



SPIRITUAL ECONOMIES: Islam and Neoliberalism in Contemporary Indonesia

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“Who are you? Who is your God? What is your book?” yelled one member of each of 130 pairs of Krakatau Steel employees. The interrogator embraced the interrogated with one arm while lightly hitting the latter’s back with the other. The interrogated wept tearful affirmations of faith and repentance. The darkened hall was illuminated only by an image of a coconut tree silhouetted against a Technicolor tropical sunset shimmering on three huge projection screens. These factory foremen and operators were involved in a “role-play” drawing on the Islamic funerary practice of *talqin*. This ritual consists of instructions offered to a corpse on how to respond to the questions of the angels of death, who will visit the recently deceased after the last mourner departs from the grave. Two business trainers cum spiritual advisers dressed in dark business suits enacted the roles of the two angels, Mungkar and Nakir.¹ They screamed into microphones while heavy metal music blared at ear-splitting decibel levels in the background. They combined in an animated call and response as they paced about the room. One repeatedly shouted, “Who are you?” while the other offered answers at equal volume. These responses oscillated among “*Laa ilaa ha illallah*. . . There is no God but Allah. . . Wealth can lie. . . Children can die. . . Allah is my flesh. . . Allah is my destination. . . Put Him into your heart. . . Put Him in your body. . . Put Him into your marrow. . . My God is not property. . . My God is not money. . . *Laa ilaa ha illallah*. . . There is no God but Allah.”

In 2002, managers at Krakatau Steel implemented what they called “spiritual reform” [*reformasi spiritual*] to enhance the Islamic piety of the company’s 6,000

employees. For decades the factory was a key site in the state's project of nationalist development, but was faced with a new political economic landscape increasingly characterized by transnational competition. The managers reasoned that through cultivating the religious virtues of the workforce they could enhance company productivity, eliminate corruption, become more internationally competitive, and perhaps prepare employees for privatization of this state-owned enterprise. The scene described above depicts the climactic moment of this unprecedented initiative, which required staff to attend "spiritual" training sessions totaling 40 hours over three days. The sessions drew on a stirring, if sometimes unwieldy, mix of Qur'anic recitation, business leadership training, Islamic history, and popular psychology. This training program, called "Emotional and Spiritual Quotient [ESQ] Training," invokes both Islamic tradition and Euro-American management knowledge in the interest of creating a more disciplined, less corrupt, company employee. The goal of these training programs is to enable a purported "natural" propensity for spirituality, believed an innate characteristic of every human being, to guide the work and home life of participants.

This essay argues that this assemblage² of Islamic and capitalist ethics in contemporary Indonesia forms what is termed a spiritual economy.³ I offer this concept in contrast to the notion of "occult economies" that treats religious resurgence as a refuge from the disruptions wrought by a global "culture of neoliberalism" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000). In so doing, I seek to analyze similar processes not fully captured by this approach. Rather than seeing religion as a retreat into mystification or means of resistance against neoliberal transformations, the concept of spiritual economies elucidates the way in which economic reform and neoliberal restructuring are conceived of and enacted as matters of religious piety and spiritual virtue. The concept emerges from events I witnessed and took part in contemporary Indonesia in which self-styled "spiritual reformers" link far-reaching economic transformations to existential questions of motivation and action. These spiritual reformers are proponents of initiatives that combine Islamic ethics with the principles of management knowledge to enhance Indonesia's transnational competitiveness. The concept of spiritual economies thus reveals how individual religious practices are conjoined to broader projects of economic transformation as workers are enjoined to compete in an increasingly global economy. I argue that spiritual economies consist of three interrelated components: (1) objectifying spirituality as a site of management and intervention; (2) reconfiguring work as a form of worship and religious duty; and (3) inculcating ethics of individual accountability that are deemed commensurable with neoliberal norms of transparency, productivity,

and rationalization for purposes of profit. This essay demonstrates that these three components enabled a conjunction of Islam and neoliberalism.

Spiritual economies refer to projects that seek to simultaneously transform workers into more pious religious subjects and more productive economic subjects. The proponents of spiritual reform consider the separation of religious ethics from economic practices as the cause of Indonesia's economic crisis. In their eyes, this disjunction resulted in rampant corruption, a lack of accountability, and labor indiscipline. The concept of spiritual economies elucidates how two domains, religion and capitalism, are brought together to create a new ethical orientation toward oneself, one's work, and one's collectivity. Islam is not merely a vehicle in this process, as spiritual reform is taken to both enable Islamic virtue and effect dispositions that enhance corporate productivity and competitiveness in an increasingly global market. Self-discipline, accountability, and entrepreneurial action are represented as Islamic virtues that should inform one's ethical conduct both within and beyond the workplace.

Spiritual economies capture the articulation of religious practice with two facets of neoliberalism in contemporary Indonesia: first, policies deployed to re-make the country's political economy; and second, projects of individual ethical reform intended to elicit a type of subjectivity commensurable with neoliberal norms. Neoliberal policies facing employees at Krakatau Steel fell under the rubrics of economic liberalization, political liberalization, and privatization. Economic liberalization entailed the elimination of tariffs on imported steel, forcing the company to compete with steel producers located outside Indonesia. Political liberalization involved the formation of a new, and for the first time independent, labor union at Krakatau Steel. This was part of a wider emergence of democratic political institutions in Indonesia. Privatization entailed the elimination of state subsidies and a turn toward soliciting private investment from foreign and domestic capital markets. Krakatau Steel would no longer be guaranteed infusions of state development funds that for years enabled the modernization of aging plant facilities. Workers at the factory referred to these transformations as reflecting a broader change in the purpose of the company "from a social mission to a business mission." Prior to the end of the Suharto regime the company was considered a vehicle for social development and enhancing the living standards of relatively well-educated, middle-class Indonesians. After the 1998 economic crisis, in which the Indonesian government agreed to privatize state-owned enterprises as a condition of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) \$40 billion bailout, the company's social mission was no longer a foremost concern of government officials and company managers.

However, I do not treat neoliberal reform as merely the implementation of an abstract set of policies. Rather, I draw attention to the actual practices constitutive of neoliberalism. Building on this approach, I treat neoliberalism as a form of practical action, not as an abstract doctrine (Foucault 2008:318; Hoffman 2006). Thus, I show how specific forms of management and spiritual knowledge were mobilized to create new forms of life and labor. I describe how mass-mediated spiritual training programs, books, and manuals for living a life were designed to inculcate individual accountability, responsibility, and self-management. I argue that managers, state technocrats, and religious reformers sought to enact a set of neoliberal practices by creating a new type of subject, a worshipping worker, for whom labor was a matter of religious duty. Thus, my focus is more on the assemblages created through the combination of different cultural forms, rather than on the homogenizing thrust of one form over another.

The concept of spiritual economies delineates points of convergence between “the global religious revival” (Asad 2007) and economic globalization. Both of these processes have been the focus of recent anthropological interest, but for the most part they have been treated separately. Comparatively little work exists that demonstrates the connections between religious resurgence and neoliberal transformation. On the one hand, anthropologists have drawn attention to the dramatic resurgence in religious practice in many parts of the contemporary world (Coleman 2000; Harding 2000; Hefner 1998; Hirschkind 2006). Another body of research has examined globalization as the intensified integration of production systems, financial activities, and labor markets across national borders (Appadurai 1996; Harvey 1989; Ong 1999; Rudnyckij 2004). However, few scholarly accounts have treated the global religious revival and economic globalization within the same conceptual frame. For example, two recent edited collections on the anthropology of globalization contain a total of only two articles that consider religion (Inda and Rosaldo 2002; Ong and Collier 2005).

This convergence of economic transformation and religious piety that I term a spiritual economy may shed light on similar assemblages occurring elsewhere. In other parts of Asia, movements that link religious practice to productivity and profit have been documented. In Taiwan, one such movement draws on a vocabulary and set of “spiritual” practices strikingly similar to those used by Indonesian spiritual reformers (Pazderic 2004). Protestant evangelism has produced unprecedented amalgamations of spiritual practice and economic desire in Latin America and Africa (Bornstein 2005; Cahn 2008; Meyer 1998). The former Soviet Union has seen a stunning rise in religious practice in the wake of the massive political and

economic transformation following the end of the Communist Party's hold on state power (Humphrey 2002; Lindquist 2002). New proselytizers have emerged who preach both Muslim piety and entrepreneurial activity in Africa, South Asia, Europe, and the Middle East (Aras and Caha 2000; Osella and Osella in press; Schulz 2006; Wise 2003). Others seek to develop alternative financial instruments that enable Muslims to participate in the global economy, while abiding by Islamic prohibitions on usury (Maurer 2005, 2006). I argue that a hallmark of contemporary neoliberalism is that it seems to enable assemblages of religion and economics that certain strands of social science theory have held a part.

