

Who are “Normal” and “Extreme” Muslims? Discursive Study of Christians’ Voice about Muslim’s Identity in Surakarta, Central Java¹

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Received: 9 March 2017 | Accepted: 8 September 2017 | Published: 16 October 2017

Abstract

This article assumes that language is not only a way of saying things (informative), but also a way of doing things (performative) or exercising power. Through conducting eight focus group discussions (FGDs) involving 39 Christian participants in Surakarta Central Java, this research studies the Christians’ discourse on their fellow Muslims. In those FGDs, I stimulated the participants’ discussion by the basic question, “How do you speak about Muslims”. Though the question is about Muslims, but in fact sometimes they also speak about themselves. I am concerned about the discursive study of religion taking advantage from Norman Fairclough’s discourse analysis theory and method focusing on the analysis of linguistic practice, discursive practice, and social practice. As a result, the discussions of participants were on a hegemonic struggle between dominant and peripheral voices to define what is considered “[ab]normal” Muslims. Christian participants identified extremist (fanatical, fundamentalist) Muslims as abnormal. They positioned extremists and excessive persons as extraordinary. Thus, they identified extremism as not the norm but an exception to the rule of religions. In distinguishing between “normal” and “extreme” the participants primarily positioned themselves as normal or ordinary religious people who are moderate. They identified those who cause conflict as neither moderate Muslims nor moderate Christians, but fundamentalists in their respective faiths.

Keywords: *discourse analysis; normal Muslims; extreme Muslims*

Introduction

The concept of identity emerged in the social sciences and humanities as a core concept in the 1950s (Gleason, 1983). Over more than 60 years it has become one of the most widely used terms in these disciplines, featuring in the titles of many thousands, if not

¹ This article is a reworking of author’s book part “I Come from Pancasila Family”: *A Discursive Study on Muslim-Christian Identity Transformation in Indonesian Post-Reformasi Era* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2014).

hundreds of thousands, of books and articles (Wetherell, 2010, p.3). But it remains a highly controversial concept (Giddens, 1991; Kim, 2002). Margareth Wetherell reformulates the trends in scholars' conceptualization of identity. She points out current theoretical shifts to intersectional and hybrid trends in the study of identity (Wetherell, 2010). This article follows the latter trend (identity as a hybrid), since in most cases identities are not based on innate properties that can be measured according to objective criteria (Bourdieu, 1991. pp. 220-228). For example, the classification into *santri* and non-*santri* or *abangan* is not fixed but fluid and flexible (Beatty, 1999).

Social identity theorists tend to conceptualize and study identity and diversity in objectivist and positivist ways (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). They write about national, ethnic or religious identities as if identity is based on primordial properties that are shared by the members of a group. They unite them and distinguish them from others. Consequently, national, ethnic or religious identities are exclusive and differences unbridgeable. This is the "cultures collide" (Blommaert, 1991. p.19) or "clash of civilizations" (Huntington, 1992) perspective. Seen as such, a multicultural society is a tragedy and inter-cultural communication an illusion.

However, inter-cultural communication is possible, at least partially. As we see in our daily life, the communication among people of different religions or cultures happens. People with different religions or different ideas within a religion also make an inter-religious dialogue. Thus, the aforementioned way of looking at and studying identity is inappropriate (Widdicome, 1998; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). This article is aimed to prove such an argument. The focus is on the relation between religious discourse and (the lack of) social cohesion focusing Christians' voice about Muslims. In this respect, Surakarta (Solo) is an interesting case. This city is a multi-cultural and multi-religious enclave, maybe the largest one in Java. There have been riots and outbursts of violence in Solo in 1972, 1980 and 1998 (Baidi, 2010, p.18). But we saw that

Indonesians always restore conflict to normality and Solonese are not an exception. Thus, the social order is peace rather than conflict.

Method of Analysis and Data

This study relies on discourse analysis. Discourse is a practice like any other. In pragmatic terms, language is not only a way of saying things (informative); it is also a way of doing things (performative) or exercising power (Bourdieu, 1991). The only difference from other practices is its linguistic form (Fairclough, 1992, p. 71). Thus the first method of discourse as linguistic practice which is used in this article is description (Fairclough, 1989, p. 26). According to critical discourse analysts the relation between language and social reality is not direct but occurs via discursive practices. Consequently, the second method is the analysis of discursive practice or interpretation (Fairclough, 1989, p.26), that is analysing the production, distribution and consumption of texts (Fairclough, 1992, p.71). The discursive practice (interaction) is crucial, since the dialectic relation between linguistic practice (text) and social practice (context) is based on it.

In analysing text and talk researchers can proceed in two ways. They can focus on the meaning of the language, analysing taxonomies and other classifications. This is what content analysis is about. Or they can analyse the use of language in the construction of social realities (Kvale, 2008). In this study I followed the latter line and used a socio-cognitive approach to discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 2008). While I acknowledge the existence of other analytical methods, both within discourse analysis and in the social sciences generally, I opted for critical discourse analysis (CDA), particularly Fairclough's version of it, as it is best suited to my assumptions and objectives. CDA approaches the text with the following assumptions.

