

TERJE TOOMISTU

Embodied lives, imagined reaches:  
Gendered subjectivity and aspirations  
for belonging among waria in Indonesia





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The council of the Institute of Cultural Research and Fine Arts has, on October 16, 2019 accepted this dissertation to be defended for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnology.

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## INTRODUCTION

On a Saturday night in Jayapura, the capital city of the Indonesian easternmost province of Papua, formerly known as Hollandia, some waria and young men hang out in a salon that Natali<sup>1</sup> established a few months ago. They shut down the shades of the windows, close the door and open a bottle of Jenever, a Dutch gin obtained with caution from an underground seller. We all nod our heads in time with the juicy bass beat of the music and try to get the air moving with the support of a fan or a piece of paper. It quickly becomes unbearably hot behind the closed doors, but for the sake of the harmonious relationships with the neighbourhood it is better not to risk drinking in public.

The long-awaited relief arrives with the tropical breeze when we finally open the doors. Natali dances in front of mirrors. She puts on a wig, freshens her lipstick and we all jump on our motorbikes heading downtown for a night out in Kali Acay, the street where a number of waria gather every night for socializing and transactional sex.

Apart from Natali, Putriani and Lenita, who are indigenous Papuans, everyone else I meet that night comes from other regions of Indonesia. There is a waria who moved here only a couple of months ago from North Sulawesi. Another from Makassar arrived two years ago. She tells me that she usually does not ask for money from cute young men. A waria from East Java has been here for ten years. She runs her own salon and lives together with her boyfriend *seperti istri suami*, like a husband and wife. She comes here just to hang out with friends.

The night ends with Lenita crying on my shoulder. The cute young man she had cuddled so passionately has left her in tears for another woman.

### 1. Doing anthropology of gender and sexuality in Indonesia

Stretching over 5,000 kilometres and spread over 17,000 islands, the archipelagic nation of Indonesia includes hundreds of ethnicities and languages within its borders, all with a shared history of Dutch colonialism. Natali's salon was located in the easternmost Indonesian city of Jayapura, close to the border of Papua New Guinea, almost 3,700 kilometres away from the capital Jakarta on the island of Java. Despite its distance from Java, the so-called 'cultural heart' of Indonesia, that night with Natali, Putriani and Lenita was something that might equally happen in a very similar vein in any larger city across Indonesia: after the daily work in a beauty salon (*salon kecantikan*), waria friends gather, prepare their make-up and attire – the activities they call *dandan*, or its waria

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<sup>1</sup> All the names of my research participants are pseudonyms, except for some of the public activist figures, whose work and commitment deserve credit.

slang version *déndong* – , get in the mood with chatter, music and drinks, and head out to a specific location in the city that is known for the presence of waria and for the exchange of their sexual services for money.

Although there are many different life stories among waria, and these differences should not be overlooked, street nightlife is one of the definite sites of waria visibility across the major cities of Indonesia. It is also a lifestyle pattern that threads together and moves around a large number of waria. For many young individuals trying to make sense of themselves, the street nightlife opens doors to *dunia waria*, the perceived social and imaginary ‘world of waria’. It also caters to their intimate encounters with men.

In broad strokes, the Saturday night with Natali, Lenita and their friends in Jayapura illustrates much of what is at stake in this study about Indonesian waria – subjects who are male-bodied, but who feel like women and who often describe themselves through the specific distinction between their male body and the soul (*jiwa*) or heart of a woman (*hati perempuan*). The latter is said to determine their wish to wear women’s clothes and make-up, at least on a part-time basis, and their desire for men they see as *laki-laki normal* – the men who would normally desire women. A derivation of the Indonesian words *wanita* (woman) and *pria* (man), the term *waria* was introduced and officially announced by president Suharto only at the end of the 1970s. Historically older terms to reflect the subjects of my research are *banci* and its variation in waria slang *béncong*. Both of them bear derogatory connotations today, while the term waria is widely used in local, national and international contexts.



**Figure 1.** Natali dancing in her salon. Photograph by the author, 2012.

Even though things do not appear exactly the same for waria in the Indonesian part of the island of New Guinea (historically also known as Irian Jaya or West Papua, hereafter Papua) when compared to the tensely populated cities of Java with their more nuanced waria community traditions and broader access to information and healthcare, how is it that in the most faraway city on the borders of Indonesia one can find an intelligible sense of *dunia waria*? The subjects of my research, whether in Java, Sulawesi or Papua, are well aware that there are subjects similar to them who associate themselves with the category of waria across Indonesia. They are also aware there are similar subjects in Thailand and elsewhere in the world, and they are curious to learn how waria are doing in Estonia, my country of origin. Some of them associate themselves closely with the internationally circulating term ‘transgender’. Although the term waria is specific to Indonesia, and waria in their public claims aspire first and foremost to national recognition, their assumption of the existence of trans subject positions elsewhere in the world emphasises their participation in the transnational circulation of knowledge. But it also speaks about their sense of belonging to the world, to humankind, as they feel they are not alone with their experience of a perceived distinction between the physical body and the inner sense of gender, which waria mostly refer to as *jiwa*, the soul.

The waria subject position has a complex yet inevitable relationship with the Indonesian nation, which is a modern and postcolonial invention, an imagined community moulded by Dutch colonialism. Benedict Anderson’s idea of nation as an ‘imagined community’ ([1983]2006) that is inherently constructed has gained wide prominence amongst the anthropologists studying Southeast Asia. Following Steedly (1999, p. 436), these endeavours are conceptually embedded in the tradition of the colonial scholarship that distinguished between the ‘great’ and the ‘little’ traditions. In the postcolonial context, this distinction was translated into a separation between the state societies, the urban ‘cultures’ composed of both national and transnational elements, and the local indigenous communities that are marginal to the modern nation states. Against the backdrop of this division, the waria subject position has emerged as part of the national culture, for it is not tied to any specific regional or ethnic tradition and it is predominantly an urban phenomenon. Subsequently, the elements of *dunia waria* have also spread across the urban archipelago, stretching from Jakarta to Medan to Jayapura.

While waria are a visible group of people across the urban Indonesia, they rarely share an equal amount of respect and access to resources as the majority of society. The waria struggle for national recognition has been an ongoing, uphill struggle, as the dominant state discourses marginalise and repress practices outside the reproductive societal role by aiming to cultivate a moral, pious subject in line with the country’s biopolitical endeavours. After ruling the country for over 30 years, President Suharto resigned in 1998, marking the Indonesian turn towards democracy – the era that is known as *Reformasi*. Paradoxically, the reforms towards a more democratic governance with its greater degree of freedom of speech brought with it a series of religiously motivated, often violent actions carried out by Islamic fundamentalists against gender and

sexuality minorities. In the context of these circumstances, male to male desire, which is often the rubric under which men-waria relationships are seen, has been increasingly rendered as a threat to the nation (Boellstorff, 2004b). Although waria have been stigmatized since their emergence as part of the national imaginary (Hegarty, 2017b), the major stigmas currently on display besides the ‘threat to the nation’ perceive waria and other subjects within the LGBT spectrum as a deviation from the course of nature and as something in contradiction with religion and morality (Bahaya Akut Persekusi LGBT, 2018, p. 11–18). Indonesia is indeed home to the largest Muslim population in the world, but throughout recent decades Indonesian Islam has been characterized as relatively moderate and receptive to diversity. However, marked by the recent major wave of condemning discourse against gender and sexuality minorities that have occurred since early 2016, religion and moral values are often used as a justification for discriminatory treatment of the LGBT population.

Most waria that I have spoken to throughout the years of my research recount ambiguous or confusing sentiments regarding their gender and sexuality since early childhood. However, in the process of beginning to identify as a waria, there is a great deal of sociality involved, including desire, which cannot be easily separated from the waria sense of gender. Encountering waria nightlife is a turning point in the lives of many waria, who then begin to understand their differing sentiments concerning their gender. “This is my world!” stated Dewi, born in 1970 in Ambon, close to Papua, when describing the process of discovering waria street nightlife and her own self through this experience during her student years in Bandung, West Java. Besides the fact that many waria are economically dependent on sex work, desire and attraction as well as sociality and gendered self-expression are significant reasons why so many waria – mostly at a younger age – spend their nights at the specific street locations in the night-time cityscape where *dunia waria* unfolds. *Malam minggu*, or Saturday night, when Natali, Putriani and Lenita set out as described in the opening paragraph is always the most crowded, bringing together a number of waria whose reasons for gathering go far beyond money or sex.

Many waria have found other people who understand and encourage them precisely in the context of street nightlife. Here they discover more pleasurable and joyful ways of being and expressing themselves. They find men who see them attractive. Furthermore, with their gendered performance at these nightlife locations waria exchange their abject status with the all-encompassing potential of the metropolis, which links well with the Indonesian idea of progress (*maju*). Dewi spent the next decade travelling between the cities of Jakarta, Surabaya, Batam, Jambi and Lampung, encountering the familiar *dunia waria* everywhere she went and surviving mostly on sex work. While the lifestyle associated with nightlife and sex work may account for one’s personal agency, first and foremost by providing possibilities to express one’s subjectivity, to experience self-affirmation and a sense of communal belonging as well as to earn the necessary income, it is nevertheless a site of severe vulnerabilities. Sex work puts waria at risk of physical abuse, increased stigma, and sexually transmitted diseases, with

currently 24.8% of waria living with HIV (Indonesia IBBS, 2015). Many waria on the migrational routes lack ID-cards, which may be used as an excuse for their detention by municipal police or prevent their access to public services. Dewi was diagnosed with HIV in 2006, having her weight drop as low as 28 kilograms. She survived, but many of her friends did not. Hence, the national and transnational flows and ideas accumulate on the bodies of waria, which can at once give some sense of empowerment, yet also endanger the subject with further marginalization. The ideals of progress and development that waria often envision in the travelling lifestyle and metropolitan imaginaries lived out in the street nightlife may fail starkly upon encountering HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases, when becoming a victim of organized raids or spontaneous hate crimes, when being scorned by family or neighbours for the means by which you earn your income, or when realizing your declining value at the sex work markets as you grow older. The stigma associated with street sex work, sexualized bodies and non-heteronormative sex further poses limitations for the waria struggle for national belonging.

Against the backdrop of the marginal and vulnerable position of waria, as well as the increasingly unsettling currents in the Indonesian public sphere that indicate the continuous politicisation of sexuality and the enforcement of pious subjectivities, the concern for waria belonging, to the nation or otherwise, becomes more crucial than ever before. Waria often go through geographic migration in which they sever relationships with their immediate families. While escaping judgemental or violent conditions at their homes or villages and seeking self-realization, acceptance and anonymity in larger urban centres, they nevertheless find themselves in need of negotiating their identities against stigma, discrimination and violence. In these circumstances, longing to belong is a widely shared sentiment among waria. Waria emphasise aspiration for recognition in their daily lives and at public performances alike. “*Waria juga manusia*” (waria are also human) is a call one may often hear among waria as they state their claim for basic human recognition, expressing a simple wish to be seen as belonging to humankind, to be accepted (*terima*) by their communities and by society at large as waria.

With regard to Indonesian *gay* and *lesbi* subjectivities (Boellstorff, 2005; 2006; 2007) as well as waria (Boellstorff, 2004a; 2007), Tom Boellstorff has described how they all desire for national belonging and thus invoke nation in their performative practice. The claims for national belonging often emanate from the idea of contributing to society with ‘good deeds’ (*prestasi*) (Boellstorff, 2007, p. 105), evoking the performative model of citizenship. While in the discourse of recognition, street sex work is something that waria usually shy away from, salon work, on the contrary, is seen as highlighting waria talent. The same applies to waria performances, including their enactments of beauty – their practice of *déndong*.

Throughout this thesis I constantly return to the significance of waria desire for a sense of belonging, which is enacted on bodies and through performative practices in response to their social and spatial exclusion. Following and

contributing to the insights of the previous extended ethnographic work on waria by Boellstorff (2004a; 2007), notably on waria national belonging, and Benjamin Hegarty (2017b; 2018) with regard to waria performing ‘national glamour’, I develop a framework to consider the embodied notions of belonging. An aspiration for belonging unfolds within the productive tension between embodiment and imagination, in which the kind of ‘homing desire’ (Brah, 1996) is enacted in bodily practice. While belonging can be understood as a feeling of being accepted in a community within one’s phenomenological immediacy, it also encapsulates a sense of participation in the envisioned cartographies and recognition at the level of an ‘imagined community’ such as the nation (Anderson, [1983]2006). At times, the sense of belonging is strived for through the practices of beauty, at others by reaching out towards the imaginary, by engaging with the affective promises of belonging on the national and global scale. Subsequently, the enactments that strive towards participation in the imagined categories and cartographies often hold strategic significance by providing the means to claim belonging to the locally surrounding communities. In other words, the symbolic resources that the performative practice draws from are meaningfully and strategically put into use locally. In order to strive for belonging at the local communal scale, waria continuously seek a sense of belonging at the national and transnational scale. On the night described in the story from my fieldwork at the beginning of this thesis, Natali joyfully introduced me to a friend of hers who was passing by the salon: “*Ini Cece dari Estonia, ibu-kota Amerika*”, which reads as Cece (my nickname) from Estonia, the capital city of America. The friend nods his heads with the sense of recognition – who wouldn’t know America?! ‘America’ in Natali’s gesture is one of the ways in which waria draw from global cultural resources, rendering them meaningful, and in a way this serves their access to power. Nobody knows where Estonia is, but everybody knows America. Despite my attempts to clarify my country of origin, I was tagged with a strategic label, since a foreigner from America hanging out in Natali’s salon is certainly worthy of mention.

In their gendered comportments, too, waria draw from the cultural resources that are rendered meaningful in their given context. To claim belonging through performative practice, the performance needs to be situated meaningfully within an audience – the group to which one aspires to belong, whether real or imagined. The specific forms of enactments that evoke legible renderings – thus holding the capacity to enforce the sense of belonging – are determined by the regional specifics of colonial, racialized, and modernist histories, their transnational influences, and available imagined communities. Especially evident against the background of the recent societal change towards urbanisation and development in Papua, elements seen as ‘modern’ prove to be fruitful. In the Papuan socioeconomic context, waria act as agents of cultural change drawing from contextually conditioned symbolic resources in their practices of beauty, but also using their skills and expertise in beautification services. The more glamorous enactments of beauty that affectively engage with the structuring ideals of femininity or beauty and are often displayed in the nightlife context as spectacular

femininities (Ochoa, 2014) lift waria experience beyond the material conditions that normally envelop them.

The dissertation asserts that bodily forms and transformations hold significant capacity to provide or withdraw access to certain categories of belonging. With its ethnographies of waria in Papua, one of the study's major contributions is to illuminate how the structural and often intersectional conditions shape the embodied notions necessary for the sense of belonging. Indigenous Papuans of Melanesian origin have relatively darker skin and curly hair compared to the majority of Indonesians. The settler population in the Papuan cities often depict the indigenous people as backward (*terbelakang*) (see also Butt & Munro, 2007). This makes the re-imagined uses of certain spaces and the enactments of beauty with a prospective sense of belonging much harder to achieve for indigenous Papuan waria, who stand further away from the dominant Indonesian beauty ideal of fair skin and straight hair (see Saraswati, 2010; 2013; Pausacker, 2015). The comparative perspective of waria in Java and Papua allows space to the productive engagements with waria as an Indonesian category. In this regard, my approach responds to the critique by Boellstorff (2002), who proposed the term 'ethnolocality' to address the unproblematic spatial assumption of 'ethnicity' and 'locality' as being the same thing – such as Java, Bali, Aceh, etc. – and presumably making a proper subject of anthropological enquiry, the one of the 'native's point of view'. Instead, my study demonstrates that the regional (e.g. Papua), national (Indonesia) and transnational spatial scales involved in how people define themselves and articulate their sense of belonging may be variously present at different times, yet they are equally important, without the ontological priority of any one of those scales.



**Figure 2.** Map of Indonesia showing the locations of the cities of my primary field research: Yogyakarta and Surabaya on the island of Java, and Sorong and Jayapura on Western New Guinea (Papua).



Not long ago Dédé Oetomo (2000) stressed the severely understudied status of waria in the Indonesian scholarship of gender and sexuality. Although there are now a few major contributions to the ethnographies of waria (e.g. Boellstorff, 2007; Hegarty, 2017b) and a couple of other scholars who have recently worked with waria (e.g. Thajib, 2018; Tidey, 2019), my accounts, especially on waria sexual labour and the waria population in Papua, nevertheless provide a novel contribution to that scholarship. Drawing on the ethnographic material about waria in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Indonesia, this thesis contributes to the contemporary debates about (trans)gender, sexuality, and embodiment. It is primarily concerned with the notions of gendered subjectivity and belonging; these are explored in relation to factors such as performativity, desire, and affect, as well as to various discursive and historical contexts such as the nation, religion, transnational dynamics, colonial legacy, and modernity, in order to demonstrate the roles of these in forging gendered positions and their potential in opening up (or closing down) arenas of belonging. Throughout the pages that follow and the articles that make up this thesis I maintain that gendered subjectivity is fostered and enacted within continuous intersubjective relations with various others, both intimate and nearby, but also imagined others such as structuring ideals and imagined communities like nation and *dunia waria*.

Drawing primarily on my ethnographic field research on the island of Java and in the region of Papua – the first seen as dominating Indonesia culturally, economically and politically; the second as the culturally most distant region in Indonesia – I intend to grasp the influence of the national, religious, and transnational discourses in the ‘making’ of gendered subjects. The principal aims of this study are to elaborate on the following areas: waria gendered subjectivity within the intersubjective continuum with various others, both human others as well as the structuring ideals and imagined communities; the spatial dynamics on the axes of abjection and agency in the lives of waria; the formulation of the productive and transformative spatialities and the ways these forge subjectivities; and the strategies of belonging that waria enact on the national and communal scales. Following these contributions, a framework to consider belonging is subsequently developed.

In each of the articles that make up this thesis these concerns are explored to varying degrees. The first article (Article I) focuses on the spatial dynamics in waria lives. It elaborates on the forms of abjection waria face, their frequent migration, and the ways waria in return ‘undo’ their spatial abjection by actively enforcing spaces of self-expression, pleasure, community, material gain, and envisioned mobility at the national and transnational scales. The idea that seemingly abject spaces may have agentic qualities is further developed in the next article (Article II), which deals solely with waria nightlife, pluralizing the understandings of waria sex work and, while doing this, highlighting the notion of desire in the waria conception of gender. Waria migration and their role in the beautification business is explored in Article III, which focuses on the *dunia waria* in Papuan coastal cities that has unfolded alongside the extensive migration, economic developments and cultural assimilation of the Papuan region into

the Indonesian state. In these settings, waria draw on contextually valid symbolic resources in their practices of beauty, which in turn highlight the strategies of belonging that waria enact.

The following introduction offers some overarching insights into the methodologies used in this study, the literature the thesis draws from and is in dialogue with, and the theoretical debates in which it intervenes. It also elaborates further on the empirical context and the ethnography that the dissertation builds on. The various theoretical frameworks that I have engaged with are discussed side by side with the empirical material throughout the introduction, while Chapter 3.1 provides the nexus of the dissertation's theoretical contribution. The first chapter of the introduction deals mostly with the study's methodological concerns and approaches. The thesis focuses on one hand on the phenomenological experiences of waria, their lived lives and their narrations and conceptualizations of their lives drawing on the extensive ethnographic fieldwork. At the same time, I also draw sufficiently from the more macro-level socio-political and historical analyses of the structures that influence waria lives. The second chapter introduces the main study subject by giving an overview of the waria subject position in Indonesian society, from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The third and the fourth chapters provide the core analyses of the dissertation, driven foremost by my own ethnographic data. The first section of the third chapter (Chapter 3.1) expands on the theoretical approaches to gendered subjectivity that I have found beneficial in describing waria subjectivities and their embodied notions of belonging. This is followed by ethnographic elaborations on becoming waria and on the notion of *dunia waria*. The fourth and the last chapter weaves the thesis together by outlining the framework for considering the embodied ways of communal belonging.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to make a few remarks on the language used in this dissertation. Throughout the thesis I refer to the subjects of my research by using the Indonesian term *waria* and allow its specificity to emerge from the text. Although I do not neglect other possible formulations such as male femininity (Hegarty, 2017b), in view of a need for a short, rough translation, I refer to waria as transgender women. I regard this as respectful, given the widely shared articulation by waria of experiencing a sense of gender as of woman, which they commonly describe as the soul of a woman (*jiwa perempuan*), their wish to be seen as feminine-identified and to be addressed by titles associated with women in Indonesia, e.g. their preference for the widely used Javanese title *Mbak* for miss or *Ibu*, the title of standard Indonesian for Mrs. For similar reasons, I depart from framing waria as 'male transvestites', as in some of the earlier ethnographies, such as Boellstorff (2004a; 2005; 2007). Waria have been also framed as a 'third gender' (Oetomo, 2000), similar to other accounts on gender variant people across cultures in some works in anthropology (e.g. Herdt, 1996). I am reluctant to use this term for its inherent colonial gaze and romanticizing feature (see also the critique by Morgan & Towle, 2002), but also for its numerical meaning, which, as noted by Alexeyeff

and Besnier (2014, p. 13), rests in the illusion that by adding a third category one would somehow surpass the limitations of the gender binary.

Indonesian language does not distinguish pronouns based on one's gender, but considering that waria prefer to be approached as *Ibu* or *Mbak*, I have referred to them using the pronouns of she and her. I find this approach respectful considering their socially performed gender. Having preferred this position in my writings, I do not necessarily oppose other possible formulations. For example, Sharyn Graham Davies (2010) uses gender neutral pronouns of s/he and hir, while Evelyn Blackwood (2010) settled for s/he and h/er for both tomboi and waria subjectivities.

In the following sections of the first chapter of the introduction, I begin by outlining briefly my relationship to the study subject by describing how I came to this topic of research to begin with through working on an independent documentary film project. The next two sections help to position the study in relation with the wider fields of intellectual enquiries. In Chapter 1.2, I outline the study's contribution to some of the major discussions and developments that have emerged at the juncture of the fields of transgender studies and anthropology. Then in Chapter 1.3, I explain my general methodological standpoints in relation to feminist anthropology. With Chapter 1.4, I return to the empirical context, describing the study site. In the final section of this chapter, I reflect upon my fieldwork with waria, elaborating on the ethnographic method and the researcher's reflexivity.

### **1.1. Discovering waria through a documentary film project**

This work begun as 'an accidental anthropology', to paraphrase Jackson (2006), for I did not go to Indonesia with a plan to study waria. Yet I discovered myself in the middle of the initial research for this study before I even planned pursuing a PhD. In 2010, as I was coming close to finishing my master's studies in both Ethnology and Communication Studies at the University of Tartu, I took a year off to go to Indonesia to study the Indonesian language. A Darmasiswa scholarship provided me a studentship at one of the universities in Yogyakarta, a visa for a year and a modest bursary. I wanted to pursue the dream life of an anthropology student, learning about everything that fascinated me about the cultural puzzle of Indonesia and sharing my experiences in an online blog. On the second day after my arrival, I noticed a couple of ladies walking with outlandish gaits and extraordinary outfits on the streets of Yogyakarta. On my first class of *bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language), we studied the words *wanita* and *pria*, woman and man. When I then asked about possible other formulations, the teacher smiled and added: "Oh yes, we have also *waria*." I still remember my impression of the sound of this word, and at that very moment the vision of Indonesia saturated by Islamic moral and rigid gender binary fractioned in front of my eyes. At that time in Estonia, we did not even have a word for people within the transgender spectrum, let alone a community that people

were aware of. Words make the world, I was thinking in the fashion of Michel Foucault (2001[1970]) and Judith Butler (1993), so the fact that here such a word exists means that there is a social category. Words are never simply descriptive, but they are also performative and hence productive. Soon I heard from my newly made local friends that if I wanted to meet waria, I could see them in front of Bank Indonesia every night. And so I did.

I had travelled to Indonesia together with a friend of mine Kiwa, who shared my interest in Indonesian gender politics. A few months after arrival in Indonesia, he was invited as a renowned Estonian artist to participate in the first art exhibition in Estonia dealing solely with LGBT issues (“Untold Stories”, curators Anders Härm, Rebeka Põldsam, Airi Triisberg, 2011). At first, Kiwa turned the invitation down, as he thought he could not do much from Indonesia. But then he approached me with a suggestion to unite our perspectives of artist and anthropologist and see where we could get together. We bought a video camera and dived our activities into online research and, to a much greater extent, on the spot research. We met several fabulous activist waria such as *Ibu* Shinta Ratri, Rully Mallay, and Yuni Shara, who would become some of my key informants in the years to come. We were also hanging out regularly at Bank Indonesia. We spent time in the waria Koranic school run at the time by *Ibu* Maryani, and attended performances by the famous cross-dressing dancer Didik Nini Thowok. We attended weddings led by waria and *dangdut* (a genre of Indonesian popular music) shows where they performed. We also travelled to Surabaya to meet some waria there and to talk to Dédé Oetomo, the leading gay activist and a founder of the GAYa NUSANTARA foundation. We travelled to Malang to meet Merlyn Sopjan, who had tried to run for the city’s mayor some years earlier. We spent some time in Jakarta, staying with bright Ienez Angela in her tiny *kos* (rented room) and talking to one of the Indonesia’s leading feminist thinkers, Julia Suryakusuma. We also got a glimpse of the exciting Jakarta underground, its numerous sex work locations and gay clubs with drag shows. We shared a fun ride home from a *dangdut* party, when a mini-bus full of waria took up the tunes of the Indonesian national anthem. While witnessing that passionate scene of young waria singing loud and proud an ode for their state, I was wondering how it was that waria, whose basic human rights are not always met in Indonesia, who barely receive public recognition and state support, who are often prosecuted, ridiculed and harassed by the representatives of the state, get so excited and carried away when singing their national anthem. Why is their national belonging (Boellstorff, 2005; 2007) never complete?

After all these experiences and interviews with over 30 waria, I was overwhelmingly absorbed with the world of waria – indeed, I sensed this as a parallel world to everyday Indonesia, a world which I suddenly had a feeling I knew much more about than some of my Indonesian friends or teachers at the university. This ‘world’ is out there, yet somewhat hidden. They have their own spaces of self-expression, modes of interaction, traditions – a communal life that bears similarities to a sub-culture in its own right, yet their individual lives are weaved within Indonesian society, their families, their *kampung* (neigh-

bourhood, village) as well as socially sanctioned limitations. I was mesmerized by the heartfelt people and the episodic extravagance of this scene that many waria referred to as *dunia waria*, the ‘world of waria’. At other times, I found myself struggling with profound sadness at the sense of inescapable injustice surrounding them. I admired the easy-going attitude, humour and occasional wildness of waria, and even more so their courage to live their life honestly according to what they feel, despite what others say, think or do. At that time, 2010 had been the most active year in terms of attacks by political Islamist groups on gender and sexuality minorities in Indonesia. I felt this had to be addressed. It didn’t matter that we had no funding and no real experience of film-making. The voices of waria had to be heard.

After completing the feature length documentary, as well as my double-master degrees in Estonia, I changed my academic focus of interest from cultural memory studies to the anthropology of gender. Five months later I returned to Yogyakarta as a newly enrolled PhD student. The documentary entitled *Wariazone* (2011) that I co-directed and co-produced with Kiwa had its international premiere, in the presence of a number of waria, at the Yogyakarta International Documentary Film Festival in 2011. To everyone’s surprise, *Wariazone* was the most attended film screening at the festival. I had produced some DVDs to be sold in support of the waria Koranic school and even these were sold out. Later the same month VICE published an article and a short documentary about Yogyakartan waria (Brooks, 2011), and that seems to have marked the beginning of their growing international attention (see Hegarty, 2017c). During the years that followed the term transgender gained growing international currency along with the exponential growth of media and scholarly representations of gender-variant people in other-than-Western regions. But the ‘transgender imaginary’ that is generally produced in the West, whether in search for the exotic-erotic ‘other’ or gender and sexuality ‘ancestors’, may misrepresent the ‘other’ by assuming their similarity to the ‘Western self’ and body and by misrecognizing their different conceptions of subjectivity, embodiment, and sense of gender (Stryker & Currah, 2014, p. 305). For example, unlike popular transgender conceptions in many other places in the world, waria usually do not aspire to change their sex. Also the degree to which desire holds a position within the notion of gender for waria suggests a very different understanding of a sense of gender and sexuality compared to what is commonly recognized in the West. I will return to this at length in Chapters 3.1. and 3.4.1. While some of the international media coverage about waria can indeed be regarded as problematic in the sense of pursuing a kind of colonial agenda, waria nevertheless generally perceive international attention as beneficial to them. In the next section, I unpack the conceptual backbone of the documentary film *Wariazone* that I co-authored, the work on which formed the initial research for this study.

### 1.1.1. *Wariazone*

*Wariazone* (2011) is an essay documentary designed to introduce the waria category and give an overview of the social position of waria on the island of Java as of 2010–2011. Without any added voice-over, it allows waria of various background and generations to speak for themselves. The occasional commentary of Dédé Oetomo and Julia Suryakusuma further contextualizes the Indonesian politics of gender and sexuality. The opening scene of the film with waria joyfully singing the Indonesian national anthem hints at the central theme as their struggle for national belonging and recognition. The film unfolds with dozens of waria telling what *waria* means to them: that it is a woman's soul in a man's body, an experience of a man becoming like a woman, that they feel in the wrong body, that waria is a third gender or that they are simply girls. As becomes apparent, there are many ways to define the phenomena, yet it can be said with certainty that there are subjects who recognize a degree of shared experience among each other: they have male bodies, but they feel themselves to be like women.

The story then unfolds by referring to the regional traditions of gendered plurality with an example of the Ludruk theatre, one of the last remaining traditions of performative arts in Indonesia that engage waria on stage. What I learned during the filmmaking, and what becomes evident in the documentary, is that compared to many other places in the world there is a relative social acceptance of waria in Indonesia. This especially applies to working class people who, in Oetomo's words, have nothing to lose. "If your boy wants to be a girl – fine! As long she can support herself and even better if she brings in money to the family," says Oetomo (Kiwa & Toomistu, 2011). The rigidity of gendered norms and subsequent practices of diminishment appear side by side with middle-class aspirations. Consequently, waria are not accepted everywhere, but are commonly accepted in the fields of beautification and entertainment. The discourse of sin regarding the subject of waria is further pursued in the agenda of several Islamist political organizations, most vocally by the FPI (*Front Pembela Islam*, Islamic Defenders Front), who have conducted a series of violent attacks on the various forms of mobilizations and social events of waria and others in the LGBT spectrum. The attacks are presented to the public as a form of 'protecting public morals' and with the excuse of 'the freedom of speech'. Against the backdrop of this vulnerable social position, the police do little to protect their victims. As several waria recount in the film, representatives of police or municipal police are sometimes the ones who prosecute, exploit and abuse waria.

Due to the lack of family support, many young waria leave their homes for larger cities and often the only means of survival – and this is also what they see many more experienced waria do – is street-based sex work. As a result of the social prejudices and forms of diminishments, waria need to operate in a limited sphere of self-realization, the abject space, which is a causal condition related to the gender norms and the dominant view on waria. As the title of the

documentary suggests, we refer to this abject space destined to waria as a 'zone', while acknowledging that this is the central conceptual tool in the documentary and not an emic term used by waria themselves.

