to be implanted in part of human body in order to have a specific efficacy, such as good aura, extra ordinary power, and longevity. The director of the centre explains that this use of Javanese words to refer some *Bioenergi* products is part of the centre's marketing strategy. She said: "When we advertised our product to the public just as the *Kapsul Bioenergi*, only a few people bought it. But when we said that the capsule is 'susuk', more people purchased the product" (Interview with Evi, director of PT *Bioenergi International*, Saturday, July 10, 2010).

The advertisements for *Bioenergi* products appear in print media, local newspapers, brochures, flyers, on outdoor banners, radio, and also on the centre's official website. To attract the modern-rational customers, the *Bioenergi* advertises its products in rational-entrepreneur publications, such as *Peluang Usaha* magazine, *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, and *Minggu Pagi*. To gain customers from lovers of the magico-spiritual, the centre advertises in spiritual publications such as *Posmo*, *Liberty*, and *Merapi*.

Another strategy in commodifying spiritual efficacy involves the packaging and pricing of the spiritual product. As a spiritual corporation, the *Bioenergi* centre develops spiritual products in various packages, depending on its target markets, and then sells them at a relatively high price. For example, a four hundred page book of *Kecerdasan Bioenergi* is sold for Rp. 450,000.00. Syaiful testifies that the minimum price for his training programs is Rp. 450,000.00 and the maximum is Rp. 450,000,000.00. The centre also varies the products based on their levels of efficacy. For instance, the *Kartu* and *Kapsul* of the *Bioenergi* are packaged in several types, the prices depending on their power. For instance, the *biasa* [regular] product of the *Kapsul Kecerdasan* is Rp. 500,000.00; the *khusus* [special] one is Rp. 1,500,000.00; and the *Plus* product is Rp. 2,500,000.00;<sup>90</sup> whereas the price of *Biosound* is Rp. 250,000.00.



Figure 5.4.

The 'Bioenergi Quotient' Book with its price: Rp. 450,000.00<sup>91</sup>

According to Syaiful, product pricing, as one of his marketing strategies, is not merely for the sake of accumulating capital. When I asked why his products are expensive, Syaiful said:

The reason why people have to pay expensive prices to participate in the *Bioenergi* programs is to invite their spiritual struggle... In the past, to increase their spirituality, people have had to trust to their *Syekh*, following wherever the *Syekh* goes, as a *cantrik* (pupil), attending the *Syekh*'s weekly lectures. Will people do all of these right now? The era is changing. Therefore, today's spiritual test is with the material. If you want to have much material wealth you have to share your wealth first. (Interview with Syaiful, June 4, 2010)

Thus, for Syaiful, the high price is a kind of spiritual test. The willingness of customers to purchase spiritual products at high prices indicates the seriousness of their intention to study and to obtain spiritual efficacies. In the past, such seriousness was assessed based upon students' physical and psychological obedience to the spiritual master (*guru*, *kyai*, or *Syekh*) as his *cantrik* [servant]. In order to ensure that the wisdom and *ilmu* that the *cantrik* received from the master would be used for positive purposes, the *cantrik* had to pass a series of both physical and spiritual stages, with a

<sup>90</sup> There is another *Kapsul Bioenergi* product which is even more expensive, namely *Kapsul Bioenergi* for beauty and success, that works, according its flyer, as a spiritual 'charm'. This capsule is sold for Rp. 1,250,000.00 for the regular, Rp. 4,500,000.00 for the special, and Rp. 7,500,000.00 for the super one. (With an exchange rate against the Australian dollar of A\$ 1 = Rp. 8,500.00, these products sell for A\$ 147.00 for the regular, A\$ 529.00 for the special; and A\$ 882.00 for the *Plus*.)

<sup>91</sup> In Australian dollars, the price of the book is equivalent to A\$ 52.00 [A\$ 1 = Rp. 8,500.00]. In Indonesian book markets, we can buy from five to seven other hard cover books for the same price and number of pages as one book sold in the *Bioenergi*.

number of arduous rituals. Today, when people are so busy with their secular activities, and everything is seen in terms of a monetary value, spiritual transmission is based on a secular mindset. To gain spiritual formulae and efficacies, people do not need to follow the master physically, as did the *cantrik*. The willingness of clients to pay for a high cost program is now an indication of their seriousness and their deep appreciation of the knowledge offered by the master.

In addition to being a spiritual test, the pricing scale follows the mindset of urban people, who tend to appreciate something expensive. According to Syaiful, one of the impacts of modernism is that society tends to appraise products and services on a material basis. It is generally assumed that price indicates quality. The more expensive, the better the quality. Cheap and even free services mean *murahan* [poor product]. This is Syaiful's justification as to why *Bioenergi* products and services are expensive. Syaiful explained that in the beginning, from 1996 to 2000, he shared *ilmu Bioenergi* with the public, free of charge. But none of the participants appreciated his expertise. One day he met a colleague, a lecturer at the economic faculty of a university, who suggested that he should package *Bioenergi* products and programs and put a reasonable price on them. The result was amazing. More people came and joined his programs, although they had to pay a certain amount of rupiahs.

In early May, 2010, after the *Bioenergi* had run paid programs for more than ten years, Syaiful promoted a free seminar program. Participants needed to make a reservation in order to have seat. Although the centre's publications in a newspaper had already noted that the seminar was free, a number of people called him asking, "is it true that the seminar is free?" This story indicates that the capitalist point of view has spread so pervasively and deeply in public reasoning, that the more expensive a program is, the more it is seen as professional and of good quality.

To avoid a public impression that since the *Bioenergi* free seminar was *murahan* [cheap] it would be unorganized and of bad quality, the centre conducted the free seminar in a professional and well-managed way. Although the topic discussed in the seminar was about *metafisika* [metaphysics], which the public assumes is related to supernatural beings and power, the seminar was conducted in a four-star hotel, indicating that it was not a *murahan* program. Syaiful said:

If I performed a free program in a regular place, people would not have valued it... I had an experience in organizing a free program in *Depsos* (*Departemen Sosial* [Social Service Department])... where people did not appreciate my program. But, when I performed it in a hotel, as you could see in the seminar, they came to my free seminar wearing good clothes, indicating they had valued it highly enough to appreciate both themselves and my program. (Interview with Syaiful, June 4, 2010)

For Syaiful, conducting free spiritual seminars in a hotel is just a method to get in touch with his potential clients, following their secular and capitalist ways of thinking. People tend to regard something expensive, conducted in a symbol of secularism, like the seminar in the magnificent hotel building, as better than that what is per-

formed in public facilities, like *mushalla* or social services buildings. The free seminar is, therefore, part of the marketing strategy of the centre to promote and sell other 'premium' spiritual books and training programs. In the *Bioenergi*'s free seminar, after Syaiful demonstrated basic information and techniques for gaining success and a healthy life, with what he called 'metaphysics', and also added testimonials from his alumni, he asked the participants who wanted to participate in the next paid programs. Just like a sales person promoting his products, he offered the programs by giving a discount and bonus for those who made an early booking. His staff then distributed flyers giving the date, venue, and cost of the programs—which, for the basic version, was at least Rp. 2,500,000.00 (around A\$ 294.00 at a currency exchange rate of A\$ 1 = Rp. 8,500.00).

Finally, the reason for the high price is that it is not merely seen as a 'cost', but as an 'investment'. In the free *Bioenergi* seminar, a young male participant complained that the *Bioenergi* training programs are too expensive. Syaiful replied by asking to the young man: "How old are you, and how much do you want to earn in the rest of your life?" The young man said: "I am about thirty years old, and I want to earn at least five billion rupiah". Syaiful said: "Okay, you can! And now please consider, if you want to earn at least five billion, is a two and a half million rupiah investment too expensive compared to the five billion you want to reach? Of course, the two and a half million investment is nothing, and too small compared to the amount you will gain in the future".

The designation of the cost of the spiritual training as an investment is also visible in centre's flyers. For example, the flyer for *Bioenergi Entrepreneur Power* training said: "*Kami pastikan Anda puas dan hidup berubah 180 derajat. Investasi: Rp. 2.500.000,*" [we guarantee you will be satisfied and your life will change 180 degrees. Investment: Rp. 2,500,000.00].

The argument that the cost of training is an investment to gain the benefit of a multiplied and even unlimited return in the future, is a smart rationalization. Presented in this way, participants would assume that the high price is normal and understandable. But, from a moral point of view, where there is no guarantee of the outcome, just a number of testimonials, and the products are not tested by an impartial observer, the rationalization is problematic, because it indicates the shifting from a 'moral value' to 'material value' basis of spiritual teaching and learning. This also means the transformation of 'spiritual transmission' to 'spiritual transaction,' where spirituality loses its sanctity and is degraded to just a spiritual commodity.<sup>92</sup>

The above commodification of spiritual efficacy in the *Bioenergi*, needless to say, leads to comparison of the centre with the Western Human Potential Movement. As

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<sup>92</sup> Many people assume that the current trend of spiritual transaction, where people pay an amount of money to get spiritual services or formulae, is a new phenomenon, and represent it as commodifying spirituality, in a negative sense. Such an argument is based on the logic that spirituality, like religion, should be transferred or given

noted in previous chapters, among the characteristics of the Human Potential Movement are charismatic leadership, pre-programmed and gradual programs of self-help development, entrepreneurialism, and the combining of spirituality with humanistic psychology (Putick, 2000). These elements of the HPM are apparent in the *Bioenergi*. They can be seen in the charismatic leadership of Syaiful, as the founder and leader of the centre, and in the pre-programmed and gradual spiritual programs of self-help development for attaining this-worldly prosperity. The implementation, by the *Bioenergi*, of modern business principles, both institutionally and practically, clearly indicates its entrepreneurial character. Finally, the combining of spirituality with popular psychology and scientific matters has its equivalent in the character of the HPM, which blends humanistic psychology and spirituality. Nevertheless, unlike the Western HPM, that borrows Eastern spiritual tradition, the *Bioenergi*, (as does the *Bhakti Nusantara*), cultivates the Eastern spirituality of Sufism, but borrows current Western popular sciences, such as humanistic psychology, neuro-linguistic-programming, and self-management.

### 5.5. Conclusion

Embodying a spiritual corporation, the *Bioenergi* centre transforms Sufi tenets, from a model of normative Islamic piety, to a formula of efficacy for this-worldly prosperity. The centre applies a form of active Sufism to provide not only moral and ethical values for modern people, but also rationalized and systematized steps of spiritual efficacy to embrace a capitalist culture, by the process of scientification of spiritual ideas and products and psychologization of spiritual training. The engagement of spirituality with modernity is the consequence of secularization, in which corporatized spirituality is influenced by 'Zweckrational action' and transformed into commodities of means for healing, self-improvement and worldly success (Lee & Ackerman, 1997, p. 5).

