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Visions of the future: imagining Islamic modernities in Indonesian Islamic-themed post-Suharto popular and visual culture

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Publication date

2014

Document Version

Final published version

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

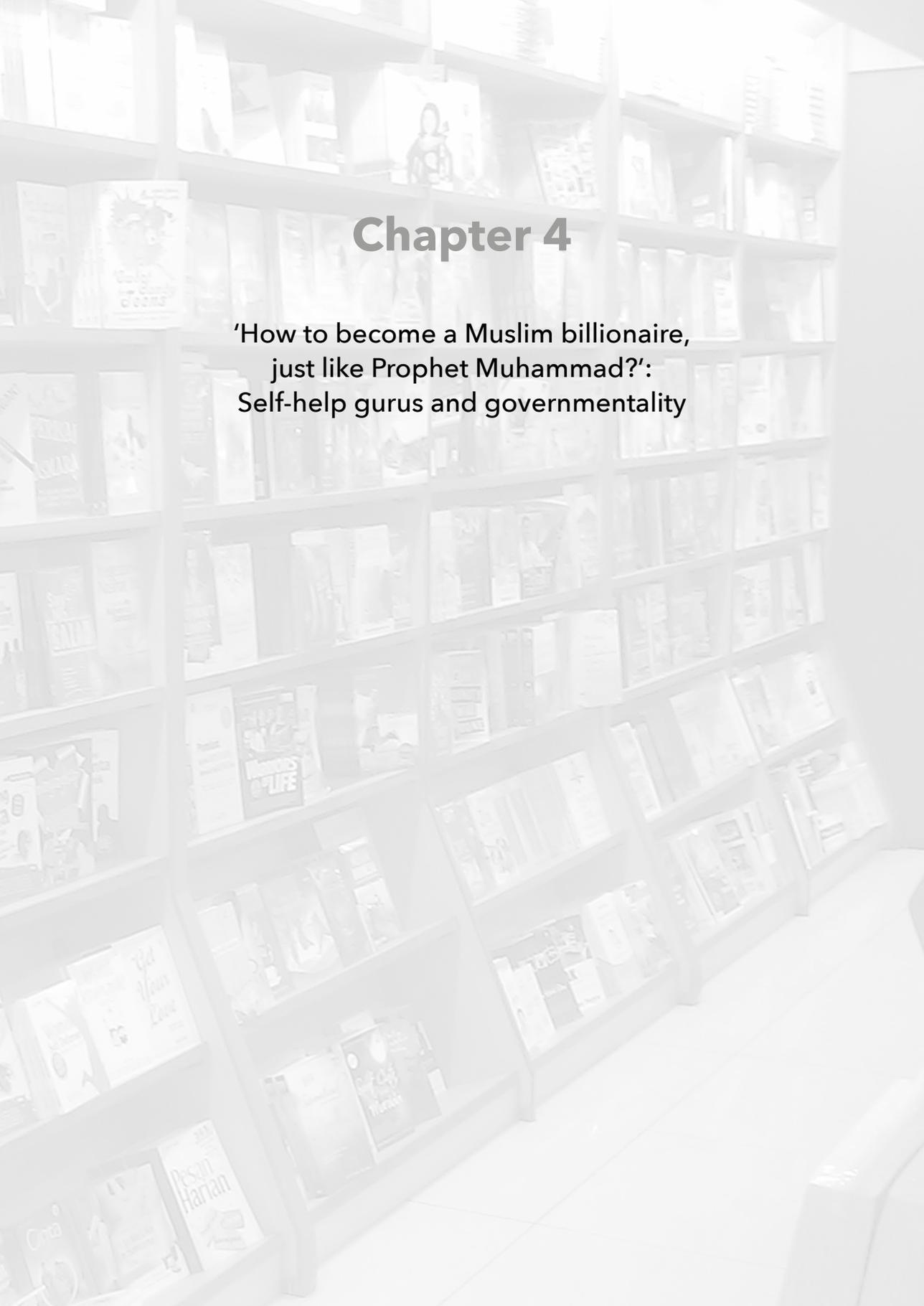
Schmidt, L. K. (2014). *Visions of the future: imagining Islamic modernities in Indonesian Islamic-themed post-Suharto popular and visual culture*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

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Chapter 4

**'How to become a Muslim billionaire,
just like Prophet Muhammad?':
Self-help gurus and governmentality**

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The global Islamic revival of the last three decades has in Indonesia fragmented traditional forms of religious authority whilst producing new figures of public piety (Hoesterey 2012: 38). Amidst these new public voices are not only Muslim scholars and clerics, but also a new generation of pop culture preachers and self-help gurus who offer Islamic guidance to Indonesian Muslims (Ibidem).

Undoubtedly the most visible Indonesian pop prophet has been the flamboyant television preacher Abdullah Gymnastiar, affectionately known as Aa Gym. Gym pioneered Islamic self-help in Indonesia when he captured the hearts of millions in 2002 with his humorous television sermons. His sermons did not dwell on a hazy hereafter, but rather focused on the practicalities of everyday life (Elegant and Tedjasukmana 2002). Dubbed by the head of Indonesia's Liberal Islam Network as the 'Britney Spears of Islam', Gym managed to transform himself into a celebrity and Islamic name brand (cf. Hoesterey 2007). His popularity rapidly skyrocketed: teenage girls and statesmen of various political leanings lined up for pictures while hundreds of thousands made pilgrimages to his Islamic school (Ibidem).

It was not only Gym's charismatic personality that made him popular. He also smartly positioned himself in the moderate Islamic majority and promoted himself as an icon of Islamic modernity. Gym's pop psychology promoted a twenty-first century Islam that embraced the benefits of technology and that aimed to advance Indonesian Muslims economically through merging modern-day practices of religion and business (Elegant and Tedjasukmana 2002). His approach was thus adeptly attuned to modernizing and Islamizing Indonesia.

Although Gym fell from public grace after he took the path of polygamy in 2006 (cf. Hoesterey 2007), his success paved the way for a new generation of Muslim self-help experts who were eager to follow in his footsteps. These gurus often lack official credentials in Islamic education. They are nevertheless accommodated by rapidly emerging Muslim publishing houses and organizations (e.g. FLP), if not by their own print company (e.g. Asma Nadia publishing house; Mujahidin Press). The books of these gurus quickly grew in popularity and it was not long until – in 2011 –

Islamic self-help became the leading category in the Indonesian publishing industry (Hoesterey 2012: 39).

The boom in Islamic self-help occurs at a moment when Indonesian Muslims are increasingly seeking control over the production and consumption of (printed) popular culture in the face of recurring moral panic about content that allegedly threatens Islamic values (Widodo 2008). To conservatives these 'dangerous' popular cultural products (e.g. tabloids) signal "an offensive and immoral process of westernization and secularization" in Indonesia (Widodo 2008). In this context, Islamic self-help books seem to serve a double function. First, they offer a profitable Islamic alternative to assumedly dangerous (printed) content. And second, Islamic self-help books provide readers with inspirational stories and practical manuals for living in a modernizing Indonesian society. The books offer their advice from an Islamic perspective, i.e. they link guidelines for practical everyday living with quotations and stories from religious texts such as the Quran and hadith (Widodo 2008).

But how do Islam and modernity intersect here? What kinds of modern Islamic selves are promoted? What politics are underpinning the construction of these selves? How do these politics differ across different types of books? How do these books attempt to govern readers?

In this chapter, I explore these questions through conducting a discourse analysis of three Islamic self-help books that are written by three different motivational writers and that are aimed at different audiences: families, entrepreneurs, and (young) women. By drawing on Michel Foucault's (1978a; 2007 [1977-1978]) notion of governmentality, I propose that the books promote and construct specific modern Islamic subjects that are fit to participate in (Islamic) modernities. These subjects are not just gesturing towards a distant modern future. Rather they point our gaze back to the disputes and contradictions that exist in present Indonesian society. The books encourage the construction of subjects that are aware of, and that intervene in, the (unequal) spread of wealth, while actively negotiating cultural, ethnic, and religious differences.

Despite its current omnipresence in our culture, the genre of self-help has received relatively little scholarly attention. As Martha Cheng (2008) observes, researchers who did analyze self-help books have mostly employed a macro-level and quantitative approach (Cheng 2008: 2). Studying large corpora (e.g. 300 books, Dolby 2005) these scholars have identified common characteristics of self-help and considered the effects these books have on people, culture, and society (e.g. Lancaster and Stead 2005; Kyrouz and Humphreys 1997; Gellatly, J. *et al* 2007;

Adamsen and Rasmussen 2001; Orleans, C. T. et al 1991). While valuably mapping the self-help genre, these studies lack a contextualized in-depth analysis of the strategies and politics that underpin the construction of new selves (but see Starker 1989; Cowlshaw 2001; Rimke 2000; Cheng 2008; Illouz 2008). My study contributes to this body of work by conducting a close reading of three self-help books, thereby paying particular attention to the tactics that underpin the promotion of modern subjects.

When looking at research that has used a similar approach to analyze self-help books, we can observe that the majority of the studies have focused on American self-help literature (cf. Cowlshaw 2001; Illouz 2007; 2008; Cheng 2008; Rimke 2000). Zooming in on American self-help, Cheng asserts: “traditional American values of individualism, self-improvement, and hard work have supported the publication and the popularity since our country’s inception” (Cheng 2008: 2). The American self-help industry thrives, because the contents of the books feed into the American Dream. But how are these values articulated and appropriated in a different cultural context? How do Indonesian Islamic self-help books compare to their American counterparts? Do they reflect the same values? And do they use the same rhetorical strategies? By exploring these questions, my analysis adds an Indonesian perspective to the study of self-help books.

My focus on Indonesian Islamic self-help books also challenges the persistent Eurocentrism and secularism in governmentality studies. Although the range of studies of governmentality is very diverse – studies are marked by various disciplinary orientations and focus on different empirical objects (Bröckling, Krassmann and Lemke 2011: 9-11; Kipnis 2008: 277) – they have largely failed to look at non-Western contexts (but see Chong 2010; Thongchai 1994; Rudnyckij 2004). Studying self-help in an Indonesian context might reveal different (Indonesian) forms and tactics of governance.

My study also addresses the dearth of research in governmentality studies on questions of religion (but see Carrette 1991; 2000; Garmany 2010; Bendle 2002). As Jeff Garmany (2010) points out, Foucault was captivated by religion, writing about the Church that it is “a superb instrument of power for itself. Entirely woven through with elements that are imaginary, erotic, effective, corporal, sensual, and so on, it is superb!” (Foucault 1991: 107, cited in Garmany 2010: 908). In his efforts to show how power is not uniform, but is defined by the specific points through which it passes, Foucault was often drawn to questions of faith, seeing in religion – with its practices and institutions – a ‘superb’ instrument of power (908). Yet, while Foucault’s works on sexuality, psychiatry, medicine, and prisons have inspired many

scholars, his fascination with religion and Christianity has often been overlooked. Extending Foucault's discussion of governmentality to an Indonesian Islamic context addresses this gap. How do Islam and governmentality go together? How is governmentality produced through Islam? What 'Islamic' modes of governmentality allow for which technologies of the self?

Islamic self-help books

A stroll through the Gramedia bookshop in the Malioboro Mal in downtown Yogyakarta affirms the flourishing market for the consumption of self-help books in Indonesia. The large *pengembangan diri* (self-development) section dominates the shop (Figure 1), while pillars that promote the top ten bestselling self-help books are placed throughout the shop (Figures 2-3). Although the bulk of the self-help books are found in the *pengembangan diri* section, they are also on display in other sections, such as 'business', 'management', 'Islam', 'religion', and 'family'. Self-help books with an Islamic theme are not only found in the 'self-development', or 'Islamic' section, but across all categories. One of the reasons for this apparent categorical chaos is the absence of established criteria for including books in the self-help category.



Figure 1: The large *pengembangan diri* ('self-development') section in Gramedia, Yogyakarta



Figures 2-3: (Left) The self-development section, (Right) one of the pillars advertising (Islamic) self-help books

Because of this lack of criteria, scholars studying self-help books have used rather broad definitions to select their corpus (Cheng 2008: 2). Sandra Dolby (2005) for instance defines self-help books as “[books] written with the aim of enlightening readers about some negative effects of our culture and worldview, and suggesting new attitudes and practices that might lead them to more satisfying and more effective lives” (Dolby 2005: 38, cited in Cheng 2008: 2). Although a precise definition of self-help books is lacking, two common characteristics are identified. First, the self-help genre as a non-academic genre usually eschews using reliable data. It instead relies on rhetorical devices such as personal narratives, parables, and meta-commentary to convey its message. And second, self-help books respond to human and social concerns in a specific period of time (Cheng 2008: 2).

For this study, Dolby’s (2005) definition and the above-mentioned characteristics were used as the first criteria in the selection of a corpus. Three books are selected as case studies. The first book, *Wonderful Family* (2012), written by Cahyadi Takariawan, is a book for achieving a harmonious Islamic family life. The second book selected here is *Rasullulah’s Business School* (2011) by Ustadz Abdollah Richmoslem and Prof. Laode Masihu Kamaluddin. This book, aimed at prospective entrepreneurs and businessmen, promises to teach you: “(1) how to transform

poorness into wealth and create a brave pious mind; (2) how to build a business empire worth billions with zero capital, just like Prophet Muhammad; and (3) how to become a Muslim billionaire like the Prophet [as advertised on the book's cover]." The last book is *Twitografi Asma Nadia* (2011) by the popular female Muslim writer Asma Nadia. The book that is aimed at (young) women is a 'Twittergraphy'. It contains a collection of inspirational tweets that Nadia posted on her widely followed Twitter-account @asmanadia. These tweets are grouped into topics that concern young Muslims, such as 'Muslim fashion', 'love and boyfriends', 'diets and sports', and 'travelling Muslims'.

I select these three books for two reasons. First, they represent the three largest sub-categories of self-help literature, family life, business, and (young) women's concerns. Second, the books revolve around different 'content-dimensions' and in this way represent different types of self-help books that are on the market in Indonesia. Steven Starker (2002) distinguished three pairs of 'content dimensions' to describe different types of self-help books (Starker 2002). Although Starker based his dimensions on American self-help books, I found the same kinds of dimensions in Indonesian self-help literature and I therefore think that these dimensions provide a useful vocabulary to talk about self-help.

The first pair Starker identifies is 'anecdotal – informational'. Anecdotal self-help books are heavily infused with humorous or biographical incidents. Other books are more informational. They depend on empirical data and facts to support their perspectives (Starker 2002: 9). The second pair is 'descriptive – prescriptive'. Self-help books often prescribe clear rules or directions for behavior. There are however also works that offer a number of possible procedures for accomplishing a goal, leaving the reader free to choose among alternatives (Ibidem). The last pair, 'closed – open system', describes a work's philosophy. A book with a closed system presents a self-contained philosophy, which resists interaction with other perspectives. An open system encourages access to new information (9-10). For Starker, these three pairs are not rigid categories. He observes that books often fuse dimensions.

