The cinematic Santri : Youth culture, tradition and technology in Muslim Indonesia

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Chapter 2

Cinematic Infrastructures

Introduction

In early 2016, with funding Sahal had received from the ministry of religious affairs, Sahal started a documentary-making project, titled *Jalan Dakwah Pesantren* (A Pesantren's Way of Proselyting Islam). For this occasion, he collaborated with Yuda Kurniawan, an *indie* filmmaker, who managed the main tasks of directing, editing and filming. By September 2016, the film had been released. The film did not make it into the mainstream commercial cinemas. This was based on it being in a digital format, pesantren themed, a documentary, and non-commercial. Instead Sahal brought it to various pesantren and other pockets of NU communities, mainly in, but not limited to Java. In early December 2016, I tried to make an appointment with Sahal in order to discuss the possibility of screening his film to a potential number of (NU) audiences in the Netherlands. After several postponements due to his film-screening related - travels, we finally managed to meet at the Dunkin Donuts café in Pancoran, in South Jakarta.

At the start of our conversation, I made a comment about his busy schedule in regard to his film's release. But his reaction, for a moment, surprised me. His body language conveyed his disappointment. He said to me: "Despite the enthusiastic responses from the pesantren people for screening *Jalan Dakwah Pesantren*, the film has not yet been played in the PBNU building, ever since its release". I was intrigued by this comment. I chased him to tell me how he had so far afforded the travel costs for screening his film in different pesantren across the island of Java without the support of the PBNU.[1] He answered,

1) PBNU, an abbreviation of *Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama* ('The Central Board of NU'),

> Yes, we had funding. But it covered the production costs only. So, we even had to cover the editing costs ourselves. To screen this film in the local regions, I arranged my travels through my personal networks. If I am to be invited to screen the film in Yogyakarta for example, I will contact my networks around Yogyakarta and ask whether they wanted to screen the film too. This way, we would spend less money on our travels. Instead from Jakarta to their places (in central Java), now the travel cost is cut (as the travel now started) from Yogyakarta. The left-over budget, then, could be spent on another purpose. Sometime, as part of our film screening tour, we also organized a film-making workshop in the pesantren.

Sahal's answer reverberates the absence and existence of infrastructure upon which the "mobility" and "immobility" of the santri's cinematic project are highly structured.[2] For many scholars, infrastructure is often defined as "built networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people, or ideas and allow for their exchange over space" (Larkin 2013: 328; see also Larkin 2008; Anand 2012; Leigh Star 2012; Xiang and Lindquist 2014; and Korpela 2016). While these "built networks" are easily understood in their physical terms, such as rail roads, pipes, and electricity, they can also manifest in the form of human interactions and an exchange of ideas, or the non-physical terms. As such, Sahal's remarks about the slow response from the PBNU, and the utilization of various pesantren as "a cinema house", indicates a lack of certain physical (and non-physical) infrastructure in the provision of the NU community that would potentially hinder the feasibility of a santri's cinematic project. But his dependency on his networks, the use of pesantren ground for film screening, and the prevalence of DIY tactics to finish the film project, also reveal that at the backdrop of such infrastructural scarcity, 'another kind of infrastructure' has (necessarily) been improvised by the santri in order to render their cinematic projects feasible and mobile, as to circulate them across the NU communities.

In this chapter, my aim is to explore what kinds of infrastructure have been used, developed and mobilized by the santri, and how they work. My exploration ranges from santri mobile cinema practices of *Lintang Sanga* and *Gajah Wong Sinema*, to a santri writers' community called *Komunitas Matapena*, to the training in film-making, to DIY tactics, and to the use of online infrastructure. Theoretically I take a cue from scholars who have emphasized the ambiguity of infrastructure, that is, every infrastructural system has always consisted of both soft and hard, political and poetic, physical and non-physical, and exhibit bridge and barrier dimensions. I argue that in the absence of an existent physical infrastructure that supports santri cinematic practices, the cinematic santri have developed alternative forms of infrastructural systems that enable them to successfully, for example, play a santri NU-style film in front of the targeted NU audiences. As I will show, the establishment of these infrastructures is fundamentally operated by the santri on the basis of their cultural connection and political affiliation

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the highest organizational structure of NU, is responsible for the highest decision and policy making of the organization.

2) This is following Korpela, who said, "infrastructure provides framework within which people can, or cannot, move" (2016: 113).

with the NU-pesantren tradition. Yet, while successfully generating the mobility of the santri's cinematic projects, this practice of self-identification with the NU-pesantren tradition has the potential to – paradoxically - limit their mobility. Throughout the chapter, I will look at infrastructure as an ongoing cultural process, one that is part of the ways through which the NU people react to, and negotiate with, their everyday realities.

I divide this chapter into two parts. I start with a theoretical exploration of infrastructure. After that, I proceed to a number of ethnographic cases that show the uses and development of existent NU's film infrastructures. These consist of the following: the establishment of an alternative cinema house, the significance of a writer's community, the organization of a santri film festival, the use of DIY tactics, and the use of Internet. Finally, this chapter questions the extent to which strategies that have been developed by the santri in order to render mobile their cinematic projects across the NU communities are both culturally strategic and creatively successful.

The ambiguity of infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to "built networks" that become the basic structural system, upon which the flow of particular goods, knowledge and people is mobilized throughout space (Larkin 2013 and 2008). In general, infrastructure is easily recognized in terms of its technical and physical forms, such as roads, cables and pipes. These are often referred to as hard infrastructure. In relation to a film project, this hard form of infrastructure may include a cinema house, a film camera, and a built film school. Yet, anthropologists have elaborately shown that infrastructure also consists of what Larkin (2008: 6) has called a "cultural system" of infrastructure, such as the "regulatory" (Xiang and Lindquist 2014), the "ideology" (Humphrey 2005), the "phatic labor" (Elyachar 2010) and the "people" themselves (Simone 2004). In relation to cinema, this so-called 'softer dimension' of infrastructure includes, to name only a few, state-imposed film regulations, (networks of) film communities, and film ideology. I argue, however, that both the soft and hard dimensions of infrastructure should be seen as something relatively fluid and contingent with each other, rather than fixed and separate.