Corporatization of spirituality, allowing the centre to make a spiritual transaction which is based on 'selling and buying principles' instead of just on a moral obligation of

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freely to the needy. In fact, historical documents testify that during the colonial era, spiritual as well as religious services were not as pure as has been assumed. In some respects, spiritual transactions, and competition to gain reward from these services, had led to religious unrest. On March 2, 1919, Yogyakarta Resident, P. W. Jogquire, reported to Governor General A. C. D de Graeff about the *Kebatinan* movement in Yogyakarta. The report said that after amulet-selling supporters of the Heroetjokro movement were arrested in Southern Yogyakarta, the *Kebatinan* movement was no longer strong. R. Kren, an Advisor for the Bumi Putera, in his letter to Governor General D. Fock, in October 1925, also reported the development of the *Java-Sunda* religion, noting that official religious employment was affected by the movement, since its followers had their own marriage and burial rituals and did not use marriage and burial services from the official religious employ any more, meaning the decrease of rewards they usually received from these services. These reports indicate the availability of 'tribute' or 'gift' among spiritual services. The case of the Heroetjockro movement even notes blatant examples of spiritual transactions through amulet selling (see Kartodirjo, 1981, pp. LXXXV, LXXXVII).

spiritual transfer, has led the *Bioenergi* to carry commercialization further than do the PTT and the BN. The legal status of the *Bioenergi*, as a firm, enables it to market spiritual programs and products based on the rational calculations of a modern firm. The commodification of spiritual efficacy has led the centre to place emphasis more on spiritual products with magical efficacy than on personal piety regimes. Furthermore, it leads the centre to combine local cultures and normative Islam, and to amalgamate Islamic spiritual understanding with pop science, in the name of spirituality.

The entrepreneurial character of the *Bioenergi*, its development of gradual spiritual training programs and packaged spiritual products, its charismatic leadership, and its promotion of the self-development of spirituality as a means for success, exemplify the *Bioenergi* as an Eastern form of the Human Potential Movement. Nevertheless, as happens in the PTT and the BN, the *Bioenergi*'s process of borrowing spiritual ingredients is apparently in the reverse direction to that of the Western HPM. While the Western HPM borrows Eastern spiritual legacies (Puttick, 2000) the *Bioenergi* is based on Eastern spirituality but takes popular sciences from the West.

In new expressions of Sufi groups in urban areas of the capital of Indonesia, Jakarta, well-educated urbanites and those who have been overwhelmed by the prosperity of modern life are the main supporters, searching for personal spiritual experiences. The *Bioenergi*, however, addresses its programs to ordinary people, promoting spiritual formulae for gaining secular prosperity and taking advantage of the opportunities offered by modern society. The centre goes even further, by 'commodifying' spiritual products and services under the rubric of a spiritual firm. The *Bioenergi* is, then, a clear example of a spiritual group fully engaged with modernity.

# Chapter 6

## **HPM, Hybridization and Commodification of Spiritual Efficacies in Yogyakarta Spiritual Centres**

In the foregoing chapters I have described the historical transformation of spiritual groups in Indonesia. I have also discussed the three different trajectories of changes in the spiritual centres in the modernizing city of Yogyakarta. The PTT provided an example of indigenous spirituality which is mobilized for cultural resistance; my analysis of the BN showed how occultism has been linked to orthodox Sufi practices; and my study of the Bioenergi showed the way hybrid spirituality can be shaped to deal with modernity in a secular landscape. All these cases exemplify the variety of responses that spiritual groups in Yogyakarta have made to the challenges and opportunities of modernity.

This chapter presents a comparative analysis of those three contemporary Yogyakarta spiritual centres by employing sociological theories and concepts concerning the relationship between modernity and spirituality. I first examine the parallels between the Western HPM and the three hybrid spiritual centres in Yogyakarta. I next look closely at hybridization of spirituality that come about as the result of globalization. Subsequently, I analyse trends of rationalization and corporatization of the spiritual centres, and finally, scrutinize the theoretical significance of the commodification of spirituality, in relation to the durability of religion in a city in the process of modernization.

### **6.1. Western and Eastern HPM: General Characteristics and Parallelism**

As already described in chapter one, the Human Potential Movement [HPM] is a term introduced by social and humanities researchers, referring to training centres or groups promoting self-help therapies, that flourished from the 1950s to the 1970s in North America, and afterwards spread to Europe, mainly the UK. Due to the variety of the groups, Elizabeth Puttick considers that the HPM is “a broad umbrella of theories and practices derived mainly from Abraham Maslow’s humanistic psychology” and, by definition, “it is not in itself a religion” (Puttick, 2006, p. 286). The practitioners of the movement prefer using the term ‘growth movement’ or avoiding any labelling of their groups (Puttick, 2000, p. 203).

Researchers studying the HPM recorded that in its early development, the HPM spread pervasively. Stone (1978, p. 66) recorded that in the early 1960s about seven million Americans were involved in the movements. The number of HPM centres around the USA in 1970 was estimated at more than seventy, and grew to several hundred by 1977 (Plumb, 1993, p. 20). Although the HPM developed and spread broadly in the era of modernization in USA, it attracted a number of criticisms from social scientists, who noted that the HPM tended to “ignore social context, blunt social purpose, and threaten to obliterate the last vestige of social responsibility” (Schur, 1976, p. 192), and that it was anti-intellectual (Plumb, 1993, p. xi; Schur, 1976, p. 192), simplistic and illusive (Schur, 1976, pp. 192-193), “narcissistic and lacking social conscience” (Puttick, 2006, p. 286). Although a number of criticisms were aimed at the HPM, Puttick mentioned that the HPM was “one of the most significant and influential movements of the counter culture of the sixties and seventies” bearing both spiritualization and secularization (2000, p. 201) that has significant impact on the philosophy and practice of business and training programs (2006, p. 287).

One of the questions addressed in this study is whether there are parallels between the Human Potential Movements that have grown in the West, and those that developed in contemporary Indonesia. Comparison between characteristics of the Western HPM and the current movements in Yogyakarta shows that there are both similar and dissimilar points.

The Western HPM which emerged in the 1950s to 1970s corresponds to the current activity of Yogyakarta’s HPM in the following ways: First, both movements blend spirituality, humanistic psychology and self-management in their training programs and activities. In the case of the Yogyakarta spiritual centres, such a blending of various elements leads to their being noted as hybrid groups.

Second, as already mentioned in chapter one, the emergence of the Western HPM was part of the rebellion against arid Western traditions, both in philosophy and theology (Puttick, 2000, p. 206), especially as manifested in behaviouristic psychology and organized religion (Puttick, 2006, p. 286). This nuance of rebellion is exactly in

congruence with Yogyakarta spiritual centres, developing as they are in Yogyakarta, the city of education, and the capital for rational-puritan Muslims, the *Muhammadiyah*, who are regarded by some scholars as tending to negate the spiritual domain in religious practices.<sup>93</sup>

Third, entrepreneurial characteristics of the Western HPM (Puttick, 2000, p. 201; Schur, 1976, p. 6) have driven the movements to create graded programs, which are packaged, promoted, marketed and commercialized as a highly profitable product (Schur, 1976, pp. 6-7). This nuance of commercialization of 'pre-programmed' experiences, and their packaging and promotion, is also comparable to Yogyakarta HPMs. The *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*, the *Bhakti Nusantara* and the *Bioenergi* provide spiritual services, and set a specific 'tariff' for the transaction. Although the three centres each use different terms for these tariffs (*tali kasih* [voluntary contribution] for the PTT<sup>94</sup>, *mahar* [dowry] for the BN, and *biaya* [cost] and *investasi* [investment] for the *Bioenergi*), all of them encourage people to spend money in order to access the services.

Finally, the correlation, in the Western HPM, between the charismatic leaders and the successful combination of business, personal development and spirituality (Puttick, 2000, p. 214), is reflected in the Yogyakarta HPM. It is generally accepted by the community of the centre that their leader is a special figure, spiritually mature and holding certain extraordinary spiritual efficacies that can be used to help people. Members of the group deeply respect their leader. The Yogyakarta spiritual centres' ability to develop and attract a huge number of participants, in fact, cannot be separated from their charismatic founders and leaders.

Apart from the above similarities between Western HPMs and the movements in Yogyakarta, there are also dissimilarities. First, studies on the Western HPMs show that the features of self-awareness movements are individualism (Schur, 1976, pp. 2-3) and rebellion against the conviction that human life is defined by one's social role (Plumb, 1993, p. xii). Referring to Heelas (1996), Puttick stresses that the Western HPM was a manifestation of 'self religion' or 'self-spirituality' (Puttick, 2000, p. 205). The Yogyakarta HPMs, it seems to me, are different, in that in them, homogenization and communalization of spirituality are highly emphasized. Instead of assisting their members to develop subjective-life spirituality, the groups embody 'life-as spirituality', by following the spiritual recipes of the masters of the institutions. It can be seen, for example, that the goal of the PTT's spiritual programs is neither to achieve individual satisfaction nor private salvation, but to share their spiritual experiences and

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<sup>93</sup> See footnote 81, chapter 4, p. 140.

<sup>94</sup> Even though the PTT said that there are no costs, but rather donations, for spiritual healing services, one of the PTT healers said: "*Bila mereka memberinya banyak ya Alhamdulillah, bila sedikit ya kebangetan*" [If they contribute a lot that is God's grace, if it is too little it means they are too parsimonious], indicating that the bigger the contribution, the better for the group.

efficacies with other people. The PTT even manages group meetings called *forum benginan* [night forum] as a medium for spiritual sharing, and to check the progress of the patients' therapy. In addition to *anjangsana* [informal visits], the prominent figures of the PTT are involved in, and even sponsor, a variety of meetings of study clubs, such as the GMRP (*Gerakan Moral Rekonsiliasi Pancasila* [Moral Movement for the Pancasila Reconciliation]). The public *ruwatan* and cultural carnivals on special days of the Javanese or Islamic calendars are a further part of the PTT's strategy to keep in touch with its supporters, in addition to displaying the centre's points of view to the public. Finally, following their participation in the *gemblengan* program, Romo Sapto, founder and leader of the PTT, provides access for his disciples to obtain further spiritual advice.

The BN's patients, clients and *murid* are encouraged to participate in weekly or fortnightly collective *dhikir*. Furthermore, besides recording a brief CV of people who came to the centre for spiritual help or participation in spiritual programs, the centre maintains its own community.<sup>95</sup> The BN routinely sends short messages to its alumni to inform them of new programs and products or to give further advice about spiritual practices that the students have learned from the training. Some of the alumni are even appointed as BN representative in their regions. The BN also helps their alumni through an association of alternative healers.

Unlike its two counterparts, which are very eager to develop congregation-like spiritual groups, the *Bioenergi* manages its alumni by running the *Bioenergi* Club. Members of the club have full access for consultation with the master. The centre also frequently invites its successful alumni to convey their opinions and experiences of the program and its efficacies, in the *Bioenergi* seminars and training sessions.