The books selected for this study revolve around these different dimensions. *Wonderful Family* is informational and descriptive, while offering an open philosophy. *Rasullulah's Business School* is informational, provides a closed system, and is prescriptive. *Twitografi Asma Nadia* is anecdotal, offers an open system, and combines a prescriptive with a descriptive style. By selecting these books, a study of governmental tactics across different types of self-help works is enabled.

The process of selection was challenging. Together with Dana, an employee of

the Gramedia bookshop in the Malioboro Mal (one of the largest bookshops in Yogyakarta), I browsed through more than one hundred pengembangan diri books. We created a pool of twenty-eight books that were concerned with (young) women's concerns, family life, and business, and that revolved around the different content-dimensions. From this pool of relevant books, I selected *Wonderful Family*, *Rasullulah's Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia*. Although official sales numbers for the selected books were inaccessible, even for store-staff, these books are written by known authors and can therefore be expected to sell well. For this reason I selected these three books. As Dana explained, sales numbers are obscured because "it is of crucial importance that every self-help book must be believed to be a best seller. The books are branded as such, so that people feel no shame in buying them. They should believe they are not the only ones with the problem." (conversation with Dana, Gramedia bookshop employee, May 2012)

Governmentality, self-help and religion

Wonderful Family, *Rasullulah's Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia* are analyzed through a Foucauldian framework. Particularly Foucault's notion of governmentality and his work on technologies of the self offer me a generative lens through which to apprehend the discursive means by which these self-help books elicit modern Islamic subjects.

In Foucault's writings, the term 'governmentality' (*gouvernementalité*) first surfaces in the Collège de France lectures of 1977-1979. The term is derived from the French adjective *gouvernemental*, and is used by Foucault to describe a range of forms of action aimed in a complex way at steering individuals and collectives (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2011: 1).

Foucault's interest in studying government signals a refinement of his analysis of power, and particularly of his analysis of disciplinary power. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault describes how sovereign power – marked by the theatrical spectacle of public executions of the criminal bodies (Foucault 1975: 9) – transforms into disciplinary power. In disciplinary power, the body is not directly punished, but is cast as "a useful and intelligible body [...] at the center of which reigns the notion of 'docility', which joins the analyzable body to the manipulable body." (136) Foucault observes that these "subjected and practiced bodies" (138) are a cost-efficient way to produce effects in the social body at large. They function to "increase the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminish these

same forces (in political terms of obedience).” (138)

In the mid-1970s, Foucault observes that this conception of power has two problems. First, it does not consider the more comprehensive processes of subjectification. It does not do justice to the double character of subjectification as a practice of subjugation and a form of self-constitution (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2011: 1-2). Second, focusing on institutions like the hospital and the prison turned out to be insufficient (*Ibidem*). Power is not only located in specific institutions, but “power is everywhere; not because it engulfs everything, but because it comes from everywhere.” (Foucault 1978b: 93)

What was needed was a double expansion of the analytic apparatus (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2011: 2). In ‘Security, Territory, Population’ (2008a [1977-1978]), Foucault elaborated the notion of ‘government’, which accounted for these two problems. This concept of government also allowed Foucault to expand his analysis to involve biopower as a new mode of power, and to conceptualize ‘biopolitics’ as a particular modern notion of governmental reason (for an elaboration of biopolitics see chapter 5).

Foucault traces this notion of government in religious history. For Foucault, modern political power is the result of a complex linkage between political power and what he calls ‘pastoral power’. Introduced through the Christian Church, pastoral power underpins our modern technologies of governance. To explain his idea of pastoral power, Foucault (2007 [1977-1978]) draws a parallel between a shepherd and a pastor. Much like the relationship between a shepherd and a flock, pastoral power is defined by beneficence and care, and its objective is the salvation of the multiplicity (Garmany 2010: 910). As Foucault writes, the salvation that must be assured to the flock has a very precise meaning in the theme of pastoral power:

Salvation is first of all essentially subsistence. [...] The shepherd is someone who feeds and who feeds directly, or at any rate, he is someone who feeds the flock first by leading it to good pastures, and then by making sure that the animals eat and are properly fed. Pastoral power is a power of care. It looks after the flock, it looks after the individuals of the flock, it sees to it that the sheep do not suffer, it goes in search of those that have strayed of course, and it treats those that are injured. (Foucault 2007 [1977-1978]: 172)

Pastoral power is thus an individualizing power that is based on the pastor’s responsibilities to ‘the flock’ – in their knowledge, in their vigilance, and in their care for each individual. Simultaneously, it is based on each member’s obedience to the pastor – to practice self-care, to maintain self-awareness, and to communicate and

confess this knowledge to the pastor (Garmany 2010: 910). Hence, pastoral authority does not seek to rule over the flock, rather it seeks to affect and induce the flock, so that a certain set of behavior is produced that helps to achieve salvation. Pastoral power thus governs souls: their individual instruction and guidance takes place in view of otherworldly salvation (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2011: 3).

For Foucault, pastoral power is a prelude to governmentality in two ways:

First, it is the prelude through the procedures peculiar to the pastorate, through the way in which, fundamentally, it does not purely and simply put the principles of salvation, law, and truth into play, but rather, through all these kinds of diagonals, it establishes other types of relationships under the law, salvation, and truth. [...] And it is also a prelude to governmentality through the constitution of a specific subject, of a subject whose merits are analytically identified, who is subjected in continuous networks of obedience, and who is subjectified (subjectivé) through the compulsory extraction of truth. (Foucault 2007 [1977-1978]: 239-240).

In accord with their Christian pastoral origins, today's governmental practices are focused on the steering and conducting of individuals, just as they were aimed originally aimed at the individual's conscience and personal salvation (Balke 2011: 88). Modern governance was born out of an expansion and secularization of the pastoral techniques that took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This secularization eventually produced forms of subjectification from which the modern state and capitalist society could later develop (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2011: 3). As Foucault writes:

We can say that Christian pastorship has introduced a game that neither the Greeks nor the Hebrews imagined. It is a strange game whose elements are life, death, truth, obedience, individuals, and self-identity – a game that seems to have nothing to do with the game of the city surviving through the sacrifice of the citizens. Our societies proved to be really demonic since they happened to combine those two games – the city-citizen game and the shepherd-flock game – in what we call the modern states. (Foucault 2000: 311).

To explain how modern states govern, Foucault cites a sentence from the French writer Guillaume de La Perrière: "Government is the right disposition (*disposer*) of things arranged so as to lead to a suitable end." (de La Perrière, cited in Foucault 2008a [1977-1978]: 96) What interests Foucault in this sentence are the 'things' that

government governs. Foucault observes that in the eighteenth century:

Government is not related to the territory, but to a sort of complex of men and things. The things government must be concerned about [...] are men in their relationships, bonds and complex involvement with things like wealth, resources, means of subsistence, and, of course, the territory with its borders, qualities, climate, dryness, fertility, and so on. 'Things' are men in their relationships with things like customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking. Finally they are men in their relationships with things like accidents, misfortunes, famine, epidemics, and death. (Foucault 2008a [1977-1978]: 96)

Government is thus concerned with governing men in their relationships to a wide range of things. But de La Perrière's sentence also indicates that government has a specific purpose. It arranges these 'things' for a 'suitable end'. And whereas for sovereign power the end was obedience to the law (98), the end for this type of modern government comprises something else. The end here must be suitable for each of the things that are being governed (Ibidem). This implies two things:

[It implies] first of all, a plurality of specific ends. For example, the government will have to ensure that the greatest possible amount of wealth is produced, that the people are provided with sufficient means of subsistence, and that the population can increase. So the objective of government will be a series of specific finalities (99).

[Second] one will arrange (*disposer*) things to achieve these different ends. This word *disposer* is important because, what enabled sovereignty to achieve its aim of obedience to the laws, was the law itself; law and sovereignty were absolutely united. Here, on the contrary, it is not a matter of imposing law on men, but on the disposition of things, that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, or, of as far as possible employing laws as tactics; arranging things so that this or that end may be achieved through a certain number of means (99).

Whereas the end of sovereignty is internal to itself and gets its instruments from itself in the form of laws, the end of modern government is internal to the things it directs. And the instruments of government are not laws, but diverse tactics (99). These tactics are targeted at the population, not just to govern, but also "to improve the condition of the population, to increase its wealth, its longevity, and its health." (Ibidem) Effects of government are thus deemed simultaneously beneficial for an individual, a collectivity, and a state. The effects of government do not create responsible people, but responsible citizens.

What is important is that the instruments that government uses to govern are immanent to the population. Instruments are acting directly on the population through campaigns, or, indirectly through techniques that, without people being aware of it, stimulate the birth rate, or direct the flows of population to this or that region or activity (105). The population is the end and the instrument of government. As Foucault writes:

[The population] is the subject of needs and aspirations, but also the object of government manipulation; vis-à-vis government, [population] is both aware of what it wants and unaware of what is being done to it. (105)

The needs and aspirations of people here thus become the target and the instrument of the government of populations. For Foucault this leads to the birth of “new tactics and techniques” of governance (106).

The significance of this notion of government in Foucault’s work lies in the mediating function he ascribes to it: it mediates between power and subjectivity. Practices of government generate subjects, they subjectivate by invoking and legitimizing certain images of the self while excluding others. To become a subject always means actualizing certain subject positions and dispensing with others; it means being addressed in a certain way as a subject, understanding oneself as a subject, and working on oneself in alignment with this self-understanding (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2011: 14). But subjects are not merely effects of the exercise of power, they also possess self-will and agency; they too desire a ‘suitable end’. This relationship between power and subjectivity, where power and freedom are present at the same time makes it possible to study how techniques of rule are tied to ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault 1988), that is, how forms of political government have recourse to the “processes by which the individual acts upon himself” (Foucault 1993: 203, cited in Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2011: 2).

These ‘technologies of the self’ allow individuals to effect by their own means a certain number of operations on their bodies, minds, and lifestyles, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain quality of life. For Foucault, techniques involve “modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills, but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes.” (Foucault 1997: 225) These technologies of the self are not only distributed through state institutions. Proceeding from the idea that “power is everywhere” (Foucault 1978b: 93), Foucault contends that not only governments govern (Rimke 2010: 71). Scholars of governmentality have therefore looked beyond

the formal institutions of government to emphasize the everyday techniques through which individuals organize and govern themselves as an implicit condition of their citizenship (Ouellette and Hay 2008: 473). It is today through socio-cultural intermediaries such as schools, but also via popular media, that these technologies circulate in a highly dispersed fashion (Ibidem).

Self-help books too are part of this mix. Self-help – an assumedly voluntary activity – encompasses technologies of the self that assist citizens “who do not need to be governed by others, but will govern themselves, master themselves, care for themselves” (Rose 1996: 45) and in this way contribute to the maintenance and progress of the nation-state. These technologies operate not so much by way of negative restriction, but by way of productive application: the self-helper must be encouraged and skilled in his or her own subjection. In this way, the self-help genre can contribute to the invention of subjects who are psychologically ‘healthy’ inasmuch as they are governable, responsible, and self-regulating (Rimke 2010: 63). But what kinds of technologies of the self do *Wonderful Family*, *Rasullulah’s Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia* offer? What are the ‘things’ that are arranged? And what comprises the ‘suitable ends’? In my study, I will zoom in on these questions and suggest that self-help books practice a form of modern government. The books mobilize governmental tactics to promote and construct specific modern Islamic citizen-subjects that are fit to participate in an Indonesian modern nation. Through the construction of these citizen-subjects, the books seek to govern and control a larger modern nation

Because governmental practices are never stable, attempts to analyze them must be contextual. My focus here is on present day Indonesia. While governmentality applies to different historical periods and different regimes of power, it is – because of its close links to neoliberalism – most often used in reference to the type of governance that characterizes advanced democratic liberal societies.

But when, following Aihwa Ong (2006), we see neoliberalism not as a form of predatory capitalism with adverse effects on the Global South or as a simple “code word for America’s overweening power” (Ong 2006: 1), but as “a technology of government” (3), then a range of non-Western contexts open up to the study of governmental practices.

In *Neoliberalism as Exception* (2006), Aihwa Ong argues that modalities that view neoliberalism as the latest stage of capitalist global structural and hegemonic domination (cf. Gill 1995), construct a framework of a neoliberal North versus a South under siege (12). Ong suggests that this framework has spawned two schools of thought in anthropology: “The first identifies a Northern ‘culture of neoliberalism’

that engenders Southern responses, including occult economies, messianic movements, and other social upheavals. The second seeks to identify 'neoliberal states' that centralize capital and monopoly power 'at the global level'" (12). In this last view, the 'neoliberal state' is often invoked as an ideal-type and is thereby unwittingly presented as an entity of singularity (Ibidem).

Ong observes how these typological approaches based on a simple geographical North-South axis, or a typology of nation-states, are challenged by the dynamic and novel combinations of neoliberal interventions and Asian political cultures. Today we find neoliberal interventions in liberal democracies as well as in postcolonial, authoritarian, and postsocialist situations in East and Southeast Asia. (3) In these locations, states are making exceptions to their usual practices of governing in order to position themselves to compete in the global economy. Rather than taking neoliberalism "as a tidal wave of market driven phenomena that sweeps from dominant countries to smaller ones" (12), Ong proposes an alternative view of neoliberalism as an extraordinarily malleable technology of governing that is taken up in different ways by different regimes, be they authoritarian, postcolonial, democratic, or postsocialist. For Ong, neoliberalism as a malleable technology of government is a profoundly active way of rationalizing governing and self-governing in order to 'optimize' (3).

As an array of techniques centered on the optimization of life, neoliberalism migrates from site to site and interacts with various assemblages that cannot be analytically reduced to cases of a uniform global condition of 'Neoliberalism' writ large (14). Neoliberalism, as an ethos of self-governing, encounters and articulates other ethical regimes in particular contexts. In Southeast Asia the neoliberal exception in an Islamic public sphere for instance catalyzes debates over female virtue (9). *Ulamas* (Muslim scholars) often resist the new autonomy of working women, while feminists claim a kind of gender equality within the limits of Islam. Contrary to the perception that transnational humanitarianism replaces situated ethics, questions of status and morality are problematized and resolved in particular milieus shaped by economic rationality, religious norms, and citizenship values. (Ibidem)

If we look at Indonesia, we see that neoliberalism as an ethos of self-governing and self-reliance at first sight seems to run counter to the basic premise of the Indonesian ideology as contained in the country's constitution. Article 33.1 of the constitution for instance states that the Indonesian economy should be based on the family (*kekeluargaan*) or the mutual assistance principle. Furthermore, article 33.3 stipulates that "land, water and natural resources [...] shall be controlled by the state

and shall be used for the greatest prosperity of the people”, while article 33.2 claims that “production branches which are important for the state and which affect the livelihood of the public, shall be controlled by the state” (Chandra 2011: iii). Despite this more socialist approach, economic liberalization has been prevalent throughout the post-*Reformasi* era (Chandra 2011: iv). Almost all post-New Order governments have pursued neoliberal principles. Both external factors (e.g. the changing global and regional economic environment) and internal factors (e.g. protests against the protectionist policies that made for corruption and nepotism during the New Order) are central to the current promotion of neoliberalism as an optimizing technology of government.