Issues of infrastructure have recently become a popular research field in anthropology.[3] For many anthropologists, however, infrastructure is less interesting if viewed from its technological characteristics only, and rather should include also the ways the "social life" (Appadurai 1986) of infrastructural technologies have streamlined

3) Within a decade or so, research on infrastructure has dramatically grown within anthropological discipline, covering a wide variety of issues of infrastructure in many different countries. They range from urban life infrastructure in Nigeria (Larkin 2008) and Johannesburg (Simone 2004); to road construction project and transportation system in post/Socialist Albania (Dalakoglu 2012) and in Peru (Harvey and Knox 2012); to hydraulic and irrigation technologies in South Africa (von Schnitzler 2013), in Nepal (Lam 1998) and in Mumbai (Anand 2012); to architecture projects in Soviet Russia (Humphrey 2005);

across the contours of people's lived realities. As Larkin has pointed out (2013), scholars in anthropology have made (or have been advised to make) an endeavor to look at infrastructure as a form of double dimensions: the "politic" and the "poetic". If the former refers to various consequences of the material operation of technology for political processes and practices (Larkin 2013: 330), the latter is assigned to mean a variety of ways by which infrastructure could operate beyond its technical function, and is served to address, for example, a semiotic aspect of one's desire and fantasy that can be wholly autonomous from the technical function of the infrastructure (Ibid: 335). In other words, an anthropological approach to infrastructure is one that recognizes both the multiplicity and contingency of form, function and meaning of infrastructural system, operated by and for people in different circumstances.

Also, sociological and anthropological studies have challenged the conventional understanding that accounts infrastructure only for mobility (Korpella 2016). For most of them, a system of infrastructure is often created to reduce one's "migratory capabilities" (Xiang and Lindquist 2014), an ability to pass through immigration checks and borders, or is manipulated to rehearse "abjection" (Anand 2012), a condition in which one particular group of people is marginalized by, for example, the government. In the word of Susan Leigh Star (1999: 388), infrastructure is designed to both "bridge and barrier". In our everyday life, for instance, we witness that thousand miles of new-built roads remained empty because of the state's strict regulation against those who had no access to auto-mobility (Dalakoglou 2012), or that a construction project of thousands of houses for surviving-disaster victims did not succeed in them possessing such houses, while many of the houses were in fact empty (Samuels 2012). Obviously, to again cite Star (Ibid, 380), "one person's infrastructure is another (person)'s ... difficulty". A luxurious cinema house in a shopping centre in an urban city of Indonesia will only screen a particular kind of film genre while leaving out others and thus targets a particular economic class of audiences. It both includes and excludes at once.

Some anthropologists have also shown the possibility of creating an alternative infrastructure which possibly works against the ruining of physical infrastructure. In his illuminating study on "People as Infrastructure", Simone (2004) has brilliantly explored how "the ruin" of the material infrastructures in the inner city of Johannesburg has triggered people of different ethnics, nationalities and classes to make a tentative collaboration for diverse activities such as doing business, sharing and other interpersonal relations that are based on trust. Elyachar (2010) makes a similar argument about how an Egyptian women's specific social practice of "phatic labor" has become "a communicative channel" through which these women were empowered to help their family's men to pursue the family's economic security. It seems that in a situation

to issues of transnational migration and mobility (Xiang and Lindquist 2014 and Korpela 2016); and to satellite engineering in Indonesia (Barker 2005); and to cultural infrastructure of new media production in America (Turner 2009).

where "physical infrastructure is lacking and inexpensive labor is abundant" (Xiang and Lindquist 2014: S133), social relations can function as "social capital" (Coleman 1999). Thus, if the presence of physical infrastructure does not necessarily guarantee a flow, its absence also does never mean a definite obstacle.

Thus, in order to demonstrate the workings of an infrastructural system, it is necessary to look at (the ambiguity of) infrastructure as a contingent process. It is society that creates an infrastructure; but that very infrastructure will feed back into that society by privileging some groups while excluding others (Kramer and Palmer 2018). In other words, and by extension, there is always the imagination of how an infrastructure might mean and work for particular society and in particular circumstances.

Now let me start my exploration on the use and development of film infrastructures in the provision of NU communities. I will begin from the establishment of NU's alternative cinema houses, firstly, *Lintang Sanga* ('Nine Stars') by the santri in the NU's central headquarters, and secondly, *Gajah Wong Sinema* ('Elephant Man Cinema') by the santri in Yogyakarta.

Screening film the alternative ways

Sahal establihsed *Lintang Sanga* in 2011. It mostly consists of film-screening events, which are usually followed by a discussion of the film. The first *Lintang Sanga* film screening, took place in October 2011 at the NU center of Brebes, Central Java – where NU has a strong following. About 2,000 spectators were in the audience.[4] In Javanese, *Lintang Sanga* means 'nine stars', most probably referring to the nine stars that circle the globe depicted in the NU's logo, and that is often said to represent the nine saints (*Wali Sanga*) who are believed to have spread Islam in Java. Through such name, Sahal wants *Lintang Sanga* to be associated as an NU mobile cinema; and as such NU values have significantly influenced the way he operates his mobile cinema practice.

Sahal explained that he aimed to take *Lintang Sanga* to local regions where major theatre chains such as 'Cinema 21' and 'Mega Blitz' are not available or too expensive for the local people.[5] As such, *Lintang Sanga* resembles the New Order mobile cinema practice. While this open-air cinema in Indonesia has its roots in the colonial period (Biran 2009 [1993]: 28), it was during the New Order times that it reached its highest

4) The event of the screening was reported by NU Online, see "Lesbumi" (2012).

5) The majority of lower class cinemas in Indonesian small towns, which mainly cater to lower-class audiences, has broken down following the downfall of the Indonesian film industry in early 1990s. Few, though, are still existent and operate, despite struggling with their sustenance, and mostly playing local cheap horror and *biru,* 'blue', films (see Pasaribu 2011). The *Cinema 21* chain, conversely, along with its recent competitor Mega Blitz, is mostly built in big malls of urban centres in Indonesia, only runs new films of local and global production, and corollary charges much higher price for its film ticket than the lower-class cinemas do. This only adds another layer of 'constraint' and absent infrastructure for lower-income people in small towns, including the NU people, to access (new) films in plush cinemas.

point of popularity especially amongst those living in small towns and rural villages (Sen 1994). Thus, to the extent that mobile cinema has the potential to distribute and exhibit films to non-regular audiences outside the mainstream cinema, *Lintang Sanga* can be seen as an alternative to the formal institutions of film exhibition practices in Indonesia.

The screening mode of *Lintang Sanga* is also very revealing of its alternative fashion. As I once observed it, the mobile cinema was run at a governmentally owned public hall that was transformed into a cinema house. The glass windows of the hall were covered with sheet of newspapers as to shield incoming light. A huge whitewashed screen of cloth was banded onto the front wall of the building. Rows of plastic chairs were arranged neatly before the screen, and a laptop and a video projector were put on the table placed in between the screen and the rows of chair. In the morning of the first day of the film screening, hundreds of students of local high schools, the target audiences of the screening, packed "the cinema hall". So large was their number that the film was played three times only in the morning session. During screening, electricity went down several times; students regularly went out of the building only to return inside with their soft drink at hands; and noises from the audiences sometime climbed up to the rooftop of the building, keeping them up with the film phases. At the outside, it was full of cars that lifted the students to and from the cinema hall, not to mention "temporary-installed" food-selling vendors. None of the students, however, showed up at the afternoon session. The number of spectators also slightly decreased in the second day of the film screening, and declined dramatically during the third day. The organizer finally decided to finish the screening program earlier than planned, which was five days. Still, to my estimation, around 1,500 students in total attended *Lintang Sanga*'s film screening. (See picture 2).

