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HOW NON-WESTERN CONSUMERS NEGOTIATE COMPETING IDEOLOGIES OF SHARING THROUGH THE CONSUMPTION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

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Keywords

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Introduction

> The Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe; a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures. Rather than attempt to place the experience of others within the framework of such a conception, … we must, if we are to achieve understanding, set that conception aside and view their experiences within the framework of their own idea of what selfhood is.
>
> (Geertz 1974, p. 31)

Although originally conceptualized in anthropology as fundamentally driven, shaped, and constrained by a cultural context's ideological make-up (e.g., Geertz 1973; Mulder 1978), sharing has been reduced in the consumer literature to a singular, i.e., Western, mechanism of resource distribution. In his recent work, Belk (2010) reviews the extensive literature on sharing and gift giving in both Western and non-Western contexts and develops a framework summarizing the key characteristics of and differences among sharing, commodity exchange, and gift exchange. His model is, however, decidedly Western in orientation. Belk (2010) assumes that people act as

free individuals who are not determined by the cultural forces in which they are embedded. This concept of the individual resembles what has been described as the Western conception of the person (Geertz 1974) or the "independent self" (Markus and Kitayama 1991), and what also forms the basis for Belk's (1988) "extended self:" an atomized, separate, autonomous, and unique individual. This assumption renders the applicability of the conceptual distinctions to non-Western contexts hardly possible. What is considered sharing, borrowing and lending, gift giving, and commodity exchange and which of these forms of behavior are perceived as obligatory, reciprocal, or morally desirable are socially constructed and depend upon a combination of factors: the ideologies, norms, and values in a given culture (Triandis 1994; Mulder 2000), the social context (Gell 1992), the personal relationships (Fiske 1992), and the objects or information involved (Giesler 2006).

More empirical work in a variety of cultural contexts is necessary to examine the funda-mentally dialectic relationship between the individual and the societal level (Berger and Luck-mann 1966), and to illuminate how sharing and its related forms of behavior manifest themselves in everyday consumer cultures. Yet it is surprising to find that there is little empirical research addressing the ubiquitous consumer behavior of sharing, using a framework that is informed by social constructionism, as well as poststructuralism. Two recent exceptions are Giesler (2008) and Humphreys and Giesler (2007). The authors demonstrate how a paradigmatic shift from ownership to access and sharing evolves through cooperative and agonistic consumer–producer conflict in the bookselling and music downloading consumption context. In his 2008 study on drama in marketplace evolution, in turn, Giesler illustrates how consumers and producers variously interpret the salient narrative of intellectual property in order to construct legitimacy for their activities in the cultural creative sphere. Although these studies are useful and visionary, they are also limited to Western ideologies and notions of sharing. In sum, there is a paucity of empirical research exploring how norms, values and ideologies of sharing in and across different cultures shape market structures and individual consumption experiences.

To address this oversight, I examine the influence of competing ideologies of sharing on the love-relationship related identity work of Javanese smartphone consumers in Indonesia. Smart-phones are digital devices that enable consumers not only to communicate with each other but also to create, transfer, access, store, and most importantly, share information about the self and its relation to the social world. As such, smartphone consumption stands at the intersection of two countervailing ideologies of sharing: a traditional Javanese ideology of sharing and a contemporary Western one. Next, I will briefly review these competing ideologies and show the tensions that exist between them. Following the neglected but central insight that humans are as much a product of society as society is a product of humans (Berger and Luckmann 1966), I then examine the identity narratives of Javanese smartphone users to demonstrate how the two ideologies are constantly blended and restructured. I conclude by discussing the implications of the study for consumer culture research on sharing and (digital) technology consumption. Data for the present analysis stems from a larger research project exploring the relationship among romantic love, globalization, and the marketplace.

This research seeks to inform our understanding of sharing and technology consumption by bringing non-Western ideologies of sharing to bear on data from the Indonesian dating scene. First, it reveals and critiques a Western bias in the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) literature (Arnould and Thompson 2005) on sharing and offers a poststructuralist alternative theorization of sharing based on culturally competing ideologies of sharing. It also contributes to our under-standing of globalized consumer culture (ibid.) by demonstrating the influence of competing ideologies of sharing on identity construction in transitional (non-Western) economies. And finally, this study makes a contribution to a nascent body of CCT literature on the consumption

of (digital) technology. Previous work has either adopted a decidedly micro-theoretical perspective (Venkatesh 2008) or has analyzed the influence of static cultural forces on technology consumption practices as a one-way process (Mick and Fournier 1998; Kozinets 2008). Thereby, these studies omit the influence of technology consumption on larger institutional and marketplace structures such as the emergent glocalized Indonesian dating marketplace.