Neoliberalism as an ethos of self-government is thus not confined to the milieus of advanced liberal democracies. However, it has barely been investigated outside North Atlantic situations (Ong 2006: 14). If we look at Islamic Indonesia, what kinds of self-government can we distinguish? What kinds of modern Islamic subjects are promoted through Indonesian Islamic self-help books? How do Islam and governmentality go together? How is governmentality produced through Islam?

By exploring questions of Islam, modernity, and governance my study contributes to governmentality studies, which has focused on a wide range of topics (cf. Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2011: 14), but which has largely ignored questions of religion (but see Carrette 1991; 2000; Garmany 2010; Bendle 2002). This lack of studies on governmentality and religion is remarkable since Foucault traces the roots of governmentality in religious history. But as Jeremy Carrette (2000) asserts, Foucault’s engagement with religion goes further than recognizing the historical relationship between the Christian pastorate and the techniques of modern governance (Carrette 2000: 135-136). For Carrette, Foucault’s interest in the ‘new relations of power’ was also very much part of his overall strategy to place religion within the framework of governmentality (Carrette 2000: 136; Garmany 2010: 910). Foucault was interested in highlighting how these regimes of power and technologies of the self were part of religious discourse; he was interested in showing the inescapable political techniques of religion (Ibidem). Furthermore, as Carrette writes, religion is an essential to Foucault’s concept of governmentality itself:

Foucault appears to collapse the ‘spiritual’, the ‘ethical’, and the ‘political’ into a single trajectory of ‘truth’, ‘subjectivity’, and ‘power’, a strategy, which can only be appreciated by locating it within the original 1978 framework of ‘governmentality’. The notion of ‘governmentality’ holds together the ‘ethical’, ‘spiritual’, and ‘political’ inside a single

framework, outside of which the terms become dislocated and redundant by being fused together (Carrette 2000: 136, cited in Garmany 2010: 910).

In this understanding of governmentality, spiritual, ethical, and political moments thus intersect in the production of truth, subjectivity, and power (Garmany 2010: 910).

The close connections between governmentality and religion raise a number of questions for my study of Islamic self-help books. How are governmental practices in Islamic self-help books not secularized, but Islamized? How do the modern Muslim selves that Islamic self-help books promote form the basis for the construction of ideal Muslim subjects – and by extension ideal Muslim citizens? How does governmentality operate through Islam to discipline and affect subjects and practices, and what are the ramifications of this for individuals? What ‘Islamic’ modes of governmentality allow for which technologies of the self? These questions will be central to the following analysis of *Wonderful Family*, *Rasullulah’s Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia*.

***Wonderful Family*: the keluarga sakinah as the foundation of an Islamic modernity**

A considerable part of Indonesian Islamic self-help books focuses on the improvement of family life. I here focus on *Wonderful Family* (2012). This book (Figure 4), written by Cahyadi Takariawan, offers tips to achieve a *keluarga sakinah*, a harmonious Islamic family. Takariawan or Ustadz Pak Cah (Islamic teacher Cah) as he is sometimes called, is a Muslim self-help writer from Central Java. In addition to his job as a writer, Takariawan is also a Jogja Family Center trainer and counselor. He has written over forty (self-help) books. While most of his books revolve around the topic of family life, his works also include da’wah books, i.e. works that summon people to Islam. To explain his ideas of ‘the ideal Muslim family’ in *Wonderful Family*, Takariawan often draws on his professional experience as a counselor. He also includes personal anecdotes about his own family. In Starker’s (2002) terms, the book thus fuses informational and anecdotal dimensions.

When analyzing the tools that in *Wonderful Family* facilitate and rationalize the construction of the ideal family, two different types of governance are identified: (1) a direct mode that explicitly frames the progress of the Indonesian nation as a responsibility of the family and (2) more indirect tactics that work through

technologies of the self. As I suggest below, both tactics work in favor of an overarching technology of responsabilization that helps the state reduce the effort it puts into governing.

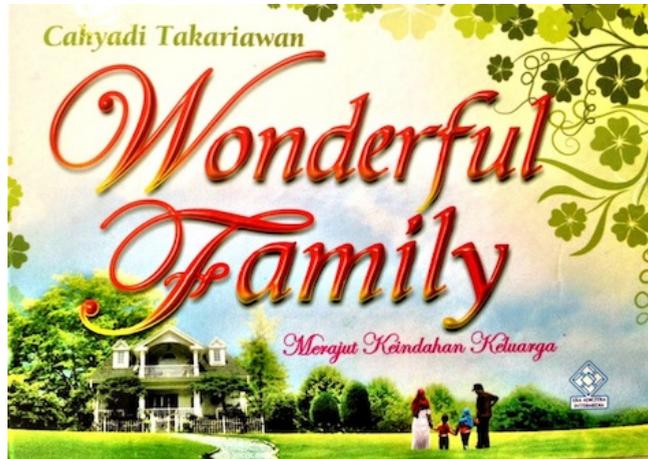


Figure 4: *Wonderful Family* (2012)

In *Wonderful Family*, the responsibility for the nation's future is first located in the intimate domain of the family by the use a rather direct rhetoric. This rhetoric is constructed through both written language and visual illustrations. As Takariawan writes in the opening sentences of the book: "families that produce good values play a crucial role in the progress of the Indonesian society, the nation, and the state" (*Wonderful Family*: ix-x). And as he later claims: "The family is first and foremost an educational institution that shapes the identity of the nation. Especially the children function as important tools for successful national development. They should therefore be imprinted with a strong character that reflects the nation's identity." (*Wonderful Family*: 229) These statements that link the development of the nation to the well being of the family attempt to instil in the self-helper a sense of responsibility. Claims like these are repeatedly used throughout the book (e.g. see pages: ix-x; 12; 14-16; 20; 225-226; 229; 230-231).

In addition to this explicit responsabilization through written language, the book also mobilizes instructive visuals to construct this disciplinary discourse. The book's images work to specify the responsible family member as both a responsible *modern* citizen and as a responsible *Muslim* citizen. Figures 5 and 6 provide examples. Figure 5 is found in the book's introduction in which the importance of the family is explained. The drawing depicts a number of buildings standing

alongside a road, while the sun shines cheerfully. The tallest building is however collapsing and threatens to destroy the other (lower) buildings. The drawing comes with the text: "High-rise buildings must be accompanied by a strong foundation in the earth. If the foundation is fragile, the buildings will collapse". The high-rise buildings here function as a symbol of Indonesia's current project of modernization, whereas the "strong foundation in the earth" stands for the family. In this image, the family is held responsible for a stable and successful project of modernization. A responsible family member is thus responsible modern citizen. In this way, Figure 5 emphasizes the importance of *kekeluargaan* – the aforementioned idea that the Indonesian economy and its development should be based on the family.

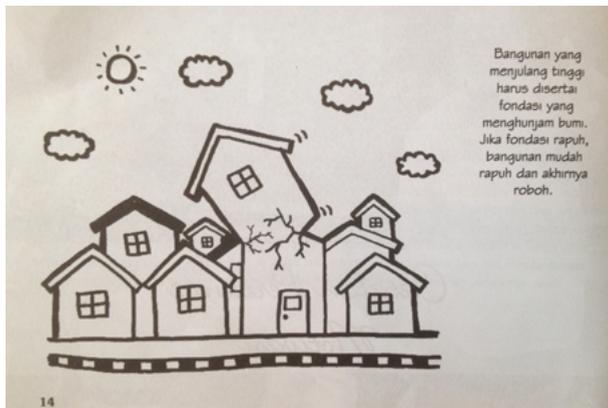


Figure 5: "High rise buildings must be accompanied by a strong foundation in the earth. If the foundation is fragile, the buildings will collapse." (*Wonderful Family*: 14)



Figure 6: "The number one function of the family is to provide education for children so that they can later become religious people that are useful to the society, the nation, and the state." (*Wonderful Family*: 224)

Figure 6 shows how in *Wonderful Family* the responsible family member is also constructed as a responsible Muslim citizen. The drawing depicts a Muslim family – recognizably dressed as such – in a domestic setting. The parents are watching television, while the children are reading a book. The text that accompanies the image reads: “The number one function of the family is to provide education for children so that they can later become faithful people who are useful to the society, the nation, and the state.” This image points at the obligation of parents to actively teach and instill in their children good Islamic values – and not be self-centered and watch television – so that the future of the nation is safe in the hands of the next generation of Muslim citizens. We can read these good values as good Islamic values when considering that it is in *Wonderful Family* a specific family that is imagined to safeguard the nation’s future, namely *keluarga sakinah*. This is a family based on the Islamic ‘sakinah, mawadah wa rahmah’ as it is described in Surat Ar-Rum: 21. In Takariawan own words, the *keluarga sakinah* is a family “filled with harmony and happiness, where there is no violence or destruction [...] and that is blessed and protected by Allah.” (*Wonderful Family* 2012: 1; 7)

More interesting than the direct disciplinary discourse is the indirect mode of governance that is also at work in the book. This mode operates through technologies of the self. *Wonderful Family* promotes at least two sets of technologies that assist self-helpers to improve the quality of (family) life. These are (1) technologies that work to neutralize regional and ethnic differences and (2) technologies of gratitude and positivity. Through these technologies, readers are encouraged and skilled to manage the problems (Figure 7) they encounter in trying to achieve and preserve a *keluarga sakinah*.

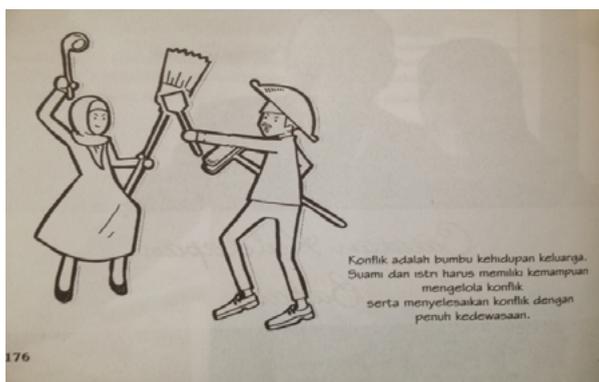


Figure 7: “Family conflicts are part of life. Husbands and wives should have the skills to manage conflicts and resolve problems in a mature way.” (*Wonderful Family*: 176)

Before discussing these technologies, it is important to note that in *Wonderful Family* these technologies – promoted to readers as self-help tools – are imbued with authority through the construction of the author-as-expert. Different tactics are used to construct the author as an expert. First, Takariawan repeatedly uses the rhetorical device of the personal narrative to frame himself as an expert on family life. On the first pages, Takariawan shares that he has been married for twenty years and that he hopes that this experience will help others to reach his state of happiness (*Wonderful Family*: viii). Takariawan often mentions his own twenty-year milestone as evidence of the success of his methods (e.g. see pages: viii-ix; xi-xvi; 71). Takariawan’s expertise is confirmed through the use of photographs. Each chapter of *Wonderful Family* starts with a photo spread that depicts Takariawan with his own family and that attests to his family skills and happiness (Figures 8-11). Takariawan also uses other stories than his own as examples. These are often stories that he knows through his work as a counselor for the Jogja Family Center and that construct him not only as a personal expert, but also as a professional expert (e.g. see pages: 54; 57; 91-92; 103; 129; 132; 133). In contrast to the construction of the author-as-expert, the reader is framed as unknowing through the belittling tone of the book and the almost childlike aesthetics (Figures 5-7).



Figures 8-11: happy family pictures of the author with his wife and child

The first set of technologies consists of what I call ‘technologies that neutralize regional and ethnic differences’. Indonesia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country that acknowledges six different religions, that is home to over a thousand distinct ethnic groups, and that lists more than seven hundred languages (Aspinall 2010). Because of this sheer diversity, the chance of finding a partner with a different ethnic and cultural background is high. And since Muslims often find their partners through arranged marriages, problems might be encountered when they move in together after the wedding ceremony.

It is here that *Wonderful Family* offers help. Despite there being many problems one might encounter at the start of a marriage – especially in a marriage in which the partners barely know each other – *Wonderful Family* focuses almost exclusively on problems that are assumedly caused by the different ethnic backgrounds of both partners. Chapter 6, which is dedicated to these problems, opens with the following fictional story of Narti and Hakam:

Narti is very surprised by the temperament of Hakam, the man she just married. Narti, who was born in a very Javanese cultural setting, was raised by a family that payed close attention to Javanese etiquettes. Speaking softly in *Kromo Inggil*, she does not use direct language to express herself, but instead relies on subtle symbolic expressions.

Hakam on the other hand was born and raised in Sulawesi and is thus very Sulawesian. Hakam is used to saying everything as it is. Hence, he does not use symbolic expressions to make his desires known (*Wonderful Family*: 120).

In this introduction Narti and Hakam’s different communicative patterns are essentialistically linked to their ethnicity. And as the story continues this becomes a problem for these newlyweds:

Every morning Narti is shocked by the way Hakam orders her to do things: “Make me tea!”; “Make me fried rice!”, Hakam commands.

Narti tried to be patient and accept the situation, but after a few months she cannot take it anymore. “In the house where I grew up, no one talks to the other person like this”, Narti says. “I am your wife. It is okay to ask me something, but when you do, please say ‘please’”. “Please, could you make me some tea, honey? [...] And try to be more subtle: what a delicious tea you made me honey, I know you made it with love, would you like to make me tea this morning, my love?”

But Hakam becomes angry when he hears what Narti says. He feels that she offends him because of his ethnic background. He shouts: "That is how you Javanese do it! I am from Sulawesi, I cannot 'Javanize' myself, this is who I am". With an emotional voice Narti replies: "That is how you do it in Sulawesi, but I am Javanese, I cannot become someone from Sulawesi" (*Wonderful Family*: 120-121).

Hence, the story ends in an unproductive situation. Hakam and Narti cannot move forward: their different ethnic backgrounds are at the core of their conflict and neither of them is capable of solving the situation. Before offering self-helpers the tools to overcome problems of this kind, Takariawan first emphasizes how regional culture matters:

Regional culture shapes a person's communication patterns. It greatly affects our character and temperament. Therefore, Indonesians are different from Arabs and [...] batak are different from Javanese (*Wonderful Family*: 124).

But, as he advises:

It is not productive nor important to say "I'm Javanese, Batakese, Bugis, Dayak, Sundanese, Ambonese, Madurese". Husband and wife form an unity in a holy marriage. Therefore, it is irrelevant to point at different ethnic backgrounds. There is no need to Javanize someone from Sulawesi and the other way around. Differences are good, but what we need are attempts to better understand each other and the skills to adjust to the partner. (*Wonderful Family*: 121)

In *Wonderful Family*, ethnic differences are constructed as the main source of conflicts between husband and wife (for more examples see *Wonderful Family*: 122-123). But, as can be read from the last quote, ethnicity may never be the source of conflict in a marriage. To neutralize ethnic differences and thus prevent conflicts between husband and wife, Takariawan offers readers specific self-help tools. These can be subsumed as tools of 'multicultural immersion and interaction'. These tools claim that we can understand each other better when we keenly try to understand each other's perspectives. As Takariawan explains:

We must actively attempt to meet, interact, and talk to people with other ethnic and cultural backgrounds to understand their perspective. Our communicative map and skills will then fuse with theirs, our skills will be enriched and we will develop new habits for

interaction with others and ultimately our marriage and family life will benefit from it (*Wonderful Family*: 125).