Nevertheless, almost all film screenings of *Lintang Sanga* took place in the provinces where, not only the mainstream cinema chains are unavailable, but also where NU was strongly represented. Moreover, the films that are played are only those that fall within the scope of santri NU-style film discourse, which I have outlined in Chapter 1. Hence, despite *Lintang Sanga* often rhetorically being claimed by Sahal as criticising the government's inability in providing equal access to cinemas for its citizens, it has been deployed primarily as a place for playing films of the santri NU-style kind, with a distinct NU audience in mind. In other words, the establishment of such an alternative mobile cinema practice as *Lintang Sanga* by the santri is operated against not only the lack of formal cinema-house infrastructure in the provision of the NU communities, but also is a response to the marginal place of NU people in the country's film industry and market, and showcases the aspiration of NU men and women to be part of wider national film discourses.

Korpela (2016: 124) said that against the shortage of an institutional form of infrastructure, people tend to invent an infrastructure of their own right as a tactic to navigate their flow. In this regard, I argue for seeing the establishment of *Lintang Sanga* by the santri as a tactical move for the spread (read, the mobility) of santri NU-style films.

Picture 2: A film screening in Lintang Sanga

The shortage of infrastructure referred to by Korpela, however, should not be understood as a mere absence of infrastructure per se, but it is better conceived of as the absence of a dominant infrastructure that institutionally supports one's mobility. In the case of the development of film exhibition infrastructure in Indonesia, for instance, the last seven years or so have witnessed an increasing number of luxurious cinema-house construction projects across cities of varying sizes in Indonesia (Barker 2013). Yet, in my view, they are not necessarily infrastructural and do not necessarily contribute to the circulation of santri NU-style films. This is because films of the cinematic santri's production could hardly pass as "the recognized and accepted categories" (Korpela 2016: 125) of movies that the country's major cinema chains would likely see them to be screened, considering the incipient character of their cinematic practices as well as of their film discourse. This way, the mainstream cinema houses challenge the santri's access to infrastructure. It is against this backdrop that santri like Sahal are forced to create their own film-screening infrastructure in order to play their films for their target audiences. As such the establishment of mobile cinema practices such as *Lintang Sanga* is not merely due to the scarcity of existent physical infrastructure of cinema buildings within the purview of the NU communities. But it is largely because of the fact that in order to screen a santri NU-style film, the santri need an alternative circuit of film exhibition that takes place outside the country's formal institutions of major, commercial, mainstream cinemas.

But, how does an alternative mobile cinema practice such as *Lintang Sanga* operate as infrastructure? Infrastructure is not merely about things, ideas and people, but a relation of them, a 'network' of various 'actors' (Latour 2005). To operate a mobile cinema practice is to bring together a constellation of film screening entities including a film DVD, a projector, a film screening place, and film audiences, that are made to be an 'actor'.[6] In this regard, anthropologists look at infrastructure as "a system of substrates" (Star 1999: 380), that is, the backgrounds upon which other kinds of objects, works or ideas are enabled to flow. In elucidating this point, Larkin writes that although electricity is the most obvious stratum allowing a computer to operate, the computer is also infrastructural to electricity because it is also the computer that entirely regulates the work of electricity (2013: 329). As such, I observe that the relation between mobile cinema and the santri is one that is similar to that between a computer and electricity. While the mobile cinema enables the santri to play a film across the NU communities, it is also the santri who provide the mobile cinema for NU santri audiences to function. To explain this further, I will now move to the case of *Gajah Wong Sinema* (GWS) in Yogyakarta.

Established in 2012, GWS is an *indie* film movement run by santri of Kaliopak pesantren Yogyakarta, who are also mostly students of the local Islamic universities, such as UIN Yogyakarta. The Kaliopak pesantren, well known for its engaging activism in artistic and cultural forms of local Islam, was founded by Jadul Maula, the president of Lesbumi Yogyakarta, and one of the key founders of LKiS (see below). Since 2009, the pesantren has regularly organized a film-making workshop for santri, and it has continued to occasionally stage similar programs throughout the last ten years.

In May 2012, GWS organized a series of film-screenings. The films played included a domestic film by Eros Djarot, *Kantata Takwa* (2008 [1990]), and a Greek production film of Tassos Boulmetis, *A Touch of Spice* (2003). While the Greek film was freely provided by a local rental film store, the other film was obtained through the help of Zastrow Al-Ngatawi, the then president of central Lesbumi in Jakarta, who borrowed the film from Eros Djarot himself.

The screening program took place in *Ngeban Resto,* a cafeteria that is owned by the NU-affiliated Wahid Hasyim pesantren. For the screening purpose, the santri transformed a corner in the café into a "film theater" as they installed in there a film projector, a white screen and rows of neatly arranged chairs. In the lead up to the event, they sent invitation letters to several university-student organizations and local independent film communities. They also spread flyers of the film-screening program and street posters, Facebook messages and Twitter posts. On the first night of the screening program, around fifty persons packed the "cinema hall". As the film progressed, other regular visitors of the café, who did not know of the screening plan

6) Latour does not see an actor as the source of action, but as "what is made to act by many others" (2005: 46).

before, took a seat in the room and joined the screening. The number of the visitors, though, decreased at the next screening occasions. On average, the regular attendants of the film screening numbered between 20 and 30. Most of them, nevertheless, were either santri of Kaliopak pesantren or university students associated with NU-affiliated organizations such as PMII.[7]

The idea of a 'network' (Law & Callon 1988) plays a crucial role in the processes of setting up an alternative cinema as infrastructure.[8] As shown by the GWS case, efforts to transform the café into an alternative place for a specifically public activity of film screening yielded both a web of relationships and a distribution of roles between multiple entities. These entities consist not only of the technical (the film-projecting equipment and the built space of the café), but also the economic (the very purpose of a café as a profit-making space), and the social (the relations among the santri, the invited spectators, and the regular visitors of the café voluntarily joining the screening). An absence or malfunction of any of these entities could risk disruption and even cancellation of the film screening practice. The agency, thus, does neither solely rest in the bodies of certain technologies, nor in the hands of certain individuals. Rather, it is located in a networked assemblage of multiple actors, both humans and non-humans (Latour 1999).