Ideologies of sharing

Before analyzing consumers' self-narratives of sharing, it is necessary to review the overarching cultural meaning systems in which these narratives are embedded. Cultural anthropologists and cross-cultural psychologists (Belk 2010; Fiske 1992; Forshee 2006; Geertz 1964, 1974; Kerstan and Berninghausen 1991; Magnis-Suseno 1981; Mulder 1994, 1998, 2000; Triandis 1994) have analyzed and distinguished between the contrasting normative understandings that make up the two conflicting ideologies of sharing that are crucial to illuminating consumption practices in my Javanese context: one emphasizing dependent selves with low individuation and moral autonomy but a high sense of obligation to share and live publicly; and another accentuating independent selves with high individuation, moral autonomy and a high sense of privacy and personal ownership. Next, I review these salient orientations, referred to herein as the collectivistic and individualistic ideology of sharing.[1] After that, I show how the tension between them provides the stage for cultural conflict and alternative consumer narratives of sharing, thereby restructuring larger normative understandings of dating in Indonesia.

The collectivistic ideology of sharing

One ideology of sharing prominently encountered in the Javanese cultural context is the traditional or collectivistic ideology of sharing. Collectivistic sharing is deeply rooted in the Javanese worldview, *kejawen* (Geertz 1964; Koentjaraningrat 1985; Mulder 2000), according to which individuals should always see themselves as a part of their family and community. The underlying conception of personhood is characterized by low individuation but a high "sense of gratitude, of obligation, of dependence and origin" (Mulder 1994: 106). Using the metaphor of a basket of eggs (Mulder, pers. comm., 16 May 2007), Javanese individuals are understood as boiled and peeled eggs whose egg whites blend into each other so that only the yolks can be differentiated. Besides determining the individual's identity, place, and aspirations, the group or clan also serves as a watchdog against non-conformist behavior (Mulder 1978, 2000). Trust is not associated with inner qualities of others but rather with them living publicly and visibly (Mulder 1978). In this model, sharing is expected, often directly demanded and comes with a moral obligation (*utang budi*) to reciprocate (Mulder 1994). Only the inner core (*batin*, or, the yolk) consisting of the most private emotions and thoughts, one is not obliged to share (Magnis-Suseno 1981).

In its application to my digital technology consumption realm, the collectivistic ideology of sharing emphasizes an expectation to share one's belongings such as smartphones with others in need. Not to share one's smartphone would be an unacceptable behavior that would be taken as a sign of selfishness and "not knowing one's place and obligations," it would be shameful for the social environment, and it would be sanctioned by the collective (Magnis-Suseno 1981;Mulder 1990).

In the traditional Javanese ideology of sharing, actions are not judged by an absolutistic dichotomous morality that emphasizes man's will and moral autonomy (Geertz 1964; Magnis-Suseno 1981). Rather, actions that lead to infractions of the social rules are regarded as not intrinsically bad but a matter of missing comprehension and insight (*durung ngerti*) or of plain stupidity (Mulder 1998). Moral judgements focus on the *lair*, that is, the visible behavior and outward

appearance, in the context of social relationships (Magnis–Suseno 1981). It is bad when infractions are noted and not tolerated by one's fellows; moral "conscience is consciousness of others" (Mulder 1998, p. 67). The appropriate measure against infractions is therefore public, social surveillance. Open conflicts and disruptions of the social harmony (*rukun*), the highest and sacrosanct principle in the moral system, are to be avoided.

The individualistic ideology of sharing

Another ideology of sharing of increasing importance in contemporary Javanese culture is the Western or individualistic ideology of sharing. It refers to a legacy of European and North American philosophical traditions that emphasize the autonomy of the individual subject (Descartes [1641] 1996; Kant [1785] 2004; Sartre [1943] 2001). Here, the individual is seen as a bounded, unique, and distinctive whole that sets itself contrastively against other such wholes rather than regard others as part of its identity (Geertz 1974). In the egg basket metaphor, individualistic selves would be hard-boiled eggs that hardly shade off into each other. This concept has driven the idea that mutual trust is a matter of people's characters and inner qualities instead of social control and supervision. It follows that people who live according to this ideology develop high individuation but a low sense of obligation and conformity. While individual privacy and freedom from invasion are highly valued, personal possessions are not to be used by others without permission (Triandis 1994). For proponents of this model, sharing is a voluntary act free of reciprocal expectations and forced compliance (Belk 2010). In its application to my context, the individualistic ideology of sharing accentuates the assumption that digital devices such as smartphones are personal belongings that need not to be shared with others. If they were to be shared, explicit permission would have to be given by the owner based on a 'free' decision.