These explorations show that the spiritual activities of the Yogyakarta spiritual centres resemble what might be called 'spiritual collectivism'. Unlike subjective-life spirituality, that strengthens individual freedom of spiritual experience and expression, spiritual collectivism is highly socially oriented. The goals of spiritual practices are not merely to satisfy individual spiritual thirst, but to share with other people. The adoption of congregation-like groups in the PTT and the BN indicates that the groups represent what Flory and Miller call "Embodied Spirituality" reflecting "an outward orientation that they understand as an integral part of their overall spiritual development," instead of just "personal desire and effort" of spirituality (2007, p. 215).

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<sup>95</sup> The BN organizes its community not only for the group's spiritual disciples but also for its clients and patients. One day I sat in a reception room of the BN, waiting for an interview with the centre coordinator. I read a note written at the bottom of a white board stating: "*Prinsip: Pasien adalah murid, murid adalah pasien*" [Principle: patient/client is disciple, disciple is client]. This notion asserts the BN's intention to unify its patients and *murid* in one community or congregation.

This sense of spiritual collectivism in Yogyakarta spiritual centres has led them to manage ‘spiritual congregations,’ where the spiritual gurus encourage their *murid* to engage in ‘life-as spirituality,’ which is guided by the guru, instead of ‘subjective-life spirituality’. Turner has argued that “[t]he principal characteristics of religion in modern society are its individualism, the decline in its authority of traditional institutions... and awareness that religious symbols are constructs” (2010, p. 19), stressing a higher degree of subjective spirituality. The Yogyakarta spiritual groups seem to show the reverse trend, with the groups exhibiting collective spirituality. It is true that they have a tendency to disassociate from mainstream religious authorities, but they then try to establish their own community, creating a congregation-like group.

Second, while the spirituality of the Western HPM is rooted in foreign tradition, namely “the ancient disciplines of Eastern religion” (Plumb, 1993, p. 1) or the Eastern spirituality of Buddhism and the Osho movement (Puttick, 2000, p. 203), the Yogyakarta HPMs base their activities upon the local-internal spirituality of Sufism and Javanese heritages. There are, of course, external elements adopted by the Yogyakarta spiritual groups due to the process of globalization. Most of these global-external components are self-management recipes and humanistic psychological theories. The fusion between the internal-local spiritual legacies and the external-global managerial and psychological elements then creates what Turner calls a ‘spiritual hybrid’ (2010, p. 18).

## 6.2. Hybridization of Spirituality

The literature of the 1950s to the 1960s which was concerned with modernization assumed that the world would eventually become one global community. The intensified globalization of the previous decade, marked by a massive surge in the worldwide technologies of information and transportation, would serve to continue the modernization project, leading people around the world to behave uniformly. In terms of cultural identity, it was assumed that local traditions and less popular cultures would finally be usurped by the global and more popular one. But this has not been the case. In fact, globalization leads to the emergence of both the global and the local. Hence, though globalization is commonly assumed to be the real threat to their existence, in reality, it enables local cultures to create and accentuate a hybrid identity, through the process of borrowing. In terms of religion or spirituality, the process of borrowing various religious/spiritual traditions from global spiritual markets to be inmixed with the local, has lead to globalization’s reinforcing the hybridization of religious/spiritual traditions (Turner, 2010, p. 18).

From the perspective of globalization studies, the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres described in chapters three, four and five, clearly illustrate the process of hybridization and glocalization of spirituality. The processes are partly the result of the modernization and globalization that are taking place in Yogyakarta, as a mid-size city

adapting to change in Indonesia, where the social dynamics of modernization have created markets for various types of products, including the religious and spiritual. The three Yogyakarta spiritual centres, therefore, employ the borrowing process described above, borrowing both from the local and the global in the following ways: the PTT bases its activities on Javanese spiritual tradition, employing modern media to broadcast its spiritual identity; the BN explores Sufi teachings, meditation techniques, and rational points of view to transform its spirituality from occultism to orthodox Sufism; and the *Bioenergi* formulates the teachings of Sufism, humanistic psychology, scientification, and other modern self-development techniques, to fulfil its promises on spiritual efficacies. This blending of internal-local spiritual legacies with external-global ones exemplifies what Berger calls ‘hybridization’ (2002, p. 10) and Robertson calls ‘glocalization’ (1992; 1995, pp. 25-44).

These hybrid forms of spiritual groups in Yogyakarta have created and moderated their own spiritual identities so as to avoid any allegations by the mainstream religious groups. They have borrowed eclectically, taking various elements from differing religious traditions, which they have then modified for their own spiritual brands that look, in contrast to the mainstream religious groups, somewhat heterodox, commercial and popular. This hybrid form of spirituality affirms what some scholars have noted—that globalization has produced, in various forms, a religious/spiritual hybrid, instead of spiritual uniformity. Turner writes, “...perhaps the real effect of globalization is the emergence of heterodox, commercial, hybrid, popular religion over orthodox, authoritative, professional versions of the spiritual life” (2010, p. 19).

As elsewhere, the current trend of global spiritual markets affects the process of spiritual hybridization and glocalization in Yogyakarta. The re-linking of occultism to Sufism by the *Bhakti Nusantara*, as described in chapter four, cannot be separated from the global market of Sufism and Neo-Sufism in urban Indonesia, amid the resurgence of normative Islam. The BN’s transformation is thus part of the group’s strategy to maintain its existence, by embracing the current trend of Urban Sufism. Similarly, the psychologization of spiritual training programs and scientification of spiritual products by the *Bioenergi*, as explored in chapter five, are not separable from the current trend of publication and self-development training, that exploits spiritual narration blended with humanistic self-management and psychology (justified as ‘scientific’, or at least not contradictory to science).

Implementing Weber’s *Zweckrationalität* [purposive rationality], the BN and the *Bioenergi* have modified normative piety into spiritual efficacies for this-worldly prosperity. The enthusiasm of these two centres to adopt such rationalizations affirms one of Beyer’s conclusions from his study on religion in global society—that religion [and spirituality] “has been a carrier of modernization and globalization, not a barrier or victim” (Beyer, 2006, p. 300).

Of the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres, the PTT, which is mostly grounded on local Javanese spiritual legacies, is the group that at first glance seems hesitant to

embrace the modern trend. In this, it seems to contrast with its two spiritual counterparts, the BN and the *Bioenergi*, in which hybridization is very much coloured by embracing modern-secular traditions. Although the PTT adopts modern media to 'broadcast' its programs and activities, the group in fact utilizes its spiritual identity to challenge the modern way of life. The spiritual hybridization of the PTT therefore, might be best understood as a facet of the marginal group's strategy to revitalize its identity in the face of the growing hegemony of certain mainstream religious markets, which they consider as foreign.

For a local defender group like the PTT, the world religions, that are now dominating public religious life in Indonesia, are imported 'clothes', impinging on Indonesian indigenous identities. Romo Sapto, who actively advocates indigenous tradition through the PTT and GMRP (*Gerakan Moral Rekonsiliasi Pancasila* [Moral Movement for Pancasila Reconciliation]), expresses his opinion about such a threat, in his painting entitled '*Rembug 1 Milenium*' [1st Millennium Summit], noting that Javanese tradition has been taken over by world religions and trans-national companies. Sapto believes that Javanese spiritualism should be the basis of Indonesians' identity, in whatever 'clothes' they wear. He therefore questioned the policy of the former President of Indonesia, Abdurahman Wahid (popularly called Gus Dur), to officially admit Confucianism, an expression of Chinese culture, as one of Indonesia's formally recognized religions, while at the same time neglecting Javanese and other Indonesian indigenous traditions.<sup>96</sup>

The PTT, instead of empowering this-worldly prosperity by adopting modern culture, is utilizing Javanese spirituality for its cultural response. Robertson (1992, 1995, pp. 25-44) and Kwon-bun (2007, pp. 15-16) assert that globalization both creates cultural hegemony, and revitalizes local culture. The PTT's criticism of modernism and globalism is thus a facet of the revitalization of local traditions, under the rubric of a hybrid culture. Its goal is not to defeat Western and other traditions, which it considers hegemonic, but to provide a balance. When I asked Sapto about his goal of revitalizing Javanese identity, in the context of modernization and globalization, he replied and affirmed that he does not pretend that Javanese culture is the only solution to the injustice of the world. Rather, he tries to provide a balance in spirituality, in order that the world will not rely only on Western materialism and capitalism.

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<sup>96</sup> Similarly to Sapto, Samsul Ma'arif also criticized Gus Dur's pluralistic point of view, and decisions that, according to Ma'arif, only benefited official world religions, and remained silent concerning the existence of local religious expression. Ma'arif wrote: "Like many historians of Indonesia's Islam, Gus Dur seemed to perceive that the encounters and interactions between local and Islamic traditions throughout the archipelago were peaceful. Whether he was aware or ignorant, Gus Dur neglected to review the phenomenon of coercive mass conversions in the second half of 1960s and in 1970s, and the implications on our contemporary situation...[H]is work on religious pluralism mostly benefited those enjoying official religions...his concept of it was always overshadowed by the hegemonic discourses of the official religions" (Ma'arif, 2010).

### 6.3. Rationalization and Corporatization of Spiritual Centres

In the Indonesian context, spiritual services were the domain of religious leaders or spiritual practitioners who were mostly connected to rural culture. Spirituality was set in opposition to secularity, and was associated with one who withdraws from worldly activities. The spiritualists, many of whom were also religious leaders [*kyai*] of *pesantren* [Islamic boarding school], *guru* or *wong tuwa* [lit. senior people possessing spiritual aura and charisma] in Javanese tradition, conducted spiritual services addressing the people's needs, as part of their daily activities in running the *pesantren* or *padepokan*.

Currently, this trend in spirituality tends to have reversed. Many *tarekat pesantren* have become *fiqh* [Islamic jurisprudence] oriented *pesantren*.<sup>97</sup> Numerous spiritual providers outside the *pesantren* are thriving in urban areas, offering various spiritual services, and it is relatively easy to find a number of spiritual centres in the cities, occupying, as offices and places for spiritual clinics, beautiful buildings advertising the centres' names. Although the centres are led by charismatic leaders, they represent spiritual institutions, supported by a managerial body, systematic programs and skilled staff, thus demonstrating the implementation of rational planning in running the centre.

Among the three spiritual centres in Yogyakarta, the two that explore Sufi teachings, the *Bhakti Nusantara* and the *Bioenergi*, already have permanent offices in magnificent buildings, but they do not claim to be a Sufi order, or to be associated with a certain *tarekat* group. The *Bhakti Nusantara* is located in an area close to a nurses' college, an internet café, an Islamic High School, and sundry business outlets. The *Bioenergi* centre is situated in the inner city of Yogyakarta, next to hotels, a private hospital, and the XT square (the new Yogyakarta business complex for arts and handicrafts, which was formerly the Yogyakarta bus terminal). In contrast, the PTT, which bases its activities on Javanese culture, is located on the northern outskirts of the city, near the complex of private university campuses and hotels, approximately five minutes' drive from the Yogyakarta international airport. Its alternative healing clinic and ritual activities take place in Sapto's house. Thus, each of these three spiritual groups is situated in an area close to secular institutions, such as schools, universities and colleges, hospitals, hotels, and business units.

