
Consumerism and the Emergence of a New Middle Class in Globalizing Indonesia

MOHAMMAD HASAN ANSORI

University of Hawai'i

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Mohammad Hasan Ansori is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Hawai'i and a Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program grantee.

Introduction

Most analysts of the middle class agree that the emergence of a new middle class in Asian countries was the inevitable result of economic reform in the developing states.¹ The emergence of this new middle class in Asian countries took place in the 1980s and 1990s during the third wave of economic development and industrialization in the region, resulting not only in economic modernization, but also leading to the implementation of important economic policies. Apart from increasing economic growth, those policies encouraged export-led industrial transformation and further facilitated the growing movement towards a new economy driven by financial globalization, market liberalization and the globalization of products.

As a result of these economic policies, the process of economic growth and industrialization has produced improvement in absolute living standards. This can be seen in the state-led industrialization policy of South Korea, whose rapid economic growth in recent decades continuously improved people's living standards, and a large number of people were able to move into the expanding middle class.² Rapid industrialization accompanied by modernization and market liberalization created affluent and prosperous groups in society. A range of indicators reveal improvements in living standards. For example, ownership of cars, telephones, televisions, refrigerators, and other such material possessions has

increased. In addition, safe water supplies and healthy foods have become more accessible.

Indonesia is experiencing a similar trend of economic and social change. The country's economic modernization and development was initiated and promoted by the New Order (1966-1997). The 1980s were an important period as economic progress at the time led to the emergence of the Indonesian middle class. People obtained work as business executives and managers, stock analysts, engineers, bankers, lawyers, accountants, white-collar office workers in city centers and other professional jobs often associated with a booming middle class. This state-led industrialization was intended to stimulate the emergence of a new middle class in Indonesia. William Liddle, a prominent Indonesianist, has suggested that Indonesia's liberalizing economic policy during the New Order regime is largely responsible for the growth of the middle class.³

Clifford Geertz's work, *Peddlers and Princess: Social Change and Economic Modernization in Two Indonesian Towns*, is one of the first attempts to examine the Indonesian middle class, providing a preliminary stepping point for later works on the middle class in Indonesia. However, Geertz conducted his research in 1952-1958, which was in pre-liberalizing Indonesia and a few years after the Indonesian revolution. His research is primarily concerned with

social change and economic modernization, instead of any specific and comprehensive study of the middle class in Indonesia. Nonetheless, Geertz's research makes the important point that it is relatively difficult for a middle class to emerge during this pre-liberalizing and industrializing period. The problems of traditional trading patterns, lack of capital, the shortage of skilled and disciplined labor, the insufficiency of markets and other limiting factors hindered the rise of the middle class.⁴

Since Geertz there have been more recent academic studies and public discourse on the new Indonesian middle class, which have concentrated on the political aspects and democracy or political participation (Tamagola: 1993, Zulkarnain: 1993, Sarjadi: 1993, Siagian: 1993, Robison: 1990, Abeyasekere: 1990, Liddle: 1990, Mackie: 1999, Crouch: 1999, Sudarsono: 1999, research project of Center for Information and development studies: 1998, and others), economic aspects or determinants (Mackie: 1990 and Shiraishi: 2006), or difficulties and problematic issues faced by the Indonesian middle class (Raharjo: 1999 and Lubis: 1993). But much less attention has been given to the cultural practices, consumption middle class and lifestyle of the emerging middle class in Indonesia. The continuous process of cultural globalization and modernization is affecting and constructing the consumer culture of the middle class in developing countries. Mass media is contributing to the transportation and stimulation of new global and modern values and lifestyles.

In this paper, I will argue that the new Indonesian middle class is not structurally pre-determined, but is in the continual process of production and reproduction through the cultural practices of class. In other words, ownership of economic and material resources does not automatically determine class; instead, culture and a lifestyle of consumerism must be seen as important cultural processes through which an emerging middle class actually creates itself as a socio-cultural entity. The emerging new middle class, the primary product of the economic modernization and globalization policies of the New Order (1966-1997), is a prosperous and affluent group of people with a certain level of economic resources. However, they must be understood as a never-ending cultural project.⁵

This paper is an attempt to further understand the processes of new middle class formation during globalization and deregulation in Indonesia through the culture of consumerism. The new Indonesian middle class will be viewed through a socio-cultural lens that focuses on the culture of consumerism and lifestyle in Indonesia. It will also examine the emergence of the Indonesian middle class in the context of the economic development of the New Order regime. Methodologically, this paper will focus on middle class consumption in contemporary Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Richard Tanter and Kenneth Young, working on politics in Southeast Asia, suggest that any discourse on class formation in Indonesia requires "either rashness born of ignorance or a willingness to bear the inevitable consequences of overgeneralization on the basis of either inadequate information or over-reliance on one part of the society—usually Java".⁶

I will first discuss the approaches to the conceptualization of the middle class to give the theoretical basis of this paper. Then, I will examine the structural process of the emergence of the Indonesian middle class in the context of the economic "developmentalism" of the New Order. In the final section, I will explore the middle-class culture of consumption in Indonesia. The data presented here is mainly drawn from secondary statistical sources, published academic studies, and my personal observations while living in Jakarta for 10 years (1995-2005).

