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Desi Dwi Prianti

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Towards the westernized body: a popular narrative reinforced by men's lifestyle magazines in Indonesia

Desi Dwi PRIANTI

Media and Culture Department, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

This paper will spotlight changing views with regard to Indonesian men's body aesthetics. It will explore how, in response to discourse contained in lifestyle magazines, the physical bodies of Indonesian men have become the primary mechanism through which to exercise agency. However, many local Indonesian customs consider men's agency to be dependent upon their ability to control bodily desire. The paper aims to give an overview of how modernization and westernization as contemporary conditions in postcolonial Indonesia serve as the background to the narratives provided by men's lifestyle magazines. In order to provide an insight into how modern white narratives are valued in Indonesia, I will begin by examining the history of Dutch colonialism as a basis for racial classification. Proceeding, I will discuss how that history relates to contemporary practices of social stratification: the belief that being married to a westerner will bring perfection to one's descendants' genes; the trend of consuming special vitamins and formulas that will change particular parts of the body; and the assumption that having western genes will bring both success and wealth. Moreover, I will also discuss the ways in which the magazines define the "ideal" body, and how that "ideal" body thus becomes the hegemonic body – one that functions as the gateway for men to achieve a good life.

KEYWORDS

Modernization; colonialism; masculinity; identity

Introduction

As Moran (2014) explores in her book, *Identity and Capitalism*, in a western context the idea of identity actually emerged with the explosion of consumption in the late-twentieth century. Within the social logic of consumerism, the notion of identity is very much rooted in individual personhood. Consumption became an arena of self-expression and self-conceptualization, centered upon a particular type of person and its mode of signification. Personal identity then works as a strategy of distinction: it essentially points towards how one person differs from another. Being distinct, different, and unique are what the identity project has to offer in order to lure subjects into a never-ending consumption trap.

Popular culture then developed to accommodate the needs of individuals in their particular identity project with films, magazines and music, all available as mechanisms through which to present different types of lifestyle. In his book *Media Today* (2009), Joseph Turow suggests that mass media

CONTACT Desi Dwi Prianti  desidwiprianti@gmail.com  Communication Department, Universitas Brawijaya, Jalan Veteran Malang-Indonesia

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have the ability to direct people's attention toward behavior considered desirable in society; to tell people what is important in a social context and why; and finally, to tell people what others think of them and what people "like themselves" should think of others, such as categorizing people and how to act towards others based on that categorization. Thus, the capitalist narrative works well within the logics of consumerism and the identity project, both of which are available and compatible for the modern western subject – a subject that already occupies a society marked as more individualistic in comparison to eastern society, with its overarching principles of collectivism (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010).

Unlike in the contemporary western world, the idea of being unique and different – to be visible – as an expression of consumerist and identity narratives was not compatible with the social, cultural and religious values of pre-modern Indonesia. In this context, several reports (Asmussen 2004; Locher-Scholten 2003; Nilan, Donaldson, and Howson 2007; Prianti 2017) that cite Indonesia as their examples stress the importance for individuals to build harmonious relationships with society, regardless of their individual interests. This is reflected in various aspects of Indonesian social life. First, the participation of individuals in communal ritual events is highly valued as a way to maintain social relations (Asmussen 2004). Secondly, unlike in the history of western feminism – which viewed men as existing in binary opposition to the goal of achieving a feminist identity – the history of the women's movement in Indonesia highlighted the importance of maintaining familial harmony with men (Locher-Scholten 2003). Third, the Indonesian concept of the ideal father differs greatly from general western masculinity ideals – such as personal strength and individual achievement – demanding instead that a father, in supporting his wife and children, puts their interests before his own (Nilan, Donaldson, and Howson 2007; Prianti 2017). In other words, according to traditional Indonesian values it is more important to be part of the community than it is to be distinct, different, or visible.

However, the colonial experience itself, coupled with the political turmoil of the late 1960s, greatly influenced the increasing westernization of post-colonial Indonesia. In general, the attitude of Indonesians toward modernization (westernization) is ambivalent and constantly changing. The debate concerning western influences amongst Indonesian scholars during the colonial era was known as "Cultural Polemic" (*polemik kebudayaan*). In this era, Indonesian scholars were divided between those who suggested the importance of adopting western values for Indonesia's development, and those who were opposed to the idea and believed indigenous values to be more valuable assets with which to take Indonesia into the future. The Old Order era from 1945 until 1966 under President Sukarno was characterized by its anti-western policy. Sukarno's negative attitudes toward the west are exemplified by his decision to withdraw from international organizations that identified with western nations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). His anti-western sentiment was also projected via his cultural policy, which considered anything that had western influences, such as music, dance, and other socio-cultural expressions, to be inappropriate and thus prohibited from public display.