In addition, the user would respect the tacit privacy concerns of the owner and avoid consuming personal information. From the individualistic perspective, good or bad actions are a matter of absolutistic principles in combination with moral autonomy and man's will (Kant [1785] 2004; Magnis–Suseno 1981). Deeply rooted in Christianity, humans have to take moral responsibility for their own behavior (Kerstan and Berninghausen 1991). Individual moral conscience and the feeling of personal guilt instead of shame in social situations are emphasized (Triandis 1994). Appropriate measures against infractions of the social rules thus relate less to the consciousness of others and the effects of behavior but rather more to the moral conscience of the individual as it is guided by universal principles (Magnis–Suseno 1981).

In sum, collectivistic and individualistic ideologies of sharing serve as justifications, frames, and motivations for consumers' smartphone practices in Indonesia. However, the ideologies are not monolithic but often amalgamated in everyday consumption practices in ways that support the individual consumer's life projects and circumstances. The negotiations of the two ideologies through the marketplace are characterized by consumers striving for the 'right' blend. Thus far, this process has not led to the historical institutionalization of a third ideology or synthesis resolving the tension between the two ideologies of sharing. So in addition to ideology, we need to study how consumers assuage the tensions between the two opposing ideals and create working compromises through their everyday regimes and practices of sharing.

Methodology

To investigate how competing ideologies of sharing play themselves out on the practical level, I chose to investigate smartphone consumption in the practice of dating in Indonesia. Since 2006, I have frequently lived, studied, and conducted research in Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia. In

addition to this experiential dimension during my undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral studies, I immersed myself in background research regarding the historical and cultural conditions relevant to the Javanese and the specific domain of interest in this chapter. Equipped with this background knowledge, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 20 Javanese (aged 17–36, $M = 24$, 10 male and 10 female) in Yogyakarta in August 2011. The data collection is part of my larger research project on globalization, the marketplace, and romantic love, illuminating market system dynamics beyond the Western hemisphere. The interviews were conducted at my place, the participants' homes or their friends' places. They lasted between 90 minutes to four hours, yielding conversations on general lifestyle issues and also on more specific love-relationship and dating-related consumption stories, all revealing the importance of digital technologies and innovations, particularly smartphones and social media such as Facebook. Follow-up interviews focusing on the role of smartphones and the concept of sharing within love-relationships were conducted online in September 2011.

All participants are Javanese, born in Central Java and living in Yogyakarta. Most of them adhere to a syncretic form of Islam, characteristic of Java (Geertz 1964), but varied in terms of relationship status (single, in a relationship, married, divorced), upbringing (parents varied from working class through upper-middle class), education (from high school to graduate degrees), and occupation (from unoccupied to skilled craftsmen to entrepreneurs). To interpret the consumption stories of Javanese smartphone consumers within their broader narratives of self-identity, I used Thompson's (1997) hermeneutically grounded interpretive framework. Accordingly, I analyzed the data through a series of part-to-whole iterations. In the intratextual movement, each interview was analyzed separately in full. In the second stage, the intertext cycle, I sought deeper under-standing by looking for commonalities and differences across the interviews (Thompson 1997). I will now turn to the analysis of consumers' narratives of sharing. I use a case study format (e.g., Holt 2002; Holt and Thompson 2004) to illustrate how the interrelationship and tension between the two models of sharing play out in the love-relationship related consumption practices of Javanese consumers.