To elaborate the definition of spiritual economies, first I contextualize the introduction of Islamic proselytization at Krakatau Steel. I focus on the conjunction of the introduction of spiritual reform with accelerating plans for the privatization of the company and the transition to a steel market increasingly defined in global, rather than national, terms. Next, I contrast spiritual economies with moral and occult economies to clarify the theoretical stakes of the argument. Subsequently, I illuminate the three components of spiritual economies that emerged during the period I carried out fieldwork in Indonesia between 2003 and 2005. Finally, I suggest the utility of a concept of spiritual economies in comprehending articulations of religious resurgence and economic globalization in Indonesia and beyond.

ASSEMBLING INDUSTRIAL AND ISLAMIC REFORM

Krakatau Steel is located in Banten, a new province founded in 2000, but based on the boundaries of an early modern Islamic sultanate. Banten was a critical node in 16th- and 17th-century Southeast Asian trade networks (Meilink-Roelofs 1962; Reid 1988; Van Leur 1955) and has thus been long connected to other parts of Asia and the Pacific. Islam has been an important aspect of the identity of inhabitants of Banten, who are routinely considered second only to the Acehenese in the strength of their Islamic piety by Indonesians (Williams 1990). One illustration of this strong Islamic identity is that in the 19th-century Banten had the highest percentage of inhabitants who had completed the hajj of any regency in Java (Kartodirdjo 1966:332). Although the majority of Krakatau Steel employees were not born in Banten and do not identify as ethnically Bantenese, the devoutly Islamic environment in Banten made religious affiliation pressing concerns for both newcomers and those with longer ties to the region.

Banten's accessibility to sea-based trade networks was central in the 1956 decision by Sukarno's nationalist government to locate Indonesia's first steel works in the region. The initial iteration of Krakatau Steel was funded with Soviet development

aid and technological expertise (Purwadi et al. 2003). Its strategic location on the Sunda Straits was likely an important consideration for the Soviet advisers who favored this site over other possibilities in East Java. Although construction ceased following the military coup of 1965 that brought Suharto to power, it was resuscitated in the early 1970s as a centerpiece of national development under the import substitution industrialization prong of Indonesia's New Order development strategy (Arndt 1975; Hikam 1995). Krakatau Steel produces a material that was absolutely critical to the state's nationalist development project and occupied an iconic position, receiving frequent visits from the Indonesian President and other dignitaries. Today, the company is the largest steel factory in Southeast Asia and site for the production of half of the total steel produced in Indonesia (Akbar 2003).

Because of the affirmative action-style hiring policies of the Suharto state, many state-owned enterprises in Indonesia have high percentages of Muslim employees. Indonesia's Muslim population of roughly 200 million gives it the world's largest number of Muslim inhabitants located within a single nation. Muslims dwarf the country's other religions, constituting about 90 percent of the total population (Hefner 2000:6). Islam is often a key criterion in defining indigenous Indonesians, although not necessarily the only one (Li 2000). At state-owned enterprises, however, the percentage of Muslim employees is even higher than among the national population because these companies were used by the regime as vehicles for enhancing the living standards of so-called "indigenous" [pribumi] Indonesians who were economically disadvantaged in comparison to those labeled Chinese under the Dutch colonial regime (Hadler 2004; Rush 1990). In 2004, Krakatau Steel managers reported that 97 percent of the company's 6,000 permanent employees were Muslim.

Over the past four decades Krakatau Steel received billions of dollars in state development aid. However, the Asian financial crisis and the end of the Suharto regime presented the company with a number of pressing challenges. These challenges are associated with "Reform" [Reformasi], which is how Indonesians refer to the political and economic transformations that have occurred in the country since 1998. Reformasi simultaneously refers to political changes in the form of increasing democratic governance and economic changes in the form of greater transparency, free markets, and merit (rather than patronage) based systems of competition, compensation, and promotion.

Reformasi had wide-ranging effects at Krakatau Steel. For years state funds had guaranteed the company's viability, but these were eliminated in 1998 after the near bankruptcy of the Indonesian government. Tariffs on imported steel that had

long protected the company from international competition were fully eliminated in April 2004, during the period when the fieldwork for this research project took place. Furthermore, China has emerged as a new global steel producer and employees fear that once the demand for steel within China begins to ebb, as it inevitably will, China will in turn flood the Indonesian market with cheap, low-cost steel. Finally, new legal protections for workers offered unprecedented possibilities for political mobilization by factory employees, including the formation of a new (and for the first time independent) labor union, thus creating a freer labor force.

By the early 2000s, many company employees, journalists, nongovernmental organization (NGO) activists, and academic observers had concluded that the economic challenges associated with Reformasi would ultimately lead to the privatization of Krakatau Steel. Privatization of state-owned enterprises was a critical condition of the IMF's \$40 billion bailout of the Indonesian government in the wake of the 1998 Asian financial crisis (Prasetyawan 2006). Under the terms of this agreement, foreign companies would be the primary investors and private ownership was expected to create "efficient and viable enterprises" (Government of Indonesia 2000). Krakatau Steel employees heatedly debated the merits of privatization. Those opposed to privatization expressed a fear of job losses after the shift from state to private ownership. Employees who favored privatization were motivated by the fear that the company could no longer rely on state investment for the modernization of ageing production facilities and would thus go bankrupt because of an inability to compete in an increasingly global steel market.

As debates over the merits and course of privatization flared among factory employees, managers at Krakatau Steel turned to Islamic spiritual reform to create an "efficient and viable enterprise." They contracted a Jakarta-based company, the ESQ Leadership Center, to introduce spiritual training at the company. The founder of ESQ, Ary Ginanjar, has drawn ideas for the training program from different iterations of management knowledge and practice that have greatly expanded in North America, Asia, and Europe in recent decades (Thrift 1998). He has sought to fuse corporate trainings and life coaching programs, like the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, with a literal interpretation of Islamic practice. Thus, he sees Reformasi as not so much a matter of structural political and economic change as a matter of individual ethical and moral reform.

In the multiday training sessions that his company offers, Ginanjar stresses that Islamic piety should not simply be restricted to religious worship, such as during one's daily prayers. Instead, he argues that principles conducive to modern business and management can be found in Islamic practice and Qur'anic doctrine.

For example, drawing on what he terms “the ESQ model,” Ginanjar instructs participants in these training programs that the third pillar of Islam is a directive for business success. Thus, the duty to give alms (zakat) is represented as divine sanction for “strategic collaboration” and exercising a “win–win” approach in both business transactions and relations with coworkers. Ary Ginanjar further asserts that the fourth pillar of Islam, the duty to fast during Ramadan, is a model for self-control and self-management. On the basis of this principle, ESQ seeks to inculcate the obligation to constrain worldly desires to ensure otherworldly salvation. Corruption, which is represented as a result of the longing for material possessions, is depicted as contrary to this divine injunction of individual accountability.

These training sessions find appeal across contemporary Indonesia, primarily to an educated audience of middle- and upper-middle-class participants. At Krakatau Steel mid- and lower-level managers were the primary targets of spiritual training. The training was, however, also extended to employees at lower levels of the company hierarchy, such as foremen and operators, although with less success.⁴ At the end of the second day of a session with an audience that consisted mostly of operators, I spoke with Rinaldi, Ary Ginanjar’s brother who had taken over as the lead ESQ trainer at Krakatau Steel midway through my fieldwork. He had an exhausted look on his face. It was one of the few times that I saw anyone associated with ESQ appear frustrated or disconsolate as employees of the company habitually presented a sunny countenance. Many members of the audience had cracked jokes in the audience during Rinaldi’s oration and audiovisual presentation, in spite of his repeated ministrations for the audience to be “orderly and polite” (*tertib dan sopan*). He explained to me that because those in the audience were “uneducated,” easily lost focus, and were not able to follow along with the message of the training. He said, “sometimes they cannot follow it, when I use English or refer to scientific literature.” Haji Alwani, a local political and religious leader who was invited by Krakatau Steel to attend ESQ at the company’s education and training center expressed a similar sentiment. He said that he doubted that ESQ would be effective for the “people” (*rakyat*) in his village (*kampung*) and that the messages were more tailored to “the middle class [*orang-orang menengah*] who were educated.” He said that this was because of the fact that many foreign words and scientific concepts were used during the training and these would be unfamiliar to uneducated people.