To improve multicultural communication, *Wonderful Family* offers readers a number of techniques: know and be aware of the topics that might be sensitive or offensive to the person that has a different ethnic background; be empathetic and be a good listener; pay attention to non-verbal language, because in some regions these are of high significance; in any case convey your message subtly and kindly; select the right place, atmosphere, and moment for interaction (*Wonderful Family*: 155-159).

The harmonious keluarga sakinah that the reader is supposed to achieve through these tips has broader significance in Indonesia today. For more than a decade, Indonesia has had a reputation of being afflicted by serious ethnic and communal conflict. Anti-Chinese riots for instance accompanied the protests that helped to bring down President Suharto, while in the early years of the transition to democracy there were grim episodes of ethnic violence in many provinces. In Kalimantan, ethnic Madurese settlers were killed and driven from their homes; communal wars took place in Maluku and Central Sulawesi, and there was violence associated with ethno-nationalist mobilization in Aceh and Papua. In this context, *Wonderful Family* promotes technologies of the self through which people cannot only improve their family life, but that simultaneously encourage people to become aware of, and deal with, ethnic and regional differences. The family skills promoted in the book thus function in a larger project of maintaining social stability and preventing new conflicts.

The social-conscious self that is here promoted differs significantly from the self that is promoted in the American self-help books that were studied by Heidi Marie Rimke (2010) and Eva Illouz (2008). Rimke (2010) writes that (American) self-help literature "exalts the individual over the social" (62); "promotes [...] the idea that a good citizen cares best for himself by evading or denying social relations" (61); and "undermine[s] collective formations and the essential interdependencies of selves" (70). Rimke sees these characteristics as consistent with "the political rationalities promoted in advanced liberal societies" (62). In a similar vein, Eva Illouz (2008) observes that (American) self-help creates a self "that has withdrawn inside its own empty shell" (2). Self-help "has made us abandon the great realms of citizenship and politics and cannot provide us with an intelligible way of linking the private self to the public sphere, because it has emptied the self of its communal and political content, replacing this content with a narcissistic self-concern." (Ibidem) While *Wonderful Family* promotes self-concern, the self that is promoted in the book is not

the “hyper-individualistic” self (Rimke 2010: 61) that Rimke and Illouz identify in American self-help. Rather, it is a socially concerned self that actively negotiates cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. This observation is both confirmed and contested when we look at the second set of technologies that is promoted in *Wonderful Family*.

While ethnic and regional differences are considered to be the main source of conflict for newlyweds, economic insecurity is regarded as a threat to the family at a later stage. To help out, the book promotes ‘technologies of gratitude and positivity’. These technologies encourage people to adopt a specific attitude that is supposed to help them deal with a precarious financial situation. Takariawan introduces the topic of economic precarity with a personal anecdote:

A friend once asked me the question: “What is the relation between financial conditions and problems within the family?” This friend had just told me a number of stories about families that were ruined by their poor economic conditions. “I’ve almost come to the conclusion that poor economic conditions of a family will lead to many problems within that family”, this friend said (*Wonderful Family*: 184).

To which the writer responded:

I have never done a survey on this, so I do not have data to connect economic conditions to the well being of the family. But my answer is: it [the financial situation] is a technicality; a fact. However, there are things that I think are non-technical, namely the way of looking at the economic problems within the family and one’s attitude to life (*Wonderful Family*: 184).

In this introductory anecdote the financial situation of a person is thus constructed as a fact and a technicality – as something beyond one’s control. As we shall see, this masks the contradictions and inequalities of capitalism. And while the financial situation of a person is framed as something that is beyond someone’s control, people’s attitude is considered to be something that can be controlled and changed. In *Wonderful Family* this attitude is the key through which to deal with economic precarity. As the book claims, people should:

Not just try to improve the financial reality of their family, but rather their attitude in the face of their economic reality. [People should] also do this when the economy is in decline (*Wonderful Family*: 191, my italics).

The attitude through which people can supposedly deal with poor living conditions is an attitude that is marked by positivity, hard work, and gratitude. In her study of American self-help books, Martha Cheng (2008) also observed the promotion of a positive and hard-working attitude. Cheng saw these as “traditional American values” (Cheng 2008: 2). These values and mentalities – of which their exclusive American-ness is debatable – can thus also be found in Indonesian self-help. As we shall see, ‘gratitude’, which is not mentioned in Cheng’s (2008), Illouz’ (2008) and Rimke’s (2010) studies of American self-help, is constructed as an ‘Islamic mentality’. In *Wonderful Family* three rhetoric strategies are mobilized to encourage readers to adopt this positive, hard-working, and grateful mentality: (1) motivational stories, (2) cautionary phrases, and (3) religious citations.

First, *Wonderful Family* offers seven short motivational life stories that should inspire and motivate readers to be(come) positive, assertive, and grateful. All stories are about people who are physically or mentally disabled. Let me cite two examples here:

Hee Ah Lee was born in South Korea in 1985 with lobster claw syndrome. Both his hands only have two fingers in the shape of a lobster. In addition, he has no lower legs. And even more depressing: he has a mental disability. Through a very hard struggle that was full of tears, he learned how to play piano. Sometimes he needs one year to learn how to play a song. In fact, to play a Chopin-song, he had to practice about five to ten hours everyday for five years. For only one song! Now he is invited to perform all over the world, with only two fingers on each hand. Disability did not stop him from achieving world-wide success (*Wonderful Family*: 186).

Hirota Ootake was born in Japan in 1976 with tetra-amelia syndrome, which is characterized by the absence of all four limbs. However, Oto learned to write by using his shoulder, he ran the school marathon and he even became a member of the school’s basketball team. Oto’s positive attitude in life made him happy and successful. [...] Oto now is a successful motivational speaker, and his *No One is Perfect* is a bestselling book (*Wonderful Family*: 187-188).

What we see in these stories is that unchangeable ‘facts’, namely people’s mental and physical disabilities (i.e. something that *happened* to them and that is largely beyond their control) are mobilized to demonstrate how despite these ‘technicalities’ one can still become happy and successful in life – if only you have the right mentality. The stories communicate that with a positive attitude and hard work there are no obstacles to achieve success and happiness, which should here

inspire people who have to deal with poor economic conditions.

By *comparing* the ‘facts’ of disabilities and economic precarity, the stories encourage readers to put things in perspective: ‘you should not complain about money, as there are people in a seemingly worse situation’. By *aligning* disabilities and a poor living condition, the latter is framed as something that is also beyond one’s control; that with bad luck happens to you, and that you should accept and just try to make the best of. Such a framing of economic precarity masks the contradictions and inequalities of capitalism while it ignores more structural causes for the uneven spread of wealth.

At the same time, the stories encourage people to overcome their precarious situation by means of their own efforts. The stories show readers that having limited means is merely a technicality, which should not stop you from working hard for happiness and success. Central to these stories thus is a neoliberal logic: social risks (i.e. poverty, unemployment) are not responsibilities of the state. Instead people themselves are responsible for their own happiness. Rimke (2010: 62) has observed the same neoliberal sensibilities in American self-help books.

These seven motivational stories are accompanied by cautionary phrases that try to convince people that it is however not money that leads to more happiness. These phrases make use of a generalizing rhetoric (e.g. ‘there are many people’, ‘everybody knows that’) to make their point. As we can for instance read:

Happiness is not only related to money. Many families have abundant funds, have great living facilities, they even experience excess, but often their family falls apart. There are many rich people who experience anxiety and depression. At the same time, there are many poor people who are able to feel joy in the midst of the difficulties of everyday life (*Wonderful Family*: 186).

Central to *Wonderful Family* then is a seemingly odd contradiction. The book first constructs a discourse that defines people in a poor economic situation as unsuccessful and unhappy. To find happiness and success, readers are through the motivational stories encouraged to deal with and overcome their precarious financial situation by means of their own efforts. Yet at the same time, the book constructs a discourse in which it is not financial security that leads to more happiness.

The particularities of the attitude promoted in the book resolve this contradiction. As we can read from the quote below, it is not money that makes one happy, but the right mentality – a mentality that is here exclusively connected to Islam:

Prophet Muhammad teaches us about a positive attitude in life. Notice for instance the Prophet's expression: "It is amazing, the affairs of the faithful, basically everything that happens to them is good for them. This applies only to the religious. When they are fortunate and reach a state of happiness they are grateful, which makes them better people. But when misery hits them, they are patient, which also makes them better people". Gratitude and patience thus define the ways of the Prophet. He shows us the importance of approaching life with a positive attitude and to avoid negative thinking. (*Wonderful Family*: 190-191)

The positive and grateful 'religious' mentality promoted here helps people to be happy in all possible scenarios. When they are (financially) fortunate they should be thankful, and when they are (financially) unfortunate they should be patient. And as observed in the motivational stories: when they are (financially) unfortunate and unhappy about it, a positive outlook should prompt them to work harder and achieve the desired happiness.

At the present moment in which Indonesia is rapidly modernizing, such a mentality is highly convenient to the authorities. Although the Indonesian economy is currently booming, the income gap between rich and poor is widening (Priyambodo 2013; Fabi 2013). In 2012 Indonesia measured a growth of 6,3 percent, making Indonesia the second fastest growing economy after China (Sinaga 2012; Hussain 2013). More people are finding jobs and inflation has been kept stable, but the rich are still receiving a (much) greater proportion of the wealth in comparison with the poor and the middle class (Sinaga 2012). Economics and analysts fear that the growing divide between the very rich and the very poor may lead to tensions, or even worse, conflict. And as Andre Sinaga writes: "especially [in a] diverse nation such as Indonesia, groups and individuals may associate particular ethnic groups with wealth and then target them during times of discontent, as we saw in 1998." (Sinaga 2012)

In this context, *Wonderful Family* not only uncritically ignores structural and systematic causes for poverty by framing it as a fact or technicality. But it also promotes a mentality that is imagined to keep people on both sides of the economic divide happy – and thus calm about financial inequalities. This contests the construction of the social-conscious self that I observed earlier. This social-conscious self is now cast as ambiguous. While engagement with ethnic differences is encouraged, financial inequality is rendered irrelevant – although this is in itself ambiguous since in *Wonderful Family* financial success also matters.

The modern Muslim selves that are promoted in *Wonderful Family* then form the basis for the construction of an ideal Muslim citizen-subject that is responsible, hard

working, positive, grateful, responsive to social and ethnic differences when this helps to maintain the order, and unresponsive to differences when this threatens to disturb the social order. Technologies that neutralize ethnic differences and technologies of gratitude and positivity thus both seek to maintain social order and harmony.

Significantly, both sets of technologies locate responsibility for social order in the individual domain – and specifically in the domain of the family, as the book consistently turns social problems into problems of self-, or family-care. *Wonderful Family's* rhetoric is in this way reminiscent of New Order discourse. During the New Order the state relied on the ideological control of the family for implementing its economic and social agendas (cf. Brenner 1999: 14). The family was deployed to define agendas for modernization – or *pembangunan* (development), the buzzword of the state back then (Brenner 1999: 16). The affairs of the family were defined as public rather than private or intimate matters, making the family the ground upon which ideological contests over the nation's future were waged (Brenner 1999: 16). The governmental technologies in *Wonderful Family* indicate a continuation rather than an ending of this mode of governance.

***Rasullulah's Business School*: transforming Muhammad into a modern entrepreneur**

In the last decade, Islamic corporate training seminars and business self-help books have become incredibly popular, especially among Indonesia's aspiring middle class (cf. Hoesterey 2012). *Rasullulah's Business School* (2011), is very much part of this trend. The book – the title of which translates as 'The Prophet's Business School' – is aimed at (prospective) entrepreneurs. It promises to teach you: "(1) how to transform poorness into wealth and create a brave pious mind; (2) how to build a business empire worth billions with zero capital, just like Prophet Muhammad; and (3) how to become a Muslim billionaire like the Prophet" (as advertised on the book's cover – Figure 12).

The two writers of *Rasullulah's Business School* both have scholarly credentials. Laode Masihu Kamaluddin (b. 1949, Wakatobi) is a professor in economics who is affiliated with Universitas Unhalu, Universitas Islam Bandung, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. In the past few years he has written several successful entrepreneurial self-help books, such as *Business Secrets from the Prophet* (2007) and *The Best Life* (2011). The other author, Abdollah 'Richmoslem' (b. 1978,

Bangetayu Wetan) has been given the honorable title of 'Ustadz', which refers to a religious teacher. 'Ustadz Rich' as he calls himself, works as a motivator for young businessman and owns his own business agency 'Richmoslem Networking Group', through which he is involved in publishing, printing, distribution, and property management. As stated on the blurb of the book, Ustadz Rich's 'big dream' is to 'MAKE MUSLIMS ULTRARICH, but pious' (his emphasis).

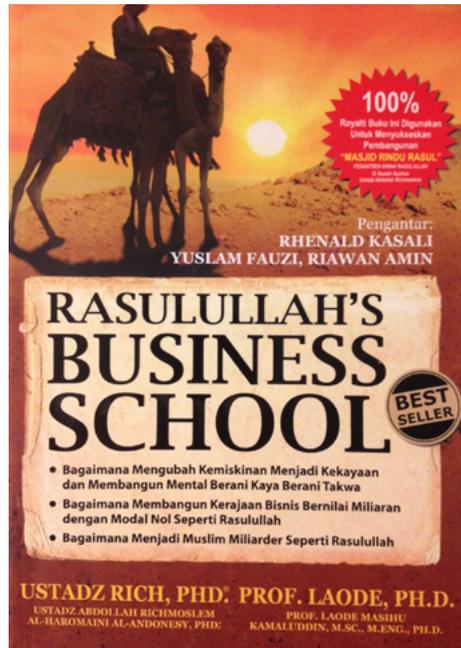


Figure 12: *Rasullulah's Business School* (2011)

The authors' educational credentials are touted on the book's cover (figure 12), which states that the book is written by 'Prof. Laode, M.Sc., M.Eng., Ph.D.' and 'Ustadz Rich, Ph.D.' In this way the writers are constructed as knowledgeable experts, while the book is endowed with scientific authority. *Rasullulah's Business School* is nevertheless written in an accesible style and is aimed at a broad audience. The book presents a 'closed system' (Starker 2002), meaning that it contains its own philosophy and does not encourage the reader to combine it with other other perspectives.

As the book's title 'The Prophet's Business School' suggests, the life and lessons of Prophet Muhammad are central to the entreneural advice that the book offers. It is the legacy of Muhammed that here must inspire, help, and motivate readers on their way to wealth. But what kind of life history; what kind of legacy of Muhammad

is created here? And in what ways is the prophetic tradition summoned for business advice? How is a seventh century Prophet transformed into an example for entrepreneurs in Indonesia today? And how does the desire for material abundance go together with being a pious Muslim?

