Between *sastra wangi* and *perda sharia*: debates over gendered citizenship in post-authoritarian Indonesia

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Abstract. The essay shows in what ways gender orders in Indonesia are linked to trans-nationally available forms of collective identity. They are primarily structured by and formulated in response to the United Nations human rights agenda and conservative notions of global Islam. The two orders evince cultural, political and legal dimensions that entail several paradoxes. In the national context they refer to and comment on each other, while at the local level they simply co-exist in a juxtaposed fashion.

Ever since the publication of Olympe de Gouge's polemic *Déclaration des Droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne* in 1791, feminists and reform-oriented male intellectuals in the East and West have struggled to abolish gender inequality. The international women's movement gained political influence in the 1970s with the first World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 and the United Nations Decade for Women from 1976-1985. In 1979 the UN General Assembly adopted that call in its Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Convention, which was ratified by 187 out of 194 United Nations member states, obliges the nations to implement programmes in order to realise the set goals. In many countries this has been challenged by Islamic actors who object to CEDAW, arguing that the convention is un-Islamic or 'Western' (Brandt/Kaplan 1995; Stachursky 2013; Tonessen 2011). Indonesia ratified CEDAW in 1984 (with reservations) and since then women's rights activists have used CEDAW as a platform from which to

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highlight inequality, and urged the government to implement the convention. Islamists reject the idea of gender equality and emphasise gender complementarity instead (van Wichelen 2006). Their primary goal is the moral renewal of Indonesia based on Islamic values.

The democratic space opened up by *Reformasi* has allowed Indonesia women's rights activists to press claims for gender equity as a cornerstone of democratic transformation of the society and the polity. It has also, however, opened up space for groups that oppose them on the basis of religious-based ideas of citizenship and rights, including ideas of cultural citizenship and cultural rights.

In this essay, I will address three fields of discourse and contestation that are relevant to this gender controversy: the secular women's rights movement which already emerged in colonial times; the debate about third genders/LGBTI, provocative sexual art such as *sastra wangi*, *campursari* and *dangdut*; and the new Islamic piety movement.

The Indonesian women's rights movement

The Indonesian women's rights movement emerged in the early twentieth century and was plagued by much internal strife, including debates between Islamic and nationalist groups over a secular marriage law (Robinson 2009; Robinson and Bessell 2002). It came to a complete standstill when the largest women's mass organisation, the communist Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, was prohibited in 1965 (Martyn 2005; Wieringa 1988, 2002). It was not until the 1980s that first attempts at reestablishment of independent mass women's organisations were launched. That time, however, the focus was not on links to political parties but on specific issues. To give some examples, in 1982 the Annisa Swasti Foundation (Yayasan Annisa Swasti) was established to fight violence against peasant women and female factory workers. The Centre for the Development of Female Resources (Pusat Pegembangan Sumber Daya Wanita), which was founded in 1986, also put the fight against violence against women on its agenda. The group Women's Solidarity in Indonesia (Solidaritas Perempuan) addressed the disastrous work conditions of female overseas labour migrants. Rumpun Tjoet Nyak Dhien[1] supports and trains female labourers, and

the crisis centre Kalyanamitra conducted an anti-rape campaign in 1991. Rifka Annisa, founded in 1993, and Mitra Perempuan, which was established two years later, were organisations that supported victims of domestic violence. Female lawyers who had joined together to form the Lembaga Bantuan Hukum untik Perempuan dan Asosiasi Indonesia untuk Keadilan (LBH-APIK- the Centre for Women's Legal Rights and Justice) gave legal advice, not only in cases of domestic violence, but also with regard to divorces and alimony matters.

After the fall of Suharto in 1998, activities for the implementation of women's rights intensified and became increasingly a concern of the state which launched programmes for the implementation of CEDAW. Official government policy under Suharto had embraced the notion of 'gender mainstreaming' but in 2000, gender mainstreaming was declared a national cross-sectional task. National institutions at all administrative levels are called upon to develop measures for the elimination of any kind of discrimination. The Central Bureau of Statistics and the Women's Ministry were put in charge of monitoring and evaluating the measures.[2] They are cooperating with non-government organisations and women's studies centres that have been established at state-run and private universities. Three social issues have been, and still are, at the focus of various measures. The first is the political participation of women. In order to achieve adequate participation, Article 55 of the Electoral Law 8/2012 stipulates that the quota of women nominated by parties in elections be 30 per cent. The actual percentage, however, stagnates below 20 per cent (Parawansa 2002:45). According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, only 17 per cent of all representatives in the Indonesian Parliament (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat) were female in 2014.[3]

The second issue is domestic violence. Since 2004, this has been punishable with the enactment of Law Number 23/2004, and the authorities are obliged to prosecute it if a report is made to the police. Handed-down gender stereotypes and religious ideas trivialise violence against women as a private matter and even grant husbands the right to use corporal punishment. Hence, the main task of NGOs and the authorities in charge is education in order to effect a change in thinking.