At Krakatau Steel ESQ training sessions were held once or twice per month except during Ramadan and the hajj pilgrimage season. They were most often held in the large multipurpose room of the factory’s education and training center, which could accommodate over 300 participants at a time. The sessions ran for

three consecutive days, usually from Friday through Sunday, but also sometimes in the middle of the week. The first two days started at 7:00 a.m. and lasted until just before the maghrib prayers,⁵ which usually begin around 6:00 p.m. in Indonesia. The third day of the training involved both the climactic self-confession session described at the beginning of this essay and the program's denouement, which consisted of a simulation of three of the events that take place during the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca: tawaf, the circumambulation of the kabbah, the sa'i, a ritual that consists of running seven times back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwah in Mecca,⁶ and the stoning of jamrat al-aqabah, in which pilgrims hurl rocks at three representations of the devil.⁷ This final day ran from 7:00 a.m. until almost midnight.

ESQ followed the conventions of other manifestations of management knowledge that Nigel Thrift has described as "knowing capitalism" (Thrift 2005). Like many other forms of management knowledge the training was structured through what is becoming a ubiquitous global form for conveying information, a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. This presentation consists of the usual slides with graphs, charts, tables, and a litany of bullet points, but also with spliced film clips, colorful photographs, and popular music. The training was delivered primarily as an interactive lecture in which the main trainer would alternate between engaging with the audience in the familiar style of a television talk show host and proceeding to deliver fiery and profoundly emotive lectures evocative of U.S. televangelists.⁸

In addition to lectures, the assistant trainers would often perform skits to illustrate the main points of the training. Interactive games, participatory role-play, and calisthenics were deployed to break up the monotony of sitting and listening. There were also a plethora of light-hearted activities that seemed intended to encourage participants to be comfortable acting in ways unfamiliar in a work setting. For example, participants sat in three sections with two aisles dividing the groups and at one point the section that performed most poorly on a collective cheer, as judged by the trainer, had to perform the hokey-pokey along with an animated video of the dance intended for children. To elicit certain embodied dispositions, the physical environment was carefully calibrated. The sound in the hall was often elevated to earsplitting volume and the lights in the room were manipulated to maximize the dramatic effects of the points made. Further, the air-conditioning was turned to its lowest setting creating a disconcerting chill in an otherwise steamy tropical climate. Participants would take regular breaks for snacks and meals.

Although Krakatau Steel was one of the first companies to embrace ESQ, the program has now spread extensively across Indonesia. In addition to Krakatau Steel, this training program was initiated at some of Indonesia's most prominent governmental institutions and state-owned enterprises including the Directorate General of Taxation; Pertamina, the national oil company; Telkom, the country's largest telecommunications company; and Garuda, the nation's flag air carrier (*Republika* 2006a, 2006d, 2006e).

State ministers, both past and present, are enthusiastic proponents of ESQ. Rozy Munir, the Minister for State-Owned Enterprises during the former administration of President Abdurrahman Wahid, completed the training and was quoted in the national newspaper *Republika* attesting to the benefits of ESQ for corporate employees (*Republika* 2006c).⁹ While I was conducting fieldwork for this project in late 2004, Sugiharto, then the newly appointed Minister for State-Owned Enterprises, issued a letter "recommending" that employees of all state-owned enterprises in Indonesia complete the ESQ training program. This is a vast pool of over 100 companies, all of which have established budget categories for employee training. In a news conference prior to this announcement, when journalists asked Sugiharto how he intended to combat rampant corruption in his ministry, he invoked ESQ as the primary means his new administration planned to use toward this end.

In just five years ESQ grew spectacularly (see Figure 1). In addition to offering programs at some of Indonesia's largest companies, the company does a brisk business in so called "public" trainings. Participants in these public programs pay up to \$350 out of their own pockets to participate. Ary Ginanjar said that these events, which attract as many as 1,000 participants at a time, are his biggest growth market. Recently ESQ has met its goal of becoming a national movement, establishing branch offices in 30 out of 33 Indonesian provinces.¹⁰ In late 2005, the ESQ Leadership Center broke ground for a 25-story office tower and convention center in south Jakarta funded in part through investment shares sold to past participants (ESQ 2008). By May 2008, the convention center was complete and work continued on the high rise in spite of Indonesia's precarious economic position. The company planned to lease much of the office space to multinational corporations with offices in Jakarta.

The connections among work, worship, and individual ethical transformation is apparent in other contemporary projects of spiritual reform in Indonesia and Muslim communities elsewhere (Haenni 2005; Osella and Osella in press; Silverstein 2008).¹¹ In addition to the ESQ program another manifestation of what is referred to by proponents and participants as "spiritual reform" in Indonesia

<u>Cumulative number of ESQ “alumni” at year end since inception</u>	
2001	43
2002	1,700
2003	15,000
2004	45,000
2005	138,000
2006	269,000
2007	465,000

FIGURE 1. Number of ESQ “alumni” (appellation attributed to ESQ participants who had completed the training). Sources: <http://www.esqway165.com>, accessed July 30, 2008; and <http://www.esqkepri.com/joomla>, accessed July 30, 2008.

is the hugely successful Islamic business called Manajemen Qolbu Corporation (Watson 2005). This Islamic media and direct marketing conglomerate uses first an English-derived term (*manajemen*) and then an Arabic word (*qolbu*) to yield a name that translates as “Management of the Heart Corporation.” The company was founded by the charismatic engineer-turned-television preacher Abdullah Gymnas-tiar, widely known as Aa Gym, who is one of the most recognizable public figures in Indonesia.¹²

SPIRITUAL ECONOMIES

The concept spiritual economies complements the notion of occult economies (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, 2000), but elucidates an articulation between the global religious resurgence and economic globalization that is not quite captured by the latter. Comaroff and Comaroff define occult economies as “the deployment of magical means for material ends or, more expansively, the conjuring of wealth by resort to inherently mysterious techniques, techniques whose principles of operation are neither transparent nor explicable in conventional terms. These techniques, moreover, often involve the destruction of others and their capacity to create value” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999:297 n. 31). The inability of modernization to deliver on the promise of development has led to a resurgence of religious and occult practices as a refuge from the violence of structural adjustment and other

neoliberal reforms. Comaroff and Comaroff base their argument on sensationalist accounts of magic and scandal such as witchcraft and the killing of accused witches, the resurgence of zombies, pyramid schemes, and the illicit sale of body parts. In contrast, the empirical material from which spiritual economies emerge are the actual practices inside key sites of industrial production where the assemblage of religion and neoliberalism is designed to address the challenges of globalization.

Occult economies emerge out of the proliferation of two kinds of unreason. On one hand, those people subject to neoliberal interventions can only comprehend these transformations by resorting to magic and mystification. Those who have seen their lives disrupted in dramatic ways resort to supernatural forces to make sense of these changes. On the other hand, they refer to the way in which neoliberal policies are spread as a religious gospel. In contrast, spiritual economies point to a set of ascetic practices that involve individual ethical transformation to instill neoliberal values such as transparency and accountability. This is not ascription to a totalizing gospel, but rather the mobilization of a specific set of religious techniques to address particular problems. Thus, religious practice is mobilized not as a retreat into magic and mystery, but rather the inculcation of a set of ascetic practices designed to transform oneself into a different type of being (Asad 1993; Weber 2002). Methodologically, I presume that those enmeshed in the spiritual economy described here understand their predicament at least as well, if not better, than the ethnographer.

Finally, occult economies are premised on Marx's argument that capitalist consumption obscures the labor that goes into the production of commodities (Marx 1977). Spiritual economies entail not so much the abstraction of labor, but making it more concrete. During my fieldwork this was apparent in two ways. First, was an emphasis on individual accountability that called on workers to reflect on their own labor practices and see their labor in relation to the larger structural transformations in which they are enmeshed, such as transnational competition and the privatization of state-owned firms. This does not involve the abstraction of labor, but, rather, making it more visible by treating it as religious worship. This was apparent in the proliferation of discourses about work engaged in by employees, managers, and spiritual reformers. Second, spiritual economies are premised on implementing transparency, a critical neoliberal value. Corruption, a practice widely viewed as endemic to state-owned enterprises in Indonesia was previously concealed, but was rendered visible as a focus of reflection during spiritual training.

Spiritual economies involve efforts to connect individual religious piety to projects of economic transformation and development. The concept builds on James Scott's notion of "moral economy" (1976) in so far as I challenge approaches that see economies as a natural reflection of a universal model of human behavior based on rational choice. Scott contributed to E. P. Thompson's formulation of moral economies (Thompson 1971) by drawing attention to the crucial role of patron–client networks in Southeast Asia before the massive transformations precipitated by the introduction of colonial capitalism. These networks were characterized by reciprocity between those of unequal social status.