Yet, the GWS case is also telling of the poetic dimension of an NU's alternative cinema house as infrastructure. The ways in which the santri obtained a copy of the film, selected the screening place, and targeted the film audiences, show that the successful appropriation of an NU's alternative cinema house is based on the santri's cultural backgrounds and institutional affiliations with the NU-pesantren tradition. The NU is a community where the existing infrastructural system of the country's film-screening circuits do not target them as mainstream audiences. This marginality is only exacerbated by the fact that cinematic practices are still generally undervalued by the NU leaders. In my view, it is against the backdrop of such marginality, that the santri have generated amongst them "a sense of cinematic solidarity". That is, a collective emotion among the cinematic santri to help and support each other, the connection of which is shaped on the ground of their common identification with the tradition of NU and pesantren. This solidarity, as shown from the GWS case, proved to have successfully helped the santri navigate their efforts of making mobile their film-screening practice.

It is true that in order to realize their film screening programs, the santri have collaborated with a third party who has a looser, or less attachment with the NU/santri tradition. Yet, their reasons to collaborate with them is more poetical than, let's say, economic. To show this, I will return to one of the *Lintang Sanga*'s film-screening

7) It is an abbreviation of *Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia,* or the Indonesian Muslim Student Association.

8) Law and Callon define 'network' as a simultaneous connectivity by which actors "*define and distribute roles, and mobilize and invent others to play these roles*" (1988: 285 italic original; see also Latour 2005).

event in Brebes, which Sahal co-organized with *Dapur Film*, a film company founded by Hanung Bramantyo, the film director whose *Ayat Ayat Cinta* was refuted by Sahal to be screened in the NU's film day celebration (Chapter 1).

As a partner organization, *Dapur Film* was mainly in charge of making available the film and film-projecting facilities. Nonetheless, during our conversations, Sahal repeatedly made some efforts to justify his decision to work with Bramantyo. He stated, "That now I wanted to collaborate with Bramantyo was because the film he played in Brebes contained different massages from those of *Ayat Ayat Cinta.* The messages of Hanung's film that I now played here were relevant to NU's commitment to issues of youth, local culture and nationalism".

It is clear here that Sahal's choice of to collaborate or not to collaborate with a particular third party is exercised against the practices of identification with the virtues of NU-pesantren tradition. Sahal's changing position may appear inconsistent. Yet, I would rather see it as a negotiation that reflects the santri's awareness of different ethical and political virtues at play. Such awareness, considering the fact that a decision like this is often observable in many other film screening practices by the santri, is essential for the successful realization of the santri's alternative film screening practices.

In the sections that follow I show that practices of self-identification with the NU-pesantren tradition among the santri are central in their efforts of developing other NU's film infrastructure. However, the very practice of identification with NU-pesantren tradition, at the same time, has the potential to ostracize certain people, ideas and objects. To show this, an exploration of a literary community called *Komunitas Matapena* is crucial, since this community serves as both bridge and barrier.

From *lembar* to *layar*: the role of a writers' community

Addressing itself as a *komunitas* (community), concerned with literary work, and mainly composed of santri members, *Matapena* (the Pen's eye) is a santri-based literary community. Matapena was established in 2005 by an NU young cultural producer and intellectual, Ahmad Fikri. It focuses on organizing a series of discussions, workshop, publication of book and magazine, and staging training camps for literature writing, involving a substantial numbers of santri specifically in, but not limited to, the island of Java.[9] In 2011 alone, Matapena published as many as 38 books throughout its branches in different Indonesian cities. There are some 37 branches throughout Indonesia and are often connected with pesantren and other NU institutions. Matapena has some 1300 members across the country (Isma 2011: 9). One of its branches is Matapena of Kidang pesantren, whose cinematic practices and engagement will be discussed in the next chapters.

As a publishing company, Matapena is a branch of LKiS. This is an institute with

9) The profile of *Matapena* can be seen at: http://www.komunitasMatapena.com/profil/tentang-Matapena.html.

a base in Yogyakarta, and that has played a key role in the consolidation of civil Islam movements within NU in the late 1980s (Chapter 1). Thus, in order to understand the characteristics of Matapena, it is crucial to briefly explore the historical backgrounds of the establishment of LKiS.

Initially, LKiS was a study circle consisting of young NU intellectuals such as Imam Aziz, Jadul Maula and Akhmad Fikri, to mention only a few of its members. Its main concerns were to spread transformative forms of Islam and alternative discourses of Islamic renewal (Bush 2009: 167). Their publication of *Kiri Islam* in 1993, the translation of Kazhuo Shiogaki's *al-Islam al-Yasar* that discusses Egyptian Hasan Hanafi's concept of "the Islamic Left" (Isma, 2011: 9), was crucial for the influence of the leftist tendencies on their early Islamic discourses and thoughts.[10] In the long run, they evolved to include activism that introduces dialogues on religious tolerance, concept of human rights and pluralism among Muslim communities (Bush 2009: 168).

Not surprisingly, thus, Matapena inherits the literary interest and ideology of its "mother". My conversation with Fikri reveals such inheritance. He explained to me that the establishment of Matapena was strongly stirred by his worries about the proliferating publication of novels and short stories that targets young readership, but roots their virtues on either Western-inspired or Arab-Islamist lifestyles. For this reason, he felt an urge to add balance to the consumption of these texts by publishing a similar kind of work that foregrounds virtues of pesantren and local Indonesian culture. Fikri did not mention any title of the criticized young-readership literature; yet it seemed to me that he was referring to FLP's Islamic-themed writings and its secular-themed counterparts, both of which will be shortly discussed below.

The FLP or *Forum Lingkar Pena* (The Pen's Circle Forum) is a writers' community co-founded in 1997 by Helvy Tiana Rosa, Asma Nadia and Muthmainnah, all of who were mosque activists of the *Tarbiyah* movement (see Chapter 1). Helvy, a prolific Islamist writer who had acted as the chief-editor of *Annida* magazine since 1991, was appointed the first general chairperson of the community.[11] No less than ten years after its establishment, the community managed to attract five thousand members across 100 branches in local cities and 8 other branches abroad, making it the biggest Islamic writing community in Indonesia. As an instrument of *dakwah*, published works by the FLP-associated writers in the form of short stories, novels, comics and magazines often contain "a didactic purpose, [...]frequently employ *religious symbolism,* and suggest ways to be *a good Muslim*, for example, by presenting the characters as models of modesty,

10) Considering the New Order's anti-communist legacy, such publication in 1993, when Suharto was tending to play his Islamic card with the conservative groups of ICMI, or Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (Hefner 2000), seems to be both highly critical and courageous.