Female activists train judges, policemen, and employees of governmental institutions and try to raise their awareness of the issue. In addition, NGOs continue to give legal advice to women, and run shelters for women and children bullied by husbands. In Yogyajarta, the women's organisation Rifka Annisa, founded in 1993 even spawned a men's group, the Alliance of New Men (Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru), which by now has branches in other parts of Indonesia and promotes a new concept of masculinity.[4]

The third issue is women's demands for changes in legislation, particularly in civic status law, but also concerning the marriage law, especially with regards to polygyny and traditional forms of marriage (*nikah sirih*) which put women in a situation of considerable legal uncertainty (Nurmilla 2009). The common objective of these three comprehensive programmes, which are complemented by a number of smaller fields of activity by NGOs, for example in the spheres of education, reproductive health and counselling of female labour migrants, is to change the existing gender stereotypes and to develop and propagate a new, egalitarian model of gender relations.

All programmes mentioned, as well as the organisations that conduct them, are based on a secular or a human rights approach to women's rights which, however, had only a limited effect on the population in Islam-dominated Indonesia. In addition, the NGOs have only few members and are mainly active in the urban centres, particularly on Java. Van Wichtelin moreover criticises women activists for failing to engage in the larger public in the debate on gender equality (Wichelen 2006). More influence is exerted by female activists of the two Muslim mass organisations Muhammadiyah which was founded in 1912, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) which followed in 1926. They have branches all over the archipelago and are organised in four separate women's organisations: Aisyiyah, the women's wing of Muhammadiyah, which was constituted in 1917, Muslimat (associated with Nahdlatul Ulama or NU), established in 1946, as well as the NU wings for young women, Nasyatul Aisyiyah already set up in 1919 (Syamsiyatun 2010) and Fatayat NU which was started in 1950 (Arnez 2010). Not least due to the debate about gender mainstreaming, progressive female activists in these groups have attempted to establish

a religious basis for the goals of gender equality and to reinterpret the Qur'an (Doorn Harder 2006; Feillard 1997; Marcoe 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Rinaldo 2013). They used the methods of hermeneutic exegesis developed by the Malaysian group Sisters of Islam in the early 1990s. The group was influenced by the American theologian Amina Wadud, who wrote a dissertation entitled *Qur'an and women. Rereading the sacred text from a woman's perspective*, which was published in 1992, and translated into Malay. Hence, it became available as a source for a new, female interpretation of the Qur'an in Muslim South-East Asia. Her approach stresses the equality of all human beings before God, arguing that this is inherent in the principle of *tauhid*, the oneness of God. Consequently, she calls for an implementation of the divine principle in society. In a monograph published in 2006 she coined the term 'gender jihad' for her ideology of liberation, and explicitly positioned gender justice both in the religious and human rights discourse. 'At its simplest level', she writes, gender justice is gender mainstreaming (Wadud 2006:10).

Particularly at the Islamic universities, female scholars used this approach to establish the government programmes of gender mainstreaming in the programmatic statements of their own organisations (Dzuhayatin 1998, 1999, 2002; Mulia 2005, 2006; Munir 1999; Umar 2002) and they prepared educational material for the public (Muhammad and others 2007). The most far-reaching attempt at anti-patriarchal reform was developed in the Ministry of Religion of all places. A Gender Mainstreaming Group headed by feminist theologian Siti Musdah Mulia was put in charge of submitting a new draft of family law. The group took its task seriously and came up with a draft that eliminated any hierarchy between men and women — which is, after all, the basis of currently applicable law (Mulia 2004). All articles stipulating male superiority in marriage and family were replaced by strictly egalitarian wording. Article 49 of the draft, for example, stipulated equal rights and duties of husband and wife in family and community, and Article 51 obliged both husband and wife to do household chores. The only legitimate type of marriage accepted in Article 3 of the draft was monogamy (*tawahhud al-zawi*); all marriage contracts relating to other marriages were outlawed. In order to serve

justice not only for men and women but also for people of various religious faiths, the draft suggests permitting marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims, and to grant the offspring of such marriages free choice of religion. In addition, the marriageable age of girls should be raised from sixteen to nineteen years,[5] and the bride price which is paid by the husband, replaced by mutual gifts.

Substantial innovations concerned the definition of marital harmony, or rather its violation through disobedience (*nushuz*). In current applicable law, *nushuz* is exclusively defined as misconduct by women; in the draft, both partners in the marriage were addressed. *Nushuz* was to refer to noncompliance with nuptial duties in general, including violence against a spouse or cruel treatment. This was clearly aimed at men. In such cases, the draft provided for the possibility to take legal action and to call in the police. With this reinterpretation of marital rights and responsibilities, Mulia and her team attempted to liberate wives from the one-sided duty to be obedient, which is often used to justify domestic violence in Indonesia. If both genders can be found guilty of having committed *nushuz*, the duty to obey also extends to the husband. It comes as no surprise that Musdah Mulia and her team did not prevail, above all because the draft was viewed as incompatible with Islam.