However, in contrast to the moral economies identified by Scott, spiritual economies illuminate the cultivation of individual ethical practice. My focus is not so much on the social ties in which economic relations are embedded, but rather on the specific techniques that are mobilized to create subjects commensurable with new economic arrangements. In Scott's formulation, clients accept outwardly exploitative economic arrangements because of an implicit understanding that patrons will provide for them in the event of hardship. A spiritual economy depicts a social landscape where such ties are increasingly absent. Whereas a moral economy is dependent on a relation of reciprocity, in spiritual economies this ethic of reciprocity is replaced by an ethic of individual accountability to God. Thus, spiritual reform sessions at Krakatau Steel consistently emphasized that employees were to be proactive, responsible, and accountable. These values were represented as simultaneously conducive to corporate success and otherworldly salvation. Furthermore, those enmeshed within this spiritual economy were trained to make judgments about such factors as time, productivity, and corruption based on a particular interpretation of religious duty.

The increasing emphasis on individual accountability was a common topic of discussion among factory employees at Krakatau Steel. One foreman in the slab steel plant at Krakatau Steel explained to me that prior to the mid-1990s the "the social was the most important and profit was secondary," but "now profit is number one and the social mission [*misi sosial*] is number two." Employees and other Indonesians referred to the "social mission" that characterized the earlier period as *padat karya*, which literally translates as "dense work" and refers to the past practice of hiring more workers than necessary for production tasks. This practice is common at many Indonesian companies, including both state-owned enterprises and private corporations. At Krakatau Steel, an active and vocal debate pitted those who saw the company's mission as "supporting the livelihoods of the masses" [*hajat hidup orang banyak*] against those that sought to make the

company competitive in an increasingly global steel market by reducing its labor costs.

The values characteristic of the “social mission” are similar to those outlined by Clifford Geertz in his studies of village Java. The notions of *padat karya* and *hajat hidup orang banyak* evoke shared poverty and patterns of work spreading that Geertz observed during the 1950s and 1960s (Geertz 1963).¹³ Geertz interpreted an ethics of shared poverty as the primary obstacle to economic development, or “takeoff” in the parlance of modernization theory (Rostow 1960). Today the problem for state technocrats, development agencies, and corporate managers is not so much overcoming cultural barriers to enable Indonesia to proceed along the track toward modernity. Rather they seek to combine localized cultural norms with outside values to become more globally competitive.

Labor rationalized according to social principles (providing more comparatively good paying factory jobs and distributing particularly strenuous activities), as opposed to economic principles (avoiding redundancy and maximizing efficiency), mirrors the ethics of work spreading identified by Geertz. However, company managers have made the decision that, in the long term, such an arrangement is untenable. At Krakatau Steel, patterns of institutionalized work spreading were apparent in one especially intensive portion of the production process where molten steel is cast into solid slabs, weighing 10 to 30 tons each. Hariyanto had the arduous task of ensuring the smooth exchange of molten steel from giant ladles into the casting machine.¹⁴ He took turns with a coworker in half-hour blocks to monitor this transfer. The heat and noise generated in this portion of the steel-making process made it a physically demanding job, but Hariyanto said that rotating the job with another employee made it tolerable because the stress of the job was “divided in two” [*dibagi dua*]. He was aware, however, that the job could likely be performed by a single employee and feared that his position, a single task performed by two people, would be made redundant should privatization occur. At stake in privatizing Krakatau Steel is the rationalization of a latter-day incarnation of practices of work spreading. Displaced from the agrarian countryside, practices similar to those observed by Geertz were integrated into industrial production during the New Order.¹⁵

The tension between the company’s social mission and its business mission was acute. One general manager told me that a 1995 Booz, Allen, and Hamilton management-consulting audit of the company asserted that one-quarter of the company’s total workforce was superfluous, corresponding to at least 1,500 permanent, full-time job positions. Some Krakatau Steel employees suspect that

planned privatization will lead to the elimination of many of these positions. Managers often cited this latter-day practice of work spreading as a rationale for poor job performance at the company, claiming that employees at the company lacked motivation because they knew that they were unnecessary.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SPIRIT

The concept of spiritual economies builds on approaches that treat economies not so much as an autonomous, natural realm of exchange and consumption, but rather as a zone for producing subjects and eliciting forms of practice (Callon 1998; Foucault 1991; Mitchell 2002, 2005). I argue that in contemporary Indonesia, Islam is invoked to elicit subjects commensurate with norms of efficiency, productivity, and transparency. In diagramming this spiritual economy, I will show how Islam serves as a medium through which subjects of spiritual reform are made accountable to themselves, their families, their work, and the nation at large.

Spiritual economies in contemporary Indonesia were visible when proponents of spiritual reform posed the question of self-government and linked it to government of the family and the nation. For example, self-government was posed as an alternative to ongoing efforts to implement Islamic *syariah* law in Indonesia (Bowen 2003:173–199). In early 2004, Rinaldi, Ary Ginanjar's brother, illustrated how spiritual reform was not simply a matter of "more rules," but of the formation of a self-managing subject. He said, "We already have enough rules . . . but if you touch them here [gesturing to his chest], in the heart, they don't need rules. They won't accept commission,¹⁶ even without more rules." In the years following the end of the Suharto regime, a number of groups advocated the implementation of *syariah* law for all Muslims in Indonesia. These included groups like *Hizbut Tahrir*, a prominent global group of Muslim intellectuals also active in Indonesia, and branches of the Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars [*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* or MUI]. However, spiritual reformers explicitly contrast their project with these efforts. ESQ is intended to inculcate an ethic of individual self-policing based in Islamic practice in contrast to these calls for the state to enforce religious doctrine for the Muslim population. Spiritual reform is not designed to implement further rules and regulations, but rather to elicit an ethic of self-government, which was referred to as "built-in control."

This spiritual economy entailed a total way of life within which the population was represented at a number of different scales. At the most elementary scale it involved a set of ethical practices of individual transformation intended to link personal spirituality to a broader project of national economic reform. These

included things like repenting for past sins to become more honest in the future. It also involved work on the self that sought to create “economies of affect” in which techniques to “manage one’s emotions” and relate better with coworkers were introduced (Rudnyckj and Richard 2009).

This spiritual economy likewise operated on the family, both in terms of content and participation. Family relations were invoked as something to be addressed through spiritual reform and participants were encouraged to introduce the training to family members. During ESQ sessions, participants were constantly admonished to remember their obligations toward family members. Relationships between parents and children were a recurring theme. Participants were called on to remember and ask for forgiveness for improprieties against female parents. At training venues ESQ staff circulated promotional material advertising shorter one and two-day-long sessions especially designed for younger audiences such as “ESQ Teens” and “ESQ Kids.” A number of times ESQ participants told me that they had encouraged their spouses to attend after their own participation. I met several adherents who proudly told me that every one of their family members had attended ESQ training.

Furthermore, this emergent spiritual economy links not only selves and families, but also the Indonesian nation at large. Ary Ginanjar designed the program to strengthen the human resources of the entire population of the country. The ESQ Leadership Center launched a program called “Developing a Golden Indonesia 2020” [*Membangun Indonesia Emas 2020*], which is premised on the idea that spiritual reform can enhance national development. Ginanjar emphasizes that management knowledge, the principles of business success and personal development used by Western corporations and exhaustively detailed in the vast management literature, can be found in the Qur’an and the *hadith*.¹⁷

Ginanjar sees the economic crisis and Indonesia’s stalled economic development as spiritual problems. Echoing former Prime Minister Mahatir Mohammed’s “Vision 2020” project in neighboring Malaysia (Bunnell 2004; Chin 1998), Ginanjar’s “Developing a Golden Indonesia 2020” initiative has been reported widely in the Indonesian media. After launching the initiative Ginanjar was named to the board of experts of ICMI [*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia*, the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals]. The head of ICMI cited Ginanjar’s efforts to “develop human resources” as the reason for his selection (*Republika* 2006b) and expressed the hope that his methods for strengthening human resources through the intensification of Islamic practice would benefit national development.

Ary Ginanjar also has global ambitions. The first overseas ESQ training was held April 7–9, 2006, in Kuala Lumpur and, in 2007, he began delivering a regularly scheduled ESQ training in Malaysia on a bimonthly basis. Another ESQ training program was offered to a group of Indonesian expatriates in the Netherlands from May 12–14, 2006, in the Hague. Several more trainings have been held in the Netherlands since. In 2007, regular trainings were introduced in Singapore and Brunei and in 2008, ESQ was introduced to Indonesians and others in Australia and the United States. One ESQ employee suggested that I bring ESQ to North America given my fascination with the program. Because the training is organized around the concept “spirituality” (which is claimed to be universal), Ary Ginanjar and his protégés envision the possibility that ESQ might be globally successful because it is purported to articulate a set of “universal truths” and thus, although grounded in Islam, are not be specific to Muslims. He sees himself as one node in the emerging global network of management knowledge constituted by programs that offer leadership training, life coaching, and self-help for business and personal success.