However, the New Order era, spanning the period 1967–1998 under President Soeharto, took Indonesia in a different direction. In order to overcome the economic and political crisis in 1966, Soeharto decided to work closely with the western world. It was during this era that the modernization of Indonesia really started. Enormous amounts of western financial aid inevitably exposed Indonesia to western influences, including products, lifestyles, technologies, and also ideologies. The western world started to be seen as a benchmark for modernization – everything associated with the western way of life came to be considered as an upgrade. These feelings, as outlined above, persist up to the present day in Indonesia.

The final, and current, period of Indonesian political discourse, which began in 1998, is known as the Reformation Era or Post-New Order Era. Although Indonesia has already experienced several presidential and some wider political changes since the New Order era, in general the Post-New Order governments practice a more conducive policy towards opinions that may be thought of as critical or different from those held by the state. Unlike preceding regimes, the sociopolitical ideologies of which were dominated by a single major narrative (either anti-western or pro-western), there is now no single dominant narrative that can be identified in contemporary Indonesia. However, whilst on the one hand western lifestyles are still depicted as superior in Indonesian popular culture, on the other hand, the general public do feel concern with regard to the potential negative influences of western lifestyles, upon which I will elaborate later.

Despite the basic incompatibility of the westernized identity project in the context of the pre-modern Indonesia, as society grew, so did Indonesian expectations of life – including men’s gender expectations. The question then becomes: to what extent are men’s gender expectations subject to the influence of narratives of modernization, and what kinds of change do such narratives evoke? In order to shed some light on how the identity project is framed and subsequently presented to men as individual subjects in contemporary Indonesia, I will present an analysis of men’s lifestyle magazines, as they have become key agents in contemporary modern societies, exposing men to the idea of being “men” (Gauntlett 2002; Hatchell 2007; Moss 2011; Nixon 2013). Focusing on the configuration of “manliness” in modernized Indonesia, eight different lifestyle magazines – both Indonesian and internationally-based, and spanning the period from the earliest men’s lifestyle magazines in Indonesia, published in the mid-1980’s until 2015 – have been chosen to provide the primary data.¹ The magazines are: *Matra*; *Best Life Indonesia*; *Men’s Obsession*; *Men’s Health Indonesia*; *Esquire Indonesia*; *Fitness for Men Indonesia*; *Da Man*; and *Men’s Folio Indonesia*.² In total, 120 editions were coded and analyzed whilst other texts, such as the first edition of the sample magazines, were studied as secondary data. The scarceness of academic work focusing specifically upon men in Indonesia resulted in difficulties finding literature discussing men in both the pre- and post-colonial eras. In order to gain some understanding of prevailing social discourse specifically concerning men in pre-modern Indonesia, older texts describing gender relations – such as *The Javanese Family: A Study of Kinship and Socialization* by Hildred Geertz (1961), and other texts that depicted influential men such as kings, presidents, patriots and other important figures in Indonesian history – were also referenced as secondary data. Using textual analysis and combining both content analysis and discourse analysis, this research attempts to map contemporary narratives of masculinity in modern-day Indonesia.

Westernized body as an upgrade

The divorcees at Puncak are a problem unto themselves. Therefore, Arab men looking to get acquainted with the divorcees in the Puncak region will help fix the problem by raising a better future generation. If these women get modest homes even if the tourists later leave them, then it’s okay. The children resulting from these relationships will have good genes. There will be more television actors and actresses from these pretty boys and girls. (*Jakarta Post*, 29 June, 2006)

The vice president of Indonesia, Jusuf Kalla, made the above statement at a 2006 trade symposium called “Tourism Marketing Strategies in the Middle East.” His (sweeping) comment engendered strong public reaction, both nationally and internationally, especially from female activists. Although Kalla’s comment was aimed primarily at Arab men, it exposes a major narrative with regard to the ways in which Indonesians value their genes. In general, Indonesians see foreigners as having better

physical qualities than their own. A pointed nose, lighter skin color and tall stature, to name but a few, represent physical qualities possessed by foreigners that are highly valued in Indonesian society. Persons with these physical characteristics are considered to be more beautiful, good looking, and attractive. Therefore, being married to a foreigner – especially a westerner – is believed to be the means by which to reliably produce “better” offspring. *Perbaikan keturunan* – which roughly translates as genetic improvement – is a common expression widely known by Indonesians as a means by which to express the aforementioned situation.

Recalling Indonesia’s history, the fallacy of genetic improvement can be found to originate in colonial times. Racial classification was first introduced to Indonesia during Dutch colonialism. It was the cornerstone of Dutch colonial administration (Fasseur 1997; Tjandrasasmita 2009). Dating from the Culture System (*cultuurstelsel*) circa 1820, various discriminations were enacted upon Indonesia’s indigenous population. Legal justification for the process of racial classification was first mentioned in the new *regeeringsreglement* of 1854, Article 109 (Fasseur 1997). Based on this law, the Dutch colonial administration divided society according to a three-class racial system. The first class was comprised of Europeans, the second class being those of partial European ancestry as well as “Foreign Orientals” (*Vreemde Oosterlingen*), including Chinese, Arabs and Indians. Finally, the third and lowest class was reserved for the indigenous Indonesian population (*Inlanders*). J.C. Baud, one of the architects of the Culture System, is known to have suggested that “[l]anguage, color, religion, morals, origin, historical memories, everything is different between the Dutch and the Javanese [the indigenous]. We are the rulers, they are the ruled” (as quoted in Fasseur 1997, 85). The indigenous population was considered too primitive and they were thus not treated as citizens by the Dutch colonial government. Indeed, in *Rethinking Indonesia* Philpott (2000) describes how the narrative of the flawed (indolent, dull, lazy, backward) natives served both as a moral justification for Dutch colonialism, and as an example of the production of European or western culture and identity as the superior other.