This example shows the limits of the new agenda for women's citizenship rights and the difficulties involved in implementing reforms that are not merely symbolic. It is an open question whether the Muslim women's rights activists will actually be able to bring about reforms. The number of reported cases of violence against women is increasing (Ford 2012), and neither the secular nor the Muslim female activists were able to prevent new Islamic-influenced laws such as the Anti Pornography Law (Rancangan Undang-Undang Antipornografi dan Pornoaksi, RUU APP) or the sharia-influenced local regulations (Peraturan Daerah Berbasis Syariah), which severely curtail women's scope of action (Bush 2009; Großman this volume). These ambitious Islamic women activists apparently have limited influence in their own organisations, as becomes apparent, for example, from the NU Fatwa Council's approval of marriages involving prepubescent girls.[6]

Stagings of new Islamic morality

The many endeavours to fully implement CEDAW, to put an end to the discrimination of women in legislation and everyday life, and to establish gender equality are thwarted by conservative Muslim activists. They first made themselves heard towards the end of the New Order period, and particularly after the fall of Suharto in 1998 (Platzdasch 2009; Schröter 2014). The first years of democratisation after 1998 witnessed the emergence of vast number of groups — large and small — which intended to revive an old idea and to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state (Assyaukanie 2009; Feillard and Mardinier 2011). On the one hand, democratic Indonesia has become more liberal and has made much progress with regard to the implementation of women's rights. On the other hand, some sections of the nation have become much more conservative, pious, and narrow-minded than in the New Order period. Even though Islamist parties had only limited success in elections (Ufen 2012), it cannot be denied that society is experiencing many forms of Islamisation in religious and cultural terms. This Islamisation is rooted in many small Islamic prayer circles and students' initiatives. It is, however, also pushed by powerful religious institutions such as the quasi-official Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) which has assumed a greater power in political debates since *Reformasi* (Ichwan 2013). This cultural Islamisation is antithetical to the cultural and religious opening up described above and to the emergence of liberal and emancipatory subcultures. For many Indonesian Muslims it is now important to align their everyday life with Islam and to cultivate a modern lifestyle which is, at the same time, modest and pious. They reject any type of so-called 'Western' emancipation which they deem is not in accordance with Islamic values. One expression of this new piety movement is the flourishing Islamist popular culture. It includes Islamic boy bands known as. *nasyid* (Barendregt 2011), Islamic consumer goods, Islamic fashion (Jones 2007), an Islamic finance and insurance sector, as well as an expanding Islamic health sector extolled as '*thibbun nabawi*, or medical treatment of the prophet' (Fealy 2008: 23). In addition, the past years have witnessed the emergence of a popular Islamic women's literature and the gender order is at the very centre of these writings.

One new genre is the so-called 'face-veil literature' whose protagonists are women veiling themselves in a manner still uncommon among Indonesian Muslims. The most important trailblazer of this genre was the best-seller *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (Verses of Love) by Habiburrahman El Shirazy, which first appeared in print in 2004 and was made into a movie in 2008 (Paramaditha 2010; Sakai 2012). The protagonist of the love story is Fahri bin Abdullah Shiddiq who studies at the Egyptian Al Azhar University on a scholarship and who is the heartthrob of young women. He is portrayed as a chaste young man completely abandoned to his studies, harbouring only brotherly feelings towards his female age-mates. The women, however, keep falling in love with him, and their emotions cause them to do all sorts of irrational things. It is evident that Fahri embodies the stereotype of the self-controlled Islamic man who is guided by reason (*aqal*), while the women are impaired by their desires and feelings (*nafsu*). This conservative Islamic idea of masculinity and femininity, which is reproduced by the movie, constructs men and women as opposites: men are rational beings, while women are acting in chaotic, destructive, and irrational ways due to their mental disposition. One of the women eventually accuses Fahri of rape because she cannot bear being turned away by him; another becomes deeply depressed for the same reason. The movie suggests that woman's desire is focused on man, while man's desire is focused on his studies and religion. This is the first key message of the movie. An exception is Aisha, a German-Turkish student. Fahri meets her on the subway and her demeanour tells him that she is a particularly pious and sincere Muslim woman. She is special; this becomes also apparent from the fact that she is wearing a face veil (*cadar*). Only her eyes are visible, but they immediately cast a spell on Fahri. By chance, he meets Aisha again at a matchmaking event organised by relatives. The two meet in the circle of members of the family; not much happens. Shyness and silence prevail, but then Aisha lifts her *cadar* for a brief moment, and Fahri is lost the moment he sets eyes on her. Hence, the second message of the movie is that no long time of courtship is needed; a man will immediately know whether a potential wife introduced to him is meant for him. Aisha and Fahri get married, but one of Fahri's admirers, the Coptic Christian Maria who is a platonic

friend of his, is on the verge of literally dying from a broken heart. Aisha generously offers to accept her as a co-wife and Fahri marries Maria too. Despite all good intentions, however, the *ménage à trois* turns out to be difficult. The women do their best to make the experiment a success, but they are jealous of each other. Eventually, Maria, the Copt, dies and everything is fine. This is the third message of the movie: polygyny is right but causes complications. People should not enter into a polygynous marriage thoughtlessly because the women, being more emotional than men, will suffer even if all involved strive for domestic harmony.