Defining Middle Class

Class analysts have long discussed different approaches to conceptualizing class. Mark Liechty, working on consumer culture and class formation in South Asia, suggests that class research theoretically always takes one of two approaches. One might treat class as a given—something that is natural, universal, and taken for granted by most people. One can also treat class as a cultural concept.⁷ Thus, some class researchers use a structuralist and deterministic approach in their efforts to understand and conceptualize class. Others might consider a constructivist/historicist/cultural conception of class as a more appropriate and adequate approach to a discussion of class.

A structuralist approach, or reading, of class strongly assumes that class is structurally predetermined. In other words, class is viewed as a given (ontologically prior to); class is a thing that exists by itself, prior to its actual performance in everyday life. For example, Loic Wacquant, a French urban sociologist, refuted both Weberian and Marxist class approaches, primarily pointing to the unitary and universal model of the middle class. Consequently, this type of class approach often disregards the diversity and dynamic aspects of class character, bringing them into a static and ahistorical position.⁸

In contrast to the structuralist approach to class, a constructivist approach views class as fluid, intangible, processual, and unformed. Class is not structurally pre-determined, but it is in the continual process of production and reproduction. For example, Jurgen Kocka, a German social historian, argued that class is never a thing, but is always in the process of making, production, and reproduction⁹. According to Edward Thompson, an English social historian, class is not predestined, but “happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs.”¹⁰ Thus, class identity, practices, and lived experience are not tacked on; they enter into the very making and remaking of class.

I find that this constructivist and cultural concept of class is more helpful in addressing the issue of this study—the process of new middle class formation during the globalization of Indonesia through the culture of consumerism. Sociologically speaking, it is often referred to as a processual way of understanding the nature of social entities.¹¹ Understood in this sense, this paper makes an effort to locate the concept in the cultural terrain out of which class identities and class culture emerge. The constructivist approach to class provides an analytical instrument for understanding the way the new middle class in Indonesia emerged and constructed their social identity through consumption.¹²

The Indonesian middle class will emerge as a never-ending cultural project that is simultaneously at odds with itself and with the other classes. It does not happen prior to its symbolic and cultural practices and organization. Put in another way, being middle class

happens when people share and feel common experiences and interests, articulate their identity, and at the same time distinguish themselves from class “others.”¹³

The relationship between class and consumption should be viewed as mutually constitutive. The culture of consumption, Mark Liechty argued, has a more complex meaning than simply the act of purchasing products. A person’s act of buying reflects just one moment in the cultural process of consumption.¹⁴ In the same fashion, economic structures do not solely determine class. Although it may be the initial determinant of class, it is an insufficient measure. Economic structures are manifested and expressed through cultural aspects of consumption and lifestyle, and in this way contribute to the formation of class. Seen another way, the culture of consumption is not the side effect or consequence of the middle class, but instead is among the cultural processes through which an emerging middle class actually creates itself as a socio-cultural entity.

Middle class people are those who are “carving out a new cultural space which they explicitly locate, in language and material practice, between their classes ‘others’ above and below.”¹⁵ Through lifestyles and consumption, people manifest a kind of class consciousness in a very practical way.¹⁶ Consumption patterns and lifestyle mainly serve as new performative mediums.¹⁷ Henceforth, wearing the proper clothing or driving a car constitutes an important part of a middle class claim to and maintenance of their middle-class membership.

New Economic Order, Liberalization and the Emergence of a New Middle Class

August 17, 1945 is a turning point in the modern history of the Indonesian people, the date when independence was gained from the Dutch. It is after this that the discourse of development in Indonesia gained momentum and filled the minds of Indonesians. For Indonesia’s leaders, the improvement of living standards for their people was the primary goal to be achieved in order to create conditions for a middle class to emerge. Promoting a developing middle class meant opening opportunities to build and increase middle-class jobs. As Dawam Raharjo, a theorist of Indonesian economic development, argued, economic

development was absent before Indonesian independence, but independence provided more opportunities to develop and improve living conditions, and create middle-class jobs.¹⁸ It is in this moment that early economic developments in Indonesia can be grasped.

To account for economic development in Indonesia, it is important to understand the conventional divisions of regime in Indonesian politics that influenced its economic system. From 1945-1997, Indonesia was ruled by two different regimes. The first regime, from 1945-1966, termed the Old Order, was under the guidance of Soekarno as president. The second, from 1966-1998, is termed the New Order, defined by the presidency of Soeharto. The rapid growth of the Indonesian economy, resulting in the rise of a new Indonesian middle class, was primarily achieved during the period of the New Order. The authoritarian President Soeharto was in power for 32 years until the student movement and the economic crisis in 1997 forced his downfall.

Throughout the Old Order era, there was almost no significant growth in the Indonesian economy because post-independence conditions were not conducive to development, and perhaps more importantly, resources were mostly put into the political realm to consolidate independence.¹⁹ Consequently, the failure of economic development dominated the economics of the Old Order.²⁰ The first Five Year Plan (a list of economic goals that were designed to strengthen the country's economy between 1955-1960) and its implementation were filled with pessimism and uncertainty, despite demonstrating distinct improvements.²¹ As a result, the desired effects did not take place and the middle class was unable to effectively emerge in this period.

