

Voices from the Margins: Street Children's Subcultures in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT *Indonesia has a proliferation of children living on the streets of its larger cities. To the state and dominant society, they are perceived as committing a social violation. In response to their marginalisation and subordination, street children in Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia, have developed a 'repertoire of strategies' in order to survive. These include the appropriation of urban niches within the city, in which they create collective solutions for the dilemmas they confront in their everyday lives. This paper discusses a street boy community that exists within these marginal spaces: the Tikyan subculture of Yogyakarta. It presents the Tikyan subculture as a technique for street children to resist the negative stereotypes which are given to them by mainstream society. As they get older and become increasingly alienated by society, the Tikyan actively reject their 'deviant' label, and decorate street life so that it becomes agreeable in their eyes. This is achieved by deviating from dominant styles of dress and conventional behaviour, and through the development of a specific symbolic identity. These symbolic challenges to the dominant culture are communicated and dispersed within the social group and conveyed to the world via the subculture's 'specialised semiotic': their style of dress; their acts of bodily subversion or dissent (in the form of tattoos, body piercing and sexual practices); the music they play and listen to; and their use of drugs and alcohol. I describe these practices as the Tikyan's obligatory performances, and the expected ways of behaving in order to remain accepted by the group.*

Introduction

Stop. We greet you as liberators. This 'we' is that 'us' in the margins, that 'we' who inhabit marginal space that is not a site of domination but a place of resistance. Enter that space ... I am speaking from a place in the margins where I am different, where I see things differently (hooks, 1990, p. 152).

Street children in Indonesia exist on the margins of mainstream society. The majority of children visibly working on the streets are boys between the ages of seven and 18. There are also girls, although they are not so visible or as numerous.¹ In the eyes of the state and dominant society, these children are seen to be committing a social violation, as their very presence contradicts state ideological discourse on family values, ideas about public

order and what it means to be a 'child'. Often, they are stigmatised and presented (by the state and media) in a derogatory and negative light as work-shy, drug-crazed, antisocial delinquents, pressed by adults into crime. Alternatively, they are over-romanticised by the press and charity groups as pitiful victims abandoned by their families and unable to look after themselves. As a result of these stereotypes, street children are often 'cleaned up' from the streets, and face the very real threat of arrest, imprisonment and in some extreme cases torture and extermination (Beazley, 2000a).

Elsewhere I have written about how children living on the streets have managed to respond to their social and spatial oppression geographically (Beazley, 2000a, 2002). In particular, I have shown how as a response to their marginalisation and subordination, street children in the city of Yogyakarta, central Java, have developed 'geographies of resistance' in order to survive (see Pile and Keith, 1997). These geographies have included the appropriation of 'urban niches' within the city, in which they can earn money, feel safe and survive (Beazley, 2000a).

In this paper, I discuss how, in addition to this 'winning of space', it is *within* these marginal spaces that the children have created a collective solution for the dilemmas they confront in their everyday lives. As Massey (1998, p. 128) tells us in respect of the spatial construction of youth cultures, 'the construction of spatiality can be an important element in building a social identity'. For street children, the spaces they have carved out for themselves in the city of Yogyakarta—bus stops, public toilets, traffic intersections, railway stations, pavements, parks, markets and spaces under bridges—have become territories in which identities are constructed, and where alternative communities have formed (Beazley, 2000a). They are what Scott (1990, p. 119) terms 'off stage social sites in which resistance is developed and codified', and where the 'hidden transcript grows'. The 'hidden transcript' for street boys is an oppositional subculture, the *Tikyan*, which has its own patterns of behaviour and a discernible system of values and beliefs.

The aim of this paper is to give an ethnographic and theoretical account of the way in which a street boy subculture, the *Tikyan*, is able to resist state control on the streets of Yogyakarta. *Tikyan* means 'street kid' in their own creative language, and is a name used with pride to refer to their own surrogate family. The *Tikyan* subculture is exclusively for street boys, and street girls are deliberately excluded from the group.² Socialization to the *Tikyan*'s norms and values is a complex process, and occurs through the construction and protection of individual and collective street child identities, which are essential to a street child's survival.³ In this paper I focus on a semiotic analysis of the *Tikyan*, including their 'styles of belonging' which are essential for developing positive self identities and for remaining accepted by the group. These include their clothing, bodily styles (including tattoos and body piercing), and masculine-defined rituals such as drinking and drug taking. I present these styles as a technique for the children to further resist their social and spatial exclusion, and to counteract the negative perceptions held by the state and mainstream society who view them as a social pariah infesting the streets (Beazley, 2000a). As Ruddick (1998, p. 345) found among homeless youth in Hollywood, it is in this way that street youth in Indonesia have 'developed a social identity to confront their stigma'. Also akin to Ruddick's findings, I show how the *Tikyan* subculture 'serves to remind us that these youth are not solely victims but ... are *creative subjects* in the environments in which they live' (Ruddick, 1998, p. 348). (Original emphasis).

My entry point into the street-child world was through the street-boy non-governmental organisation (NGO) *Girli* in Yogyakarta,⁴ where I spent 18 months working as a volunteer and conducting fieldwork. My research in the field took a qualitative approach by asking the children to participate directly in an investigation of

their lives. The methods I applied included informal interviews, participant observation on the street and participatory action research activities, including role-playing, drama improvisation, spontaneous drawings and 'mental maps' drawn by the children (Matthews, 1992; Swart, 1990; Johnson *et al.*, 1995, 1996; Baker, 1996; Chawla and Kjørholt, 1996; Hart, 1996; Chambers, 1997). Empirical data were also collated through focus-group discussions. Conversations were related to the children's reasons for leaving home; relationships with their families; friendships on the street; issues related to work; attitudes to society; problems with police, security guards and others on the street; drug and alcohol dependence; tattoos; sexual practices; and their relationships with NGOs. All these methods and convergent research strategies were ideal catalysts for informal conversation interviews, and often led to further discussions about other aspects of the children's lives (Beazley, 1999).

The theoretical framework for this paper draws James's (1986) work on 'symbolising boundaries' and the body as a medium of expression among children and adolescents. Throughout my analysis I also use the theoretical frameworks of post-structural and subcultural theorists from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham.⁵ Recently, this work has been expanded upon by academics from a variety of disciplines, including cultural geographers (Blackman, 1995, 1998; Thornton, 1995; Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995; Muggleton, 1997; Wyn and White, 1997; Breitbart, 1998; Leonard, 1998; Ruddick, 1998; Skelton and Valentine, 1998). Drawing on Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, Levi-Strauss's notion of *bricolage* and homology, Eco's semiotics and Marx's theories of class, ideology and commodity fetishism, the CCCS researchers adopted a neo-Marxist approach, and combined empirical studies of British youth subcultures (specifically Mods, Punks, Teds and Rockers) as a way of explaining the forms of rebellion and resistance by particular youth groups (Stahl, 1999).