More than 70 years after Indonesia proclaimed its independence in 1945, this colonial experience is apparently still very much rooted in the ways Indonesians long for the westernized body. Since being partially white is believed to be a superior physical quality, many Indonesian *blasterans* (mulattos) have successful careers in the Indonesian entertainment industry. Miller Khan – one of Indonesia’s *blasteran* figures – acknowledges that he used to have a mediocre career as an actor until he moved to Indonesia, gaining popularity in Indonesian cinema (*Best Life Indonesia* [2015]). His picture, showing off his “six pack abs,” featured on the front cover of *Fitness for Men Indonesia*, September 2015 edition. Even those with no history of working in the entertainment industry in their country of origin have a good chance of building a successful career in the Indonesian entertainment industry. For example, Arifin Putra, who used to have German citizenship, is now one of the big Indonesian *blasteran* stars, and has chosen to adopt Indonesian citizenship. Arifin Putra appears on the front cover of the March 2014 edition of *Men’s Folio Indonesia*. Similarly, Delano Rijke, a Dutch citizen who used to play semi-professional football in the Netherlands, has now become a rising star in Indonesia. Rijke features as a model for the fashion section in *Fitness for Men Indonesia*, August 2012 edition. In fact, the first men’s lifestyle magazine in Indonesia, *Matra*, launched its first edition on August 1986 featuring a male figure with Caucasoid characteristics (lighter skin color, pointed nose, tall figure). The privilege associated with being *blasteran* – or foreign – in popular media discourse can also be seen in several television series that are dedicated to them: *Gaul Bareng Bule* (Hanging out with Foreigners), which aired on *Trans TV*, is a reality show hosted by an Indonesian *blasteran* figure that portrays the culture of *blasteran* and *bule* (foreign) figures through food

and daily activity. In a similar vein, *Kelas Internasional* (International Class) is a situation comedy that was aired on *Net TV* from 2015–2017 and depicted a high school class of foreign students.³

The suggested superiority of western body narratives can also be seen in the magazines' portrayals, as most of the professional models used in the magazines are either Caucasoid or, at the very least, partially white. The magazines only use indigenous Indonesians as cover models if they are famous, or have the "ideal" western-like appearance (lighter skin tone, pointed nose, tall, mesomorph body). Additionally, the western body narrative is supported through many pictorial representations in the magazines themselves – not only are western body types a major feature of front covers, but they are also found in the magazines' various sections (advertisements, advertorials, articles, and photo shoots). These images are found in both the Indonesian and internationally-based sample magazines. Notably, *Men's Obsession* is the only Indonesian-based magazine that does not cherish the otherwise pervasive narrative of the western body.

There are two distinct periods that mark the availability of men's lifestyle magazines in Indonesia. The differences between the two periods are defined not only by the time span, but also by the differing narratives practiced by the magazines themselves with regard to the western body. The first period (1986–2000) was marked by the launch of *Matra* in August 1986. *Matra* was the first men's lifestyle magazine available in Indonesia and is an Indonesian-based publication. As the only men's lifestyle magazine available during this period, in each monthly edition, *Matra's* major articles consistently featured Indonesian men. Indonesian men's bodies are easily found in *Matra* magazines – both in articles and advertisements. Western bodies started to be used to endorse foreign products in advertisements, such as those of Levi's and Nike in 1989. Although the use of western bodies to endorse brands has increased since then, the practice has never increased to the point that it became the magazine's dominant mode of representation. In the December 1990 edition of *Matra*, of 20 advertisements that were endorsed by a human model, half were endorsed by western bodies. A decade later, in the January 2000 edition the same distribution is observed as, from eight advertisements featuring a human model, four were endorsed by western bodies and the other four were endorsed by Indonesian bodies. Unlike the other men's lifestyle magazines that were available during the second period, the management (exercise and grooming) regimes of male bodies were not major narratives in *Matra*. Most of the articles discuss general knowledge topics, such as history, politics, biography and other contemporary issues, for example the effects of globalization and advertisements. Despite that fact that *Matra* itself circulated until mid-2007, I propose the second period started in 2001. The launch of *Men's Health Indonesia* in September 2001 marked a new era in the discourse of men's lifestyle magazines. Westernized body management regimes were heavily featured by the magazines that circulated during this period. Importantly, this does not only apply to those internationally-based publications, but also to the specifically Indonesian-based magazine *Da Man*. Indeed, the first edition of *Men's Health Indonesia* (September 2001), *Esquire Indonesia* (March 2007), *Da Man* (May 2007), *Best Life Indonesia* (November 2008), *Fitness for Men Indonesia* (August 2011), and *Men's Folio Indonesia* (April 2013) all portrayed western bodies on their front covers – both Hollywood figures and professional models.