In the following analysis, I suggest that *Rasullulah's Business School* mobilizes the Prophet's legacy in ways that turn him into an ideal modern and moral Muslim subject. This subject position forms the base for the promotion of a kind of citizenship that matches with the aspirational piety and consumerist longings of today's Muslim middle class (cf. Heryanto 1999: 173). But before constructing this subject, the book first clears the ground by resolving two sets of assumed contradictions that may form obstacles for the coming-into-being of this subject. The book here orchestrates a vision in which the desire for wealth and Islamic piety not only go together, but in which they also strengthen each other. Simultaneously, the seemingly conflicting notions of a self-enterprising subject ('you determine your own fate') and an almighty God ('Allah determines your fate') are matched. To build this vision, the book first constructs a discourse in which money improves both the quality of life, and the quality of faith, as we read:

It is fair to say that money will determine one's life quality. [Also] money can produce true blessings when it is earned and spent properly. For instance when it is used for something good, to build a mosque, to help the poor or the needy, or anything else that can improve the quality of our faith and that of others [...] Money would then be something like sugar, for which ants are always searching and around which they all gather. In a similar vein, we will be loved by everybody. (4)

As can be read from this passage, money – when spent in 'the right way' – can strengthen one's faith. And for the book, spending money in the right way means spending the money to 'worship Allah' (*beribadah Allah*). As Laode and Rich explain, readers can worship Allah through sharing their fortune. To persuade readers of their perspective, the authors look for authority in sources such as the Quran and the hadith (reports on the life and actions of Muhammad):

The prophet says: "Allah gives us fortune for a purpose: as a means to worship Him." A lot of people who are rich forget that, they only think of themselves. (13)

Al-Quran explains to us that fortune has to be divided and should not to be kept only for oneself. So worship means sharing with others. And the richer a person is, the better the quality of his worship should be. (14)

We must remember the spirit of the Prophet “eat when hungry and stop before you are full”. We should not be greedy. Because when we are greedy we disrespect Allah. [...] Money must be used as something to bless our friends and relatives with. In this way, we will come closer to Allah. We must be rich both materially and spiritually. (14)

While arguing that spending and sharing money helps readers to improve their life while getting closer to Allah, the book also connects the longing for wealth to respecting and recognizing Allah:

Allah does not ask anything of us, He does not ask of us to be rich. But we ask him. Because God is the provider of fortune. Allah once said aloud: “I do not want the slightest fortune from anyone. I do not want anyone to give me something to eat. I am the Supreme Provider of Sustenance, that is my power.” That is why we must ask Allah for fortune. As much as possible if necessary. Do not be shy. Because Allah is the one who will give us fortune, not others. If you do not pray and do not ask for it, you feel that you do not need Him. Do not become cocky! How arrogant is that? Be rich in God’s provision. (12)

Rasullulah’s Business School here links the desire for wealth to acknowledging the position of Allah – something that is of course crucial to the practice of Islam. The book suggests that if you do not ask Allah for wealth, you deny his power and disrespect his position. That ‘wealth’ is here material wealth, and not food or ‘sustenance’, is stressed when the writers continue:

Don’t be content with being poor. Being poor is difficult and not nice. When you are poor it is easier to just fall into disbelief; to stop believing in Allah. (12)

What we can witness in the above-cited excerpts is that the book makes (the desire for) wealth and the aspiration for piety perfectly compatible. Money can be used to enhance the quality of one’s faith (see the first quote), while being poor endangers the quality of one’s faith (see the last quote). Simultaneously, one does not have to be shy or ashamed about desiring and asking for more wealth, even ‘as much as possible’ (12), since it is through expressing this wish and involving Allah in this wish, that one respects Him and His power (see the penultimate quote). The book here counters the advice that *Wonderful Family* gives readers. As we have seen, *Wonderful Family* does not see money as determining the quality of life or faith. *Wonderful Family* states that “happiness is not only related to money” (186);

attempts to keep people on both sides on the rich-poor divide happy; and it advises poor people to be patient. By contrast, *Rasullulah's Business School* stimulates the desire for wealth and advises people not "to be content with being poor." (12)

While uniting Muslim piety and (the desire for) wealth, the book also pairs the seemingly conflicting notions of a self-enterprising subject and an almighty God. From the previous it may seem that when Allah is the sole provider of fortune, it is Allah who determines people's fate – and all people have to do is ask and wait. But the book is quick to counter this idea. It here again looks to the Quran for inspiration, as the authors cite: "Allah will not change the fate of people if they do not want to change their destiny (QS Al-Israa' [17]: 30)." (98) And elsewhere the book states: "Fortune is appointed by God [...], but we need to be willing to take action and pick it up. If we are willing, then Allah will certainly give, rest assured. [...] Go take it!" (16) The book thus stresses that people need to take action and responsibility. And when they do so, Allah will bless them with fortune. In this way the book combines the two seemingly incongruent notions of an almighty God and a self-enterprising subject.

The seamless blend of two apparently contradictory sets of ideas clears the ground for the construction of a moral and modern subject that matches with the aspirational piety and consumerist longings of Indonesia's Muslim middle class. This subject is constructed through a fourteen-step plan that the book offers to its readers. This plan should help (prospective) entrepreneurs to build a business that is as successful as that of Prophet Muhammad. As we shall see, this plan, titled "14 steps to build a business empire like Rasullulah" (113-212), selectively reconstructs the life of Muhammad and mobilizes this remodelled legacy to give readers business advice.

The life of Muhammad (c. 570–622) is generally divided into two parts, namely the period before and the period after declaring the prophecy. The book mainly looks for inspiration in the period before Muhammad became the Prophet. Before coining its fourteen-step plan, the book gives a short overview of the early life of Muhammad. This brief biography largely corresponds with twentieth and twenty-first century scholarship on the life of Muhammad (e.g. Conrad 1987; Armstrong 1992; Rogerson 2003).

Muhammad was born in Mecca and belonged to the Banu Hashim clan, which was part of the Quaraish tribe. Roughly six months before Muhammad was born, his father Abdullah died. After he was born, Muhammad was sent to the desert to live with a Bedouin family, as was Islamic custom at that time. He stayed there until he was between two and four years old. When Muhammad was six, he lost his mother

to sickness and was fully orphaned. His grandfather Abd al-Muttalib took him under his wings, but passed away when Muhammed was eight. Muhammad then came under the guardianship of his uncle Abu Talib, one of the leaders of the Banu Hashim clan. During his teen years, Muhammad joined his uncle on trading trips to Syria where he gained experience in commercial trade (Rogerson 2003: viii-x; *Rasullulah's Business School*: 109-110). Little is known of Muhammad's life during the later years of his youth, and it is difficult to separate history from legend as the documentation on the period is fragmented (Watt 1974; 2013: 8). What historians agree upon is that Muhammad became a merchant and that because of his honest character he earned the nickname 'Al-Amiin' (the trustworthy). Muhammad's good reputation also led to a marriage proposal from the wealthy widow Khadija whom he married at the age of twenty-five (Rogerson 2003: viii-x; *Rasullulah's Business School*: 109-110).

After providing this brief biographical note, *Rasullulah's Business School* picks up specific fragments from Muhammad's life story and mobilizes them in its step plan. Through interpreting and retelling Muhammad's life in the global language of corporate management and psychology, this step plan turns the Prophet into a modern and moral businessman; the ultimate example for Muslim entrepreneurs in Indonesia today. The ideal entrepreneur that is constructed in this way is a perfect self-governing subject.

According to the fourteen-step plan, the ideal entrepreneur is a 'mental entrepreneur', and Muhammad can be seen as one. As the introduction to the plan reads:

What is important is how of Muhammad became rich. He departed from zero, from hard work, from his belief [...] and built his business empire. [...] Muhammad's wealth came not because of his heritage [...] But it came from his mentality, he was what is in the modern world now called a "mental entrepreneur". What is a mental entrepreneur? A mental entrepreneur "goes-and-creates" (meng-create). He uses everything in himself and his enviroment to his benefit. [...] That is the lesson that we can learn from Prophet Muhammad. (110)

In this passage, the ways of Muhammad are interpreted and made contemporary by fitting them into the mold of the 'mental entrepreneur', a buzzword stemming from corporate business management. 'The mental entrepreneur' can become successful without start-up capital or seeds, indicating that with the right skills and the rights mentality everybody can become a succesful (and rich) entrepreneur. This narrative

that claims that everybody who has the right mentality and is willing to work hard 'can make it' bears close similarities to the American Dream. As mentioned earlier, Cheng (2008) sees these values as hard-wired in American self-help (Cheng 2008: 2). As we shall see, *Rasullulah's Business School* constructs a similar 'from rags to riches' narrative, but bases this narrative in the Islam.

The first step of the plan "Learn to value the school of nature" (121) shows readers how Muhammad as toddler already acted like a mental entrepreneur and used his environment to his advantage. As the book recounts this period:

During four years of his childhood, Muhammad lived in the middle of the Sahara desert [...] In such a natural environment, Muhammad developed a strong body and high-stamina. Meanwhile he became smooth-tongued, smart-minded, and skillful in riding horses. (123)

The strong and healthy body of Muhammad, which he developed during childhood, helped him gain intelligence in the form of 'physical intelligence', or what we now are familiar with as 'Physical Quotient' (PQ). (123)

Muhammad's toddler-years are here cast in the light of global psychology. Subsequently, the book refers to scientific research to further convince readers of the value of PQ:

A survey, conducted in Canada, with more than 500 students said that students who spend extra time each day in the gym to work out are better in doing their tests than the less active exercisers. [...] In her book *Smart Moves: why learning is not all in your head*, Carla Hannaford explains that movement is directly beneficial to the nervous system. Muscle activity, especially activity that stimulates the production of coordinated neurephrin, a natural substance that stimulates the growth of nerve cells, helps to increase the number of neural connections in the brain. (123)

Muhammad as a child was always active [...] it turned him into a strong young man with great intelligence (124)

Through making Muhammad an example of a healthy PQ, the book here tries to motivate readers to exercise. The book suggests that through a healthy body readers will improve their PQ, and hence their intelligence – an important asset if one wants to become a successful entrepreneur. Individuals are here thus addressed on the assumption that they want to be healthy, something that is beneficial to the

functioning of the social body. Whereas the first step focuses on a strong active body as the basis for a sharp mind, the other steps of the plan help readers cultivate the abilities and attitude that should set them on the road to success. Steps 2, 3 and 4 for instance stimulate the construction of an independent, hard-working, and patient subject. “Step 2: learn to live independently from an early age” for example makes self-reliance a crucial condition for becoming a successful entrepreneur, as the writers claim:

Of all creatures, Allah gave humans the trust to lead this world. But how can humans be capable of managing the earth when they are still dependent on other things than their own authority? How can men rule the world without an independent attitude? (125)

‘Independence’ for the book is not only an attitude, but also a state of being. The book particularly motivates people to be their own boss:

In the world of entrepreneurs, self-reliance is an absolute must-have. When an entrepreneur is facing problems, he should respond quickly and take appropriate decisions. At that moment no one else can be relied upon but yourself as *your own boss*. An entrepreneur should thus always think of creative ways to manage everything. [...] Like on a plantation, independence is the fertile ground that allows beautiful things like determination, creativity, and visionary people, to grow. (128, my emphasis)

While stressing that people should be(come) independent in every sense of the word, the book sees creativity and quick decision-making as the results of this attitude. Muhammad provides both an example and the evidence of the success of independent and creative thinking, as we read:

Muhammad had to become independent at an early age because he lost both his parents when he was young. While other children were still being hugged by their loving parents, Muhammad fought the hard challenges of life. But he never gave up and learned to solve problems with clear solutions. (132)

When Muhammad was only twelve years old he went to Syria on a businessstrip. With that experience, he grew into an independent person. [...] He learned to make difficult decisions. What provides evidence of this, is the way Muhammed dealt with things at the moment his uncle went bankrupt. Muhammad did not dissolve in sadness and pain. Instead, he deftly took an immediate decision. He looked for an alternative to bankruptcy. Armed with experience and skills in trading, he began selling merchandise to Mecca’s wealthy merchants. Of course, Muhammad was adept to trade according to this model, because, when he was younger he already sold things to Muslims who went on

the *hadj*. Exactly these experiences became the capital on which the further development of the entrepreneurial spirit of Muhammad was based. (133)

Rasullulah's Business School here summons this story about Muhammad to prove the success of the independent attitude that the book promotes. And in this example it is specifically an assertive, creative, positive, and pro-active mindset that is constructed as effective.

Becoming an independent entrepreneur also requires leadership skills (135). The third step "Perfectionize your leadership qualities" and the fourth step "Appreciate the process" teach readers how to develop these leadership skills. The book particularly tries to convince readers to work hard, as "being a true leader requires hard work" (139):

Working time for an entrepreneur is not determined regular working hours. [...] According to a belief, although Muhammad had his eyes closed while sleeping, his heart was always open. Even during his sleep he would contemplate. His mind was always working, thinking, evaluating, and designing the future of His people. For Muhammad, there was no time limit for thinking of His people. (140)

As can be read from this passage, in addition to working hard, a good leader must always feel responsible for his or her people. Hard work and responsibility are thus for the book important qualities of the ideal entrepreneur.

And although the book presents the plan as a "recipe for success" (120), readers should not expect immediate change as "everything that exists must go through a process" (143). The book stresses that the process itself already teaches you a lot, and that therefore one should never give up. Muhammad for instance unknowingly laid the base for his excellent leadership when he was young:

When he was young, Muhammad lived in poverty. He could only buy clothes once a year. For each year, he only had one outfit. [...] His uncle, who raised him, was also not a very rich man.

To take the load of his uncle, young Muhammad started herding goats. He learned a few lessons from herding goats. [...] Herding goats can cultivate an attitude of gentleness, patience, and humility. Therefore it is not surprising that Muhammad came to be known as a humble person. [...] This lesson was very important to him as an adult. Herding goats taught him how to lead people, how to manage them, and how to organize their lives. (145-146)

Rasullulah's Business School here shows readers that they can find a lesson in everything. As observed so far, a healthy body in combination with an independent, assertive, hard working, and responsible attitude are important to become a 'mental entrepreneur'. These are also qualities of an ideal self-governing subject. And while the first half of the step plan looks inward, the second half of the plan looks outward, as it tries to govern one's attitude towards other people.