For administration and management, each group has a staff, but the groups differ in terms of the 'labour system' adopted. The *Bioenergi*, which is legally a company, has a number of employees who receive a monthly salary. A directress, who is supported

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<sup>97</sup> According to Bruinessen, based on the oral tradition, many of the older *pesantren* in Indonesia were originally *pesantren tarekat*, in terms of the *kyai* of the *pesantren* being "specialized in *kanuragan* and other forms of magic". The growing number of reformist *kyai* turned them into more *fiqh* oriented *pesantren*, of which some have now totally stopped their *kanuragan* practices, while some have persisted in them, in addition to *kitab* studies (see Bruinessen, 2007, p. 101).

by managers and staff, runs the centre's office. Syaiful M. Maghsri, the founder and leader of the *Bioenergi*, is called *Bapak* [Father]. The *Bhakti Nusantara*, which is legally registered as both a firm [CV] and a spiritual foundation, is supported by several *karyawan* [staff] as its main officers (who receive a monthly salary), and *cantrik* [disciples] (followers who stay in the centre and receive an 'incentive' on each program). The *koordinator* [coordinator] is in charge of running the centre's office. The leader of the centre is given the title 'Gus', literally meaning 'son of a *kyai*'. The PTT, however, which is legally neither a *perusahaan* [firm] nor a *yayasan* [foundation], but a *paguyuban* [community group sociologically representing *Gemeinschaft*], applies a *murid* and *warga* [disciples and members of the community] system, on the basis of voluntarism. Sapto Raharjo, founder and leader of the PTT, is its main figure, known by his community as *Romo Sapto*. 'Romo' is a Javanese word literally meaning 'father' and bearing a spiritual legacy. Sapto delegates the everyday running of the clinic to his assistant, Mas Jeje,<sup>98</sup> who, to his colleagues, is 'lurah' [headman].

Although the three centres are diverse in terms of their organizational and staff employment systems, they share commonalities in the following ways: office staff have uniforms; opening hours of the office are generally from 8 am to 4 pm; forms are required to be filled out by the patients/clients; therapy record cards are kept for patients; and cost/tariff is standardized (especially in the BN and the *Bioenergi*). Like regular business companies, the groups also have front office and receptionist staff, media representatives, and security officers, as well as brochures and flyers describing their products and programs.

In order to attract wider public interest, the groups actively advertise and promote their spiritual programs and products both in print and electronic media, such as the local Yogyakarta newspapers like *Kedaulatan Rakyat* and *Merapi*, the national tabloid, *Posmo*, local television and radio stations and the internet. Some centres circulate their own flyers, leaflets, brochures, and outdoor banners, to attract people.

In addition to bureaucratic and firm-based institutionalization, another trend in Yogyakarta spiritual centres is their eagerness to bring packaged local spiritual practices into the international arena of global spiritual markets. In the PTT, internationalization can be seen in the group's world-view on the politics of culture [*politik kebudayaan*], and in its criticism of today's modernism and globalization, that according to the group, only drive anxious people towards embracing materialism and neglecting spiritualism. In his painting exhibition, Sapto explained his cultural strategy. He said that he was finishing a paper on the issues of *politik kebudayaan* and wanted to send the paper to UNESCO.

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<sup>98</sup> At the end of 2010, Mas Jeje was delegated by Romo Sapto to handle the PTT's clinic chamber in Semarang. His position in Yogyakarta is now filled by Mas Sumbo.

Concerning holistic medical treatment, Sapto exclaimed proudly: "If we are talking about holistic healing, we are the first [to do it]". He added that, in the past, a group of guests from Germany had come to his *sanggar* to study holistic treatment. When I asked his response to the current dynamics of *Reiki* spiritual groups in Indonesia, Sapto noted that *Reiki* was originally from Indonesia. He explained that one day, during a multicultural event, a Chinese Buddhist monk recounted to him that Tibetan Buddhists originated from the migration of a Buddhist group from Sambisari, on the northern outskirts of Yogyakarta. According to Sapto, because *Reiki* developed from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, it may be that *Reiki* was actually originally from Java.

In the *Bhakti Nusantara* publications, GMB was frequently extolled as an international spiritual consultant. The notion that the centre and its leader are of international repute also appears in the BN's messages to its alumni. For example, a text message sent by the centre before a *ziarah* program at the end of 2009 read: "*Berbondong-bondong orang dari seluruh penjuru nusantara dan Asia Tenggara, yang dekat kok malah menjauh nggih?*" [People from all over the archipelago and Southeast Asian countries flocked [to BN], why do those who are nearest stay away?]. This assertion, that people from across Southeast Asia came to the centre to participate in its spiritual programs, reflects the BN's desire to inform its local members that its leader is internationally recognized, saying, in effect, 'so do not hesitate, please come again to the centre for further spiritual programs'. Furthermore, when I interviewed Gus Muh, he proudly related that he had guests from a French television channel who were filming BN activities.

In the *Bioenergi* centre, the internationalization process is implemented even in the brand name of the company, namely *PT Bioenergi International* [*Bioenergi International Inc.*]. Its brochures, newspaper advertisements, and banner also claim that its products have reached Belgium, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia, the USA, and many other countries. On various occasions, Syaiful, the centre's founder and leader, was introduced as a consultant to a Japanese Company.

What does such a trend to internationalization mean? First, from the perspectives of spiritual marketing and contestation of identity, it is part of the centres' strategy to convince local people that the centres have been internationally recognized, and thereby assuage their suspicion and doubt. Further, such internationalization is part of the centres' contest with, and even their challenge to, other local spiritual practitioners who may be fond of borrowing and marketing global spiritual products like *Reiki*, *Falun Gong*, and Yoga, and to many more practitioners, similarly operating in Indonesia. Thus it indicates a criticism by the three spiritual centres, of Indonesian people who appreciate something more, even something spiritual, if it comes from abroad.

Second, from the globalization perspective, internationalization indicates the centres' eagerness to bring Indonesian spiritual heritage into international spiritual markets. It is as if the groups were saying: "Look you international people...! Indonesia also

has spiritual formulae that are suitable for you. So, please look at us too, when you consider Eastern spirituality. Do not focus only on Chinese (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism) and Indian (Yoga, Hinduism) spiritual traditions". For the centres, then, the internationalization of spirituality is, in effect, an "equalization project" (Daniels, 2009), to bring Indonesian spirituality onto an equal footing with other players in the global spiritual marketplace.

It is worth noting here, however, that the internationalization project underway in current spiritual centres in Yogyakarta is not novel. In the mid twentieth century, many *kebatinan* groups were interested in this, but only a few groups have been really successful, such as SUBUD and Sumarah. SUBUD is the most internationally recognized, having its members spread over more than eighty-three countries. Its international organization is known as the World Subud Organization (WSO). Its official website provides information in various languages, such as English, French, Russian, Spanish, Dutch, Serbian, and Bahasa.<sup>99</sup> In the sociological literature, SUBUD is even described as a sort of Indonesian New Age Movement (Melton, 2001, pp. 1506-1507; Rubinstein & Smith, 2006, p. 807). Currently, Sumarah is also gaining in popularity through on-line media. Its homepage, headed 'Sumarah Meditation International Network' provides information about the Sumarah in three languages: English, Dutch, and Italian. The website also offers a Sumarah retreat program in Solo, Central Java, for Western people (<http://www.sumarah.net>).

Generally, the institutionalization and internationalization processes of the Yogyakarta spiritual groups represent their strategies to present spiritual services in a 'professional' way. The centres frequently claim that none of their spiritual services is contradictory to either science or religion. Such a claim aims to convince potential customers who are rational and religious. The processes of scientification<sup>100</sup> of spiritual products and psychologization<sup>101</sup> of spiritual training programs in the *Bioenergi*, as described in chapter five, the use, in *Bhakti Nusantara* training programs, of Harun Yahya's scientific CD, and GMB's frequent citing of Masaru Emoto's 'The True Power of Water' to validate his *Air Maunah* products, are good examples of 'rationalization' in

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<sup>99</sup> The official website of Subud said: "There are active Subud members in 83 countries in the world. Fifty-four of these countries are members of the World Subud Association. This association is the worldwide umbrella organization for Subud. The WSA, founded in 1991 and registered in Washington, D.C., is a non-profit organization. The WSA exists to enable national Subud bodies to work together and support the practice of the *latihan*, as well as to foster the educational, cultural, social and entrepreneurial activities that Subud members are involved in" (see <http://www.subud.com>).

<sup>100</sup> Scientification is "[t]he act of turning a non-scientific entity into an enhanced scientific property. Scientification is often used in the business world to describe data previously too difficult to explain, regarding demographic product selection" (Urban-Dictionary, 2010).

<sup>101</sup> Psychologization is "[t]he action of making something psychological; the analysis, description, or interpretation of something in psychological terms" (OED, 2011b).

terms of borrowing scientific explanations to provide logical justification of their services and products. In the PTT, rationalization tends to be less apparent than in its two counterparts. Usually, Sapto would provide a rational explanation to anyone who urged him for one. For example, when asked by a women guest about the efficacy of a *keris* [kris], instead of explaining it from a magical point of view, he explained that it was due to the *keris* being made from a meteorite.

This rationalization, in which magical and mystical explanations of spiritual products are replaced by scientific ones, is the centres' strategy for meeting the needs of modern people who may be searching for fresh spiritual channels that are suited to their spiritual orientations (Lee & Ackerman, 1997, p. 134). In order to serve their modern-minded customers, the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres have employed what Weber calls '*Zweckrational* action' [instrumental rationality], in which participants expect a specific result from their spiritual participation (Lee & Ackerman, 1997, pp. 3, 5). This can be seen, for example, in the *ruwatan* program of the PTT, the *takeji* and collective *dhikir* of the BN, and the various spiritual-like training programs of the *Bioenergi*, where spirituality is dedicated to this-worldly prosperity, from healing to fostering success in career and business. The spiritual practice of *dhikir*, for example, is rationalized in such a way that the practice is not merely directed to self-purification and getting closer to God, but is projected to heal certain diseases. The 'magical elements' of such a spiritual practice are undermined and replaced by "systematic coherence and naturalistic consistency" of thought (Weber, 1991, p. 51) in order to achieve this-worldly prosperity (healing, a successful career, an abundance of material wealth, etc.).

Referring to Weber, as described by Nicholas Gane, who studied Weber's rationalization, the rituals of *dhikir*, *ziarah*, *ruwatan* and other spiritual programs in these centres, which are rationalized as a means for grasping this-worldly prosperity, represent a kind of "rationalization of culture", in which the ultimate meanings or values of the spiritual practices "are *disenchanted* or... *devalued* and are replaced increasingly by the means-ends pursuit of material interest". Therefore, the value oriented rationality (*Wertrationalität*) of the spiritual practices is subordinated to the means-end oriented rationality (*Zweckrationalität*) or 'purposive rationality,' which aims for prosperity instead of just piety. In a time when materialism is among the dominant worldviews of modern people, being prosperous is calculated to be more advantageous than being pious. In consequence, such a rationalization would cause religious ethics and ultimate beliefs to be subsumed under 'rational calculation,' which may then be accepted as just routine, this-worldly action (Gane, 2002, pp. 157-158). The demarcation between the sacred and the profane would be vague, and religious and spiritual practices would potentially lose their sacredness.