Being part of an international edition does not make magazines such as *Esquire Indonesia*, *Best Life Indonesia* and *Men's Health Indonesia* adhere to the use of the same editorial layout as a United States edition (their country of origin). They are allowed to create different editorial content that is deemed more suited to the local market. However, Hollywood figures occupy most of the front cover space of *Esquire Indonesia*, *Best Life Indonesia* and *Men's Health Indonesia*. This principle is also demonstrated in *Men's Folio Indonesia* – a Singapore based magazine marketed in Indonesia and Malaysia – and *Da Man* – an Indonesian-based magazine with an Asian market (although printed

in English). In its media kit, *Da Man* highlights the importance of the US and Hollywood to its positioning as follows:

DA MAN provides its highly-educated, discerning readers the latest news on the hottest trends in fashion, luxury, art and design, and much more. With a creative team based in the US, DA MAN has a strong link to Hollywood. This link gives DA MAN the edge of being one of the first titles publicists seek [out] to extend the exposure of Hollywood's who's who in Asia. ("About DA MAN" 2016)

Both *Da Man*'s emphasis on the central importance of Hollywood in its branding strategy and *Men's Folio Indonesia*'s excessive portrayal of the western body indicate the United States' superiority as the role model for a modern lifestyle.

Indonesian-based magazines aimed at the local markets, such as *Fitness for Men Indonesia* and *Men's Obsession*, relatively speaking portray more Indonesian figures on their front covers. However, they both still heavily perpetuate the western body as the ideal masculine body. Even though Indonesian figures appear more frequently than Hollywood figures on *Fitness for Men Indonesia*'s front covers, most of them are Indonesian *blasteran* figures with a six-pack, and a muscular, mesomorph body. In 17 editions spanning the period from the first edition (August 2011) to December 2012, more than 50% of *Fitness For Men Indonesia*'s editions used Hollywood and *blasteran* figures on their front covers, whilst only five editions featured Indonesian figures – a fact that contradicts *Fitness for Men Indonesia*'s stated editorial aims. Before it became *Fitness for Men Indonesia*, the magazine was part of *Men's Fitness* (international edition), which was originally published in the United States. *Men's Fitness Indonesia* was first published in 2008; however, in order to be both more independent and more compatible with the local market, the Indonesian publisher and editorial team decided to end *Men's Fitness Indonesia*, instead publishing *Fitness for Men Indonesia* in August 2011. Although they still put *Indonesia* in their title as found in the internationally-based magazine until April 2014, *Fitness for Men Indonesia* is now an Indonesian-based magazine.

Compared with the other men's lifestyle magazines from the second period, only *Men's Obsession* has had more realistic representations of the Indonesian male body on its front cover. Participating in the same market as *Best Life Indonesia* – targeting the upper-class, mature reader – *Men's Obsession* uses Indonesian socialites on its front cover: political leaders and business tycoons, as well as government figures. *Men's Obsession* employs this formula intentionally in order to position itself in a national context, in contrast to other westernized magazines. Since its first edition in January 2004, *Men's Obsession* has consistently featured Indonesian figures on its front covers – a marketing strategy adopted in order to address the absence in the marketplace of men's lifestyle magazines focusing upon national figures. As mentioned in its media kit: "We [*Men's Obsession*] exist in order to give a different perspective and to fill the void in the sector [national magazines] in Indonesia's mass media market by consistently presenting national figures" ("About Us" 2016). Unlike other men's lifestyle magazines, *Men's Obsession* does not use excessive digital alteration in order to create idealized western bodies. However, other westernized bodily practices are still heavily supported by *Men's Obsession* – an area to which I will turn in the forthcoming sections.

In terms of physical characteristics, Indonesian men have a tendency to be shorter in comparison to western men. Data from the Indonesian Life Family Survey conducted in 2007/2008 by RAND – the Center for Population and Policy Studies of the University of Gajah Mada – and a survey conducted by METER, revealed that the average height of Indonesian men is 1.62 meters. This sample is representative of about 83% of the Indonesian population (OECD 2011, 80). However, because according to the magazines, the western body represents the ideal body, a taller stature inevitably becomes marked as the superior body shape. Indeed, Sohn (2016) reported a positive correlation