In this paper, I expand on the CCCS work by drawing on Scott's (1990) concept of the 'elite choreographed public transcript' to explain the means by which the Indonesian state exercises ideological hegemony and maintains power and domination over subordinate groups. The paper describes how street children resist this 'public transcript' and subvert dominant discourse by forming oppositional lifestyles and their own 'hidden transcript' or subculture as a form of resistance to state power.

One of the main criticisms of the CCCS approach is its lack of ethnographic data to support its theory. It has also been accused of being too focused on white, male, working-class youth. By studying the *Tikyan*, this paper will contribute to the development of more ethnographic examples by considering the lifestyles of a homeless group of street children and youth in the developing world as an oppositional subculture. Further, there is a dearth of rigorous academic research on homeless children in Indonesia, and very little knowledge about their everyday lives, or their intrinsic qualities and characteristics, particularly from the child's perspective. Therefore, I present an analysis of Yogyakarta's street children and youth culture, particularly the existence and maintenance of a distinct, street-child social world—an urban subculture within Indonesian society.

'Resistance'?

In his discussion of the CCCS and its application of resistance theory as the basis for youth studies, Blackman (1998, p. 211) states that the problem lies not with resistance theory *per se*, but in the way youth studies became:

... theory-led, with only a thin basis in empirical data collection. Thus resistance as

a theoretical concept has as its major weakness a thin foundation in empirical work, upon which grand theoretical constructions have been erected.

Following Blackman (1998), I argue that the term 'resistance' is ethnographically useful for exploring the *Tikyan*'s different performances because it shows their genuine degree of struggle and opposition with respect to the social and physical oppression to which they are exposed on the street. As mentioned, the Indonesian state and the majority of society often construct street children to be deviant criminals, or passive victims of a ruthless society (Beazley, 1999, 2000a, 2002). In a similar way to Blackman's 'New Wave Girls', the *Tikyan* have been able to carve out and occupy specific territories on the street, despite their social and spatial marginalisation, and seek to present themselves as cultural occupiers and social definers within those spaces.

An analysis of street children as a resistant subculture involves an inquiry into the process through which they forge their social world within these territories by developing street identities and relations as a 'distinctive way of life' embodied in beliefs, customs, social relations and particular patterns of behaviour (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). Such an inquiry includes: work activities; leisure activities; peer-group formation, conflicts and pressures; norms and values; socialisation and construction of identities; and ideas of individuality and freedom.⁶ It also requires a semiotic analysis of the children's and youth's subculture, including their system of style, dress, slang, gestures and rituals, and how they 'live out' their daily practices (Cohen, 1972; Hebdige, 1979; Blackman, 1995; Thornton, 1996).

Agency Matters

As Ruddick (1998, p. 345) has asserted, '*agency matters*' (emphasis in original), particularly when the object is 'those people who are denied agency in all but the most banal forms: adolescents. When discussing street children and youth, it is important to focus on their agency, in order to challenge those commentators who present them within simple 'banal' binary terms, as victim or delinquent. As Lucchini (1993, p. 16) says of street children in Latin America:

The definition of the street child only in terms of 'victimization' or of delinquency leads to a reduced conception of a reality which is in fact far more complex. This dichotomy generates the stigmatization of the child.

It is essential to view street children's actions and motivations as complex and diverse, depending on the situation they find themselves in, and the people with whom they interact. It is also necessary to recognise that street children and youth possess multiple and fluid identities which shift depending on their circumstances, the spaces they occupy and their daily interactions (Beazley, 2000a). Thus, even though their lives are regularly portrayed in a negative way, and as a 'problem' which needs a solution, their decision to leave an impoverished, boring or abusive home should, in fact, be understood as the child's own solution to a personal predicament. As Hebdige (1979) asserts, 'Each subcultural "instance" represents a "solution" to particular problems and contradictions'.

Street children do not lack agency, therefore, but take responsibility for their own actions and have some control over their lives. I see the creation of street-children identities and the maintenance of their own subcultures as a response to their stigmatisation, and a solution to the variety of problems they face in a world which is hostile to their very existence, rather than as a problem. This is particularly true as they get older, reach adolescence and find that society begins to react to them differently to

when they were young and 'cute'. Brake (1980), for example, states that subcultures are often an attempt to resolve collectively experienced problems arising from contradictions in the social structure, alienation in society and harassment by the law. He says that they appeal to those who feel that they have been rejected, and provide an alternative social reality and status system which offer 'rallying points' and 'symbols of solidarity' (Brake, 1980, p. 175).

The socialisation to a subculture helps a young person redefine negative self-concepts by offering a collective identity and a reference group from which to develop a new individual identity and face the outside world (Beazley, 2003a). A community of children living on the streets who have similar background problems and experiences can provide new children on the street with comfort, support and vital knowledge for survival. For example, Ennew (1994, pp. 409–410) notes how street children, in the absence of parents, bring each other up and 'develop supportive networks, coping strategies and meaningful relationships outside adult supervision and control'.

Similarly, in Yogyakarta, seasoned street children help to socialise newcomers to the street and the *Tikyan* social identity. The socialisation provides new children with peer support and survival skills as well as a collective identity that assists them in their construction of a new, positive self-image (Beazley, 2003a).

Social Relations

The *Tikyan* subculture offers children who have fled home a new identity as street children. As they construct their new, collective identities, the children are also expected to adopt appropriate attitudes, values and perspectives, in order to conform to established street etiquette and be accepted as a member of the group. Once a boy joins the *Tikyan*, he is constantly watched and appraised by the other children, who discuss his behaviour and his ability to survive on the street. A child is assessed for his attitude, independence, masculinity, strength of character and apparent adaptability to the street. The assessment, which is particularly intense when a boy first joins a street-child community, is a constant process that ensures conformity within the group. As Scott (1990, p. 130) has noted, among 'subordinate groups' these 'pressures for conformity' are expressing the 'shared ideal of solidarity' to protect the 'collective interest of the group'.

For newcomers, the early period is marked by trial and error as they gradually learn the expectations of the street-child community. These are the fundamental values which the *Tikyan* adhere to in their daily lives. They include their attitudes, rules, beliefs and forms of communication within the group, as well as relationships with others on the street.

Subcultural Capital

In trying to make sense of the values and hierarchies of the street-child community, it is helpful to heed Thornton (1995, pp. 10–11), who draws on Bourdieu (1991) and his work on 'cultural capital' to suggest that a similar system exists within a subculture,⁷ where 'subcultural capital' confers status on the owner 'in the eyes of the relevant beholder'. She further asserts that there are particular spaces in which these subcultural distinctions hold their sway. In this way, subcultural capital can be objectified (in fashion or belongings) or embodied in 'being in the know', or being 'cool'. Within a street-child subculture, doing the right work, speaking the recognised slang, being street-wise and displaying the expected attitudes are all forms of subcultural capital.