Rationalization occurs in the Yogyakarta centres, not only in the elucidation and justification of their spiritual products and practices, but also in the way they manage the

centres and price their products, services and programs. The BN and the *Bioenergi* deliberately set relatively high prices and organize their seminars and training programs in the magnificent buildings of hotels and university halls, instead of in mosques, *pesantren*, or other places affiliated with religion or spiritual practices. The question is, 'Why?'

When I asked Deni, the BN coordinator, about the costs set for his spiritual programs, and who decides them, he answered that the amount to be paid by the participants was determined by a team. In order to determine a viable cost, the team would reckon up various elements, such as accommodation, transportation, honorariums for the team workers and guest speakers, food, seminar kits, certificates, and many others. The cost of the training is thus based on a rational calculation. When I asked him whether GMB, the BN leader, was also involved in determining the amount of *mahar* and other costs, Deni replied that he was almost never involved in it. Similarly, the PTT made rational calculations when the group wanted to conduct public rituals. However, instead of setting a specific cost to be paid by the participants, the PTT openly told its community about the total cost of the events and then offered to accept donations of flexible amounts. The PTT would accept contributions either in cash or goods.

In the *Bioenergi*, which clearly declares itself a firm, the high price of the products, according to Syaiful, just follows people's consumerist and materialist way of thinking. Because consumerist societies appraise products and services on the basis of money and other material values, it is generally assumed that price indicates quality—to get good quality, one must pay a relatively high cost. People would hesitate to purchase cheap products and services, since they expect them to be of poor quality. Therefore, in order to give the impression that its products are of high quality, the *Bioenergi* sells them at a relatively expensive price.

As described in chapter five, the owner of the *Bioenergi* told of his experience when he was developing his centre. From 1996 to 2000, he shared his expertise for free, but none of the participants appreciated his sharing. When he followed his colleague's advice to develop packaged programs and put a reasonable price on them, more people came and joined his programs, even though they had to spend certain amount of rupiahs. Since the *Bioenergi* was, so far, known as a spiritual firm with high priced programs and products, people were curious when, in early May 2010, the centre promoted a free three-hour seminar, in a hotel. The advertisement said that participants should make a reservation in order to get a seat. Although the centre's publicity in local daily newspapers had already noted that the seminar was free, a number of participants still asked Syaiful: "Is it true that the seminar is free?" This incident indicates that consumerist points of view have spread pervasively in many directions, including to the spiritual world. It is assumed even here, that since price indicates quality, then the more expensive the program, the higher its quality and professionalism.

BN and *Bioenergi* officers assert that besides being part of the centres' strategies for broadcasting that their programs are well qualified and professionally run, conduct-

ing spiritual training programs in secular buildings, in fact, helps to ensure that the training session is a success, by providing participants with a comfortable venue. Nevertheless, from a critical point of view, running spiritual training programs in such secular buildings may not be merely for practical reasons. It also implies other strategies, such as: (1) to build an image that the spiritual program is not just parochial, so that spirituality is not identified with the backward, seedy, creepy, and scary; (2) to invite and attract more urban people, who are used to having comfortable lives, to participate in the program, noting that spirituality is suitable for modern people as well; (3) running the program in a university hall indicates that the centre promoting the spiritual training is accepted academically; and (4), showing, above all, the centre's survival strategy, to engage with other secular activities by becoming involved in a place so far considered as secular.

In short, the process of institutionalization, internationalization, and rationalization of spiritual services among the Yogyakarta spiritual groups not only marks 'embodied spirituality' but also 'corporatized spirituality'. While embodied spirituality denotes the adoption of a congregation-like group (Flory & Miller, 2007) as a 'club' of spiritual seekers, corporatized spirituality reflects the implementation of corporate principles to manage spiritual groups and spread their spiritual worldview under corporation-like spiritual management. Under such a corporatized spirituality the groups develop hybrid programs and products based on the target market. From globalization studies, the eagerness of these centres to adopt this kind of modern principle emphasizes one of Beyer's conclusions from his study on religion in global society—that religion [and spirituality] "has been a carrier of modernization and globalization, not a barrier or victim" (Beyer, 2006, p. 300).

Nevertheless, corporatized spirituality is vulnerable to accusation. Spiritual services that traditionally tended to be conducted in silence are now spoken, and services are packaged into various types of seminars, training programs, retreats, and consultation, as well as spiritual goods. Such corporatization of spiritual centres marks the transformation of spiritual services from those based on the sacredness of religious institutions to those based on the 'secular'. The public may then easily assume that corporatized spirituality only downgrades spiritual orientation from helping people on the basis of moral and spiritual obligation, to selling products to customers with the aim of accumulating material benefits.

#### **6.4. Commodification of Spirituality and the Durability of Religion**

The process of spiritual corporatization in the Yogyakarta spiritual centres has led to a notion of spiritual commodification, in which the sacredness of the spiritual is vulnerable, reduced to a secularized transaction between sellers and customers instead of being a sacred agreement between the *gurus* or spiritual masters and their spiritual disciples. To explore whether or not there is spiritual commodification in the

Yogyakarta Spiritual centres, and whether or not such a process has undermined spirituality, we need to refer to how sociologists define the concept of 'religious commodification'. In his article, 'Toward a Sociology of Religious Commodification,' Pattana Kitiarsa defines religious commodification as a:

[M]ultifaceted and multidimensional marketized process which turns a religious faith or tradition into consumable and marketable goods. It is an interactive and iterative relationship between religion and market, simultaneously involving both market force[s] commodifying religion and religious institution[s] taking part in marketplace and consuming culture. (Kitiarsa, 2010, p. 565).

The word 'commodification' itself, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, means "the action of turning something into, or treating something as, a (mere) commodity; commercialization of an activity, and so on, that is not by nature commercial" (OED, 2011a).

In view of the above definitions, spiritual commodification might be defined as the action of turning spirituality into, or treating spirituality as, a mere commodity (programs, services and products). Under such treatment, spirituality, which is by nature not a commercial entity, would be treated as a commercial and marketable object to be consumed through the multifaceted and multidimensional interactive and iterative process occurring between spirituality and the market. The repeated interactive process driving the market forces commodifies spirituality and, simultaneously, the spiritual institution becomes actively involved in the marketplace and the consumer culture.

The process of spirituality taking on the form of a commodity marks, in the words of Grace Davie, "a shift from obligation to consumption" (Davie, 2007, p. 144) of spirituality, as happens in religious commodification (Kitiarsa, 2010, pp. 565-566), leading to the use of spirituality just as a tool for accumulating material benefits through the process of spiritual transactions. The burgeoning of spiritual centres exemplifying a spiritual corporation in the urban arena, as well as the fact of their overt advertising in the print and electronic media, could easily lead people to assume that commodification of spirituality is part of the centres' strategies to gain financial benefits through capitalizing on spiritual efficacies. This assumption is reasonable, because some centres explicitly describe a specific 'cost' for the services. They call it *tali kasih* [voluntary contribution], *mahar* [dowry], *biaya* [cost], or even *investasi* [investment] of a specific amount. For example, it states in the BN brochures that the *mahar* for participating in spiritual pilgrimage and *pengijazahan ilmu hakekat* [licensing spiritual knowledge] is about Rp. 699,000.00 to Rp. 1,999,000.00 depending on the grade of the benefit; and it is advertised in one of the *Bioenergi* flyers, that the *biaya* for participating in the GIM (*Gemblengan Ilmu Metafisik* [Training for Metaphysical Science]) program is Rp. 1,700,000.00, and the *investasi* for participating in the BEP (*Bioenergi Entrepreneur Power*) training program is Rp. 2,500,000.00.

Has thus pricing the programs and services downgraded spiritual transformation to a mundane, spiritual money-oriented transaction? Do Yogyakarta spiritual centres give higher priority to collecting money by selling spiritual products and programs than to providing spiritual advocacy for people in need?

It is not easy to determine which is the priority for them, because spiritual commodification is a reciprocal process between the market and the spiritual agents. However, when spiritual leaders are queried about such sensitive issues, it is difficult to ascertain that selling spiritual programs is the main means by which the centres, their founders, and the leaders of the groups earn money. GMB, the founder and leader of the BN, frequently states that he never touches the money paid by his *murid* in the centre. All the money goes directly to the *bendahara* [treasurer] of the centre. The variety of costs offered by the centre is, according to GMB, just his strategy to identify the seriousness, level of intention, commitment, and *keikhlasan* [sincerity] of the participants involved in his spiritual programs. According to GMB, it is reasonable to give more formulae and spiritual benefits to the participants who are eager to pay more, than to those who pay less. Referring to an advertisement of a broadband company, GMB said: "Who pays the highest prices will have the premium products or unlimited facilities and one who pays the minimum one will only have the basic".

On the night I participated in one of the *ziarah* and *pengijazahan* programs, GMB asked participants to raise their hands to indicate who had paid for the special, medium, and basic packages. He questioned further, asking who had just chosen the basic, cheapest one. Many participants raised their hands. "Is this because the money?" he asked. No one replied to his rhetorical question, and then he said: "Okay, you know what? The prices and packages program we made was actually just a trap to detect your seriousness in our program. I know your reason for choosing the basic one, but do not worry; I will give the same spiritual formulae to all participants". GMB eventually offered the same spiritual formulae to all the participants regardless of how much they had paid, just a few minutes before *pengijazahan* began. Nevertheless, the next morning, before the program was closed, Gus Muh told the participants that he would provide spiritual gifts especially to those who had paid for the most expensive packages.

To convince participants that spiritual programs, products and services in his centre are not money oriented, GMB told them that he had other professional institutions from which he earned money. Although he was the founder of the business oriented institutions, he had handed over their operation to his wife. "My wife is now the person who gives me money, bought me a cell phone, etc.," he said.

Concerning the *mahar*, the amount of money to be paid to the centre when participants want to be certified as having specific spiritual power or formulae, the BN, in its text message following the invitation to the advanced spiritual program explained: "*Mahar*='filter&zakat-jiwa yg tutup apes2&dosa2'..." [Dowry is a filter and soul alms to protect the sinful and unfortunate...] (BN text messaging on Tuesday, January 26,

2010; 8.26 am). When I got the message, I got an impression that the BN wanted to convince anyone complaining that the *mahar* was too expensive, as the message continued: “... *Org2 hmburkn ratusn juta utk HAJATAN2, PRYAAN2, JADI PNS, DLL, tp mrk sngt ‘was2’ dlm ‘mmahari-spirual’ njih...?*” [Many people spend hundreds of millions of rupiahs for parties, gaining job, and so on, but they fear and hesitate to spent money for spiritual dowry].