The New Order regime, also known as the "New Economic Order", began with the transfer of executive political power from Soekarno to General Soeharto on March 12, 1966. This represented a significant philosophical shift regarding what constituted the fundamental mission of the government. For the New Order, the mission could be summarized with the words "economic development."²² The discipline of economics gained a prominence that was almost unimaginable in Indonesia's earlier years. The regime change did not merely mean an executive power change, but also marked a radical change in economic

policy. In the New Order era, economic development became a central doctrine and a high priority. The New Order based its economic development on the national motto of the Development Trilogy, referring to the expected goals of stability, growth, and equality.²³ Thus, rapid economic growth and export-led industrialization became the main themes of economic policy. In this way, the New Order created a new economic culture.

The 1980s are widely recognized as a major turning point in Indonesian economic development, leading to important changes in Indonesian consumption patterns. Indonesia adopted a new economic paradigm of deregulation and market liberalization, which was far more open and outward-looking. Indonesia had become an ardent advocate of deregulation. The basic tenets of this new approach were: deregulation, export-led growth, the creation of a regulatory climate conducive to foreign investment, and the transfer of economic power from the government to the private sector.²⁴

The adopted policy of deregulation, with all its effects and consequences, marks the openness of Indonesia to the global world. The adaptation of Indonesian economic development to the forces of globalization had an effect on shifting oil-led growth to trade-led growth and providing more access to the global culture of consumerism. Through deregulation, Indonesia became an integral part of the global economy. It has made the world its marketplace and reciprocated by inviting the world to take a stake in the nation's development.²⁵ Middle class consumers in Indonesia can be viewed in the context of this market globalization.²⁶

The liberalization and deregulation policy of Indonesia had significant effects on its systems of finance, banking, and production by helping to stimulate the structural changes of occupation and creating various middle class jobs. The increase in these kinds of jobs has been a primary factor in the rise of a new middle class in Indonesia, and this growth of the middle class was the targeted goal of Indonesian economic development.

According to Takashi Shiraishi, an analyst of comparative development in Southeast Asia, the emergence of a middle class in Indonesia can be traced back to the economic boom years of 1987-1997. The

1996 census data indicates that those who were classified as professionals and technicians, executives and managers, and white-collar office workers constituted 8.6 percent of the total working population and totaled 7.4 million people.²⁷ However, it is important to keep in mind that, compared to the working population, the census-based number of middle class in Indonesia was relatively small. Concerning jobs and lifestyle, the Indonesian people who could have been categorized as prosperous and urban were less than 5% of the population, or approximately 7.3 million people in 1980.²⁸

In Jakarta, where Indonesian economic development is more centralized, the new middle class is growing more extensively than in other cities in Indonesia. According to Shiraiishi, economic development has transformed Jakarta into an emerging middle-class city, with the biggest growth from 1987-1997, and a current population of 10 million. Most of the middle-class people in Jakarta consist of professionals.²⁹ The consumption pattern and lifestyles of those middle-class people are featured in weekly and monthly magazines and appear on TV talk shows: young banking professionals are shown dressing in brand name suits, driving expensive cars, and eating out in posh Italian, French, and Japanese restaurants.³⁰ These new members of the middle class will be examined on the basis of their consumption and lifestyle as an indicator of class culture, focusing specifically on their emergence and growth in contemporary Jakarta.

New Middle Class Consumption Cultures

Some might categorize people as middle class on the basis of personal income or wealth. However, such statistical categorization does not necessarily take into account the culture of consumerism through which the emerging middle-class creates itself as a socio-cultural entity. Instead, it is the processual way the middle class is produced and reproduced that establishes this entity. Thus, middle class culture is not simply the product of economic determinations, but also a reflection of the profound role that culture plays in producing and reproducing hierarchies of economic privilege. Culture and economics are mutually constitutive and cannot be understood in isolation. Yet, they are also not reducible to each other.

The extensive discourses of lifestyle in Indonesia are enhanced through commercial advertisements, fashion journalism and lifestyle magazines featuring an international manufactured culture.³¹ More importantly, however, is that in everyday life, people judge other members of Indonesian society by means of lifestyles,³² like social relations, consumption, entertainment, and dress. In this sense, the class membership of the Indonesian people is evaluated through one's consumption patterns and lifestyle.

The phenomena of *kafe tenda* (tented cafés) and Mall Culture in Jakarta are good examples through which one can examine how the middle class in Jakarta is produced and reproduced through cultures of consumption. I will pay especially close attention to the process of making the Jakartan middle class by explaining both the phenomena of *kafe tenda* and Mall Culture as performative mediums for Jakartan middle class people.