With these messages, the movie is positioned within a current Islamist discourse that draws on conservative Indonesian gender concepts and combines them with Islamic ideas. The three key messages are addressed both in women's magazines and in the many Islamic manuals about how to be a good daughter, mother, or wife. On the one hand, the emphasis is on pious female behaviour; on the other, it is on ideas of harmonious partnership. Women's ideal behaviour should be in harmony with the supposed female dispositions, emotions, capabilities and deficiencies. The new Islamist ideology is completely in tune with the concept of *kodrat wanita* (female nature) which was used by the New Order to promote a conservative gender agenda where women's citizenship was defined by wifehood and motherhood (Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis 1987; Robinson 2009). In the non-religious patriarchal conception of gender promoted under the Suharto regime, women are viewed as ruled by emotion and hence as weak; on the other hand, however, they are attributed particular social skills when it comes to looking after members of the family in general and children and husbands in particular. Nevertheless, both the New Order and the new Islamist discourse claim that women always need strict guidance and regimentation in order to prevent chaos (*fitna*). Segregation of the sexes, early marriage, the cultivation of shyness and modesty and, of course, proper covering of the body are mentioned as the most often cited measures for preventing potential disorder.

In recent years, scholars have conducted research on the increasing popularity of veiling among young Indonesian women. They have pointed out that women decide to veil themselves out of

their free will, that by doing so they pursue specific religious, social, or even political goals, and that veiling is not a response to male bullying (Brenner 1998; Nef Saluz 2011; Smith-Hefner 2007). Several anthropologists have argued that veiling head and body can be an expression of distinctiveness and elitism. The veil (*jilbab*) alone, however, is no longer exclusively a signal of extraordinary piety, as it is by now worn by the majority of the female population, at least in urban areas. Women who want to present themselves as members of a religious *avant-garde* have to go a step further and veil their face as well. The Indonesian anthropologist Eva Fahrun Nisa has done fieldwork among the so-called *cadari*, women who wear face veils (Nisa 2012). In their conversations with the anthropologist, the women stress their efforts to grasp 'true Islam'. Nisa goes on to explain that once truths have been gained, they need to be habitually embodied, not least by covering the face in a manner considered appropriate. Only in that way can they express perfect feminine purity.

One might expect that the female Islamists welcome the popularisation of complete veiling by movies such as *Ayat-ayat cinta*. According to Nisa, however, this is not the case. The *cadari* categorically reject entertainment movies; above all, they object to the portrayal of the *cadari* as a seductive woman as exemplified by Aisha in *Ayat-ayat Cinta*. Their critical stance extends to popular literature which also increasingly focuses on beautiful *cadari*. Nisa argues that *cadari* view this popularisation as a 'travesty of their belief system' (Nisa 2012:149).

Cultural Islamisation involves a voluntary decision by Muslims who opt for a religious life that suits their own wishes. The Islamisation of law, in contrast, transcends the sphere of the voluntary and becomes an oppressive system, while it is also immediately linked to cultural transformation. The best-known example of such a patriarchal Islamisation of law can be observed in Aceh (see Großmann, this volume), where the complete system of justice is being adapted to Islamic concepts; this process set in a couple of years ago.[7] Women are now obliged to veil themselves and to cover their bodies. Their scope of action is increasingly curtailed, and the sexist assaults by the sharia police (Wilayatul Hisbah or WH) keep causing outrage.[8] Generally, the new jurisdiction does not encourage women to report harassments to

local authorities and increases insecurity for them.[9]

In other regions of Indonesia, local regulations have been issued ostensibly instantiating Islamic legal concepts, the so-called *peraturan daerah syariah*, which are usually referred to by the abbreviated term *perda syariah*. According to Bush (2008: 176), 45 per cent of these rules pertain to the moral demeanour of the citizens; 33 per cent out of the remaining 55 per cent are clothing regulations for various groups of the population. In some districts of South Sulawesi, Islamic covering is also mandatory for non-Muslims. In West Sumatra, the home region of the matrilineal Minangkabau, women are by now prohibited from leaving the house after nightfall without being accompanied by a male relative (Candraningrum 2006; Parsons and Mietzner 2009).

Interestingly, it was not always members of Islamist parties who became active in Islamising the legal system. In many cases such changes were initiated by mayors or district chiefs who were Social Democrats or members of the secular Golkar Party (Hwang 2013:91). Hwang, following Geertz' classification of Javanese Muslims into devout *santri*, syncretistic *abangan*, and traditional *priyayi*, calls this phenomenon a '*santri*-isation of Indonesian politics' (Hwang 2013:96). She points out that *perda syariah* were primarily decreed in regions that were Islamist core regions in the past: Aceh, West Java, and South Sulawesi. According to Hwang, the population in the regions of the former Darul Islam is assumed to be so pious that even secular politicians expected to profit from the successive introduction of Islamic law. The Islamisation of politics and society has progressed most strongly in these regions.