Critical discourse analysts assume a dialectic relation between language and social structure: what participants say is shaped by and in its turn shapes social structures, either reproducing them or

transforming them (Fairclough, 1992, p. 72). This is the third method: the analysis of social practice or 'explanation'. In other words, critical discourse analysts are interested in the socio-cognitive—that is, ideational and interpersonal—effects of language.

Fairclough (1992) develops CDA as a multi-perspective and poly-methodical approach of discourse analysis. Elsewhere in his book, he uses the term 'stages' instead of 'methods'. But the distinction between analytic perspectives and stages is not clear-cut. There are overlaps. Moreover, the distinction between perspectives and stages of analysis does not reflect a one-to-one situation. All stages are used for analysing all dimensions of practice, although one method may be more fruitful for analysing a specific dimension of practice than another.

The data presented here are mainly utterances from eight focus group discussions (FGDs) involving 39 Christian participants. On average, each FGD involved five to six participants. In addition, we draw from their sacred scriptures, religious books, newspapers, a handwritten letter from a candidate participant, flyers, cyber sources, et cetera. Apart from the religious criterion, participants were grouped according to three criteria. We had male and female groups, and within these categories we distinguished between elders and youths, and professionals and workers. Gender-wise; 21 women and 18 men attended the FGDs. We classify participants aged 17 to 24 as youths and those aged 50 years and over as elders. We do not have a specific category of participants aged 25 to 49, but that was the age group of most professionals and workers. The youngest participant attending the young group was 19 years old, while the oldest in the elder group was 73 years old. By professionals we mean entrepreneurs, managers or public servants; by workers we mean labourers, company employees, domestic workers, et cetera.

All participants invited to join the Christian groups were happy to participate and none refused. Only one young Christian male cancelled his acceptance because he said he had another urgent commitment. However, on his own initiative he submitted a

two-page handwritten letter explaining his description of Muslims. We include the letter as a data source to be analysed in this chapter.

Multi Religious and Multi Ethnic Enclave

Certain unique characteristics of Surakarta make it a perfect case study. The first is its religious diversity. Islam is the majority religion (75.9%), with Christianity (Protestants and Catholics) a significant minority religion (23.2%). Catholics and Protestants are almost equal in number: Catholics at 11.7% and Protestants at 11.5%. The 2010 census puts the national percentage of Christianity at 9.87% (Protestant 6.96%, Catholic 2.91%), with only 2.75% at the provincial level (Central Java) (Protestant 1.77%, Catholic 0.98%). That national census puts Islam at 87.18% nationally and 96.74% at the provincial level. Thus, adherents of Christianity in Surakarta outnumber the national and provincial average.

Table 1. Religious demography in Surakarta in 1970², 2001³ and 2011⁴

Year	Muslim		Catholic		Protestant	
1970	286.928	61.8%	38.686	8.3%	40.305	8.7%
2001	404.662	73.1%	69.871	12.6%	72.266	13.1%
2011	446.036	75.9%	69.057	11.7%	67.653	11.5%

Year	Buddhist		Hindu		Confucian		Others	
1970	12.307 (2.6%)				70.902	15.3%	15.068	3.3%
2001	4.400	0.8%	2.381	0.4%	-	-	-	-
2011	3.724	0.6%	1.640	0.3%	-	-	-	-

² *Sala in figures 1970*, total population 464.196. The label 'others' in this table refers to 13 groups of local beliefs, the three largest being Sapta Darma, Djwa Haju, and Pangestu.

³ *Surakarta in figures 2001*, total population 553,580.

⁴ *Surakarta in figures 2011/2012*, total population 588,110.

One may ask how the proportion of Christians in Surakarta can be as high as 23.2%, while in other cities in Java it is below 10%. Conversely, why is the percentage of Muslims in Surakarta less than the average in other cities in Java? Religious demographic statistics show that it is not because of the success of the Christian mission, as Muslims have assumed in recent years. As noted in Table 1 above, the statistics in 1970 show that Muslims stand at 61.8%, whereas Christians (Catholics and Protestants) are put at 17%. From 1970 to 2011 Muslims increased by 14.1%, whereas Christians increased by 6.2%. In addition, over the past decade (2001-2011) adherents of all religions except Islam decreased slightly. Islam was the only religion to show a slight increase. Hence it is more accurate to talk about 'Islamisation' than about 'Christianisation' during the past four decades.

In the latter part of the Soekarno period people in Solo were strongly pro-PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) and the mayor was a Communist (Ricklefs, 2012, p.175). In the 1955 general election, the PKI won 57.26% of the votes. A nationalist political party (PNI) got 30.03% of the votes. By contrast, two Islamic political parties won a minority of the votes: Masyumi 11.10% and NU 1.61% (Mulyadi & Soedarmono, 1999). Since 1965 citizens have had to opt for one of five/six state recognized religions, and PKI and PNI members or sympathizers—mainly *abangan* or members of *kebatinan* (Javanese)—mostly chose Christianity or Islam. That was a fairly general pattern in Java (Feillard, 1999; Hefner, 2000; Suhadi, 2006; Nugroho, 2008). There are no statistics on religious affiliation in Surakarta before 1965, but the proportion of Christians in 1970 (17%) shows that Christian missions had achieved considerable success by then. However, Ricklefs (2012, p.175) points out that not only Christianisation but also Islamisation intensified in Surakarta.⁵ Hence the significant number of Christians in Solo is not attributable

⁵ Ricklefs (2012, pp.175-184) devotes one section to purification of the *abangan* and *kebatinan* movements by Muslim movements in Surakarta in the 1970s.

to the success of Christianisation in recent decades.