The eighth step "Be loyal" and the twelfth step "Always try to empathize with others" attempt to persuade readers that a loyal and empathetic attitude towards others is crucial for the success of one's business. As Laode and Rich write:

In business, trust, honesty and loyalty form the greatest capital. (169)

To achieve success, attitude is as important as ability. Our attitude will determine the altitude of our position. If we want others to understand us, then we have to understand them as well. The benchmark in interacting with others is that if we behave well, others will also be nice to us. If we please others, then others will please us in return. (191)

After these statements, the book recounts several stories about Muhammad. Through these stories the book gives readers specific cues on how they can achieve 'the right' attitude. As can be read from the following two extracts, in their interaction with others, readers should try to be: honest about what they sell, trustworthy, friendly, and outgoing:

Young Muhammad sold goods to other merchants. [...] When his goods were defect, he never tried to hide it. This became a sort of obligation to him. Also, he never sold goods on unfair prices. Muhammad's honesty took him to the pinnacle of success in the world of commerce. [...] And precisely because of his honesty a lot of people wanted to be his agent. (170)

Muhammad always tried to make people happy. Therefore many people wanted to be friends with him. His friendly and outgoing personality made him a success in the world of traders. Every time he engaged in trade, he always got good profits. And he did not take a single dime from the profits before his agents allowed it. Because of his honesty and friendliness he made rich and powerful friends. (194)

In these stories a loyal, social and empathetic attitude is rewarded with the growth of a network ("a lot of people wanted to be his agent"; "he made rich and powerful friends"). The eleventh step "Have an egalitarian attitude and build a network" goes

further into building a network – which is considered an important condition for developing a successful business (188). The plan here specifically persuades people to adopt an “egalitarian mindset” (185), which according to the book helps to build up a strong network. For this egalitarian attitude, Muhammad is “the most ideal figure to look at” (188):

Muhammad was known as a person who had many friends. His relations were not only located in Mecca, but also outside Mecca. Among his mixture of friends, Muhammad did not practice any kind of favoritism. He made everyone feel special. He was known for being egalitarian. He made friends with the young and the elderly, with the educated and uneducated, with commoners and rulers; and with black and white people. All without a difference. (188)

The egalitarian mindset that the book here promotes is then not only purportedly beneficial to growing a strong and diverse network, but also to social order and harmony in multi-cultural and multi-religious Indonesia (see also the analysis of *Wonderful Family*). *Rasullulah’s Business School* here thus challenges the socially withdrawn subject that is identified in American self-help books (Rimke 2010; Illouz 2008) and that was ambiguously present in *Wonderful Family*. *Rasullulah’s Business School* states that: “Helping each other, loving each other, and respecting each other is not just some duty, but has become a necessity today” (185). In the following story that attests to Muhammad’s egalitarian attitude, responsibility for social order is moved from the authorities to the individual:

When there are people who are oppressed, Muhammad appeared on the front to provide relief. One time, when Muhammad was young, the power of the leading clan in Mecca became weaker and this clan could no longer be able to guarantee the safety of the city’s residents. At that time, there was no court or police to prosecute people that did something wrong, and that in this way could ensure the security of people and their rights. When Muhammad saw this situation, he called out that sacred hearts cannot be silent about wrongdoings happening everywhere. Together with other residents, Muhammad took action and held a meeting. [...] The result was an oath, a commitment to prevent violence in Mecca. [Such actions] extended Muhammad’s network and increased his credibility. (189-190)

This example not only works to show that an egalitarian attitude can be beneficial to one’s network, but it also constructs Muhammad as a responsible and self-governing subject; someone who does not look to state institutions for assistance (there literally was no police or court), but who together with others took action to preserve

security and social harmony. Last but not least, a good Muslim mental entrepreneur sees Allah as an indispensable teammate. In the fourteenth and last step of the book, readers are encouraged to believe in the “God Factor” (205) – the idea that Allah supports you, and that when you do good Allah will bless you with fortune:

As human beings we certainly have weaknesses. Sometimes we predict that a business decision will bring us benefit, but then it leads to losses. Our weaknesses make us realize that we need God and that we need each other. Good teammates complete each other. Human life should be used to thank God. (205-206)

If we do things the best we can, of course Allah will bless us. We are His fellow worker in creating a better world. (209-210)

Rasullulah’s Business School here completes the circle as it comes back to the unity between an ‘almighty God’ and an ‘self-enterprising subject’ that it had constructed earlier.

To conclude, we have seen that *Rasullulah’s Business School* recounts and reconstructs Muhammad’s legacy in ways that turn him into an ideal moral and modern citizen-subject; that turn him into the ultimate example for Muslim entrepreneurs in Indonesia today. This appropriation and (re)interpretation of the prophetic tradition, here in the global language of corporate management and psychology, is not an exception. Ali Sultaan Ali Asani, Kamal Abdel-Malek, Annemarie Schimmel (1995), James Hoesterey (2012), and Anna Gade (2010) have also observed that representations of Prophet Muhammad are shifting and changing according to historical timeframes and contexts, as they write:

Now, under accelerating conditions of global capitalism and worldwide Islamic awakening, new types of texts circulate in regional context [...] [The] very understanding of the figure of the Prophet Muhammad himself and his life story may now be imagined entirely in terms of inspiring connection over distance and difference. (Gade 2010:272, cited in Hoesterey 2012: 40)

Muslims see their Prophet through a variety of lenses, and the role he plays [...] differs according to the perspective they choose to adopt. Portrayals of Muhammad [...] are strongly influenced by diverse interpretations of his status as well as local cultural and literary idioms. (Asani; Abdel-Malek and Schimmel 1995: 8)

The present portrayal of Muhammad as a mental entrepreneur – a modern and moral businessman – resonates with the aspirational piety and consumerist longings of today's Muslim middle class, as described by Ariel Heryanto (1999: 173). The subject that is constructed through this portrayal is a healthy, independent, hard-working, assertive, and social responsible citizen-subject. *Rasullullah's Business School* thus manages to transform Prophet Muhammad into a perfect self-enterprising subject that is fit to participate in a post-New Order Indonesia in which neoliberalism, as an optimizing technology, is increasingly present (Chandra 2011).

Twitografi Asma Nadia: governing Muslim girls

In simple language Asma Nadia helps us to understand ourselves, to understand how we can be a Muslim who knows Shari'ah and still be sociable loh [supel]. She is very cool, I have bought all her books (Pratiwi Mufliha, female, English language student – conversation with author, May 2012).

When asking Pratiwi (18), an English language student at UGM, about self-help books, she told me that she not only buys self-help books, but that she is also 'a devout asmanadian' (Pratiwi, May 4 2012). She explained that an asmanadian is a follower of Asma Nadia on Twitter.

Asma Nadia, who was born as Rosalba Asmarani in 1972 in Jakarta, is one of Indonesia's best-selling female authors. In the past ten years, Asma Nadia has published more than forty books, both fiction and non-fiction. She has won numerous national and regional awards. In 2000, 2001, and 2005 she earned the Best National Author award, while in 2008 she received the Anugrah IBF award for the best Islamic novelist. In addition to writing books, Asma Nadia is also involved in screenplay writing, has her own publishing company, and is a celebrated public speaker. She has repeatedly expressed her desire to empower and inspire her readers, mostly women, to make most of their lives. Her books are mainly targeted at fellow wives and housewives, but also increasingly at a younger generation of women.

Twitografi Asma Nadia (2011), which is the focus of study here, is aimed at this younger generation, i.e. girls in the age of 15-25. As the title suggests, the book is a 'Twittergraphy'. It contains a collection of inspirational tweets that Asma Nadia posted on her widely followed Twitter-account @asmanadia. From this account, which is currently followed by more than 135.000 people and which contains over 50.000 tweets, around 1400 tweets were selected for this book. These tweets are

grouped into topics such as ‘Muslim fashion’, ‘love, boyfriends, and marriage’, and ‘travelling Muslims’.

I choose focus on the book rather than on the (discussion on the) Twitter-page for two reasons. First, in the book Asma Nadia’s tweets are teamed with supplementary explanations, tips and religious citations; hence they are repackaged for the market as self-help. A focus on this repackaging helps to scrutinize the intersections between Islam, self-help, and capitalism. Second, in the ways that these loose tweets are selectively clustered into topics and are ordered into more or less coherent narratives, governmental politics are practiced. The book and the website nevertheless remain closely connected.

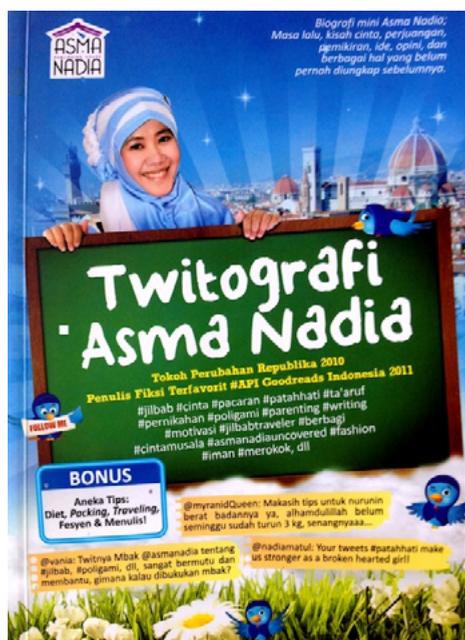


Figure 13: *Twitografi Asma Nadia* (2011)

Like the author of *Wonderful Family*, Asma Nadia is also explicitly constructed as an expert. The cover of the book (Figure 13) shows a veiled Asma Nadia. She is sitting on a cloud and holds up a blackboard that amongst others displays the title of her book. Asma Nadia is thus framed as the teacher while the book contains her lessons. The image also constructs Asma Nadia as a guru. The white and blue stripes that are beaming behind her, in combination with the grass/flowers at the bottom, and the blue sky/stars on top of the image, call to mind (Buddhist) guru iconography. The

cloud is drifting over a city in which a mosque is prominently present. Up on her cloud Asma Nadia is surrounded by veiled Twitter-birds. The cover here not only constructs Asma Nadia as a figure to (literally) look up to, but also as someone who, from an all-knowing bird's perspective, can look down at (Islamic) city life and tweet, i.e. advice, about it.

Twitografi Asma Nadia answers to worries young Muslim girls may have and to issues they assumedly encounter in their lives. Asma Nadia offers her advice from a personal perspective, sharing her own experiences with readers. The book has a mostly prescriptive (Starker 2002) style, it gives it advice (do's and don'ts) in the form of rules – that look like random tweets. In the following analysis, I propose that in the act of giving advice, a technology of normalization is at work. This technology turns problems into excuses that stand in the way of becoming a 'perfect' Muslim girl, i.e. someone who has fun, is self-confident, self-conscious, ambitious, fashionable, family-minded, cosmopolitan, and above all pious. In this way an idealized norm of conduct for Muslim girls is constructed. In *Twitografi Asma Nadia* this technology of normalization seeks to govern three domains: (1) girls' bodies, (2) girls' interpersonal and intimate relations, and (3) their relation to, and their mobility in, space.

The first part of the book is dedicated to fashion. Asma Nadia helps out with issues that are related to wearing a veil and offers her advice about other Muslim must-have items. The veil has earlier been discussed, among others, as "the ultimate symbol of Muslim otherness" (Moors 2007); as "a political statement of women, an active reappropriation of Islamic religiosity" (Göle 1996: 4), and as a popular fashion item (Jones 2007; Amrullah 2008). Veiling has among others been seen as "a way to affirm one's cultural identity" (Wagner 2012: 521), as an effort "to reconcile the opportunities for autonomy and choice offered by modern education with a heightened commitment to the profession of Islam" (Smith-Hefner 2007: 389), and as articulating "new prosperity, high cultural taste and cosmopolitan beauty that complement, and occasionally overtly substitute for, religious piety, self-restraint from worldly pleasure, or sexual chastity." (Heryanto 2010)

Among the multiplicity of meanings that has been ascribed to the veil, *Twitografi Asma Nadia* turns the veil – as well as other fashion items – into something through with girls can be governed. Via Asma Nadia's fashion advice, girls are encouraged to inflict certain actions (up)on their bodies, thereby turning their bodies into a site of governance. Dressing the body – and deciding to dress the body – in what according to the book is 'the right way', stimulates the construction of fashionable, pious, and seemingly autonomous female subjects.

A number of tactics are mobilized to encourage readers to follow the book's fashion advice and position themselves as this subject. To start, *Twitografi Asma Nadia* sums up the possible challenges that stand in the way of dressing in the right way. When Asma Nadia for instance discusses the wearing of the veil, a practice the book strongly encourages, we learn about the difficulties she herself faced when she was a teenager:

Deciding to wear the veil is not without challenges. There are challenges that we will have to face when we decide to wear a veil. Problems might arise from our family, school or work place. But is life not a challenge? (6)

I'm grateful to Allah that I pursued to veil. Although my mom was initially furious and I was almost kicked out of school. (7)

One thing I had to give up when I started veiling was swimming. I love swimming. However in 1988 there was no Muslim swimsuit like there is now, let alone a separate pool for women. (7)

I've been rejected by the mother of my best friend when I was in highschool, because her child came to me and asked me to explain about the veil. (11)

[...] despite its light weight, it [a long veil] can cause a headache and you get dizzy so fast. [...] (7)

I was the best (rank 1) of my class during secondary school, from second grade all the way to graduation. When I was in highschool, and just started wearing the veil, I however got a fail in my report card, because I could not wear the veil when doing sports. (11)

I was almost expelled from highschool because of being veiled - but in the end I did not get expelled because of the school fire (that happened around the time the decision had to be made, but due to school fire they were too busy taking care of redevelopment). (11)

Through citing these challenges, the book points at the obstacles that may keep girls from dressing in the desired way – in this case, that may keep them from veiling. Subsequently, the book tries to counter and dismantle these challenges. It does so through offering counter-arguments that should convince girls to dress in the appropriate way (i.e. wear a veil). Three sets of reasons are here distinguished.

The first set provides education about Islam. If we again take the case of the veil as our example, we for instance read that:

There are millions of reasons that Muslim women have for not wearing a veil. But there are a million reasons more to wear a veil, a lot of people just do not realize this. [...] The veil is not just an Arabic cultural tradition, but a law mentioned in the Quran, just like the prayer, fasting etc. (2)

By pointing out that veiling is a law in Islam, the book frames women that do not wear a veil as disobedient. In this way, the book tries to convince readers to overcome challenges and conform to the practice of veiling. Simultaneously, the book tries to make it 'easier' for readers to conquer their issues. It does so through offering a second set of arguments, which makes the dressing practice crucial and central to one's existence as a Muslim. Asma Nadia writes:

After a long time of thinking, I realized, Allah has given us so much, why do I then still doubt about just having a light piece of clothing on my head. (3)

[...] I felt I needed to wear a veil, because then Allah could embrace me. Why would someone want to deny his rule? His protection? (3)

If you honestly believe in an afterlife, what is stopping you from immediately complying? (2)

Have you forgotten how beautiful heaven is? Is that the reason why you postpone obedience to Him? (2)

Much good awaits those who are obedient to Him, and much good awaits those who have taken risks to receive His love. (6)

Do not worry about lost opportunities, because we defend a principle. Allah always supports our intentions. (6)

I was thinking, a veil is heavy, but would I not feel very relieved when with the veil I would be free from punishment? (7)

In these tweets, the veil is constructed as the key to afterlife; to being welcomed in heaven; to being free from punishment; and to being loved, embraced, supported, and protected by Allah. By connecting these fundamental aspects of being a Muslim to a dressing practice, the earlier mentioned obstacles are (re)constructed as both

insignificant and as issues that without a doubt must be conquered.