Work and Survival

Street children take enormous pride in earning their own money and not being dependent on anyone. A street child's work is strongly connected to his social identity and his feelings of self-worth and self-confidence. In Yogyakarta, there are distinct hierarchical levels and codes of ethics attached to all working activities, and older children will teach newcomers the rules of working on the street. As Visano (1990, p. 160) notes in Canada, 'experienced kids orient neophytes to various techniques of survival'. Once accepted into the *Tikyan* subculture, newcomers are taught how to earn money and survive by shoe-shining, busking, selling, parking cars or petty theft in the local market. They are also informed of the strict spatial territories in which they may operate.

The lowest level of work in the *Tikyan* hierarchy is begging. This is generally viewed as lowly and shaming, as it does not conform with the value of being independent. Also seen as a low-status job is scavenging (of plastic spoons, water bottles, cardboard boxes, tin cans, newspapers and clothes, which are resold or worn), although it has higher status than begging.

Shoe-shining is the most common profession among prepubescent street boys and can be highly lucrative, especially for those boys who play on the fact that they look cute, thus gaining sympathy from the general public. Despite its high returns, however, it is considered to be only for young boys, and they will stop when they feel they are too old, or when they are mocked by their peers. Street boys in Yogyakarta are also engaged in selling newspapers, bottled water, sweets and stationery; making and selling jewellery; and busking with guitars, drums, tambourines and *celek-celek* (a home-made rattle). Busking with guitars is at the top of the instrument and work hierarchies, and street boys take a lot of pride in playing their guitars as it confers a significant amount of subcultural capital. They busk along Malioboro, the main street of Yogyakarta, serenading people at the numerous night food-stalls. During the day, they busk at bus stops or on the city buses. Most young boys who want to stop shoe-shining desperately aspire to own a guitar, and will try to save up to buy one and move up the hierarchy.

As they reach adolescence, however, the *Tikyan* are increasingly marginalised by the outside world that no longer sees them as 'cute' but likens them to *preman* ('street thugs'). The transformation of street children's perceptions of their lives as they reach adolescence has been noted by a number of people working in the West as well as in developing countries (see Aptekar, 1988; Felsman, 1989; Visano, 1990; Boyden and Holden, 1991). James (1986, p. 155) in her examination of youth in the UK discusses how being an adolescent is in itself an incredibly difficult social experience for a child, as s/he enters a 'nothing' stage when s/he is neither an adult nor a child and 'is lost in between, belonging nowhere, being no one' (see also Sibley, 1995). This experience is particularly intense for a street child who has developed and cultivated his own distinct identity on the street, only to find that as he gets older things begin to change.

In Yogyakarta, the street children's perceptions of themselves and their lives changed as they got older (more specifically, when they reached 14 or 15 and began to look older physically). Younger children appeared to genuinely like being on the street, but as they reached puberty, they became more disenchanted, saying that they were bored with street life. One reason cited for this was that their adolescent appearance influences how society perceives them, and consequently impacts on their daily lives and how much money they earn. As one of the interviewees, Suvil, told me, when he was young, people thought he was cute, felt sorry for him and often gave him money and food. As he got older people became more 'suspicious' and alarmed by his presence. They saw him as a street thug and a threat (Suvil, 15, personal communication, April 1997). Aptekar (1988, p. 47) noted the same phenomenon among street children in Colombia:

The 'cute' image changed to a perception of older children as thugs. They were treated accordingly, with the nature of their street life inevitably and profoundly altered as a result.

Shoe-shining, for example, is a highly lucrative job for young boys, but it and begging go against the street code of ethics for older street children. This can be seen in the lament of one boy who was having trouble shifting his identity from cute shoe-shine boy to adolescent/young adult:

I want to be a shoe-shiner but I am too big. People don't like me any more and prefer smaller boys to shine their shoes. Now I am quite big and everything feels bitter, it's so difficult. I want to go back home, but I'm afraid of my mother and that she will beat me again (Supri, 15, personal communication, February 1996).

Visano (1990, p. 155) describes adolescence as a time when street children in North America undergo a 'career crisis'. It is when they have to confront 'reality shocks' about their way of life and 'begin to experience a sense of estrangement and frustration with their nomadic existence [as] the child's idealised image of the street clashes with their struggle for survival' (Visano, 1990, p. 156). This point, as Supri mentions above, is when street children often consider returning to mainstream society and/or going home. Typically, Visano (1990) says, this will happen after a child has been on the street for a year, although this is not the case in Indonesia, where children leave home much earlier than in the USA and can live for many years on the street before they become old enough to start experiencing 'reality shocks' about their situation. The dilemma that they do face, however—unlike street children in the West—is not being accepted or established in the community due to their inability to obtain an identity card, without which they cannot work.⁸ Further, having experienced the freedom of living and working on the streets, they are often unable to endure the strict discipline and time-keeping of home life or formal sector employment (see Beazley, 2000b). Abandonment of the street is difficult, and sometimes impossible, for children who have been on the street a long time, as it has become a central part of their lives and the way of life with which they are most familiar.⁹

In the subsequent section of this paper, I show how street youth actively respond to this increased alienation by deviating from dominant styles of dress and conventional behaviour, and developing a specific symbolic identity (see Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Brake, 1980, 1985; Scott, 1990; Willis, 1990). These symbolic challenges to the dominant culture are communicated and dispersed within the social group via the *Tikyan's* 'specialised semiotic' (Blackman, 1995). These are the *Tikyan's* 'main elements of style', which help to define their identity and make up their 'cultural map' (Willis, 1990, p. 15). They include their style of dress, their acts of bodily subversion or dissent (in the forms of tattoos, body-piercing and sexual practices), the music they play and listen to and their use of drugs and alcohol. They are what Thornton (1995) identifies as a subculture's 'capital'.

Homeless not Helpless

Once street children have decided to stay on the street, or find they have no other option, they rationalise it to themselves and one another via their 'socially approved vocabularies' (Visano, 1990, p. 145). Peer-group communication is particularly important in street boys' lives, and, due to their own requirements for personal survival, the children do not want to break that connection. Thus, to cope with their negative social environment, the *Tikyan* increasingly ignore and distance themselves from the criticisms

they receive from society by reinforcing communication and interaction with one another. They do this by drawing on their numerous values and ideologies, including group solidarity, and by creating and dispersing their own messages to counteract those from the mainstream. In this way, the children reinforce their loyalty to one another and immerse themselves in the subculture still further.