“OPENING THE GOD SPOT”: MORAL CRISIS AND SPIRITUAL INTERVENTION

The first component of spiritual economies involves the creation of “spirituality” as an object of management, intervention, and manipulation. Ary Ginanjar explained the rationale for ESQ by telling me, “Indonesia is now in a moment of moral crisis, even though Indonesia is a religious country. Most Indonesians are Muslim, so why is there a crisis even though most of them are Muslim? We found that they separate religion from the rest of their life: their business, their economy, their law, their life, everything. . . . So the main problem now is that the moral crisis has become an economic crisis.” In his view, the moral crisis is a result of the fact that although most Indonesians are Muslims, their religious practice is devoid of genuine spirituality and is thus merely pro forma. He explained to me that, “at the moment here religion is only like a ritual. . . . Just a ritual without spirituality.” In response to this problem, his goal is to reinsert spirituality into religious practice and other domains of life.¹⁸

Spirituality was conceived of as the central object on which ESQ training operated. However, it did not really exist for most Indonesian participants before they encountered the training program. This object was rendered in English and was therefore likely a term with which participants only had passing familiarity, if that. Therefore, Ary Ginanjar had to create spirituality and ensure that it was

understood as located within an individual's body, before it could be activated and acted on. Spirituality was invoked as something that had been lost in Indonesia's rush to development and modernization under the authoritarian government of Suharto. Ary Ginanjar lamented that for "too long Indonesian companies have emphasized science and technical knowledge," but neglected spirituality. This meant that Intellectual Quotient (IQ) was prioritized as the index of one's work capabilities. In contrast, Ary Ginanjar saw his mission as enhancing the spiritual knowledge (which he terms SQ, an abbreviation for Spiritual Quotient) of Indonesians through spiritual training.¹⁹

This emphasis on spirituality, however, was not a rejection of science in favor of mysticism. Rather, Ary Ginanjar saw his efforts to develop spirituality as commensurable with the latest developments in psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience. When I asked Ary Ginanjar why he invoked the English word "spiritual" as opposed to an Indonesian or Arabic term like *rohani* as the central object of the training program he responded that it lent "universal" authority to his project of spiritual reform. He said, "if I use Indonesian [in the training] they will think that it is about religion. But if I talk in English, they will think that it is universal. That it is science, not religion." Thus, he considered cultivating spirituality as commensurable with scientific rationality, rather than a mystical endeavor.

During the ESQ training, spirituality was represented as a universal human attribute that was physically isolated in the individual bodies of every human being.²⁰ For evidence of this Ary Ginanjar drew on the scientific research of the University of California, San Diego neuroscientist V. S. Ramachandran who "found the existence of the God Spot in the human brain" (Ginanjar 2001:xxxix). Ramachandran's research, which shows a certain region of the brain becoming more active during religious activity, received widespread attention in North America (Connor 1997; Hotz 1997). In his books and training programs, Ary Ginanjar argued that the center of spirituality in most humans, the God Spot, is "shackled" [*terbelenggu*] by preconceptions and prejudices, which leads people to behave immorally, ignore work duties, and engage in corruption. Spirituality was further conceived of as universal in so far as specific religious traditions were merely surface manifestations of the same underlying global spirituality. The goal of the training is to eliminate obstacles to "unshackle" the natural propensity for spirituality to guide action.

The mobilization of spirituality was designed to have profound effects. ESQ training involved the introduction of a new way of conceiving of one's relationship to oneself. A lecture in the afternoon of the second day of the training asserted that

a universal spirituality was connected to what was purported to be an innate human propensity for making correct moral judgments. In this lecture Rinaldi depicted two possible ways in which one could respond to the “problems and challenges” that one faced. Two hypothetical courses of action were laid out in a neat flow chart. In the first, a materialistic orientation [*orientasi materialisme*] resulted in “uncontrolled emotions” [*emosi tidak terkendali*] like anger, dejection, and sadness. This resulted in the closure of one’s “spiritual conscience” [*suara hati spiritual tertutup*] and a “shackling of the God Spot” [*God Spot terbelenggu*]. This condition led to a failure in one’s ability to act logically [*logika tidak bekerja normal*] and an imbalance in one’s IQ, EQ, and SQ resulting in a “split personality.” The second possible response to individual and collective crises was what was termed “a spiritual orientation toward the unity of God” [*orientasi spiritualisme tauhid*]. In this model of subjectivity one’s emotions were managed [*emosi terkendali*], so that one was calm and peaceful leading to an open God Spot [*God Spot terbuka*].

Immediately following this description of possible spiritual orientations Rinaldi lectured about the relationship between “opening the God Spot” and being a diligent worker. As an example, he turned to a local cultural example, invoking the Sultan of Yogyakarta’s “interior servants” [*abdi dalam*] who he claimed worked not for money but for the pride of working for the sultan (Woodward 1989). Rinaldi said the contemporary crisis in Indonesia was a result of the fact that people “don’t know why they work” and that they needed to be reminded that “they work for God.”

Later that day in a private conversation, Rinaldi said the goal of ESQ was to “unshackle the God Spot.” I asked him what this meant and he continued, “Every human being is already honest, just, and accountable. But they don’t always act this way. Why? Because their God Spot is blocked! It is blocked because of all the negative influences in the world. What they need is to return to spiritual values. ESQ opens up the God Spot and allows the goodness that is already inside people to come out.” He continued, by explaining that knowledge of right and wrong is already intrinsic to human beings, “conscience exists in humans. No one has to teach them to not do corruption, because people already know that it is wrong. . . . These things are not taught by men, but given by God.” Participants are thus instructed that through “unshackling” their spiritual center, the “God Spot,” they can renounce degenerate pasts and become better workers, kin, and citizens.

Cultivating spirituality within subjects of spiritual reform was intended to make participants more amenable to managerial norms, but it was also intended to make participants more effective at self-management by transforming their

work into a matter of religious piety. Living a virtuous religious life was likened to being a virtuous laborer and vice versa. A spiritual economy involves the creation of spirituality as an object, represented in this case as the God Spot, which is understood to be located within the self (Dumit 2004). Spirituality is then activated and acted on to elicit specific dispositions in those who participate in spiritual reform. These dispositions include the next two significant components of spiritual economies: treating work as a form of worship and cultivating an ethics of individual accountability.

WORSHIPPING WORK: THE QUR'AN AS HUMAN RESOURCES MANUAL

A second component of spiritual economies involved reconfiguring labor as a form of religious worship.²¹ Spiritual reformers in Indonesia sought to inculcate the ethical maxim that work in the world demonstrated one's devotion to God. According to one human resources manager, Sukrono, this intervention was the result of an updated reading of the Qur'an. He explained:

When we were a small developing country in the 1970s we thought that worship [*ibadah*] meant praying, giving alms [*zakat*], or going on the hajj. That is not true, in fact, from studying the Qur'an we know that passages dealing with these things are only about 20 percent of the content, the rest of the Qur'an is about human relations. The crucial thing is that in everyday activity—waking up and going to work, doing family errands, and so forth—one's intentions [*niat*] are toward worship. . . . In the hadith there is the story of Muhammad and the stone maker. Muhammad saw two people. One was always at the mosque, engaged in ritual. The other was working so hard, providing for his family, that he didn't have time for ritual. Yet, it was he who went to heaven while the former did not.

Here Sukrono illustrates how Islamic worship had been interpreted as a form of worldly motivation. He focuses on three of the five pillars of Islam: praying, giving alms, and going on the hajj pilgrimage. The prevailing assumptions that guided the project of Indonesian development during the New Order had proceeded under the assumption of a separation of religion from the economy. However, current managers like Sukrono have recast the Qur'an as a human resources manual. In fact, Sukrono finds evidence for what Max Weber (1946) called "inner-worldly asceticism" in the hadith. Fulfilling one's duty to God is not restricted to following the five pillars of Islam, or what Ary Ginanjar called mere "ritual" activity. Rather,

following the principles that Muhammad illustrated during his life, everyday action in the world such as working and supporting one's family constitutes religious activity equal to performing the required practices inherent in the Five Pillars of Islam.

Krakatau Steel employees who had participated in ESQ had similar interpretations about what work as worship meant. Yanto, who worked in the Krakatau Steel credit union, connected religious practice to labor through the fact that both involved individual discipline and attention to the clock. He said that a good Muslim must be constantly attentive to time because of the Islamic requirement to pray five times per day at predetermined hours. Likewise work at an industrial or clerical job required constant attention to the clock. Yanto said, "I have to be sure to wake up on time, be to work on time, take my breaks at the right time. . . . It is the same with prayer, it has to be done at the right time. One has to be disciplined in both religion and work." Yanto's ideas about the relationship between time, work, and discipline echoes Weber's characterization of this relationship as a central component of "the spirit of capitalism" (Weber 2002:14–15).