The quintessential figure of the 'zone' as presented in the film is Rika. Like a cosmic creature with wide eyes sparkling between fake eyelashes and a thick layer of foundation, her skinny little body never stood still as we met her at Taman Lawang, the busy street sex work area in Jakarta. With an eccentric giggle she called herself Cinta Laura, the famous German-Indonesian actress and pop singer. She warned us not to film her legs and I understood well why. Her legs and hands were covered with blue-ish dots, which I read as a sad hint of her status as HIV positive late with treatments. Her parents did not accept her. They supposedly do not even know what she is doing in Jakarta. Between her otherwise loud jokes and giggles, there was a moment when she became thoughtful and told us that sometimes she feels sad when thinking about why she has turned out like this (*"kenapa sih aku bisa seperti kayak begini..."*). I sensed fear and confusion in her eyes as she said it. And just an instance later, as if she had woken up from a bad dream, she shouted something funny to the man passing by and wandered off on her platform heels.



**Figure 3.** Rika. Still image from the documentary *Wariazone* (2011).

While the documentary roughly tells the story of the recent politicization of sexuality in Indonesia and the spatial abjection of waria to the 'zones on the margins of society', my intention with the following fieldwork research and the ensuing dissertation was to get a more anthropologically grounded understanding of what is happening inside the 'zone'. How do waria cope with the social strictures and conditions and how do their activities relate to their sense of agency? How does *dunia waria* operate in the production of certain subjectivities? How can we further explain the flourishing of waria street-based sex

work? What other patterns of waria migration can be noted? How are *dunia waria* and waria national belonging displayed and contested in Papua – a region at the margin of the national imaginary without the dominance of Islamic morality? These were some of the questions I was left with after the production of the documentary, as I returned to Indonesia to dig deeper into the ‘zone’ to discover *dunia waria*. While the ‘zone’ – the conceptual tool in the documentary – is construed negatively with reference to the oppressive power of social constructions, *dunia waria*, on the contrary, is an emic term, referring to the social and imaginary world of waria as they themselves perceive it and make their lives of it. This difference also marks the double methodological perspectives used in this thesis which I will further elaborate below.

## 1.2. Transgender studies and anthropology

In the Western world, the transgender phenomenon has a long history of enquiries in the medical circuits, dating back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Stryker & Whittle, 2006). The international fame of Christine Jorgensten, who was one of the first individuals to go successfully through gender reassignment surgery in 1952, not only introduced globally the medico-juridical procedure of transitioning from one gender to another as something that was then known as ‘transsexuality’, but also underlined the prevalence of the medical paradigm in this process. As Susan Stryker notes (2009, p. 81), the story of Jorgensten was a spectacle of medical science’s ability to carve out gender and sexed flesh according to conventional heterosexuality. In the decades that followed, the media, including pornography (see Preciado, 2013), defined to a great extent the materiality of gendered bodies that were considered beautiful and attractive. Although these tendencies were not directly related to the experiences of people within the transgender spectrum, against the backdrop of modernity, the ground was set for social imaginings which, on one hand, fixed the bodily norms and, on the other hand, also envisioned possibilities to change one’s body towards desired form. For a long time, however, the prevailing discourse regarding the transgender population remained psychopathology.

Significant changes in this discourse were foregrounded by studies in cultural anthropology that contributed to the contemporary theories of sexuality, for example by providing an analytical distinction of sex/gender (Rubin, 1975) and a critique of gender and heterosexuality as naturalized universals and medico-biological units. This made it possible to argue that biological features did not ‘naturally’ correspond to sexual practice, orientation or gender identity (Morgan & Towle, 2002, p. 471; see also Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Ethnographic accounts of gender and sexual practices in various cultures date back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Mead, 2001[1928]; 2001[1935]; Malinowski, 1987[1929]). Margaret Mead’s work in Papua New Guinea (Mead, 2001[1935]) is known as one of the earliest ethnographies demonstrating that gendered enactments are socially produced. However, between the late 1930s and the 1970s, sexuality was seldom



seen as a legitimate area of research and thus the contribution of anthropology to sexuality was generally subsumed in other projects such as kinship or personality (Lyons & Lyons, 2011, p. 5). Reflections on homosexual behaviour remained ambiguous and judgemental in line with the dominant discourses in society (Weston, 1993, p. 339). Alternative sexualities did not move to the centre of scholarly attention until the late 1960s, fostered by the wider social changes along the shifted understanding of homosexuality from individual pathology to cultural construct (Weston, 1993, p. 341). The few remarkable early examples of ethnographic work on urban gay populations were conducted by David Sonenschein (1966), Evelyn Hooker (1967) and Esther Newton in her ground breaking *“Mother Camp”* (1979[1972]). Particularly in the second half of the 20th century, anthropology therefore helped to displace the perversion-based models produced by hegemonic medical and psychiatric discourses with frameworks grounded in the appreciation of the diversity of human cultural practice (Rubin, 2002, p. 17–18). However, this did not remain unproblematic. While anthropological studies on queer subjectivities across the world have the potential to disrupt the colonial discourses operating along the lines of geo-political power (often also within the context of international LGBT activism), the ‘anthroqueer’ scholarship (Bacchetta, 2002, p. 952) runs the risk of reorientalizing and exoticizing queer subjectivities (Weston, 1993, p. 345) or depicting them as inherently localized phenomenon (Wieringa & Sivori, 2013, p. 4).

The 1990s saw the emergence of a fast growing field that soon became to be known as transgender studies. The possibilities for new ways of thinking about and engaging with the transgender were partly paved by the alliances between medical and activist circuits that were created during the AIDS crisis, but also by the increasing popularity of poststructuralist and performativity theories in academia, which opened up different ways of conceptualizing the transgender phenomena (Stryker & Aizura, 2013, p. 1). Some of the cornerstone publications were Sandy Stone’s *“The empire strikes back”* (1991), which called upon transgender people to actively participate in the production of knowledge, Leslie Feinberg’s *“Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come”* (1992), and Susan Stryker’s *“My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix”* (1994). The new field that was eventually set in stone with the publication of the lengthy *Transgender Studies Reader* in 2006 (Stryker & Whittle, 2006), which called into question the entire epistemological framework that treats gender merely as a social or discursive representation of an objectively knowable material sex. Rather, it conceives gender as another global system, within which specific forms of bodies are produced along the multiple axes of signification (Stryker, 2006, p. 8). From these standpoints, transgender critical theory is helpful in articulating new modes of embodied subjectivities and for viewing gender as embedded within various tangled forms of power.

It is also peculiar that in the United States, the term *transgender* not only moved away from the medicalized, sexualized and pathologized baggage of the *transsexual*, but it also came to function as an umbrella term to incorporate all the various forms of alternative genders and gendered representations, such as

transsexuals, drag queens and kings, butches, gay men in drag, cross-dressers, etc. David Valentine in his seminal book “*Imagining transgender*” (2007) provides a critical ethnography of the category transgender in the United States. He engages with the significant question regarding any kind of knowledge making across categories that are inevitably productive. Valentine asks in what ways the category *transgender* produces certain non-normative genders by erasing others (Valentine, 2007, p. 14). In some respects this question has also become more important over the past years in Indonesia, as the term transgender is increasingly used by waria. As distinct from what I witnessed in 2018, during my most intensive fieldwork in 2011–2012, only a small number of waria were using the English term *transgender* when describing their sense of self. However, while the growth of the term among waria can be understood as indicating the increasing penetration of the transnational discourses through healthcare and activist circuits as well as the trending ‘transgender’ in global popular culture, the deployment of the term is often also culturally specific. Hegarty (2017a) has shown that among elderly waria, *transgender* is used to refer to a very specific kind of subjectivity and a time in one’s life course – that connected to youth, migration and sex work. The term travelled to waria first through the language of HIV organizations, for whom waria, since the early 2000s, became a ‘key population’ of care and targeted awareness campaigns (Hegarty, 2017a, p. 72).

While the ethnography of the categories, transgender or otherwise, is not the focus of my research, the primary concerns that animate this thesis are nevertheless related to the Foucauldian question of the productivity of discourses. Amongst the key inquiries in my study are the ways in which people come to identify with and feel related to the imagined community of waria and *dunia waria* (the world of waria), which is itself productive, and how this ‘world’ then articulates and forges specific forms of personhood and opens up arenas of belonging. For example, some young waria perceive monetized sex exchange as an inevitable part of *dunia waria*, as if dressing up in an outgoing manner, gathering at waria nightlife locations and seeking men who would pay for her sexual conduct is something that comes along with being a waria – as if this is what waria simply do. The knowledge of the existence of these familiar ‘worlds’ in other cities have made waria travel, seeking life experience or better economic perspectives, forging mobility, but at the same time also vulnerability. Besides, these travels also create a sense of waria community as a national phenomenon.

The field of transgender studies shares concerns with various cross-disciplinary areas, most prominently with queer studies, which also had its ‘transnational turn’ through the 1990s with a shift of focus towards queer formulations on the hybrid transnational and/or postcolonial terrains (Povinelli & Chauncey, 1999). On the margins of both these fields lie anthropological studies on gender non-normativity in the global south. There is now a vast array of ethnographic texts on gender and sexuality in various non-Western contexts (for example Johnson, 1997; Kulick 1998; Blackwood & Wieringa, 1999; Manalansan, 2003; Sinnott, 2004; Boellstorff, 2005; 2007; Blackwood, 2010; Davies, 2010; Ochoa,

2014; Besnier & Alexeyeff, 2014). While these accounts have deterred the linear thinking of the transgender subjectivity that used to be prevalent in Western transgender discourse, according to Valentine (2007, p. 150–155) this scholarship usually falls under two different framing rubrics: homosexuality, or gender variance/transgender. But the question between the two frameworks leads to the epistemological debate about whether such subjects are best understood as gendered or sexual subjects, which hints at the question of whether sexuality is experienced as distinctive from gender. In Western activism and social theory alike, the ontological distinction between gender identity and sexual orientation has been popularized since the 1980s. However, as Valentine (2007, p. 165) concludes, the worldwide ethnographic studies on alternative genders and sexualities have most significantly demonstrated that gender and sexuality are not universal experiences, nor they are categories that are shaped differently in various cultures, but they also transform themselves as categories in their particular contexts.

My thesis contributes to these debates in several ways. First, while I acknowledge the analytic usefulness of the separation of sexuality/gender categories, my analysis argues for the interconnectedness of these categories in human experience, as I insist on the notion of desire in the conception of gender among waria. Attraction towards men is one of the central features of being a waria. It is almost as central as the notion of the soul of a woman. But waria distinguish their attraction from that of the gays, who in view of waria would desire other gays. But waria generally claim that they would never desire other waria, thus making a distinction between ‘desire for difference’ and ‘desire for the same’ (Boellstorff, 2007, p. 78). Secondly, I reject describing waria subjectivity under the rubrics of homosexuality, and nor I use the term ‘transgender’ as an identity marker for waria. Rather, I describe waria gendered subjectivity in its complex intersubjectivity, which also includes sexuality. Throughout the thesis I refer to the subjects of my research with the Indonesian term waria<sup>2</sup>, but use ‘transgender’ foremost heuristically following the field of transgender studies (see Stryker, 2006, p. 4–6; 2008, p. 1–10) and deploy it analytically to consider the variety of gendered lives that are lived different from society’s conventional expectations derived from sex assigned at birth.

Thus this thesis contributes to the line of thinking in transgender studies that insists on the empirical approach to gender that allows the formation of subjectivity to be unveiled within the intersectionally productive systems of gender, race, colonialism, religion, and nation. Instead of focusing on categories and language I shift my attention to ‘lived bodies’ (Bloodworth-Lugo, 2007) that never exist detached from their historical, cultural and spatial contexts, which can be both productive and constrictive. The phrase ‘embodied lives’ in the title of this dissertation derives from the stance of regarding subjects as always embodied, materially embedded within the perpetual performative practice tied to

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<sup>2</sup> Since 2018, another term has also appeared, namely *transpuan* – a portmanteu word from trans and perempuan (woman) – which is used among some circuits of LGBT activists.

various intertwined contexts and systems of meanings without neglecting their physiological flesh.

### **1.3. Methodological enquiries of feminist anthropology**

The aforementioned concerns with categories also resonate with the methodological traditions in feminist research that have influenced the development of feminist anthropology. Doing anthropology requires a certain alertness about not investing into colonial knowledge production by exporting Western constructs and applying them blindly to non-Western contexts. This also applies to anthropology that is informed by feminist theory and perspectives from gender and sexuality studies. Feminists, indeed, have been criticized for the tendencies of colonial knowledge production since the 1980s (e.g. Mohanty, 1984). As Henrietta Moore has argued (1988, p. 9, 197–198), the deconstruction of the sociological category of woman and the idea about the ‘universal subordination of women’ is perhaps the most significant contribution of feminist anthropology to feminism. The critique of the transnational deployment of categories is also influenced by Foucault (1978; 2001[1970]), who has demonstrated that subjects and categories are always historical. From these assessments, another cohort of feminist intervention eventually grew; this is now known as transnational feminism and focuses on situated perspectives. Transnational feminism rejects the assumption that there is one path of feminism that presumes a narrative of progress or liberation or that there is a shared experience amongst the category ‘woman’. Since the context always shapes categories, there is the need to move away from universals into context-dependent particulars (see Errington, 1990, p. 9).

The principles that drive this kind of critique are nothing new to anthropology, but go back to the roots of interpretative anthropology (Geertz, 1973), which brought about the paradigmatic shift from the all-encompassing and generalizing positivistic models towards more humanistic and hermeneutic approaches. In transgender studies, Stryker has also in several instances (2004, p. 215; Stryker & Aizura, 2013, p. 9) underlined the concerns regarding colonial knowledge production when applying the Western understandings of gender and sexuality to non-Western subjectivities. Questions of the ethnographic stance and method, reflexivity and knowledge production have been central to feminist anthropology since its emergence. However, these discussions have developed in parallel with other enquiries in anthropology, most prominently following the period that is known as the reflexive turn (see e.g. Clifford & Marcus, 1986). I will return to the questions on the reflexivity of my study at length in the next section.

As a social justice oriented feminist researcher, my motivation for working with waria as well as the principal methodological standpoints of this study emanate from the perspectives often shared in feminist anthropology. A first sight, it may seem peculiar that I have situated myself closely within feminist

anthropology while studying the subject of transgender. The vast body of the work done under the tag of feminist anthropology has indeed been concerned with the subject of women. However, the necessary shift in focus from women to gender relations was introduced into the tradition of feminist anthropology long ago (e.g. Rosaldo, 1980). From these perspectives, feminist anthropology is not necessarily an anthropological study of women. Rather, it is the study of “the role of gender in structuring human societies, their histories, ideologies, economic systems and political structures” (Moore, 1988, p. 6). As I have already stated earlier, I consider this study primarily as a work of anthropology informed by feminist theory and methodologies and the critical perspectives from gender and sexuality studies.

The tension between the feminist and transgender subjects of inquiry links to the historical strains of feminism within and between some of its strands. There have been, for example, versions of radical feminism which deny transgender as the valid subject of feminist intervention, up to the point of exhibiting transphobia, not allowing trans women to enter women’s spaces, etc. (see Stryker & Bettcher, 2016; Ahmed, 2016). But this is not the way that I envision and engage with feminism. Profoundly influenced by the poststructuralist and queer perspectives to gender and feminism as well as by the approaches of intersectionality, feminism for me provides first and foremost a critical lens, a think-tool, for considering gender as another regime to which we are subjected. Feminism lays the foundation to address the ways in which the inevitably asymmetrical gender relations intersect with other forms of difference and how these together impact one’s embodied personhood and create unequal access to a variety of resources. Having defined feminism for myself as such, it has proved useful for my enquiries into the anthropology of waria.

The focus on marginal groups or practices has also been a persistent concern in the field of gender and sexuality, since it allows to reveal, critique and challenge the workings of power on the sexual and gendered relations in society. While waria are a visible group of people in Indonesian society, they are nevertheless a relatively small community within the nation’s population of almost 270 million. Due to the extensive migration among waria, it is difficult to work out the total number of waria in Indonesia, but according to the report by the Indonesian Ministry of Health (Directorate General of Disease Prevention..., 2017), the estimated population of waria in 2016 was 38,928, with an upper limit of 89,640. A related motivation behind this study emanates from the issue of representation and voice. Early feminist anthropologists wanted to make women in the ethnographic record visible (see Lewin, 2006). In a similar fashion, I am delighted to contribute to the growing scholarship on transgender in anthropology as well as to expand the Indonesian scholarship of gender and sexuality with regard to waria.

One of the central concerns in feminist anthropology has been the question of how the socio-political and reproductive organization in society influence gender inequality. While the vast portion of this scholarship is focused on women and women’s roles in societies, gender as a regime of power within the

state's biopolitics of heteronormativity and social norms related to the configurations of masculinity, femininity, and morality influence transgender populations in significant ways. Feminist anthropology's move beyond the recognition of cultural difference and its emphasis on the multiple intersecting axes of difference (Moore, 1988) has been essential in the development of the methodological framework used in this study. The thesis involves a significant degree of interest in the wider societal structures that organize bodies and the conditions that define the potential for creating 'livable lives' (Butler, 2004) for themselves. The research thus situates within the debates of power central to feminist anthropology since its foundation in the early 1970s. At the same time, I remain loyal to anthropology's long-standing methodological ground in close and lengthy participant observation and in-depth interviews, its commitment to revealing emic approaches and allowing the voice of its study subject to be heard. This is because when we only look at the structural constraints, it prevents us from seeing the complex ways in which subjectivity and agency are enacted in the vernacular culture. On the other hand, when focussing only on the lived experiences of the research subjects and reducing or neglecting attention to the historically developed socio-political terrains in which they are embedded, it would be difficult if not impossible to account for the study subject adequately in its various entangled contexts, which are, after all, inseparable from the constitution of subjectivity.

The methodological framework of this thesis thus incorporates both the phenomenological experience of waria, their lived lives and their narrations and conceptualizations of their lives, while at the same time it does not ignore macro-level socio-political analysis of the structures, often oppressive, that influence waria lives. Sufficient attention to the broader structural conditions provides a lens through which it is possible to indicate how socioeconomic processes structure waria lives, including their most intimate aspects (see Article II). The study is also attentive to how, as a response to the oppressive structures, waria seek pleasure, a sense of belonging, and self-affirmation through their affective engagements with various others in the spaces and at the times that are available to them. With its focus on embodied lives, I move away from replicating the Cartesian mind-body split, which has contributed to the theorization of bodies as fixed, detached and disembodied from their actual contexts (see Bloodsworth-Lugo, 2007, p. 59–61). I rather emphasize the embodied subjectivity and the relational nature of bodies as they are entangled with their very real socio-historical and spatial contexts, perpetual affective and performative engagements, and gendered relations to others.

A more specific contribution in the context of feminist anthropology is the study's attention to pleasure in gendered relationships. Despite conveying a central force behind sexuality, the terrain of pleasure has still to a great extent been overlooked. Although Carol S. Vance (1992[1984], p. 23) called for a move 'towards pleasure, agency, self-definition' long ago, pleasure in the anthropological studies of gender has still been given scant regard (Spronk, 2014). The study elaborates on the questions of the waria notion of gender tied

to sexual desire and extends our knowledge of how, in the case of waria, pleasure relates to the political economy of sex work (Article II).

The thesis also expands intersectional thinking in feminist anthropology – the idea that various intersecting differences such as gender, race, class, age, religion, etc. are interrelated and constitutive of the subject position. The study interrogates various intersections of subjectivity, in which transgender positionality as well as non-heteronormative sexuality, age and racialized embodiment tied to national belonging affect waria intersectionally. This creates different degrees of agency also within the diversity of the category. For example, the access to erotic capital in the context of waria street nightlife is usually tied to youthful desirability. Indigenous Papuan waria, on the other hand, struggle much harder in their aspirations for national belonging through enactments of beauty. Hence, the study highlights that along with the need to attend to the wider structural conditions that shape life paths, it is important to recognize the historically and culturally constructed forms of difference, which also influence subject positions intersectionally. With the remaining two sections of this chapter, I return to the study's empirical context and the method.

#### **1.4. The study site**

When I took a three-day heavily overloaded ferry journey from Makassar in Sulawesi to Sorong in Papua, to my initial surprise there were also five waria on board. They were making a considerable move for themselves, travelling to Papua with the aim of settling, for example, in the province's capital Jayapura, open a hair salon, and make some money. From Sorong, it took me another four days on a ferry to travel to Jayapura, the city bordering with Papua New Guinea. I had thus travelled from what is conventionally envisioned as the all-encompassing cultural centre of Indonesia, the populous island of Java, to the imaginary periphery of the nation. Although one would indeed find many more indigenous Papuans on the streets here, and the presence of betel nuts – chewing the mildly psychoactive nut is a widespread, often-ritualised cultural practice in Papua and other Pacific islands – at each and every step, I also noticed how these coastal cities of Papua are saturated with familiar items of Indonesian vernacular street culture, such as roadside canteens offering *Indo-Mie* (a brand of instant noodles), *nasi goreng* (fried rice) and other familiar items of Indonesian street cuisine, women in headscarves, and mosques inviting the faithful for prayers. Unlike most other Indonesian regions where Islam is predominant, however, the prevailing religion in Papua is Christianity, which has established its presence in the region since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Rutherford, 2003, p. 30). The busy streets of the Papuan coastal cities, full of people riding motorbikes without helmets and minibuses decorated with flashing lights and equipped with powerful bass speakers, gave me a sensation of a kind of promise in the air – a promise of a better life where everything is possible and money makes the world go round. In recent years, against the

backdrop of the booming mining economy, and with the presence of one of the world's largest gold and copper mines, the Grasberg, in the foreground, Papua has undergone rapid changes and development, which have also opened up new arenas for nightlife and transactional sex.

Compared to most of the other regions in Indonesia, the emergence of waria in Papua is a fairly recent phenomena and counts as one of the effects of making Papua more 'Indonesian' since its incorporation into the state of Indonesia in the 1960s. What was then known as West New Guinea remained under Dutch control after Indonesian independence in 1949. The Dutch focused on achieving administrative development in the region (King, 2004, p. 21) with the prospect of independence. In 1961, the New Guinea Council decided on their official name Papua, which etymologically denotes the frizzy hair of Papuans (Gelpke, 1993; King, 2004, p. 19) in contrast to the straight hair of the majority of Indonesians of Indo-Malay descent. In fact, the indigenous Papuans of Melanesian origin have relatively darker skin, stockier bodies and curly hair. However, against the backdrop of the Cold War era global politics (see Kivimäki, 2003, p. 136–138), in 1962 the Dutch agreed to transfer administrative power in Papua to Indonesia. Indonesian military invasion followed, introducing a policy to integrate West Papua politically and culturally into the Indonesian nation (Muhammad, 2013, p. 5). This was followed by mass migration into the area, both government controlled (the *transmigrasi* programme, see Osborne, 1985, p. 126) and spontaneous (McGibbon, 2004, p. 23), along with which the first waria also arrived in Papua.

This thesis follows the critical regionalities approach, as proposed by Johnson, Jackson, and Herdt (2000), for it recognizes the historicity and multiple interconnectedness of a region. The critical regional view opens up productive engagements with globalization, by acknowledging the 'local' as always already materially and conceptually hybrid, as it messes with and sustains its connections to the 'unsituated field of global' (Johnson, Jackson, & Herdt, 2000, p. 373). This approach thus underscores the necessity to examine local particularities while taking into account of its multi-layered history and contemporary entanglements with other world areas. A variety of world regions have influenced the Indonesian archipelago for a long time, with Indian influence emanating since ancient times. Arabic traders arrived in the archipelago as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and throughout the centuries that followed introduced Islam to the local kings and consequently to their population. European traders began to enter the islands in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. With the establishment of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1602, the region was increasingly controlled by the Dutch, especially towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus material and conceptual hybridity characterizes not only Southeast Asia in general, but the Indonesian subject and, specifically, the subject of this study – Indonesian waria, who are simultaneously subjected to and positioned by discursive structures on various levels and in various forms. There is a growing interconnectedness in contemporary times via the media – including social media – to the transnationally circulating discourses emanating not only



from the global North and West, but also from elsewhere, as Arabic, South-Korean and Japanese influences also leave their mark on gender performativity, lifestyles and desires. Waria who play with the labels such as ‘Miss Mexico’ or ‘Miss Netherlands’ and call their Saturday night party ‘The Planet Bangkok’ hint at the productivity of the imaginary world areas which, despite remaining outside their immediate reach, nevertheless actively participate in the making of lives locally. Mark Johnson (1997) has vividly demonstrated the place of ‘America’ in forging the ideals of beauty, loves and lives among *bantut* in the Philippines. In the Philippines, the American style has been endorsed along with the penetration of the Christian Philippine State (Johnson, 1997, p. 32). However, American pop culture has left an unprecedented mark on Indonesian culture as well since the time of the New Order (see e.g. Saraswati, 2013), making space for productive envisionings about, for example, a foreigner hanging out in one of the waria salons as someone from America.

The data for this study derives mostly from my experiences in four cities: Yogyakarta, Surabaya on the island of Java, and Sorong and Jayapura in Western New Guinea, popularly known as Papua. By choosing these cities for my enquiry, I have focused on the central and the peripheral within the national imaginary of Indonesia. Java is the most populous island in Indonesia (and in fact in the world), dominating Indonesia culturally and economically. It has held an important position within the scholarship of Southeast Asia for its long-standing cultural influences from the ancient civilizations of India and China, and more lately from the Islamic world (Steedly, 1999, p. 436). Papua, the Indonesian part of the New Guinea island, previously known as Irian Jaya, on the contrary, is seen as the culturally most distant region, and falls into what is perhaps one of the most marginal areas in the world, the Pacific Islands (Alexeyeff & Besnier, 2014, p. 2). Peculiar also is their contrasting Human Development Indexes (HDI). While the Special Region of Yogyakarta (0,789) ranks highest after Jakarta (0,801), West Papua (0,629) and Papua (0,591) are the districts with the lowest HDI in the country (Padan Pusat Statistik, 2019). In the terms of Anna Tsing (1993), Papua is the ‘out-of-the-way place’ within the national imaginary. It is the Indonesian internal ‘other’. Papua as a region falls outside the cultural boundaries of Southeast Asia, as it is usually classified as Melanesia (Peletz, 2009, p. 4). However, it should be mentioned that the coastal cities in Papua where I worked are developing rapidly with their booming economies, and according to the 2010 census, over two thirds of the population are migrants (Elmslie, 2017, p. 6), which gives them a very different complexion from life in inland Papua. Nonetheless, the complexity of the built infrastructure, the density of traffic and population, the presence of massive shopping malls, high end hotels, various chain stores, transnational brands and other businesses – all characteristic of Yogyakarta and even more so of Surabaya – nevertheless mark the profound differences between my field sites in Java and Papua. However, the prices of street food and basic services tend to be higher in Papua.

My main base throughout the time I spent in Indonesia was Yogyakarta on the southern edge of the central part of Java. The city, with a population of around 400,000, is renowned as the Javanese cultural centre of the country, hosting numerous universities and artist collectives, dubbed and promoted as ‘The City of Tolerance’. It is the capital of the Yogyakarta Special Region with its regional autonomy as the only officially recognized monarchy in Indonesia, ruled by the Yogyakarta Sultanate. For these reasons, Yogyakarta is known among waria as an easy-going and friendly city with several waria support groups and a set of cultural activities. It is also home to *Pondok Pesantren Waria Al-Fatah*, the Koranic school for waria, which is unique in Indonesia and possibly in the world.

I also worked in Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia with a population of around 3 million. As an early port city on the northern coast of Java, Surabaya has a long history of commercial sex. At the time of my intensive fieldwork, it was hosting the proclaimed largest sex work district in Southeast Asia, known as Dolly or Gang Dolly, which was officially closed in 2014, evicting nearly 1,500 female sex workers (Promchertchoo, 2016). The sexual landscape in Surabaya is influential in the patterns of migration among waria, many of whom travel to Surabaya from Kalimantan, Sulawesi and elsewhere. Surabaya is also home to the Ludruk theatre, which is one of the few remaining performative arts practices in Indonesia to offer waria the opportunity to appear on stage (see also Geertz, 1976, p. 291–295).



**Figure 4.** Scene from the Ludruk theatre performance in Surabaya. Photograph by the author, 2011.

In Papua I focused on the region's largest cities of Sorong and Jayapura. Additionally, I spent a few days in Timika. The Western New Guinea region consists of two provinces: West Papua and Papua. Following its local and vernacular usage, I generally refer to this region in this dissertation as Papua. Close to the border of Papua New Guinea, Jayapura, with its population of 315,000 people is the capital of the province of Papua. The city spreads out between the hills and around lake Sentani and is divided into five districts. Most of the waria here either live on the coastal area or up in the hills of the Abepura district, which also hosts the busiest waria street nightlife location, Kali Acay.

In Papua I worked most extensively in the coastal city of Sorong, the largest city of the West Papua province. Located at the northwest tip of the bird's head peninsula, Sorong is the entry point to Papua for many migrants, the gateway to the tourist destination of Raja Ampat Islands, and the logistics hub for Indonesia's oil and gas routes. Large oil and gas production companies, such as PetroChina International (Bermuda) and JOB (Joint Operating Body) Pertamina-PetroChina Salawati, are based in the area, offering economic promise not only for the company's workers, but also for those who serve and entertain them. Although the nightclubs and hotel restaurants are economically accessible only to the privileged, waria seem to like Sorong especially for its metropolitan atmosphere.

When we rode our motorbikes through the bustling evening traffic, waria were constantly whistled after or hailed by the men on the roadside. Gayatri, a 23-year-old Javanese waria, whom many waria think highly of owing to her self-confidence, joyfully shouted back at them. She exchanged smiles and winks with the boys in traffic when pulling back behind the red light. As we zigzagged through the traffic, her hair loose in the warm evening sea breeze, Gayatri told me that everybody in Papua constantly thinks about sex: "That's all they do! Sex, sex, sex, nothing but sex on their minds!" In response to further whistle and calls from the roadside, Gayatri shouted merrily: "We are the flowers of the night!"

Papuan sexual culture is, indeed, relatively more flexible compared to many other parts of Indonesia. Many migrants perceive Papua as a frontier culture that allows more sexual openness (Butt, 2015, p. 113). The Freeport Indonesia that operates the Grasberg mine employs approximately 32,000 people. Most of them live in the nearby city of Timika, where the nightlife is permeated with the touch of commodified sexuality. My female interlocutors, who came from Java to teach at the Timika schools, recount that when visiting *Timika Indah* nightclub, they are usually suspected to be 'call girls'. The massage parlours in the city are known to be *Massage plus plus*, referring to the promise of the 'happy ending' – that is, for men. The naturalization of commodified sexuality in Papua has been influenced by the establishment of sex work districts or *lokalisasi* in the 1970s in parallel with the *transmigrasi* programme and the initiatives of the mining economy. *Lokalisasi* are the official sex work complexes that were established in a number of cities from the beginning of the 1960s. *Lokalisasi* relocated the brothels together into a small street or section of the neighbourhood,

with the goal of promoting social discipline and control (Hull, 2017, p. 79). The clients of *lokalisasi* are usually local, lower to middle class Indonesians. In Papua, the substantial number of military and construction workers contribute to the flourishing of the sex industry. The area close to the Sorong sex work district is called Malanu, which etymologically refers to the Indonesian word *malu* meaning shy or shame. Locals recount that the name was derived from the experience of shame of the people who used to live in the neighbourhood of sex work in the early days, but over time it has come to be seen as normal for the vast majority of Sorong's citizens. Besides those employed in the regulated *lokalisasi* of Malanu, there are also street sex workers, young women who have sex in exchange for commodities, as well as waria who engage in sex work.