Whereas the first and second set of arguments make the veil essential to being a (good) Muslim, a third set assures readers that this dressing practice does not clash with being ambitious, succesful or cosmopolitan, as Asma Nadia writes:

Who is to say that with a veil your grades in school will be hampered? There are not just one or two veiled women who have achieved the highest level in the world, but there are actually many. This proves that [...] with the veil you can still conquer the world. (8)

The veil does not stop you from making history. (8)

Many artists still shine bright after wearing the veil. (8)

The myth that causes many Muslimahs to worry is never proven to be true. They say that when you wear a veil it is very hard to find a husband. However, I was 23 years old when I found mine :-D (9)

There is no need to feel inferior in foreign countries when you wear the veil. So far, I have travelled to 130 cities in 30 countries as a backpacker. Thank God, there is no obstacle. (9)

Twitografi Asma Nadia thus assures that wearing a veil and being a modern girl are perfectly compatible. The book even goes on to suggest that one becomes more successful and more fashionable after deciding to wear a headscarf. In a seperate chapter titled "my accomplishments after wearing the veil" (*Twitografi Asma Nadia*: 9), Asma Nadia for example writes:

Did I become less popular, or did I have less friends after starting to veil in highschool? No, and actually, I became class president many times. Also, I was accepted into graduate school without having to take extra tests. (9)

After I started veiling, I became the champion of the biology group DKI Jakarta. (9)

I graduated from highschool with the highest diploma score. (9)

During highschool I was always in the top 3. (9)

While wearing a veil, I was actually asked to be the face of different headscarf brands. (9)

Wearing a veil and Muslim clothing does not have to kill your style. (17)

Using the right colors and patterns can help you look even more stylish, [...] but do not be a fashion victim! (23)

Pay attention to colors, models, and motifs that make you look more elegant and graceful. (23)

We see that through mobilizing three different sets of arguments that try to dismantle possible challenges and objections to veiling, the book encourages girls to dress in 'the right way'. I have here focused solely on the example of the veil, but the same pattern of reasoning is also central to the advice the book gives about other Muslim must-have items, such as dresses (p: 17-18, which cannot be too tight, short or transparent), pants and leggings (p: 19-20, leggings are a no-go, as they show one's body shape, are unflattering and ungraceful), long socks and shoes (p: 21-22, socks are a must to cover feet and prevent sweaty feet, black socks are particularly advisable so that no one sees they are dirty, good quality shoes should be bought so that others cannot smell your feet).

What is central to all fashion advice is the construction, in minute detail, of an idealized norm of dressing and a subsequent rewarding or punishing of girls for conforming or deviating from this norm. In the case of the veil, the book suggests that when girls work on themselves and conform to the constructed norm they: will overcome their problems; learn to make seemingly autonomous decisions (that may go against the wishes of family and friends); will be successful and fashionable, and are embraced by Allah. Deviation from this ideal is constructed as conduct that disappoints Allah and that makes one a bad Muslim.

But there is more to *Twitografi Asma Nadia*. In addition to seeking control over the Muslim female body (see also chapters 5 and 6), the book also attempts to govern girls' interpersonal relations and conduct. It focuses on two types of relations, namely (1) the relations between girls and their friends and (2) the relations between girls and their potential love interests. While it is through the governance of the public visibility of the Muslim female body that the book promotes a fashionable but pious modern female subject, it is through governance over interpersonal relations that the book sets the 'wrong' kind of modern female Muslim subject apart from the 'right' kind of modern female Muslim subject.

The first domain that is subjected to this practice of governance involves the ways in which girls communicate and express themselves when they are amongst friends.

The book for instance tells girls explicitly not to “be(come) a Muslim *alay*” (*Twitografi Asma Nadia*: 59). ‘Alay’ refers to a subculture that first came around the scene in Indonesia around 2007/8. The word *alay* has no exact translation, but it is widely accepted as an abbreviation of ‘anak layangan’ (kite kid), a derogatory term for a *kampung* (village) kid. The term finds its roots in the idea that kites are cheap entertainment for lower class youngsters, who cannot afford ‘city games and toys’ due to the financial constraints of their families (Kuswandini 2009). Unlike those kids in big cities who play with a PlayStation, Xbox or Nintendo, *kampung* youth spend much of their time outside flying kites – hence getting dark skin and a messy look (Kuswandini 2009).

Today metropolitan Indonesians use the term *alay* to critically describe youngsters who are trying to keep up with trends, but do so in the wrong way. In their eyes, *alay* youngsters have a poor understanding of what is modern, cool, and trendy. As a cultural critic in The Jakarta Post notes:

Forgive me for saying this, but *alay* refers to someone from a *kampung* who is experiencing culture shock when he or she comes to a big city like Jakarta. That person dresses up in what he or she thinks is ‘trendy’, while in the eyes of others (urbanites) that attire is truly bad taste. (Arya Verdi Ramadhani, cited in Kuswandini 2009)

Alay youngsters are seen as participating in modernity in the ‘wrong’ way. And as Pratiwi, one of my informants, further explains: “*alay* youngsters usually hang around malls with other *kampung* people. They talk and write in a dumb and annoying way. They are fashion victims in the negative sense, wearing skinny jeans, tight dark T-shirts with a punk print, and they have strange hair-do’s. They look messy and unsophisticated. They are sort of ‘hipsters gone wrong.’” (conversation with author, May 2012).

Alay youth express their subcultural affiliation in a number of ways such as through fashion and music. But the most characteristic feature of *alay* is the (written) language through which they communicate with friends and express themselves on blogs and social media. Their writing, ‘*tulisan alay*’, can best be described as Indonesian language that has undergone extensive leet transformation; that is highly condensed and that uses combinations of small and capital letters, numbers, as well as special characters (‘L1k3 7hI5 / like this’), often to the point that it becomes unreadable for outsiders. An example is ‘cXnK qMoh tO cKiDnAAAAaaaAaAaaaa’ reading ‘sayang kamu tahu sakitnya? (honey, do you know how much that hurts?)’ (Kuswandini 2009).

Tulisan alay has been condemned by critics who see it as a destruction of the national language and as evidence of the dumbing down of the young generation (ibidem). As Nadia, a self-proclaimed *alay* girl, however explained to me: “I see this use of language as part of my identity, as a creative and unique way of expressing myself. Moreover, texting my friends *alay* messages is a sign of friendship and closeness, because of the extra effort we put in and the idea of secrecy” (correspondence with Nadia, June 2013).

Twitografi Asma Nadia tackles *alay* language to construct a discourse that claims that being *alay* and being a good Muslim are incompatible:

Many young people think that condensing Islamic phrases into short sentences is a new modern style of expressing themselves amongst each other. Though this practice has been around a long time it is not a good thing. (59)

In Betawi we know the word ‘yaela’, from ‘Ya Allah’ and ‘Lailahailallah’. Because we still sometimes hear people say ‘yaela hailallah’ (a coalition of Islamic and Betawi) especially teenagers, now start to follow the *alay* trend and abbreviate [*alaykan*] Islamic terminology. Please do not do that. (59)

Never abbreviate ‘Allah’ [...] ‘Ya Allah’, should not be changed in ‘olo yes’ or ‘yes aloh’, okay? [...] Do not say: ‘masa olo’, but ‘Masya Allah’. (59)

I was shocked when at home I heard Adam and his friends play computer games, because when they panicked they yelled ‘astazim, astazim’. [...] Can we abbreviate astazim astagfirullah to azim? No way! (59)

Rather than condensing ‘assalamu’alaikum’ to ‘ass’ (which in English means what?) better use the full greeting to great pals. (59)

The greeting is like a prayer, when you make it *alay*, you cancel the prayer. (59)

By using the *alay* language among each other you lower yourself and degradate the teachings of Islam. So keep *alay* away from Islam. (59)

As can be read from these excerpts, *Twitografi Asma Nadia* considers the central feature of *alay* culture, its use of language, a ‘degradation’ of (Islamic) language and an act through which girls ‘lower themselves’. By constructing this discourse and by speaking about *alay* in the same terms – and from assumedly the same position – as those who consider themselves ‘sophisticated city people who do get it right’, the book aligns itself with *alay*’s metropolitan critics. Through seeking control over the

way in which Muslim girls express themselves and communicate about Islam, the book tries to eliminate *alay* as an option; as a possibility of modern female Muslim identity. *Twitografi Asma Nadia* claims that *alay* is low, unsophisticated, and a degradation of Islam.

Twitografi Asma Nadia not only attempts to govern the way girls communicate with friends, but also the way in which they deal with potential love interests. Dating and relationships are generally not acknowledged in Islam, but they nevertheless occur among many young Indonesian Muslims. Asma Nadia writes that she receives many questions about this, e.g. "can I have a boyfriend?" (86), "how can I find a partner?" (101) She has therefore taken up this issue in her book (85). As we shall see, through giving advice on this matter, *Twitografi Asma Nadia* simultaneously blocks and opens up possibilities of Muslim subjectivity, thereby further crafting and specifying its ideal modern female Muslim subject. The book does so via a specific rethoric pattern.

To start, the book sums up reasons that girls have for wanting to be in relationship:

When I asked on Twitter why you girls want to have a boyfriend many answered to me: just because we want to and they are willing to, mbak! :p (86)

Or they answered that having a boyfriend gives prestige 'others have a boyfriend, but I don't have one yet. This gives the impression that I'm still for sale. (87)

There also those who said that having a boyfriend is handy because you have someone to pick you up ... lol, this is a motorcycle boyfriend. (85)

There also those who say your boyfriends can carry heavy stuff when you are shopping... lol. (85)

Also you can learn a lot from a boyfriend. (86)

After mentioning a variety of reasons, some that have to do with social pressure and others that have to do with just making fun, Asma Nadia comes up with arguments that are intended to overrule the ones that have been coined by her Twitter followers. These arguments discourage relationships and are driven by two central incentives: (1) an ambitious mindset and (2) family.

First, Asma Nadia sees boyfriends as emotionally distracting. She for examples writes:

Having a boyfriend brings with it a risk... your mood goes up and down, which happens when your boyfriend does not love you, or does not change his relationship status on FB or Twitter :p (87)

Another risk of boyfriends is that they can break your heart... seriously! (87)

Your achievements are not measured by how many boyfriends you have had hehehe. This does not count the same way as a job achievements on your CV do :p (87)

So if you do not want a broken heart, or waste your time, energy and tears, do not take a boyfriend! (87)

This emotional distraction is here seen as a hinderance to girls' ambition and achievements, as she advices:

Do not waste your young years on boyfriends and troubles, but realize your potential to achieve and realize your dreams and that of your parents. (89)

Use the period before marriage for improving yourself in His presence. Remember, good men choose good girls. That can happen without first having a boyfriend. (89)

The emphasis on self-development, autonomy, ambition, and achievement identified in the above cited fragments often recurs in *Twitografi Asma Nadia*. It forms an important part of the ideal female modern citizen subject that is constructed and promoted in the book. A citizen-subject that is focused and ambitious, contributes to the country's workforce. Note, also in the above-quoted tweets, that it is particularly in their 'young years' and 'before marriage' that girls should work hard and focus on themselves, because, as is implicitly suggested, after marriage they will have other priorities.

In *Twitografi Asma Nadia* boyfriends do not only form a threat to girls' desired ambitious mindset, but they also pose a threat of a much more fundamental kind. As Asma Nadia writes:

Are the tears you shed the only risk of having a boyfriend? :) Actually no. The world of boyfriends is also vulnerable to crime! Creepy. (88)

We often hear newsreports of harassment and murder by ex-boyfriends. [...] :((88)

An extreme case: there was a female student who disappeared, then three months later they found her corpse in the closet of her boyfriend :((88)

A girl, the eldest child *and the foundation of the family*, was disabled for life because she refused to have sex with her boyfriend. (88, my emphasis)

In this criminalization and strong discouragement of relationships and sexuality, a second argument against relationships surfaces: boyfriends pose a threat to the family. This discourse keeps recurring, for instance when the book tries to dissuade young women from dating by opposing boyfriends to parents in a diametrical manner:

Coining the reason ‘that you can learn from boyfriends’, to me, is not really fair to your parents. Why? (86)

How long have you known your boyfriend? What did he give you? Compare that with the bond and what has been given to you by your parents. (86)

Your parents have given you so much. Why are your parents not enough to learn from? (86)

What is evident: in the end the love from your parents and family is the most important. Why do you have to search for something impure? (89)

In this argument the repercussions of dating are imagined to go beyond readers themselves. Not only do they hamper their own development by having a boyfriend, but they also offend their parents and damage family bonds. Thus, through giving advice about dating and relationships, the book not only carves out a modern Muslim self that is ambitious, but also one that is family-oriented.

Twitografi Asma Nadia thus fiercely discourages relationships. What is also striking, is that the book only mentions sexuality once – and then it criminalized. Sexuality seems something that cannot be spoken about. Despite the book’s fierce rejection of relationships, it does not leave girls in the dark when it comes to finding a partner. Under the heading “how to get married without buying a pig in a poke (*beli kucing dalam karung*)” (90), the book provides girls with a solution that avoids both dating and (blind) arranged marriages. The book’s solution, the *ta’aruf*, is a gathering by which youngsters of marriageable age are introduced to each other and can get to know one another. As Asma Nadia puts it: “*ta’aruf* is flirting with the intention to marry.” (90) The difference with a relationship is that one ideally marries within three to six months after the *ta’aruf*.

After clarifying the concept of *ta’aruf*, Asma Nadia gives girls tips for a good

ta'aruf:

We can identify a good candidate quite easily. The trick is to ask good questions and see what the candidate answers. (101)

What do you ask? First, make a list of questions, and define the weight of the answers corresponding to your own principles. There are for sure key questions and key answers. (102)

Do not use the #*ta'aruf* for just staring at one another :p use the #*ta'aruf* for gathering as much information as you can about the other candidate. (103)

During the #*ta'aruf*, try to get to know his background, his character, his ideas about marriage, children and other future arrangements. (103)

If utilized properly, the #*ta'aruf* can give not only you information about the candidate, but also the potential problems after you marry. (104)

Find elegant ways of asking questions, so that it does not feel like a job interview for the other person. (104)

When it doesn't feel like a good fit after the #*ta'aruf* inform the other ASAP. (104)

Give the other a deadline, nobody wants to be hung on an appointment that is not clear. (104)

As can be read from these excerpts, *Twitografi Asma Nadia* encourages girls to be resolute and take matters into their own hands. The book thus again promotes a Muslim self that is autonomous and hands on – something that at different moments recurs in the book.

To recap, we have seen that it through seeking control over the body that the book elicits a fashionable, autonomous, but pious modern female subject. We have also seen that it is through its attempts to govern interpersonal relations that the book further defines this ideal subject. In doing so it sets the 'wrong' kind of young modern Muslim subject (*alay*, engages in relationships) apart from the 'right' kind of young modern Muslim subject (ambitious, family-minded, autonomous, finds a partner through *ta'aruf*).

The third and last domain that the book seeks to govern involves girls' relation to space and their movement in and through space – space here being both national and international. The book here tries to produce its ideal modern female Muslim

subject as an active, responsible, and cosmopolitan citizen.