11) Annida is an Islamic teenager-targeting magazine, founded in 1991. By early 2000, both FLP and Annida seemed to work in cooperation, as the latter often published works of the FLP's writers (Arnez 2009: 50).

chastity and benevolence" (Arnez 2009: 46, italics mine). To make it more explicit, when employing "religious symbolism" and giving "suggestion to be a good Muslim" to the readers, the characters in most of the FLP fiction stories seek reference from the purification-oriented Islamic teachings of the *Tarbiyah* movement and identify themselves as young, intellectuals, and urban middle class Muslims, an affinity shared by members of the FLP writers. Issues such as the Palestine-Israel conflict, Islamic transnationalism, and the global *ummah* frequently appear in the FLP publications, and *Ayat Ayat Cinta* is one of the FLP's most popularly consumed works of all.

The other block of youth-targeting fiction literature is the published fiction that falls within the secular-themed categories, referring to youth-targeting publications that do not necessarily contextualize their contents with individual beliefs and practices of religions. The popularity of the secular-themed fiction categories, starting much earlier than that of the FLP works, is especially marked by the 1986 book appearance of Hilman Hariwijaya's *Lupus* series, initially popularised in a secular weekly youth magazine, entitled *Hai.* Lupus, "a young and delinquent protagonist", personifies young Jakartans of rich families, who enjoys "prestige markers of international consumer culture" and speaks in *Engdonisan* language, "a racy slang of Jakarta's urban youth peppered with English terms" (Sen and Hill 2007: 33). Importantly, in the film arena, Lupus story is comparable to the famous *Catatan Si Boy* series (Boy's Diaries), which is perceived by Heryanto (2014) as a film series that bears representation contradictory to that of *Ayat Ayat Cinta*. According to him, Boy's Diaries is a film that "displays the flamboyant lifestyles and trappings of wealthy Indonesian families living the American dream... fancy cars, luxurious homes, frequent travels to London or Los Angeles, holidays at the beach, and partying at the nightclubs" (Ibid: 70).

Having said that, now I will go back to Matapena.

The main goal of Matapena is, firstly, to create a *budaya literasi* ('literary culture') amongst students of Indonesian pesantren, and secondly, to propagate a moderate and inclusive view of Islam that is reconcilable with local tradition and culture, through the production of literary works. Its emphasis on the adaptability and compatibility of Islam with local tradition and culture, reminiscent of Abdurrahman Wahid's idea of *Pribumisasi Islam* (Indigenizing Islam), resonates with the current debate of *Islam Nusantara* ('Islam of Archipelago'), introduced by NU during its 33rd 2015 national congress.[12] Politically, the introduction of *Islam Nusantara,* defined by the NU leaders as a kind of Islam that is "tolerant, peaceful, and accommodative of local cultures" (Sahal 2015: 16), is a political means to promote a specific NU Islam (Fachrudin 2015: 263). In other words, the discourse of *Islam Nusantara* is in part constructed against the background of ongoing religious rivalry between different Muslim groups in Indonesia. The close affinity of Matapena's literary ideology with *Islam Nusantara*

12) Initially promoted by Wahid in the 1980s, *Pribumisasi Islam* is a term that refers to an idea of reconciling Islamic scriptures with local tradition and cultures (Wahid 1989).

discourses signifies the political difference of the NU's literary community against that of the non-NU santri groups.

Although Matapena is primarily a literary community, its members are still interested in film-making. Their *Matamovie* program is evidence of this. It is a program that is said to organize film-related activities such as film screening, film discussion, and "do-it-yourself" film-making. Yet, the *Matamovie* seemed to be a local program, as it was absent in majority of the branches of Matapena, except in a very few of them such as in Kidang's Matapena. Apart from the disengagement of some santri toward film technologies as I have discussed here and there, such different appreciation of a film-making program amongst branches of Matapena is partly because of the nature of Matapena as a community. Matapena does not require a definite degree of commitment from its branches in the local pesantren. It does not require a fee membership for instance, nor does it force a face-to-face meeting upon its members. It also does not require its branches to follow the whole programs of Matapena Yogyakarta. Conversely, Matapena allows its branch communities to structure their own programs and do their own works on the basis of their own interests. What binds these communities together is the mere fact that they are students of, or have an affiliation with NU and pesantren tradition, and that they share the same interest in literature and other forms of creative writing.

Matapena's writing training camp program renders the community instrumental for the spread of cinematic fever among the santri. LSDP, an abbreviation of *Liburan Sastra di Pesantren* ('Literary Vacation in Pesantren'), is a three-day training camp of literary work, in which different pesantren-branch members of Matapena take a turn to hosting the camp. In June 2012, a pesantren in Jepara, Central Java, hosted the 8th edition of the camp. Following the participating santri of Kidang pesantren, I went to Jepara for joining the LSDP. I noticed, around 50 santri from around ten different pesantren across Java attended the camp.

On the first day, we received extensive materials through a series of lectures on, among others, how themes of local Islam could be inspirational for literary work, and how a literary work should tell about surrounding social realities. This not only makes it close to a social-religious realism theory of literature that is close to the literary world view of the 1960s Lesbumi, but also resonates with the idea of *Islam Nusantara,* that is, its emphasis on indigenizing Islam with local culture. On the second day, we were given a series of workshops on how to produce a proper creative writing, in which all of us were tasked to write a short story, and then we discussed it in a selected group supervised by an experienced writer. On the last day, we were trained to act out a play and some other theatrical performances, and then we performed them at the closing ceremony.

As far as I am concerned, many santri make their films on the basis of a story that they first wrote it in a form of fiction and other creative writings. It thus goes from *lembar* (sheet) to *layar* (screen), meaning that the writing activities would serve as a foundational step for some of the santri before they move forward to film culture. The

LSDP program has served to provide the santri with training on writing a proper literary work that suits the virtues of NU-pesantren tradition. As such the community can be seen as a training ground from which a generation of cinematic santri can be sourced, as well as contents of the santri NU-Style films are enhanced. Matapena through its writing programs has played a significant role as infrastructure to the rise of cinematic santri within the provision of NU communities.

As stated above, infrastructure can serve as both a bridge and a barrier. As a community, Matapena is often claimed by its board members to be 'inclusive'. The observation I made on a couple of film screening activities held by Matapena in Yogyakarta has confirmed a certain degree of its openness, as people of different ethnic, economic and religious backgrounds were welcomed to join. On the other hand, in the the LSDP program I attended in June 2012, those who participated in it were all students of either pesantren or Islamic schools that are culturally and structurally identified as NU. Moreover, in my conversations with some of these students suggest that their decision to become members of Matapena was less driven by the fact that it is a writer's community of santri, than because it is an NU-affiliated santri writers' community.