As becomes apparent, there are some major contextual differences between the key fieldwork sites in the aforementioned cities of Java and Papua. The most significant points that feed into the ethnography that this thesis builds upon are the greater economic possibilities for waria, the effects of migration, the more flexible sexual culture, and the ethnic tensions in Papua. Java, in comparison, has seen considerably more political (Islamist) pressure on waria. From the perspectives of Papua, Java is characterized by greater competition in the beauty business, but also by historically more established communal activities and support networks for waria.

Given these differences, can we, after all, grasp the 'Indonesia' in this dissertation? Concerning some of the central notions of this thesis – *dunia waria*, and waria gendered subjectivity – I found the similarities between the key sites of my research greater than the differences. The ethnographic vignette at the opening of the thesis that paints a picture of waria hanging out in a salon in Jayapura and then getting together with friends in one of the street nightlife locations is something that in a similar vein could also happen in Surabaya or Yogyakarta. After all, as already mentioned, the waria subject position is part of the national culture. This line of thinking, with the attention to the similarities rather than the differences, becomes most evident in Article II, which focuses on waria nightlife. Despite some of the contextual differences that may structure the potential personal economies, the ethnicity of the clientele, the daily logistics and timing, the practices of beauty, etc., these are not central to the argument about the essential sensorial, social and performative qualities of waria nightlife, which apply to waria in the cities of Java and Papua alike. Yet this does not mean that I have somehow neglected the differences between the key field sites in this dissertation altogether. As these provide necessary ethnographic detail, especially with regard to the arguments made in the first and the third articles of this dissertation, they have been acknowledged and taken into account.

Overall, the focus on Java and Papua worked very well methodologically. The focus on 'the central' and 'the marginal' served the aim of grasping the national and transnational embeddedness and influence on waria embodied subjectivity. It also proved fruitful in tackling one of the dissertation's central questions about waria national belonging.

Another reason for pursuing research in the region of Papua is the fact that so little has been written about waria in Papua. Most of the substantial scholarly work on waria has focussed on waria in either Java (e.g. Oetomo, 2000; Hegarty, 2017b) or Sulawesi (Davies, 2010) or in both these regions (Boellstorff, 2007). The few valuable accounts available on waria in Papua are based on the ethnographic research from the 1990s until 2001 by Morin (2008) and Butt, Numbery, and Morin (2002). Given also that the HIV rate in Papua is the highest per capita in Indonesia (Butt, 2015, p. 110–112) and that waria are amongst the most vulnerable groups of population, I found it important to give Papuan waria, both migrant and indigenous, scholarly attention.

After I was invited to screen the *Wariazone* documentary in the news station of *Tribun Timur* in Makassar, I also spent three weeks in Sulawesi, staying most of the time in the village of Segeri. The data from the field experience from Sulawesi, like that from the couple of trips to Jakarta, a longer journey to Central Kalimantan, and a brief visit to the city of Timika in Papua – even though in all these places I spent some time with and interviewed a few waria – is not central to this study. However, all these encounters provided some relevant information that helped me to see things in wider perspectives.

## **1.5. Reflections on fieldwork**

I first moved to Indonesia in August in 2010 and remained there continuously until the end of May 2011. The focused research with waria begun after the Merapi volcano some 20 kilometres from my home in Yogyakarta had had its biggest eruption of the century in late October 2010, and after I had finished cleaning the layer of ash from my bed at the end of November. The remainder of the time as a student of Indonesian language and cultural studies at The University of Sanata Dharma was spent with intensive work on the *Wariazone* documentary. At the beginning of the film-making, I became acquainted with some literature available online about waria, mainly through the work of Boellstorff (2005; 2007). However, the narrative structure of the documentary was developed through a discourse analysis of over 30 video interviews of various lengths that we had conducted with waria during the film-making.

I returned to Indonesia again in October 2011 for nearly six months of focused anthropological fieldwork. My waria friends in Yogyakarta were happy I had returned. The few leading activists were grateful to me for making the documentary, which they liked and which they explained was the reason they wanted to help with my further research. This mostly meant keeping me updated and welcoming me at the various waria events and gatherings in Yogyakarta, of which there were usually a couple every week.

Of my main field research sites, the cities of Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Sorong and Jayapura, I spent the most time in Yogyakarta, which was my main base in Indonesia. In Papua, I am more familiar with Sorong, which I visited again for a follow-up research in 2015. In 2018, I spent another three weeks for fieldwork

in Yogyakarta. Throughout the years, I have returned to Indonesia almost every year for reasons other than this research, and this has kept me connected to its people and attentive to its developments.

### **1.5.1. The ethnographic method**

In each of the four cities of my primary research sites I conducted semi-structured extended biographical interviews with waria of various ages. During the primary field research I interviewed twelve individuals in Yogyakarta, eight in Surabaya, twelve in Sorong, and ten in Jayapura. For interview occasions, I usually visited waria at their homes or in their salons because we could talk privately and spend some time together, and I could observe the informant's everyday environment. These audio-recorded interviews usually lasted between 40 minutes and 2.5 hours. I mostly posed my questions grouped together around a certain theme (such as childhood upbringing, family relations, social acceptance, sexual relations, dreams, body perception, religious sensitivity), so they could narrate their stories freely around these topics. I tried to intervene only when necessary to clarify. I conducted all the interviews in Indonesian apart from three that I conducted in English. During my later follow-up research trips to Indonesia in 2015 and 2018, I conducted seven more biographical interviews. Since I was then focused on specific issues, I preferred to use other methods, such as participant observation, themed interviews, and the use of camera, which I comment on below. Altogether I have conducted 49 semi-structured biographical interviews with waria, interviewing some of them several times over the years.

While the lengthy biographical interviews provide an excellent source for analysing the ways waria narrate their lives and for use as a basis for discourse analysis, equally important methods of my research were participant observation, informal communication, and the use of camera. I attended various activities of waria: their community meetings, the lip-syncing performances in a mall, or public awareness campaigns on the Malioboro street in Yogyakarta. I followed their football and volleyball events and their birthday parties. In Surabaya I attended Ludruk theatre shows, which only feature men and waria on the stage. My Sundays in Yogyakarta were usually reserved for the meetings at the *Pondok Pesantren*. On a daily basis, I hung out in their salons and at their nightlife locations. On a few occasions, I went to a nightclub with waria, attended a *dangdut* party where waria performed, and welcomed some waria to my *kos* in Yogyakarta.

Some of my research participants I met only a few times, and I can thus rely only on the self-presentation that emerged from these particular encounters. For others, I tried to establish more continuous relationships, meeting them several times on various occasions over the course of the years. A few times I was accommodated by waria in their salons (in Makassar, Segeri village and Sorong), which further blurred the boundaries between myself as a researcher

and as a friend. To protect the privacy and integrity of my informants, I present the material referring to them by pseudonyms, unless they are well-known activists whose work deserves credit. I also refer to the year of birth of the person (unless unknown) and to the city where we met.

Besides participant observations and biographical interviews, which were the principal methods in this research, I also took advantage of using camera as an additional research tool in both photography and video modes. Using camera as a research method follows a different setup from using camera for film-making purposes, which is usually much more calculated and focused on getting the shots needed. The potential usefulness of the method beyond documentation, and specifically with regard to gender performativity, first emerged at *Ibu Shinta's* birthday party at her house in the Kota Gede neighbourhood. The party brought together almost a hundred waria with their partners and friends. During performances, games and dancing in the yard, an intensive photo shooting suddenly broke out in the back room among younger waria. I was dragged with my Canon to capture the session of posing and re-posing in various groupings. Several waria powdered their noses. "Photograph us, but leave him out of the photo!" was how one waria referred to a young man with pigment spots on his face who himself seemed very eager to have his photo taken with a bunch of young waria in festive dresses. One waria leaned towards a pillar and revealed her breast while conveying a seductive look; others were laughing. Yet the loudest laugh was sparked when they gathered around my tiny monitor to see the outcomes.

It was then that I realized camera's power to bring out some aspects that may otherwise remain partially veiled. This approach of camera as stimulating people's behaviour rather than passively observing is well discussed in the field of visual anthropology (see e.g. Loizos, 1993, p. 46; El Guindi, 2015, p. 440–441). Camera in these situations is an active agent – the viewer that reflects as well as provokes the one who is viewed. At Shinta's birthday party and at several other moments during my field research, especially when waria had put up some work on their *déndong*, camera seemed to reinforce some aspects of gender performance. Hence, it was not only a useful tool for documentation, which actually proved very beneficial later on when I was analysing the fieldwork materials, sometimes several years later, but – especially in the study of gendered subjectivity, in which performativity is one of the very central aspects – it is also a method that allows different kinds of knowledge to emerge. Among the aspects of gender performance that camera, in my experience, seemed to reinforce were the spectacular femininities which, following Marcia Ochoa (2014), is an aspect of performativity's register – a form of self-presentation that enacts spectacularity and engenders a sense of the presence of an audience. While sufficient development of this approach as a methodology of visual anthropology remains beyond the scope of this thesis, I will touch upon it further in Chapter 4.2.1.

There are a number of important limitations of this study that need to be acknowledged. First, the scope of the current study is limited by my focused

field research only in selected cities in Java and Papua. As I also know from my own experiences from travelling in Central Kalimantan and spending time in Segeri village in South Sulawesi, there are, of course, waria living in villages and smaller towns as well, and their lives might be structured in very different ways than those described in this study based on waria living in urban centres. In some rural places, even the term waria may not be known or used, and the subjects do not necessarily follow the otherwise widely shared lifestyle pattern of afternoon salon work and night-time street sex work. While young waria in Segeri village have frequent casual sex with multiple partners, for example, they do not expect payment from these men, whereas they expect that the man pays for shared soft drinks and cigarettes. However, the majority of waria tend to live in bigger cities across the archipelago and participate in nightlife activities in the ways described here. Thus, though the main conclusions drawn from this study should apply as adequate assumptions, they nevertheless need to be interpreted with caution so as not to over-generalize the diversity which exists within the category and beyond.

The second main limitation follows the previous point: the widespread waria lifestyle pattern of afternoon salon work and night-time street sex work is a broad generalization, and certainly does not purport to apply to all waria at all times. Street sex work as described in this study mostly takes place within urban centres. Besides, waria who engage in street-based transactional sex on a regular basis are usually younger, between around 18 and 40 years old. While some of them consider sex work as their main profession and their source of income, for many others, if not the majority, it is rather regarded as a form of leisure that is taken up a few times a week or less. Some waria in turn remain critical about street nightlife activities, associating it with bad manners and considerable health risks. While salon work is indeed a typical form of work for waria in many parts of the country, this also does not apply to all waria. There are many waria working as wedding organizers, dressmakers or tailors, designers, entertainers, artists, etc. Some work full time or part time also at non governmental organizations.

Thirdly, I dedicate a significant part of this study to waria sex work that involves the clientele as a counterpart. However, my access as a female researcher from another country to men who have sex or are in relationships with waria remained rather limited. I would thus encourage more research into the partners of waria by other researchers.

The language barrier posed another limitation. While I was able to communicate freely and conducted almost all the interviews in Bahasa Indonesia, it was sometimes still difficult to capture everything that was said, especially given the wide range of dialects and the usage of specific slang language among waria, which also differed regionally. However, having all the interviews and some of the other recorded materials transcribed helped significantly to cope with this limitation. As with most qualitative research, other forms of barriers such as cultural and methodological barriers should also be acknowledged as inevitable limitations of the study. I elaborate on some of them in the next section.



### ***1.5.2. Body on the field: Notes on reflexivity***

Against the backdrop of the controversial posthumous publication of Bronisław Malinowski's diaries (1989[1967]) and the reflexive turn taken in anthropology (Clifford & Marcus, 1986) since the 1980s, the researchers' figure on the field, their relationship to the research subject and its participants, the constitution of the Self and the Other, and the complex conditions of knowledge production have been some of the central debates in anthropology. These questions still require continuous critical reflection, and even more so in the entangled worlds where anthropological representation does not stand apart from the people who provide its content.

How would a researcher from Eastern Europe get a grip on a subject so far from her own culture? Can a cis-gendered researcher fully understand the subject of transgender? An idea drawn from feminist thought about self as open and fluid, incomplete and partial, seems to comfort the inevitable realization that it is never possible to completely understand the 'other', nor to overcome the difference. Even though, as anthropologists, we aim at the most objective representation, we are nevertheless only human on the field and relate to the world through our senses within the limited time and space that our bodies are involved with. As anthropologists we also encounter situations on the field in which we feel uncertain or uncomfortable, driven or affected. We are humans who may fall ill and fall in love, who may feel the tears of their informant on their shoulders, who may cry at the death bed of her research participant. We may feel danger, enchantment, shock, or sorrow – all of which characterized my experiences in Indonesia. Participant observation, which was the main method in this study, is all-encompassing. I was immersed in the knowledge that emerged from every encounter I had in Indonesia, and not only with waria. All these experiences are potentially valid as data.

If all sensitivities and experiences are potential data, and if as researchers we are always partial and incomplete, one could ask whether we can, after all, understand something radically different, whether from another culture or from our own culture. As self is inherently partial, so is knowledge always situated (Haraway, 1988). Donna Haraway has highlighted the potentiality for objectivity in the knowing self that is always already partial. She said, "a scientific knower seeks the subject position, not of identity, but of objectivity, that is, partial connection" (Haraway, 1988, p. 586). One does not need to become the other to understand, but it is precisely through the partial connections and the situated knowledges that valuable connections and productive openings for the larger vision may appear. The challenge here, according to Haraway (1988, p. 579), is to simultaneously hold a historically contingent and critical approach to all knowledge claims and to our vocabulary in the knowledge making, while at the same time remaining fully loyal to faithful accounts of the 'real' world.

The partial connection reveals itself most intimately through our own bodily presence on the field, which may bring along certain connotations, create affective relations and barriers. Our own bodies may also be praised or regarded

with curiosity, but also targeted with violence or abuse. What is the figure of a European woman from the Baltic states aged around thirty years old doing in the field of the Indonesian urban environment?

In general, my status as a foreign researcher actually worked well in establishing trustworthy and mutually supportive relationships. This is tied primarily to the assumption I sensed among waria that as a foreigner from a place that is assumed to be socioculturally more ‘advanced’, I must be far more knowledgeable about transgender subjectivity and its truthfulness compared to many locals, who often approach waria from the point of suspicion. For similar reasons, I was also assumed to be liberal and receptive to a world that many Indonesians would shy away from, such as exuberant nightlife and matters of sex and sexuality. The feeling I had about our relationship with many waria of around my own age and generation was something like a sisterhood based on an assumption that I, as a woman, could understand their womanly feelings.

Being a foreigner also seemed to add some curiosity and respect from their side towards me. Sometimes I noticed that my interest in them could make them feel more confident and proud of who they are as waria. The latter worked less well in Java though, where some research or attention fatigue may have appeared. On a few occasions in Sulawesi and Papua, but most strikingly with Eki in South Sulawesi, I discovered myself – my body and my presence – as a kind of symbolic resource for waria. I was eager to sit down in a relaxed mode with Eki and hear about her stories at length, but she kept us busy every day. Day after day she put me in her car and we were driving around the nearby villages to visit one friend of hers after another, attend a wedding, say hi to the people preparing for another wedding, bring fruit, look for wine, go to market, etc. She got to introduce me to her friends and told everyone that she is the reason for my visit from a faraway country. “She has come to research me,” she said with a glimpse of pride. Although some of these encounters made me feel very uncomfortable because of the endless photo-shoots, remarks on my well-built body and ‘pointy nose’<sup>3</sup>, the women pinching my skin and the children constantly jumping around, I knew it was important for Eki, and perhaps, indeed, it gained her some credibility. In a similar vein, Natali had introduced me as someone from the capital of America as I described at the beginning of this thesis; and in Sorong I was invited to become a judge at the West Papuan waria beauty pageant. As I felt that the responsibility of a jury member would contradict my intellectual and ethical sensitivity towards the subject matter, I kindly declined the invitation. However, at other times I played along with the expected role of a ‘credible other’, as this was often the least I was able to do to raise self-confidence and create a degree of symbolic value for some of my research participants.

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<sup>3</sup> Prianti (2018) has described how Indonesians generally consider the physical qualities of foreigners better than their own, especially for their “pointed nose, lighter skin color and tall stature” (Prianti, 2018, p. 106).

While these aspects highlighted most clearly the effect my body had on the field, a number of other reasons might also have encouraged waria to collaborate with me. As I have already mentioned, having made a relevant documentary helped to establish relationships and gain trust, especially in my main base in Yogyakarta. But also, as Hegarty (2017c) has vividly demonstrated, waria make themselves available for researchers and journalists, since the affective labour associated with these communications is also tied to their understanding of *prestasi*, performing good deeds in society. I cannot think of any occasions when anyone declined my proposal for a chat or interview, although there were degrees of difference in interest and openness. For example, there were a couple of interviews with sex worker waria in Surabaya that sounded rather scripted, and it was challenging for me to break through the stereotypical story of waria victimhood they tended to portray. Mostly, however, the interviews went deeply into personal stories with several meetings and follow-up talks, including sometimes very heartfelt exchanges with occasional tears that were usually triggered by feelings of guilt towards parents and family.

Most of the time I travelled and spent time with waria alone, without other researchers, friends or foreigners around. One of the main focuses in the dissertation is waria street sex work, and as a young female researcher I had to take care in these locations, as well as elsewhere. Throughout my entire experience in Indonesia, I realized that my strongest ‘weapon’ against gender-based harassment was my ability to speak a level of Indonesian. This provided me with a tool to stand up for myself and talk my way out of uncomfortable situations. In Yogyakarta, I was sometimes accompanied to street nightlife locations by my local male friends. It happened once that I was on my way home around 5.30 in the morning alone, and I was followed by a man who demanded my attention. Fortunately, my motorbike was more powerful than his and I managed to escape. After this occasion, however, I took more precautions and tried to find someone to accompany me for the late night explorations, especially given the fact that I had been sexually attacked at night on the street in Yogyakarta before, despite riding a motorbike underneath a bulky raincoat. In Sorong, the waria and her family I stayed with for the most part were very concerned about my safety at street nightlife. Although I suspected that the danger associated with Tembok (street nightlife location in Sorong) was greatly exaggerated, I nevertheless took precautions and did not stay out much beyond midnight. I avoided taking *ojek* (motorbike taxis) at night, but rather found someone I knew who could give me a lift home.

In retrospect, my position as a junior researcher on a budget also served my research well. For one thing, my consumption choices were generally modest, resembling those of many waria. In Yogyakarta I had rented a room, but in other places I preferred to stay with locals, who were sometimes friends of my friends, newly made friends or, on a few occasions, waria who welcomed me on a couch in their salons. The cheapest way to get around in Papua is by ferries, which sometimes carry thousands of passengers on board and have very limited sleeping options. On a four-day ferry ride from Sorong to Jayapura, as probably

the only foreigner on board, I managed to negotiate a place for myself in the security staff's cabin, sharing a room with four large men. Despite the discomfort, this way of travelling provided me access to the realms of extensive migration across the archipelago. It also introduced me to the waria on board. One of them later became my key informant in Jayapura.

The issue of money is central to the daily lives of most waria. It is also a theme running through my research. A related question with regard to the researcher's reflexivity is how a researcher ought to relate, contribute or avoid this theme within the relationships made during the research. I generally avoided paying money for interviews, since I did not want to contribute to turning research participation into a form of labour. Instead, I usually took some snacks with me when I visited someone, and paid for drinks, food or cigarettes when we met outside, given the obvious difference in access to such resources between me and my research subjects; this was also an attempt to give something back in return for the time they dedicated to my curiosity. However, during filming for *Wariazone*, we paid a small sum to the sex worker waria when we took up their time at their place of work. I also left a donation for waria organisations whenever I interviewed their leaders.

In this chapter I have provided an overview of the study site, the methodological approaches and methods used in this study, and of the major fields of intellectual traditions that this dissertation is part of and contributes to, first and foremost the anthropology of gender and sexuality and the growing field of transgender studies. Following the study's methodological framework, the next chapter focuses on a more macro-level analysis of the historical formation and the broader structural conditions of waria. By reflecting on the regional history of gender diversity and the contemporary social position of waria in Indonesia, the next chapter thus expands on the focal study subject of the thesis.

## **2. Historical and contemporary terrains of the waria social position**

As we were heading down the street in Segeri village in South Sulawesi, we passed by hair salons every few hundred metres. Sena, a young *calabai* – a Bugis term for a subject similar to waria – told me that in each of them works a *calabai*. We eventually settled in one of them. There was a *calabai* cutting the hair of a man, another *calabai* cutting the hair of a woman, who was also the girlfriend of a *calalai* – a female bodied and masculine identified subject position – sitting on the couch nearby. Some hours later, Sena cautiously prepared her make-up and hair in the salon of Eki. A senior *calabai*, Eki teased me into asking Sena where she was going: “*Mau ke mana, Sena?*”. Sena responded by hitting her left hand with her right fist and whispered: “*Cari cowok*” – looking for a man. Dressed in a sarong and a *peci* cap coming from his Friday

evening prayer at the nearby mosque, a man appeared at the door. While chatting casually with the two *calabai*, he seemed to enjoy watching Sena getting ready for the night out in a nearby village. Next day Sena showed me a framed photo of her. “This is when I was a *bissu*,” she commented on the picture depicting her wearing the traditional outfit of the Bugis shaman.

In these fractioned recollections of the village life in South Sulawesi, the contemporary as well as historical terrains of the regional gender variety present themselves in an almost strangely easy going manner, in contrast to my experiences in many other parts of Indonesia. Bugis people recognize five genders in their language, so an encounter with a *calabai* – or a *waria* – does not provoke anxieties, even when coming from regular prayers in one of the numerous mosques built around the South Sulawesi villages. South Sulawesi is probably the last remaining regions in Indonesia where traditional gender ambiguous ritual practitioners, here known as *bissu*, hold a meaningful position in society (see Davies, 2010). As their role is in transformation, a young *calabai* like Sena may occasionally perform the prominent ritual dance of the *bissu*.

However, in most other places in Indonesia *waria* do not always enjoy such a degree of interrelational recognition by their fellows compared to what I witnessed in the village of Segeri. In this chapter, I first elaborate on the history of gender diversity in Indonesia and the development of the *waria* subject position. This is followed by an overview of the contemporary representations of *waria* and of the political homophobia in Indonesia and other means of social exclusion and diminishment that I analytically describe through the notion of abjection.

## **2.1. History of gender diversity in Indonesia**

Indonesia, like other regions in Southeast Asia, has a long history of gender transgressive practices. While there have been assumptions among Western scholars that these practices gesture towards underlying homosexual desire, Blackwood (2005a), drawing from various historical resources, argues that these, often accounted as ritual transvestic figures, are rather the products of cosmologically defined genders in early modern Southeast Asia. In these conceptions, gender was imagined as a masculine and feminine binary that was traversable. As also emphasized by Errington (1990), the gender system in Southeast Asia rests on a specific set of differences that do not derive from nor are determined by genitally identified human bodies. Rather, in some of these cultures, the structure of the universe was imagined as gendered. Yet the gendered cosmic energies do not necessarily correspond to people’s physical sex and gender roles (Errington, 1990, p. 18). These assumptions probably relate to the emergence of ritual practitioners who, in their own embodiment, symbolically united the gender binary to maintain the cosmos (Blackwood, 2005a, p. 858–859) and acted as the sacred mediators between the mundane and the sphere of spirits and nature (Peletz, 2006, p. 312). Boellstorff (2005; 2007) has referred to these positions as “ethnolocalized professional homosexual and transvestite subject

positions” (ETPs), Blackwood (2005a) as “gender transgressive ritual practitioners”, Peletz (2006) as “transgendered ritual specialists”, the genealogies of whom may date back to the pre-Islamic era (see also Johnson, 1997, p. 27; Wieringa, 2000, p. 450–451).

Most waria whom I interviewed did not know much about the history of the similar subject positions to their own. If they did, they would mostly mention the *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu* of the Bugis people in South Sulawesi. Of the various gender transgressive ritual practitioners historically in the region, indeed *bissu*, the androgynous shamans of the Bugis (Davies, 2010, p. 12), are the most documented, and they are still active in some regions of contemporary South Sulawesi. While this was not the focus of my research, I spent a few weeks in Segeri village in South Sulawesi. Besides man and woman, Bugis people also list respective trans positions as *calalai* and *calabai*, of which the latter is similar to the subject position of waria. In fact, *calabai* whom I met seemed to recognize themselves as the local version of the national waria. The fifth gendered category is *bissu*, who encompass both feminine and masculine elements, perform individual and collective rituals, and who are able to become possessed and communicate with the spirit world (*dewata*). In Segeri, I stayed in a salon belonging to Eki, who is a *calabai*, lives with her boyfriend, and who sometimes referred to herself as “a *bissu* of the new generation”. I visited and interviewed (with a translator from Bugis to Indonesian) six *bissu* in the region, one female-bodied and the others male-bodied. Most of the *bissu* I met simultaneously practiced Islam and they all considered the sacred worlds of *dewata* and Islam to be the same sphere, with just the difference in the means of reaching out towards them. Young *calabai* such as Sena, for example, who sometimes dress up as *bissu* to perform the ritual dance with *kris* (the curvy dagger), seem to signal a kind of commodification of the *bissu*, re-coding it as a folk tradition. As Blackwood (2005a) and Peletz (2006) have both pointed out, over the course of the influence of Islam, Dutch colonizers and other transnational impacts, the more traditional forms of gender transgressive practices were objectified, delegitimized and rendered as illicit and against god-given nature, or as backward feudal remnants. The same can be said about *bissu*, whose prestige, as Davies (2010, p. 206) notes, has decreased over the past few centuries, though their more recent inclusion into various cultural representations may nevertheless ensure the continuity of the *bissu* subject position, despite its transformation.

In his elaborate ethnographies on queer subjects in Indonesia, Boellstorff (2005; 2007) distinguishes between the “ethnolocalized professional homosexual and transvestite subject positions” or ETPs and the subject position of waria. There are accounts of ETPs in Southeast Asia since the 14th century, and Boellstorff (2007, p. 189–190) considers these first and foremost as occupational positions rather than distinct genders or sexualities, although in some instances, these subject positions may include homosexual or celibate behaviour. In contrast, the continuity of waria subject position – the one associated with small-scale trading, lowbrow entertainment, and paid exchange of sex (Boell-

storff, 2007, p. 85, 192) – can be traced back to the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, Boellstorff notes (2007, p. 190) that there is relatively little evidence of gender transgressive practices during the late colonial era, which may suggest that such practices were removed from the communal rituals and sacred rites of the courtly elites. These shifts can be explained by the increasing influence of Islam and Christianity in the region, but also by the growing cultural impact of colonial rule. Although the Dutch policy of non-interference prevented the implementation of laws against homosexuality and gender transgressive appearances among the indigenous population (Blackwood, 2005b, p. 227), the colonial management of gender and sexualities as part of the cultivation of a certain morality, reason and affective appropriateness demarcated the racial categories between the colonizer and the colonized (Stoler, 2002), and this prepared the ground for later formulations of modern heteronormativity. But the colonial era also brought another significant divergence in the discourse of sexuality.

The disproportionate presence of single European males and the naturalization of the need to meet their sexual urges (see Hull, 2017; Manderson, 1997), as well as growing urbanization and the presence of male migrant labour at plantations and construction sites, created a shift from traditional to commodified sexualities (Drucker, 1996), with sex work becoming to be seen as a ‘necessary evil’ (Manderson, 1997, p. 377). Against the backdrop of these changes in the discourses of gender and sexuality, male cross-dressing figures appeared in colonial urban market settings. They were detached from the traditional kinship networks and related to petty commodity trading, folk entertainment, and sexual labour (Boellstorff, 2004a, p. 163), and were mostly known by the term *banci*, or *wandu* in Java. In the context of this dissertation with waria nightlife as one of the streaming themes, it is thus relevant to acknowledge that the association of waria subject position with erotic capital and visibility in lower class urban nightlife dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Indonesia declared its independence in 1945 after the short Japanese occupation during the Second World War. Its first president Sukarno led the country until 1967, after which the position was taken over by another authoritarian leader Suharto, who promoted his period of leading the country as the New Order. The postcolonial era brought with it a growing visibility of sexualities, but also the discourse of innate gender differences resting on heteronormativity as the fundamental aspect of Indonesian national modernity. This explains why, as Hegarty writes (2017b, p. 47), “so soon after independence, the otherwise familiar male-bodied femininity of ‘banci’ quickly emerged as a figure who consolidated anxieties about the modern meanings of gender in Indonesia.” Especially during the Suharto’s New Order, the discourse on gender took on the shape of reproductive heterosexuality. Suryakusuma (2004, p. 161–163) has referred to the New Order gender ideology as *State Ibuism*, which defines women as domestic housewives, dependent on and subordinate to the position of men. The state’s project of reproductive heterosexuality, reinforced by Islamic views on gender, frames women and female sexuality under so-called proper

femininity and motherhood, while men should take the lead of the household and be active in public domains (Blackwood, 2005b, p. 228). Against these currents it even seems paradoxical that among the older generation of waria, New Order is often depicted as the ‘golden era’ of waria.

Hegarty (2017b), with his study focusing on waria during New Order, demonstrates that at a time when the public configurations of the ‘perfect woman’ and ‘complete man’ were articulated against the background of the drive for modernity in society for the first time, the subject position of the contemporary waria also unfolded. They became visible in society, gathering in certain places that had emerged along the urban developments of spaces of leisure, and from the 1970s onwards stereotypically working in hair salons (Boellstorff, 2007, p. 87). According to Hegarty (2017b, p. 13), the older generation of waria agree that there were subjects similar to them before the 1960s, but they were radically different. Their path for greater social acceptance was, Hegarty argues (2017b, p. 52–56), paved by the influence of Western scientific and medical knowledge that allowed distinguishing between biological sex and psychological gender. With regard to waria, the latter was framed as their inner soul of a woman, *jiwa perempuan*, which is permanent and hence needs to be accommodated. What marks and differentiates the subject of waria that emerged from its predecessors during the New Order is their greater visibility through the practice of *déndong* – the glamorous comportment that involves cautiously applied thick make-up and well-groomed hair, requiring a significant amount of time, effort and skill in order to produce the desired look for public eye. But *déndong* was not just about looking great to emphasize the womanly feelings of having *jiwa perempuan*, nor was it practised simply to catch the attention of men they were attracted to – both of which were characteristic elements to the New Order waria already. As Hegarty (2017b; 2018) asserts, the practice of *déndong* was understood as a form of self-cultivation with an aspiration of national belonging. This thesis adds to Hegarty’s revelation by demonstrating how waria in their gendered enactments in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century draw on various cultural resources to aspire to a sense of belonging, whether national or otherwise.

As we have seen, the complex and linked relationship between the waria subject position and the Indonesian nation dates back to the New Order. This was also the era when the term *waria* was coined, replacing the terms *wadam* of the previous decade, *wandu*, which was sometimes used in Java, and *banci*, which was already in use at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in several parts of the archipelago. Today, *banci* is still used, but regarded as a derogatory term. Waria, a derivation from the Indonesian words *wanita* and *pria*, woman and man, was officially announced by president Suharto in a newspaper article in *Kompas* in 1978. The term was preceded by what was supposedly the first non-derogatory term *wadam*, derived from *wanita* and Adam, which originated in 1968. But by the 1970s, *wadam* received criticism from some Muslim circuits for its use of a Prophet’s name, so the minister of religion of the time coined another term, “waria”, which the president approved (Boellstorff, 2007, p. 224; Hegarty, 2017b, p. 11).