Kafe Tenda

The economics and culture of *kafe tenda* should be seen as mutually constitutive. The culture of Kafe Tenda is a space through which the middle class is produced and reproduced. Dining in a *kafe tenda* involves much more than simply the act of eating, because eating is only one moment in the cultural process of consumption. The conscious choice of a specific place and food for the diner is another integral part of the process. In this section, I will examine how middle class formation and production emerges through the culture of *kafe tenda*

A friend of mine who recently moved to Jakarta from Surabaya is a good example of the new middle class and their relationships with *kafe tenda* in Jakarta. He lives in an expensive apartment around the Semanggi district—a milestone of Indonesia's development and advancement towards being a metropolitan city and a nice place for fun shopping, and also a dining center containing some of the hippest hangouts for youngsters—which is equipped with luxurious goods and consumer durables, such as TVs, a video deck, stereo sets, a washing machine, a refrigerator, and an air conditioner, and he also drives a new car and always dresses in a brand name suit. He is one of the Jakartan new middle class. One day he invited me to go to a *kafe tenda* for dinner, but I refused his invitation. Then he

said to me, “Ansori, you should go to *kafe tenda* occasionally to mingle and socialize with the important and rich people. You are really *kuno* [traditional]. You just keep studying.” Based on the constructivist perspective of class, his behavior exhibits his class tastes, because his words demonstrate a level of middle class consciousness. For him, going to a *kafe tenda* and having dinner and fun is important for the maintenance of his class membership.

Eating at fancy restaurants instead of cooking at home has become a lifestyle symbol and an integral part of Indonesian life for decades. Many middle and upper-class people in Jakarta spend much of their leisure time trying out the many various international restaurants. Yet, Jakartan middle-class people have created a specific place for having dinner, *kafe tenda*, where they can manifest or mimic the culturally prescribed tastes of their class.

It should be noted that *kafe tenda* (tented cafés) are different from *warung tenda* (tented roadside stall). *kafe tenda* were initially made popular by Indonesian celebrities and artists, and became a new trend after the economic crisis hit Indonesia in 1997. For many Jakartan people, the establishment of *kafe tenda* became an alternative source of potential moneymaking during the economic crisis. *kafe tenda* spread in certain places, such as the Plaza Senayan parking lot, the Central Business District, the Mega Mall Pluit, Monas, Semanggi, outside Plaza Senayan on the weekends, and on Raden Fatah Street, Kamayoran. In *kafe tenda* a wide range of food and drinks are served, which are accompanied by high prices compared to the many tented roadside stalls. *Kafe tenda* are equipped with different entertainment, music, and karaoke, and decorated with colorful lights. Almost all the visitors are middle class, and there are hardly any upper class or lower-class people there. The diners at *kafe tenda* drive new and fancy cars, dress in brand name suits and wear modern fashions.

By contrast, *warung tenda* (tented roadside stalls) or semi-permanent *warung* (using semi-permanent buildings), which are easily found along the streets of Jakarta, are mostly visited by lower class residents, blue-collar workers or other passers-by. *Warung tenda* tend to sprout up in the late afternoon and evening on roadsides, on sidewalks, in parking lots, and in open spaces. Due to low overhead, *warung tenda* offer

cheaper fare than *kafe tenda*. A *Warung tenda* consists of a simple tent structure tied to poles or a nearby fence, and can quickly be set up with wooden tables and benches. A *spanduk* (cloth with ads or the menu printed on it) serves as the wall between the dining area and the street or nearby *warung tenda*.

Dining at *kafe tenda* is essentially determined by class taste and not necessarily by one’s income. Thus, even though upper class people may have more money, they might not dine at *kafe tenda* simply because it is a middle class cultural space. Instead, they primarily dine at fancy and expensive restaurants. At *kafe tenda*, the Jakartan middle class is able to balance their efforts to construct a class identity and to create class distinction. In this sense, *kafe tenda* are a class cultural project, a never-ending effort to make a middle class culture through consumerism.

In addition to serving to distinguish the middle class from elites, *kafe tenda* also help those “in the middle” to distinguish themselves from those below them on the social scale. The lower classes eat out at *warung tenda* because dining at *kafe tenda* requires disposable cash, effectively excluding those below the middle class. Thus, poorer or lower-class people who have dinner at *kafe tenda* might be considered unsuitable, weird, or immoral. In the collective mindset of the Jakartan people, those of the lower class should stay in their own culturally designated place—*kafe tenda*. By framing *kafe tenda* in a class between below and above, Jakartan middle class people construct a moral distinction, implying conformity to the culturally constructed and established class behavior codes of being appropriate and inappropriate, suitable and unsuitable. In this sense, working class people are considered out of place when eating at *kafe tenda*. Class distinction emerges clearly as moral distinction through this social performance at *kafe tenda*.

The New Order economic development has brought about the improvement of the living standards of Indonesian people by creating and increasing middle-class jobs. That is, New Order economic development has brought about a structural change of occupations. All the middle-class jobs make a contribution to increasing the income level and the emergence of the middle class.

A person or group's access to financial resources determines their ability to purchase and to consume. Having access to a certain amount of financial resources determines the ability of people to consume at *kafe tenda*. However, it is only one moment in the cultural process of consumption, and does not automatically determine class. Economic structures and material resources are expressed through cultural aspects of consumption and lifestyle to create a class. Thus, through the culture of *kafe tenda*, middle class identity is produced and reproduced. But *kafe tenda* are not simply the products of economic determinants.