Haidar, a bright young trainer, further illustrated what was at stake in worshipping work. I had originally met him when he was working as an instructor for the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People training program at Krakatau Steel. He had done a master's degree in human resources at a European university and expressed an interest in moving to the United States to write a doctoral dissertation on the relationship between religion and work motivation. He was deeply enthusiastic about improving economic conditions for Indonesians and convinced that this could be accomplished through the application of principles of management knowledge that he had learned as a student. However, he thought that these principles would be most effective when combined with the Islamic practices familiar to most Indonesians. He had become very interested in ESQ and, several months after I first met him, was hired by Ary Ginanjar to be an ESQ trainer. He was specifically tasked with developing a new ESQ "product" that would focus on implementing the principle that work was a form of worship.²²

While Haidar was still working as a Seven Habits trainer, he expressed his frustration at the lack of motivation to work hard among employees of state-owned companies. Haidar disparaged the fact that he had heard employees joking that KS (the acronym for Krakatau Steel by which the company was known across Indonesia) actually stood for *kerja santai* or "relaxed work." He was likewise unimpressed at how lackadaisical Krakatau Steel employees were when it came to arriving at work. "They show no embarrassment for showing up 10, 15, 20 minutes late! And they

do it over and over! They have no shame about it!” His comments illustrate how some human resources trainers contracted by state-owned enterprises understood their goal as making work into a religious duty.

There are important differences, however, between the Protestant ethic described by Weber and the efforts of Indonesian spiritual reformers to make work a form of worship. For Weber, the ethical orientation that emerged from the revisions made by Protestant theologians was conducive to an austere, rationalized, capitalist way of life. This relationship was contingent and unintentional. In contrast, spiritual reformers in contemporary Indonesia make the link between corporate success and religious piety in the present. This relationship is not contingent, but by design. It creates an explicit program aimed at implementing moral, political, and economic reform simultaneously. This spiritual economy involves the intensification of Islamic practice to enhance Islamic piety and transform economic behavior.

Further, rather than a distant God operating at great remove from the solitary individual, the participants in Indonesian spiritual reform are confronted by a God who exercises meticulous surveillance through its proxies. Many participants in ESQ related their conviction that two of Allah’s angels, named Rokit and Atip, keep a watchful eye over each individual by constantly recording deeds good and bad. Kustowo, an employee at the billet steel plant explained that these two angels, “maintain a database” [*mencatat database*] of all actions to determine whether one will achieve salvation. Using the English words “reward” and “punishment” he said that these two angels compile an inventory of both the sinful and meritorious actions of each human being. The balance of these two columns determines the fate of the deceased in the afterlife. An individual with more merits than sins would be admitted to heaven, although a surplus of sins would consign one to the fires of hell. “Only ourselves, God, and the two angels know about our behavior,” Kustowo told me. “If we do something *halal* we get a reward. If we do something *haram* we get a punishment.” This story was also related during the ESQ training and is one with which many participants were clearly familiar.

These Islamic notions of accountability mirror the elements that Marilyn Strathern has found characteristic of “audit cultures.” These are protocols of finance that are increasingly ubiquitous in a wide range of contemporary institutions and comprise the “taken-for-granted process of neoliberal government” (Strathern 2000:3). Spiritual reformers thus draw on a common concept in Islamic eschatology and transform accountability at work into a matter of religious worship. The report compiled by the two angels is filed away for Judgment Day and a final decision

on one's salvation. I draw on Strathern's argument to show how popular Islamic beliefs about audits converge with neoliberal norms of audit and accountability in constituting a component of a spiritual economy. Treating work as a form of worship involves cultivating an ethics of individual accountability and illuminates the convergence of Islam and neoliberalism.

“DEVELOP YOUR BUILT-IN CONTROL”: CORRUPTION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SPIRITUAL REFORM

The third component of spiritual economies entails the inculcation of ethics of individual accountability that are commensurable with neoliberal norms of transparency and efficiency. ESQ was designed as means not just to develop an Islamic work ethic, but also as a means to eliminate rampant corruption at Krakatau Steel. Proponents believed that the initiative would transform what one employee described as a “culture of corruption” at the company. As described above, since its inception Krakatau Steel was widely conceived of as a vehicle for social rather than strictly economic development. State technocrats sought to elevate living standards for educated Indonesians by creating middle-class livelihoods through well-paid salaried jobs. However, this system did not promote either individual accountability or entrepreneurial behavior. Lisa Rofel documents a similar tension between the collectivism of the Cultural Revolution and the individualizing techniques implemented during economic reforms in post-Mao China (1999). In Indonesia, this tension was exacerbated by the fact that social development created opportunities in which managers were able to engage in corrupt practices for individual benefit.

Corruption has long been a concern in Southeast Asia (Jackson and Pye 1978; Sutherland 1979), but although countries like Singapore have taken dramatic steps to increase “transparency” in their governments, in Indonesia corruption is viewed as a persistent problem by both Indonesians and transnational organizations (Schrauwers 2003). Many Indonesians are deeply suspicious of elites and assume they use their positions to their personal advantage (Butt 2005). A discourse about corruption, circulated by transnational institutions has had far-reaching effects on the way in which Indonesians see themselves and their place in the world. Multilateral institutions have stated that “Indonesia remains the most corrupt country in East Asia” (World Bank 2003). Often overlooked in these appraisals is the fact that activities classified as corrupt may in fact draw on patron–client relations that have a different social logic (Scott and Kerkvliet 1977). In such arrangements rights and responsibilities are not premised on the actions of “liberal subjects,” the autonomous and rationally maximizing individuals of the west (Mehta 1999; Povinelli

2002). Nevertheless, discourses that represent corruption as a problem and the attendant practices intended to “fight corruption” are expected to rationalize economic behavior. The national media widely covers reports on corruption composed by transnational institutions. These accounts are a regular topic of conversation among Indonesians.

State-owned companies have been long regarded as sites of some of the most egregious corruption. This was because in part of the fact that they could depend on consistent infusions of cash from the central government under import substitution industrialization policies premised on prerogatives of national modernization and development (Heryanto 1988; Hill 2000). Suharto’s Golkar party used state-owned enterprises to distribute patronage during the New Order. Systems of audit and accounting existed within the administrative structure, but were not enforced. For example, when I interviewed Kadiono, an employee of Krakatau Steel’s internal audit department, he told me that members of his department had trouble confronting those suspected of corruption, particularly in cases where the accused were long-time acquaintances of those tasked with carrying out audits.

Krakatau Steel employees and outside observers (such as journalists, academics, and NGO activists) thought the company was rife with rampant corruption. Employees routinely regaled me with stories about people at all levels of the company who were complicit with, if not direct participants in, activities that were branded “corrupt” [*korupsi*]. At lower levels of the company hierarchy these were small scale. For example, employees reported that company security guards regularly accepted bribes from thieves removing stolen materials from factory grounds. One common practice was what employees referred to as “time corruption” [*korupsi waktu*], which involved an employee leaving work early but giving his or her company-issued identity badge to a colleague so that the offender would be clocked out at the apportioned time, thus receiving full wages and evading disciplinary action.

At higher levels of the company hierarchy there were more serious incidents of collusion typically involving arrangements in which kickbacks were provided on purchases. Employees at the level of division head or manager had the ability to approve contracts that were negotiated with outside parties. It was common practice to take a kickback, or what was referred to as “commission” [*komisi*] on these external contracts. These contracts involved anything the company regularly purchased including oil, computers for an office, or spare parts for the giant machines that melt, cast, and roll raw steel. Hadi, an operator in the hot strip mill illustrated some examples of collusion and corruption in his plant, telling me that

suppliers “were supposed to send first-class products [*spek kelas satu*], but what was received was fourth class. The first-class materials will last for several months, but the fourth class maybe only two weeks. . . . A piece of equipment that actually cost only 140,000 rupiah would be sold to the company for 14 million!”²³ As long as the company could count on steady infusions of state development funds, such drains on company accounts could be willfully ignored. Given increasing international competition because of the deregulation of the formerly nationalized steel market, however, such demands on finances were becoming a serious problem for the company’s bottom line.