Since the money paid by participants does not go directly to the master, but is mostly distributed for operational costs, including honorariums for the committee members who support the program, it is difficult to consider that the centre has capitalized on its spiritual program for accumulating capital. It would be acceptable to say that the spiritual leader, in fact, has provided an opportunity to its *cantrik* and other committee members to earn a small amount of money from the centres’ activities. From this perspective, the BN has even successfully helped the jobless to earn a little money. Emphasizing that the BN is not money oriented, the BN coordinator noted that those who have no money at all may participate in the program free of charge. But those who have a lot are encouraged to pay more than the others, so that they can arrange subsidies among participants.

Romo Sapto, founder of the PTT, also confirms that his spiritual group is not a ‘profit centre’. Sapto said that all the PTT activities are self-funded, both from his own money and from the members of the group. He never invited an external sponsor to run the programs. When I asked him why he never asked for external sponsors and donations, he replied: “If I asked for donations or searched for any external sponsor, I would not be able to speak freely; I could not criticize anything if I wanted to do so”. It is worth noting here, that, in addition to being a spiritualist, Sapto is a painter. He earns money from selling his collections.

Sapto fully understands that his activities in healing services and staging Javanese cultural-spiritual events in various places can lead to suspicion and criticism. For example, he was suspected of just using Javanese tradition as tool for accumulating capital. His criticism of capitalism, modernism, and as globalization, followed by his offers of *ruwatan* services and holistic healing is, according to some criticisms, just another kind of ‘capitalization’ of Javanese tradition. In answer to this, Sapto asserted that “*Jowo iku ojo nganti diwadahi, yen diwadahi, ujung-ujunge duwit*” [Java should not be contained and packaged, whenever this has been done the end of such containing and packaging is usually just money]. These are among Sapto’s reasons for naming his group ‘*Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*’ in the *Gemeinschaft* model instead of the *Gesellschaft*, and also explain why the PTT does not implement a specific tariff for its healing services, but provides a donation box in the reception room.

In the *Bioenergi*, the group that, at first glance, is patently commodifying and selling spirituality by pricing the services and products more expensively than its two counterpart groups, the impression that the centre is making money is difficult to

avoid. However, again, Syaiful would argue that the price, as in the BN, is a kind of a test, replacing the spiritual and physical ordeal that used to be inflicted by spiritual masters in the past. Because modern people are so busy, and cannot follow the master physically, they are asked to pay an amount of money, as part of the test. The willingness of customers to pay a certain amount of money indicates that they are serious about following the master's spiritual formulae offered by the centre. In addition, paying a high price for a spiritual formula would be futile if they did not then practise it, so the high cost would drive them to seriously practise the spiritual exercise in order to access its efficacy.

Sapto Raharjo and GMB are considered as spiritual Gurus among their communities, while Syaiful M. Maghsri, is depicted as a *pembimbing* [spiritual guide]. Therefore, it seems that spiritual transformation in these three Yogyakarta spiritual centres is still framed by the *guru–murid* [master–disciple] connection rather than by just a seller–buyer relationship.

Based on the above explanation, the spiritual commodification that takes place in the Yogyakarta spiritual centres can be seen not merely in terms of the commercialization of spirituality. It also applies spirituality as a means to accelerate spiritual actualization, spread ideas and spiritual worldviews, and to some extent contest with other, hegemonic, cultures. It is true that there is an institutionalization process representing 'spiritual corporations' that enables them to develop hybrid products based on the target market. But, again, commodification by these spiritual corporations does not mean selling spirituality only with the goal of accumulating material profits. The adoption of corporate principles in these spiritual institutions is the centres' strategy to compete with other, secular, institutions, in order to present professional spiritual services in a modernizing city.

From sociological theory, the trend of spiritual commodification indicates both the secularization thesis and rational choice theory at work. Proponents of secularization like Cox (1965) and C. Taylor (2007) would argue that the trend is proof of religious decline, in which the role of the religious institution for providing spiritual services is reduced. Religious and spiritual services are no longer the monopoly of the orthodox and authoritative divine institution. Some private-corporatized spiritual institutions are now among active religious-spiritual providers. Spirituality and religion are losing their sacredness under such secular institutions, where religious and spiritual services are transformed from religious/spiritual obligation to mundane transaction, from Divine-moral exchange to worldly-material transaction. However, promoters of rational choice theory or "the religious market approach, or economic interpretation of religion," like Stark, Finke, Iannaccone, and Warner, as categorized by Turner (2010, p. 9), would argue the reverse, that commodification of spiritual services would actually provide the public with a more open market for spiritual shopping. The availability of various spiritual forms then, would offer people more choice for purchasing

spiritual products in whichever outlets meet their needs. The result is then a higher degree of consumption of spirituality. The higher the degree of consumption of religion/spirituality, the more re-sacralized the world would become, lessening the impact of secularization. On this subject Kitiarsa writes:

[R]eligious commodification subtly contests the secularization thesis. Market has become a major channel to gain access to, express, and spread popular religiosity. As a sociological concept, it is placed on the opposite side of the wall against the secularization stance. It demonstrates some paradoxical relationship to the pre-existing thesis of secularization. The presence of religious goods and some enormous efforts to “sell” religious faith via markets and media channels have demonstrated the growing mundaneness of religious teaching and belief at the outset. (2010, p. 569)

In the context of Indonesian “delimited religious pluralism” (Howell, 2003, 2004) where every citizen is required to affiliate with one of the state’s official religions, the growth of subjective life-individual spirituality would be politically problematic. Although the nuance of protest and rebellion against the anti-pluralist attitude of mainstream religious groups univocally presents in these groups by accommodating all participants regardless their religious, ethnical, and cultural backgrounds, the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres are neither too subjective nor too individualized. In fact, the spirituality developed in this modernizing city is a kind of spirituality of collectivism embodying the congregation-like character of a religion. With reference to the notion of ‘subjective-life spirituality’ versus ‘life-as religion’ (Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005, pp. 3-7), Indonesia seems to have what might be called ‘life-as spirituality’ as a complement to ‘life-as religion’. Carrette and King (2005) predicted that selling spirituality could silently take over organized religion, but spiritual commodification in Yogyakarta seems to demonstrate the reverse. Albeit that some spiritual groups, even those coming from Islamic backgrounds, try to disassociate from the major Muslim organizations like the *Muhammadiyah* and the *Nahdhatul Ulama*, as well as from any established Sufi order [*tarekat*], and the groups that cultivate local Javanese spiritual legacies declare they have nothing to do with religion, all the groups are packaging their spiritual services under the shadow of religious traditions. All the groups declare that their spiritual services and products are not in contradiction with any religious teachings. The groups also stress that their spiritual practices are dedicated to attaining religious maturity. What happens, then, is that instead of being taken over by spirituality, religion has successfully absorbed spirituality, for the benefit of a higher rate of religious consumption by the population. It valid to say, therefore, that the commodification of spirituality in Yogyakarta is another manifestation of the durability of religion in a society in the process of modernization.

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# Chapter 7

## Conclusion

This study has shown that the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres—the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal* (PTT), the *Bhakti Nusantara* (BN), and the *Bioenergi*—typify hybrid spiritual groups promoting spiritual efficacy. Spirituality is cultivated not just for nurturing human piety, but also reproduced, packaged and commodified as a means of responding to both the challenges and opportunities of modernity. The efficacy of spirituality, pertaining to such spheres as health, success in career and business, and harmonious life, can be acquired not only through participating in the spiritual trainings and activities, but also through consuming the material products promoted as being spiritually efficacious. As such, the exploration of spiritual efficacy has led the three groups to reproduce spiritual programs and products based on means–end rationality, instead being value-ended (Gane, 2002, pp. 2, 157-158; Lee & Ackerman, 1997, p. 134; Weber, 1991, p. 51). The centres’ efforts to elaborate the goals of spiritual actions, which in pre-modern times were perceived as being basically immaterial, into a rational, modern way of thinking, take the process even further by the reification of spiritual efficacies into a new association with inner-worldly material interest. The Yogyakarta spiritual centres, in order to meet the needs of modernizing people, combine spiritual techniques and formulas from both home-grown and global origins, resulting in what I call hybrid spirituality. The spiritual hybrid forms of Yogyakarta spiritual centres have been constructed in such a way that spirituality is not only a set of ideas and a project for practices of piety promotion, but a reproduced, packaged, commodified, efficacious tool for engaging with this-worldly prosperity.

In summarizing the discussion in the foregoing chapters, I will conclude, first of all, that the three hybrid spiritual groups in Yogyakarta vary in their spiritual legacies, their types of response to modernity, and their ways of commodification of spiritual efficacies. The PTT exemplifies the rebirth of a local spiritual group based on Javanese spiritual traditions. The group adopts a loose legal foundation, but practically it prefers to be a community group, avoiding any allegation of being a formal organization. Under the rubric of the revival of local culture, the PTT promotes spiritual efficacies of the Javanese spiritual tradition as ways of responding to the challenges of modernity. Its main activities, such as holistic healing, collective *ruwatan*, *slametan*, and cultural carnivals, represent the PTT's soft-protest against the ambiguous state policy on religion and the growth of puritanical religions, which tend to undermine local spiritual traditions. PTT spiritual activities also illustrate the group's resistance to the pressures of modernity that, according to the PTT, has marginalized local spiritual groups and commercialised various kinds of social life. Notwithstanding, resistance is vividly apparent in the PTT, commodification of spiritual efficacy still prevails, although to a lesser degree than in the two other groups, the BN and the *Bioenergi*.

The *Bhakti Nusantara* is a 'transformative' spiritual group that is now able to link its spiritual activities, which were hitherto associated with occult practices, to normative Islam and modern point of view. In this context, the BN tries to professionalize its services and commodify its spiritual efficacies through packaged programs and material products promoted as spiritually effective. The BN hybridizes spirituality by combining the teaching of the Sufi heritages with humanistic psychology, popular science, and other global alternative healing techniques. Organizationally, the BN applies for legal status as a foundation [*yayasan*], and is supported by various business units. Therefore, the commodification of spiritual efficacies by the BN is more overt than that in the case of the PTT, although it is still less than that of the *Bioenergi*. In terms of its attitude to modernity, the BN signifies a changing response of Yogyakarta hybrid spiritual centres, from their previous resistance to the challenges of modernity to an active grasping of the opportunities it provides.

The *Bioenergi* is an example of a spiritual enterprise that fully implements modern business principles. The centre claims to present Sufi teachings for practical purposes, such as acquiring this-worldly prosperities. The *Bioenergi* commodifies its spiritual efficacies by what I call 'psychologization of spiritual program' and 'scientification of spiritual material products' to present practical and active Sufism in secular arenas. The centre blends Sufi teachings with popular sciences such as Neuro-Linguistic-Programming (NLP), management of the self, and the power of the mind. The *Bioenergi* is a hybrid spiritual group fully engaged with the opportunities and the fruits of modernity, and thereby (compared to the PTT and the BN) it is the most commodified spiritual centre in Yogyakarta.