between height and happiness in Indonesia. Drawing from the Indonesian Life Family Survey, he observed that taller men are happier than their shorter counterparts. In this context, it is therefore unsurprising that a wide range of practices aimed at increasing height are available on the Indonesian market. These practices take the form of both modern and alternative medicines; the use of devices specially designed to increase body height; doing exercises that are believed to increase body height; and joining special programs tailored for shorter individuals who want to be taller. Special vitamins (*Zevit grow*) and dairy products (*HiLo*) are advertised as able to help the body grow taller. Both of these products' advertising strategies target male teenagers, a fact that implicates a taller body as an important factor in the well-being of young men. A young man with a taller body is destined to be a popular and confident teenager – a devoted son with a bright future. However, his shorter counterpart will fail to be popular, lack confidence, and will have to try harder to be a devoted son, whilst most of the time being ignored by others – especially girls. Unlike being muscular and having a lighter skin tone – narratives that are clearly supported by the magazines as representing the ideal body – the magazines never overtly mention being taller as an ideal. None of the articles and advertisements discuss how to increase your height – in a way similar to that in which women's magazines never write articles on how to increase breast size. However, by predominantly using western male bodies as pictorial representations of the ideal masculine body with the full knowledge that western males are, relatively speaking, taller than Indonesian males, the magazines still suggest to the reader that being tall is the norm.

Whilst it may be true that as Asians, Indonesian men are relatively speaking shorter, smaller and darker, beneath that knowledge lies a deeper power struggle between the categories. As Hall, Evans, and Nixon (2013) point out, the power of any representational practice resides in its ability to produce “truth” through the construction of “otherness” and exclusion, as well as stereotyping. These practices set up meta-structures between short and tall, small and big, white and black, thereby defining the normal and the abnormal, the acceptable and the unacceptable, the attractive and the unattractive, and other superior-inferior oppositions. The magazines' practices are not limited to the ways in which they posit western bodies as the epitome of the ideal man; they also extend to other bodily practices that men have to perform, as will be examined in the following section.

Westernized bodily practices as a superior habitus for Indonesian men

In order to examine how the magazines' editorial practices are able to create particular discourses to which men then find themselves subject, I will use Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital. Within the field of contemporary narratives of masculinity in Indonesia, the western world is the standard. Men's magazines provide a rationale by which Indonesian men determine what is to be valued as cultural or social capital. In the magazines' narratives, the western body provides the ultimate cultural capital via which men lay claim to their modern habitus. According to Bourdieu (1993), capital is a resource that is the object of struggle within fields, functioning as a social relation of power. The concept of field is a metaphor for domains of social life (Bourdieu 1993, 73; see also Smith 2001; Swartz 1997 as quoted in Coles 2009). Moreover, men's acquired capital produces their particular predisposition – a set of prescribed, embodied inclinations, or habitus. Habitus thus lies beyond consciousness; it is a practice that was nurtured because of one's capital, and mass media are part of the supporting system of the nurturing environment.

Turow (2009) examines the mass media's ability to direct people's attention; to tell them what is important in the social world and provide a rationale to support it. It is via this mechanism that men's magazines define what constitutes legitimate or valued capital in the field of masculinity.

Their ability to define the visual order and its framing creates representations in which the western body becomes the necessary capital that is required to build westernized bodily practices as symbols of a superior habitus for men.

The first and foremost westernized bodily practice supported by the men's magazine is the use of the suit as the epitome of the modern masculine man. The front cover of *Matra*'s first edition featured men in suits. In Indonesia, the suit first became the symbol of the modern man, only later coming to represent the modern "masculine" man. The suit was introduced by the Dutch during colonialism, and became known as the clothing of the elite. Even today in Indonesia, the suit is widely accepted as the dress code for politicians, bureaucrats, CEO's and other "important" people. Indeed, official pictures of both the president and vice president always show them wearing suits. Articles featuring work and careers found in the sample magazines from the earliest (1986) to the latest (2015), always portray men in suits. In the same way that the man in the suit appears as the epitome of the modern middle-class man, the suit itself has become a marker of the distinction between the "have" and "have-nots" in Indonesian society. Interestingly, as a magazine that specifically intended to give more coverage to national figures in response to the heavy coverage of western figures in other men's lifestyle magazines, *Men's Obsession* also supports this practice. In their narrative, suits are consistently associated with successful figures, in combination with special lighting techniques used to give the impression of a lighter skin tone.