Consumer narratives of sharing

Case 1: Yani and Ira on the importance of control in sharing

Yani and Ira are sisters from a working-class background who have lived in Yogyakarta their entire lives. While Yani is 23 years old, holds an undergraduate degree and has been in a relationship for two years, Ira is a 21-year-old undergraduate student who currently does not have a boyfriend. Yani describes the relationship among sharing, trust, and jealousy as she experiences it with her boyfriend:

YANI: My boyfriend and I are open and trust each other, so there is nothing that we hide from each other. Regarding our smartphones, we are both open and share. At the beginning I became a little bit angry or jealous when he sent text messages to his female friends, and I often asked who they were, what his relationship with them was and so on. He told me that they were just friends and rarely sent each other messages, maybe only if there was an important issue. Since then, every time he sends or receives text messages from girls, he surely tells me, and if he does not tell me, he does not delete the messages because he knows that I will definitely check his smartphone [laughs]. But for me this is better than if he were to hide something behind my back … Besides text messages there are pictures; I once found a picture of him together with a female friend, and because I was angry, he deleted the picture and apologized to me [laughs].

In her interview, Yani draws upon many elements of the collectivistic ideology of sharing to describe and legitimize her use of smartphones. With the existence of these digital devices, partners in love-relationships can share what they do, with whom, where, and when – and they often directly ask the beloved for this information. Ira's statements help to understand why this is the case among many Javanese couples:

INTERVIEWER: Why do you want to find out all this information?

IRA: Because when I am in a love-relationship with someone, I feel that I have rights to him, whatever it is … I have the right to know what he does, where he is, and with whom he is together.

INTERVIEWER: Imagine if he said that his smartphone was his private item and that you were not allowed to check it. What would you think and feel?

IRA: If he would not give me the permission to do so, it would mean that he is hiding something from me … and I have to find it out. Because in a love-relationship you are not supposed to have any secrets.

INTERVIEWER: For you to trust someone, you have to know every bit of information?

IRA: I believe that expressed and revealed information shows the honesty of a person.

For Yani and Ira, sharing is crucial in love-relationships in order to enable partners to shade off into each other, build up trust and reduce jealousy. But it is not enough to only verbally share feelings and thoughts. Rather, personal information that is stored in smartphones is supposed to be shared too. As a variation of the expectation to live one's life publicly and visibly (Mulder 1978), sharing this information is taken as a "real" sign of the honesty and sincerity of the partner. Yani and Ira feel that they have the right to know their partner's life in detail and they believe that enforced mutual sharing and surveillance are salient measures to achieve happiness in a love-relationship. Yani's boyfriend experienced how critical these aspects were to Yani and eventually shared information about his life and social relationships with her through his smartphone. However, he is less enthusiastic about finding out about Yani's social relationships and activities:

YANI: It is different when my boyfriend checks my smartphone; he will not find any weird messages because I rarely send or receive text messages from other boys. If there are any, he does not get jealous – strange, isn't it? He just asks who that is, and when I tell him, he is just a friend, he says okay, that's fine. It makes me angry and sad that he rarely checks my phone; he is lazy and just says that there are only messages from him.

His lack of enthusiasm to check Yani's smartphone is not taken as a sign of trust towards her honesty or of the quality of their relationship, but instead makes her angry and sad. Drawing on elements from the collectivistic ideology of sharing, Yani believes that a person who is in love and cares is supposed to reciprocate the demanded sharing practices and serve as a watchdog against potential non-conformist behavior by keeping the beloved under close surveillance. She thus expects a behavior from her boyfriend that would be disapproved of as being too possessive and overly jealous, since it violates one's privacy and autonomy, according to the individualistic ideal of sharing. Smartphone consumption practices have become a major means through which such expectations of sharing and notions of love are negotiated. Given the variety of normative guidelines and assumptions of exactly what the "right" degree of sharing and shading off into each other is, it is not surprising that these negotiations are a continuous struggle. Yani's case illustrates that different understandings of the role and meaning of sharing in love-relationships

provide normative instability that set the stage for reflection, conflict, and compromise. Smartphones and the personal information stored in them play a crucial role in this process.

Case 2: Venna and the quest for trust and privacy in sharing

Venna is a 22-year-old undergraduate student from a working-class background. She was born in Yogyakarta and currently does not have a boyfriend. In contrast to Case 1, her interview illustrates a quest for privacy and trust in a love-relationship with someone who demands detailed sharing practices:

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever experienced a situation like that?

VENNA: Yes, when I was still in a relationship with Joko, my neighbor. At the time I was in touch with a male friend of mine in Jakarta through text messages. We were very close friends so that I already regarded him as my brother and he called me 'say' [honey] in the text messages. Apparently Joko had my smartphone and read my text messages. And he thought that I had something going on with this male friend of mine behind his back. On top of it, Joko is a close friend of this male friend of mine too.