As their alienation intensifies, the *Tikyan* characteristics and messages develop and multiply among themselves until the children have a whole array of 'symbolic borders' to erect against mainstream society. These barriers are a response to their experience of exclusion, and are a form of 'symbolic defiance' and subversion of an outside world which prohibits them from participating in what it has to offer (see James, 1986; Scott, 1990). The barriers are also ways in which the kids are able to structure 'their own liminality' (James, 1986, p. 158), by reinforcing their difference, strengthening their boundaries and producing a collective identity and sense of belonging. These external identifying characteristics can be seen as the *Tikyan*'s specific subcultural capital or their 'signature' (Blackman, 1995, p. 52), with which the children reproduce feelings of solidarity, and thus ensure continued participation in the social group.

Bodily Tactics

Street boys in Yogyakarta use their primary site of identity—their own bodies—as vehicles for self-expression and the accumulation of subcultural capital. Harvey (2000, p. 116) notes that 'the "most irreducible locus for the determination of all values, meaning and significations", within ... marginal spaces is the human body, the "measure of all things"'. For street boys continually operating in (and shifting between) spaces at the margins, the one site that they do have some control over is their own bodies. Their bodies are surfaces on which they can express their difference and assert their defiance to state and society, and may be understood as conduits which enable their transgression and resistance (see Hebdige, 1979; Callard, 1998). By looking and acting differently the boys are deliberately shocking and rejecting the dominant culture and subverting mainstream norms as a tactic to advance their own claims. It is in this way that they represent a challenge to the state and its principle of conformity and myth of unity.

Subculture theorists view bodily style as an important aspect of subcultures. Hebdige (1979, p. 132) interprets subculture as a form of resistance 'in which experienced contradictions and objections to ruling ideology are obliquely represented in style'. I see the *Tikyan* subculture's appropriation of bodily styles as a response to their experiences of social and spatial exclusion, and as a way for street children to construct and reinforce their difference and express their inner creativity. As James (1986, p. 169) writes of adolescents in the UK, 'Set aside from society they themselves set themselves further apart through using their bodies as a means of symbolic expression of and about their adolescent condition'. As Willis (1977, p. 10) asserts, the body is the 'source of productive and communicative activity', and is a crucial site of knowledge for a community as it assists in producing meanings for the collective group. In this way, the children use their own bodies as surfaces on which they 'display their own codes' (Hebdige, 1979, p. 101). Belonging to the *Tikyan* group is also about conforming to a particular bodily style.

Part of the *Tikyan* community surveillance involves a collective monitoring of the body and of whether members are able (and willing) to grasp and display the appropriate signs of a shared identity. Body conformity includes the requirement to adhere to a set of norms of the physical body and acceptable bodily styles and aesthetics (dress and

body decoration). Part of bodily style also includes testing the boundaries of the physical body, through the consumption of forbidden substances (drugs and alcohol) and the demonstration of the correct bodily presence (through performance and sexual prowess). Displays of masculinity are a prerequisite in all these bodily performances and an essential element of the *Tikyan* signature and bodily style.

Rebel, Rebel: Masculine Style

Exhibitions of masculinity are a vital aspect of the *Tikyan* solidarity. The street requires a boy to be even tougher than is usually expected of a Javanese male, particularly if he has not yet reached puberty. This is because it is essential to have a masculine, 'hard' image on the street, to gain respect and status within the subculture. Street boys have to consistently convince one another of their toughness and independence in order to remain accepted as a member in the group.

Street boys regularly participate in aggressive displays of masculinity among themselves, and consistently negotiate definitions of masculinity by discussing events that other boys have had a role in and commenting on their performance. The constant surveillance and monitoring of one another's masculinity is part of the overall attempt to maintain conformity within the *Tikyan* group. As James (1986, p. 162) found among youth in the UK, assertive displays of masculinity are vital for continued acceptance by a male group:

If they do not swear and relate ribald tales, if they do not participate in feats of physical endurance, dares or fights, if they fail to join in ... or [do not] smoke or drink they cannot be 'one of the lads' and to be 'one of the lads' means belonging.

In addition, money earned by the street children is invested in statements about self-image, in order to define identity and raise self-esteem. Money is spent by the children on the overt consumption of consumer goods, which are status symbols within the subculture. Even though their bodies are small, most street children adopt a form of 'pseudo-maturity' as a sign of rebellion against the expectations of society. They do this by acquiring and displaying 'adult male working-class habits' such as smoking (which they do ostentatiously if people are watching), gambling (which is illegal), getting drunk, taking pills and indulging in 'free sex' (see Willis, 1977). They do, in fact, anything that is considered inappropriate behaviour for young boys and makes them feel 'grown-up' and masculine. If it is *dilarang* ('illegal'), it is even more appealing. As one long-term NGO worker said to me:

If something is *dilarang*, it is more likely that they will do it. They will do whatever deviates from mainstream ways of dressing and behaving. From gambling to engaging in 'free sex'. This is part of their 'rebel identity' (Mas Ari, personal communication, September 1996).

'*Rasanya asyik*' ('It feels fantastic!'), said one boy when I asked him what the attraction of gambling was. The children enjoy gambling because it requires risk-taking, skill and concentration, and if they win, their self-esteem and feelings of pride are enhanced. It also gives them the opportunity to earn more money. With his winnings, a boy can indulge in spectacular consumption—eating, smoking, drinking, taking pills and going to the movies and to prostitutes. He gains a place at the top of the *Tikyan* hierarchy—until the next game.

Sex Bebas: 'Free Sex'

Enjoying *sex bebas* ('free sex') is one of the main aspects of street life that the children

frequently cited as a reason for the street being 'great'. Sexual activity, even for young street children, is an intrinsic part of street life, and having sex is an important part of their constructions of masculinity and dominance in the group. Street boys engage in an array of sexual activities and identities, with a diverse range of motives.

When the children arrive on the street, sexual acts are often performed by older street boys with newcomers as a form of initiation into the group. The children will also have sex between themselves through mutual consent. As they get older they engage in survival sex, commercial sex, comfort sex, casual sex and romantic relationships, with multiple partners (transvestites, prostitutes, girlfriends, street girls, 'benefactors' and homosexuals) from both within and outside the street world. This is in order to fulfil multiple needs: to assert their virility and dominance in the group; to relieve sexual frustration; to gain money or protection; and to find affection, pleasure and solidarity.¹⁰

Street Style

Apparel

Learning to belong to the *Tikyan* subculture is not only about asserting masculinity in culturally defined ways, displaying sexual prowess or conforming to expected norms and behaviour patterns. It is also about the displaying of signs and symbols through which individuals and groups seek to establish their presence (Willis, 1977). Hebdige (1979), for example, sees that objections to hegemony are often expressed by subcultures at the level of appearances, in style and signs. Tait (1992), however, challenges the use of subculture theory as a credible framework for understanding street children in Australia. She says it is impossible for them to establish a style, as they have to wear whatever is available to them, and asserts that 'There are no grounds for a common decoding of their styles of dress, since necessity rather than choice is the most likely determining criterion' (Tait, 1992, p. 13).