The second westernized bodily practice is defined by men's longing for western products. Western male bodies have become naturalized in the discourse of magazines through the bodily practices of others. All of the sample magazines feature fashion "advertorial" sections as part of their regular format, in which they advertise fashion items and brands in an editorial style of reportage – a technique that intentionally blurs the line between commercial and editorial opinions. As an example, one of the advertorial sections in *Esquire Indonesia*'s June 2014 edition contains three full-page reports on watches. One of the articles, entitled "Strong Choices – From the Outset We Know the Identity," uses an interview-style editorial layout in order to normalize its commercial nature. The interview was conducted with the managing director of Audemars Piguet, discussing issues surrounding the characteristics, design, and technology of the watches, as well as the brand's reputation in general.⁴ A large number of advertorial sections are also found in *Da Man*, *Best Life Indonesia* and *Men's Folio Indonesia*. The titles of their advertorial sections – "News" in *Da Man*, "Best Report" in *Best Life Indonesia* and "Report" in *Men's Folio Indonesia* – demonstrate how commercial opinions become naturalized in the discourse of these magazines. Only a limited number of local product advertisements were found in the sample magazines, whilst advertorial sections were focused entirely on western brand-name products, such as Bvlgari, Dolce and Gabbana, Dior, Omega, and other luxury brands. These editorial choices, which are found across the magazines, show how important it is for the male body to look western, not only in its physicality, but also via its product choices – thus endorsing the innate compatibility of western bodies and western brands. Every foreign brand advertising in the magazines does so by utilizing western models. No Indonesian, either male or female, models are used to advertise western brands. Indeed, in order to add value to a particular product, the use of western bodies can be viewed as essential. This pervasive use of non-Indonesian models is illustrated perfectly by a fashion article dedicated to the promotion of genuine Indonesian products, entitled "*Made in Indonesia*" and published in *Fitness for Men Indonesia*'s first anniversary edition of August 2012 – it was endorsed by a western model.

The last, but definitely not the least, westernized bodily practice that is heavily promoted by the magazines is the adoption of a western lifestyle. Across a variety of content – ranging from dating and sex, career, diet, grooming and sport, to dining and style guides – westernized lifestyle practices

are normalized by the magazines. Several research projects remark upon the media's ability to exert its greatest effect with regard to the westernization of Indonesian society (Budiman 2002; Lasminah 2001; Prianti 2012; Prianti 2013; Utomo and McDonald 2008). Increased access to modern media and the ownership of economic capital make the Indonesian middle class the most visible targets for westernization. Indeed, various researches touch upon the issue of westernization and modernization in Indonesia, arguing that the young middle class in contemporary urban Indonesia is becoming more open and liberal in the ways they express both their identity and their sexual behavior (Utomo 1997; Utomo and McDonald 2008). Unlike in more liberal countries, in an Indonesian context, dating and having a relationship do not necessarily mean that the two parties are involved in a sexual relationship – sex is not something to be easily discussed in public. In Indonesia, the general public believe that sex is only supposed to take place between married couples. Both premarital sex and displays of public affection are considered taboo and thus culturally prohibited, especially in rural areas largely inhabited by more traditional and conservative Indonesians. Those who violate these rules will suffer social punishments such as social exclusion, potentially tarnishing the family reputation, and even being paraded around the neighborhood. However, the more modern, urban societies now emerging in Indonesia have less conservative attitudes in expressing their sexual behavior. In 2010, an internet sex tape scandal involving young pop stars and soap stars erupted in Indonesia. This was the first high-profile case that was charged under the controversial anti-pornography bill passed one year before. The fact that premarital sex is against the cultural views of much of the country's population ensured that the case attracted intense coverage from both national and international media such as *China Post*, *National Turk* and *The Australian*.

During the first period of men's magazines in Indonesia, *Matra* only discussed sexual relationships that are conducted between married couples in its sex segment – both articles and question-answer segments – as is implied by its use of the words “husband and wife.” These features are always in a text-only format with no model illustration attached. As an example of the type of question featured in *Matra*'s question-answer segment – which is guided by a sexologist – there is a letter from a man with a sexual problem who is afraid of not being able to satisfy his wife (May 1989 edition). In contrast, men's lifestyle magazines that are available during the second period present a different perspective in the way they frame men's sexual behavior. Articles discussing sex dwell on issues such as how to please women; how to achieve the ultimate pleasure; and how to get good sex daily. *Men's Obsession* is the only magazine from the sample that chooses not to run articles about sex as part of its editorial. Both *Men's Health Indonesia* and *Fitness for Men Indonesia* suggest the importance of having the ideal body in order to achieve good sexual performance. Unlike in *Matra*, segments concerned with sex are not only accompanied by model illustrations, but also exclusively feature Caucasoid couples, implying that sexual freedom is demonstrative of a western lifestyle. Sex thus becomes another arena in which the male body can exercise its masculinity – an arena that is defined by western ideals.

Having great sex is part of the modern habitus – something that the male body has to master. *Esquire Indonesia* consistently features interview articles with women who believe men's sexual performance is an important asset that they will take into consideration when choosing partners. The importance of premarital sex as a defining component of westernized masculinity can also be seen through the ways in which the magazines frame their content. *Fitness for Men Indonesia* included a sex segment titled “Don't Be a Foolish Man in Bed” in the August 2012 edition, consisting of nine guides for men suggesting how to increase their chance of having sex after dating. One of the guides reads as follows:

Treat her like a porn star: if your life is like a porn movie then each time you go clubbing, you will end up in a sex party. But your date will not want to be treated like a porn star, so don't ask her to do strange things. Especially if this is your first opportunity to sleep with her. (*Fitness for Men* 2012, 85–86)

Hence, sex is no longer something sacred between a married couple. Rather, it is a skill that should be sharpened through experiences with the “she” (*si dia*). Rather than using “wife,” the word “she” is commonly used in articles related to sex to refer to one's sexual partner.⁵ In this way, the magazines still have the ability to promote their message without upsetting the general public.