Rather than being the result of decentralisation, however, as has been stated by Salim, the entry of Islamist discourse into politics has a pronounced national component (Salim 2008: 175). This becomes apparent, for example, from the debate about an anti-pornography bill which was introduced in parliament by representatives of the Islamist Justice and Welfare Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) in 2004, and discussed in the Indonesian public for a long time. Conservative Muslims were of the opinion that fines or prison sentences should be imposed for kissing in public, wearing

bikinis, strapless t-shirts, traditional Javanese and Balinese women's garb, erotic literature, depictions of the nude or sparsely clothed human body in art and photography, as well as all movie scenes showing sexual acts. In addition, there was to be a ban on lifestyles that caused offence to Muslim guardians of public morals: the cohabitation of unmarried couples, homosexuality, and adultery. In 2008, the law in a slightly modified and hence 'defused' form was approved, and a first much-debated verdict was passed in 2011: a video aired on the internet, which showed him having sex with his girlfriend, was the doom of musician Nazriel Ariel Irham. He was sentenced to three and a half years in prison (*Jakarta Post*, 31 January, 2011).

Gender deviance

Given such developments, it is remarkable that forms of a sexually liberal culture, located beyond the Islamised mainstream, do still exist in Indonesia. These phenomena include the *campursari*, a musical show in which song and dance play an important role and the audience is involved in various ways. The music is a contemporary form that combines Javanese and Western elements and the dances performed range from modest movements that gently accompany the music to frivolous stage shows. Over the past years, *campursari* has undergone a further modernisation process, undergoing musical and performative changes. Modern instruments have been added to the repertoire and dancing is inspired by performances of international pop stars. Erotic stagings and graphic imitations of sexual intercourse enjoy particular popularity. Sparsely clothed dancers wearing very short skirts or hot pants turn their back to the audience and move their bottoms in circles, or perform thrusting hip movements while casting lascivious glances at the crowd. The performances take place not only in bars, but often also in public places, and are consumed by all kinds of spectators — youth of both sexes as well as families with children (Hardjana 2010). No one seems to take offence with this, and even the Islamist militias of the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI),[10] which usually tend to mobilise against events they consider un-Islamic or immoral, have so far not interfered in these explicit stagings of sexuality.

The musical genre *dangdut* has undergone a similar

transformation. From being a popular lower class entertainment genre, it became a sexualised modern spectacle. *Dangdut* is folk music combining Persian, Arab, Malay and Indian elements. The first president of the republic even elevated it to the status of Indonesian national music.[11] A more sophisticated type of *dangdut* was later used by Islamic performers to spread pious ideas. The *dangdut* of the poor segments of the population, however, was characterised by subtle innuendos rather than by piety. The female singers dressed like their role models in the international world of pop music and did their best to exude sex appeal. Every once in a while there was some discussion about the moral dimension of the dance performances, but such debates were usually short-lived. Then, however, a private television station aired the dance of a young woman named Inul Daratista in 2003. Her spectacular hip movements made her a celebrity overnight and *dangdut* sparked a national controversy. Prior to her big performance, Inul had been a village dancer hardly noticed by anyone. All of a sudden the media became aware of her. Her dance style and outfit were the subject of discussion and the question arose as to whether such performances posed a danger to public morals. The popular outrage reached its climax when Taufik Kiemas, the husband of the then-president Megawati Sukarnoputri, appeared in a TV show dancing at Inul's side. The male *dangdut* star Rhoma Irama contributed to the debate by stating that Inul's performances discredit the *dangdut*. Islamic clerics began to get excited over the 'pornographic performances' and called for an immediate stage ban. Politicians of non-Islamic parties argued against such drastic measures, and took sides with the discredited artist, not least because Inul's fans were important voters. The whole affair became a national political issue where religious and conservative-traditional values were invoked against the freedom of artistic expression. By now, however, the hysteria has completely ebbed down and no one talks about Inul anymore.

The virulently liberal face of Indonesian culture, despite Islamist zealotry, is also represented by the genre of female erotic literature. Called *sastra wangi* (fragrant literature) it caused an international sensation.[12] Writers such as Djenar Maesa Ayu, Ayu

Utami, Fira Basuki, Dewi Lestari, and Nova Riyanti Yusuf picked out incest, extramarital sex, and homosexuality as central themes. They were not afraid of giving drastic descriptions of sexuality and they played offensively with the breach of all social conventions (Hatley 1999; Listyowulan 2010). One of the most prominent examples is Ayu Utami's book *Saman*, of which more than one hundred thousand copies were sold in Indonesia. The novel is about the sexual adventures of three young women from good families, about split identities and the transgression of patriarchal moral ideas. Shakuntala, one of the protagonists, deflowers herself with a spoon and feeds the hymen to a dog. Later, she enters into a lesbian relationship in which she takes the male-connoted part. These are the scandal-provoking parts of the novel. It also has, however, another, political dimension which centres on the priest Saman. During a conflict, he takes sides with oppressed rubber farmers who are struggling against dispossession. He is denounced as their leader, arrested and tortured.