This assertion is contrary to my experience in Yogyakarta. In Indonesia, street children certainly do covet, search for and appropriate particular objects and appearances, and despite the fact that the children are very poor, style and a certain 'look' are very important to them. They want to be stylish and clothes are an important component of their identity construction; like most young people, they are very adept at developing their own styles. The *Tikyan* style gives the alternative culture its energy. The kids create trends for themselves as an indication of their group identity. Often, one or two boys within the group will adopt a 'look', and the others will follow and imitate it. These 'trendsetters' are almost always the same boys who are recognised within the group as possessing 'subcultural capital', and are respected on the street. They are what Blackman (1995) refers to as 'style leaders' within the subculture.

It is also necessary to emphasise Hebdige's (1979, p. 3) observation that the construction of style in subcultures can be merely a 'gesture of defiance or contempt, in a smile or a sneer. It signals a Refusal [*sic*]'. In a similar way, hooks (1992, p. 116) talks of an 'oppositional gaze' as a subversive sign, and reminds us of how Foucault 'invites the critical thinker to search out those margins, gaps and locations on and through the body where agency and resistance can be found'. Similarly, in addition to their lifestyles signaling a refusal to conform to the 'expected' way to behave, street children also contest, resist and subvert the discipline and constraints imposed on the physical body by the Indonesian state and Indonesian society. They do this by using the 'power to disfigure' their own bodies (Hebdige, 1979, p. 3).

The children do not have a wide selection of apparel to develop their styles, and

construct their style from what is available to them by appropriating particular ‘normal’ objects and subverting their meanings as an act of *bricolage* (see Hebdige, 1979). What are important are the ways in which these commodities are ‘used’ and ‘arranged’ by the children to make their own personal, liberating meanings through their consumption, and how they ‘mark the subculture off from more orthodox cultural formations’ (Hall and Jefferson, 1976, p. 55; Hebdige, 1979, p. 103). As Willis (1990, p. 14) informs us, seemingly ‘humble’ objects can be obtained or stolen by subordinate groups and ‘symbolically appropriated to have a cutting edge of meaning’. These items express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination (see Hebdige, 1979). Arek (15), for example, was acting as a *bricoleur* when he appropriated a sign of being a devout Muslim: a *peci* (hat of black velvet), which he wore at a jaunty angle, thus subverting its original devout meaning, while he was getting drunk on the main street.¹¹

The *Tikyan* also ‘raid and rehabilitate’ styles from other subcultures. While I was in Yogyakarta in 1996 and 1997, there was a distinct Punk revival emerging on the streets (see Hebdige, 1979). Some of the children had begun to adopt and develop a retro-Punk style, by experimenting with Mohawk hairstyles and safety pins, and one young boy had spray-painted *Anak Punk* (‘Punk Kid’) on his jacket. Particularly noticeable, however, was the number of street children (and other people on the street) who borrowed the cultural influences—colours, signs and music—of the Rastafarian culture. The children enjoyed singing songs by Bob Marley, whose lyrics reflect their own sense of marginality and rejection, and used pictures of marijuana leaves and the red, green and gold colours of the Ethiopian flag in their jewellery, clothing, knitted hats, bracelets and also tattoos. Others grew dreadlocks and were described as *orang rasta* (‘Rastaman’).¹² I see this cultural connection with Rasta as ‘an expression of solidarity or of a desire to belong to something believed in’ (Massey, 1998, p. 125):

Today I asked Rudi (15) why he had red, green, and yellow lines tattooed on his chin, and why the street kids seem to like the Rasta colours so much. He replied:

Rudi: The Rasta [style] suits street kids.

Hatty (the author): Why?

Rudy: Because street kids aspire to be like Bob Marley. You know Bob Marley, right?

Hatty: Yes, but why like him?

Rudy: Because he was a street kid too. He hung out on the street, smoked *ganja* and played the guitar. He was free, like us. Because of that we want to be like him (Fieldnotes, March 1997).

Hair

Traditionally in South-east Asia, ‘hair was the crucial symbol and emanation of the self’ (Reid, 1988, p. 79), and carried some of the power of the person concerned. In the 17th century, the cutting of hair became an important symbol of adherence to Islam and was seen as the greatest sacrifice to the self (Reid, 1988). To this day Indonesian dominant culture still dictates that hair should be short and neat on boys, and the head is a site of control in most institutions (for example, in the Army, religious schools and prison). In addition, young men with long hair can be arrested in police and military sweep operations for being suspected *preman*.

For street children, the head is one site where they are able to secure ‘symbolic control’ by using it as a site of subversion (see Willis, 1990). As mentioned, some children cultivated dreadlocks or Punk hairstyles, while others cut out zig-zag marks along the side of their scalps or shaved their heads. This particular action can be understood as a sign of ‘reverse discourse’ and resistance as well as an expression of group solidarity (see Foucault, 1977). The reason for this is that street boys’ heads are shaved if they are caught and detained in a police sweep. In Javanese society, close-cropped hair is a mark of inferior status and head-shaving is often used as a punishment by those in authority, including the police (see Reid, 1988). Such an action by the police can be seen as a display of absolute power and as ‘a policy of terror: to make everyone aware, through the body of the criminal of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign’ (Foucault, 1977, p. 49). A street child subjected to this fate returns to the street with a shaved head (and often a beaten body), bearing the sign of the justice ‘meted out on him’ by the absolute power (Foucault, 1977, p. 43). By collectively shaving their heads, the kids are subverting the dominant group’s use of power as well as asserting their solidarity with the child who has been arrested. In this way, the street boys used precisely the site that the state designated as a site for displaying power (the head) to defy and subvert the meaning of the state and as an expression of group solidarity.

Subversive Bodies: Tattoos and Body-piercing

Amidst an almost universal feeling of powerlessness to ‘change the world’, individuals are changing what they *do* have power over: *their own bodies*. That shadowy zone between the physical and the psychic is being probed for whatever insight and freedoms may be claimed. By giving visible bodily expression to unknown desires and latent obsessions welling up from within, individuals can provoke change—however inexplicably—in their external world of the social, besides freeing up a creative part of themselves, some part of their essence (Vale and Juno, 1989, p. 4).

This assertion that body modification is a sign of control over our own bodies does not consider regimes which attempt to limit individuals’ ‘control’ over their own body (Bell and Valentine, 1995). As Douglas (1973, p. 98) contends, ‘The scope of the body as a medium of expression is limited by controls exerted from the social system’. Body modification is often criminalised in Indonesia, and the modified body can be regarded as a ‘subversive’ or ‘political body’, in the sense that its presence may provoke reaction from agencies of the state (see Bell and Valentine, 1995).