In *kafe tenda* people can meet other businessmen and professionals and have the chance to meet Indonesian movie stars. *kafe tenda* are a public space³³ where people share their common interests and feelings with other people from the same class. Going to a *kafe tenda*, therefore, is as much an expression of middle class identity as it is a consumption choice. In this sense, *kafe tenda* are the cultural spaces of class, a space in which specific claims to value, meaning, and reality are lived out and naturalized in everyday practice. People in Jakarta's social middle produce this cultural space of class.

The culture of *kafe tenda* opens up new ways of imagining oneself and one's community in consumption terms and are, at the same time, a performance of class. Thus, the cultural atmosphere of the restaurant transforms it into a public space where people stake a claim and confirm their class membership. Middle class membership is not about fixing rank, but about claiming and maintaining a place in the ongoing competition. As noted by Veven Wardana and Herry Barus, much working on the lifestyle of Jakartan rich people, "*kafe tenda* is a symbolic lifestyle".³⁴ It is a new performative medium through which people attempt to synchronize their lives with those of others.

Mall Culture

A second phenomenon of middle class practice in Jakarta is mall culture. Similar to the culture of *kafe tenda*, mall culture cannot solely be seen as a consequence or a product of economic privilege. Economics and mall culture should be seen as mutually constitutive,³⁵ and in the same vein as *kafe tenda*, mall culture can be considered a cultural practice of class.

In what follows, I will examine how the phenomenon of mall culture assists in the emergence of middle class formation and production.

At the most fundamental level, malls are simply shopping centers which function to facilitate the consumption of a modern lifestyle.³⁶ The overwhelming prevalence of malls in Jakarta is partly due to more recent globalization, which has transported a global view of a modern lifestyle to the Jakartan people. Daniel Ziv, who has engaged in research on Jakartan malls, notes that the malls "contain lots of bright glitzy things on display. Malls have food courts galore and awful live bands and overflowing cineplexes. Malls have pricey cafes and noisy video arcades and trendy salons and obnoxious kiddy pageants."³⁷ The shopping mall can serve as a venue through which Jakartan people can fulfill their needs by socializing with friends, enjoying entertainment, or by simply visiting.

However, in the last few decades, it has become apparent that malls in Jakarta do not only serve as shopping centers for Jakartan people, but also reveal certain elements of cultural practice. As Ziv said, "less fortunate cities make do with parks, beaches, playgrounds, outdoor promenades or even stuffy cultural centers as the places where their residents meet and interact. Jakartan people are far luckier. They have the mall...Most of all, malls are the places Jakartan people go to see and be seen."³⁸ In addition to functioning as shopping centers, malls in Jakarta are built mainly to provide public spaces where people can engage in activities related to their class.

For Jakartan people, visiting the mall does not necessarily mean shopping or buying household goods. Jakartan people, especially Jakartan youths, often visit the mall for the cultural purpose of "*mejeng*". "*Mejeng*" refers to behaviors that purposely display a certain level of consumption, such as wearing the most up to-date fashion trend and meeting with other people of the same class in public spaces. In the mall, they hang around different areas and go from one place to another. They do not really need to buy something because that is not their main purpose. Instead, the cultural meaning of visiting the mall is to articulate and demonstrate their identity and share that interest with other people. In this way, for Jakartan people, visiting the mall is a symbol of consumption and lifestyle.

The public phenomenon of mall culture has developed rapidly over the last two decades in Jakarta. It is a new public space that is designed for the display and consumption of modern commodities. This new public space dictates what kind of clothing one wears or should wear to be accepted. Those who fail to conform “don’t count” in the eyes of their peers. Thus, the culture of the mall should be viewed as a space of the new middle class because it is at the mall that they are put on display and negotiate their claims to middle-class membership.

By transforming this public space into a commoditized zone and then claiming moral legitimacy³⁹—implying a class justification of being modern, honorable, and decent—the Jakartan middle class claims the malls as its own legitimate class domain. This act of transforming public space into consumer space serves to exclude those who cannot participate in its consumerism. In a sense, mall culture is the productive work of the middle class that produces itself and its external existence from the raw materials of consumer goods. Thus, through the culture of the mall, the Jakartan middle class is produced and reproduced. The middle class in Jakarta is truly a cultural project of class; it never exists outside of the continuous production and reproduction through cultural practices.

The fact that the income level and living standards of the Jakartan people have risen as the result of the policies under New Order economic development does not automatically determine class. Although it is true that having a certain level of material or financial resources determines one’s ability to participate in consumption, it is not merely the financial element that defines the middle class. Many in Jakarta are unable to make a claim to middle class membership because they are unable to display their lifestyle in the mall. This is not to say that mall culture is in any way simply the product of economic determinations. Mall culture is a never-ending process of cultural production and middle-class formation.