In Djenar Maesa Ayu's *Menjusuh Ayah* (Suckled by the Father), a woman recounts the sexual childhood experiences she had with older men, including her father. She states that as a baby she was not fed her mother's milk, but her father's semen. When she confronts her father with that story, he accuses her of lying and hits her with his belt. She insists, however, on her version of the past. The first-person narrator tells the reader that her father eventually refused to feed her any longer. Hence, she turned to his friends as a child. 'I liked the way they slowly pushed down my head and allowed me to suckle there for a long time' (Ayu 2008:95). When one of her father's friends penetrates her, she kills him: 'I am a woman, but I am not weaker than a man', she writes, 'because I have not suckled on mother's breast' (Ayu 2008:97).

The new erotic women's literature led to a controversial discussion in Indonesia. The term *sastra wangi* itself alludes to the public erotic self-staging of the women, which was eagerly picked up by the media. Many stories about the young writers opened with exact descriptions of their looks, mentioning the high heels, the strapless t-shirts, the long loose hair, or the fact that the audience smoked and consumed alcohol during the readings. Like the provocative titles and texts, the media stagings brought fast fame and high sales figures. On

the other hand, the women were accused of using sex as a marketing strategy. Not surprisingly, criticism of the taboo breaches came from the religious side, while secular-urban intellectuals mostly appreciated the new literary awakening. Saman won several awards, including a writing contest of the Jakarta Art Institute in 1997 and an award of the Jakarta Art Council (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta) for best novel in 1998. In 2000, Ayu Utami won the Claus Award in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, there has been some reserve on the part of literary scholars. Katrin Bandel criticises the unquestioned male perspective of the *sastra wangi* (Bandel 2006:115), Arnez and Dewojati find fault with the virulent phallocentrism (Arnez and Dewojati 2010).[13] Positive appraisal, however, prevails in the overall judgment. According to Arnez and Dewojati, the issue of whether sastra wangi can be called emancipatory is still controversial, but nevertheless 'it can be claimed that in modern Indonesian literature such an open discussion of sexuality and female desire has not taken place before, especially not in such an outspoken language' (Arnez and Dewojati 2010:20).

Third genders and modern gender activists

In Indonesia, we encounter a somewhat paradoxical situation where gender deviance is tolerated in many quarters while there is, at the same time, an increasingly repressive-patriarchal gender mainstream. This becomes particularly apparent in the issue of acceptance of queer lifestyles. After the end of the New Order period, the emerging liberalisation in the urban areas included that aspect as well. A group called Q-Munity has organised an annual queer film festival, the Q! Festival, in Jakarta since 2002 and activists join in public debates, trying to reduce prejudice and to put an end to discrimination. Within the women's rights network, Kartini, a training manual was developed to strengthen the position of non-heteronormative life models (Bhaiya und Wieringa 2007), and Siti Musdah Mulia proclaimed in the newspaper *Jakarta Globe* of 23 September 2009 that lesbian desire was created by God just like its heterosexual counterpart and hence must be accepted as natural. Until today, her statement triggers controversial discussions within Indonesia and beyond.

As could be expected, this unusual awakening was criticised by

Islamist hardliners as an adoption of Western decadence. Performance venues of the Q! Festival were repeatedly raided by 'goon squads' and in 2010 Surabaya became the site of an *éclat* that was even covered by the international media. It was sparked by plans of the Asian branch of the International Lesbian and Gay Association to hold an international conference in March of that year. There had been similar conventions before in Mumbai, Cebu and Chiang Mai. The organisers were eager to be as discrete as possible in order to avoid protests. There was to be no Gay Pride Parade, and the organisers planned to publish a press release only on the last day of the event. Due to an unlucky coincidence, however, the local media learned about the planned event in its run-up and there were quick reactions by Islamic organisations. Statements were issued by religious authorities, claiming that homosexuality is irreconcilable with both Indonesian culture and Islam. Such language immediately mobilised the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam) and the Indonesian fraction of Hizb-ut Tahrir[14] to take militant action against the organisers. As a result, the local authorities prohibited the conference and those participants who had already arrived were besieged at their hotels by the mob until they were brought to safety under police protection (Vacano 2010).