Proponents of spiritual reform sought to inculcate an ethic of self-management, which they termed “built-in control” to eliminate corruption and make the company more attractive to outside investment. One senior manager at Krakatau Steel, Djohan, who had attended several years of graduate school in the United States connected the practices of spiritual reform to new economic norms. He gave a personal account of his spiritual awakening and its effect on his attitude toward his job. In somewhat stiff English he poignantly confided:

ESQ helped me communicate with God. Sometimes, when my feelings are very clean, when I pray, I cry. . . . You can manage your heart through the methods of ESQ. . . . When someone asks for bribe, if they have already managed their heart well, their heart will urge them “please don’t do that!” . . . That is built-in control. If you can manage your heart well, you can develop your built-in control [then] the employees don’t do corruption. Not because they are afraid of their superiors, not because they are afraid of their leaders, not because they are afraid of regulations that will have them sent to jail. But I am afraid. Why? Because I have already seen how someone who does corruption is tortured in hell!²⁴

Djohan illustrates a spiritual economy by asserting that enhanced Islamic piety is a method of inculcating an ethic of personal responsibility (Rose 1999). Central to achieving this disposition is remembering one’s individual accountability to God. In this instance, Djohan shows how a bodily activity, shedding tears, is a physical sign of atonement that represents the subjective transformation of a working subject. This link between labor, individual accountability, and religious piety is constitutive of a spiritual economy. At stake in this assemblage is the political, economic, and spiritual reform of a business perceived to be threatened by chronic corruption.

This focus on individual accountability and self-management through Islam has further significance. During the Suharto era the state’s monopoly on coercive

violence and occasional willingness to use it produced a brutally effective check on collective political action by workers. Furthermore, rumor, fear, and state violence shrouded in secrecy were a central means through which the New Order state was able to hold on to power in Indonesia for 32 years (Siegel 1998, 2006). The end of the Suharto regime and increasing international pressure on the Indonesian military to observe human rights conventions meant that the state no longer acted with such impunity. Hence Djohan's emphasized the importance of developing methods of "built-in control." Given the reduced repressive capacity of the Indonesian state and the precarious position of Krakatau Steel, which must compete in an increasingly globalized steel market, managers like Djohan see self-management and individual accountability as values that are indispensable to the survival of the company.

CONCLUSION: FROM FAITH IN DEVELOPMENT TO DEVELOPING FAITH

The concept of spiritual economies captures how religion and neoliberalism can combine to enlist subjects in their own self-government. By making spirituality a site of economic intervention and action, subjects are inculcated with norms conducive to what architects of this spiritual economy refer to as "built-in control." By interpreting work as a form of worship, subjects of spiritual reform are informed that their everyday work can enable them to ensure otherworldly salvation. Religious practice is reconfigured according to norms of maximum economy in so far as principles such as transparency, productivity, and rationalization are represented as ethics already inherent in Islam. Spiritual economies further illuminate how individual audits enable the assemblage of religion and neoliberalism. These constant detailed reflections on individual practice to ensure compliance with abstract economic and religious norms are central to ethical practice in both domains.

Conceptualization of spiritual economies provides analytical purchase on the convergence of religious reform and capitalist transformation in many parts of the world today, shedding light on enduring affinities between certain religious practices and what Weber termed "the spirit of capitalism." Central to achieving this affinity is turning spirituality into a site of individual management, redefining work as a form of spiritual practice, and instilling ethics of individual accountability and personal responsibility for this worldly success and other worldly salvation.

Spiritual economies are distinct from the prosperity religions that have recently proliferated in Southeast Asia and beyond (Coleman 2000; Jackson 1999; Wiegele

2005). Prosperity religions are premised on the notion that enhanced religious devotion will foster economic prosperity through divine intervention. Spiritual economies, in contrast, entail inculcating the ethical dispositions deemed conducive to market success. Rather than expecting divine intervention, spiritual economies are premised on inculcating ethics of work as worship, self-discipline, responsibility, and accountability to achieve worldly affluence and otherworldly salvation.

I also elaborated the analytic of spiritual economies to illuminate a new facet of Indonesian modernization. Under both Suharto and Sukarno, development was seen as a technological problem (Barker 2005). B. J. Habibie, Suharto's influential Minister of Research and Technology and Vice-President who later became President of Indonesia, envisioned that the country would use technological innovations from Europe and North America to "leap frog" stages of development and bring Western standards of living to Indonesia. However, Indonesia's economic and political crises called this optimistic program into question. Ary Ginanjar and his protégés—architects of the spiritual economy described here—concluded that the nation's ills were the effect of moral flaws. ESQ, their program of "spiritual reform," addressed this failure by enhancing a form of Islamic practice that contains ethical dispositions conducive to neoliberalism.

The combination of Islamic ethics and business management and life-coaching practices has produced new ways of governing selves, families, and the nation at large. Thus, proponents of ESQ see the program in opposition to recent calls for the implementation of *syariah* law in Indonesia. They see such calls as a demand for "more rules" whereas ESQ offers the possibility of eliminating ills like corruption through more effective self-government. Further, by finding precedent for business management knowledge in Qur'anic injunctions and events in the history of Islam, spiritual reformers seek to demonstrate that devout Islamic practice is conducive to worldly success.

Programs of spiritual reform in contemporary Indonesia are moderate in so far as they do not advocate rejection of the west. Spiritual reformers like Ary Ginanjar emphasize a universal humanity that is premised on the fact that all humans contain a "God Spot." Thus, they do not see Islam as locked in an inevitable conflict with the west. As one Krakatau Steel manager and ESQ advocate remarked, "We have a saying, Americans are not Muslim, but there are Islam-like" (*bukan Islam, tapi Islami*). By this he meant that, like Muslims, Americans "keep their commitments and are attentive to time and cleanliness." Developing Islamic practice was not a stance against the West, but a way of enhancing the transnational competitiveness of Indonesian workers.

In contemporary Indonesia, the economy is increasingly defined in transnational rather than domestic terms, in so far as state-owned companies can no longer depend on protective tariffs and government subsidies. The intensification of Islamic practice is represented as a means to address these challenges, as it offers the possibility of increasing the productivity and competitiveness of Indonesian workers. At the time of publication, the massive job loss that many feared would follow withdrawal of subsidies had not transpired. Perhaps not coincidentally, by August 2008 global steel prices had reached all time highs (Milnes 2008). The global surge in prices for industrial metals had buoyed Krakatau Steel's bottom line and appeared to stave off the threat of job cuts for the time being. However, Indonesian government officials and company managers still see privatization as the key to future viability. In September 2008, the national parliament finally consented to the sale of a 30 percent stake in Krakatau Steel through an initial public offering (Suharmoko 2008).

Ultimately, the success of ESQ in Indonesia stemmed from the fact that it could be represented as simultaneously universal and particular. Thus, those who took part in the program could be confident in their own religious values and practices. But they could also be made receptive to the argument that Islam was a manifestation of underlying universal values. This flexibility of form is part of what makes it neoliberal. At the same time that Ary Ginanjar promoted ESQ as grounded in the five pillars of Islam and the six pillars of *iman* (faith), he also asserted that it was universal because it was grounded in scientific knowledge. He envisioned spiritual reform as a remedy to Indonesia's crisis of development, but also worked actively to introduce it to non-Muslims both within the country and overseas. He drew inspiration for the training from Islam, but argued that Islam was an outward manifestation of an underlying general spirituality. Ary Ginanjar and other proponents of ESQ stressed either the program's universality or its particularity with different audiences at different times. This flexibility enabled the program's popularity and spectacular growth.

The creation of a spiritual economy in Indonesia is neither a wholesale translation of Weber's spirit of capitalism, nor is it a strict interpretation of Islamic texts and practices. It is an unprecedented assemblage that is as much the Islamization of neoliberalism as it is the neoliberalization of Islam. Indonesia's earlier Suharto-era push to modernization through supporting primary industries like steel production was characterized by an unbending faith in development. Recent efforts to enlist the nation's workers in a spiritual economy demonstrate that today faith itself is being recast as development in a more flexible neoliberal landscape.

ABSTRACT

This essay argues that the convergence of religious ethics and business management knowledge illustrate the formation of what are termed spiritual economies. Spiritual economies conceptualize how economic reform and neoliberal restructuring are conceived of and acted on as matters of religious piety and spiritual virtue. The spiritual economy described consists of producing spirituality as an object of intervention, reconfiguring work as a form of religious worship, and inculcating an ethic of individual accountability and entrepreneurial responsibility among workers. Drawing on 18 months of ethnographic research, the majority of which took place at Krakatau Steel in Banten, Indonesia, this essay describes a moderate Islamic spiritual reform movement active in state-owned companies, government bureaucracies, and private enterprises in contemporary Indonesia. Proponents of spiritual reform consider the separation of religious ethics from economic practice as the root of Indonesia's economic crisis because this disjunction resulted in rampant corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of discipline at the workplace. The essay analyzes these efforts to inculcate Islamic ethics in combination with western management knowledge that is expected to enhance economic productivity, reduce endemic corruption, and prepare employees of state-owned enterprises for privatization.