Having in mind the kind of "NU-friendly Islamic contents" that were mainly taught during the Matapena's writing workshops, along with the affinity of Matapena's literary ideology with the *Islam Nusantara* idea, and its ideological rivalry with that of the FLP writers, all of these indeed challenge the inclusiveness of Matapena as a community. I argue, to an extent that an identification with NU-tradition has encouraged these Muslim students to join Matapena, the very same identification may discourage those who are not identified as NU-affiliated santri to become its member. This means, as infrastructure, Matapena has the potential to limit the mobility of santri NU-style film discourses and practices within the provision of NU-santri communities and is exclusive to those who are not affiliated with NU-tradition. This is because the rhetoric of 'komunitas' (community) that is used by the founders of Matapena is ideologically appropriated to exclude others, especially those (Muslims) writers who are affiliated with the Islamist Tarbiyah groups. This also means, additionally, that Matapena as a community has challenged the dominant idea among activists and scholars, working on quite different communities recently on the rise in post-Suharto Indonesia, who argue for both the fluidity and openness of contemporary Indonesian communities (Jurriëns 2014; Crosby 2014; and Ida 2014).

I will now continue with a discussion on the infrastructural system that helps santri obtain the skills of film-making. To do so, I will turn to an NGO's film festival as my starting point.

NGO's film festival: training on film-making skills

On an afternoon in June 2013, hundreds of pesantren students attended the launch of

a santri film festival at the building of Erasmushuis in South Jakarta. The festival was organized by Search for Common Ground (SFCG), a US-based NGO, in partnership with two NU's NGOs, *The Wahid Institute* and *P3M*. The first festival of its kind, the committee claimed that as much as 21 films of santri production were received from ten NU-affiliated pesantren across the country: from the islands of Java, Sumatra and Sulawesi. Out of the twenty-one films, it was said that ten films were selected for nomination of the best "*film* santri", and to be played in the festival roadshows, which would commence after the festival launch. Three out of the ten-selected films were played during the launch, in addition to the screening of trailers of all the films. All of them were short documentary films, and as suggested by the festival's title of "Understanding in order to Respecting" (*Memahami untuk Menghargai*), their themes revolve around issues of peace, tolerance, local wisdom, and anti-violence, not to mention pesantren identities. These are issues that are close to NU's civil Islam concerns.

At the festival I spoke with someone who had come from Cilacap in Central Java. He was a santri and attended the local pesantren. He said he first heard about the initiative when members of an NGO came to his pesantren to attend a four-day workshop on peace and tolerance, and on a documentary film-making.[13] The santri admitted that never before the NGO came was he capable of operating a film camera, let alone think about making a film. But during the workshop, he and his fellow santri received training in film production, stretching from doing research, writing a film script, operating a film camera, to editing video footage for a complete film. After the workshop, he said, the NGO challenged him and his peers to make a documentary film on particular themes they had learnt about at the workshop.[14] With a small subsidy of 500.000 *Rupiah* (50 US Dollar) and a facility of camera provided by the NGO, his film-making team spent four weeks for the research, drafting, and shooting processes of their festival-competing film, "*Déwék Bé* Islam" (a *Ngapak* dialect of Javanese language equivalent to 'We are also Muslims'). Despite the fact that his film did not win the best film award, such an experience encouraged him to continue to try to make more films.

The main organizer of the festival, SFCG is a non-profit organization principally promoting peaceful resolution for ethno-religious conflicts in society, and which has its branches in territories worldwide. As explained to the festival audiences, members of SFCG of Indonesia had paid visits to the pesantren of the festival-participating santri, and had assisted these santri for making documentary films for as long as three months. During this time these santri were scheduled to finish their films for the festival.[15] It

13) The NGO's workshop's theme on peace and tolerance is crucial viewed from the context of the escalation of ethno-religious violence especially in but not limited to the eastern parts of Indonesia, such as Maluku, Kalimantan and Sulawesi, following the loosening grip of the post-Suharto transition government. On accounts of the violence, see Spyer (2002), van Klinken (2007); Al Qurtuby (2015).

14) On the NGO's reports of this program, see Isma (2014).

15) News report of the event, see "Festival" (2013).

was also stated that the NGO would organize film roadshows to pesantren and other relevant places for playing the films.[16]

The organization of the Festival Film santri or a similar festival was not conducted in the following two years. However, as the NGO's report of the program notifies, these santri continued to produce documentary films after the two-year assistance program of the NGO was resumed. The santri producing "*Déwék Bé Islam*", for instance, have added to their filmography two other self-produced films entitled, *Kyai Santri* and *Janéngan* ('Praises to the Prophet'), both of which were concerned with issues of pesantren and local tradition. Other santri joining the film workshop were also reported making similar progress (Isma, 2014: 33). Significantly, the NGO's film-making project is another good example of the ways the film-making fever has spread across the santri communities. Yet, unlike the literary community discussed above, the significance of the NGO's film-making program lies at its function to not only introduce to the santri an awareness of using film medium for propagating the messages of Islam, especially ones that fit with the NGO's concerns on inter-ethnic tolerance and inter-religious dialogues, but also, more importantly, bring forward to the santri a range of basic skills for proper film-making production.[17]

Still, many santri in other pesantren made films largely on the basis of a 'Do It Your Self' (DIY) spirit. The following story of Ali will help account for how the santri may come to a cinema project "on his own".

The case of Ali: making film with "DIY" efforts

Ali is a santri of a traditional pesantren in Kediri, East Java. In 2010, he made *Para Penambang* (The Sand Miners), a documentary film I have mentioned in Chapter I. The film shows Ali's interviews with several sand miners who work in the river that flows behind his pesantren, and it portrays the hard life that these miners have to go through, particularly after the coming of their rival miners equipped with large and expensive machines; the illegal big-capital miners that are backed up by the authorities.

16) For a popular writing mentioning the road show, see "Astuti" (2014).

17) The SFCG is not the only film festival potential to the spread of cinematic fever among the santri. Film festivals catering to diverse audiences started to mushroom across the country following the era of *Reformasi* (van Heeren 2012: 67-8). Of one notable example is the *Pesta Sinema Indonesia* (Feast of Indonesian Cinema), held on each June from 2001 to 2005 in Purwokerto, Central Java, by a group of students of Youth Power community. The organization of this festival has involved some filmmakers having NU-santri cultural backgrounds, who later proved to be taking part in the efforts of spreading the cinematic fever among the santri. Dimas Jayasrana (one of the speakers in NU film day celebration we discussed earlier) and Tomy Taslim are two cases in point. The latter, furthermore, has traveled across cities in Central Java for film-making campaigns among high school students, and organizing film training, scholarship, and a series of student film festivals. According to Taslim, several santri who are at the same time still within the category of 'student' did participate in his student's film festivals.

In his film, Ali not only sympathizes with the traditional miners, but he also explains his compassion to them by referring to the pesantren's teachings.[18] The film ends with a scene that showed the santri groups who made the films going to perform a prayer in the pesantren's mosque. The film, in my view, nicely points out an intricate relationship between Islamic teachings and socialist critique of poverty, corrupt businessman and practices of capitalism, a point that brings Ali's film close to Lesbumi's view on art and culture, 'politically' manifested during the 1960s (Chapter 1).