The first formalized waria organizations also appeared in the 1970s (Boellstorff, 2007, p. 103). Since then, waria have appeared in national television programming, performed at public events, and organized weddings. While waria can be found in rural areas as well, they are most visible in larger cities across the archipelago. They can be of any religion and ethnic background, which further demarcates their position as part of the national culture rather than of tradition or *adat*. Following these observations, Boellstorff framed waria as ‘national transvestites’ (2004a; 2007, p. 78), whose performances lay claim to their national belonging. Boellstorff argues that waria aspire to national belonging by emphasizing that they have skills, marked by the Indonesian term *prestasi* – their performance of ‘good deeds’ for society (2007, p. 105). What highlights this endeavour in the waria discourse of recognition is salon work, which illustrates waria talent, their ability to transform others by ‘making them beautiful’.

Salon work apparently situates well within the Indonesian discourse of modernity. During the economic development of the New Order era, salons appeared in towns and villages across the country (Hegarty, 2017b, p. 138), providing waria with the means to be in dialogue with Indonesian modernity by demonstrating their role of expertise as agents of beauty. Hence, salon work emerged as the prototypical work of waria and the kind which serves their *prestasi*. My ethnographic accounts from Papua highlight and expand on this discourse, as waria often justify their presence in the region by their capability to make the Papuan population more ‘beautiful’, which in turn is tied to the Indonesian notion of *maju* (progress) that situates well in the context of Papuan discourse of ‘catching up’ with the more developed regions of Indonesia.

Overall it can be seen that unlike Indonesian subjects of *gay* and *lesbi* (the terms used locally, see Boellstorff 2005; 2007; Blackwood, 2010), the waria subject position is not linked to globalising discourses. While the Southeast Asian region has a long history of gender transgressive practices, the history of the waria subject position can be traced back to the late colonial era, when the shift from traditional to commodified sexualities appeared in the context of trends towards urbanisation and the expanded deployment of male labour. However, the formulation of the contemporary waria subject position as the one who wears feminine attire and make-up in the daylight, who can be found in most Indonesian cities at certain places on the streets in the night time, who may prepare the extravagant traditional wedding make-up for the bride and groom whose wedding you attend, who works in a hair salon across the corner, and who projects herself onto the the national imaginary at their public performances, appeared during the New Order.

## 2.2. Representations of waria in contemporary Indonesia

The carnival procession through the crowded Malioboro street was the highlight of the Yogyakarta Fashion Week in 2011. Each participating group or organization had dressed up in costumes or presented a certain image, from traditional batik to the more outlandish fantasy costumes to the combination of Javanese traditions with luxurious elegance. The latter niche was put into use by waria, who were marching in two separate groups of around 20 participants each. The first group had incorporated the colour of gold, the second was mostly dressed in various shades of silver. Behind the banner presenting the name of their organization “*Regu Jogja Istimewa Waria*” walked Cahya, the mute waria wearing a crown and a label across her body that indicated her participation in the 2007 final round of Miss Waria Indonesia. The same autumn she had begun her studies in sociology in the State Islamic University of Yogyakarta (*Universitas Islamic Negara*), which welcomes students with disabilities under the flag of promoting inclusion. As all the university’s female students are required to wear a *hijab* (Muslim headscarf), she also wears one to school. She is thus identified by her feminine gender presentation and in the gender segregated auditorium she sits together with female students. Cahya has experienced a threat of rape by two policemen, who once entered her *kos* and aggressively asked for money and sex.

Next to Cahya walked Fatima (born 1989) in an elegant costume and towering hairstyle. From my conversations with her, I know that she considers waria as people whose “true identity (*jati dirinya*) until now is not accepted, except for the developed countries.” She expects society and the government to recognize waria talent and support waria in developing their talents to find income other than by ‘selling themselves’, that is, through sex work. While I had often seen her at Bank Indonesia during long nights, she explains her motives primarily as getting together with friends and chatting. While her tiny dainty figure would often permit her passing for a woman, she says she feels around 50/50 safe on a daily basis. She has nevertheless been spit on and beaten with stones, and arrested several times during the police raids at Bank Indonesia.

Waria were walking slowly as if they were on a sacred possession. They smiled only a little and mostly to me or others they knew. Both sides of Malioboro street were packed with spectators taking photos of waria and others alike. Some adolescent men jumped next to a waria, throwing out a silly smile and a thumbs up for the picture. Others became very excited. They begun teasing and pushing each other. “*Banci!*” I heard one of them mocking another. While it is probable that some of these guys had their first experience of oral sex with a waria at Bank Indonesia, *banci* is a widely used derogatory term towards those who in some way or another do not meet the expected performance of masculinity. At the same time, in comparison to the more conventional presentations of femininity in Indonesia, waria are known to portray a relatively more playful and sexual look. So it is hardly surprising that a group of waria who look amazing with their shiny make-up and fancy hairstyles, but who

nevertheless have male genitalia under their fabulously feminine outfits, would get the boys simultaneously confused and excited. There is no doubt that some waria found the three-kilometre march challenging. The carnival positioned them as the objects of gaze, magnified by the endless strain of snapping smart-phones. Against this gaze, waria had to project a sense of determination with their chosen gendered presentation, despite what others think and the stigmas pertaining to them.

The carnival ended up in *Taman Budaya* (The Culture House), where the participants presented themselves to the jury. While some other groups performed dance shows, waria walked around in circles, showing themselves to the jury. At the front Cahya greeted the audience with poise and elegance. “Waria – they are very beautiful, aren’t they?!” commented the voice in the loudspeakers; but the applause was only lukewarm



**Figure 5.** The waria delegation at the march of the annual Jogja Fashion Week in Yogyakarta. Photograph by the author, 2011.

That scene at the Fashion Week in Yogyakarta characterizes well the waria social position in contemporary Indonesia. They form a recognized social category, as if they are an accepted segment of the population in Indonesia – they too walk among other social groups at the fashion parade. But just as the reaction of the Fashion Week audience with their confusing and sometimes objectifying sentiments and their lukewarm applause, the waria place within the nation is nevertheless marginalized, and is far from complete acceptance and recognition. Socially, waria are usually accepted in a sphere of activities which falls roughly within the beauty business and entertainment. Indonesians are used to encoun-

tering waria in salons working as hairdressers and make-up artists and seeing waria singing at *dangdut* performances, lip sync shows, or playing a tambourine at the street intersection by the traffic lights, but they would prefer not to see waria in their own family, work collective or in prestigious public positions. Since their growing public exposure in the 1980s, waria are often portrayed as jokester figures. They may be funny and appreciated in some ways, but they nevertheless remain marginal. The image of amusement and mockery was further fostered by appearances of waria on national television, most famously by Dorce Gamalama, who has been a public figure since the late 1980s and who had her own talk show on the Jakarta regional Trans TV station from 2005 to 2009.

The representation of waria is also sexualized, given their frequently exposed, relatively more transgressive performance of femininity compared to the prevailing norms in society, but also due to their longstanding association with sex work. There is a popular saying *mau anak, cari waria; mau anak, cari istri*, which translates as “if you want to have fun, seek a waria; if you want to have a child, seek a wife”. By contradicting the companionship of waria and women the maxim underlines waria affiliation with fun and sexual pleasure from the perspective of young men. As the image of waria thus includes its associations with sex and sexuality, shame and mockery, it is no wonder that the groups of adolescent boys at the fashion parade got overly excited when encountering waria.

While enactments and representations of sexuality across the archipelago are continuously diverse, the post-*Reformasi* era that followed the fall of president Suharto in 1998 has seen both conservative and progressive values regarding gender and sexuality arise (see Davies & Bennett, 2015). There has been a significant growth in LGBT communal activities and an extended reach in related educational and advocacy work. However, *Reformasi*, with its radical political shift towards decentralization as well as its opening up towards the impact of global religious identities, further boosted by the experiences of economic marginalization and disempowerment among many (Hoesterey & Clark, 2012, p. 211), brought with it the widespread moral contestations that have also targeted waria, sometimes with severe effects on their safety. This suggests a different picture compared to the waria ‘golden era’ of the New Order. Although there is currently no legal basis that forbids sexual intercourse between people of the same sex (except for relations with persons under 18), the dominant state discourses continue to marginalize and stigmatize those that do not fall under the reproductive societal role (Blackwood, 2005b, p. 227). The growing voice of conservative political Islam (Wieringa, 2006) has exploited the issue of sexuality, integrating it into their political strategy to gain popularity and power under the veil of protecting public morals for the sake of the nation (see Robinson, 2015; Kiwa & Toomistu, 2011).

The Islamist agenda was pushed forward through the implementation of the so-called anti-pornography law (*UUP-Undang Undang Pornografi*, Law No. 44, 2008), which, despite considerable on-going debate, was nevertheless passed in

October 2008. The opponents saw the law as restricting women's freedom of self-expression and movement as well as conflicting with the traditional forms of cultural expression in many areas in Indonesia, such as Papua, Kalimantan or Bali (see Bellows, 2011), but it was defended with the argument that the law provides guidance in morality and Islamic orthodoxy with regard to an appropriate expression of femininity (Robinson, 2015, p. 61; 2018, p. 318). The discourse around the law as well as the increasing participation of the radical political Islamists in the *Majelis Ulama Islam* (MUI, Council of Islamic Scholars), which issues rulings on Islamic law that are popularly accorded the status of law, although they are not formally binding (Robinson, 2015, p. 60), have contributed to the reformulation of Islamic masculinity and femininity in Indonesia (see also Jones, 2010). In addition, there is an evident cultural influence from Middle Eastern Islam and alignment with global orthodoxies (Eliraz, 2004; Pedersen, 2016) which further demarcates gendered appearances and roles. In my experience, fully veiled women were extremely rare in Yogyakarta in the years 2010–2012; but by 2018 this form of gender specific Islamic attire could be noted on the streets daily.

Against the backdrop of these tendencies, it is important to note that Indonesia is not officially a Muslim country. While the majority of Indonesia's over 260 million inhabitants are Sunni Muslim, Indonesia in fact recognizes religious plurality – though with the condition that every citizen needs to subscribe to one of the six world religions: Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Self-defined Muslims, according to state censuses, make up around 87% of the population. According to Butt and Lindsey (2012), the influence of Islamic law (*sharia*) over the national law has been a matter of debate since the foundation of the country. While the state's official grounding philosophy, known as *Pancasila* ('Five pillars', roughly divinity, humanism, unity, democracy, and social justice) does not articulate Islam as the state's religion, its 'first pillar' of divinity, emphasizes the belief in God. As this is not necessarily the Muslim god, it leaves space for religious freedom. However, over the decades, Islam has been gaining greater prominence in Indonesian daily life, which also paves the way for the normalisation of the state's role in guiding and promoting religious orthodoxy (Hefner, 2018, p. 217). Sharia law (Islamic law) is officially practised only in the autonomous province of Aceh at the northern tip of Sumatra; but since the Indonesian democratic turn in 1998 in many parts of the country there has been a daunting presence of the radical Islamic minority, who deploy Sharia for their claims and statements. Through their organized activities, they have put the rights and the safety of minorities under pressure.

### 2.3. The rise of political homophobia

The targeted violence against the organized gatherings of gender and sexuality minorities including *gay*, *lesbi* and *waria* appeared soon after the fall of Suharto in 1998. The first event, which is seen as the emergence of political homophobia in Indonesia (Boellstorff, 2004b), took place in September 1999 in Solo, Central Java. In November 2000, at the celebration of the National Health Day in the town of Kaliurang near Yogyakarta, at least 25 individuals were injured in a violent attack of around 150 men dressed in white robes, wearing knives and machetes (Boellstorff, 2004b, p. 465–466). Attacks were also reported at events such as the workshop on human rights in Depok in 2010, at the *waria* beauty pageants in Makassar and Jakarta the same year, at the presentation of the Canadian author Irshad Manji's book "*Allah, Liberty and Love*" at the University of Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta in 2012, to name but a few. The perpetrators often justified these attacks to the public as a way of protecting public morals and under the premiss of the freedom of speech.

At the beginning of 2016, another unprecedented wave of public persecution of LGBT subjects appeared (see Suryakusuma, 2016; Boellstorff, 2016; Davies, 2016; 2018), fostered mainly by radical Muslim organizations, but also by other conservative individuals, politicians and organizations. At an institutional level, according to Suryakusuma (2016), the government representatives "called on the UN Development Program (UNDP) to stop funding its LGBT programs; the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) enacted a discriminatory rule against LGBT people; the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) wants to ban 'programs that encourage children and teenagers to adopt indecent behavior', and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) wants LGBT sites to be blocked, together with terrorist sites." These public accusations and threatening measures announced at state level brought the condemnatory discourse against gender and sexuality minorities closer to the mainstream, foregrounding tendencies of the politicization of sexuality and the enforcement of certain forms of pious subjectivities.

Compared to 2010–2012, in the public debates and demonstrations there has been a growing visibility of the acronym LGBT, which is portrayed as a visible collective of gender and sexuality minorities. Among those who oppose the claims of the gender and sexual minorities, LGBT demarcates an unwanted 'foreign influence', a threat to national security, and a violation of Islamic norms, all of which are believed to have caused the moral crises in the country. The Indonesian 'LGBT crisis', as it was often framed in the international media, has, according to Davies (2018, p. 330), been "the culmination of various converging factors, including the lasting effects of the 1997 financial collapse, increasing religious conservatism, decentralization, the perception of growing moral laxity, and emerging LGBT rights internationally." As is evident from the recent media monitoring by the Community Legal Aid Institute of the violent attitudes and attacks on the population under the LGBT spectrum, the main forms of stigma directed towards LGBT subjects are that they are a deviation

from the course of nature, conflicting with religion and morality, and dangerous to the nation (based on the 2017 media monitoring, *Bahaya Akut Persekusi LGBT*, 2018, p. 11–18). According to the media monitoring for 2016, the year of the heightened ‘LGBT crisis’, the ‘threat to the nation’ turned out to be the most prevalent form of stigma, followed by the conflicting status with religion and morality, and thirdly, by the claim that LGBT is the product of liberal, feminist and human rights propaganda. The latter draws on the fears of many Indonesians and resembles tendencies in other parts of the world that have recently seen the rise of conservative values and public persecution of the LGBT population framed and campaigned as a response to ‘gender ideology’ (see Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018). Although at this stage it is difficult to draw any solid conclusions, during my fieldwork in 2018, some gay and waria activists explained the Indonesian ‘LGBT crisis’ as a counter-reaction to the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States. “The whole thing started in the USA,” said Shinta Ratri (born 1962), the leader of *Pondok Pesantren Al-Fatah Waria* (Koranic school for waria, hereafter *Pesantren*) in Yogyakarta. “In 2015, they legalized same sex marriage. So Indonesian politicians used this issue to spread hate speech towards the LGBT community.” Waria as the most visible group within the LGBT spectrum became the apparent target of the diminishing rhetoric that ignited at the beginning of 2016.

The intensification of populist attitudes towards waria has shifted the ground of the waria community in Yogyakarta. A few waria have cut their hair short and prefer to go around daily with a more normative or androgynous gender presentation. Also by 2018, sex work at Bank Indonesia was generally considered dangerous, not so much for the raids by the municipal police, but for the occasional hate crimes (see Article I). One waria was murdered at another sex work area near the heritage site of Prambanan temple just outside the city in 2015, after which that waria nightlife area was abandoned.

At the height of the public rage against LGBT population in early 2016, the waria *Pondok Pesantren* in the city of Yogyakarta was attacked by the Islamic extremist organization *Front Jihad Islam* (FJI) and forced to close. Founded in 2008, *Pesantren* is a unique institution in Indonesia, and possibly in the world, where transgender identified people have created a place to learn Quran and pray together. Since the stigma attached to waria in Indonesia is predominantly tied to the notion of sin from the Islamic perspective, *Pesantren* establishes itself as a counterpoint in this discourse, manifesting the freedom to practice one’s religion and simultaneously destabilizing the widely shared assumption in Indonesia that transgender subject position somehow contradicts piety<sup>4</sup>. In the same month of February 2016 as *Pesantren* was attacked, big banners on the streets, stating for example “Ban LGBT” (*Tolak LGBT*) or “LGBT is an

<sup>4</sup> Iran provides an interesting comparative case, where homosexuality is criminalized, yet sex reassignment surgeries encouraged. In the combination of the religious and medico-behavioral discourses on gender, Iranian legal and medical authorities have framed sex reassignment surgeries as a means to overcome ‘abnormality’ in an attempt of “hetero-normalizing people with same-sex desires or practices” (Najmabadi, 2008, p. 3).



infectious mental disorder” (*LGBT gangguan jiwa menular*) appeared. After four months gathering ‘underground’, *Pesantren* re-established its weekly activities during the month of Ramadan. It is necessary to mention that at the time of writing (in mid-2019), there are no laws in Indonesia criminalizing adult consenting sexuality, unlike the situation in neighbouring Singapore and Malaysia<sup>5</sup>. Rather, it is morality that increasingly functions as the central punitive control mechanism through which homosexual and extra-marital acts are condemned (Davies, 2019).



**Figure 6.** Demonstration banner at the ASEAN Literary Festival in Jakarta in May 2016, which translates as “Communists and LGBT must be scorched from the earth. Fight and oppose the seeds of communism and LGBT.” Source: Islamic vigilantes threaten to shut down... (2016).

In these signifying practices, the LGBT population has been framed as the ‘other’ that is dangerous for the societal well-being and potentially threatening to the nation. This is vividly exemplified by some of the radical Islamist organizations’ demonstration banners that tie LGBT with communism, as for example at the demonstration against the ASEAN Literary Festival in Jakarta in May 2016 (Islamic vigilantes threaten to shut down... 2016). Communism has been demonized and portrayed as the enemy of the state since the mid-1960s. The position of the first president, President Sukarno, which had grown more authoritarian over the years, was destabilized by the horrendous events in the autumn

<sup>5</sup> However, at the time of finalizing this thesis in mid to late 2019, the Indonesian government is discussing a new criminal code which could criminalize homosexual and extra- and pre-marital sex. The proposed changes to the law evoked large-scale public unrest led by students (see e.g. Paddock & Suhartano, 2019).



of 1965. As Saskia Wieringa (2000; 2011) demonstrates, an attempted coup by the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) was portrayed in the media through its alleged links to sexual perversion. These tensions resulted in a series of actions led by the military, in which probably a million people who supposedly had ties to the PKI were killed. The years of unravelling that followed secured the position of the next president for General Suharto, who ruled the country for over 30 years until 1998.

Despite the probability that the vast majority of Indonesians dislike radical Islamists and their practices, groups such as FPI (Islamic Defender's Front), as well as other conservative influencers and organizations, pursue the politically motivated agenda of 'othering' LGBT subjects. Against the backdrop of the state's heteronormativity, the heterosexual family becomes simultaneously the site for the production of sexuality as well as for the policing of counter-normative desires (Wieringa & Sivori, 2013, p. 9). This tactic of 'othering' the 'sexual deviants' subsequently feeds into the stigma and judgemental attitudes towards waria in potentially severe ways at an everyday level of various forms of social and spatial exclusion. In the next section, I will discuss the forms and the extent of social and spatial exclusion of waria through the notion of abjection.

## **2.4. Social exclusion as a form of abjection**

The 'LGBT crisis' of the recent years has contributed significantly to the various forms of abjection of waria. However, almost all the waria I talked to had experienced some forms of violence and diminishment long before. The visibility of waria compared to *lesbi* and *gay* (localized terms) and other men who have sex with men (MSM, see Boellstorff, 2011) has placed the burden of the prevailing stigmas more heavily on waria than on other sexual minorities who are normatively gendered. A degree of verbal and physical abuse may be experienced at the hands of ordinary people, including their own parents and relatives, and even clients of sexual services who, for example, refuse to pay and reply to the waria's demand with an act of violence. The abuse may come from representatives of the state or municipality, such as the police or municipal police (SatPol PP), whose raids at waria sex work locations and subsequent arrests are often described as violent and abusive. Some waria have been victims of attacks by religious radicals, who usually target organized activities and victimize entire groups of gender and sexual minorities. The media also has an active role in fuelling the 'moral panic' (Platt, Davies, & Bennett, 2018) surrounding non-heteronormative sexualities in Indonesia, portraying the acts of violations upon waria in derogatory tones or publishing scandalous reports on sex worker waria.

To exemplify this claim, I looked at Indonesian news reports that appeared in online media from the narrow period between August and December 2017. For example, using the complaints of people from the surrounding neighbour-

hoods in Jakarta as a premiss – a claim, by the way, not backed up with any proof in the article itself – waria street nightlife locations were raided by FPI in order to eradicate the ‘immoral place’ (*tempat maksiat*) (Sering Meresahkan, Warga Razia Waria, 2017). Within this period of media monitoring, several waria initiatives of public events or wider gatherings were also threatened with attacks by radical Islamic groups. For example, these were cancelled on the grounds of being “contrary to the religious and cultural values of the people in Ogan Ilir [regency in South Sumatra]” (Siregar, 2017). Muslims of Aceh are warned against the ‘movement of waria’ (Muslimin Aceh Harus Berhati-hati... 2017). Waria have been murdered (Surya, 2017). Waria have been raided in their *kos* (Astaga, Lagi Razia... 2017). A ‘shocking couple’ consisting of a waria and her male partner were discovered during a municipal police raid for drugs in South Sulawesi:

“The police suspect the two are a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) couple. Because when raided, AB [the initials for the arrested waria] only wore underwear. Not only that – when a police officer searched the room, two spoons were found, which were suspected of being the tools to consume drugs.” (Pasangan Waria Terciduk Sekamar... 2017)

The extract above exemplifies well the ways in which the waria subject and non-heteronormative sex are often framed in stigmatizing ways: entitling the story as being about a ‘shocking couple’, suspecting them of consuming drugs based on the evidence of two spoons, and simultaneously highlighting that the waria was wearing ‘only underwear’, which is interpreted as a suggestion that the couple is ‘LGBT’. The use of drugs in Indonesia is not only severely penalized, but since the New Order the drug problem has been publicly framed in association with moral and religious flaws (Simatupang, 2017). However, these brief insights based on the online media monitoring of a narrow period of around five months in 2017 represent only the tip of an iceberg of both the prevailing stigmatizing discourses and the actual diminishing practice.

In this dissertation, I use the notion of abjection to analytically convey the social exclusion that waria face at various levels and in different forms – from the individually experienced forms of rejection, policing and physical or verbal abuse, to the more discursive productions and structural oppression within communities, regions and the nation. Abjection literally means to expel, to cast out. My understanding and use of abjection has developed mainly through the insights from the work of Mary Douglas (1966), Julia Kristeva (1982), and Judith Butler (1993). Douglas, in her “*Purity and Danger*” (2002[1966]), regards dirt as a matter out of place that is erroneous to the system. The practices of cleansing, limiting or punishing are all attempts to push vague and unruly experience into a structure of order (2015, p. 44). Through the spread of beliefs about the potential dangers associated with the ‘dirty’, people guide each other to be proper citizens. Collective rituals that express anxieties about human bodily holes, such as the vagina or anus, Douglas notes (2002[1966], p. 223), emanate from the

desire to maintain political and cultural unity. From these perspectives, Indonesian postcolonial attempts to regulate its sexual politics under the strictures of reproductive heteronormativity are indicative of the anxieties about non-heteronormative sex and 'unruly' female sexuality – things often framed as dangerous, dirty and immoral. Hence, these anxieties and consequent framings function as the means to re-establish social order and 'proper' citizenship. As Wieringa and Sivori (2013, p. 11) note, at times of political instability national identity politics often emerges through the establishment of heteronormativity by purging sexual dissidents.

Emanating partly from the work of Douglas, Kristeva, in her seminal *"Powers of Horror"* (1982), provides a varied analysis of abjection, while maintaining that it is related to questions of identity and social order. She argues that social being is established through the forces of expulsion of the formless, the disgusting, the unruly, and the ambiguous that disrupts the place, identity, or system. Abjection therefore lies at the unsteady edges of the self. Following Kristeva, McClintock (1995, p. 71) describes the abject as a symptom of the failure to establish the borders of the self, threatening the self with danger. In her *"Imperial Leather"* (1995), McClintock applies the notion of abjection to the project of modern industrial imperialism. She argues (McClintock, 1995, p. 72) that abjection, as the inner rejection of modernity, expels certain groups towards the impossible edges of modernity, such as the slum, the ghetto or the district of brothels.

My understanding of waria social exclusion has probably benefitted most greatly from the work of Butler (1993), who follows the Foucauldian notion of power as productive. One of the central notions of Foucault's (2001[1970]; 1978), and consequently of Butler's (1993) work, is the paradox of subjectivation, which is based on the conception that there is no subject 'I' that stands outside of power. Being subjected to power is the very condition that brings the subject into existence. Power works as a regulatory and normative means producing the subjects. It allows the subject to emerge as a self-conscious agent. Viewing gender as a form of power, as Butler (1993, p. 7) notes, we are simultaneously subjected to gender and subjectivated by gender. Within the productive frames of regulatory power and performativity lies a continuous tension between what is coded as the norm and what is expelled as the abject. In performativity practice, the norm renders itself as normal by creating its pathologized and rejected other as the abject. But the abject is also the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject (Butler, 1993, p. 3), where 'I' is secured against the 'other' that is the 'not-I', the constitutive outside, which through its negative relation determines the knowable subject.

Following this logic, gendered heteronormativity then essentially functions through those bodies which fail to materialize the norm and become the necessary 'outside' for the normative bodies, which qualify as the bodies that matter (Butler, 1993, p. 16). These renderings are crucial to note, since they define who one can and cannot be, who one can and cannot become. This conceptualization on the workings of power, its establishment of the hetero-

normative and pious normative body – roughly, the product of the New Order Indonesia and Islamic norms – and its forces of abjection that strengthen this normative subject, helps to explain the anxieties around waria social position that emerged almost simultaneously with the state heteronormativity. It can also be understood as the mechanism behind the more recent politicization of sexuality in Indonesia as well as the continuous struggle for waria national recognition. Boellstorff (2007, p. 111) has stated that the waria national belonging is an open question, because waria gendered subject position is haunted by their maleness – they can never be authentic (*asli*). Even if waria perform good deeds, practice their *prestasi*, it would not undo their haunting maleness. Projected against the heteronormative knowledge system, the maleness that haunts the waria feminine gender position becomes the source material for the forces of abjection (Nyers, 2003, p. 1074); this is the reason why waria are perceived as abject beings, not yet the subjects of the heteronormative realm.

Abjection may also manifest itself spatially by drawing borders between the self (i.e. clean, normal) and the other (i.e. dirty, abnormal). The abject others are not allowed to enter the spaces that construe the ‘clean, normal’ self. This contributes to and also shapes the structural limitations of access to resources for people like waria. Waria have to contend with not being accepted to work in the formal sector of the economy, which has more highly skilled positions with better salaries than the vast informal sector of the Indonesian economy. It is estimated that around 70% of the workforce in Indonesia is engaged in informal employment (Firdausy, 2000; The Informal Sector ..., 2011), which comprises various informal and occasional jobs, often in households with some production for local markets, and other small-scale businesses like roadside canteens, small shops, or beauty salons. In the study on waria labour rights, Ariyanto, Radjab and Sundari (2007, p. 7) assert that the high prevalence of sex work among waria is largely the result of economic factors. Many waria leave their homes at a young age, sometimes escaping the violent or otherwise uncomfortable circumstances of the disapproval of their desired gender expression. Others seek options for high school or a job in other cities for similar reasons. Due to the lack of support from their immediate families, their access to – usually costly – higher education remains very limited. Having to survive on the streets in the bigger cities, young waria often earn their living by offering sexual services, which may then actually provide higher income compared to the work, for example, in salons.

For these reasons, many waria rely economically on street sex work and have difficulties breaking out of this vicious circle. While waria street nightlife can also be a space of possibilities and a site of agency, it is nevertheless subjected to continuous spatial abjection and policing, of which the recent spatial dynamics of street sex work in Yogyakarta provide an example (Article I). Not less important is to acknowledge the various physical and psychological dangers that sex work entails. While there has been a plenty of educational and outreach work done on safe sex education among waria and the access to health services for waria has lately improved significantly, the prevalence of HIV among waria

means that they remain amongst the highest of risk groups (Indonesia IBBS, 2015), and many waria infected with the virus continue earning money with sex work. Furthermore, the continuous spatial abjection, which has reduced the social qualities of street nightlife and increasingly steered waria towards online searches for money or intimacy, has a great potential to increase the already vulnerable state of waria. It may reduce their access to information, services and support, the availability of which often rests on the sociality at the street nightlife locations.

The spatial abjection also limits the times and spaces of the possibilities to express oneself as a waria. Some waria are recognized by male identity at their workplaces. Others prefer to expose their 'waria-ness' only at night or in cities other than their own in order to avoid becoming the object of ridicule or to offend their families. Indira (born 1986), for example, did not tell her parents in Solo that she had become waria while living in Yogyakarta, some 60 km away. One day, her sister accidentally saw her singing at a traffic light and a week later came to look for her. "I was hugged by my number one sister in tears, she came here together with my sister number five," she described their meeting. "Then two of my nieces came here, I cried again... Yes, at that moment I told my family: 'Yes, that's me.'" The family accepted Ines as a waria, only cautioning her against committing crime. But she has never been back to her hometown as a waria, because she is worried about the rumours in the neighbourhood affecting the reputation of her father and mother:

"I'm afraid of talk such as 'hey your child is a *banci*.' That would make my parents afraid, shocked. So it's this talk that I don't like. I would rather like if, for example, my neighbour would talk directly to me. I would immediately answer... But if these talks reach my mother's ears, my mother must be crying."

As in Indira's case, family support is generally appreciated with profound sentiments, although several waria I have spoken to did not expose themselves in the presence of their immediate families in order not to offend them. When I interviewed Sisi Renata, a Yogyakartan waria (born 1966), she burst into tears when we had only spoke for about ten minutes. It happened at the moment she touched upon her relationship to her mother, whom she loved dearly. She never told her mother about being a waria, although she worked as a volunteer at Kebaya, the NGO focussed on HIV prevention among waria, and performed in public at the waria advocacy events in Yogyakarta, the city where her mother also lived. Sisi Renata assumed her mother actually knew about it, but it was simply never discussed between them, and neither did Sisi Renata make her face the fact by her dress or her manners. Sadly, Sisi Renata died unexpectedly of tuberculosis a few days before the end of my long-term field research in 2012. She was buried as Eddy, wearing a dark suit (see further Toomistu, 2014).

Other waria have cut their ties and moved away from their families, who have been judgemental or violent. In Article III, I elaborate on the story of Sakti, an

indigenous Papuan waria, who escaped violent conditions in her home town of Biak at the age of 19. She went to Sorong where she got acquainted with other waria – in her own words, she entered *dunia waria* – surviving mostly on transactional sex, yet aspiring to open her own salon.

Stories similar to those of Sakti, Sisi Renata or Indira are not rare among waria. Whether in subtle ways, as in the cases of Sisi Renata and Indira, or along with the use of violence, as experienced by Sakti, these patterns of family rejection highlight a crucial form of abjection that many waria face. In combination with other forms of social and spatial exclusion, stigma and violence, abjection relegates its subjects to the margins of society, to the abject spaces: the limited sphere of self-realization, the anonymity of the larger cities, the times and places out of sight, of which street nightlife is the most evident example. The structural exclusions and the subsequent spatial abjection are crucial in influencing waria lives and thus need to be taken into account when addressing waria subjectivity and their agency. The next chapter marks the methodological shift from the historically formed discourses and socio-political conditions that shape waria lives structurally towards the lived lives of waria, their perceptions and narrations of themselves and their worlds.