These incidents appear to be at odds with the supposedly tolerant attitude towards gender variances in Indonesia as described by anthropologists such as Boellstorff (2005), Peletz (2009), Davis (2010) and Blackwood (2010). These scholars base their claims on the existence of so-called third and fourth genders rooted in local social orders. An often-cited example of this are the Bugis of South Sulawesi who use five gender terms: besides women and men, there are *calalai* (masculine women), *calabai* (feminine men), and *bissu* (ritual experts and shamans who are ambiguous in terms of gender). The *bissu* have always particularly attracted the attention of anthropologists, who interpreted them as a culturally-accepted variant of non-binary gender. In the Bugis system of gender categories, they are classified as *calabai*, that is, individuals with a male body and a feminine or ambivalent habitus. They are viewed as embodying a pre-Islamic, double-gendered Supreme Being which is attributed the ability to mediate between humans and spirits; hence, they act as healers and shamans. There is

some debate, however, among anthropologists about whether the existence of this phenomenon can actually be interpreted as an indicator of tolerance and liberalism. Birgit Röttger-Rössler, who has done fieldwork among the Bugis, is sceptical, and even objects to applying the term 'third gender'. According to her, *calabai* are 'institutionalised, socially-accepted variants or subcategories of the male gender' (Röttger-Rössler 2009:287, translation mine). She adds that these types of transgenderism can by no means be interpreted as a negation of heteronormative gender concepts. The reverse is true: they reinforce the latter. As Röttger-Rössler sees it, the order legitimated by this exception is not only 'defined clearly and rigidly'(Röttger-Rössler 2009:287–8), but also asymmetrical, putting women at a disadvantage.

On top if this, the mere existence of a local 'third gender' does not allow the conclusion that local communities are generally characterised by a liberal attitude towards gender issues. This becomes particularly evident when modern phenomena of transgression, which are usually referred to as queer, meet local forms of deviance. The mobilisation of queer activists in Indonesia and the resulting Islamic counteroffensive is a well-documented example of this.

The same applies to shifts in local gender structures that were triggered by the general climate of open-mindedness after the end of the New Order. In the year when the conference in Surabaya was wrecked by conservative moral ideas, there was also a remarkable public debate on local Indonesian transgenders who are subsumed by the collective term of *waria*.[15] The debate was sparked by a 'Miss Aceh Transsexual' beauty pageant held in February 2010. Many people in Aceh have ambivalent and contradictory attitudes towards *waria*. On the one hand, they view the latter's existence as a disgrace for the community; on the other hand, *waria* are tolerated half-heartedly, not least because men secretly relish their sexual services. *Waria* often use their beauty parlours and hairdressing salons as brothels and engage in prostitution in the semi-clandestine red light district of the capital Banda Aceh. It is obvious that neither Aceh society nor the police intend to actually eliminate this option for extramarital sex, which is punishable under current legislation. Representatives of the authorities,

however, take advantage of the *waria*'s extralegal status and arbitrary arrests as well as rape in police custody are common. Everyday discrimination, humiliation, and assaults by the sharia police are rampant. In the wake of the devastating tsunami in 2004, which was interpreted by Islamic clerics as a warning to disobedient believers, *waria* were repeatedly expelled from their homes and businesses because their neighbours feared that their presence might evoke the wrath of God to descend upon them again.

In Indonesia, both the human rights and the Qur'an and Sunna are invoked in the discussion about whether or not the existence of *waria* is legitimate. In Aceh, more importance is attached to the religious narratives of justification, however, than to secular reasoning, because Islam is viewed as the measure of all things. In the end, phenomena that are incompatible with the commandments of Allah will not gain acceptance. The experts disagree, however, about what is compatible with Islam, particularly if *waria* make their appearance in modern contexts. The pageant mentioned above, where they performed in burlesque costumes, sparked a pan-Indonesian controversy which dominated the headlines of the local and national press for several days. Well-known politicians, activists, and Islamic clerics piped up to express their opinion. The majority of the religious contributions condemned *waria* as being immoral and sinners, while secular commentators came to their defence, referring to minority rights.

I had the opportunity to discuss that issue in March 2010 with students at the State Islamic University (Universitas Islam Negeri, UIN) in Yogyakarta and at the Gadjah Mada University (UGM) which is also located in Yogyakarta. The Islamic students, in particular, engaged in a lively debate about whether the Qur'an makes a clear statement about the matter and what the prophet Muhammad said about it. This was their sole criterion for tolerating or condemning *waria*. On the personal level, the subject did not trigger any emotions in them; it was a purely matter-of-fact discussion without any recourse to moral categories. My colleague Sahiron Syamsuddin, a respected Islamic scholar with whom I held the event, eventually made an important point. He said that three gender categories were already

known in Muhammad's time: men, women, and *khunta* — transgenders who resembled the *waria*. He went on to explain that the third gender had fallen into oblivion due to subsequent patriarchal developments. This was acceptable to the students. Sahiron's reasoning is typical of so-called 'progressive' Muslims who attempt to substantiate liberal ideas with little-known data from the Islamic past or new interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunna.