Ali, who comes from a town in the Western tip of Java, had been living in his pesantren for more than seven years. During his pesantren studies, he also attended a nearby Islamic college for his bachelor's degree in Islamic education. Ali, who is an avid reader and has a strong interest in creative writing and journalism, established a literary community in his pesantren, which is a branch of Matapena Community of Yogyakarta. Nevertheless, Ali acknowledged that he has never joined in LSDP programs, nor met with board members of the Yogyakarta's Matapena. So far, he had maintained his contact with the latter only through SMS and emails and Matapena's periodical magazines. On my visit to his pesantren, Ali told me that he had sent the draft of his novel to Yogyakarta's Matapena, and hoped they would publish his novel. The story of his novel was developed from his film.

Ali had never seen a film in a cinema before, but one of his friends showed him the highly celebrated Islamic film *Ayat Ayat Cinta* on his laptop. Having watched the film, he realized the importance of film for disseminating Islam, and its potential use for spreading pesantren values.[19] Hence, he was encouraged to make a film about Islam in the context of his pesantren. Unfortunately, the santri did not own a camera, had no budget for such creative projects, and had no knowledge about film production. This, however, did not stop him from realizing his ambition. His fellow santri came to his help as they had attended a nearby vocational school and had studied camera and video editing skills. At the same time, a santri who returned for good to his home gave him 100.000 *Rupiah* (about 10 US dollars), an amount that is enough to pay the miners he interviewed. And luckily, a relative of a *santriwati* (or a female santri) was willing to lend him a digital handy-cam. In short, his writing skill, a borrowed handy-cam, his friend's technical knowledge, and a donation from a parting santri, all helped enable Ali to realize his ambition: producing an amateur documentary film. This was a film made with very limited resources and with simple equipment, but a film nonetheless.

Two years later, when I visited his pesantren, Ali still showed his passion in film-making, but he failed to produce any single film after *The Sand Miners.* According

18) Most part of the story of Ali has been published by *IIAS Newsletter*, see Huda (2014).

19) His story resembles that of Dadasaheb Phalke, the father of Indian cinema, who is said to produce his 1913 first film *Raja Harishchandra,* after watching a 1906 American Christian film production, *The Life of Christ,* as the film's deep religiosity and cinematographic potentialities are said to have aroused the man's religiously cinematic engagement (Dissanayake 2009: 877).

to him, this failure was apparently due to his friend with the camera skills who had returned home for good in Kalimantan. Ali's film-making story, nonetheless, exemplifies an emergence of a generation of santri who is capable of producing film from within the pesantren grounds by way of learning and improvising at their own ways the skills and knowledge required for film-making. Ali made a film even though he was untrained and inexperienced. He did so by capitalizing on all possible means and help available and "necessary" (Luvas 2012: 1), even if they are at very minimum level, as to realize his film. On my visit, Ali and his friends who were still living in the pesantren recalled how they managed to make a quick observation in the river area, talked to the miners, wrote the storyline, shot the footage, and edited the footage before finishing the film only within two days. Irrespective of the film's poor quality, they made the film on the basis of trial and error, with a DIY ethos.

Ali is not the only santri to have made a film in the spirit of DIY. In fact, the emergence of cinematic santri within the NU communities is worked out through DIY practices. Santri like Sahal, for instance, have created a film-screening place with its own experimental ethos. The santri in Yogyakarta's Matapena often run the *Matamovie* film-making program on an occasional and spontaneous basis. Aisyah, a cinematic santri of Kidang pesantren who I will discuss later, told me how she has first learned and developed her directing skills from the films she watched. Even the santri who received some basic film-making skills from professionals we discussed above, all work on their films with the DIY principles. Indeed, this is to argue, following Barendregt's (2011), that DIY culture does not necessarily mean 'amateurish' and 'without knowledge'. In short, Ali is a personification of many other cinematic santri who learn film-making skills on the basis of DIY spirit, thanks partly to the proliferation of digital cameras and other cheaper-budgeted video-making tools, not to mention the abundant DIY-film-making knowledge on Internet, such as the website, Film Pelajar (.com).[20]

The spirit of DIY does not appeal only to the cinematic santri, but also to many other Indonesian cultural producers, regardless of their religious identities and affiliations. The Indonesian Islamic *nasyid* music communities, for instance, persist to cling to DIY ethos by spreading their *nasyid* music via home-produced cassettes circulated in university campuses and Islamic book fairs – practices already popular amongst them at the course of their initial emergence in the 1990s – despite many *nasyid* boy bands have now signed contract with multinational record companies (Barendregt 2011: 239). Likewise, Paramaditha (2014) has demonstrated the widespread practices of DIY culture among the Indonesian independent cultural producers working in varying arenas of art, film, music and literature. Luvaas (2012: xv) argues, the prevalence of DIY culture among the independent cultural producers has mainly to do with the desire to be an active participant in the cultural production of a global community. Such active

20) The website is meant as a platform of knowledge-sharing and exchange of information relating to student's film festival and competition. Yet, it also has a special section which features a number of articles on film production.

participation, Paramaditha adds (2014), is linked to the idea of youth as new citizen subjects who partake in the political and cultural transformation after the Reform era. In the context of the cinematic santri, however, as I have argued in chapter one, their active participation in the cultural production of a global community through DIY practice, should be better related to the battlefield discourse in which the santri are competing with other varieties of Islam for public visibility, attention and political influences through popular culture, and more specifically film.

The desire for visibility and political influence in a public sphere, significantly, is also reinforced through the 'occupation' of Internet cyberspace by the santri, a phenomenon I discus below due to its significance as part of the infrastructural system for the spread of cinematic fever among the santri, one that takes place in the realm of the virtual.

The use of the Internet space: *online infrastructure*

The rise and emergence of the cinematic santri often lend their credence to the advent of the Internet technology. Santri like Sahal in Jakarta, Ali in Kediri, and those living in Yogyakarta (GWS and Matapena), or those in Western-Javanese Kidang pesantren, have often used the Internet to varying degrees for reaching out their fellow santri filmmakers, as well as for developing their cinematic knowledge, and spreading their cinematic projects. In the contexts of the santri the use of Internet platform for their cinematic practices becomes crucial.

The cinematic santri are Internet savvy. Most of them are not only reachable through emailing platforms such as Yahoo or Gmail, but also have several active accounts of different social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogger and YouTube. Among the santri, the use of social media platforms for cinematic-related purposes is extensive. Sahal, for instance, often posted on his Facebook account several notes of different length in which he narrated his cinematic projects, sometime along with pictures. His cinematic notes and pictures would trigger a number of comments from his Facebook friends. Many santri would post their statuses, short notes, pictures, articles and even videos of their cinematic projects on a variety of social media platforms at once. Aisyah is one such person. As she posted some photographs of her film-making projects, she wrote the synopses of her films on her blog, accompanied by the photographs, some of which she had posted on her Facebook. She even uploaded trailers of her films on her YouTube account under the label of "*film santri*", hyperlinks of which are observable throughout her blog, lenasayati.blogspot.co.id, and the blog of her pesantren, ppcondong.wordpress.com.