Conclusion

Economic modernization and the policy of rapid economic growth for Indonesian development have made important contributions to the massive growth of white-collar workers. Such an economic improvement

has significantly increased per capita income and, as a result, has improved the living standards of the Indonesian people. It is in this situation that a new middle class in Indonesia emerged as the beneficiaries of economic development. The 1980s were an important period, marking the integration of Indonesia into the global world. The period signaled the rapid influx of consumer commodities and the transformation of a modern lifestyle.

Throughout this paper, I use a constructivist approach in examining the emergence of the middle class in Indonesia. The cultural process aspect of class analysis articulates the dynamic and ongoing making of class. The reality of class is that it is something that is always in continuous production and reproduction through cultural practices. The phenomena of *kafe tenda* and mall culture exemplify the processes of middle class production in Indonesia.

My analysis has shown that the “newness” of the Indonesian middle class is closely associated with commodity consumption and the social practices of taste. These properties serve as the social markers of a new cultural standard that is specifically linked to globalization and the opening of Indonesian markets to the global economy in the 1980s. The invention of the Indonesian middle class involves the construction of a new cultural image and the entry of a new social group as the affluent beneficiaries of the Economic New Order, rather than a product of the Old Order and the colonial context of the Dutch.

Compared to the middle classes in other Southeast Asian countries, the Indonesian middle classes are mainly characterized by their dependence on the state. This condition leads them to a great dilemma. On the one hand, they are expected to be the locomotive of democratization in Indonesia. On the other hand, democratization will bring about significant structural changes that may disadvantage their class position. Rather than being critical of the authoritarian regime of Soeharto that is often seen as corrupt, arbitrary, and nepotistic, they make maximal efforts in preserving their relationship to the state and maintaining the status quo. Thus, as Crouch has suggested, democratization in Indonesia cannot be seen as a byproduct of middle-class revolt against the authoritarian regime of the New Order, but instead, the middle class significantly develops thanks to the rapid economic growth of the regime.⁴⁰

Bibliography

- Abiyasekere, S. (1990). *Statement at the conference on the politics of middle class Indonesia*. In Tanter, R. & Young, K. (eds.). *The politics of middle class Indonesia*. Victoria: Center for Southeast Asian Studies
- Arief, S. (1978). *Consumption patterns in Indonesia: an econometric study*. England: Sritua Arif Associates.
- Billah, M.M. (1993). *Perspektif kelas menengah Indonesia*. In Zulkarnain, H.B., Siagian, F. & Ida, L. (eds.). *Kelas menengah digugat*. Jakarta: PT Fikahati Aneska.
- Brubaker, R. (1985). *Rethinking classical theory: the sociological vision of Pierre Bourdieu*. In *Theory and society*. Elsevier Science Publisher.
- Burris, V. (1987). *The neo-Marxist synthesis of Marx and Weber on class*. In Wiley, N. (ed.). *The Marx-Weber debate*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Center for Information and Development Studies. (1998). *Kontradiksi aspirasi dan peran kelas menengah di Indonesia*. Jakarta: CIDES Publication.
- Crouch, H. (1993). *Hilangnya kelas menengah di masa orde baru*. In Zulkarnain, H.B., Siagian, F. & Ida, L. (eds.). *Kelas menengah digugat*. Jakarta: PT Fikahati Aneska.
- Crouch, H. (2001). *The Perils of Prediction: Understanding the Indonesian Transition, 1998-1999*. In Embong, A.R. (ed.) *Southeast Asian Middle Classes: Prospects for Social Change and Democratisation*. Selangor: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Dick, H.W. (1990). *Further reflections on the middle class*. In Tanter, R. & Young, K. (eds.). *The politics of middle class Indonesia*. Victoria: Center for Southeast Asian Studies.
- Fernandez, L. (2000). *Restructuring the new middle class in liberalizing India*. In the journal of *Comparative Studies of South Asia*. Vol. XX, n. 1 & 2.
- Djain, Z. (1989). *Perokonomian Indonesia*. Jakarta: Lembaga Penerbit Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Indonesia.
- Geertz, C. (1963). *Peddlers and princess: social change and economic modernization in two Indonesian towns*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gerke, S. (1995). *Symbolic consumption and the Indonesian middle class*. Working paper no. 233. University of Bielefeld.
- Koo, H. (2001). *Korean workers: the culture and politics of class formation*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Koo, H. (2006). *The changing faces of inequality in South Korea in the age of globalization*. *Korean Studies Journal*, Vol. 30.
- Lev, D.S. (1990). *Intermediate class and social change in Indonesia: some initial reflections*. In Tanter, R. & Young, K. (eds.). *The politics of middle class Indonesia*. Victoria: Center for Southeast Asian Studies.
- Liechty, M. (2003). *Suitably modern: making middle class culture in a new consumer society*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Mackie, J.A.C. (1990). *Money and the middle class*. In Tanter, R. & Young, K. (eds.). *The politics of middle class Indonesia*. Victoria: Center for Southeast Asian Studies.
- Mukerjee, D. (1974). *Indonesia today*. New Delhi: Economic and Scientific Research Foundation.
- Pond, D.H. (1964). *Development investment in Indonesia, 1956-1963*. Malaysia: Malaysia Printers Limited.
- Prawiro, R. (1998). *Indonesia's struggle for economic development: pragmatism in action*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Priyono, A.E. (1999). *Konsumtivisme kelas menengah perkotaan*. In Hadijaya. *Kelas menengah bukan ratu adil*. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana.
- Rahardjo, M. D. (1999). *Masyarakat madani: agama, kelas menengah dan perubahan sosial*. Jakarta: Pustaka LP3ES Indonesia.
- Rahardjo, M.D. (1987). *Perokonomian Indonesia: Pertumbuhan dan Krisis*. Jakarta: LP3ES.
- Robison, R. (1995). *The emergence of middle class in Southeast Asia*. Working paper no. 57. National Library of Australia.
- Robison, R. (1990). *Problems of analyzing the middle class as a political force in Indonesia*. In Tanter, R. & Young, K. (eds.). *The politics of middle class Indonesia*. Victoria: Center for Southeast Asian Studies.
- Sagir, S. (1982). *Ekonomi Indonesia: gagasan, pemikiran & polemik*. Bandung: Iqra'.
- Sarjadi, S. (1993). *Kontribusi kelas menengah terhadap proses demokratisasi*. In Zulkarnain,