The Indonesian state dictates what the body should look like and how body modifications should be carried out (on and by whom), and in the past has brutally punished those who did not conform. Historically, tattooing and ear adornment were bodily art forms characteristic of South-east Asia and were extensively used for talismanic reasons in Java (Reid, 1988). The practices also held ritual functions, and were marks of bravery and a rite of passage for young men. Tattooing, for example, conferred ‘special powers’ on the bearer, such as invulnerability. With the introduction of Islam in the 17th century, however, these practices were suppressed due to Islamic opposition to magical representations (Reid, 1988).

The Indonesian state has continued this construction of the acceptable modern and ‘civilised body’, by actively suppressing and punishing anyone who has been found to deviate from it (see Grosz, 1995). Modifying or adorning the body in Indonesia is taken

by the state to be a sign of subversion. Through their body decorations, street children are seen to be committing a 'transgressive act' (see Cresswell, 1996).

Numerous accounts were shared with me of people being arrested by the Indonesian authorities for possessing long hair or tattoos, particularly during the *Petrus* ('mysterious killings') period of the early 1980s (see Bourchier, 1990).¹³ As a result, some people burnt their tattoos off with lime or acid to avoid arrest or murder. These stories of state control are not only events of the past. I have seen a number of young men with scarred skin where in more recent years they had burnt off their tattoos during 'police operation seasons'. Such control was especially intense in Jakarta during 'Operation *Preman*' ('Operation Street Thug') in the late 1990s, when anyone who looked like a *preman* (by possessing long hair or tattoos) was arrested, shaved and often put into a 're-education camp'. In early 1997, many boys with tattoos told me that they could not work at the traffic lights during the day, and that they had to wait until night when their tattoos and long hair were not so conspicuous. These same boys would, however, continue to mark their bodies with more tattoos when they had the opportunity.

In some subcultures, tattoos are used as a form of initiation, although this is not the case within the *Tikyan*, where it is a matter of personal choice (see Govenar, 1988). Tattoos are, however, a status symbol, and seen as 'cool' and bestowing subcultural capital. If a child is not tattooed, it sets him aside from other members of the group and there is a certain amount of peer pressure to have one. Once a child reaches adolescence he usually succumbs and has one made. Tattooing among the *Tikyan* is, therefore, a kind of ritualistic practice which signifies a rite of passage for those who have reached adolescence. It also demonstrates a commitment and affiliation to the group and reinforces the individual's identity as a street child.

The boys build their own tools to make tattoos, from battery-powered rotary machines connected to a rubber band, with a needle which vibrates up and down a ball-pen tube to pierce the skin. They also make tattoos with needles and razor blades and black ink.

In addition to tattoos, many street boys wore numerous earrings, and often pierced their mouths, noses, eyebrows and nipples. They usually pierced each other's skin with safety pins, and if they did not have anything to wear in their holes, they inserted small pieces of wood or pieces of cotton to keep the holes from closing up. Body-piercing had become very popular in Western popular culture, and the children saw a lot of young Western tourists come through with pierced faces, and would try and get their earrings or nose rings from them. At one point, some children's faces appeared to be literally covered in metal, although this 'trend' did not last long.

The children know that they can be arrested for having tattoos, but tattoo themselves anyway—a further example of the tough, masculine image they wish to project. Acts with such a socially defined stigma demonstrate an attitude of rejection of mainstream 'norms' imposed by dominant society on the individual body. It also makes it harder for the boys to ever return to the mainstream. The various ways that the children choose to 'inscribe' their bodies, despite the restrictions and controls imposed by the state, can all be seen as 'subversive bodily acts' (see Grosz, 1995). In this way, the skin is used by the *Tikyan* as a medium for social expression, and is a social barrier that subverts the state's control of the body. The street children have tattoos and body-piercings out of a desire to be provocative and rebellious to the outside world and each other, and their body adornments can be seen as symbols of discontent and dissatisfaction with their lot in life. Body adornments within the *Tikyan* community 'articulate a politic of dissent', and operate as a kind of 'shock tactic' to the outside world (Curry, 1993). The children are 'marking themselves as people apart and doing so with commitment and relish'

(Curry, 1993). Interviewed street children often said that they had got their tattoos and body-piercings as *seni* ('art'). Other children said that their tattoos were a 'show of force', as they wanted to appear more masculine and 'hard', and thus invulnerable. Still others said that they got their tattoos when they were *stres* ('stressed'):

Today I asked Heru about the rings through his nose and lower lip, and why he had put them in. He replied: 'Art. I was born for Art'. I then asked if that was the only reason. He said: 'People think I am strange, I like that' (Heru, 14, personal communication, Fieldnotes, June 1997).

As well as professing his creativity, Heru was asserting his difference and enjoyment of 'watching reactions to the show' (Bell and Valentine, 1995). Tattoos and body-piercing thus belong to a whole set of 'performative strategies' within the *Tikyan* group, and body symbolism can be understood as a strategic subversion of mainstream norms and a performative statement of self-conscious 'othering' (Bell and Valentine, 1995, p. 152).

Altered States: Use and Abuse of Drugs and Alcohol

Alcohol, drugs and inhalants are all used habitually by street children in Indonesia. This is partly because drug use is structured by the concept of style and masculinity within the *Tikyan* subculture, and participation is a prerequisite for belonging to the group. Most consumption is for the primary purpose of getting *mabuk* ('drunk' or 'intoxicated by drugs') as quickly as possible. 'Social' drinking and drug use are not concepts easily explained in Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim society where alcohol and drug consumption is severely frowned upon. If you are seen to be drinking or taking drugs, it is perceived as being for one purpose only—to get *mabuk*. The word *mabuk* covers a variety of drug-induced states, including those from glue or alcohol. It can mean drunk, stoned (on glue or marijuana), high or 'tripping' (on hallucinogens or pills). There are also slang words which the children use for these states: *teler* ('out of it') and *tewas* ('passed out').¹⁴

By taking drugs and alcohol, the children are testing the boundaries of their physical bodies, sometimes in a competitive process. Different groups, however, have contrasting drug 'styles', which include the types of drugs they take and their rituals in taking them. Malioboro Street's drug 'style', for example, involved drinking heavily, occasionally smoking marijuana and consuming various illegally obtained doctor-prescribed pills to get high. In contrast, the street boys in the main square did not drink, smoke or take pills. Their drug 'style' was sniffing glue, which they bought in pots from the local shopping centre and sniffed underneath their T-shirts. The boys said that they enjoyed being high on glue as it gave them hallucinations that they were 'flying', and that they could really 'touch their dreams'. The boys also told me that glue stops hunger pains and makes them feel 'full' so they do not need to eat. The boys' consumption of glue varied. The youngest boy, Agus (9), sniffed the most. He told me that he finished between six and eight cans a day.