INTERVIEWER: What did you think and feel when this happened?

VENNA: At the time I didn't know that Joko had checked my smartphone. Unexpectedly he asked me straightaway about the text messages. He was angry and asked for an explanation. I was confused; how could he know about it? Because I didn't have anything going on with this male friend of mine, I told him in a calm way that it was just a normal friendship … Obviously he had sent a message to my male friend and asked him to confirm the messages. He got the same answer from him. But in that moment Joko was angry with my male friend.

INTERVIEWER: What were the consequences of the incident?

VENNA: The consequence in the long run was that he didn't trust me any more. Maybe that was one of the reasons for our break-up. His behavior changed after the incident compared to his behavior when we got close.

Venna experienced the interconnectedness between sharing, trust, jealousy and privacy rather differently from Yani and Ira. When her boyfriend enacted what he thought was his right of reciprocal sharing and checked her smartphone, he came across a message from a male friend of hers who called her "honey," a term used both among close friends and partners in love-relationships. Although the incident could be explained and his anger vanished shortly afterwards, he lost trust in Venna. Trust is a very important but elusive category in Indonesia, as Venna explains:

VENNA: When someone trusts someone else or something else, he or she will guard his trust faithfully. But if you ever do something wrong, even if it is only once, just for a moment, something totally unimportant or minor, then this trust will be lost and will never come back. That's why people try to protect their privacy so heavily.

The idea of strictly protecting one's privacy resembles salient elements of the individualistic ideology of sharing. In a social environment that associates privacy with having something to hide and trust with living one's life publicly, however, a rather pragmatic approach seems to be a suitable way to achieve a working peace. Konde, a 17-year-old Javanese, explicates his way of bridging the two competing ideologies of sharing:

KONDE: Normally I delete the chat or text messages that I receive from or send to my close female friends directly afterwards because I am afraid that my girlfriend will read them. I don't like that

other people to read my messages because I regard them as private. And I also don't like to read other people's text messages because I regard them as private and I don't need to know what is in them.

Although he strongly believes in the importance of privacy and does not need to shade off into his partner's life to build up trust as much as Yani, Ira, and Joko, for example, he reflected upon the ideological instability provided by the countervailing ideologies of sharing and decides to construct a pragmatic, working compromise that allows him to minimize conflict and drama in his love-relationship. Venna, in contrast, chose a more idealistic, confrontative way of negotation:

INTERVIEWER: Are you going to share your mobile phone with your friends and your boyfriend like before?

VENNA: My smartphone is my private item. I never share my smartphone with anyone without this person asking me for permission.

INTERVIEWER: Has the idea that "my phone really is my own possession" emerged?

VENNA: Yes, definitely.

INTERVIEWER: Do you wish that your friends and your boyfriend would respect your privacy more and would not search for private information on your phone? Are you going to respect others' privacy more than you used to?

VENNA: I follow the principle that I don't want to know someone else's privacy before he or she tells me about it. And I think that they, other people, also have to follow this principle as I do. I don't disturb you so you also don't disturb my privacy.

INTERVIEWER: Will people become more individualistic because of such incidents?

VENNA: I think so. But it's a private decision … If they want to share with other people or not is up to them – and no one else has the right to tell them what to do.

INTERVIEWER: If you could work together with a smartphone company, what would you advise them?

VENNA: Maybe I would suggest using fingerprints [laughs], so that only the owner of the smartphone could unlock and use it.

Instead of relying on the consciousness of others, Venna follows her personal principles that have to be respected by others. She regards her smartphone as her own possession that she never shares with anyone without explicit permission (Triandis 1994). Rather than meeting other people's expectations or demands to reciprocate, she assumes herself to be an individual who can make 'free' decisions (Belk 2010). Similar to Konde, she also believes that a happy love-relationship does not need such a high degree of mutual shading off into each other. However, in contrast to his pragmatic approach, she does not want to superficially play by the rules of the collectivistic game of sharing. Her reluctance to share and her emphasis on individualistic notions of self were the basis of many of the conflicts with her boyfriend and eventually led to their break-up. In her case, no comforting blending of the two opposing ideals of sharing could be constructed within their love-relationship.