Surakarta is also a multi-ethnic city. The majority are Javanese, the others being Chinese, Arab, Banjarese, Madurese and so forth. Current statistics do not reflect ethnicity in Surakarta, but a 2001 report gives a clear picture of ethnic diversity in this city. Javanese constitute an absolute majority at 94%, whereas the two biggest minority groups are Chinese (3.5%) and Arab (0.7%).

This study explores social identity construction through interreligious—particularly Christian-Muslim—relations from a communicative practice theory point of view. We want to know why and under what conditions people, both individually and collectively, elevate their religious identity above other identities and whether or not religious identity threatens national identity and leads to social conflict. It focuses on Christians and how they speak about Muslims. When talking about Muslims as the ‘other’ (out-group), Christians sometimes talk about themselves (in-group).

The following three sections will prove the inter-cultural communication argued in the introduction, taking the shape of Christians’ discourse on their fellow Muslims. The discussion will be organised along three different type of analysis: (1) linguistic practice, that is the linguistic features of the text (Fairclough, 1992). For this stage, Fairclough (1992) suggests various analytic tools. Here we focus on vocabulary, that is wording, over-wording and rewording (alternative wording); (2) discursive practice understood to include production, distribution and consumption of texts. Analysis of discursive practice (interpretation) is the intermediary between analysis of linguistic practice (description) and analysis of social practice (explanation). There are many ways to analyse discursive practice (Fairclough, 1992), but this study uses mainly two tools: intertextuality and what Fairclough calls inter-discursivity; and (3) social practice in terms of what is seen in the analysis of the socio-cognitive effects of the texts. The aim is to determine the nature of the social practice of which the discourse is a part, which explains why the discourse is what it is, and the effects of the language (text)

on social reality (context). The analytic concepts used in this stage are ideology (Foucault, 1980 and hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). The analysis aims to reveal three different levels of discursive process: micro, meso- and macro-level practices through critical discourse analysis.

Linguistic Practice

At the micro or individual dimension of discourse participants (Christians) speak about Muslims as “friend”, “neighbour”, “sister”, “brother”, “relative” or “family member”. A participant said, “I could not have only Christian friends. I like to have Christians, Muslims, Hindus or even Buddhists as friends. And I am happy.” In talking about her friends a girl in the young female group described three of them. She said “One Muslim is rather fanatical, two others are ordinary.” She uses “fanatical” (*fanatik*) and “ordinary” (*biasa*) as identity labels. By doing so she classifies Muslims into two groups: fanatical and ordinary. Another participant in that group used the same words to speak about her neighbours. She said:

“There is a mosque [close to] my house that can be considered rather fanatical. There are two Muslims [neighbours] opposite of my house. One has a stall, the other doesn't. The one that has no stall goes to the fanatical mosque, sir. I don't know the name of the group. I have a dog. The dog often goes out. And if it goes out, it chases people. The fanatical man often [throws] stones at my dog. [He] often beats it, sir. When my dog is outside, the one who has no stall and is not fanatical will even open the door [of his house, gate]. He is not a dog fanatic”.

In this text the girl describes her relation with her Muslim neighbours. The utterance shows that in the participant's area, the Christian residences are not separated but mixed with Muslim residences. It is confirmed by later texts that the Christian residences sometimes are close to mosques. In this text the girl mentions that the non-fanatical man is “not a dog fanatic”. Using the foregoing classification, he is an “ordinary” Muslim. Another participant in the same group used the same words to define the identity of her fanatical neighbour. She said:

“[He is] very fanatical ... I happen to have a Muslim neighbour. His Islam is from the school that wears pants like when people are in a flood. He is [a member of] LDII [Indonesian Islamic *Dakwa* Institution]... They [members of that family] are weird, sir. I played in his house. I was hurt. I sat down on the sofa. But the next day [I] saw that sofa. It was [drying] in the sun. ... I also played with his younger sister ... I went inside the sister's room... Then the next day I passed by [that house]. The bed was drying in the sun. The bed was a carrycot. Why was it drying?”

At the meso or institutional level a participant said, “Islam is good. But it depends on the people.” “There is diversity in Islam,” said another participant. A male worker said, “Muslims in Solo could be classified into two [groups]. [There are] those [who are] nationalist Muslims... The second, actually very few, are those [who are] hardliners.” A female participant in the elderly group made similar utterances about nationalist and radical Muslims.