For the most desired effects, the boys took illegally obtained pills that they called 'crazy medicine' or 'poor man's Ecstasy'. There are numerous different types of pills which the children buy on the street, most of which are doctor-prescribed drugs for mental-health disorders, stress, insomnia, depression or epilepsy. Rohypnol (for stress),¹⁵ for example, was very popular as a means of helping the children 'forget', as was Naphacin (for respiratory problems) mixed with Sprite, alcohol or coffee to speed up the ingestion process. Pills varied in cost on the street, but a strip of 10 Rohypnol, for example, cost Rp. 10 000 (US\$1.25). The kids would usually consume everything they

had bought, and sometimes took 20 or 30 tablets at a time. They also experimented, mixing different cocktails of pills together to create different 'trips'. The pills were often called 'Ecstasy' by the children, although at Rp. 40 000 (US\$3.75) for one tablet, Ecstasy itself was too expensive for them. It is, however, manufactured in Jakarta, and is readily available on the street.

With some pills, the children become immobilised. Mogadon and Rohypnol, for example, totally incapacitate them, sometimes for days at a time. Many of the children described to me how you can 'lose' two or three days at a time, and said how much they enjoyed this aspect of pill-taking as during that time they did not have to worry about earning money or looking for food. They would 'wake up' after three days and not remember anything, but their friends would tell them what they had done (including getting into fights and motorbike accidents). The children enjoyed the feelings of being invincible and invulnerable to pain when they were high on drugs. Many showed me scars and wounds from when they had been in drug-induced fights or accidents and had not felt a thing.

Alcohol was particularly popular among the *Tikyan* as an essential element in their displays of a masculine, 'hard' identity. It also signalled a refusal to the outside, predominantly Muslim, world for whom alcohol is supposedly prohibited. As Willis (1976, 1990) informs us, alcohol often functions to augment prestige among young men and within subcultures, and 'excess consumption certainly emphasises public gender identity' (Willis, 1990, p. 44). Similarly, drinking is seen as an exciting pastime for street boys as it creates an 'existential freeing of the self' (Willis, 1990, p. 44). They usually drink a cheap, locally produced herbal wine, vodka or whisky, mixed with a Thai energy drink.

Apart from pills and alcohol, the kids knew of other ways of getting high. One was to grind up the seeds of a *kecubung* tree (which yields a large green seed) and mix them with coffee or smoke them. This made them feel happy, they said—as though they were flying. The children also experimented by drinking *Autan* (mosquito repellent) and coffee, and by smoking cigarettes dipped in *Autan* and dried out. They would try anything to get the desired effect of being high.

The children enjoyed experimenting with different drugs and told me about their experiences. Coki talked to me about taking mushrooms—how their effect depends on your state of mind, and how you must not take them if you are unhappy. He told me that at *lebaran* (a Muslim holiday), he and some other boys took 'magic mushrooms' which they picked in a field near the university. Once they had eaten them they started crying, missing their mothers and lamenting the fact that they could not go home (Coki, 13, personal communication, March 1997).

In a similar way to the hippies in Willis's study, street children regularly take drugs and alcohol as a form of diversion and escapism. It is a hedonistic pastime that assists in opening up a world of freedom without responsibility. Further, by getting high together, the *Tikyan* are performing a kind of collective ritual of escapism. Taking drugs and alcohol within the *Tikyan* culture, however, is not only a form of diversion and enjoyment, but also a means of suppressing hunger and inhibitions, to reduce anxiety, stress and depression and to help release anger, frustration and dissatisfaction with their marginalised role in society.

Sometimes the boys' external worlds are so depressing that the only way they can survive is by creating a different reality. Due to their means of livelihood, their social environment and their constant exploitation on the street, street children do not feel safe in their daily lives. They face threats from the police and the military, and are regarded as the 'scum of society'. The children know what mainstream society thinks of them, and

say that it hurts their feelings when they see people looking at them with suspicion. Sometimes, they just want to escape their situation and getting *mabuk* is the easiest way of doing so. The drugs and alcohol, therefore, are also 'symbolic barriers' (Willis, 1976, p. 107) which the children use to distance themselves from mainstream perceptions. In this way, being *mabuk* is an emotional crutch on which they can rest, and a 'weapon' with which they can meet (or ignore) all their needs, blot out their feelings of powerlessness and inferiority and feel stronger.

The boys at the main square also said that being high on glue helped them overcome their inhibitions when they were begging at the traffic lights. Wit (15), however, said that they had to be careful taking drugs if they wanted to continue working. He learnt to take enough to give him the courage to work busking on the buses (as he was shy), but not so much that he could not play his guitar. This was Suvil's experience when he mixed Bodrex (a flu tablet) with tobacco and smoked it before going to work on the buses. He said it was so strong that he passed out, which had not been his intention.

Taking drugs, like other bodily styles, is also about asserting power over one's own body. Smoking, drinking and taking different drugs represent the testing of boundaries between 'self' and 'other'. One reason for this is that the substances are either illegal or legally restricted. Drug use is heavily punished by Indonesian law whatever the drug is, and can attract a prison sentence of seven years for possession of a small amount of marijuana. As it is *dilarang*, it is immediately appealing to the kids as it is part of the *Tikyan* subculture to demonstrate their bodily style through the appropriation of forbidden substances. In this way, drug consumption is linked to the street-child subculture norms and is part of their everyday lives.

Substance abuse, therefore, offers a release from the children's worries, so that, temporarily at least, their problems are solved. It is integrated into their various lifestyles and relates to a number of their survival needs at both individual and collective levels. Street children usually start taking drugs through particular rituals within the group. Most are influenced by their friends on the street, and learn about drugs and ways of taking them from their peers. This is why different groups of street children have various 'styles' of drug-taking. There is a 'collective character of consumption', whereby the purchase and consumption of various stimulants is a communal activity and strong peer pressure means that you 'have to take part' in drinking and pill-taking rituals. As Lucchini (1993, p. 39) has noted in the context of drug-taking among street children in Latin America:

The children claim a collective identity as street children, but contest the stigmatisation which is attached to it. The collective and public consumption of drugs is closely linked to this fact.

From my own observations and conversations, I realised that street children take drugs to help them 'perform' at work and at play. Drugs and alcohol are compensatory devices for the children since they help relieve hunger pangs, boredom and feelings of being ashamed, and because they help the children to fill a void in their lives, enabling them (at least temporarily) to forget their daily concerns. They also facilitate sleep. Drug use, however, is also about seeking enjoyment, reinforcing solidarity and creating a sense of belonging and status within the group. Moreover, it is a collective protest against stigmatisation as street children, and thus a claim to power over their own bodies.

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed how as street children reach adolescence, and physically

begin to look less childlike, they are increasingly alienated from mainstream society, which they respond to by actively challenging their marginality.