### 3. Waria gendered subjectivity

With my focus in this thesis on ‘lived bodies’ I move beyond describing bodies as detached or fixed, but rather as they come into being through practice and relations. Lived bodies are always in-between bodies (Bloodsworth-Lugo, 2007, p.3). They remain in the state of ever becoming through continuous performative practice – through somatic techniques, affective engagements and forces of encounter with various others, through their constant productive dialectic between cultural practice and the ‘felt sense’ (Salamon, 2010) of the subjective experience, between the inside and outside, bodies and minds. Hence, as subjects in the world are always embodied, subjectivity in my view is grounded in the space in-between the mind and the body as well as within the productive relations to its cultural, historical, social, and spatial contexts.

With this chapter, I first elaborate on the theoretical insights behind my commitment to ‘embodied lives’. In order to reflect upon the questions of waria belonging, I develop an approach to subjectivity that I envision as always embodied and yet ingrained in the continuous affective and imaginary ties to the socio-historical categories and other structuring entities – the relations I describe as ‘imagined reaches’. This is proceeded by ethnographically elaborated sections, first, on the narratives of how one becomes a waria, in which I contribute to the previous accounts on waria by pointing towards the romantic and sexual encounters with men as one of the important markers in the process of becoming a waria. The two subsequent sections describe *dunia waria*, the social and imaginary ‘world of waria’ that I have used analytically to make sense of

the socially productive character of the category waria and the agentic qualities of the spaces and practices it involves.

### 3.1. Theoretical approaches to embodied subjectivity

The two central notions of this dissertation are gendered subjectivity and belonging, subsequently raising the focal question of how these two interrelate. In the framework of this thesis, I consider belonging as a feeling of being accepted in a community. It is an aspiration that unfolds within the productive tension between embodiment and imagination. But the sense of belonging may also be realized in affective relations to imagined communities and cartographies. While moving beyond seeing belonging as a geographical register, belonging nevertheless assumes a counterpart for subjectivity, such as the community to which one aspires to belong, whether perceivable in immediate reality or imagined. Hence, belonging may also be envisioned as a form of intersubjectivity, which is productive in as much as it frames and forges bodily enactments to be intelligible, affectively appealing, or legitimate in the community to which one seeks to belong. What makes certain enactments intelligible or appealing always rests on their specific historical and contemporary contexts and available medias, which all render the conventions of beauty, spectacle, or gendered performances in general as meaningful.

Studying waria gendered subjectivity, my theoretical framework is grounded in the phenomenological approaches to performativity. Following Butler (1993), gender is performatively constructed. However, my thesis underlines the intersubjective and affective relations within this performative practice. Thus, I conceptualize gender as an embodied experience and a performative process that is enacted through intersubjective relations with various others – with human others, but also with structuring entities, such as imagined cartographies and phantasmic ideals of gender. Consequently, I ask how gender performativity relates to people's desire for communal belonging? Let me unpack this in the next pages.

The waria description of having the soul (*jiwa*), heart (*hati*) or instincts (*naluri*) of a woman – or any combination of those – can be understood and roughly summarized as the waria subjective sense of gender, following anthropology's long-standing commitment to considering emotions, too, to be culturally bounded (Geertz, 1973, p. 81). Hence, the soul, heart or instincts stand for waria experience of their 'womanly feelings', their sense of gender. Soul or *jiwa* in waria understanding is foremost tied to person's mentality, psychology, and mindset. To obtain a better comprehension of the culturally bounded meaning of the word *jiwa*, the Indonesian term for mental illness, for example, is *penyakit kejiwaan*, literally meaning the illness of the soul. The psychiatric hospital is *rumah sakit jiwa* – literally, the house of the ill soul. Hence, *jiwa* can be understood in relation to the Western concepts of the mental and psychic. *Naluri* that may be translated as 'instincts' are also said to be tied to feelings,

but they seem to be doing this in more embodied ways. *Naluri* may include the body language, impulses and expression. Waria describe both *jiwa* and *naluri* in connection with the ‘feeling of the heart’. The emphasis on the ‘heart’ by waria probably also relates to the Muslim interpretations of heart as the locus of emotions, belief, and understandings. Describing themselves through the notion of having the ‘soul, heart and instincts’ of a woman, hence, can be understood as the waria experiential sense of gender.

Another aspect as quintessential to waria subject position as their confession of having the ‘soul of a woman’ is their attire – waria often describe themselves as male-bodied individuals who dress like women. A term that is usually used by waria with regard to the practice of dressing up in feminine attire and putting on make-up is *déndong*. This is a waria slang derivation from the Indonesian *dandan* that translates as grooming and indicates the practices of the cultivation of appearance. Men also *dandan*, but more seldom, and that would make them look neat (*rapi*). For women and waria, *dandan* is a far more regular practice – often, indeed, a daily practice – consisting mainly of hairdo, make-up, and dressing, and it is considered a means to become beautiful (*cantik*) or to bring out (*keluar*) one’s inner beauty. To bridge the perceived disjuncture between their sense of gender and their male body, waria aim to create an appearance through *déndong* that would correspond to their sense of self. Body here becomes the medium for the self (Mahmood, 2005, p. 166), the way of incorporating the ‘soul of a woman’. However, the self is experienced in-between and as a result of these ‘womanly feelings’ and their corresponding enactments through performance. This process of gendered enactments that compose a performance and simultaneously foster the sense of self is best approached through the framework of gender performativity.

In poststructuralist feminist critique, the distinction between the ‘authentic’ self and presentation as well as the causal relation of sex to gender has been destabilized through deployment of performativity. Influenced by Foucauldian constructivism and Austin’s speech act theory (1975[1962]), Butler describes performativity (1993; 2004) as ‘the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names’ (Butler, 1993, p. 2). A formulation linked to Luce Irigaray’s (1985[1977]) concept of mimesis, performativity is a reiteration of a set of norms, a repeated idealization of gender, which simultaneously forms the subject. This conception of performativity is nested in Foucault’s notion of power as productive. Foucault (1978, p. 94–95) has described power as immanent to all kinds of relations, also ingrained in the modes of resistance. In the knowledge system, in which bodies are legitimized as male and female kinds, the subject, the speaking ‘I’, is produced through regulatory systems of power, such as, for example, heteronormativity or marriage. Performativity is a discursive practice, but, as Butler argues (1993, p. 12), it inevitably operates also in the materialization of sex. While man and woman are discursive categories, both these positions assume a specific kind of materialization of sex.



The performativity theory has been influential in anthropology since its popular inception in the late 1980s. According to Morris (1995), however, its conceptual tradition may be traced back to practice theory (e.g. Bourdieu, 1977), which considers bodily practices as a means to overcome the individual and societal separation, and to the perspective of feminist anti-essentialism, which distinguish between sex and gender (e.g. Rubin, 1975). All these intellectual traditions share an emphasis on the continuous discursive practice that is inseparable from the formation of a subject.

Performativity thus is a discursive practice mediating materiality. As such, it has a potential to disrupt the inside-outside or body-mind binary: interiority and exteriority are not necessarily causally related; rather, they are intrinsically connected. Following this logic, it is not that the interior sense of gender *produces* the exterior acts, attire, and performance. It may as well be the other way around – that certain performatives act as the means of the cultivation of self. Building on Butler (1993), Saba Mahmood (2005, p. 163), in her analysis of the piety movement in Egypt, states that “the pious subject does not precede the performance of normative virtues but is enacted through the performance.” Similar argument can be made with regard to gender and gender performativity – the interiority (sense of gender) and exteriority (performatives) are rather mutually constitutive.

So, in this light, how should we consider the gendered subjectivity of waria, who claim to have the soul of a woman and who come to recognize themselves as waria? Following Butler’s (1993, p. 2) claim of performativity in which “the discourse produces the effects that it names,” waria practice of *déndong* does not simply express the interiority, their soul of a woman, but it is simultaneously the means to become a waria, the speaking subject. *Déndong* is one of the crucial element that makes one a waria. Of the waria reference to their soul, heart or instincts in describing what makes them feel like women, it is *naluri* (instincts) that underlines the productively intertwined relation of interior-exterior the best: *naluri* is not only something interior that is in need of exterior expression, but it is already performative, already ‘written in the body’, as *naluri* is understood as also reflecting body language and expression. In Butler’s terms, *naluri* produces the embodied effect that it names as *naluri* of a woman. *Naluri* is thus enacted through the performative practice that is understood as a reference to the inner sense of gender, which becomes the means and the basis to articulate one’s gendered subjectivity in association with the category waria. Hence, the notion of *naluri* exemplifies well the intrinsic and productive relation between the inside and outside, or mind and body. But the notions of *jiwa* (soul) and *hati* (heart) do not stand entirely apart from the performative either, floating somewhere in the depths of the inner space. For example, waria often articulate their attraction and desire towards men – a very much embodied (re)action – in terms of their feelings of their heart and soul.

In order to attend to the bodily practices and technologies used in the course of performativity to produce the desired bodily outside, the notion of somatechnology (Stryker & Sullivan, 2009) is useful. Somatechnology describes the

relationship between bodies and technologies, in which the technology of the body becomes indistinguishable from the bodies it produces. For waria, the bodily technologies and subsequent transformations, whether temporal such as make-up, paddings on hips or breasts, or permanent, such as breast or facial silicon injections, help to align the body she *feels* to have ('felt sense' (Salamon, 2010)) with what becomes socially apparent for themselves and for others. Beauty can thus be understood as a somatic technique (Aizura, 2009) and it is also a means to produce a gendered subject.

Even though we can argue that gender is performative, constructed through the reiteration of a set of cultural and historic norms, it feels very real for the people who embody these genders. In human experience, Csordas (1993) argues, there is a constant dialectic between the perceptual experience and cultural practice. While the gendered enactments of waria can be regarded in performative terms, I am keen to include the more affective and sensorial perspectives on embodiment and gender to grasp the waria sense of gender as a perceptual experience. I have used the notion of 'felt sense' developed in the work of Gayle Salamon (2010), drawn from the psychoanalytic concept of bodily ego and Merleau-Ponty's (2013[1962]) phenomenological explorations on embodiment. Salamon argues that the body of which one has a 'felt sense' is not necessarily contiguous with the physical bond of the body and its exterior contours – an experience that may well describe also normatively gendered individuals. 'Felt sense' is helpful to account for the ways waria phenomenologically experience their 'soul of a woman' – it is the body she *feels* to have. It is the experiential, sensorial ground of one's embodied subjectivity.

The critique of bodily theorizing as 'disembodied', as in much of the work of poststructuralism and deconstruction, has resulted in a shifting focus from bodies to embodiment (see e.g. Grosz, 1995). Critical phenomenological accounts of embodiment strive to move beyond accounting for a body as an object for scrutiny, as fixed, detached and given, envisioning bodies instead as perceiving subjects (Csordas, 1990, p. 36), as doing agents, as experiences of potentialities, and as a locus from which our engagements with the world are arrayed (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011, p. 89). From this perspective, bodies are constantly involved with our selves and also with the outside world. Bodies provide subjectivity's extensions into the world, bringing about the 'worldliness of being' (Stacey & Ahmed, 2001, p. 3). Thus in order to produce adequate accounts of subjectivity it is necessary to consider embodiment and its relationality in practice, leaning towards my focus in this thesis on the 'lived bodies'.

While processes of selves are subjective experiences, they are always also intersubjective (Van Wolputte, 2004, p. 260–261). In line with Moore (1994, p. 3), who has described experience as intersubjective and embodied, social and processual, I insist throughout the thesis on the foundational intersubjectivity in human experience. Following Merleau-Ponty's notion of intercorporeality (1968), Weiss (1999, p. 5) argues that "the experience of being embodied is never a private affair, but is always mediated by our continual interactions with other human and nonhuman bodies." Embodiment is thus ingrained in intersubjectivity,

originating in the multiplicity of engagements to the sources outside one's own body. These sources, which engender an embodied experience, may be human others – intimate or nearby – or nonhuman others, such as imagined categories of belonging or structuring ideals. How would an intersubjective engendering of an embodied experience unfold in waria subjectivity? With regard to waria street nightlife (Article II), for example, the perceived body-soul disjuncture in waria experience can be eased by the attention of others who value the body and its performance. In street nightlife settings, these are other waria and men who engage with waria socially and intimately, catering for the waria experience of self-affirmation, and thus granting her the desired embodied experience. But waria also engage with non-human others in their embodied enactments. For these cases of intersubjectivity that take place in the context of waria street nightlife, but also elsewhere more generally, it appears beneficial to draw from the insights of affect theory.

Affect can be regarded as a feature of intersubjectivity. Arising in the midst of in-betweenness (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 1), affect foregrounds emotion and dynamics in bodily matter (Clough, 2010). Integral to body's perpetual becoming, affect pulls the body beyond its surface-boundedness through the forces of encounter with the outside world (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 3). Affect marks the intensities or stickiness (Ahmed, 2010) in relations between bodies and discourses, but also socio-historical or cultural formations. Emerging between human bodies, or between bodies and the outside world, affect is also crucial in the production of collective affinities. When considering waria practices of beauty or their engagements with men at the nightlife settings, affect helps to grasp the sensorial and pleasurable aspects in these practices as well as the imaginary relation to sometimes very distant others, which all nevertheless bring about the embodied being.

Broadly speaking, therefore, waria perform certain actions to overcome the disjuncture between their male bodies and their sense of gender that is described through the notions of soul, heart or instincts. The various ways a body is then lived, how gender is enacted in various contexts, is constituted by discourse in the sense of gender performativity. Throughout the thesis I aim to reveal the modes of gendered practice that can be seen as forging the agency of waria. Agency in the general feminist understanding of the term refers to the capacity for autonomous action in a context which often encapsulates cultural sanctions and structural inequalities (McNay, 2000, p. 10). However, treating agency as a synonym for resistance or an expression of free will is problematic, leading to unspecified and shallow accounts (see Ahearn, 2001). In poststructuralist feminist thinking, agency is not understood as only arising in the negative paradigm of subjectivation, as a form of resistance, but the norms can be performed and experienced in various ways. According to Mahmood (2005, p. 18), agency cannot be conceptualized “simply as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that specific relations of *subordination* create and enable” (emphasis original). While waria escape the normative assumptions of gendered embodiment (i.e. born male – becoming man), they

are simultaneously inscribed to a different set of norms – for example, the norms of femininity in Indonesia or enactments of glamour inspired by the gendered renderings in the transnational ‘mediascape’ (Appadurai, 1996). Homi Bhabha (1985) depicts colonial mimicry as the affect of hybridity, which is “at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance, from the disciplined to the desiring” (1985, p. 162), becoming a strategy of the disempowered. Van Wolputte (2004) further argues for the inevitably fragmented character of the bodies and selves in the context of various social tensions. However, this fragmentation can be used in response to “the sometimes violent rupture between experience and discourse, and objective and symbolic reality” to overcome these disjunctions and achieve a sense of belonging (Van Wolputte, 2004, p. 263). For waria who are dependent on the income from sex work the mimicry of the ‘global gender’ in the situational contexts of street nightlife can be regarded as their strategy for survival, their response to societal diminishment and abjection as a means to earn one’s living. For others, these modalities of femininity provide the way to participate in the wider transnational culture, to facilitate the imaginary movement towards and their participation in the metropolis, as they strive for this specific sense of belonging. Appadurai (1996, p. 35) has noted that imagined worlds of chimerical metropolitan aesthetic are more likely to be constructed by those who are further away from the world imagined, “particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world.” While waria inscribe themselves into the global capitalist consumer culture, affected by the image of the ‘phantasmic lady’ (Article I), which penetrates the representations of women in the global mediascape, “the other imagined world” that Appadurai hints at would perhaps be the waria version of ‘queer utopia’ in José Esteban Muñoz’s (2009, p. 121) terms, a desired ideal worth striving for: a space of leisure, joy, friendships, pleasure and playful self-expression, where waria would be appreciated and desired for the way they are, the way they sometimes want to see themselves, and the way they want to be loved.

Hence my take on agency in this thesis is tied first and foremost to one’s subjectivity – the capacity to enact a liveable embodiment drawn from one’s ‘felt sense’ of gender and the performative contexts which render these enactments meaningful. Agency may also be tackled spatially (Article I), considering the ways in which, for example, the key spaces of *dunia waria*, such as salons and street nightlife locations, facilitate agentic modes of being tied to self-expression, sociality and a sense of belonging. In Article II, which focuses solely on waria sex work, I elaborate on the forms of agency that emerge through pleasurable bodily practices at the street nightlife locations. Given that desire is an important feature in waria subjectivity and following the intersubjective dimension in embodied subjectivity, the pleasurable bodily interactions with men – but also with other waria and with structuring ideals – cater to self-affirmation. Sex work locations thus become the sites of subversive power within which waria embodiment is enacted in relation to the proximate and distant others. Given their social significance for waria, salons too function as the sites of agency. But salon work also provides the means to be in dialogue

with Indonesian national modernity and to use it as the basis to articulate and strive for national belonging. I will come back to this later on.

Returning to the notion of somatechniques, in other scholarly work on waria bodily practice (Hardon, Idrus, & Hymans, 2013; Idrus & Hymans, 2014) waria are described as envisioning their bodies as ‘projects’ that can be manipulated with pharmaceutical products and cosmetics in order to become ‘like woman’, but also to cater to the male attention. While highlighting the somatic techniques that waria use in their gendered enactments, these insights once again underline the significance of intersubjectivity in bodily practice – waria want to produce a certain look for a certain audience, the male gaze. But in order to achieve self-affirmation and recognition in others it is not sufficient to simply perform gendered enactments. Since performance is always constituted and contextualized by power and history (Manalansan, 2003, p.15), gendered enactments need to be performed in a way that also renders them intelligible. The potential of achieving this in oneself and in others rests on the careful consideration of the specific socio-historical contexts in which these enactments are embedded.

In her analysis of the production of femininity among women and trans-formistas in Venezuela, Ochoa (2014) develops the notion of spectularity to grasp the scope of practices used in gender performativity that aim for legible forms of femininity. Spectacular femininities materialize bodies through discursive production, creating a spectacle of self directed to an audience, which can be real, such as the masculine gaze, or imagined, such as oneself in the mirror or an ambivalent audience projected into the lens of a camera. Drawing on Butler’s description of speech act (1999, p. xxv as cited in Ochoa, 2014, p. 209), Ochoa describes spectacular femininities as involving three productive elements: they are staged, presented to an audience, and subject to interpretation. Ochoa’s use of the spectacle helps to bring closer together the discourse and the body and delineate between various modalities and intentionalities of gendered enactments. The spectacle is a more ‘theatrical’ form of enactment (as it is ‘staged for an audience’). It is one of the registers of performativity, in which people can draw on cultural resources and use them in their signifying practices. The latter are unavoidably related to various media, which provide citational imperatives (Ochoa, 2014, p. 210) and thus produce the conventions of a spectacle. The successful accomplishment of the spectacle relies on the subject’s awareness of the contexts they are in, in order to produce and accomplish the legible forms of femininity (Ochoa, 2014, p. 231). In a similar vein, as I also argue in Article III, the enactments of beauty that waria produce for themselves and others in Papua, whether in salons, street nightlife or at a beauty pageant, are specific to the Papuan socio-historical context and its available media, which render some forms of embodied beauty as more legible than others.

What matters in determining the modes of production of gendered enactments more generally is indeed context, both the broader cultural as well as the socially situational, sensitive to its specific temporality and spatiality, bearing similarities to Malinowski’s (1946[1923], p. 307; 2002[1935] p. 18, as cited in

Ben-Amos, 1993, p. 209) distinction between ‘context of culture’ and ‘context of situation’. A performance is always enclosed in both of these contexts, on which its meaning depends. Gendered performances take place in the narrower context around a particular event or situation, but they are always already situated within the wider socio-cultural context that nevertheless penetrates all meaningful action. As to waria nightlife (see especially Article II), their gendered enactments are situated within the context of commercialized sexuality, which in Malinowski’s terms would be the context of situation. This situational context spurs waria in shaping their appearances, movements and speech as alluring or erotic and potentially available to the audience of their display (Goffmann, 1990[1959]; Bauman, 2012). According to Bauman (2012, p. 99), the performer casts her/his co-participants as an audience, inviting them to evaluate how skilfully and effectively the performative act is accomplished. At the waria sex work locations, the primary audience of their performance are the men who seek sexual relationships with waria – their potential clients or partners. The attention waria get or the money they earn would be interpreted as an evaluation of how effectively they have accomplished their performance. But as I argue at various points throughout the thesis, the intersubjective dimension within waria gendered performances at the street nightlife setting reaches beyond their potential clients, including other waria, but also the structuring ideals and imagined communities that can be envisioned as imaginary audiences, which, however, may forge self-affirmation and a sense of belonging. But the enactment of these imaginary ties to aspired belonging may also act as resources that grant access to other categories of belonging, such as belonging to the local surrounding communities.

These threads lead to the question of how subjectivity and performativity relate to belonging, a central question in this thesis. For waria, who depart from the normative assumptions on gender and deploy an alternative subject position, that of a waria, the question of belonging is highly contested at the national level, but equally complicated on the more local communal scales, such as the families and villages or neighbourhoods (*kampung*) where waria have grown up or settled. Conceptually we can think of belonging as demarcating the limits of acceptable difference within a group (Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2014, p. 2–4). Hence, belonging is tied to the questions of similarities and differences that may be embedded in corporeality, but are nevertheless performatively enacted<sup>6</sup>. As mentioned above, belonging to a group, community, or an imagined category such as nation or *dunia waria*, is aspired to through performative enactments. Hence, desire for belonging is productive as it frames and forges bodily enactments to be intelligible, affectively appealing or legitimate. Thus belonging can also be regarded a form of intersubjectivity, as it assumes a counterpart – the community in which one aspires to belong. The sense of belonging is thus

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<sup>6</sup> With regard to corporeality, Butler’s framework of performativity (1990; 1993) has been criticized for its lack of addressing racialization and its ability to take account of the various historical contexts in which the speech acts are embedded (see, for example, Nelson, 1999).

achieved when these enactments are rendered meaningful by the desirable audiences located in their historically and socio-culturally specific contexts. As performativity's establishment of the normative body needs to be considered alongside the attention to the specific socio-spatial and historical embeddedness of the subject, in a similar manner the means to achieve a sense of belonging is always contextually dependant. It unfolds within the productive performative tension between the embodiment and the imagined reaches towards the categories one aspires to belong to or the cultural resources that may strategically serve belonging to the locally surrounding communities. Having outlined these theoretical approaches to embodied subjectivity and its relation to performativity, agency and belonging, in the remainder of the introduction, I will now proceed with a more ethnographically elaborated account of waria gendered subjectivity and their embodied notions of belonging.

### 3.2. Becoming waria

It was long after midnight on a Saturday night as I was making my regular trek towards Bank Indonesia, or BI as waria usually call this area located in the heart of Yogyakarta, at the southern end of Malioboro street, not far from the Sultan's Palace. At that time in Yogyakarta there were five different street locations where a number of waria would spend their nights getting together and looking for potential partners. BI, which spreads out around a few *angkringan* (food stalls), an underground public toilet and a parking lot in front of the colonial bank building was one of these BI and the area behind Tugu rail station known as Bong Suwung were the busiest waria nighttime hangout spots in Yogyakarta around the time of my extended fieldwork in 2011–2012. People in the neighbourhood or those hanging out late at night would know that this is where one may encounter waria. All waria in the city seem to be aware of at least some of these locations, but those who go out regularly usually stick to one location.

I was still a few blocks away from BI, when I suddenly noticed a few waria standing by the road under a street light in quite an unusual place. I turned my motorbike around and soon met four charming ladies in fancy dresses, impressive make-up and carefully done hair. It was obvious they had invested a significant amount of time and labour to achieve this look of 'going out for the night' – they had all *déndong* well. But after a while talking to them, I was no longer sure whether I had really met waria. One of them, named Milly, then switched from Indonesian to English and said:

“Whatever they call it, you know... I am homosexual. We just get bored and we just want to make us beautiful. You know, sometimes we want to make variation in our sexuality, you know, different appearance to look beautiful, because of our heart.”

Another one added:

“And sometimes, too, when we getting changing to waria, it’s because we are bored with homosexual life, so sometimes we want to get some fun with straight guys.”

Three of them were from Kalimantan and the fourth was from Medan in Sumatra, and they had all lived in Yogyakarta for several years. They are friends who occasionally get together, dress up, put on spectacular make-up, and go out on the streets. They are looking for fun, as they say, and they seem to enjoy being approached as waria who can be paid for their company and their sex. While we were talking, a man in his fifties pulled over his motorbike, gave a broad smile and tried to engage in conversation. One of the girls stepped closer. Soon she sat on his motorbike and they drove away – a scene typical of waria nightlife locations. Milly continued:

“But basically, I am a feminine man. So actually, there is a kind of time of waria. Some of us only dress like fifty-fifty, and some doing this [what we do now]”.

While the case exemplifies the interrelation and occasional juxtaposition of the gay and waria subject positions, it also underlines the culturally constructed character of the social categories such as ‘waria’ (or, for that matter, ‘woman’ or ‘man’) that operate in the public sphere, being at once productive, performative and hermeneutic. In Foucauldian terms, discourse mediates materiality and simultaneously also produces it. The presence of these friends and the fact they may indeed find partners in the blink of an eye depends on the very existence of the knowable category ‘waria’ within the Indonesian night-time cityscape. Waria as a gendered subject position is a social category in Indonesia, and within the context of street nightlife this category is recognized in the bodies of the flamboyant figures standing by the road, usually wearing spectacular make-up and outlandish dress. Because of their performance of gender that is commonly associated with that of waria or *banci*, these self-identified gay men were recognized in the context of the street nightlife and they were able to lure the men considered as *laki-laki normal* – those who would normally desire women. Most of the men who are interested in these pursuits are also aware of the male bodies underneath their feminine attire. Thus the socially legitimized category of waria also allows these habitually identified gay men to ‘pass as waria’ on the occasions they want to enjoy the attention and sexual pleasure of the *laki-laki normal*.

It is relatively common knowledge among waria and gay circuits that some gay men like to *dandan* occasionally; however, they would not usually perform transactional sex at the places where waria gather. Some waria would think these men are actually waria, but they are simply too shy or afraid of the reactions from their families and other gay friends to become a ‘full time waria’. Others think, indeed, that they dress up only with the purpose of experiencing a different kind of sexual pleasure; they are just gay *dandan*. Sometimes these figures are



also called *banci kaléng* (see Hegarty, 2018, p. 359), who are understood as those who expose effeminate manners, gather at the sex work locations, but do not *déndong* regularly and do not identify as waria – at least not yet.

While Milly identified as gay, she however referred to the ‘time of waria’ in her life. But in fact ‘waria-ness’ is expressed temporarily by many. There are waria who do not *déndong* full time, who are recognized by their male identity at their daily work or who simply do not want to contradict themselves in front of their families. “Not all waria have the soul to always become a woman [*tidak semua waria memiliki jiwa yang selalu untuk menjadi perempuan*],” a 23-year-old waria of Yogyakarta stated. Enactment of ‘waria-ness’ is indeed often temporarily and spatially bounded.

As the above case illustrates, the distinction and interrelation between the gay and waria categories and subject positions is anything but clear and simple. However, waria usually distinguish themselves plainly from gays, saying that gays are attracted to other gays, while waria desire *laki-laki normal*. Some also note that while gays may still marry women, waria would always remain waria<sup>7</sup>, as they have the soul of a woman. But going through a period of identifying as gay is not rare among waria. This is when they notice their attraction towards men and enjoy sexual relations with men, but do not yet *déndong* or come to identify as waria. The period is often looked back on as ‘when I was still gay’ (*waktu saya masih gay*), and in most cases I know it aligns with the teenage years. Nonetheless, I have also met someone who became a waria from identifying as gay in her mid-twenties after her gay boyfriend broke her heart, and another who switched between her feminine and masculine subject positions, along with her/his name, self-presentation and aspirations for family commitments during an extended period of time. But what would these incidents indicate? I suggest that these cases in the ‘grey area’ – waria who *déndong* occasionally, who switch back to their identification as men, who swing between their ‘gay’ and ‘waria’ identifications, who somehow seem to slip away from the likelihood of adequate categorization in the eyes of the ethnographer – further emphasis the idea of the productivity of cultural categories. These categories open up possibilities for the ways of becoming and categories of belonging, notwithstanding the messiness of the ‘felt sense’ of bodies and the practices in the flesh.

What, then, are the essential elements that make one a waria? My research stands in line with the revelation of Boellstorff (2007, p. 90) that soul and clothing are basically the two components that make a waria. A third one, I suggest, is waria attraction towards men. While soul (and heart or instincts) can be roughly understood as the inner sense of gender, and clothing is the way one meaningfully enacts gender against the system of gender performativity, waria attraction to men is another aspect that seems fundamental both in their

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<sup>7</sup> In his rich ethnography on the gay subjectivity in Indonesia, Boellstorff (2005) has provided great detail on gay men and their desire to marry heteronormatively. However, there have been cases, still rare, of waria going back to their villages in normative male attire and marrying a woman due to social expectations.

self-discovery process and to their sense of self as waria. There are various trajectories by which one makes sense of herself as having the soul of a woman or gets to wear feminine attire regularly, but as is evident in the following coming of age stories of waria, sexual experiences with men or attraction to men share a valid position in these stories.

Most waria noticed their difference from other kids already in early childhood. They recount playing with dolls, making friends with girls or feeling attracted to or shy in front of boys. Often their effeminate manners are noticed by other people in the family or neighbourhood, who draw attention to their feminine gestures and sometimes call these kids *banci*. During their early teenage years, many recall noticing sensations towards male classmates or falling in love with a person of the same sex. On the contrary, relations with girls are described rather like those between sisters, there is no sensation (*tidak ada rasa*). The upcoming stories of various trajectories of self-discovery demonstrate the productive interplay between the elements we may analytically recognize as gendered and sexual.

Kidung was born in 1978 into a poor family of nine children in Yogyakarta. As a child she enjoyed singing and dancing and she remembers that her performance turned out better if she did it dressed as a girl. During primary school she recognized a couple of waria in her neighbourhood and that other people were calling her *banci* or waria. She felt she was different and that her difference resided inside herself.

“From a young age I feel that I am a woman, from my childhood I play with men, I am also naughty. I have been drinking from a small age, I am a smoker, I played with the boys on the street. But that was how I felt myself to be a woman – they were looking after me.”

She recognized herself as a waria and begun *déndong* – dressing and grooming the way girls would do – at the age of 13. She was wearing bra and high heels at home and made her family face the reality: “Yes, that is me. If you don’t want to accept me, I will leave home. Here I am, this is your child, this is your blood, like this,” she recounted. One of her older brothers became angry, telling her not to *dandan*, even if she wanted to engage with men. They ended up fighting, until their mother interrupted and allowed Kidung to *dandan*. Her parents believe people are born different, and following this principle they also accepted Kidung as a different kind of a child. Later on, in fact, another sibling turned out to be a waria too. She begun *dandan* only at the age of 22. Kidung did not want to become an economic burden to her family, so she left the junior high school (SMA) and started working in a salon, thus supporting her self-realisation and living her choice of gendered subject position as a waria.