As a nation with a long history of struggle against colonialism, many Indonesians have negative feelings towards any values that openly contradict traditional values and local customs, which are considered part of westernization or neo-colonialism. However, as I discussed earlier, different attitudes towards westernization coexist, and the general view does not always represent everyone's opinion. In April 2006, the first *Playboy Indonesia* magazine was published, specially created to take into account local customs – with no nudity, especially no photographs of nude women. Despite tailoring the magazine to local sensibilities and the decision to feature interviews with Indonesia's most famous author and dissident novelist, the magazine's premiere issue still caused significant controversy, resulting in the charging of the editor-in-chief and the premiere issue's model with violating the indecency provisions of the criminal code (*The New York Times*, 24 July 2006).

Other westernized bodily practices can also be seen in the dress and style narratives contained within the magazines. The use of fragrances and the wearing of watches represent major bodily practices constitutive of a desirable masculinity according to the magazines – in a similar way that wearing lipstick and carrying a purse does for women. Indeed, fragrances and watches provide the major advertorials and the largest volume of advertisements found in the magazines, especially for *Men's Folio Indonesia*, *Da Man*, *Esquire Indonesia* and *Best Life Indonesia*. Fragrances and watches are thus both part of men's modern habitus. In the context of watches, Indonesian men used to practice a very different habitus, one that is related to their perception of time. Indonesia has a tropical climate with two seasons – the dry and the rainy season – with hot and humid temperatures all year. Unlike countries with four seasons, which have daylight saving time, the time in Indonesia is more predictable and not subject to large daily differences. Sunrise and sunset occur at almost exactly the same time throughout the year. Further to this, mosques will play the *adhan* five times a day at almost the same time every day, which makes time easily predictable even without a watch.⁶ It is a common practice for social gathering invitations, especially in Java, not to mention time in an exact manner, as is modern practice – such as “19:00” or “7pm.” Rather, time is specified by estimation, such as *bada isya* (“after *ishaa*”).⁷ Whilst modern discourse suggests that men should value time as a scarce and valuable commodity, in Indonesia, time was historically seen as flexible and adaptable. Indonesian men used to spend hours gathering socially with other men in their community – ranging from doing community night watch, special ceremonies related to the death of relatives or neighbors, or just “hanging out” in a modest coffee shop. These practices are important for men in order to build bonds with other men in the community. However, as Indonesia became modernized and westernized, fewer men see the importance of these practices, especially in urban areas and big cities. Yet both fragrances and watches are marketed as if they add value to men's identity. Both commodities are framed as if they have personalities that men should want to be associated with. Fragrances are no longer needed only to mask body odor; they are specifically required in order for men to build their identity. Watches are not worn only in order to keep track of time; they also accentuate a man's personality.

As mentioned earlier with regard to Moran's work on identity and capitalism, the western concept of identity is highly marketable. This same logic is also applied to other male consumer behaviors. It

is within these particular bodily practices that men realize their identity. They come to know their macho personality through the fragrance they use. They find their elegant and sophisticated nature in the watch they choose to wear. They realize their hardworking habit through their body shape. They are aware of their intellectual prowess from the suit they are wearing. Hence, men's identities reside in their choices of commodities and clothes, lifestyle and other consumer behaviors – all rooted firmly in western narratives. The ideal male body is also associated with supposedly superior western characteristics of masculinity. The ideal well-groomed body is associated with hard work, is highly determined and disciplined, and thus stands as proof of a man's control over his life. Hence, masculinity is attainable through a man's ability to fulfill his bodily needs via a set of bodily practices – doing exercises, grooming, dieting, dating and working. These practices are all wholly transient in nature – temporal, such as wealth, beauty and everything in life which by its essence passes with time. Following the magazines' primary discourse – one that strongly reflects modern narratives – men's devotion to their exteriority lies at the core of the ideal masculine body. Men's exteriority – physical characteristics, clothes, gadgets, and other visible qualities – constitutes men's capital, allowing them to articulate a modern western habitus and to gain a superior position in the field of masculinity in relation to their peers.