The spread of the santri's cinematic project through the Internet is significantly extended by online news media platforms developed by the santri. NU-Online, the official news media platform of the PBNU, plays the most crucial and active role in this. Recalling my story on the film day celebration at the NU headquarters in Chapter

One, the NU-Online would make a news report of every single event concerning santri's cinematic projects, as well as circulate other forms of journalistic writing about the santri's cinematic discourse. Publication by the NU-Online, significantly, is often shared in turn by the santri through their social media accounts, especially on Twitter and Facebook.

The significant use of the Internet for the spread of cinematic fever by the santri is made possible partly by the rise of Internet accessibility as well as the quick growth of a more affordable mobile phones-based connectivity across the country. Since the mid 1990s state-initiatives to create public, commercial access (Sen and Hill, 2007: 197), the Internet connectivity in Indonesia has achieved dramatic growth in the urban areas, while making slower progress into rural areas (Lim 2011: 9). With the increasing ownership of mobile phones that come with Internet connectivity – in 2010, there were approximately 211 million mobile phone users across Indonesia, although some people owned more than 2 phones, or 88 % of the total population – the growth of Internet accessibility has become accelerated, as "prices are relatively affordable and the cost for the necessary infrastructure is far less than for the cable broadband" (Lim 2011: 8). Most of the cinematic santri with whom I work, especially those who has finished their pesantren studies, access the Internet through their mobile phones.

Another factor that has significantly allowed the santri to use Internet space for the spread of their cinematic activities is the nature of Internet space itself. The Internet is a technology that has the potential to be a 'convivial platform', a state of being that is characterized by high autonomy and freedom (Lim 2005). As such is enabled by technological features of the Internet, which include the following: "convergence (one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many communication), broad availability, low cost, and resilience to control and censorship". With these features, the Internet has "provided an 'affordances' for less dominant actors to use the technology without being controlled by the more dominant actors" (Lim 2005: 28, emphasis original). In this way, the Internet can be used not only to express ideas, but also to reinforce one's identity and ideology in a relatively more democratic atmosphere (*Ibid.*: 179). Following her, I argue, the cinematic santri are not oblivious to the conviviality of the Internet, and hence they make some use of it for their cinematic campaigns.[21]

The conviviality of the Internet has the potential to create an inclusive and wide participation. However, one's activities on the Internet do not operate in a vacuum, but are worked out through the social, cultural and political conditions of the users as well as the vast technological potentials of the Internet (Jacobs, cited in Ali 2011: 117). For example, a cinematic santri like Sahal may have thousands of Facebook friends who are not necessarily santri, i.e. having variously socio-religious backgrounds. However, not all

21) The occupation of Internet space by the santri is nothing new among Muslim communities. Garry Bunt (2009) has earlier explored how the expansion of Internet has transformed the ways Muslim societies understood and practiced their religion, and the ways they perceived themselves and their fellow Muslims.

his Facebook friends would like to follow his cinematic activities posted on his Facebook page, let alone click their likes and give their comments on them. While following his post about the NU's film competition I mentioned in Chapter One, for example, I observed that the post received no more than ten comments, all of which, significantly, were coming from Facebook users with NU-pesantren backgrounds, many of who had been involved in the cinematic project. This indicates that those who most likely read his update statues on Facebook are online friends with whom he has established particular links, connections and networks through offline realities.

NU-Online is a similar case. Despite its vigorous effort of circulating cinematic events and discourses of the santri, the site is especially popular and widely read, as indicated by its search traffic index, mostly by Internet users who would identify themselves with religious views of NU-flavored Islam.

The above examples evoke a question about the extent of participation of the Internet users in the santri's cinematic activism in the online space. While the conviviality of the Internet has potentially offered a democratic and permeable space of exchange, sharing and communication platforms, as such do not necessarily guarantee whether voices of the santri's cinematic campaign at the online world are, widely, heard. Moreover, the character of Sahal's Facebook friends and NU-Online readers show that online activism is never separated from, but an extension of, the offline realities (Lim 2005 and 2015; Ali 2011). Internet-using individuals seem to play their role as agentive subjects, determining their online activism on the basis of their alternating social, cultural, political and religious preferences. It is in the light of such understanding, I argue, that the (limited) significance of the online infrastructure for the spread of film-making fever among the santri has to be framed: as Star (2009) writes, it forms both bridges and barriers.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that against the lack of cinematic infrastructure in the provision of NU communities, the santri develop alternative forms of infrastructure in order to make their cinematic projects viable and mobile. These forms include an alternative cinema house, a friend's film camera, and a rented film DVD, as well as a writer's community, an NGO-sponsored training in film-making, a DIY ethos, and the use of the Internet online space. While some of these infrastructure consist of hard materials, such as a film camera, film DVD, and the building that was temporally made up as 'a cinema house', the ways they are operated by the santri are based on their softer dimensions, that is, the cultural networks and identification with NU-tradition that are shared among the santri.

The cinematic infrastructure established by the santri is an expression of DIY practices. This means that there is always the imagination of what an infrastructure might mean for the santri, and how it would allow their films to be produced and

circulated. Some of this imagination becomes voiced in term of their disappointment via the lack of support from NU and the marginal place of the NU people in the country's film industry and markets. As I have shown in the chapter, this imagination is largely constructed by the santri through their connection with the NU-pesantren tradition.

The santri's contingency on NU-tradition for mobilizing their cinematic project resembles the use of "trust" among the people in the city of Johannesburg for gaining economic transaction amid the city's lacking of physical infrastructure but abundance of inexpensive labor (Simone 2004). In the case of the cinematic santri, they face various forms of marginality. First, they are marginal to the country's film infrastructures. Second, they preside in a marginal position either in front of their elite leaders or vis-à-vis the more established filmmakers, be them from the secular-liberal order, or the non-NU santri Muslim filmmakers. It is against the backdrop of such 'marginalities' that the santri have generated amongst them "a sense of cinematic solidarity". That is, a collective emotion among the cinematic santri to help and support each other, the connection of which is shaped on the ground of their common identification with the tradition of NU and pesantren.

However, as much as the notion of NU-tradition has the potential to enable the mobility of the santri's cinematic projects, the very same tradition has the equivalent potential to limit that mobility only within the provision of NU-santri communities. It even not *seldom* renders it exclusive to those who are "rivals" of the NU-santri groups.