- H.B., Siagian, F. & Ida, L. (eds.). *Kelas menengah digugat*. Jakarta: PT Fikahati Aneska.
- Shiraishi, T. *The rise of new urban middle classes in Southeast Asia: what is its national and regional significance?*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rieti.go.jp/jp/publications/dp/04e011.pdf>
- Siagian, F. (1993). *Eksistensi kelas menengah dan peranannya dalam perubahan sosial di masa orde baru*. In Zulkarnain, H.B., Siagian, F. & Ida, L. (eds.). *Kelas menengah digugat*. Jakarta: PT Fikahati Aneska.
- Smail, J. (1994). *The origins of middle class culture*. London: Cornell University Press.
- Tanter, R. & Young, K. (1990). *Introduction of the politics of middle class in Indonesia*. Victoria: Center for Southeast Asian Studies.
- Tomagola, T.A. (1993). *Mencari motor demokratisasi di Indonesia*. In Zulkarnain, H.B., Siagian, F. & Ida, L. (eds.). *Kelas menengah digugat*. Jakarta: PT Fikahati Aneska.
- Ziv, D. (2002). *Jakarta inside out*. Jakarta: Equinox Publishing.
- Wacquent, L. J. (1991). *Making class: the middle class (es) in social theory and social structure*. In Mcnall, S., Levine, R. & Fantasia, R (eds.). *Bringing class back in*. Wesview.
- Wardhana, V. & Barus, H. (1998). *Para superkaya Indonesia: sebuah dokumentasi gaya hidup*. Jakarta: Institut Studi Arus Informasi.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: how working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- 5 It is conceptually referred to as the process of ongoing refinement of the individual living standard of Indonesian middle class, mainly through education, consumerism/lifestyle and political behavior.
- 6 Tanter, & Young, Introduction of the politics of middle class in Indonesia, pp. 1-10.
- 7 Liechty, Suitably modern: making middle class culture in a new consumer society, p. 8. Class is seen as comprising individual attitudes, belief and behavior that depends upon the formative capacity trough social learning and social interaction.
- 8 Wacquent, Making class: the middle class (es) in social theory and social structure. In Mcnall, S., Levine, R. & Fantasia, R (eds.). *Bringing class back in*, p. 51. It is important to bear in mind that Wacquent's critique to both Weberian and Marxist class approaches additionally describe the general nature of structuralist approach.
- 9 Koo, Korean workers: the culture and politics of class formation, p.13.
- 10 Ibid, p. 8.
- 11 Liechty, Suitably modern: making middle class culture in a new consumer society, p. 21.
- 12 Brubaker, Rethinking classical theory: the sociological vision of Pierre Bourdieu, p. 761. A class approach which shifts focus from objective, structuralist-economic abstraction of class territories to the processual and constructivist formation of class can take Bourdieu's work "Distinction" as an example. Bourdieu argued that "class divisions are defined not by differing relations to the means of production, but by differing conditions of existence, differing systems of dispositions produced by differential conditioning and differing endowments of power or capital... age, sex and ethnicity are not principles of divisions that cross-cut class divisions. Class is not mode of social grouping among others: it is the generic name for all social groups distinguished by their conditions of existence and their corresponding dispositions". On the most concrete level, Bourdieu, equating class with his central concept of Habitus, "is concerned with class based differences in the ensembles of consumption habits, leisure, time activities, and taste in work of art, food, dress, and home furnishings, etc."
- 13 The Jakartan Middle classes definitely conduct simultaneous projects of making class and distinguishing their class with other working class and bourgeois.
- 14 Liechty, Suitably modern: making middle class culture in a new consumer society, p. 30.
- 15 Ibid, p. 5.
- 16 See Dick, "Further reflections on the middle class". In Tanter, R. & Young, K. (eds.). *The politics of middle class Indonesia*, p. 74. As he said, "the consciousness is rather identification with a class of people pursuing modern, westernized lifestyles that has, to a considerable extent, been based on role models fashioned and propagated by the national mass media and especially television".
- 17 Liechty, Suitably modern: making middle class culture in a new consumer society, p. 115. Liechty argued that consumption and lifestyle, as class culture, "is a new performative medium through which people attempt to synchronize their lives with those of others". Needless to say, "middle class is a kind of performative space characterized by constant alignment and realignment with class others and where goods play active role". As a consequence, "middle class membership is not about fixing rank but about claiming and maintaining a place in the ongoing debate".
- 18 Rahardjo, *Perokonomian Indonesia: Pertumbuhan dan Krisis*, p. 51.