Nationalist Muslim groups ... show a spirit of tolerance toward Christians... [By contrast] we are afraid of people [who advocate] radical Islam. How do we behave [towards them]? For instance, [they] refuse to shake hands. [When we] help to put up [their] washing line, [they] rewash. On the other hand, to adherents of nationalist Islam we [behave] ordinarily.

In this text, the speaker not only uses labels (“radical” and “nationalist Islam”), but also cites concrete behaviour. They (Christians) behave ordinarily to nationalist Muslims, but are afraid of radical Muslims. In referring to Muslims the speaker links identification as a radical with behaviour, namely refusal to shake hands with Christians.

A female worker observed, “Those extremists are dangerous... They often attack cafes. [They do] something haphazardly ... But there are Muslims who want to gather with us.” In this text the speaker linked Muslim extremism with being dangerous and doing something haphazardly. They attack cafes and do not want to gather with Christians. Thus, the speaker described both the label of extreme and the concrete behaviour associated with Muslim extremism. Another participant said, “[We are] afraid to approach those radical Muslims.” If we compare utterances in the last two

paragraphs, we conclude that the words “hardliner” and “radical” are alternatives for “extremist”. The participants distinguish between Muslim extremists and nationalists.

A young female participant said, “There is very fanatical Islam. There is still normal, ordinary [Islam].” Another participant used a different term, “proper” (*wajar*), saying, “To behave [as a Muslim] in society in a proper (*wajar*) way should be natural (*wajar*).” In these texts the words “ordinary” and “proper” are alternatives for “normal”. According to that classification, fanatical Islam is not normal or proper.

In the young male and female FGDs the participants talked about different types of veils (*jilbab*) to describe Muslim.

“The *jilbaber* women, their *jilbab* are very, very big. ... [just like] a bed sheet worn as a *jilbab*”.

“Every Friday *jilbaber* held demonstrations. They occurred often, either in Slamet Riyadi Street or elsewhere”.

“There was ... a Muslim family and she [the woman in that family] wore *burqa* (*cadar*). One day a washing line with wet laundry collapsed, sir. Then my uncle [a Christian] tried to help by taking and putting up [the washing line]. She rewashed the clothes”.

“A pious Muslim woman [on my campus] wears *jilbab*. It is the modest *jilbab*, not the *burqa*. It is the modest one. Although she is pious, she shows great tolerance towards other religions”.

In the foregoing texts the participants distinguished between three kinds of veils: *jilbaber*, *burqa* and modest *jilbab*. The suffix -er in the word “*jilbaber*” indicates a person wearing a *jilbab*. The speaker does not apply this word to any woman wearing a veil, but only to Muslim women wearing “very, very large” *jilbab*. The words “a bed sheet worn as a *jilbab*” are sarcastic, describing an excessively large veil. The words “to rewash” wet clothes that have been touched by Christians are comparable with similar texts quoted previously. Using that classification, a woman wearing a *burqa* is a radical Muslim (cf. previous classification of radical and nationalist

Muslims). By adding the word “although” in the last utterance the speaker contrasted piety and tolerance.

In regard to typical dress of fanatical Muslim men, a participant said, “Those fanatics... wear calf-length *pants* (*celana cingkrang*), [they] do not [behave] properly, [they] wear *koko* shirts, [they] wear *kopyah* [hats].” Another participant commented, “The Bali bombers, they are very [anti-]West, they also hate Christians very much. They wear turbans, [have] beards, very long beards, [wear] head covering, and also [wear] what is called waistcoats.” In this last text the speaker links the Bali bombers with anti-Western and anti-Christian sentiments and a particular style of dress. The word “very” in the phrases “hate [the West, Christians] very much” and “very long beards” suggests strong intention.

Several participants in the male worker group talked about two different kinds of Muslims and their social relations with Christians. “Muslims who are new learners about Islam, they show their egoism and they perceive themselves as the most proper,” said one of them. Another observed, “People who are just learning [Islam], they show their fanaticism”. By contrast a participant said, “Those who are deeply educated in Islam have a better understanding of human relations” and “they can assimilate with us”. Here the speakers suggested that the deeper Muslims’ knowledge of Islam, the more harmoniously they live with others. Conversely, the more limited their knowledge, the more fanatical and egoistic they are.

However, a Catholic participant said, “Javanese Islam is not like that [violent]. They must be influenced by something from outside that enters Solo. So these Javanese Muslims of Solo, we know they [observe] Javanese culture. Their tolerance ... is strong enough.” Here the speaker links Javanese Islam and Javanese Muslims with Javanese culture and tolerance of others (social cognition). The same participant commented, “Religion must enter [society] through local culture. If the culture is abandoned, there will be conflict.” In this utterance, the speaker intimates that mixing religion with local culture would prevent conflict.