My second conclusion is that the three hybrid spiritual centres I have explored are comparable to the Western Human Potential Movement [HPM] in terms of their char-

ismatic leadership, their entrepreneurial character, their ever-developing packaged spiritual training programs and material products, their combination of spirituality with humanistic psychology and other popular scientific considerations, and their promotion of spirituality as part of self-development in acquiring prosperity in this world. The above-noted parallels show that the three hybrid spiritual centres in Yogyakarta exemplify the Eastern form of HPM in certain respects. Nevertheless, these Eastern forms are dissimilar to the Western HPM in that the former borrow popular science from the West to combine it with Eastern spiritual traditions, whereas the latter borrow Eastern spirituality to merge it with Western humanistic psychology.

A third conclusion, derived from the perspective of globalization studies, is that hybridization and glocalization of spirituality are apparent in the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres. These processes have partly come about as the result of the modernization and globalization that have taken place in Yogyakarta. The social dynamic of modernization in this city has created markets for various types of products in the religious and spiritual fields, based upon amalgams of local and global origin. The *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*, although it strongly resonates with resistance to modern culture, blends Javanese spiritual traditions with modern media to broadcast its spiritual projects. The *Bhakti Nusantara* and the *Bioenergi* blend Sufi teachings with various global alternative spiritual healing techniques (such as *Reiki*, *yoga*, *kundalini*, etc.), combined with Western humanistic psychology and popular sciences in their spiritual growth programs and material products. Such a blend of internal-local spiritual legacies with the external-global ones in the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres betokens what Berger calls 'hybridization' (2002, p. 10) or what Robertson refers to as 'glocalization' (1992, 1995, pp. 25-44).

Fourth, the three Yogyakarta spiritual centres represent 'intra-ecclesia' spirituality. None of these spiritual centres intends to be an independent group disassociated from official religions. Their spiritual projects are dedicated to exploring the experiential dimension of religions that would reach Indonesian religious maturity. The Indonesian 'delimited religious pluralism' (Howell, 2003, 2004) seems to have restricted the potential growth of the extra-ecclesia spirituality which has developed in the West. Therefore, referring to Heelas' and Woodhead's notion of 'subjective-life spirituality' versus 'life-as religion' (Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005), Indonesia is likely to have what might be called 'life-as spirituality' or 'spiritual collectivism,' instead of the 'subjective-life spirituality,' as a complement of the 'life-as religion'.

What I mean by 'life-as spirituality' is a spiritual practice with strong attachment to a spiritual group, some of which groups are even associated with organized religion, and under the guidance of a spiritual guru. Unlike subjective-life spirituality that strengthens individual freedom and in which the self is the centre of spiritual expression and detached from any religious dogmas, the life-as spirituality is highly communalized and congregationally oriented. In certain respects, it still considers religious dogmas or religious institutions as being important. In the Yogyakarta spiritual cen-

tres, the sense of such spiritual collectivism has led them to manage 'spiritual congregations', in which spiritual gurus encourage their *murid* to desire a guru-guided life-as spirituality instead of their own subjective spiritual process of development.

Furthermore, 'life-as spirituality' in Yogyakarta is an effect of the mushrooming of embodied spiritual centres promoting spiritual efficacy in urban Indonesia. Responding to the opportunities of modernity, the centres employ bureaucratic and firm-based institutionalization practices as well as rationalized spiritual programs and products. They are even eager to bring their practical local spirituality packages into market niches in international arenas. As a strategy by which to present spiritual services in a 'professional' way, the institutionalization, internationalization, and rationalization of spiritual services by the Yogyakarta spiritual centres denotes, not merely 'embodied spirituality,' but 'corporatized spirituality'. Whilst embodied spirituality relates to the existence of congregation-like groups (Flory & Miller, 2007) of spiritual seekers, corporatized spirituality refers to the implementation of corporate principles for managing spiritual groups and spreading spiritual ideas. Under corporatized management, the groups develop hybrid programs and products based on their target market.

It is thus fair to say that commodification of spiritual efficacy is evident in hybrid spiritual centres in Yogyakarta. The process of spiritual corporatization has led the centres to this spiritual commodification. One might assume that commodification of spirituality would threaten the sacredness of spiritual transformation, making it vulnerable to being reduced to a secularized transaction between seller and customers, instead of a sacred agreement between spiritual *gurus* and their spiritual disciples, or that the culture of commercialization, along with the implementation of rational calculation in the centres, could pollute the purity of spiritual transmission. However, this is not the case, because spiritual commodification in the Yogyakarta spiritual centres has not merely been in terms of the commercialization of spirituality, although it is true that there is an evident process of institutionalization enabling the centres to develop hybrid products based on target markets. Commodification of these spiritual corporations does not necessarily mean selling spirituality only for accumulating material profits. The adoption of corporate principles in Yogyakarta spiritual centres is a method they have adopted to compete with other secular institutions in presenting professional spiritual services in a modernizing city. In order to survive amid the overwhelming pressures and evolutions of modern culture, spiritual centres had to adapt.

Finally, what is the sociological consequence of the commodification of spiritual efficacy in a modernizing city? Following sociological theories, the trend of spiritual commodification indicates both the secularization thesis and rational choice theory. Proponents of secularization like Cox (1965) and Taylor (2007) would argue that the trend is proof of religious decline, in which the role of religious institutions in provid-

ing spiritual services is being reduced, and there is no longer a monopoly of orthodox and authoritative divine institutions. Some private-corporatized spiritual institutions are now amongst the most active religious-spiritual providers. In such secular institutions, spirituality and religion might be seen as losing their sacredness, where religious and spiritual services are transformed from spiritual obligations to mundane transactions, from divine-moral exchanges to worldly material transactions.

However, promoters of rational choices theory or “the religious market approach, or economic interpretation of religion” like Stark, Finke, Iannaccone, and Warner as categorized by Turner (2010, p. 9) argue the reverse. Commodification of spiritual efficacy would actually provide a more open market to the public for the purposes of spiritual shopping. The availability of various spiritual forms would then lead people to better choices for purchasing spiritual products in whichever outlet meets their needs. The result is then a higher consumption of spirituality. None of the spiritual centres promoting spiritual efficacy in Yogyakarta intends to be an independent group disassociated from official religion. They all even claim that their spiritual services are dedicated to maturing Indonesians’ religiosity. Accordingly, a higher level of consumption of spirituality would lead to a higher level of religiosity. The more religion and spirituality are consumed, the more re-sacralization of the world there will be, meaning a lessening of the impact of secularization. It can actually be said, therefore, that the commodification of spirituality in Yogyakarta is another symptom of the durability of religion in a modernizing society.

Peter Berger, in his later life, had been becoming aware of the exuberant nature of religion in the ‘developing world’. He started talking about re-sacralization and de-secularization, explicitly pointing out the ‘mistake’ of secularization theory”. Berger wrote:

My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled “secularization theory” is essentially mistaken. (Berger, 1999, p. 2)

Even so, it seems to me that Berger has missed the point because, as I have explored in the previous chapters, there are many religious movements which are deeply locked into the commercial secular world. Berger may be right that the simple secularization thesis of, for example, Bryan Wilson, assuming that in the secularized world religious institutions will survive under secular cultures, does not accurately describe the modern situation especially in Southeast Asia. Noting that secularization theory has falsely predicted the result of adaptation strategies of religious institutions, Berger further noted that “[w]hat has in fact occurred is that, by and large, religious communities have survived and even flourished to the degree that they have *not* tried to adapt to the alleged requirements of a secularized world” (1999, p. 4). However, much of the

religious growth in Indonesia, as I have described, is indeed bound up with new secular life styles, self help, and worldly success and therefore it is not clear whether this is a religious revival or re-sacralization. In the case of the Yogyakarta spiritual centres I have explored, they prominently resemble hybridized urban spiritual piety plus religious efficacy for this-worldly prosperity, but with a strong dose of consumerism.

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### Newspapers, Tabloids, and Magazines

*Bernas*

*Bernas Jogja*

*Harian Jogja*

Kedaulatan Rakyat

Liberty

Meteor

*Minggu Pagi*

Posmo

*Radar Jogja,*

*Seputar Indonesia,*

Suara Merdeka

Tempo

### Interviews

Sapto Raharjo (36), founder and leader of the *Paguyuban Tri Tunggal*

Mas Jeje (35), Sapto Raharjo assistant and healer in the PTT alternative healing clinic

Mas Sumbo (36), PTT alternative healer

Prima (30), secretary of GMRP

Tri Nugroho (29), PTT member

Waluyo (52), PTT member

Suparti (48), PTT member

Muhammad Basis, founder and leader of *Bhakti Nusantara*

Deni Aden, BN coordinator

Syaiful M. Maghsri, founder and owner of the *Bioenergi* centre

Evie Idawati, directress of the PT *Bioenergi*

Fajar, Training Manager of *Bionergi*

### Online Resources

<http://us.foto.detik.com/readfoto/2010/12/13/135804/1523306/157/1/demo-keistimewaan-diy>

[http://yogyakarta.bpk.go.id/web/?page\\_id=483](http://yogyakarta.bpk.go.id/web/?page_id=483)

<http://desnantara-tamasya.blogspot.com/2011/02/peta-kota-yogyakarta.html>

<http://www.indonesia-tourism.com/map/indonesia-map.html>

<http://kangmasjeje.blog.friendster.com/>

<http://www.bioenergicenternews.com/>

<http://www.bukusolusi.com/>

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<http://bioenergicenter.wordpress.com>

<http://bioenergicenter.blogspot.com>

<http://paguyubantritunggal.net/>

<http://bhakti-nusantara.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.sumarah.net>

<http://www.subud.com>

## Glossary

[A - Arabic; I - Indonesian; J - Javanese; Lit. - Literally]

<i>Adat</i> (I)	Customary tradition
<i>Agama</i> (I)	Religion
<i>Agama Asli</i> (I)	Indigenous religion
<i>Agama Resmi</i> (I)	Official religion. In Indonesia, the term refers to Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.
<i>Aliran Kepercayaan</i> (I)	Lit. Stream of belief: Another name for <i>kebatinan</i> (see <i>Kebatinan</i> )
<i>Anjangsana</i> (I)	Informal visit to strengthen brotherhood
<i>Babahan hawa sanga</i> (J)	Javanese spiritual training by controlling the nine holes of the human body
<i>Baiat</i> (I)	<i>Bay'at</i> (A) Vow of allegiance
<i>Balai Pengobatan</i> (I)	Healing clinics
<i>Barakah</i> (I)	<i>Bark</i> (A) Blessing
<i>Batik</i> (I, J)	Colored traditional cloth made through the process of manual wax-resist dyeing
<i>Bekam</i> (I)	<i>Al-hijma</i> (A) Lit. Cupping: A therapy using the effect of suction, by attaching small cups to skin at points requiring treatment
<i>Bengkel Akhlaq</i> (I)	Workshop on morality
<i>Beskap</i> (J)	Javanese style men's jacket
<i>Biaya</i> (I)	Cost
<i>Bid'ah</i> (I)	<i>Bid'a</i> (A) Heresy
<i>Bioenergi</i>	Name of a spiritual centre in Yogyakarta known for its activity in promoting practical Sufism