Keywords: neoliberalism, Islam, spiritual economies, Indonesia, globalization, management, ethics

NOTES

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1. The *talqin* ritual is well documented in accounts of Islamic practice in Indonesia. Geertz provides an account of the *talqin* delivered in eastern Java (Geertz 1960:71) and Bowen describes a similar ceremony in the Gayo region of Aceh (Bowen 1984:24–25). However, the accounts offered by both Geertz and Bowen occur after someone had actually passed away, whereas in the scene described here the *talqin* was invoked as a role play in which participants simulated the experience to prepare for their own eventual experience of death.

2. In referring to this object as an assemblage I draw on the work of Collier and Ong who describe an assemblage as “the product of multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic. . . . It does not always involve new forms, but forms that are shifting, in formation, or at stake . . . [It is] heterogeneous, contingent, unstable, partial, and situated” (Collier and Ong 2005:12).
3. Two anthropologists of Southeast Asia have used the phrase “spiritual economies” in passing (Brenner 1998:171; Klima 2002:153, 282–286). Although related, my development of the concept differs in important ways. For example, Brenner uses the term to refer to the way in which many Javanese believe that through mastering “desires they can accumulate both material wealth and spiritual merit” (Brenner 1998:171). My use of spiritual economies refers to the way in which spirituality is produced as an object of self-management and intervention to facilitate new economic practices. Thus, my focus is not on the economic benefit of accumulating spiritual merit, but rather on inculcating spirituality to produce new types of laboring subjects.
4. Most Krakatau Steel employees were supportive of the ESQ initiative, although I did encounter a small number who were critical, referring to it as “propaganda.” Due to space limitations these criticisms are not dealt with in detail here.
5. *Maghrib* is the first evening prayer for Muslims and occurs at sundown. It is a particularly important prayer for employees of Krakatau Steel because it represents the end of the workday for nonshift employees. Departing work for home before *maghrib* sometimes served as a justification for leaving work early.
6. The *sa'i* ritual consists of running or rapidly walking seven times back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwah in Mecca. This is a reenactment of Hagar’s anxious search for water before Allah revealed the waters of the Zamzam spring to her.
7. The stoning of *jamrat al-aqabah* takes place in Mina just outside of Mecca and represents rebuking the devil. This requires collecting a number of pebbles from the ground on the plain of Muzdalifah and hurling the pebbles at the three pillars at Mina, which represent the devil. All three pillars represent the devil: the first and largest is where he tempted Abraham against sacrificing Ishmael, the second is where he tempted Abraham’s wife Hagar to stop him, and the third is where he tempted Ishmael to avoid being sacrificed. He was rebuked each time, and the throwing of the stones symbolizes those rejections.
8. This style of oration was not foreign, as Christian televangelists appeared on weekend religious shows on some Indonesian television networks during the period in which fieldwork for this project took place.
9. *Republika* is affiliated with the ICMI, the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (for more on ICMI see Hefner 2000:128–166). Beginning in 2005, the newspaper devoted one page each week solely to articles about ESQ. This was published in conjunction with the ESQ Leadership Center.
10. As of early 2008, the three Indonesian provinces with no ESQ presence were Gorontalo, Maluku Utara, and Nusa Tenggara Timur. These are among the poorest and least developed provinces in Indonesia.
11. A number of charismatic figures have emerged across the Muslim world who seek to merge Islam and capitalism. From the charismatic Egyptian television preacher Amr Khaled (Wise 2003) to the Turkish Sufi Fethullah Gülen, who preaches that wealth, industry, and entrepreneurship are facets of being a good Muslim (Aras and Caha 2000).
12. Aa Gym’s star has dimmed somewhat after his decision to marry a second wife in December 2006 (Hoesterey 2007).
13. Geertz’s notion of “shared poverty” was widely criticized by subsequent scholars for his inattention to widespread hierarchy and stratification in rural areas (Hart 1986; White 1983).
14. With the exception of recognizable public figures, I have used pseudonyms to conceal the identities of all individuals referred to directly in this essay. A guarantee of anonymity was a condition of many of the conversations that I had during my research.
15. The New Order refers to the period in Indonesia’s history that coincides with Suharto’s tenure as national leader, roughly the years 1965 through 1998. Suharto coined the term to contrast the period of his rule with the “Old Order” under Sukarno. Suharto sought to stabilize the

- Indonesian economy, which suffered from rampant inflation and low productivity prior to his administration.
16. "Commission" [*komisi*] was a widely deployed euphemism for illegitimate kickbacks on contracts signed by managers. This is discussed in greater detail below.
 17. The hadith are collections of writings that relate the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad.
 18. Although Ary Ginanjar suggests that Islamic spiritual reform movements like ESQ and others represent a rupture with the past, in fact these movements are in many ways a continuation of processes that began in the latter years of the New Order. As Robert Hefner has shown, Suharto sought the "greening" or Islamization of the Indonesian bureaucracy as he shifted his dependence from the military to Islamic groups to shore up support for his regime (Hefner 2000). In 1990 Suharto founded ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia), the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals, as a means of cultivating support among the growing legions of middle-class Muslims in Indonesia. In the following year, in another move to consolidate the support of Muslims, he completed the hajj pilgrimage and adopted the name Haji Mohammed Suharto. Thus, far from springing wholesale from the rubble of the New Order, in many ways Islamic spiritual reform movements in contemporary Indonesia can be seen as a continuation of processes underway during the latter years of the New Order. Thanks to an anonymous CA reviewer for helping me to clarify this point.
 19. Ary Ginanjar is well versed in popular social science and the concepts he uses are derived from the work of North American and European management trainers and life-coaching gurus. He cites the research of Danah Zohar and Daniel Goleman, whose academic affiliation with Harvard University lends them global credibility. Zohar, who advanced to Ph.D. candidacy in the Department of Psychology at Harvard, is influential for her work in identifying the spiritual quotient (SQ) (Zohar and Marshall 2000) and Goleman, who received a Ph.D. from the Department of Social Relations at Harvard, is credited with discovering emotional quotient (EQ) (Goleman 1995). Ary Ginanjar represents both of these inventions as landmark scientific achievements. On the first morning of ESQ training the concepts of IQ, EQ, and SQ are introduced as important events in a progressive account of the history of scientific discovery. Subsequently, landmark achievements in the history of astronomy and astrophysics are later recounted, such as Copernicus's theory of a heliocentric solar system and the proof of an expanding universe confirmed by observations using the Hubble telescope.
 20. Paul Rabinow has observed that, like in ESQ training, the spiritual is simultaneously particular and general in contemporary France. Contemporary debates over whether genetic material is isomorphic with national boundaries reflect the way in which "the spiritual lives in the person, [but also] forms the 'general part' of the particular" (Rabinow 1999:11).
 21. This section builds on Rudnyckyj 2008.
 22. This "second stage product" was called "Mission Statement" and was completed in early 2007, with the first paid trainings held in March and April of that year.
 23. In 2004, this was worth roughly \$15 and \$1,500, respectively.
 24. Djohan used the acronym "KKN," which stands for *korupsi, kolusi, dan nepotisme* [corruption, collusion, and nepotism]. This acronym is commonly used to refer to a bribe and this is how I have translated it here.

Editor's Note: *Cultural Anthropology* has published a number of other essays on neoliberalism and subjectivity. See, for example, Aradhana Sharma's "Crossbreeding Institutions, Breeding Struggle: Women's Empowerment, Neoliberal Governmentality, and State (Re)Formation in India" (2006); Nickola Pazderic's "Recovering True Selves in the Electro-Spiritual Field of Universal Love" (2004); and Yan Hairong's "Neoliberal Governmentality and Neohumanism: Organizing Suzhi/Value Flow through Labor Recruitment Networks" (2003).

Cultural Anthropology has also published a range of articles on globalization. See Ritty Lukose's "Empty Citizenship: Protesting Politics in the Era of Globalization" (2005); Karen Ho's "Situating Global Capitalisms: A View from Wall Street Investment Banks" (2005); and Victoria Bernal's "Eritrea Goes Global: Reflections on Nationalism in a Transnational Era" (2004).

Cultural Anthropology has also published additional essays on Indonesia. See, for example, Tom Boellstorff's "Playing Back the Nation: *Waria*, Indonesian Transvestites" (2004); Celia Lowe's "Making the Monkey: How the Togeian Macaque Went from 'New Form' to 'Endemic Species' in Indonesians' Conservation Biology" (2004); and Webb Keane's "Knowing One's Place: National Language and the Idea of the Local in Eastern Indonesia" (1997).

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