Pauline (born 1964 in Kalimantan) remembers her feminine behaviour since her childhood. She grew up with her siblings as their parents were dead. At the primary school her deskmate was a girl and that is when she also noticed her

femininity arising (*timbul kewanitaannya*). In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade she had sex with a man, and they had a continuous relationship.

“So we loved each other. Every Saturday night he always came to my house, at the time of the 6th grade. We were already in a relationship like that of a husband and wife. So sometimes he had sex with me like hugging and kissing, so it was still in the elementary school, lasting until junior high school.”

She was carrying a lipstick in her bag. At the junior high school she was also wearing a short skirt at school, while at home she needed to attend to the normative gender presentation, because her family would not accept it otherwise. She left Kalimantan soon for Yogyakarta and from there on to Papua in 1992, where she still runs a successful salon business in one of the districts of Jayapura.

Putri (born 1980 in Surabaya) used to prefer dolls to football as a child and recounts being called a *banci*. She spent her high school away from her parents in an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), where she experienced sex with fellow male students, who tried to have sex with her at night.

“They always did it like I’m a woman from them. From there I felt that ‘Oh my god, is that I’m a woman? Is that I’m a gay? Is that I’m a transgender?’ I didn’t know, what was meant for me, but I worked on with my life.”<sup>8</sup>

After finishing school she did not want to stay with her parents because she wanted to get a better understanding of herself. So she moved to Bali, where she tried to survive and ended up performing at the drag queen lip-sync shows.

“Because of this I think I became transgender, because every day I was doing make-up and I felt comfortable with make-up. From that show I know that I’m transgender, I know that I’m ladyboy. So every friend of mine did make-up only at night. But I was happy to be ladyboy everyday, in the day I had make-up, in the night I also had make-up.”

Hence, in all these stories the elements of gendered behaviour and same sex attraction are equally present. Kidung in her words felt herself as a woman since early childhood, relating this to her experiences of singing in feminine attire, wearing a bra at the age of 13, and falling in love with men at the same early age. Pauline also notes her femininity arising in the elementary school and engages in a relationship with a man as early as in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Putri recalls playing with dolls and having sexual relations with men in an Islamic boarding school. These seem to be indeed the two most commonly shared threads in the stories of how one becomes a waria: behaviour or looks that are considered feminine or somehow different and sometimes also noticed as such by others as a child; and romantic feelings and/or sexual encounters with men during the early teenage years. Although such experiences in themselves most probably

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<sup>8</sup> This interview was conducted in English.

make her question, they do not necessarily get someone to identify as a waria. Often at this point it becomes necessary to meet other waria, to encounter the social world of waria, which becomes hermeneutic as it appears to explain the somewhat confusing sentiments in regard to one's gender and sexual identity. It also becomes productive as it opens up new ways of imagining one's life and one's belonging. This transition is often described by waria as entering (*masuk*) or falling into (*terjun di*) *dunia waria*, the world of waria.

### 3.3. *Dunia waria* – the world of waria

Indira, whom I also described above in Chapter 2.4, too said she had had the character of a woman since childhood. She was playing with dolls and girls. But she only began to make sense of herself as a waria when she moved to Yogyakarta for work at the age of 17 and then met waria at the Lempuyangan station. Although she had noticed her 'instincts and heart' as that of a woman much earlier, she was still recognized as a young man working in the formal sector.

"At that time I was still in a boy's appearance, but I already had instincts and a heart, behaviour like woman. And when I was there, there were a lot of waria friends at the Lempuyangan station at that time. After that I thought 'Oh, I'm not the same as them? What? No...' I was still the question mark. Later I saw the movements and activities of my friends. That's how I tried to find out my sexual orientation. It turned out that I am a waria. At that moment when I looked myself all made up like a woman, I was confused, what kind of character do I want to be? *Alhamdulillah*, I also can... Oh I am a woman and after that I took up activities like singing or maybe *nyébong*, going out at night. Yes, it turned out to be comfortable and just enjoy it, you know. After that, oh, it means I am like this. Until now I am a waria."

The experience of Indira sheds light upon the social dimension in the process of beginning to identify as a waria. When meeting waria at one of their nightlife locations, she began questioning her own identity. While these motives were driven by her 'womanly instincts, heart and behaviour' since childhood, she recognized herself as a waria only after encountering other waria and their activities. She tried out busking (which she refers to as singing), which is a widely shared practice and a form of labour among waria, especially in Yogyakarta. Busker waria walk the streets, markets, cafés, while singing and playing a simple instrument or music from a portable loudspeaker, and asking for some money in return<sup>9</sup>. Indira also tried *nyébong*, which is a slang word for the waria

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<sup>9</sup> In 2014, the government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (*Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*) passed a law that prohibits begging and homelessness (*Perda No. 1 tahun 2014 tentang Gelandangan dan Pengemis*). The implementation of the law affected the widely shared waria practice of *pengamen* (busking). I regard the enforcement of the law as a form of spatial abjection (Article I).

nightlife activities that involve gathering at the specific locations wearing appealing attire for the purposes of general socializing as well as intimate encounters with men in a form of transactional sex. In other words, Indira entered into the social realms of the group of people known as waria. She engaged with the activities that waria she had met were already practising. She learnt to dress in feminine attire, to go out busking in the morning and *nyébong* at night. Through these activities she felt herself comfortable, she enjoyed it, and thus she understood that this is who she is – a waria. She became involved with the waria ‘lifeworld’ (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973), she had entered *dunia waria*.

Following many waria, who refer to the period of realizing themselves as a waria as ‘entering’ (*masuk*) or ‘falling’ (*terjun*) into the ‘world of waria’ (*dunia waria*) or who refer to the cultural milieu of waria as *dunia waria*, I have used *dunia waria* throughout the thesis to get an analytical grip of the waria lifeworld, the ‘culture’ that waria enact and produce as a result of their performative practice. But *dunia waria* is also a category of imagination, providing the means to envision one’s life in retrospect or towards its potential developments and to differentiate it from the rest of the world. One waria said, “I was already in this world since my third year in junior high school”. Another recounted “immediately falling into the waria world” (*langsung terjun di dunia waria*) after returning from high school in Jakarta back to Makassar, where she met other waria and entered into a long-term relationship. An indigenous Papuan waria describes her story in the following manner: “When I entered the world of waria, my family forbade it, they said no, they did not agree with me entering the world of waria. I was beaten, so I didn’t feel at home any more and I fled alone to Sorong.” Following the wide use of this semantic formulation among waria, I deploy *dunia waria* to refer to the social and imaginary worlds of waria.

*Dunia waria* is also performative. It has its own codes of communication such as, for example, waria slang language that other Indonesians would not make much sense of. It is laid out at its community cultural activities such as beauty pageants, sport events, excursions outside town, their regular meetings, birthday parties, advocacy activities. *Dunia waria* includes specific traditions, such as a lottery game *arisan* that is practised at many waria communities as in other Indonesian social groupings. In *arisan*, each participant contributes a small amount of money each week, securing herself a chance to win the whole sum that was collected. Many waria follow the temporality that is characteristic to *dunia waria*, such as daily work in salons, followed by *mandi* (shower) and *déndong* after sunset, and gathering for the night outside.

Indonesians in fact use the word *dunia* for various kinds of social and imaginary scenes, such as *dunia seni* (the art world), *dunia artis* (performance art world), *dunia perempuan* (women’s world), *dunia luar* (outside world, i.e. foreign countries). Blackwood (2010) writes about Indonesian *lesbi* ‘falling into the lesbian world’ (*terjun ke dunia lesbi*). Waria may speak of the time when they *terjun di dunia salon* – they ‘fell into the salon world’ – which would mean the time of getting acquainted with salon work and discovering this ‘world’.

They may also refer to the nightlife and sex work scene as a particular *dunia*. This would be usually referred to as *dunia malam*, the nightlife. Young waria may be described by older ones as looking for *dugem*, which is a portmanteau slang word for *dunia gemerlap*, the ‘sparkling world’, which generally means nightclubs or simply clubbing. As these ‘worlds’ are often intertwined, *dunia waria* does not stand in isolation from other ‘worlds’, such as *dunia gay* (gay world), *dunia salon*, *dunia malam* or the context of female sex work, which normalises transactional sex in many Indonesian cities.

Throughout the thesis I maintain that *dunia waria* has unfolded under societal constraints, but that it can also be regarded as a response to them. It has formed through the forces of abjection, as a consequence of the oppressive structures of social exclusion in the society, but it is also the means to overcome them. As families often refuse to accept their child as a waria, many leave home to seek recognition elsewhere. They travel to bigger cities, where they find support from an older waria or groups of waria, forming new kinships. These new kinships create communities and these communities further make ‘worlds’ which are at once embodied and imaginary, and which not only hold the promise of a more ‘livable life’ (Butler, 2004), but often indeed cater for it.

### 3.4. The key spaces of *dunia waria*

*Dunia waria* may be understood not only as a discursive formation of the perceived social and imaginary world of the waria, but can also be traced within the material landscape. In my experience, the two most visible and active sites where *dunia waria* is enacted are salons and street nightlife locations. Throughout this thesis, but especially in Article I, I argue that while this specific spatial organization has developed as a result of various social strictures and spatial constraints – in other words, through the forces of abjection –, these sites nevertheless hold important agentic qualities. These spaces are not only places of paid exchange that matter in terms of waria personal economies, but they are also productive spatialities that affirm waria subjectivity. Drawing on the conceptualization of space as socially and discursively produced and tied to power relations (see Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1994; Soja, 1996), the waria salons and nightlife locations can be envisioned as transformative and conjoining spatialities that function as both medium and outcome of situated human agency (Lefebvre, 1991; Gregory *et al.*, 2011, p. 716). As explained earlier in this chapter, my view on agency is first and foremost tied to the possibilities that arise from the expression of subjectivity. Subjugating oneself to certain practices may enforce subjectivity, providing a point from which to speak and socialise while not having to hide or reject the ‘felt sense’ of gender. As I will show, the key spatialities of *dunia waria* are the sites of embodied world-making, providing strategies for more ‘livable lives’ (Butler, 2004).

With its codes of communication and aesthetics, self-support strategies, ethics, and spaces, *dunia waria* is often a transitional space for young waria to reach

self-affirmation and a feeling of belonging to a community which fosters the experience and expression of their subjectivity. The activities around *dunia waria* provide the social, emotional, and other kinds of support for young waria – from information on safe sex practice and access to healthcare, to tips on how to *déndong* or earn necessary income.

First of all, therefore, the key spaces of *dunia waria* such as salons and street nightlife locations hold important social qualities. Salons are often the venues where waria organize their meetings or gather together for an afternoon hangout, listening to music, chatting, sometimes dancing in front of mirrors, practising their hairstyling skills on each other, while remaining ready to serve a client who might step into the salon at any moment. Through these playful enactments in their salons, waria are engaged in constant transformation through experimental communication with their self-reflections, with their structuring ideals, as they dance, walk, put on make-up, do their hair, try out poses, partaking in the constant and indefinite becoming (Article I).

Waria also cite social reasons for going out for the night to the locations associated with transactional sex, often called as *tempat nyé bong*. Sex work among waria is a complex topic in its own right (see Article II). It is generally caused by economic conditions (Ariyanto, Radjab, & Sundari, 2007) as a result of the social abjection of waria. Following the extensive migration at an early age that many waria experience due to the lack of family support, sex work is often their sole means of survival on the streets of a big city, the ‘vicious circle’ (Ariyanto, Radjab, & Sundari, 2007) that is difficult to break apart from. Indeed, the majority of waria have some sex work experience over their life course. According to the study by the Indonesian Ministry of Health, as many as 75,9% of waria are estimated to sell sex and an additional 10% engage in casual sex (Directorate General of Disease Prevention..., 2017). Sex work places waria under various dangers, such as the risks of sexually transmitted diseases or physical abuse. As a form of labour, it is also stigmatized in Indonesia, and this weighs on the struggle for waria national belonging as well as their individual reputation in the eyes of their families or neighbouring communities. Some waria also relate transactional sex with the notion of sin, affecting their sense of self-worth.

However, there are other significant reasons beyond the purely economic for waria wishing to pursue their night activities. Many waria describe street nightlife as a chance to come together with friends, to dress up in attractive attire, and socialize – experiences they often describe simply as fun and enjoyable. This is why waria in Yogyakarta, as well as in many other cities, are more likely to refer to these practices as *keluar malam* (going out at night), *mejeng* (exhibit oneself, hang-out), *kumpul* (get together) or *nyé bong* (a more specific waria term for their night-time socializing that involves transactional sex) rather than PSK (*pekerja sex komersial* – commercial sex work). From the point of performative power granted by the practice of *déndong*, waria make themselves visible and intelligible for others. Furthermore, young waria in their gendered enactments often extend their affective engagements to the transnational

imaginings of the cosmopolitan world in order to converge emotionally with the imagined ‘phantasmic lady’ – a notion I use and develop in Article I to mark the structuring ideals of gender that render the norms of femininity and sexiness across the transnational ‘mediascape’ (Appadurai, 1996). Hence, in the spectacle of waria nightlife, there is a great deal of gendered performance linked to the envisioned upward mobility in relation to Indonesian modernisation and consumer capitalist developments, undermining waria visibility against the backdrop of ‘national glamour’ (Hegarty, 2018). Furthermore, street nightlife provides waria possibilities to meet men who are interested in waria.



**Figure 7.** A couple of waria at the key street nightlife site known as Tembok in Sorong, West Papua. Still image of video footage by the author, 2015.

### ***3.4.1. Desire in the waria conception of gender***

Gathering at the specific waria street nightlife locations caters for the intimate encounters of waria with men, serving their own sexual pleasure as well as providing them with the opportunity to feel attractive and desired in their preferred gendered presentation (see especially Article II). As often occurs in the street sex work settings, the waria is the one who chooses with whom she wants to engage in sex and how much to charge – if anything at all, if the man is considered desirable yet poor. Sexual engagements at these locations are often based on mutual attraction, binding together the motives of money, pleasure and love. The engagements with other waria, structuring ideals, and sexual encounters with men together foster the sense of self-affirmation, making waria sex work locations ultimately into playgrounds for love (Article II). ‘Playground’ here frames the social, performative, sensorial and pleasurable aspects embedded in the waria places of *nyébong*. It is prompted by the waria use of the word ‘play’



(*main*) in reference to flirtatious communication and sexual activity. Indonesians also use *main* to indicate the social activities that are considered fun, such as chatting and hanging out. Potentially long-lasting romantic relations between men and waria also emerge from the acquaintances made at these street nightlife locations.

The significance of men and waria relations that emerges in the context of street nightlife can be further explained by the notion of desire in the conception of gender among waria. In line with Oetomo (1996) and Boellstorff (2004a, p. 168), I convey the interconnectedness of gender and sexuality in the waria subject position. As described in previous sections, in the stories of waria self-discovery during early adulthood, romantic or sexual relations with men hold an equally important position as their behaviour and feelings, which are considered girl-like or womanly. Many waria also describe themselves or the meanings they attach to the subject position of a waria through romantic feelings, desire and attraction towards men they regard as *laki-laki normal*. Pauline's explanation (born 1964 in Kalimantan) for waria illustrates well the intrinsic relation of gender and sexuality within the waria subject position:

“So I don’t have passion (*nafsu*) with you because I’m not gay and I’m also not heterosexual, so I’m *transgender* [uses the English term] and I don’t like to have sex with you, but with men. Maybe that’s my opinion for the category of waria. It is different from gay, different from heterosexual, and also waria is different, so there is a difference. Gay people like men, but there are also heterosexuals who like men and like women. So if you ask what is the meaning of waria in my life, it is not a meaning, but it is the life of waria – namely, men who dress as women and *my feeling of woman* [uses English] until she dies, until the God calls.”

Here we see her contrasting the waria subject position and that of the gay and heterosexual position. As emphasized at several points in this thesis, most waria distinguish between themselves and gays based on their specific object of desire. They say that gays are attracted to other gays, but waria like *laki-laki normal* – men who would normally desire women. Pauline touches upon the widely shared marker of waria identification – dressing as women, which is often understood as the practice of *déndong* – but what strikes me here is her emphasis on sexual passion (*nafsu*) when describing herself. She claims not to be sexually interested in me as someone apparently a woman, because she is not a gay nor a heterosexual, but she is a waria, a ‘transgender’ that she describes through three main aspects: a male body wearing feminine attire, her ‘feelings of woman’, and her desire for men.

The intrinsic link between the waria subject position and their sexual desire for men is shared by most waria I know. It is also why some young waria see nightlife that includes transactional sex almost as an intrinsic part of what makes one a waria. This especially applies to the so-called ‘temporal’ waria – those who dress up only at night when out of sight of their families or when they travel to other cities, notwithstanding their definition by themselves or others

as waria, *banci kaléng* or ‘actually gay’. For young waria particularly, street nightlife is the context where they may find joy in meeting others like themselves, playing around with their feminine-identified subject position and experiencing sexual encounters with men. The significance of these street locations is boosted by the fact that there are usually no other places with such a density of people interested and available for non-heteronormative intimate encounters, that is, sex between men and waria.

There is also another significant aspect to note here. The body is often the source of tension for waria, who have grown up with a feeling of distortion between their anatomy and the ‘felt sense’ (Salamon, 2010) of their bodies. From the position of the ‘felt sense’ of gender as that of a woman, the pleasurable relations with men – whether these are sexual exchange or simply flirtatious attention – that emerge at the waria nightlife locations forge waria self-affirmation. Even if these intimate and alluring experiences are ephemeral and usually still tied to monetary exchange, they give waria the chance to enjoy sexual pleasure, but equally as importantly they affirm waria desirability as sexual subjects, as subjects ‘like women’. The emphasis by some waria on their desired intimacy further foregrounds the position of sexual desire in their sense of gender: for example, not liking when men touch their genitals or perform oral sex on them or that they like to have sex ‘just like women’ referring to the so-called missionary position (which, however, is not the case for all waria, see Oetomo (2000)). As waria forge pleasurable relations with men in the context of street nightlife and beyond, it illuminates the intersubjectivity of waria embodiment. Here the intersubjectivity does not appear that much as a mimetic production in relation to the structuring ideals and imagined categories of belonging, although in some ways it also does that – having sex ‘just like women’ is also a performative statement and an enactment that points towards the structuring ideal of heteronormative sex. But more importantly, the intersubjectivity of embodiment here arouses sexuality, which in turn affirms a sense of gender.

It is also true that many waria have met their long-lasting loves at the street nightlife setting. A loving and lasting relationship is often described as an ideal for waria, as it is for many Indonesian women, but it is hard to achieve this in the predominant context of reproductive heterosexuality. Many waria share an experience of having had a loving relationship with a young man (often described as *brondong*) that might have lasted for years, until the man reaches a critical age and decides for himself or is forced by his family to marry a woman. Others recount their long-lasting relationships with men who are already married and may have children. In these cases, the non-exclusive relationship is kept secret and develops through occasional dates. Very few waria are actually living together with their partners *seperti istri suami*, like husband and wife. In this paradoxical situation of love for waria – being attracted to men they conceive as heterosexual, meaning that they would normally desire women, whereas gays are attracted to other gays – some waria consciously choose to not engage in the pursuit of relationships, but enjoy the momentary pleasures that

come up at the level of street nightlife. See the following conversation with Donna (born 1976) in Sorong:

Donna: I once had a husband (*suami*), I had a boyfriend who became a husband. I lived together with him for a number of years, but the only way it goes is that we are also hurt, yes, we are the ones who are also broken, who are hurt.

Toomistu: You were hurt by him?

Donna: Yes, finally it is the only way it goes that we are hurt. He turned back to a woman, went back to a woman.

Toomistu: Is it because he wanted to have kids or?

Donna: Yeah, maybe that's what we can't have – we can't have offsprings. They say they want to have offspring. It's okay, that's the way it is, but it hurts us, it hurts. Indeed, the men do not feel this way, we just don't make them feel satisfied, he is always and always... But those who feel this way are generally waria. So how to go about it...

Toomistu: And is it perhaps that waria become afraid of dating men from the fear of heartache?

Donna: Yes, as to me, I have already been traumatized, I mean, I already have a trauma if I wanted to be married (*bersuami*) again. So to become married again, we would often continue to get hurt. It's better if I just go for the night, to sell, just going out at night.

So even if these pleasurable interactions with men are momentary, taking place in the context of street nightlife and involving monetary exchange, some waria like Donna judge them better than investing emotionally in a long-lasting relationship which may end with a broken heart once the man leaves for a woman. Hence, the street nightlife is one of the few contexts which caters for the waria intimate encounters with men, with or without any desired prospects of longer-lasting romantic relations.

The emphasis on the sensorial, social and pleasurable aspects in waria street nightlife reveals aspects of waria sex work that go beyond the political economy of sex work and adds another important angle to some of the previous accounts of waria sex work, which associate it with the lack of opportunities to work in the formal Indonesian labour market (Ariyanto, Radjab, & Sundari, 2007). With this in mind, however, it is necessary to highlight once again that many waria are economically dependent on the income from sex work. Moreover, transactional sex involves increased risks for health. Waria are one of the crucial risk groups in HIV-related health and outreach projects with, as mentioned before, the latest available data for 2015 suggesting the rate of HIV infection among waria as 24.8% (Indonesia IBBS, 2015).

Increasingly, waria are also encountering men through online apps. As I describe in Article I, the social nature of street sex work at Bank Indonesia in Yogyakarta that I witnessed in 2010–2012 had basically disappeared by the time of my follow-up fieldwork in 2018. This can be partly explained by the restructuring of the area, which included the removal of the underground public toilet where waria used to have sex with their clients. But the increasing risk of

being targeted by occasional hate crimes and the continuous policing of that very central area by the municipal police also played a role here.

As I have shown in this section (Chapter 3.4), the key spaces of *dunia waria* such as salons and street nightlife locations are not only places of paid exchange of importance in terms of waria personal economies. They are also productive spatialities that affirm waria subjectivity in affective relations with their intimate partners, the community, the phantasmic promises of the transnational media-scape as well as the Indonesian nation. These spaces of embodied world-making at once manifest *dunia waria* and provide opportunities to transform oneself in its currents. Marlon M. Bailey has written about the Ballroom culture in Detroit, in which the members of the Black LGBT community strive for community and transformation through performance that Bailey describes as ‘both a means of altering their ways of *being* in the world and of creating an *alternative* world altogether’ (Bailey, 2013, p. 19, emphasis original). Just as Ballroom culture forms an alternative world where their members’ gender and sexual identities are celebrated and affirmed (Bailey, 2013, p. 106), waria nightlife and the socializing at waria salons provide a space for waria to express themselves in a desired way and to be admired as such.

As we have seen, *dunia waria* is a site of embodied world-making, which on a daily basis is most visible at waria salons and at the specific street nightlife locations. While *dunia waria* as a term may be used by waria to refer to their own understanding of self through references to the practices of dressing in feminine attire or simply diverging from the normative gendered expectations, not all waria participate in the social activities that are generally associated with *dunia waria*. Street nightlife, for example, is strongly objected to by some waria, who emphasize its psychological and moral burden, and the risks and danger it poses to health. This kind of critique, however, is mostly expressed by those who have already established themselves in the salon world or elsewhere and are thus financially independent. They are also at least in their thirties as opposed to young waria in their late teens who need money to survive and for whom street nightlife is a site of communal belonging, self-expression and learning, and who would often describe these practices as enjoyable and fun.

In the next and the final chapter, I draw together several points laid out in this thesis to account for the waria embodied notions of belonging. I ask how the aspirations for belonging may frame and forge the embodied enactments deployed in the course of gender performativity. More specifically, I consider how waria embodied practices cater for the sense of belonging and are used strategically to claim belonging on both communal and national scales.

## 4. Embodied notions of belonging

I remembered Nayla as a rather shy and sad girl. She was keeping close me at the long nights at Bank Indonesia, confessing that she does not engage in sex work like others here. She comes here only to hang out with friends and she works as a make-up artist in Boche nightclub, which employs several waria. When I returned back to Yogyakarta around half a year later and went out to Bank Indonesia again, Nayla was the first one who ran over to greet me with kisses. She had coloured her hair blond and added hair extensions. Tapping around proudly on high heels, she seemed a much more extrovert persona than I remembered. She announced loudly how she had travelled in Australia and Singapore, and everywhere she goes she works as a *lonte*, a hooker.

It was clear to me that she had not actually travelled to these places, but her gesture and speech – the spectacle (Ochoa, 2014) she put on a display – indicates her dreaming about those places. Although she was a bit tipsy and in a festive mood in her sexy outfit that night, her performative engagement with these places that are materially out of reach speaks about her affective investment in the transnational imaginings that brings the symbolic value of these faraway places into her story.

In this chapter, I focus on the ways that waria negotiate their belonging on various interlinked scales. In much of the scholarship engaging with the notion of belonging, it is generally investigated through the points of ethnicity, nation, religious affiliation or geographical borders (see the critique by Wood & Waite, 2011). Yuval-Davis (2006) and Antonsich (2010) distinguish between the sense of belonging, the intimate, personal feeling ‘at home’, and a discursive resource which structures belonging to specific collectives (‘the politics of belonging’). Following their distinction, this thesis deals mostly with the former approach to belonging – the sense of belonging. Belonging is also never simply ontologically ‘given’, but it is performatively enacted (Bell, 1999). Antonsich (2010) has pointed to the lack of scholarship engaging with the multiple yet intertwined scales of belonging. My proposed framework of belonging responds to his call. I do not consider belonging as necessarily a geographical register, but as a feeling of being accepted in a particular community, as primarily an emotional affiliation (Wood & Waite, 2011). But the community one aspires to belong to is not inevitably a community that is experienced within one’s felt immediacy. It can also be an imagined community or cartography. Belonging may hence include a sense of participation in the imaginary categories, which is sought for through certain affective and performative engagements. This conceptualization of belonging links with Avtar Brah’s notion of ‘homing desire’ (Brah, 1996), which she articulated – based on trans subjects on the diaspora – as the feeling of home in one’s embodied presence while tackling the political and social regulation of belonging. Thus ‘homing desire’ is different from the desire for the homeland. Rather, ‘home’ can be understood as a metaphor for body and embodied belonging (see also Bhanji, 2011). Like Brah, this thesis also deals with a predominantly diasporic community, especially considering waria in the

cities of Papua. When waria cut their relations to their immediate families or they are not tolerated in their *kampung* of origin, as is often the case, following their 'homing desire', they seek new forms of kinships, cartographies of belonging and places where they would be accepted and recognized. The travels and movements many waria engage with are hence their 'outward returns home' (Aizura, 2012) in search of acceptance, a sense of belonging, or simply a plausible ground for self-realization granted by urban anonymity and the possibilities of a kind of upward mobility (see especially Article I and III).

As mentioned in several instances earlier, the aspiration for belonging unfolds within the productive tension between embodiment and imagination, in which the desire for belonging to imagined categories is enacted on bodies and through bodily practice. Thus waria enact belonging performatively and affectively and they do it through various scales. Belonging may be aspired to on the communal and local scales within the phenomenological immediacy as well as on the scales of the communities that go beyond the felt immediacy – on the regional, national or even transnational scales. Although in practice, these scales of belonging are intertwined, it is useful to distinguish between them analytically. Following Benedict Anderson's approach to the nation as an imagined community (Anderson, 2006[1983]), national belonging is not only a matter of national recognition at the official state level, but it is about the feeling of belonging to the imaginary category of Indonesia. Similarly, we may also consider belonging to a regional category that in Indonesia often connotes cultural and ethnic specificities (e.g. East Java, West Papua, South Sulawesi, etc.) – the 'ethnolocalities' (Boellstorff, 2002). Furthermore, *dunia waria* that spreads across the archipelago – waria as an Indonesian category with its specific ways of life, identifications, places, etc. – can also be envisioned as an imagined community. Usually waria are aware that there are waria in other cities and in different regions across Indonesia. Many waria experience migration or extensive travel between cities or islands during which they meet other waria, join their street nightlife locations or pick up a job in someone's salon. In other words, they come across the slightly different yet familiar *dunia waria* in other places and begin to recognize this 'world of waria' as an imagined community in its own right. Unlike the engagement with the imagined categories of belonging, belonging to a specific community of waria, city or neighbourhood (*kampung*) can be experienced in felt immediacy, in which belonging is experienced as a feeling of being accepted and respected by one's fellows; and non-belonging would respectively correspond to rejection and disrespect by others. The phenomenologically experienced sense of belonging in waria daily lives is primarily related to waria belonging to *dunia waria* – to their community of friends and other like-minded people as well as their social category of identification. It is also an experience of acceptance by their local communities and surrounding societies. Additionally, we may distinguish an aspiration for belonging on the transnational scale, which may be understood as a kind of 'belonging to the world', to humankind, or to the transnational metropolis, which is aspired to by engendering affective ties to the subjects or places elsewhere in the world.

However, the enactments of these registers of belonging by no means appear in a straightforward way. The aspirations for national belonging are usually articulated widely in the waria discourse of recognition. At the waria beauty pageant in Papua, for example, waria on the stage called for recognition by stating countless times that “*waria juga manusia*” (waria are also human). The famous waria activist, the head of the jury who flew in from Jakarta, cited in her speech the Indonesian Constitution, which states equal opportunities for work and living for all citizens. These performatives explicitly call upon the national belonging. However, national belonging is often evoked in much more implicit ways. National belonging is not only a matter of equal citizenship and national recognition, nor it is necessarily aspired through performatives that claim recognition at the state level. National belonging is often enacted by simply marking the ways one is recognized as an Indonesian, claiming oneself a position within the ‘in-group’ of Indonesians. This may be aspired to, for example, by speaking Indonesian instead of any local languages, or by presenting oneself in public in certain ways, or just by calling oneself a waria, instead of a *banci*.

So how do gendered enactments cater for the potential of belonging to any of these scales, categories and communities? How may the aspirations for belonging or an experience of already belonging frame the enactments that are used in the production of gender? These questions bring into focus the intersubjective significance in performative practice in two ways. First, with regard to the audience at whom a specific performance is targeted; and secondly, by highlighting the context – the regional histories and systems of meanings, which render the enactments involved in the performance as meaningful, affectively appealing or legitimate. Concerning the ways belonging is enacted performatively on bodies and through bodily practice, the meaning of these embodied enactments rises against the backdrop of the available imagined communities and the systems of knowledge, which in turn rest on the regional specifics of the historical and contemporary contexts. In other words, these enactments are accomplished only when interpreted intelligibly in their particular context imbued with its colonial histories, transnational influences, and the available imagined communities.

To be able to claim belonging through performative practice, the performance needs to be situated meaningfully within an audience – the group to which one aspires to belong. But this audience may also be, and often is, imaginary. The latter is usually the case on the belonging that is aspired to on the transnational scale, in which the audience for the most cases remains ambivalent, at best located as ‘over there’, *di sana*. But aspiration for transnational belonging also does something else. When Nayla at the beginning of this chapter recounted the places where she ‘had been’ and what she ‘had seen’, there was obviously no transnational audience of a kind that was receptive of her speech. The audience were other waria, and also her self.