Finally, at the macro or societal level of discourse participants speak about freedom (*kebebasan*) as something new in Indonesian life after the *Reformasi* in 1998. A male professional said, “Freedom has broadened, opened up more. Formerly there was oppression.” He classified the New Order as an era of oppression and the *Reformasi* as an era of freedom. A participant said, “In the government bureaucracy... it was difficult for non-Muslims to occupy [a high] position.” But after *Reformasi*, another participant said, “In Solo we fortunately have a leader [mayor] who is a Muslim [and] another [vice mayor] who is a Catholic.” The two texts describe the different positions Christians held in the bureaucracy before and after *Reformasi*. The word “fortunately” shows that having a Christian vice mayor is auspicious for Christians. An elderly male said, “Solo is an interesting example [in politics]. Among the leaders, the mayor is Muslim, the vice mayor is Catholic. In the past I never saw a big Christmas celebration in the city hall.” In this text, the speaker sees a relation between the position of a Catholic vice mayor and the opportunity to hold a big Christmas celebration in the city hall.

However, some participants said that freedom stimulates the emergence of Muslim extremism. Freedom implies “whatever is free”, said a participant. Freedom also leads to “violence” (*kekerasan*). A male professional said, “To open the door of democracy on a large scale nowadays makes the dominant people able to do whatever they want. Because they think they are not challenged.” Here the speaker relates the introduction of large-scale democracy to a scope for the dominant group (majority) to act arbitrarily. An elderly female described a similar situation using different vocabulary: “free in the wild sense”. This is an alternative wording of the phrase “whatever is free” and people who “are able to do whatever they want”. Some participants referred to attacks and raids by radical Muslims on Christian places of worship. A participant said:

“I live in the south of Solo. That [place] is very close to Ngruki. They [Muslims at the Ngruki *pesantren*] are Islamic radicals... [A group of Muslims] from Ngruki suddenly attacked the place [of worship]. They forced that place to close down and be forbidden to worship”.

In this text, the speaker labelled Muslims at the *pesantren* of Ngruki Islamic radicals (social position). Another participant said, “This is a Pancasila state. Everyone has freedom of worship. But why was there a raid to force the closure of that place of worship? ... That [place] is not in their region. Ngruki belongs to Sukoharjo. That [place] belongs to Solo.” In the second utterance, the participant described Indonesia as a Pancasila state where everyone should have freedom of worship. She also classified an inside and an outside region: those radical Muslims are from Sukoharjo, not from Solo.

A young male participant observed, “The [New Order] government had authority... But now the [*Reformasi*] government is defeated by words like *Reformasi* and freedom.” In this text the speaker linked authority with the New Order government, and absence of authority with the *Reformasi* government. He also combined the words “*Reformasi*” and “freedom” into something that undermines government authority. By contrast an elderly female said, “Those [Muslims] extremists are very dangerous. Those [who] force cafes to close down are distracted.” The two speakers linked extreme Muslims with acts of violence, for instance forcing cafes to close down. A male professional said, “Nowadays it is probably very difficult to stop them [extremists] [from perpetrating acts of violence]”.

A participant said, “The first pillar of Pancasila is Lordship. We have God, whom each of us perceives as ultimate. But each of us has our own understanding. [We are] united by the element of [Indonesian] culture.” This speaker suggests that Pancasila permits people to have different interpretations of God. He also mentions Indonesian culture as an element unifying diversity. An elderly male claimed, “As a [state] ideology Pancasila is nothing but the best.” Another participant in the same group said, “Pancasila is like

colourful flowers [in the garden]. If all are red, they are not beautiful. [The beautiful one is the one that] is next to yellow, green and red ones.” The speaker described Pancasila using a metaphor that refers to accommodation of diversity and coexisting with others.

Some participants described the identity of Muslims as anti-Pancasila. Christian identity, on the other hand, is described as pro-Pancasila. A male professional mentioned, “Christians have a deeper spirit of Pancasila than them [Muslims].” The same person added, “Christians appreciate diversity more [than Muslims].” “Those who recognize [themselves] as Christians, [they] appreciate the condition of pluralism, diversity more. It rarely [happens] that [Christians] are very, very extreme like Muslims,” said another participant. Here the word “pluralism” is an alternative for the word “diversity”. The expression “very, very extreme” is an over-wording.

A participant commented, “Some [Islamic] educational institutions are anti that [Pancasila]. Moreover, I heard that Ngruki [name of *pesantren*] does not recognise Pancasila. They refuse to respect the [national] flag, state symbol.” A woman worker said, “Because [they are] over fanatical they consider themselves to be better than others. They impose their beliefs [on others], which should not happen in the Pancasila state.” In this text, the speaker identified Indonesia as a Pancasila state. The word “fanatical” is used again. Another participant in the same group said, “[Rather than a] *Syariah* state ... Pancasila should be prioritised.” This speaker points out a contradiction between a *Syariah* state and the state ideology of Pancasila, thus applying another participant’s classification: “Pancasila state contrasts with *Syariah* state”.

Discursive Practice

Similar dimensions of linguistic processes are also revealed in discursive practice. The participants drew on mental models of living in “harmony (*rukun*)” with their relatives, friends and neighbours when they talked about the others (Muslims) or about themselves.

Talking about togetherness of Muslims and Christians, a young female participant referred to the situation in her family when *Idul Fitri* came. She said, “All of our family members met, mixed, shook hands.” Another young female drew on her inter-religious family tradition of *arisan* and gathering during *lebaran*.