End Notes

- 1 See Macki, 1990; Hart 1993 quoted by Gerke, 1995; Fernandes: 2000, Koo: 2006, Robison: 1995, Liechty: 2003, Shiraishi: 2006.
- 2 Koo, The changing faces of inequality in South Korea in the age of globalization. *Korean Studies Journal*, Vol. 30.
- 3 See Liddle, "New middle class in Indonesia", In Tanter, R. & Young, K. (eds.). *The politics of middle class Indonesia*, pp. 56-67. The high rate of industrial development has been the main goal of New-Order Regime through their state-led modernization and liberalization policy in the 1980s; a policy that is more outward-looking. The primary byproduct of such policy is the production of significant number of new middle class that will expectedly serve as the agent of national development.
- 4 See Geertz, *Peddlers and princess: social change and economic modernization in two Indonesian towns*.

19 See Pond, *Development investment in Indonesia, 1956-1963*, p. 93. For him, the history of Indonesian economy during the first fifteen years of political independence must be viewed against a background of low levels of material welfare and economic resources, decades of colonial domination and eight years of military occupation and war. Annual per capita income was about 100 dollars (U.S.) or below, and might have declined during 1949-1964. About 80 per cent of population earned livelihood in the agrarian sectors, which used relatively little capital.

20 See Djamin, *Perkonomian Indonesia*. p. 2. For him, the failure of economic development Old-Order is caused by some factors. First, the Strategic Committee of Development, formed in 1947, could not apply all the planned programs of development as all the national efforts were directed mainly toward political diplomacy and war against Dutch that intended to re-colonize Indonesia. Second, Banteng Program established on August 14, 1950 and mainly intended to serve as the development of indigenous entrepreneur, also failed to make a radical economic changes for some reasons, the colonial structure of economy and the absence of BNI (National Bank of Indonesia) nationalization.

21 Pond, *Development investment in Indonesia, 1956-1963*, p. 96.

22 Prawiro, *Indonesia's struggle for economic development: pragmatism in action*, p. 2.

23 Ibid, p. 87. As he further argues that, "this trilogy epitomized Indonesia's vision of development. The Development Trilogy is a simple but powerful idea, which more than anything else expresses the New Order's pragmatic and ideological standard against which all economic policies could be measured".

24 Prawiro, *Indonesia's struggle for economic development: pragmatism in action*, p. 257.

25 Ibid, p. 280.

26 Ibid, p. 313. He argued that "globalization implies having ready access to the products of the world at international prices"

27 See Shiraishi, *The rise of new urban middle classes in Southeast Asia: what is its national and regional significance?*

28 See Mackie, *Money and the middle class*. In Tanter, R. & Young, K. (eds.). *The politics of middle class Indonesia*. P. 127.

29 See Shiraishi, *The rise of new urban middle classes in Southeast Asia: what is its national and regional significance?*

30 Gerke, *Symbolic consumption and the Indonesian middle class*, p. 8.

31 For example, many national and local magazines, newspapers, TVs and Radios in Indonesia show and display modern consumption patterns and lifestyles, either for teenagers or adults, such as *Anita* magazine, *Bintang* magazine, *Popular* tabloid, *Hai* magazine, *Kawanku* magazine, *Senior* tabloid, *Wanita Indonesia* tabloid, and many others, or certain sections of some newspapers, such as *Perempuan* section, showing certain lifestyles and consumption for Indonesian women, on *Kompas* cyber media, *De-Style* section in *Jawa Pos* newspaper, *detikfood* section on *Detik* media, or on some TV shows, such as the *metrolife* and *E-life* sections on Metro TV, and many others.

32 Ibid, p. 3.

33 Public space is always referred to as a public space refers to an area or place that is open and accessible to all citizens, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_space

34 Wardhana, & Barus, *Para superkaya Indonesia: sebuah dokumentasi gaya hidup*, p. 113.

35 The aspects of economics exert a power to form a part in the establishment of mall culture and mutually mall culture offers a foundational space of which economics could operate.

36 The modern shopping mall (or simply mall) is often referred to as a huge building or set of buildings that contain stores, with interconnecting walkways enabling visitors to easily walk from store to store.

37 Ziv, *Jakarta inside out*, p. 88.

38 Ibid

39 The concept of moral legitimacy is mainly adopted from Liechty's *Suitably modern: making middle class culture in a new consumer society*.

40 See Crouch, "The Perils of Prediction: Understanding the Indonesian Transition, 1998-1999". In Embong, A.R. (ed.) *Southeast Asian Middle Classes: Prospects for Social Change and Democratization*.