The various scales of belonging are usually intimately interrelated in bodily practices. Sometimes they are used strategically to claim belonging on some level, drawing from the resources of belonging to the other. Nayla in her spectacular speech act (Ochoa, 2014) aspired to belong to the transnational scene

she associated with the glamorous life of a high profile sex worker travelling across the well-off metropolitan cities of Singapore and Australia. But this aspiration was enacted not to evoke reaction from a kind of transnational scene. Rather it primarily served an affective convergence with other waria doing late night sex work in Yogyakarta. She deployed the conventions of a spectacle drawn from the available media and other sources of information and used it to produce a meaningful gender performance suitable for the scene of the waria nightlife in front of Bank Indonesia. Nayla drew from the resources of transnational belonging in order to situate herself within the audience of other waria, claiming communal belonging. Simultaneously, her affective engagement with these desirable faraway places also critiqued the life she was normally surrounded with. It thus holds a potential to lift her experience – even if this is only a phantasy – closer to the realms of her dreams. As explained in the previous chapter, it is not necessarily that the exterior acts causally represent the interior, but bodily practice can also be understood as the means of self cultivation. The sense of self that Nayla enacted through her spectacular engagement with the faraway places was a self in motion – a self which would, in a way, transcend her otherwise marginal position, not only as a waria living in Indonesia, but also as a girl who was usually not at the centre of attention and praise within this specific waria community. Nayla thus responded to these circumstances with an enactment of transnational belonging in order to claim belonging locally.

As we have seen from this example, the sense of belonging is usually intertwined throughout the various scales it interrogates. I am interested in the ways in which waria strategically enact belonging by drawing on any of these scales. As I have described earlier, waria often do things that are considered *prestasi* (good deeds) in order to claim national belonging. In the discourse of recognition, however, street sex work is something that waria would normally shy away from, as it is associated with *malu* (shame) and it is not a form of *prestasi*. Consequently, sex work impacts negatively on the prospects for waria national belonging. From the perspective of the concern for belonging, how to then make sense of the widespread nightlife activities among waria? When writing about abjection, Kristeva (1982) connected the act of abjection with prospects for subjectivity. To paraphrase Kristeva (1982, p. 3), within the same motion that the sex worker waria abject themselves from mainstream society with its proclaimed morality, heteronormativity and pious selfhood, they may also claim themselves the subject position of a waria – the one who is attracted to men and who enjoys dressing up in feminine attire, for which waria street nightlife offers the most convenient ground (see Article I). While street nightlife would not forge national belonging, it would, however, cater for self-affirmation and a sense of communal belonging – and after all, for many waria, it provides a much needed source of income.

In the cities of Papua, both indigenous and migrant waria are present, with migrants forming the vast majority. Here waria negotiations of belonging throughout these various scales (communal, local, national, transnational) become even more nuanced. Thus the ethnography of the Papuan waria allows fruitful



argumentation for the framework of belonging. As mentioned earlier, Papua is situated on the margins of the national imaginary. The population in the urban centres consists of a minority of indigenous Papuan people and a majority of migrants from various Indonesian regions who have migrated there since the 1970s either through the government's programme of *transmigrasi* or spontaneously (Article III). Against the backdrop of the Papuan vast mining economy, prices are significantly higher in Papua than in Java or Sulawesi. However, indigenous Papuans are often depicted as people who are backward, in contrast to the pursuit of success and development in the context of national modernity. In this specific context, it becomes very apparent how indigenous Papuan waria are socialized into *dunia waria* as well as how waria have established themselves in the region as the agents of beauty (Article III). They enact beauty themselves through the practice of *déndong* and spectacular self-presentation. With their salon services, waria also transform others, including the indigenous population, and they claim this work as their genuine contribution to society and to its progress (*maju*). This contribution, hence, becomes the basis for their aspirations for national belonging. In the sections that follow, I elaborate first on the productive nature of *dunia waria* as a locus of becoming and the category of belonging. Subsequently I proceed to discuss waria national belonging and the ways in which enactments of transnational belonging through somatic techniques of beauty, presentation of glamour and spectacular femininities are strategically put into use to claim belonging locally.

#### **4.1. *Dunia waria* as a locus of becoming and the category of belonging**

As I have described several times above, many waria use the term *dunia waria* when describing their lifeworlds. It is the social and imaginary 'world of waria' as they themselves perceive it, differing from the all possible kinds of other 'worlds' in the rest of society. Throughout the dissertation, I have benefitted from the use of *dunia waria* analytically to get a grip on the 'culture' that waria enact and produce and the inherently productive character of the category waria. Waria as a category of identification comes with its own social world, which opens up possibilities for economic self-realisation, social networks, and affective engagements. The embodied world-making that perpetually takes place at the sites of *dunia waria* and beyond is a performative practice which renders and challenges gendered norms, but also enforces understandings of what it means to be a waria. This leads to a point developed throughout the thesis: waria often forge their subject position in the context of the perceivable *dunia waria*. *Dunia waria* thus functions as a locus of becoming and the category of belonging – the 'world' that becomes one's own – and as such, it comes with its affective affinities and patterns of lifestyle.

When young individuals move from their hometowns to larger cities and encounter other, usually older or more experienced waria, they learn certain

skills, movements, and activities of other waria. These kinds of performative renderings, affective engagements, transitions of knowledge and skills that guide one's way were plainly noticeable among waria in Papua. When indigenous Papuan waria migrate from rural areas to the urban centres such as Sorong and Jayapura, they learn from the more experienced migrant waria, who have often arrived from the regions that have longer traditions of active waria communal life. They possess more experience in salon work as well as in street-based transactional sex. Many waria, indeed, regard sex work as closely intertwined with what it means to be a waria.

My encounter with Sakti (born 1990) in Sorong (see Article III) over the course of three years, highlights the tensions around the social transition into *dunia waria*. Sakti had run away from home in Biak because her step-father did not accept Sakti as a waria and was beating her regularly. "Since childhood I already wanted to really become (*menjadi*)," Sakti recounted. "I already felt that my self (*diri saya*) is indeed a woman, so I ran alone to Sorong here, then entered *dunia waria*." When I first met her hanging out with other waria at Tembok (the main street nightlife location of Sorong), she was thought of as the only indigenous Papuan in the community. She appeared as rather shy and insecure, but made efforts to hide it. When other waria turned their attention to her, she rolled her hips in return. Sakti told me that her dream was to open her own salon one day. But to finance her life in the meantime she also comes here at nights for sex work, just like her friends. When returning home, she prays for her sins. While other waria were joking and laughing next to us, she told me with thoughtful eyes that she does sex work only for money. During my encounter with Sakti, witnessing the interaction between her and the much louder, older and more self-confident migrant waria, the socially productive nature of Tembok really struck me. While Tembok means different things to different people, and this also varies depending on the time of the day – in the afternoon, for example, this is where families come to enjoy *liburan* (holidays) and eat the seasonal fruit of durian –, for some young waria such as Sakti this street nightlife location can also be the site of pressure to play love and act beauty the ways that waria do. Like many other waria, she needs to find male clients (*tamu*) to earn the income she needs. In order to find clients as well as to receive appreciation and communal belonging by other waria, she needs to look appealing. Indigenous Papuan waria who are new in the communities learn these necessary skills – not only of salon work, but also of sex work – from migrant waria, who are usually more experienced.

When I returned to Sorong three years later, Sakti had become the central figure of attention in the waria community, with a reputation for being bit naughty and wild. She had won the second prize at the waria beauty pageant and she worked in a salon as much of the time as she could spare from her exuberant nightlife activities, which she now seemed quite to enjoy. She was far from being the only indigenous Papuan on the scene, but she had also taken to using the skin-whitening products that are widely used in Indonesia among women, men and waria alike (Prianti, 2018; Saraswati, 2010). Coming from the

rural area where her 'entering *dunia waria*' was persecuted, she had found comfort in the *dunia waria* of Sorong, following its social milieu, its trajectories and activities on her own journey of becoming. *Dunia waria* was the locus of becoming for her and at once a community of belonging.

In a similar manner, Dewi discovered herself through her encounter with waria community in the nightlife scene of Bandung in East Java (Article I). She had moved to Bandung to study tourism, but when she got acquainted with waria, she described her sentiment with a statement of 'this is my world!' She felt she had found a 'world of her own' that finally made her understand the confusing sentiments regarding her gender and sexuality that she had experienced since childhood. She had found others like her, who literally assisted her in making sense of herself. She subjected herself to being a waria, realizing herself within *dunia waria*. She then travelled across the country surviving mainly on sex work at the various locations where others like her were gathering at night. But with the same move, she also placed herself in an abject position in relation to mainstream society, dropping out of school and hence her promising career in tourism.

The examples of both Sakti and Dewi suggest that social categories, such as waria in Indonesia, are not simply categories that mark people and practices, but as performatives they are also inherently productive. Butler (1993, p. 7) writes that we are subjected to gender, but simultaneously also subjectivated by gender. Following the logic of the paradox of subjectivation, waria, while being subjected to gender – which against the backdrop of the normative gender system would be either a man or a woman – , usually experience a variable sense of non-normative gender since their early childhood. In Indonesia, this divergence between one's phenomenological experience of gender (*jiwa perempuan*) and the gender one is subjected to has over time materialized as the subject position of waria in society (see Chapters 2.1 and 2.2). But in this process, waria themselves also become subjectivated by the very category of waria, as this category provides an intelligible sense of themselves and delivers it also to others.

As described earlier, gender and sexuality are closely intertwined experiences for waria. In their accounts and in their practices waria underline their attraction to men, besides their feelings of being a woman or someone with a soul of a woman. Desire and sexual encounters with men hold a significant position in their narrations about themselves and their stories of becoming a waria. Thus this thesis highlights that the sense of gender and sexuality are deeply intertwined within waria subjectivity. But how would this phenomenological reality of the 'felt sense' evolve within the paradox of subjectivation, in which one is subjected to gender and subjectivated by gender – and in this case subjectivated by the very category waria? My guess is that this tension may also drag the male bodies with an ambiguous sense of gender and sexual attraction towards people of the same sex into 'wariahood' in order to become intelligible subjects for others and also for themselves. By this, I certainly do not mean to under-

estimate the experiential reality of the waria felt sense of gender, but to draw attention to the loose yet productive edges of a cultural category.

Thus *dunia waria* can be envisioned as the social and imaginary ‘world of waria’, in which one can live her life following her sense of gender, the ‘soul of a woman’. It is also an immediately experienced community with its own social life that influences practices and ways of life as well as gendered enactments. The sense of a community of the *dunia waria* is crucial for young waria who have recently arrived in larger cities or got acquainted with other waria. But *dunia waria* may also be envisioned as an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 2006 [1983]) of waria that spreads across the country. When a young waria arrives from her hometown or village at any of the waria communities in larger urban centres, she would discover that these communities usually consist of waria with a diverse regional background. In Surabaya, for example, there are numerous waria who have travelled from Kalimantan or Sulawesi in search of a better income from the sex work markets. In Yogyakarta, there are waria from other regions too, but their reason for settling is usually less an economic one and more likely related to sociality, comfort and safety. I discuss the extensive waria migration to Papua at length in Articles I and III, where it can be seen that the vast majority of the waria in Papuan cities come from other islands in search of better economic conditions and/or new grounds for self-realization.

The diversity of the regional origins among waria in their communities contributes to the perception of the waria as a national category. Consequently, it further follows that waria who travel may encounter the familiar elements of *dunia waria* on their migrational routes throughout the country’s urban centres. The participation in the imagined community of *dunia waria* as spreading across the nation is also envisioned at the various waria social and cultural activities. For example, at the waria beauty pageant in Sorong, the winner got to participate in the waria national contest in the capital city of Jakarta (Article III). Cultural events like those are not only potentially productive mediums for advocacy, but they link the specific local circuits with the waria national community and consequently with the Indonesian nation. The fact of Papuan waria belonging to the national community of waria was announced several times on the pageant stage throughout the evening.

While participation in the activities around *dunia waria* caters for the sense of belonging and often forges self-affirmation, as the cases of Sakti and Dewi illustrate, it also comes together with a lifestyle pattern which involves dangers that increase the already vulnerable position of waria. Some young waria in their teens, who *déndong* occasionally, seem to consider nightlife that includes monetised sex exchange almost as an essential part of *dunia waria*: for example, when distinguishing between their income as that of ‘being a waria’ – meaning, the income earned in the context of street-based sex work – and from other jobs where she is recognized by her male identity (Article II). While in many ways, as I have argued in the previous chapter, street nightlife has agentic qualities, it nevertheless involves significant perils. Dewi, having realized ‘her world’ and subsequently subjecting herself to being a waria, travelled between various

cities for the next decade. In her lifestyle pattern of relying mainly on the street sex work, she got involved with a circuit of people in Jakarta who were injecting synthetic heroine and carelessly exchanging needles. Diagnosed with HIV, she survived, but her friends did not.

Of the sex work related chances of increased vulnerability, STD-s and the risk of physical abuse are only amongst the most evident and severe. Street sex work as a lifestyle pattern, which usually conveys nights lasting until sunrise, consumption of alcohol, sometimes drugs, may close off possibilities for alternative professional development as well as waria national belonging. Some young waria recounted that sex work actually provides them with an income several times higher compared to other available jobs such as salon work, which makes it challenging to step away from it. However, the value of the sex worker waria correlates to youthful appearance, which is never lasting. This makes age another significant marker of difference which contributes to the intersectionally vulnerable position of aging waria (Article I). Since sex work contrasts with the idea of *prestasi* as well as with the heteronormative and pious selfhood as the promoted version of Indonesian citizenship, it thus makes it more difficult to pursue the claims for waria national belonging. Hence, while street sex work may foster the sense of communal belonging among waria, it simultaneously challenges the question of waria national belonging.

As we have seen, *dunia waria* can be described as a locus of becoming and a site of belonging, highlighting the productivity of ‘waria’ as a cultural category. Participation in the *dunia waria* may hence also forge certain embodied and gendered enactments. One of the obvious outlets for this is the street nightlife, which, by following the activities inscribed into *dunia waria*, opens up possibilities for young waria such as Sakti to survive her new life in Sorong, and to explore her sexuality and gendered self-presentation by performing sex work. The two key frames for embodied notions of belonging, as outlined in the introduction of this chapter, are audience and context. The context, including the regional colonial history, situated systems of knowledge and available imagined communities, allows meaningful renderings of the performatives within the desired audience. It is interesting, however, that in their bodily performances at the waria street nightlife as well as in their daily activities and public performances, the enactments of the various scales of belonging are inevitably related. The migrational experiences, for example, or the participation in waria cultural activities like the beauty pageant evoke the sense of belonging not only to the local waria community, but simultaneously to the nation as well as to the metropolis – the transnational dimension of belonging. While street nightlife contrasts with *prestasi* and challenges waria national belonging, as evident in Papua in the case of Sakti, it paradoxically still fosters one’s understanding of what it means to be a waria, an Indonesian waria. Furthermore, the spectacular femininities and glamour that are often enacted in the context of waria nightlife position these bodies against the backdrop of the Indonesian modernization drive – aspects on which I elaborate further in the next section.

## 4.2. Beauty, national belonging and the discourse of progress

Embodied technologies of beauty are crucial in the production of knowledge about gendered subjectivities and the organization of femininity and masculinity in society. In the history of femininity in Indonesia during the New Order, beauty came to be understood as requiring significant effort and care (Hegarty, 2017b, p. 17). Following the association of modern femininity with the cultivation of body and looks, over time waria gendered enactments also became closely tied to the enactments of beauty, and the practice of *déndong* became one of the foundational aspects of what makes one a waria. But beauty for waria is not only a way of incorporating femininity and one's sense of gender. It is also a register of recognition.

Through his historical analysis, Hegarty (2017b) argues that the state's emphasis on self-cultivation during the New Order enforced practices of beauty that waria deployed through their practice of *déndong* and glamour, but this was pursued with an aspiration for national belonging (Hegarty, 2017b, p. 374). Gender presentation and the cultivation of self through enactments of beauty were seen as a form of *prestasi* ('good deeds') in society. Waria participation in the performative practice of beauty is roughly twofold. First, through their own embodied technologies, mostly as *déndong*, and secondly, through their work in hair and beauty salons, where waria use their skills in beautifying others.

On the pages that follow, I demonstrate how the beauty that waria deploy is linked to national belonging as well as to the discourse of progress. This highlights the significance of the specific context of the colonial histories and transnational influences that shape the perception of what is considered a successful, or at least legible, form of beautification. Here I substantially draw on my ethnographies in Papua, where the idea of progress has evolved as part of the national modernity and the integration of the region to the Indonesian state. The idea of progress as well as that of 'Indonesia' in turn shape the forms of embodiment that are necessary in order to convey a progressive, successful or beautiful look. This framework for the consideration of belonging that I subsequently elaborate on may potentially be applied to other regions beyond Papua.

How beauty is organized and understood and what kind of beauty feels affectively engaging is bound to specific cultural histories and contexts in which beauty is performed. There is a range of gendered modes of expression that waria may enact in various situations. Here I outline a few organizing principles of beauty in Indonesia: those of *halus* (refined), glamour, and *malu* (shame). This is not to say these are the only organizing forces, nor that they are the most significant ones – eroticism, *ibuisim* or cosmopolitanism, for example, could be regarded as equally important. However, in order to reflect upon the ways that beauty may condition belonging, it is necessary to elaborate on at least some of the key Indonesian organizing principles of beauty.

One of the central notions of Indonesian femininity, rooted in the Javanese culture, is the characteristic of *halus* – the refined femininity that connotes the values of sensitivity, grace and politeness. If anything, it is *halus* that indicates

the qualities of an Indonesian stereotype of a ‘proper’ and desirable woman. To become *halus*, one is expected to invest some effort in bodily cultivation, which not only designates the correct ways to speak, gesture and move through spaces, but for women and waria in particular it would include the necessity to *dandan* or *déndong*. The opposite of *halus* is usually envisioned as *kasar* – the rude and rough. As noted by Oetomo (2000, p. 50) sometimes waria can switch between *halus* and *kasar* modes, exemplified in the situations when their ‘man’ suddenly ‘comes out’, such as at staged comedy performances or in some complicated street nightlife circumstances, when waria need to defend themselves in front of gangsters or rude clients. However, the cultivated femininity that is promoted in society, aspired to among many waria and deployed in various contexts, is *halus*.

Another significant register that is often adopted in the waria practice of *déndong* is glamour. Most conventionally, glamour is deployed at the waria street nightlife, but also at many festive cultural events when waria need to present themselves in public. According to Niko Besnier (2002), glamour can be understood as an enactment of translocality. It is the bodily means to symbolically bridge the local realms with faraway places and fantastic comportments. Nigel Thrift (2008) describes glamour as the specific style of allure that connotes ideals which can be glimpsed in the imaginary realms. It also allows playing with alternative versions of self (Thrift, 2008, p. 298). Glamour, hence, holds the capacity to lift one’s experience from the normally surrounding conditions towards the affective promises of the metropolis; to emotionally converge with, and virtually become, a ‘global diva’ for the night (Manalansan, 2003) – an affective affinity often noticeable at the waria street nightlife. By deployment of glamour waria then affectively engage with the image of the ‘phantasmic lady’ – the structuring ideal of gender as manifested through and as a result of the available ‘mediascape’ (Appadurai, 1996) (see further in Article I).

Shame (*malu*) is also a key organizing principle in gendered practice and the management of looks (Lindquist, 2004). *Malu* may guide and limit the movements, self-presentations and gendered enactments of waria. For example, waria in general associate their religious practice in public mosques with a sentiment of *malu*. Only a very few waria that I have met actually pray in public mosques. This is because in public mosques, men and women usually pray in separate lines or sections and most waria feel themselves as misfit in either of them. But *malu* may organize the movements of waria in much more general ways. Some waria perceive their presence in public spaces in the daylight or their romantic relations with men haunted by the notion of *malu*. One waria described it thus: “In the eyes of the society waria is viewed as an insult, so we also feel inferior to them, we feel shame (*malu*), like a feeling of disappointment.” Another recounted asking a man prior to dating her: “So you are not ashamed to date a waria?” *Malu* provides another frame of interpretation for the widespread pleasurable gendered performance by waria in the context of their street nightlife. The feeling of *malu* to dress up in feminine and flamboyant attire in the daylight that many waria cited further emphasizes the significance of the performative power experienced at the waria nocturnal gathering places (Articles

I and II). But *malu* is also a gendered affect that shapes the enactments of beauty in specific ways. Ayu Saraswati (2010; 2012) has argued that *malu* in Indonesia is tied to the perception of skin colour and the use of skin-whitening products. In other words, *malu* structures particular somatic techniques of beauty.

The management of *malu* through the practices of beauty became very evident in my ethnographic accounts in Papua. Against the backdrop of the corporeal differences between the indigenous Papuans of Melanesian origin with their relatively darker skin, stockier bodies and curly hair, and the migrant population characterized by the Malay body type of smaller shape and straight hair, indigenous Papuan waria demonstrate craving for the kinds of beauty tied to lighter skin colour and straight hair, which are conventional to the dominant Indonesian ideals of beauty (see Pausacker, 2015). So the notion of *malu* as a gendered affect orients the ways in which beauty is organized locally, specifically in relation to the cultivation of fair skin. While *malu* is amongst the main organizing principles of the management of complexion, the fair skin ideal is also reflected within the notions of *halus*, glamour, and potentially also in other principles of beauty. My encounters with Sakti, whom I have already introduced in the previous section (see also Article III), illustrate the ways in which the notion of *malu* and the quest for belonging shapes the perceptions of embodied beauty.

When I first met Sakti only a couple of years after her arrival in Sorong, she was playfully called as ‘Miss Angola’ by other waria. This was in reference to the Miss Universe beauty pageant of 2011 that crowned Leila Lopes from Angola as the winner (Associated Press, 2011). Three years later, Sakti was instead making efforts to associated herself with the label of ‘Miss Mexico’. I also noticed that sometimes she was calling others whom she liked less for some reason, with a little grin of satisfaction, ‘Miss Angola’. The trend of skin lightening products in Indonesia had not left Sakti untouched during the few years of her personal journey of becoming more and more ingrained in Sorong’s *dunia waria*. It was not that *dunia waria* made her lighten her skin, but through her socializing into *dunia waria* she also became invested in the norms guiding the locally appropriated conceptions of feminine beauty. According to Saraswati (2013), the preference for light skin has been cultivated throughout various historical periods in Indonesia dating back to the mythologies long before colonial times. Since the late 1960s, Saraswati (2013, p. 20) argues, the construction of the fair-skin beauty ideal has been chiefly influenced by American popular culture. Indeed, during my fieldwork in Sorong, it was Britney Spears whose poster was decorating the walls of numerous salons where waria worked. But importantly, this white beauty ideal is not tied to body features of specific origin such as Caucasian whiteness, but rather involves the feelings of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism (Saraswati, 2013, p. 27) affecting women, waria and men alike across Indonesia (see also Prianti, 2018). Thus the widespread practice of skin lightening in Indonesia rather gestures towards class aspirations and a sense of upward mobility.

However, engagement with this convention of beauty is far more complicated for some bodies than others. Specifically, it positions indigenous Papuan waria



under intersectional circumstances not only of gender, but also of racialized ideals of beauty. The specific conventions of beauty matter greatly, far beyond being simply a question of taste and class aspirations, because beauty for waria is also a register of recognition. The performative practice of gender and beauty facilitate waria legibility as waria, as subjects 'like women'. Following the idea of feminine beauty as requiring significant effort, *déndong* has a central position in what it means to be a waria. Beauty has subsequently become the essential resource to claim oneself the subject position of a waria and also to situate oneself in society. But the dynamics in these practices are much harder to cope with for indigenous Papuan waria, who stand further away from the dominant Indonesian ideals of beauty of fair skin and straight hair. Sakti's craving for a label other than 'Miss Angola' hints at the perceived hierarchies in the forms of embodied beauty, which subsequently influence her sense of self-worth and also structure her potential for belonging. Racialized notions of beauty in Papua have been noted by other authors as well. Leslie Butt (2015, p. 114), for example, describes how Papuan women compare their sense of worthiness against the aspects of the Indonesian migrant women's bodies with lighter skin, straight hair, and smaller body shape.

Besides enacting beauty on themselves, waria also engage with these conventions of beauty beneficially when beautifying others through their salon services. While in the discourse of recognition, street sex work is something that waria would rather shy away from, salon work, on the contrary, is considered a good example of waria talent. Salon work commonly involves various kinds of hairdressing and make-up services. A more specific site of expertise that waria in some regions are well known for is wedding make-up, which often includes ethnically stylized laborious make-up for bride and groom alike, sometimes also for the accompanying children. Salons have been the sites for waria self-realization since the New Order, when waria carved out their niche as beauticians against the backdrop of the national modernity that brought about the idea of the cultivation of the body (Hegarty, 2018, p. 17). As Hegarty (2018, p. 138) continues, "salons in towns and villages around the country situated waria within a national imaginary predicated on development." In this context, salon work became the prototypical position of waria, and it is also cited as the site of *prestasi*, their contribution to society with 'good deeds' (Boellstorff, 2007, p. 105). Salon work is usually considered the core skill (*ilmu*) of waria and what they claim as their genuine contribution to Indonesian society. Especially outside Java, where salon work is often the primary employment for waria – as for example in Sulawesi or Papua – waria hold the reputation of being expert beauticians, serving both men and women alike. The ability to transform others by 'making them beautiful' in turn is deployed in the discourse of waria recognition to claim belonging to the nation.

Salon work provides a promising field of economic self-realization for waria travelling to Papua. Migrant waria in Papua who work in salons often look back and describe their circumstances in Java and Sulawesi in terms of tough competition and limited income, while in Papua, the 'money is good' and the market

is growing. Waria migration to Papua and other areas of rapid urban development is situated in and further boosted by the context of modernization tied to the idea of self-cultivation. In these settings, waria have successfully established their niche in the beauty business. Furthermore, waria in their salon work in Papuan cities have taken advantage of the popular beauty ideal of straight hair and light skin. Indeed, at the time of my fieldwork, hair straightening was usually the salon's most expensive service, which Papuan women nevertheless praised.

The kinds of practices of beauty discussed here can be explained against the backdrop of the Papuan discourse of progress, which derives from and is closely related to the history of Papua's incorporation into the Indonesian state in the 1960s. Since then, Papua has undergone rapid development. At present the migrant population has considerably outnumbered the indigenous population in many regions, including the cities of Sorong and Jayapura, which have, according to the 2010 census, 74% and 65% of migrant population respectively (Elmslie, 2017, p. 6). The continuous economic and social dominance of the settlers, the militarisation of the region, and the racialised notions of embodiment in the rest of the country have resulted in various forms of diminishment of indigenous Papuans (Munro, 2013), including Papuan waria. However, these practices go hand in hand with the Indonesian agenda of modernity, which in turn appears to advance the idea of self-cultivation towards the indigenous Papuans, who are often depicted as backward (*terbelakang*) or left behind (*tertingga*) (Butt & Munro, 2007). The practices of diminishment on one hand and the Indonesian discourse of modernization on the other have consequently contributed to the formation of certain embodied notions of what it means to be 'successful', which are linked to the discursive orientation towards progress (Article III).

For example, the word *amber* in the Biak language (which is also Sakti's native language), which indicates the foreign non-Papuan people, etymologically means 'the straight hair'. More recently, however, *amber* has gained another layer of meaning, connoting a successful or rich person. As noted also by Danilyn Rutherford (2003, p. 44–45), *amber* signifies a valued category of personhood, used with reference to persons of note. In Article III, I cite Donna (born 1976) in Sorong, who describes the role of waria in Papuan salons as the necessary feature of the Indonesian notion of *maju* – that is, progress, advancement, maturity and flourishing. "So if no one would accept waria," tells Donna, "they would not be able to advance (*maju*), the city could not become progressive (*nggak bisa maju kota itu*), the city could not flourish, yes, it would remain the same forever." Donna here links the presence of waria along with their salon services, which cultivate the embodied beauty of others, with the Papuan potential for development.

However, for the indigenous Papuan population, the fascination with things associated with 'development' may not necessarily amount to one's felt sense of national belonging. Rutherford (2003), in her research on the Biak-Numfor of the northern coast of Papua, has demonstrated a strong sense of allure for everything 'foreign' amongst these people. 'Foreign' is the source of prestige and authority (Rutherford, 2003, p. 30–33). Subsequently she argues that the parti-

cipation in the state apparatus and economic developments in the region following New Order indicates the ways in which people can ‘belong’ to a nation, while maintaining their commitments that fall beyond the nation state. For Biaks, skin as a surface may in turn absorb the potency of faraway places (Rutherford, 2003, p. 23). This provides another angle to reflect upon the relative success of waria in delivering the beautification services at their salons.

As we have thus seen, the aspired beauty in Papua follows the Indonesian dominant ideal of beauty of fair skin and straight hair, which in turn references the feelings of cosmopolitanness and transnationalism. These certain forms of cultivation of embodied beauty rest on the image of success in Papua, which is tied to the imagined West as the locus of progress, and to the imagined community of Indonesia – that is, the specific context embedded in its regional histories, transnational influences and available imagined communities, which all consequently enforce the forms of embodied beauty considered as legible and affectively appealing. For waria, these performative practices enable new forms of kinship and senses of belonging to the imagined worlds of the global and the national. Meanwhile, they also beneficially position waria in regard to possible audiences locally, such as men in the street nightlife context, or the local Papuan population whose acceptance they aspire to, or the migrant waria, whose recognition matters for indigenous waria. Thus, waria draw from contextually conditioned symbolic resources in their practices of beauty to create senses of belonging on the transnational or national scale in order to strive for belonging at the local communal scale.

#### **4.2.1. Spectacular femininities**

In this light, the notion of spectacular femininities provides another productive lens to consider the gendered enactments when striving for the sense of belonging. According to Ochoa (2014), spectacular femininities are femininities that “employ the conventions of spectacularity in their production” (Ochoa, 2014, p. 208). As outlined in Chapter 3.1, spectacularity is one of the registers of performativity, in which people can draw on cultural resources and use them in their signifying practices. The enactment of spectacularity is staged, presented to an audience (whether real or imagined), and subject to interpretation (Ochoa, 2014, p. 231). But in order to successfully accomplish spectacular femininity, it needs to be situated meaningfully within the socio-historical contexts in which it is performed. As I elaborate at length in Article III, the enactments of beauty that waria produce for themselves and others in Papua are specific to the available media and socio-historical context, including the notion of *maju*. Whether waria enact spectacular femininities during some of their playful gatherings in salons, in the context of street nightlife, or on the stage of a beauty pageant, while their scales and audiences differ in each case, they allow waria to position themselves alongside the available imagined communities and cartographies of belonging – the imagined audiences – and to draw on them as cultural resources in the course of striving for recognition and the sense of belonging.

Spectacularity as a register of gendered enactments stations well within the discourse of progress as it often draws on the images and modes of the transnational ‘mediascape’ (Appadurai, 1996) that have become increasingly available for waria communities and the rest of society alike, but also on glamour and other enactments of translocality (Besnier, 2002), allowing waria at the same time to situate themselves beneficially in regard to certain audiences. Spectacularity can be regarded as a causal aspect of the ‘mediatization’ (Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2015) of the world more generally, as it reveals the impact that the media has on lived bodies. According to Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby (2015), the framework of mediatization considers the mutually transformational relationship between various types of mediated communication and the cultural processes in society. Spectacular speech acts, indeed, are sometimes mediated, depending on their situational contexts. Events such as the beauty pageant or when performing to a camera or cell phone are examples of such mediated spectacles. However, as Ochoa (2014, p. 221) also noticed, spectacular femininity does not always assume a ‘real’ audience. Neither does it require a ‘real’ mediation aside from the body itself. But it highlights the productive relationship between the available mediascape and cultural practice.