Interpretive summary

In summary, the cases illustrate some of the ways in which consumers in Indonesia draw on the two competing ideologies of sharing in their love-relationship related identity work. Indonesian consumers attempt to creatively negotiate and blend the two ideologies through their smartphone consumption practices in ways that support their individual (consumer) life projects and create a

working compromise in their love-relationships. It is striking that extreme approaches such as Yani's emphasis on control in sharing or Venna's strict quest for privacy and trust in sharing tend to produce difficult conditions for a love-relationship to flourish as they create continuous misunderstanding and conflict. My analysis further suggests that smartphone consumption practices restructure the Javanese ideology of sharing at least in two important ways. First, open confrontations and conflicts are on the rise as an effect of increasing (mis-)communication via smartphones, which further weakens the concept of harmony or *rukun*, once the most important and sacrosanct principle in the Javanese worldview (Magnis-Suseno 1981; Mulder 2000). Second, the separation between the inner self (*batin*) and the outer world (*lair*) become increasingly blurred since smartphones make information about the self and its intimate social relations visible to the outer world, which in turn creates expectations to share. With new digital devices entering the marketplace, new consumption practices will emerge and the search for the 'right' blend and the restructuring of the larger normative understandings of sharing will continue.

Implications

These findings have the potential to inform the literature on sharing, (digital) technology consumption, and the manifestation of consumer culture in non-Western contexts in several important ways. First, my empirical findings suggest that previous research on sharing (Belk 2010) suffers from an ethnocentric Western bias and is thus not suited to illuminate the full complexity of sharing within and across different (non-Western) consumer cultures. The understandings of sharing, privacy, trust, and jealousy that the consumers in my study create, move far beyond the Western conceptions of sharing (ibid.). Indonesian consumers are forced to strike compromises between two competing overarching ideologies of sharing. Given the variety of ideological and institutional abstraction regarding these issues, conflict is the norm and failure to compromise often leads to or facilitates the break-up of relationships. The continuous struggle of consumers to achieve working self-narratives of sharing play a formative role in the restructuring of larger normative understandings of mating, friendship, and love (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Even broader, they also contribute to fundamentally reshaping established social structures such as class or religion (Klein 2001). However, questions of exactly what constitutes the 'right' blend and what new structures of power relationships will evolve remain unanswered, making sharing an ongoing tightrope act. Longitudinal research is needed to unpack how this negotiation process influences the emergence of new market systems as well as shifts in normative understandings and the evolution of consumer cultural practices (Giesler 2008; Humphreys 2010; Karababa and Ger 2011).

The findings further contribute to our understanding of (digital) technology consumption. Former research in the consumer behavior literature has acknowledged and drawn upon the larger cultural forces in which technology consumption is embedded, but it has focused on its influence on micro-level practices as a one-way process (Mick and Fournier 1998; Kozinets 2008). I find that smartphones are one of the most important technological devices Javanese consumers use to share information about the self in their love-relationships and make internal emotions and thoughts strategically available to the outside world. I further demonstrate how smartphones in Indonesia foster a blurring of longstanding cultural boundaries between the internal sphere of emotions, thoughts, and intentions and the external sphere of expressions and behavior. As such, I demonstrate the influence of digital consumer technology beyond the micro-level of individual consumer practices. Digital technology can facilitate ideological instability and help set the stage for conflict and compromise in social relationships. Thereby, it influences the continuous human production of societal-level abstractions (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

Finally, my analysis also responds to the call to further explore the influence of globalization and consumption on transitional economies (Arnould and Thompson 2005). Following established concepts of hybridization and glocalization, I demonstrate how identity construction in a non-Western context draws from the marketplace to blend local traditional and global normativities (Karababa and Ger 2011; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006; Kjeldgaard and Ostberg 2007). My findings further support the thesis that globalization promotes reflexive, self-actualizing consumer subjects (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard 2007). More specifically, I show how Indonesian consumers form particular self-ethics and enact their personal understandings of how and what to share within their love-relationships (Karababa and Ger 2011). Utilizing alternative ideologies of sharing, they overcome the 'natural' notion of traditional dominant normativities and instead actively negotiate the 'right' blending. In this process, the active Indonesian consumer subjects articulate their reflexive identities through the marketplace, thereby producing new glocal forms of ideological and institutional abstractions.

Acknowledgments

Note

1 The terms individualism and collectivism are not used in the classic Hofstedian (Hofstede 1980) sense of reproducing binary oppositions. Rather, they are understood herein as cultural resources that are leveraged to create specifically tailored relational narratives that, in turn, serve multiple competing interests (Giesler 2008; Holt and Thompson 2004).

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