Inducing this construction are concerns about the state of 'public mosques' in Indonesia. 'Public mosques' are mosques that one can find in (privately-owned) places such as hospitals, malls, offices or bookshops. These mosques offer Muslims an opportunity to pray while they are on the go or at work. But as Asma Nadia observes:

When going to visit the mall or a public space, we often see that the mosque is in a poor condition. Its facilities are poor, it is very difficult to find, it is not clean, and it smells really bad. This is even more dismaying when the mosque is located in a mall or luxury hotel. These mosques are in bad shape, although the visitors of the malls/hotels are mostly Muslims. (65)

Also, we too often see that office staff is forced to pray in the emergency staircase, because their building does not have a mosque that is easily accessible. (65)

Perhaps the mosque is placed in a far-off location (in the basement, parking lot or behind the toilets), because it is not really a productive commercial place. (65)

While Asma Nadia here observes that public mosques are in a poor shape, she assigns the responsibility for their improvement to individuals, as she writes: "Many Muslims just complain about this situation, but few actually do something about it. In fact we can do a lot of simple things to help change this situation." (65) To help readers to take action, she provides them with a 'simple' five-step plan:

Step 1. If you go to the mall and encounter a mosque that is in bad shape inform the receptionist at the information booth that he or she must let the manager know that the mosque facilities need to be improved. Say that mall's visitors will be more comfortable if the mosque can be easily reached. If visitors are comfortable, they will stay longer in the mall, and the mall will benefit from it. (66)

Step 2. Go more often to the mall which has a good mosque. Also, tell the receptionist that you love this mall because it has a good mosque. So do not only complain, but highlight what is positive. (66)

Step 3. Publish in a safe manner (avoid slander) which mosques are not good. The more people publish about mosques in malls or other public places which are not okay, the harder people will try to improve the facilities. [...] be kind and bring across your message in clear language. (66)

Step 4: This step can be taken by Muslims who love praying and have political power. [...] you can issue a regulation that requires that there are mosques in strategic places, for instance on every floor, or you can issue for other regulations that regulate facilities of the mosque in public space. (67)

Step 5. Become a rich Muslim and build a great mall / office / hospital / bookshop / supermarket with a great mosque. (67)

As we can observe, this five-step plan moves responsibility for better and more hygienic praying facilities to Muslims themselves. If they would like to see better mosques, they need to stop complaining and instead become active and attentive citizens who take responsibility. Although in step 1-3 of the plan managers and organizations are responsible for the actual improving, it is people themselves that need to set this change into work – and each and everyone can contribute.

Improved public mosques are not only beneficial to individual Muslims, but also to the workplace and the economy. Employees could for instance spend more time at work if they do not have to travel far to pray. Also employees might be less prone to stress, frustration, and health issues if they do not have to pray in staircases and basements. Muslim visitors of the mall can spend more time and money there. More visits to the mall is even part of the plan for action (step 2), making consumption and the middle-class mall-visiting lifestyle (see also chapter 2) very much part of the modern Muslim self that is imagined in the book.

While disciplining readers to be more concerned about the maintenance of religious spaces, *Twitografi Asma Nadia* also encourages girls to travel out of the country and experience foreign (more secular) places. But, as Asma Nadia explains, travelling is not always easy for Muslims. In the section ‘travelling Muslims’ she offers girls advice on several issues they can encounter while travelling.

The first issue she highlights and helps girls with is the “damaged image” (image buruk) (211) of Muslims (see also chapter 6). As she writes:

Women who wear a veil often become the victims or negative stereotypes and discrimination when they travel abroad. First, they are frequently mistaken as migrant workers who are looking for work, and second they are suspected to be terrorists. (211)

I was approached by the police in England and they investigated my activity. (235)

Also in Spain I was roughly questioned by the police. (236)

Veiled Muslim women are often mistaken for being migrant workers when they are

abroad or when they travel to or from East Indonesia. (211)

[...] At my arrival in Hong Kong and Switzerland I have been asked sarcastically: do you want to find a job here? (212)

As Asma Nadia comments on this problem: "this is obviously not ideal, but we can prepare ourselves for this. Let's go!" (211). Asma Nadia emphasizes that girls should be conscious of the negative image that they, as Muslims, have in other parts of the world, but that they cannot let discrimination stop them. The book advises that girls deal with these issues assertively, but with kindness, and that they try to distance oneself from what they are accused of. She gives the following example:

When I took a walk in the park in Korea, an old lady saw me wearing my veil and yelled: "Oh Islam, you are a terrorist!" I just smiled to her and said, "We also hate terrorists." "Please, I hope there will be no more Muslims who commit acts of terrorism. That bothers us too." (212)

The idea that Muslims can travel the world unproblematically when they have the right attitude, is further emphasized when the book gives advice on two other challenges that Muslims may face while travelling: eating halal food and continuing their prayers:

One of the obstacles for Muslims when traveling around the world is to find halal food. So what is the trick? (217)

If you want to be safe choose vegetarian food. Then you do not have to worry about halal food. (217)

An alternative can also be to find an Indian or Pakistani (Muslim) restaurant, or find a kebab restaurant, most European countries have kebab restaurants. (217)

Make sure that the kebab is halal! Because in Volendam, the Netherlands, I was at a kebab place which also sells pork. (217)

If in doubt make instant noodles. Some of my friends bring a small ricecooker with them. (218)

Do not stop praying during the trip. (219)

Try to find a place to pray during your travel, a quiet place in the train, a museum, or a park, or another place. (219)

Choose a place that does not attract and provoke a lot of attention. (220)

If you cannot find a good place, just ask where the nearest mosque is, it might be close to where you are at that moment. (220)

Asma Nadia's advice on these challenges thus shows that with an assertive and self-conscious attitude (e.g. 'do not pick a place that provokes attention') Muslim girls can travel the world with ease. The self that is advocated here is cosmopolitan and is able to adjust religious practices to any other place in the world.

To conclude, I have suggested that via offering advice on issues that Muslim girls encounter in their lives, *Twitografi Asma Nadia* seeks to govern three domains: (1) girls' bodies, (2) girls' interpersonal and intimate relations and, (3) their relation to, and their mobility in, space. In its attempts to govern these three domains a technology of normalization is at work. The book constructs an idealized gendered norm of conduct for Muslim girls and rewards or punishes girls for conforming or deviating from this norm. Through both its form – a Twittergraphy' – as well as its content, the book claims hipness. The discourse that *Twitografi Asma Nadia* articulates is however highly repressive. Girls are encouraged to become 'fashionable' and 'autonomous' subjects that make their 'own' decisions and that are in line with what their religion allegedly asks of them. By following Asma Nadia's advice, readers make themselves governable. While setting the 'wrong' modern self apart from the 'right' modern self, the book carves out a female modern citizen-subject that is ambitious, self-conscious, sophisticated, fashionable, family-minded, responsible, cosmopolitan, and above all pious. This is a female citizen-subject that is fit to participate smoothly in a global Islamic modernity, and that is still a good Muslim.

The modern Muslim as a self-enterprising citizen-subject

Through Islamic self-help books, pop culture preachers and self-help gurus offer Islamic guidance to Indonesian Muslims. *Wonderful Family*, *Rasullulah's Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia* provide families, entrepreneurs, and young women with inspirational stories and practical manuals for living in a modernizing Indonesian society. In the analysis, I have suggested that while 'helping' readers, the

books mobilize governmental tactics to promote and construct specific modern Islamic citizen-subjects.

If we look at the form of the books, we see that Starker's (2002) categories are encapsulated by a governmental logic. Personal anecdotes become sites through which the authors are constructed as experts who "govern at a distance" (Rose and Miller 1992: 181). Informational passages give 'evidence' that the promoted attitude indeed works – we have seen this last point repeatedly in *Rasullulah's Business School*. And as *Twitografi Asma Nadia* shows, a more prescriptive style, which depends on particular 'do's and don'ts', leads to a repressive governmental discourse.

My analysis in this chapter has shown how through different governmental tactics, *Wonderful Family*, *Rasullulah's Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia* each construct a different Islamic subject. The three subjects share the similarity of being self-governing and self-enterprising modern citizen-subjects that are fit to participate in Indonesian Islamic modernities.

In my analysis of *Wonderful Family*, I have shown how the book deploys family issues to define its agenda for modernization. The book thereby turns the affairs of the family into public rather than private or intimate matters. *Wonderful Family* constructs the responsible family member as a responsible modern Muslim citizen. This citizen-subject is modelled in such a way that it can help to maintain social order. As we have seen, *Wonderful Family's* ideal modern Muslim citizen-subject is aware of Indonesia's ethnic and cultural multiplicity and stimulates intercultural dialogue, something that is important for the prevention of ethnic conflicts. In addition, this subject also maintains social order by not contesting the growing rich-poor divide. *Wonderful Family* ignores structural and systematic causes for poverty by framing it as a fact or technicality. At the same time, the book promotes a mentality that is imagined to keep people on both sides of the divide happy – and thus calm about financial inequalities. I have proposed that through the emphasis that the book puts on maintaining social order, and because it defines the family as an important realm of governance, *Wonderful Family's* rhetoric is reminiscent of New Order discourse. The governmental technologies in *Wonderful Family* indicate a continuation rather than an ending of this mode of 'family - social order' governance (see also the next chapter on Islamic-themed films for a more elaborate discussion of this form of governance).

In *Rasullulah's Business School*, it is not the family, but the Prophet who forms the model for the construction of an ideal Muslim citizen-subject. This business self-help book reconstructs and appropriates Muhammad's legacy in ways that turn the

Prophet into the ideal Muslim citizen-subject. For this subject, the desire for wealth and Islamic piety not only go together, but also strengthen each other. This matches with the aspirational piety and consumerist longings that according to Ariel Heryanto (1999: 173) mark today's Muslim middle class. On the issue of the desire for wealth, *Rasullulah's Business School* challenges *Wonderful Family*, which stresses that money does not determine one's happiness. Furthermore, in *Rasullulah's Business School* the seemingly conflicting notions of a self-enterprising subject ('you determine your own fate') and an almighty God ('Allah determines your fate') go hand in hand. The citizen-subject that is constructed through the portrayal of Muhammad is healthy, independent, hard working, assertive, social, caring, and responsible. *Rasullulah's Business School* suggests that by displaying this behavior one will win Allah's favor, which will lead to blessings and success.

For *Twitografi Asma Nadia*, 'the right behavior' will make one a fashionable, ambitious, and cosmopolitan Muslim girl, while 'the wrong behavior' will make one a bad Muslim. *Twitografi Asma Nadia* constructs a more repressive moral discourse (in the sense that it constantly warns for bad behavior) than *Wonderful Family* and *Rasullulah's Business School*. At the same time, it claims a certain hipness, both through its form – the book is a Twittergraphy – which alludes to the popularity of social media among Indonesian youngsters (see also chapter 7), and through the way it imagines Muslim girls as fashionable and cosmopolitan.

Twitografi Asma Nadia answers to worries young Muslim girls may have and to issues they assumedly encounter in their lives. I have proposed that in the act of giving advice, a technology of normalization is at work. This technology of normalization governs three domains: (1) girls' bodies, (2) girls' interpersonal and intimate relations, and (3) their relation to, and their mobility in, space. Through this technology the book constructs a gendered and idealized norm of conduct for Muslim girls. The book suggests that girls who fit this norm are rewarded, while girls who deviate from this norm are considered a bad Muslim. The ways in which in *Twitografi Asma Nadia* girls are governed along the lines of their femininity (for instance through their female bodies or through their relationships with men), suggests that there is a gendered dimension to governmentality. This is something that I will explore further in the next chapter, where I will zoom in on gendered biopolitical practices in Islamic-themed films.

Twitografi Asma Nadia in the end distinguishes between the 'wrong' modern female subject and the 'right' modern female subject. It promotes a female modern subject that is ambitious, self-conscious, sophisticated, fashionable, family-minded, responsible, cosmopolitan, and above all pious. This is a female citizen-subject that

can participate in a Indonesian Islamic modernities, and that is still a good Muslim.

Although the three books construct different Islamic citizen-subjects, they also share similarities. First, they are all responsible, self-enterprising, and self-governing subject. While *Wonderful Family* and *Rasullulah's Business School* stimulate hard work and self-reliance, *Twitografi Asma Nadia* encourages an ambitious and autonomous attitude. In all three books, people – and not the government or someone else – are responsible for themselves. We have seen that people are responsible for their own success, for their own position in society, and even for the maintainance of religious public spaces (*Twitografi Asma Nadia*).

Second, the modern Islamic citizen-subjects that *Wonderful Family*, *Rasullulah's Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia* construct and promote can all participate in Indonesian Islamic modernities. This does however not mean that these subjects are only gesturing towards a distant modern future. Rather they point our gaze back to the disputes and contradictions that exist in a present Indonesian society. As we have seen, the books encourage the construction of citizen-subjects that are aware of, and that intervene in, the unequal spread of wealth (although *Wonderful Family* forms an exception here), while actively negotiating cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. *Wonderful Family's* subject actively negotiates ethnic and cultural differences, *Rasullulah's Business School's* subject is encouraged to share its wealth and to help others, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia's* subject is aware of negative discourses that cast Muslims of terrorists and aims to challenge these discourses.

Wonderful Family, *Rasullulah's Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia* here differ from the socially withdrawn, detached and hyperindividualist subjects that Rimke (2010) and Illouz (2008) identified in American self-help books. The three self-help books that I analyzed do not “undermine[s] collective formations and the essential inderdependencies of selves” (Rimke 2010: 70), but are instead socially conscious – although *Wonderful Family's* masking of capitalism's contradictions challenges this observation. Since the books' citizen-subjects are modelled to help an Indonesian society and an Indonesian Islamic modernity to function, we could see the construction of this sometimes ambiguous social-conscious subject as the result of a specific Indonesian mode of governmentality.

In the beginning of this chapter, I wondered whether we could also think of an Islamic mode of governmentality. This is a relevant question in a time in which non-Western and non-secular states increasingly make use of optimizing technologies of government (Ong 2006: 3). This question has however received little scholarly attention, since, as I suggested earlier, there is a lack of research in governmentality

studies on questions of religion.

My analysis of *Wonderful Family*, *Rasullulah's Business School*, and *Twitografi Asma Nadia* shows how Islam and governmentality can go together. It shows how the seemingly conflicting notions of a self-enterprising subject ('you determine your own fate') and an almighty God ('Allah determines your fate') go hand in hand. In 'Security, Territory, Population' (2008a [1977-1978]) Foucault observes how in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries pastoral governmental practices are secularized and broadened at the moment when feudal structures disappeared and territories and colonial empires developed (265). The modern and capitalist state later instilled in these practices the ideas of calculation, population, goals, and the government of the social body at large. What we can witness in Indonesian Islamic self-help books is that these 'secularized practices' are induced with religiosity again: they are Islamized. 'The governance of souls', 'the authority of an otherworldly entity', and 'the establishment of mores' that were part of pastoral power are in Islamic self-help books (re)mapped on the modern notion of governmentality. The result is a form of Islamic governmentality in which people are first and foremost governed through their 'Muslim souls', i.e. through their belief and loyalty to Allah. Unlike in the secular notion of governmentality, they are not only accountable to themselves, to others and by extension to society, but now also to a higher power, Allah. It is then through affecting the 'Muslim soul' that this form of Islamic governmentality – like pastoral power – not only tries to establish general (Islamic) mores within the population, but also produces citizen-subjects that act in ways that are beneficial to Indonesian society and future Islamic modernities.

This form of Islamic governmentality thus seeks to govern people through their 'Muslim souls'. The analysis of *Twitografi Asma Nadia* however also hinted at a form of government that focuses on the gendered body. How does Islamic governmentality produce not only ideal Muslim citizen subjects through their 'souls', but also through their (gendered) bodies? How are governmentalized Muslim bodies produced? In the next chapter I will engage with these questions by zooming in on Islamic-themed films.