In the young female FGD the concept of fanatical and normal Muslims arose from the early phase of the discussion. When I asked the participants in that group how they described Muslims a participant responded by telling about her friend’s brother who is a member of LDII. Soon afterwards she used the label “fanatical Muslim” when referring to the boy from LDII. Another participant in the group told a story about three friends and said that “one Muslim was rather fanatical and the other two were normal”. Whereas talk about friendship crops up frequently in FGDs with youths, references to neighbourhood are more common among the elderly.

Some participants referred to friendship or daily family activities when talking about their social relations with Muslims. For example: “I played inside the house [of my Muslim friend]”, “my mother... asked my [Muslim] sibling to have a meal before fasting (*sahur*),” et cetera. Some of them referred to pets such as a dog. Others cited experience of good interpersonal cooperation (“helping” each other) in neighbourhood life when they talked about social relations between Muslims and Christians.

At the meso level Christian participants often used the classification of “we” (*kami, kita*) and “them” (*mereka*) when speaking about themselves and Muslims. They drew on a mental model of Christian communalism. One participant used the words “from our side”. This is a reference to Christian community spirit. When some participants talked about forcible closure of place of worship by radical Muslims or “building a church is very, very difficult”, they saw themselves as coming from the same community (religion, institution).

Christian participants drew on general Christian sources when talking about Muslim-Christian relations. When explaining that “Islam has a lot of interpretations” and “has many faces” (extremist, hardliner, nationalist, tolerant) a participant—a member of a Pentecostal church—said that he was citing a book series *40 Days to Love Nations in Prayer*. The book series is published by an international evangelical movement. One volume writes about diverse features of Islamic understanding and comprehension (*Corak pemahaman dan penghayatan Islam yang berbeda-beda*). The book lists eleven models of Islam: normative Islam, exclusive Islam, cultural Islam, transformative Islam, inclusive pluralist Islam, contextual Islam, esoteric Islam, traditional Islam, modernist Islam, actual Islam and rationalist Islam. The same participant said:

“In that [book] there is knowledge about [Islam]... There are clearly Qur’anic verses which refer to capturing Christians and killing Christians... [However,] there are verses which are in line with the Bible. Those verses are to love Christians, to love others... I myself concluded that there is diversity among Muslims, because the one Qur’an contains many things. [If] they take [only] one thing, they will fight Christians. They will be extremists, hardliners. If they take [verses of] loving Christians, loving others, they will be nationalist Muslims, who are tolerant”.

Here the speaker was referring to another volume of *40 Days to Love Nations in Prayer*. One section of the book, ‘What the Qur’an says?’, lists three categories of Qur’anic verses: verses and *hadits* (Muhammad’s traditions) that are in accord with the Bible; verses and *hadits* which are in opposition to the Bible; and verses and *hadits* which are unrelated to the Christian faith. In this case, the speaker described Islam or Muslims, not by quoting the Qur’an directly but by citing a book about Qur’anic verses produced by the Christian community. Here intertextuality illustrates a process of indirect discourse representation (Fairclough, 1992, p.107). Hence the speaker was not citing Muslims’ ideas but the ideas of Christians about Islam. In discourse representation, there is a distinction between a Christian voice talking about Muslims and the voice of the Muslim who is talked about.

In talking about Muslim clerics and intellectuals who are tolerant because they have a good understanding of Islam an elderly male drew on an Islamic principle, “my religion is mine, your religion is yours”. It is from the Qur’anic surah 109:6: “*lakum dinukum wa liyadin*” (to you be your religion, and to me my religion). Another participant referred implicitly to his own knowledge of the Qur’an: “Those extremists and hardliners do not pay attention to the truth in the Qur’an itself. They pay attention to the [teachings] of their clerics.” Thus, he communicated that the Qur’an does not teach extremism, but Muslim clerics do.

Talking about *Syariah* a participant mentioned that *Syariah* creates “a wall of segregation” between Muslims and Christians. It separates Muslims from others in society (mental model). They referred to this experience, especially in Aceh. A participant said, “That [*Syariah*] will encourage strong sectarianism in the future, not so?” By contrast the Christian vision is to break down walls of segregation. An elderly male, a presbyter in the Javanese Christian Church (GKJ), drew on Jesus’ words to convey the Christian rejection of segregation: “It was stated by Jesus at that time that Samaritan people, who were considered *kafir* [infidels] by the Jews, were in fact visited by Jesus, helped by Jesus... How can we now build walls of segregation? All humans are the same.” The speaker was inspired by a narrative similar to a biblical account (Luke 10:33-34).

The participants produced a meaning of the word “Pancasila” which extends its original connotation. They consumed and reproduced Pancasila in relation to freedom of worship, spirit and appreciation of diversity, appreciation of pluralism, and used a metaphor of colourful flowers in a garden. The original definition of Pancasila refers to five pillars which are written in the preamble to the constitution of 1945. They are: belief in the one Lordship; just and civilized humanity; the unity of Indonesia; democracy guided by inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives; and social justice for all the people of Indonesia.