As becomes apparent from the abovementioned examples, upon closer examination, the much-cited Indonesian open-mindedness with regard to gender variances turns out to be a restrictive straightjacket into which some phenomena can be fitted, while others cannot. Transgender individuals are tolerated and may even hold respected positions, provided that they stay within narrow, strictly-defined social confines or already-accepted cultural constructs. Above all, they are expected to be inconspicuous. As long as a beauty pageant is held in a village, whether or not the event is made into a scandal depends on the social relations between the individual actors. At the national level, it is not possible to rely on such local relations. Other narratives of justification then take effect, particularly narratives backed by Islam. It appears that only a minority of the Indonesian Muslims subscribe to progressive interpretations of the Qur'an and the Islamic traditions, and my colleague Syamsuddin would certainly have had a hard time if rhetorically-versed Islamists had participated in the discussion. According to a study conducted in 2013 by the Pew Research Center, 93 per cent of all Indonesians disapprove of homosexuality. Thus, in terms of tolerance, the country is behind Malaysia (86 per cent) and Pakistan (87 per cent) and at the same level as Palestine. As has been noted by Jamison Liang, homophobia is on the rise (Liang 2010). This development is due not only to the strength gained by a conservative, partly militant Islam, but also to the fact that by now there is a public debate on the issue of gender deviance.

Conclusion

The most recent developments in Indonesia show that democratisation, liberalisation and Islamisation may exist at the same time and that there may even be a causal relationship and mutual

dependency between them. The urban centres, where erotic women's literature is consumed and queer parties are held, are also the main site of the Islamist youth who loathe nothing more than the naked skin of the secularised *avant-garde* and the emancipative lifestyles of the liberal activists. They confront these phenomena with their own moral discourse and invent Islamic virtues of female submissiveness and modesty. Unlike the liberal activists, however, the Islamists are struggling for hegemony, for the implementation of an Islamist gender order where it is not up to the individual woman to either wear a mini skirt and loose hair or completely cover herself. In the opinion of Islamist actors, the wellbeing of the nation is at stake if no check is put on the liberal lifestyles, which are condemned as 'Western'. Despite many nationalist references, however, the Islamist collective identity is by no means limited to the nation. Indonesia is viewed as part of the global Muslim community, the *ummah*, and the local constructions of Islamic community resemble those that are currently becoming popular in other countries. This development is not so much a process of Arabisation, as is often claimed by liberal Indonesian intellectuals, but rather a phenomenon of internationalisation. It collides with an international secular and liberal Islamic movement which is committed to gender equality, the acceptance of queer lifestyles, and social pluralism. Belonging in Indonesia today is not restricted to a local or national reference framework. Additionally, actors of various political or religious orientations point to national contexts and global norms and values simultaneously. This makes mutual understanding between followers of contradicting ideologies difficult. In many countries such as Turkey, Tunisia or Egypt the society is deeply divided between supporters of a secular or liberal modernity and adherents of an Islamic-oriented future. For Indonesia it is still an open question who will gain the upper hand in the new 'clash of cultures'. The outcome of the last presidential elections has shown that society is deeply divided over the question of whether the Indonesian nation should be liberal-pluralist or authoritarian-Islamist.

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Notes

1. An Acehnese group, invoking the name of an Acehnese patriot.
2. The Womens' Ministry, established in 1975 in response to the UN agenda for women's policy was renamed the Ministry of Women's Empowerment in the heady day following the fall of Suharto. See Parawansa 2002.
3. http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=ID.
4. Aliansi Laki-Laki was founded in 2009 by a group of men who intended to stand up against violence against women.
5. The Government passed a law on child protection (Perlindungan Anak) and raised the minimal marrigae age to 18 years, but did not change the marriage law acoordingly.
6. The fatwa had been issues during the 32nd NU Congress in Makassar 2010.
7. On the possibilities of women's rights organisations to exert influence, see Großmann 2011.
8. In 2010, Human Rights Watch published a study that dealt exclusively with human rights violations committed by the police in Aceh. The assaults included so-called 'virginity tests'.
9. For example, in May 2014 eight men raped a 25-year old widow in her house where she was with her boyfriend. When the case was reported to the authorities, the first thing that happened was that the woman and her boyfriend were sentenced to whipping. See CBS News of 7 May 2014: http://www.cbsnews.com/news/gang-raped-indonesia-woman-may-be-caned-for-violating-islamic-law/, accessed 9 September 2014.
10. FPI was founded in 1998 by Habib Muhammad Rizieq Syihab with the goal of turning Indonesia into an Islamic state. The group is responsible for many acts of violence against religious minorities. And obviously receives backing from influencial politicians, police and military.
11. Sukarno pursued a strictly anti-Western course in politics and culture. He banned Western music, including the very popular Beatles, and promoted local interpreters instead.
12. Bodden and Hellwig (2007) introduce a series of articles on this new literature.
13. In their review of *Saman*, the two authors draw on theories of Luce Irigaray and Helène Cixoux.
14. Hizbut Tahrir is a pan-Islamic organisation, founded in 1953 by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani in Jerusalem and has spread since then to more than 40 countries. Its members are striving for an global Islamic caliphate and the introduction of sharia law. The Indonesian branch started in 1980 as a result of missionary activities at universities. See also Amrullah this volume.

15. The term *waria* is mainly used in the media, but sometimes also in the local contexts as an alternative to the respective local terms. It is derived form the words *wanita* (woman) and *pria* (man).

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