I have examined the *Tikyan* subculture's behaviour patterns and activities as a complex combination of the determination to subvert and defy the dominant culture, the urge to find enjoyment, the desire to accumulate and display 'subcultural capital' and the aim to reinforce allegiance to the group. It is in these ways that street children socialise themselves to conform to the group's norms, behaviour patterns and bodily styles. Such actions result in them being alienated still further by dominant society.

As street children get older the contradictions in their lives begin to intensify. When the boys realise that they cannot easily return to the mainstream and get a 'proper' job, they become frustrated with their position and how society views them. With the increased alienation from society, the inability to earn a 'legitimate' income and the lack of alternative opportunities available to them, the children often have no option but to turn more and more to their subculture group for mutual support. They do this by subverting dominant streams of thought, reinterpreting their exclusion, and by positively reinforcing street life as the best way to live.

In order to maintain their own identity and self-esteem, the *Tikyan* have created a symbolic means of self-identification, based on their own human bodies. The *Tikyan*'s 'specialised semiotic' is their main elements of bodily style, and include their overt displays of masculinity; their shifting sexual identities; the music they play and listen to; their acts of bodily subversion or dissent (in the form of dress, tattoos and body-piercing); and their pursuit of altered states of consciousness.

This, then, is the *Tikyan*'s 'style of belonging' that helps to inscribe their lives with meaning and provides them with a 'symbolic means of escape' (James, 1986). By reordering the use of their own bodies, the children are challenging the source of their social problems and playing out power relationships through the medium of their bodily techniques (see James, 1986, p. 168). The *Tikyan* style is primarily a reaction to their powerlessness, and an example of how despite their subordination, they are able to express themselves and create their own meanings. In direct defiance of dominant society, street children are taking control of their own bodies as expressions of their freedom and symbolic creativity, and as sites of contestation, pleasure and empowerment. In addition to these objectives, the children's sex and drug lifestyles are practiced as ways for ensuring survival, seeking comfort, finding pleasure and dealing with the psychological problems they have to face through their alienation, and which intensify as they reach adolescence.

The *Tikyan* community enables a street child to establish a new identity, and is a means through which they can voice their collective indignation at the way they are treated by the state and dominant society, and from where they can actively refuse and subvert state ideology. Street life, however, is riddled with contradictions, and although street children and youth regularly trespass or transgress the rules set by the state and dominant society, they are not always *intentional* actions of resistance (see Cresswell, 1996, p. 23). Often their transgressions are merely in pursuit of survival and/or a sense of belonging to the subculture. The paradox is that in the very act of conforming to the codes of the *Tikyan*'s 'hidden transcript' (so that they will continue to be accepted by their peers) they simultaneously violate the legal and moral boundaries of the public transcript. It is the results of their actions and the fact that they are 'noticed' for being 'out of place', which means that they are repeatedly perceived as deviant and dangerous (*ibid*). Their defiant stances and actions thus cause dominant society to look on with disdain and label them as 'deviant' or problem children, and to alienate them still further.

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Notes

1. One reason why street girls are less visible is that they do not engage in the same income-earning activities as the boys (shoe-shining, busking, selling goods, parking cars, scavenging and begging). Usually, street girls survive by being looked after by their 'boyfriends', their principal guarantors of income and protection (Beazley, 2002).
2. See Beazley (2002) for a discussion of the lives of street girls, how they are treated by the *Tikyan*, and how they manage to negotiate spaces, and their own street-girl identities, on the streets of Yogyakarta.
3. See Beazley (2003a) where by drawing on Visano's (1990) concept of a street child's life as a 'career', I examine the gradual socialisation to the *Tikyan* subculture. By employing Turner's (1994) 'self-categorization' theory, I discuss how a street boy's individual identity construction and performance entails a continual interaction with the *Tikyan* collective identity, and how the *Tikyan* have developed their own code of street ethics, values and hierarchies, as a reaction to, and a subversion of, their imposed exclusion.
4. *Girli* is an acronym of *pinggir kali* ('river's edge'). It is where most of the poor inhabitants of the city live and where *Girli* had its first open house. It is also where many street children sleep and hang out, particularly under the bridges away from the harsh rays of the sun.
5. See for example, Brake (1980, 1985), Cohen (1972), Hall and Jefferson (1976), Hebdige (1979), and Willis (1976, 1977, 1990). See also Skelton and Valentine (1998, pp. 12–16) and Thornton (1995) for a discussion of the CCCS and its contribution to youth subcultural theory.
6. See Beazley (2003a), where I present a detailed discussion of street boys' construction and protection of individual and collective identities, which are essential to their survival.
7. Bourdieu (1977) subverts Marx, and says it is not only economic capital but different forms of capital, cultural capital (knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions) and 'symbolic capital' that are accumulated through upbringing and education. This cultural capital confers social status and is the linchpin in a system of distinction.
8. One way for street children in Indonesia to return to mainstream society is to find work in the formal sector, in a factory or a shop, but that requires a state-issued identity card. To obtain an identity card, a child needs a birth certificate, a family registration card and an address, which most homeless street children do not have.
9. Some children do try to 'go straight' and go home, but, disenchanted with conventional life, they often feel compelled to leave for the streets again (see Beazley, 2000b).
10. I discuss the sexual lives of street boys, including initiation practices, relationships with street girls and transvestites and commercial sexual activities, in Beazley (2003b).
11. Street children also sometimes wear the *peci* when they are begging at traffic lights or in the market, to make people think they are from a religious organisation and attract 'donations'.
12. Hebdige (1979, p. 144) tells how, in the UK, dreadlocks 'became the most readily identifiable signifier of a meaningful difference' and also noted how different subcultures (in particular, Punks) 'lifted' Rasta 'style' (along with *ganja*, i.e. marijuana), and how the Ethiopian colours and 'Rasta rhetoric' 'began to work [their] way into the repertoires of some punk cultures'. Similarly, Massey (1998, pp. 125–126) notes how the use of Rasta colours 'from Boston to Rio, from London to Cape Town' is a deliberate 'visible sign of belonging, maybe even of commitment'. See also Connell and Gibson (2003) for a discussion of the reggae diaspora and 'Rastafarians, resistance and identity'.
13. Bouchier (1990) notes that during *Petrus* in the early 1980s, the newspapers would frequently report the findings of *mayat bertato* ('tattooed corpses') in the street, victims of these government-sponsored murders.

14. The literal meaning of *tewas* in Indonesian is 'killed' or 'slain', usually in war or in an accident. It also means 'defected' or 'flawed' (Echols and Shadily, 1992).
15. Rohypnol is a kind of sedative, known as 'Roofies' or the 'date rape drug' in the USA as it causes blackouts, although the person can still function physically. Once consciousness is regained, the user experiences complete memory loss about what has happened. As a sedative it is 10 times stronger than Valium.

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