<i>Blangkon</i> (J)	Javanese style men's hat
<i>Chakra</i>	The subtle energy centre in the body, associated with spiritual development and the psyche, which is rooted in tantric thought
<i>Cantrik</i> (J)	Spiritual disciples
<i>Campursari</i> (J)	A contemporary Javanese music genre, combining Javanese musical instruments ( <i>gamelan</i> ) with popular instruments such as keyboard and guitar
<i>Dakwah</i> (I)	<i>Dakw</i> (A) Islamic preaching
<i>Doa</i> (I)	<i>Du'</i> (A) Prayer
<i>Dukun</i> (I)	Lit. Shaman, folk healer
<i>Dhikr</i> (A)	<i>Zikir</i> (I) Lit. Remembrance. Ritual of chanting names of God and other supplications ( <i>doa</i> ) from specific Qur'anic verses or hadits as an expression of Muslim submission to God and part of spiritual discipline
<i>Faḍīlah</i> (A)	Efficacy or outcome of spiritual disciplines in <i>tasawuf</i>
<i>Falun Gong</i>	A spiritual discipline and practice first introduced in China in 1992, that combines the practice of meditation, breathing exercises, and slow movement. China's government banned the group in 2000, but it spread globally, including to Indonesia. <i>Falun Gong</i> is also known as <i>Falun Dafa</i> .
<i>Fiqh</i> (A)	Islamic jurisprudence
<i>Gamelan</i> (I, J)	Javanese orchestra, mostly percussion
<i>Gemblengan</i> (J)	Spiritual training
<i>Gunungan</i> (I, J)	Mountain of food, composed of fruit and vegetables, used in public ritual as part of the expression of gratitude
<i>Gus</i> (I, J)	An appellation of the sons of Kyai
<i>Guru</i> (I)	Lit. Teacher. Spiritual master who teaches spiritual wisdom and efficacies to his <i>murid</i> (see <i>Murid</i> )
<i>Hadits</i> (I)	<i>Hadith</i> (A) A collection of documented sayings, actions, and provisions of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>Hakikat</i> (I)	<i>Haqīqa</i> (A) Lit. The essence. The divine truth considered the ultimate goal of the mystical path
<i>Ikhlas</i> (I)	<i>Ikhlaṣ</i> (A) Sincerity

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<i>Ilmu Hikmah</i> (I)	Wisdom knowledge from <i>wali</i>
<i>Investasi</i> (I)	Investment
<i>Istighfar</i> (I)	<i>Istighfâr</i> (A) Reciting <i>Astaghfiru Allâh al-‘adîm</i> [I ask forgiveness from Allah, the Greatest God]
<i>Inkung</i> (J)	Whole cooked rooster
<i>Jathilan</i> (J)	Folk magic performance demonstrating invulnerability
<i>Kabupaten</i> (I)	District
<i>Kaharingan</i> (I)	Name of indigenous religion in Kalimantan
<i>Kanuragan</i> (J)	Supernatural power in martial arts
<i>Karomah</i> (I)	<i>Karâma</i> (A) A concept of supernatural power possessed by pious Muslims due to their obedience to God The concept is equivalent to the <i>mu‘jizat</i> [miracle], which is allowed only to God’s messenger [ <i>nabi</i> and <i>rasul</i> ].
<i>Kebatinan</i> (I, J)	Javanese Mysticism representing the amalgam of ancient Javanese spiritual tradition, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islamic Sufism
<i>Kejawen</i> (I, J)	Javanese tradition
<i>Kesekten</i> (J)	<i>Kesaktian</i> (I) Magic formula for supernatural power
<i>Kidung</i> (I, J)	Ballad
<i>Kirab</i> (I, J)	Carnival
<i>Klenik</i> (I, J)	Black magic and other occult practices
<i>Kraton</i> (I, J)	Palace
<i>Kuda Lumping</i> (I)	Lit. Flat horse. A folk dance depicting a horse. The performance is sometimes accompanied by a magic show.
<i>Kyai</i> (I, J)	Javanese name for Islamic scholars, who usually own and run the <i>pesantren</i>
<i>Larung</i> (J)	Lit. Float
<i>Majelis Zikir</i> (I)	<i>Majlis Dhikr</i> (A) The assembly of <i>dhikr</i>
<i>Mahar</i> (I)	Dowry
<i>Makrifat</i> (I)	<i>Ma‘rifa</i> (A) The esoteric knowledge of God, or Gnosticism
<i>Malam 1 Sura</i> (I)	The Javanese new year calendar
<i>Manaqiban</i> (J)	Ritual of reciting the hagiography of a Sufi saint

<i>Mawas Diri</i> (I)	Lit. Introspection. Name of first Indonesian spiritual monthly magazine
<i>Muhammaddiyah</i>	Lit. The follower of Muhammad. The largest modernist Muslim organisation in Indonesia
<i>Mukjizat</i> (I)	<i>Mu'jizât</i> (A) Miracle
<i>Murid</i> (I)	Lit. Disciple. Spiritual disciple who nurtures spiritual wisdom and efficacies from his Guru (see <i>Guru</i> )
<i>Merti Bumi</i> (J)	Name of harvest festival popular in Sleman, dedicated to prayer and thanking God for His blessing to the earth, which bestows mercy on all farmers
<i>Mubeng Beteng</i> (J)	A ritual of walking barefoot around Yogyakarta palace hedge in silence
<i>Mushalla</i> (I)	Muslim prayer room
<i>Ngelmu</i> (J)	Supernatural and mystical science
<i>Orde Baru</i> (I)	New Order
<i>Paguyuban</i> (I, J)	Community groups sociologically representing <i>gemeinschaft</i>
<i>Pasa putih</i> (J)	Lit. White fasting. Fasting by consuming only water and white rice without any additional side dishes
<i>Pasa ngalong</i> (J)	Lit. Bat fasting. Fasting by consuming only fruit
<i>Pasa ngebleng</i> (J)	Fasting from midnight until the following midnight for several days (usually for 1, 3, 7 or even 40 days), the only food allowed during this ritual being a glass of water and a fistful of rice at midnight
<i>Pathok Negara</i> (J)	Lit. The pillars of state
<i>Pengijazahan</i> (I)	The distribution of spiritual formulas by a guru to his <i>murid</i> , giving them full license and authority to practice them
<i>Pendopo</i> (I, J)	Lit. Pavilion. A large open Javanese veranda that serves as an audience hall and is used for other common activities
<i>Pengombyong</i> (J)	Lit. Supporter
<i>Perusahaan</i> (I)	Firm, corporation
<i>Pesantren</i> (I)	Islamic boarding school
<i>Prana</i>	Lit. Vital life or vital energy. A Sanskrit word referring to a subtle energy in human body that flows through breath and

blood. The practitioners of *prana* believe that *prana* exercise, such as through Yoga and meditation, will enable them to maintain their balance of energy, aiming at healthy life and inner power.

<i>Reiki</i>	An alternative healing system originating from the Japanese Buddhist tradition, and built around the use of universal life energy, known as <i>ki</i> . Reiki disciplines and practice were developed in 1922 by the Japanese Buddhist Mikao Usui.
<i>Romo</i> (J)	Lit. Father. Title of Javanese elder people who have mastered advantageous spiritual skills
<i>Ruwatan</i> (J)	Javanese ritual of exorcism
<i>Ruqyah</i> (I)	<i>Ruqya</i> (A). Recitations of certain Qur'anic verses dedicated as supplication and used as a means for treating sickness and other problems, mainly those caused by bad spirits or demons, but sometimes also used for treating physical diseases
<i>Sanggar</i> (I, J)	Lit. Studio. Currently commonly used by spiritual groups to denote the centre of their activities
<i>Sedekah Bumi</i> (J)	Javanese harvest festival
<i>Sejahtera</i> (I)	Prosperous
<i>Senam Pernafasan</i> (I)	Breathing exercise
<i>Shirk</i> (A)	<i>Syirik</i> (I) Putting something or someone in the place of God, thus deviating from the principle of <i>tauhid</i> or monotheism, in Islam
<i>Slametan</i> (J)	<i>Selamatan</i> (I) A celebratory feast or ritual meal asking for God's blessing and marking an important occasion
<i>Syariat</i> (I)	<i>Sharî'a</i> (A). Lit. The path. Islamic law
<i>Syukur</i> (I)	<i>Shukr</i> (A). Gratitude
<i>Sedekah</i> (J)	<i>Sadâqa</i> (A). Alms in the form of a religious meal
<i>Sedekah Bumi</i>	Lit. Alms for the earth. Another name for harvest festival in some Yogyakarta villages
<i>Spiritual</i> (I)	Spiritual
<i>Spiritualitas</i> (J)	Spirituality
<i>Shaykh</i> (A)	<i>Syaikh</i> (I) Spiritual teacher who leads a <i>tarekat</i> group

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<i>Tali kasih</i> (I)	Lit. Voluntary contribution
<i>Tarekat</i> (I)	<i>Tarîqa</i> (A) Lit. The Path: Sufi order
<i>Tasawuf Postif</i> (I)	Lit. Positive Sufism which refers to non-ascetic Sufi practices
<i>Tasbih</i> (I)	<i>Tasbîh</i> (A) Glorifying God by saying ‘ <i>Subhâna Allâh</i> ’
<i>Tembang</i> (J)	Javanese song
<i>Tenaga Dalam</i> (I)	Inner power
<i>Tirakatan</i> (J)	Gathering all night long to engage in introspection
<i>Totok</i> (I)	Lit. Full-blooded. An alternative healing technique originating from ancient Chinese tradition, of massaging certain parts of the human body
<i>Ubo rampe</i> (J)	Supplies of an offering in <i>slametan</i> and other Javanese rituals, usually consisting of <i>inkung</i> , <i>tumpeng</i> , plantain, boiled egg, <i>rempeyek</i> [rice cracker], and <i>jajan pasar</i> [traditional snacks]
<i>Wali</i> (I)	Muslim saint
<i>Wertrationalität</i>	Value-ended rationality, in contrast to means-end rationality
<i>Weton</i> (J)	Birthday based on the Javanese calendar system
<i>Wudlu</i> (I)	<i>Wuḍu</i> (A) Ritual of ablution
<i>Yayasan</i> (I)	Foundation
<i>Ziarah</i> (I)	<i>Ziyara</i> (A) Visiting tombs of <i>Walis</i>
<i>Zikru Asy-Syifa</i>	<i>Dhikr al-Shifâ</i> (A) Healing <i>dhikir</i>
<i>Zweckrationalität</i>	Instrumental rationality, purposive rationality, means-end rationality, in contrast to value-ended rationality or <i>Wertrationalität</i>