Freedom of worship is not mentioned in the five pillars of Pancasila, but it is written into the constitution of 1945. Article 29, paragraph 2 reads that “the state guarantees all persons freedom of worship, each according to his/her own religion or belief. When comparing the Pancasila state with an Islamic or *Syariah* state participants drew on a general understanding among Christians in which images of an Islamic, *Syariah* state are anti-Pancasila. When a participant commented, “If the Jakarta Charter were to be included, Pancasila would change”, he drew on an understanding of the Charter as anti-Pancasila. The Jakarta Charter is the initial draft of Pancasila. It was drafted and ratified by a Committee of Nine (eight Muslims and one Christian) before the preparation for Indonesian Independence on 22 June 1945. The difference between the Jakarta Charter and Pancasila is confined to the first pillar. The first pillar of the Jakarta Charter is ‘Belief in Almighty God with the obligation for Muslim adherents to carry out the Islamic *Syariah*’.

Comparison between the Jakarta Charter and Pancasila philosophy was one of the public discourses during the process of constitutional amendment in the early 2000s. Some Christian politicians and leaders refused to reinstate the Jakarta Charter. We give a few examples. *Kompas* newspaper published two articles on 4 August 2000 when the house of representatives (DPR) was debating the constitutional amendment. Herman Musakabe, a Protestant and governor of East Nusa Tenggara, wrote an article titled, ‘Please be careful in amending the constitution’. Yongky Karman, a Catholic pastor, wrote an article titled ‘About the first pillar of Pancasila’. Both writers mentioned that Pancasila is ‘the foundation of the Indonesian state’. ‘Replacing the first pillar of Pancasila with the Jakarta Charter would change that foundation, with all its implications, Musakabe wrote. He added that it “would strengthen the spirit of disintegration of Indonesia because religion can stimulate disintegration”. Karman in his turn wrote:

“Christians of Eastern Indonesia rejected the inclusion of the majority religion in the state foundation, because they feared that it would lead to undesirable excesses by all parties, namely a growing sense of first class citizens [Muslims] and second class citizens [Christians]”.

Referring to Sukarno, he wrote: “Indonesia is neither a religious nor a secular state but a Pancasila state”. The claim that it would change the foundation of the state drew on the idea that if the Jakarta Charter were included in the amended constitution, it would replace Pancasila. The writer gives the reason why Christians rejected it: they were worried about becoming ‘second class’ Indonesian citizens. He also uses the words “Pancasila state”. The foregoing examples clearly show that the discourse in the FGDs was linked to a discourse that had been going on in Indonesian society. The utterance in the FGDs that “Bali [people] want to separate [from Indonesia], North Celebes [people] want to separate, Papua [people] want to separate” if *Syariah* were to be included in the constitution relates to Musakabe’s comment on “the spirit of disintegration [of Indonesia]”.

Social Practice

At a personal level the participants primarily positioned Muslims in two boxes: “fanatical” and “ordinary” or “normal”. The participants position these fanatical Muslims as ‘weird’. That is to say, fanatics are not the norm but the exception in neighbourhood life. Participants in the youthful groups identified fanatical Muslims by using a slang word, “*lebay*” (over acting). Here they were heavily influenced by popular culture (hegemony).

The participants positioned ordinary Muslims as good and tolerant (subject position). This classification meant that they positioned fanatics as “not good” and intolerant. Whereas tolerant Muslims share food with Christians during religious feasts, intolerant Muslims throw away food that was given by Christians. These “good” Muslim villagers are prepared to act as receptionists

at Christmas celebrations. In family life “good” Muslims will accompany their Christian siblings to Sunday school.

At the meso level Christian participants identified Islam as having “many faces” and multiple interpretations. In general, they reproduced two images of Islam/Muslims: a “normal” and an “extremist” image. Participants positioned Muslims who are knowledgeable about Islam as more tolerant. This is comparable with the way participants talked about Christians. The better Christians’ understanding of Christianity, the more tolerant they are. So there is a correlation between education and tolerance. Besides advocating “normal” Islam, most participants favoured democratic and moderate Muslims. Terms like “extreme”, “hardliner”, “radical” and “fanatical” are interchangeable. Some participants identified extreme Muslims with acts of “violence” and “*jihad*” activities/groups. A Christian positioned *jihad* as fanatical Muslims’ fight against Christians. A participant identified the term “hardliners” with Muslims’ notion of fighting and killing Christians. As noted in the section on description, usage of these terms is fluid.

Some participants distinguished between Islam (the religion) and Muslims (its believers). Others differentiated between the Qur’an and its interpretations. The problems were not with Islam and the Qur’an, but with the clerics and “the people”. The dominant opinion was that the problems arose from the extremists’ and hard-liners’ interpretations of Islam and the Qur’an. However, few participants identified the Qur’an as problematic in the sense that it literally supports Muslims capturing and killing Christians. The participants cite evidence that fanatical, extreme and hardliner Muslims divide things or goods into two categories: pure (*suci*) and impure (*najis*). Hardliner Muslim groups were identified as ones who perceive Christians as impure. That is why they dry a sofa after it has been used by Christians, rewash wet clothes that have been touched by Christians, and ask Christians to wash their hands before shaking hands with them. In other utterances hardliner Muslims clean the mosque floor after it had been used by Muslims

outside their group. So here Muslims outside their own group are also considered impure.