Unlike modern narratives, Indonesians used to exercise a very different kind of bodily practice in order to tame temporality. Temporality was seen as something misleading in life. Indeed, a superior man was traditionally one who was able to control his worldly passions as well as his emotions by exercising a discreet manner, being wise, and presenting a composed personality (Prianti 2017). Throughout Indonesia's history, different beliefs pertaining to the origins of life have been practiced, however, atheism was never one of them. The afterlife is a common societal narrative and influences the country's philosophical foundation – *Pancasila*.⁸ As written in *Indonesia 1996: An Official Handbook* (as quoted in Embassy of The Republic of Indonesia Bucharest-Romania 2016), the first *Sila* “Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa” – “Belief in The One and Only God” – implies the importance of the pursuit of sacred values in order to get a better life in the hereafter.⁹ Therefore, special meditation, fasting, daily prayer and other less transient rituals are commonly practiced by Indonesians. The most common ritual practiced by Indonesians today is *puasa*. The word means intentionally not eating and drinking, as in abstention – to resist or to abandon something. According to Hidayat (as quoted in Hellman 2009, 61), the word *puasa* itself comes from Sanskrit, meaning controlling the self. In Indonesia, fasting does not only belong to the private sphere, but also enters the public sphere, including the political field. During his presidential time, the third president of Indonesia, Habibie, asked Indonesian citizens to join him in sacrificing for the nation by fasting twice a week in order to save rice and thus strengthen the nation (Scott 1998). Moreover, in terms of masculinity, according to indigenous Indonesian beliefs, one is rewarded for disciplining bodily desire with religious power, known as *kesaktian*. Fasting is perceived to be a way of achieving goals in social as well as political life. However, one must control personal emotions, bodily functions, and basic needs (Hellman 2009, 62). Resisting the body's basic needs, such as food, sleep, sex and other physical matters, allows one to control the use of the body and to be empowered. In this sense, rather than being subjected to material desire, men's agency relies on their ability to control it.

Conclusion

It has become clear how the identity project works together with the logic of consumerism as an inherent component of capitalism. Important processes of self-actualization – as a means by

which to mark one's unique individuality – are fully supported by the practices of consumerism. Even though the identity project, as illustrated in the foregoing, was not fully compatible with pre-modern Indonesian narratives, in a contemporary modern context Indonesia has adopted a completely different narrative – one that has moved toward capitalism. This shift has allowed new notions of identity to flourish. Men's lifestyle magazines are one of the key agents in introducing and promoting this western identity project. They have normalized westernized bodily practices as defining parts of men's social and cultural capital in order to articulate a western habitus.

This habitus is not only important to a man's sense of individual identity, but also establishes a certain discourse of otherness. The way the magazines build their narrative suggests that only western-looking men are compatible with the modern habitus, and therefore they alone become and exhibit the epitome of westernized bodily practices. Conversely, the "other" body merely serves as a perfect example of everything that the magazines despise – something that men should not aspire to. The magazines' visual order suggests that the "other" body is something that should be improved – locked in a permanent state of becoming. The western masculine body is thus presented as something that men can achieve through a series of demanding exercises and compulsory practices. According to the discourse advocated in the magazines, men's bodies are regulated by, and subjected to, modern discourses of masculinity, and this is in reality the only option available to men if they are to acquire contemporary, westernized notions of masculinity. Fulfilling the body's needs has become the essence of men's agency; an idea that is very much rooted in modern, western discourse. This idea is in radical opposition to the indigenous knowledge and belief that the ability to control one's physical needs is what constitutes an individual's agency.

Notes

1. I use the term "manliness" in order to refer to the idea of being a man. I intentionally did not use the word "masculinity," as I precisely aim to problematize the origins of what has come to be known as "masculinity" in Indonesia.
2. I use the terms "Indonesian" and "internationally-based" in order to categorize the sample magazines based on their countries of origin. The first group refer to men's magazines that have their origins within Indonesia and have local editorial teams that are based in Indonesia, even though they circulate internationally. The latter group of men's magazines originate from a foreign country and have their headquarters located in that country of origin, but have a local editorial team in order to publish their Indonesian editions.
3. Both *Trans TV* and *Net TV* are major national television channels in Indonesia, both with wide coverage areas.
4. Audemars Piguet is a manufacturer of Swiss luxury watches.
5. *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Language) uses general pronouns to refer to both male and female persons. The word *si dia* does not necessarily refer to a female person. However, from the picture, illustration and description used in the article, I took the liberty to conclude that the person in question is a she. Given that same-sex relationships are against cultural views, it would not be possible for the Indonesian media to explicitly promote this kind of message editorially.
6. *Adhan* is the call for Muslims to do their mandatory daily prayer five times per day. A *muezzin* calls *adhan* from the minaret of a mosque.
7. *Ishaa* is the evening prayer – one of the five times of Muslim daily prayer. *Bada isya* means around 7.00 pm.
8. The word *Pancasila* is derived from Sanskrit: *panca* means five, and *sila* means principle. Together they constitute the basic philosophical principles of Indonesia.
9. The original phrase in *Bahasa Indonesia* is *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (YME) and it is always written with capital letters.

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Notes on contributor

Desi Dwi Prianti is a PhD candidate in Utrecht University, the Netherlands. She is also a lecturer in the communication department of the University of Brawijaya in Indonesia. Her main research focus is upon men and masculinity in contemporary Indonesia. Since 2012 she has been engaged in research on the topic of contemporary societal change in Indonesia, focusing on the effects of modernization, media portrayal, and gender relations – with specific emphasis on the post-colonial experience.

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