At the macro level participants identified a transformation among Indonesian people from the New Order to the *Reformasi* era. Participants reproduced an image of the New Order as an era of state oppression. By contrast they recognize *Reformasi* as an era of freedom. They reproduced the view that in the *Reformasi* era freedom was not only opened up but also broadened. In general participants identified the affairs of the Muslim majority as emerging in many aspects of (public) life, including the economic and social spheres. In a globalizing world participants identified extreme Muslims as positioning America and the West as enemies. Participants reproduced an image that “freedom” and “democracy” tend to give the “dominant” people a voice. They cited examples of the minority religious group (Christians) and the minority ethnic group (Chinese) being targets of discrimination and violence. The participants identified instances where churches and Christian places of worship in their area were raided by extreme Muslims.

Most participants reproduced an image of the state’s lack of authority in the *Reformasi* era to deal with extreme Muslims’ acts of violence. In the present era, they positioned the state as defeated by extreme Muslims. Thus, they positioned the state as unable to protect them against acts of violence. Since *Reformasi* some participants have also experienced difficulty in obtaining state permission to build churches or worshipping communally outside the church. But this restriction does not apply to Muslims.

However, this does not lead to identification of the majority of Muslims as supporting Syariah law and practicing discrimination and acts of violence against Christians. The trouble came from outsiders, hardliners who are very few and not local Muslims. Thus, the participants identified the challenge to Muslim-Christian relations as coming from minority groups within mainstream Islam. Among Christians, too, the problem comes from evangelical movements, not from mainstream denominations such as the Javanese Christian

and Catholic churches. Thus, participants reproduced a social mechanism to maintain peace between Muslims and Christians.

Conclusion: Christian's Voices on the Normal Muslim

What these series of FGDs reveal is a hegemonic struggle between dominant and peripheral voices to define what is considered “[ab]normal” Muslims. Christian participants identified extremist (fanatical, fundamentalist) Muslims as abnormal. They positioned extremists and excessive persons as extraordinary. Thus, they identified extremism as not the norm but an exception to the rule of religions (institutional level). In distinguishing between “normal” and “extreme” the participants primarily positioned themselves as normal or ordinary religious people who are moderate. They identified those who cause conflict as neither moderate Muslims nor moderate Christians, but fundamentalists in their respective faiths. In addition, these not-normal Muslims are discursively treated as dangerous. Their type of Islam—their very Islamism so to speak—is detrimental to peace and national integration. Unsurprisingly the youth alarmingly respond to the state’s lack of authority as it prevents the latter from assuming necessary measures against “dangerous” fanatics/fundamentalists. It seems that the fanatics/fundamentalists present as the Real other—to use Žižek’s expression (2002)—in the eyes of Christian youth. Commonly the Real others accentuate differences that traumatize.

The participants’ “normal”/“not-normal” classification reminds us of Michel Foucault’s work *Madness and Civilization*. A society which perceives people as mentally ill labels them accordingly and will treat them as mentally ill (Foucault, 1965; Schatzman, 1971). Put differently, we can say that some research participants perceived radicals, extremists and terrorists who are identified as not-normal to be mad or mentally ill. In fact, around 240 people who were identified as terrorists by the police were killed and many more injured in four major acts of terrorism in Indonesia

from 2002 to 2005. Three terrorists were executed and 57 people suspected of terrorism were shot dead in their hideouts, including Air and Eko from Solo. In addition, around 700 people accused of terrorism were jailed. Here we can see the link between knowledge production about terrorism and the treatment meted out to them (killing, imprisonment, etc.).

Foucault (1980, p.39) notes that power in society is persistent and subtle in that it ‘reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives’. In Christian groups the participants identified extreme Muslims who wear typical clothing (calf-length pants, *niqab*, etc.) as improper and not normal. The youths in Christian groups called extremist and terrorist Muslims “*lebay*”, new slang for something out of the ordinary. We interpret FGD participants’ labels such as “improper”, “not normal”, “out of the ordinary”, “*lebay*” and “excessive” in terms of Foucault’s classification of mad and civilized people.

International Crisis Group (ICG) Indonesia published a policy brief titled *Indonesia: ‘Christianization’ and Intolerance*. ICG’s policy brief as well as the primary voice in our FGDs positioned extremists and hardliners as “funny”, “foolish”, “odd” and “not normal” (these wordings are from FGDs, not from ICG). Interestingly, from the perspective of extremists and hardliners, they take their very Islamism as a form of protest against what they perceive as injustice. In his study in Tanzania, Ndaluka writes that some Muslims say that they ‘make a noise (*pigakelele*)’ if they feel that they are being marginalized (Ndaluka, 2012, p. 206). The hardliners’ voices are suppressed because of the national and international war on terror. However, studies of terrorism indicate that when hardliners’ voices are silenced they tend to become more, not less radical (Mamdani, 2004).

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