For example, Sakti enacts spectacularity when she strikes a pose in front of the mirror in a salon where a number of other West Papuan waria beauty pageant contestants are busy preparing their make-up, hair and dress a couple of hours prior to the event. She looks at herself in the mirror and announces in English “Leila Lopes from America!”, imitating the voice of an emcee on an imaginary stage. She enacts a spectacular femininity, projecting it to the others in the salon, but perhaps still mainly for herself in the mirror – the others were too busy to take much notice anyway. She draws from the cultural resources of the global beauty culture – Leila Lopes from Angola was Miss Universe 2011 – but what is of further interest here is that she positions the body of Leila Lopes, and subsequently herself, into America. As mentioned earlier, in around 2012, she used to be one of the very few indigenous waria in the Sorong’s waria community and thus was labelled as the ‘Miss Angola’ by others for her relatively darker skin, but she rather strived for the title of ‘Miss Mexico’. She then cultivated her complexion, using whitening products and protecting herself from the sun – like many other waria, Indonesian women, and even some men (for the latter see Prianti, 2018) – and by 2015 she was able to look back at the time when she was in her own words ‘*hitam sekali*’ – very dark. Sakti, dressed in a long white dress uncovering her shoulders, checks herself in front of the mirror with worry. She asks another waria to help her apply a light powder on her upper back, but checking herself again, she still asserts with dismay: ‘*Coklat*’ (chocolate).

During my fieldwork, I sporadically took photos and used a small video camera. The main purpose of these activities was documentation for the sake of my own research process. However, my experience with using a video camera while working with waria underscored the frequently discussed feature of the methods of visual ethnography – camera as an active agent that is able to engage with the subjects, evoke situations and enactments, as opposed to camera as a

passive recording instrument (see Loizos, 1993, p. 46; Rouch, 1974, p. 40–41). More specifically, my camera sometimes induced enactments of spectacularity among waria. I often noticed significant changes in the behaviour of waria when I began photographing or video recording. Each time I took out my camera, waria were already waiting, striking their poses. Or I had to wait while they refreshed their make-up and adjusted their hair. Sometimes I was also refused permission to take photos with the plea of not having taken a shower yet (*belum mandi*), which is the usual daily activity around the time of sunset for most Indonesians. For waria especially, the evening *mandi* is often accompanied with *déndong*. I soon discovered that it was practically impossible to use the observational filmic language at the waria street nightlife locations, as if the camera created a situation – and it certainly did – that required a response. Mostly these responses were intentional smiles, poses and handwaves of ‘Hi!’ Often waria started to perform in a prominent manner as if it was the camera that situated them onto some power position and made them visible. At other times, especially when I appeared in a new scene for the first few times, I felt I was expected to act as a kind of reporter, asking questions. Even when I did not do that, someone else, usually a more active or slightly older waria, began dragging her younger friends in front of the camera for short interviews.

According to the visual anthropologist Jean Rouch (Levin, 1971, p. 136 as cited in Bruni, 2002), people in front of the camera are even more ‘real’, as the camera stimulates their behaviour rather than suppressing it. When used by the film-maker in embodied ways (such as using a handheld camera close to the people that are being filmed), camera is always interactive (see Ferrarini, 2017), creating another kind of intersubjective relationship between the camera and its subject. Inspired by this approach in visual anthropology, but also following the idea of gender performativity (Butler, 1993), it would be useless to try to judge whether waria self-presentation in front of the camera is more or less ‘real’. Rather, the repeated citational enactments simultaneously form the subject, in which the interiority and exteriority are intrinsically connected and mutually constitutive. My use of camera stimulated the specific kinds of performative enactments for waria, which often fell under the conception of spectacularity – these enactments were staged and performed to an audience, encapsulated by the camera.

However, I would also suggest that these enactments subtly mirror the current social position of waria, the various forms of diminishment they are facing, and their incomplete sense of national recognition. The visibility they claim and the demonstration of their position as the purveyors of beauty with their performance for the camera is their response to these forms of abjection. The audience projected into the camera was mostly abstract. While making Wariazone, even if our tiny handycam may not have looked convincing, waria knew that the camera was used for the purpose of film-making, but, as is usually the case with documentaries, there was no certainty as to which parts of the footage might end up in the film and where the film itself would eventually be distributed. Later on, when I was using the camera sporadically during my fieldwork, even if I had

told waria that I was filming for the personal documentation of my research and that the film would not be distributed, this did not seem to make much difference to their reaction to the camera. Camera still became the active agent, which encapsulated an abstract audience and at once projected waria onto the stage, on which they also wanted to see themselves pretty, and enabled their participation with all their spectularity in the subsequent production of the media and mediated selves.

Hence, inspired by the available mediated communication, waria put spectularity into use as a register of gendered enactments, as one of the ways to claim their subject position of that of a waria, the speaking subject that is also beautiful ‘like woman’. Since spectularity reflects on the participation in the discourse of progress – as it not only draws from the cultural resources of the transnational mediascape but also hinges on the notion of mediated selves, as someone who is ‘on the stage and under the lights’, to paraphrase Hegarty (2018) – waria claims of belonging – to the nation, to humankind – are also adjusted and met within these enactments of spectularity.

In this chapter I have focused on the embodied notions of belonging that waria enact in their gendered performances. The desire for a sense of belonging, the ‘homing desire’ of waria, unfolds in the productive tension between embodied practice and imagination. In other words, what is known and available for use as symbolic resources, what is imagined as structuring ideals or communities of belonging, is enacted in performative practice. As the given ethnographic examples illustrated, the aspirations for belonging to or participation in social groups, such as the community of other waria, frames and enforces the enactments that are used in the production of gender, including the practices of beauty. More specifically, these bodily enactments are forged by the audiences to whom a specific performance is targeted and whose inclusion is claimed, and the context that provides the system of knowledge against which the enactments are rendered as meaningful, affectively appealing or legitimate. Namely, the structuring ideals and imagined communities that waria can rely on in these practices are deeply embedded in the context of the specific colonial histories, national and transnational influences that shape the perception of what is considered a successful, or at least legible, form of gendering and beautification.

Of the various scales of belonging that may be analytically distinguished, I have narrowed my focus to the two scales that are crucial following the ethnographic data as well as the general aims of this dissertation: the communal scale of *dunia waria*, and national belonging. However, as I have argued, the various scales of belonging are inevitably intertwined in the performative practice. Waria may aspire to belonging on some scales by drawing on the cultural resources of another. Participation in the activities that are associated with *dunia waria* caters for the sense of belonging and often forges self-affirmation. Hence, waria as a social category is also productive as a locus of becoming and the category of belonging. *Dunia waria* may thus also forge certain embodied and gendered enactments. One of the most visible outlets for this is the street

nightlife and related embodied enactments. Waria street sex work, despite its agentic qualities, however, comes with the danger of increasing the already vulnerable status of waria. It also challenges their aspirations for national belonging.

National belonging is pursued in a variety of ways, including through more implicit modes such as, for example, enacting *halus* in gender performance, or more explicitly, such as through claims at waria public performances. The most significant site of waria *prestasi* is salon work, which underlines waria skills and talent in transforming others to make them ‘more beautiful’, which makes it their contribution to the society and the basis for their claim for national belonging. National belonging is also pursued at events such as waria beauty pageants or various socially engaging performances. On these occasions, waria often draw on the transnational aspirations of belonging and other available cultural resources and enact them through somatic techniques of beauty, presentation of glamour and spectacular femininities, which are then strategically put into use to establish their position locally, in other words, to claim belonging locally.

Michael Warner has written (2002, p. 88) that when the dominant public can take their lifeworld for granted, the counterpublic must poetically establish its lifeworld as it strives to transform rather than to replicate. Waria in their glamorous enactments are also those who transform the more conventional models of femininity in Indonesian society. They engender, rather, the figure of the ‘global diva’ (Manalansan, 2003), the ‘phantasmic lady’, the one who belongs to the world and at once mediates these faraway places and phantasms onto the locally surrounding grounds here. This can be applied to the enactments both on the stage of the pageant and at the street nightlife.

The role of waria in Papuan cities as the agents of beauty illustrates well how the value of beauty as a cultural resource is dependent on the region’s specific historical and cultural context. Waria who have travelled to Papua benefit from using this contextually specific resource in their salon work, but also at night on the streets. While these practices hold economic perspectives, they are also the means through which waria strive for their sense of belonging. The enactments of beauty in Papua – materialized on the bodies of waria as well as on the bodies that waria work with in their salon work – reflect the colonial history of Papua subjected to both Dutch and Indonesian influences, the potential of the imagined communities of belonging such as the Indonesian nation and *dunia waria*, but also the transnational beauty culture. These affective affinities that waria embodied enactments reach out towards enable a sense of belonging.

However, that said, this does not mean that belonging is an easily achieved status for waria. Rather, these are some of the strategies waria use in order to cope with their precarious lifeways and various forms of diminishment. In addition, as my analysis has shown, these pursuits of belonging are not equally achievable for all waria at all times. Racialized ideals of beauty as well as age are crucial axes, which intersectionally affect waria within the diversity of the category.

## SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES

### Article I

**Toomistu, T. (forthcoming 2019). Between abjection and world-making: Spatial dynamics in the lives of Indonesian waria. *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 13(2).**

In this article I take a spatial approach to waria subjectivities, unpacking the spatial dimension of their lives, which I describe through the notions of abjection and agency. Despite being a visible social category, especially in urban areas, waria experience various forms of diminishment. These circumstances are influential for a substantial number of waria who have histories of migration within Indonesia. In other words, waria lives are structured by spatial constraints and subsequent movements and formulated over the course of migration. The tale of running away from a home village, from parents and family who refuse to accept them as waria, is a recurrent narrative among many young waria. In search of acceptance and recognition, they travel to bigger cities. But waria migration is also tied to a certain sense of upward mobility, productivity and potential financial gain, which make West Papua and other urban regions of recent rapid economic growth attractive destinations. Waria migratory trajectories are supported by a widely shared lifestyle pattern that includes daily work in a hair salon and night street-based sex work. The economic self-support model of salon and sex work roughly maps the spatial organisation of waria lives. The social and imaginary ‘lifeworld’ (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973) that emerges extensively around these locations are often described in spatial terms as *dunia waria*, which translates as ‘the world of waria’.

In this paper I demonstrate how in response to and as a result of the structures of social exclusion, key *dunia waria* spaces – of which I have focused on street nightlife and salons – enforce waria subjectivity. I argue that waria salons and nightlife locations are transformative and conjoining spatialities that function as both medium and outcome of situated human agency (Lefebvre, 1991; Gregory *et al.*, 2011, p. 716), providing strategies for more ‘livable lives’ (Butler, 2004). These spaces are not only places of paid exchange that matter in terms of waria personal economies, but are also productive spatialities that affirm waria subjectivity in affective relations with their intimate partners, the community, the phantasmic promises of the transnational mediascape, as well as with the Indonesian nation. These experiences matter, since they cater for self-affirmation and a sense of belonging. Various aspects of my argument are illustrated with the story of Dewi. After encountering waria nightlife during her studies in Bandung, she abjected herself from mainstream society. And by doing so she subjected herself to being a waria, to the expression she, at the time, recognised as her truest sense of being in the world.



While the paper adds to the commitment of feminist geography in studying the spatiality of gender, it also expands the still understudied field of non-western transgender spatialities. I draw on the conception of ‘space’ as it is used in recent work in critical human geography, influenced by the work of theorists such as Henri Lefebvre (1991), Doreen Massey (1994), and Edward W. Soja (1996), who conceptualize space as socially and discursively produced and tied to power relations. I approach the tendencies of social exclusion analytically by using the notion of abjection, drawing from Kristeva (1982). Abjection as a practice of force may manifest itself in the form of spatialisation by drawing borders between the self and the other and by relegating the latter to the margins of society, to the abject spaces. To illustrate the spatial abjection, I elaborate on the example of the law that was passed in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (*Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*) in 2014, prohibiting begging and homelessness. However, the law also affected the widely shared waria practice of busking which, for a number of waria, especially the older ones, is their sole source of income. Agency may also be constructed spatially. In the case presented in this paper, I regard agency foremost as nested in the possibilities that arise from the expression of one’s subjectivity. Subjugating oneself to certain practices – even seemingly in line with the dominant discourse – can enforce subjectivity, providing a point from which to speak and socialise.

In the first empirical section of the article I give an overview of the tense context of the surveillance of the sexual selves of waria, and of non-hetero-normative sex in Indonesia more generally. Waria have been persecuted vocally by groups of radical Islam since the Indonesian turn towards democracy in 1998. 2016 saw another increase in the wave of discourses denouncing the LGBT population in the Indonesian media. Since then many waria feel threatened in public spaces, even to the point of cutting their hair and not wearing women’s clothes. I discuss waria migration and the formation of *dunia waria*. There are multiple yet often intertwined reasons for waria being mobile, from young waria who leave their towns or villages in search of identity to business-orientated ladies who seek better economic perspectives. In some way or other, these reasons all relate to finding a space for acceptance and self-realisation. In general, these are sought and found in urban areas distant from immediate families, where many waria recount a moment of discovering or entering into *dunia waria*, a world that equips them with various attributes from ways of dressing, talking and *déndong*, to the skills needed to survive, to the variety of cultural activities such as beauty pageants, birthday parties, community meetings, advocacy work. I argue that the sense of *dunia waria* and its the key spaces such as salons and the street nightlife locations shape waria subjectivity across urban Indonesia, drawing attention to the social dimension of the processes of becoming waria. Subsequently I show how waria lives in and around *dunia waria* are imbued with affective engagements with various others, and how these may function performatively as structuring ideals.

Salon work, commonly involving hairdressing and make-up services, is usually considered the core skill (*ilmu*) and talent of the waria, something they

are known for, needed for, and which they claim as their genuine contribution to Indonesian society. Salons are also significant social venues where waria spend their days chatting, listening to music, dancing in front of the mirror and practising hairstyling skills on one another. While waria in their salons regularly transform others, using their skills to make their clients more 'beautiful', they are also engaged in constant transformation through the experimental communication with their reflections, with their structuring ideals as they dance, walk, put on make-up, do their hair, try out poses.

The corporeal imitation that waria enact in their play positions them in motion towards the promise of a 'phantasmic lady', which can be understood as their structuring ideal, an imagined counterpart worth striving for. Hence, besides providing basic income, waria salons engender the image of waria as being useful to society by providing beauty services, which in some regions such as Papua fit well into the context of modernisation and 'development'. But more importantly, salons are significant social venues for waria and spaces where they affectively engage with their image, being in constant motion towards their gendered ideals, partaking in the indefinite becoming.

The second form of spatiality that I focus on are the places where waria gather at night for paid sexual services as well as for socialising (*tempat nyébhong*). These areas are the subject of moral prejudice and in many instances are targeted by municipal police. The recent spatial dynamics of street sex work in Yogyakarta are exemplary of the processes of further spatial abjection. While many waria engage in sex work activities for economic reasons, I focus here on the performative power that is manifest at these locations. Many young waria apparently take pleasure in dressing up in flamboyant attire and going out at night every once in a while. These practices might include sex, but quite often it is waria who then decide with whom to engage in sex and how much to charge. In their nightlife activities waria extend their affective engagements to the transnational imaginings of the cosmopolitan world in order to converge emotionally with the imagined 'phantasmic lady' and become a global diva for the night (Manalansan, 2003). These enactments suggest that in the spectacle of waria nightlife there is a great deal of gendered performance linked to the envisioned upward mobility in relation to Indonesian modernisation and capitalist consumer developments, which undermine waria visibility against the backdrop of 'national glamour' (Hegarty, 2018).

As we have seen, in the process of spatial abjection, waria simultaneously reclaim certain spaces that forge self-definition and community as well as the creative management of available resources. These marginal spaces are transformed into what José E. Muñoz (2009) would call the queer utopia and bell hooks (1999) the spaces of radical openness to transformation, expression and community as well as for the practices of non-heteronormative intimacy. Beauty salons and waria nighttime gathering places may spark moral prejudice and targeted violence, but simultaneously they are the sites of agency in which waria experience self-affirmation and a sense of belonging while embodying the envisioned mobility on both national and transnational scale. Spatiality here turns

into a vehicle for the fabrication of subjectivity. For waria who *déndong* for the night or who play in front of mirrors in salons, these unfulfilled and distant aspirations can be envisioned as the ‘phantasmic lady’ that inspires their definition of beauty, femininity and sexiness, or simply informs their ways of becoming. Thus through affectively engaged performance, waria undo the limitations of their social and spatial exclusion. Affirming, declaring and sustaining their subjectivities in those spaces gives rise to the promise of more liveable lives. However, this celebratory world-making through embodiment is subject to continuous abjection. It is also not equally available for all waria at all times. The access to erotic capital is usually tied to youthful desirability, making age a significant axis when considering the intersectional spatiality of waria. The sense of belonging, to the nation or otherwise, through enactments of beauty is much harder to achieve for indigenous Papuan waria, who stand further away from the dominant Indonesian beauty standard of fair skin and straight hair. Hence, the paper also expands the intersectional thinking by attending to the axes of gender, racialized embodiment, non-heteronormative sexual practice, and age – all of which contribute to the abjection of waria.

## Article II

**Toomistu, T. (2019). Playground love: Sex work, pleasure, and self-affirmation in the urban nightlife of Indonesian waria. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 21(2), 205–218.**

The focus of this paper is the widely shared lifestyle pattern of street-based sex work among waria. The high number of sex worker waria is usually explained in economic terms. However, in this paper I am broadening the structural interpretation of waria sex work. I argue that their presence in the specific locations in the city known for waria sex work is not only for work, and often it is not even for sex. There are other important reasons that need to be considered when considering waria sex work. Prompted by waria use of the word ‘play’ (*main*) in reference to flirtatious communication and sexual activity in nightlife locations and beyond, I use the notion of playground to indicate the social, performative, sensorial and pleasurable aspects these spaces represent. I suggest more elaborate ways of understanding waria sex work, broadening its structural interpretation as a direct result of gender identity non-recognition and limited work opportunities. I reach out for a more affective and intersubjective understanding to reveal the modes of agency embedded in waria nightlife practices.

In recent years, sex work in Indonesia has come under increasing moral attack and waria sex work locations are often targeted by the municipal police. By highlighting the aspects in street nightlife which hold agentic qualities this paper confronts this systemic violence. The paper demonstrates that waria street nightlife also fosters waria agency, which emerges from self-affirmation through pleasurable bodily practices involving intimate (sexual partners), proximate

(other waria and men) and distant others (structuring ideals). The affective interactions with these others, as a consequence of and as a response to the oppressive structures of social exclusion, foster among waria a subjective sense of gender and cater for sociocultural support, belonging, pleasure and love. These experiences of self-affirmation count towards waria agency. The paper also emphasises the notion of desire in the conception of gender among waria. *Jiwa*, or soul, which makes a waria feel like a woman, is intrinsically tied to waria attraction towards men. But in the current situation of considerable social exclusion, these relations often only unfold within the context of street nightlife.

I begin by first providing some relevant theoretical and empirical background information. I give a brief overview of the historical traces and the contemporary social position of waria. I also outline the contribution of anthropological studies to the criticism of medico-biological essentialism on gender (e.g. Rubin, 2002; Valentine, 2007; Kulick, 1998; Blackwood, 2010; Boellstorff, 2007) and give an overview of the key debates in sex work studies, pointing to the growing body of literature arguing against the victimisation paradigm in sex work studies (e.g. Beloso, 2012; Jayasree, 2004). I also draw from insights from the anthropology of intimacy, which have highlighted how intimacy is implicated in wider political-economic processes (Constable, 2009) and linked to social and economic inequality (Padilla *et al.*, 2008, p. xii). While sex work in Indonesia is illegal, it is to some extent tolerated (Safika, Levy, & Johnson, 2013). However, sex workers are morally condemned and prosecuted (Wolffers, 1999). Unlike the Indonesian female sex work system of *lokalisasi*, waria sex work usually occurs in a freelance form where clients are met in certain places in the city.

Regarding my approach to subjectivity developed in this paper, I have used the notion of the ‘felt sense’ of gender (Salamon, 2010, p. 14) to better engage with the subjective experience of gender. While drawing on gender performativity (Butler, 1993), I elaborate on the intersubjective approach to subjectivity (e.g. Desjarlais & Throop, 2011; Moore, 1994). The latter is generative of my argument that the perceived body-soul distinction in waria experience can be eased by the attention of significant others who value the body and its performance. In waria street nightlife settings, these others are waria and men who engage with waria socially and intimately.

In the first empirical section of the article, I describe the political and economic organisation of sex work among waria. I elaborate on the constraints under which *dunia waria* unfolds, highlighting social exclusion structures as the general reason behind the thriving of waria sex work. I introduce and develop the notion of *dunia waria*, the perceived social and imaginary ‘world of waria’, the ways it has formed as a consequence of the current waria social position and how it often provides a support system for young waria. As a response to and as a consequence of the oppressive structures of social exclusion, waria forge their subject position in the context of *dunia waria*, in which nightlife plays an important role.

I proceed by analysing from affective and intersubjective perspectives the modes of agency embedded in waria nightlife, highlighting the social and sensorial qualities of waria street nightlife. The ethnographic descriptions of the social milieu at the street sex work location in Yogyakarta and the testimonies of several waria exemplify the ways in which street nightlife is an important site for self-expression and social interaction. It is a space where a particular gender performance is lived out, often with spectacular make-up, nice outfits, gestures, postures and interaction. The social significance of street nightlife is boosted by the marginalised position of waria in society, as self-expression during the day is often suppressed. Waria nightlife, on the contrary, is about creating an alternative world altogether (Bailey, 2013, 19). Hence, it also provides important sociocultural support for young waria.

In terms of sexual relations at these places, waria are often the ones who choose with whom to have sex and how much to charge. There is casual flirtatious communication between young men and waria that goes beyond monetary exchange. While sex work indeed provides the much needed income for many, money is not always the sole motivator behind the reasons many waria gather at these locations. As waria grow up with a feeling of distortion between their anatomy and the 'felt sense' of their bodies, the body is often a source of tension. Since these locations are surrounded by men who are attracted to waria, the waria have the chance to feel attractive and desired. As it turns out, there is often a flexible scale of how much to charge, if anything at all, depending on the mutual attraction and the financial need of a waria. When thinking of trans bodies and their sexuality, which often come with a personal history of shame, insecurity and vulnerability, it is also crucial to recognise the importance of sensorial experiences and affective relations with men, which for many waria only unfold around street nightlife. Moreover – and significantly – many waria have developed long-lasting romantic relationships with men they have met at these locations. The intimate and alluring moments not only allow for sexual pleasure, but also affirm waria desirability as sexual subjects, 'like women'. Sexual play with men therefore fosters self-affirmation. Even if these alluring experiences are momentary, playfully performative, or usually tied to monetary transaction, they foster the embodied world-making of waria through pleasure, and thus provide strategies of survival and adaptation in the face of social stigma, displacement and vulnerable personal histories.

Taken as a whole, the article expands upon the previous accounts of waria sex work, which explained it through limited work opportunities (e.g. Ariyanto, Radjab, & Sundari, 2007). I seek to demonstrate that in these practices there is more at stake than economic necessity. The paper highlights the importance of recognizing the agentic qualities of waria street nightlife and the ways in which these practices are vital to forging more liveable lives (Butler, 2004) against the backdrop of moral policing and social exclusion, and alongside the human need for intimacy. However, waria street sex work is nevertheless a site of significant dangers. It is important to pay continuous attention to the physical and psychological risks that street sex work entails as well as to the structures of exclusion

that condition the phenomenon. Sex work still remains the principal means of survival for many waria. Furthermore, the economic gain and self-affirmation achieved through the pleasurable interactions taking place as part of the street nightlife mainly apply to younger waria, further demarcating the heavy fate that befalls many older waria.

In order to adequately attend to the phenomenon of waria sex work, sufficient attention beyond the structural explanation needs to be given to the affective and intersubjective perspectives on subjectivity. Thus the paper also makes a compelling case to encourage the use of affective and phenomenological perspectives towards embodiment and gender in addition to enquiries into the discursive and ideological formations of gender. The discursive, structural, and phenomenological approaches towards body and gender can methodologically be mutually constitutive and useful.

### Article III

**Toomistu, T. (2019). Embodied notions of belonging: Practices of beauty among waria in West Papua, Indonesia. *Asian Studies Review*, 43(4), 581–599.**

In this article I focus on waria communities on the Indonesian part of the island of New Guinea in the provinces of Papua and West Papua to discuss the forms of embodied belonging among waria. Compared to the rest of the country, waria are a relatively recent phenomenon in Papua, and one which counts as one of the effects of making Papua more ‘Indonesian’. Since the 1970s, waria from neighbouring islands have moved to Papua, seeking life experience and better economic prospects. These circumstances, along with wider social change, also attract indigenous Papuan waria to the community.

Drawing on my fieldwork in the cities of Sorong and Jayapura with a special focus on the West Papuan waria beauty pageant, the paper demonstrates how accomplishment of femininity is tied to the nation in as much as to the local imaginings of modernity resulting in specific kinds of practices of bodily mobility. The forms of beauty that waria embody and produce reflect the history of internal colonisation, the available imagined communities, and transnational beauty culture, all of which foster categories of belonging. The questions of Papuan waria belonging cannot be explored without attending to the corporeal differences between migrant and indigenous waria. While settler waria are usually of Indo-Malay descent, indigenous Papuan waria are of Melanesian origin, with a relatively darker skin, stockier bodies and curly hair. The continuous economic and social dominance of the settlers in the context of the migration, the historical legacy of violence by settlers, the militarisation of the region and the racialised notions in the rest of the country have resulted in various forms of diminishment of indigenous Papuans (Munro, 2013), including Papuan waria.

The central argument of this paper is that waria in their beauty practice aspire to belonging on the transnational and national scales in order to claim communal belonging. However, as a light-skinned beauty standard has been cultivated throughout different historical periods in Indonesia, indigenous Papuan waria are positioned under intersectional circumstances not only of gender, but also of racialised ideals of beauty. Driven by Avtar Brah's (1996) notion of 'homing desire', in which home is regarded as a "mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" (1996, p. 192), I consider waria longing to belong as it is enacted on bodies and in practice. I elaborate on the enquiries into waria national belonging as explored by Tom Boellstorff (2004a; 2007) by demonstrating how belonging is enacted not only at the national, but simultaneously at the local and transnational levels. In my view, belonging is an aspiration that falls on the productive axis of embodiment and imagination, in which the desire for belonging to imagined categories is enacted on bodies. However, the legibility of such enactments is achieved only when accomplished in the particular context imbued with its colonial histories, transnational influences, and available 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 2006[1983]). Given the available categories of belonging, the accomplishment of beauty in Papua is tied both to the nation and to local aspirations of modernisation. The main theoretical framework is exemplified throughout the article with the story of Sakti, an indigenous Papuan waria, who ran away from her family in Biak at the age of 19. Having arrived in the city of Sorong, she immediately "entered the world of waria".

I elaborate my argument by first providing an overview of the position of waria within Indonesia and the notion of *dunia waria* (the world of waria). The waria subject position has a complex yet undoubtedly evident relationship with Indonesia – even the name waria was officially announced by president Suharto in 1978. While waria form a visible social category, their place within the nation is nevertheless marginalised and disputed under a proclaimed morality that is broadly regulated by the state and by religion (Platt, Davies, & Bennett, 2018, p. 2–5). The structural limitations on social acceptance have set the conditions for the emergence of *dunia waria*, in which waria strive for self-realisation, recognition and a sense of belonging. The lifestyle that comes with *dunia waria* and relies mainly on income from salon work and street sex work can be mobile – waria often move to different cities for shorter or longer periods seeking life experience, support, or better economic conditions. Since West Papua promises economic prosperity, many waria from other islands travel to Papua for work.

I continue with an overview of the historical background of Papuan annexation to Indonesia, as a result of which the first waria appeared in Papua. After Indonesian independence in 1949, Papua remained under Dutch control and focused on achieving administrative development (King, 2004, p. 21) in order to gain independence. However, power in the region was transferred to Indonesia during the 1960s, after which Indonesian policy was to integrate West Papua militarily, politically, culturally and socially (Muhammad, 2013, p. 5). Since its incorporation into Indonesia, Papua has undergone rapid development. By now migrants have become the majority in many regions of Papua. The

booming mining economy has brought about changes in the urban landscape and in the realms of gender and sexuality, which also affect the lives of waria, who first appeared during the wave of government-initiated transmigration and the legalisation of sex work in designated areas (*lokalisasi*) in the 1970s (Morin, 2008, p. 44). Papua, with its growing urban population and development, promises a fertile ground for small businesses such as beauty salons. The flourishing of street sex work is fuelled by the workforces of the mining economy and the military.

Waria migration in Papua therefore appears twofold: there are waria who travel to Papua from other islands – i.e. migrant or settler waria (*waria pendatang*); and there are waria who are born and raised in Papua (*waria asli Papua*) and who travel to urban centres. Papuan waria seek a lifestyle and construct their sense of self in the context of the available *dunia waria*. This world is fostered by the more experienced migrant waria, who usually arrive from regions that have longer traditions of active waria community work and possess more experience in salon work as well as in street nightlife. Whether waria were born in Papua and left their immediate families to come to bigger cities in search of their identity, or travelled to Papua from various Indonesian islands seeking better economic prospects, the city not only attracts them with its communities of support and urban anonymity, but also with its affective promise of belonging on the national and global scale.

I proceed then to discuss the notion of beauty in Papua, which is tied to the idea of progress (*maju*). The corporeal differences between the newcomers (*orang pendatang*) and indigenous Papuans (*orang asli Papua*) are constantly accentuated in the widespread use of vocabulary such as ‘straight hair’ (*rambut lurus*) or ‘curly hair’ (*rambut keriting*) in daily speech in Papua, reflecting and producing certain ideas of embodied materiality. These kinds of enactments reflect the powerful discourse of modernisation in Papua since the time of the New Order, when officials talked about modernisation as a ‘takeoff’ (*tinggal landas*) (McGibbon, 2004, p. 16). Drawing on several ethnographic examples, I conclude that the image of success in Papua is tied to the imagined West as the locus of progress, and to the imagined community of Indonesia, which consequently also enforces certain forms of embodied beauty.

The majority of waria in Papua work in salons and participate in nightlife. Both these positions imply an active engagement with practices of beauty. Migrant waria in Papua have brought with them their skills in salon work from elsewhere in Indonesia, introducing new trends in hairstyling to the urban Papuan population. This creates another layer to the public figure of the waria – that of agents of beauty. The daily work of waria in the salons often involves straightening the hair and lightening the skin of the Papuan population. This production of beauty among Papuan people is the good deed (*prestasi*) that waria do for society, supporting them in their economic niche as purveyors of beauty and giving them a certain value within society. Waria as agents of beauty can therefore transform the indigenous Papuan people – who are often depicted as backward (*terbelakang*) or left behind (*tertingga*) (Butt & Munro,



2007) – into more progressive citizens, closer to the image of the advancing Indonesian nation. Therefore, waria use the conventions of beauty as resources not only to earn a living but also to strive for a sense of belonging.

Lastly, I make a close ethnographic reading of the event of the West Papuan waria beauty pageant of 2015, pointing to the conventions of belonging articulated at the event. Waria beauty pageants, which are held regularly in bigger cities across the country, allow enforcement of momentary authority by drawing on distant authority and events (Ochoa, 2014, p. 105), asserting waria presence in society. I show how the waria beauty pageant in Papua contests the nationally promoted body, and the standard Indonesian model of embodied beauty. The fact that the jury of the waria beauty pageant decided to give the award exceptionally to an indigenous Papuan waria, and the many explicit points in the speech given by the famous waria activist from Jakarta, Mami Yuli, highlighted the many ways in which the organisers had designed the event to reinforce the perception of how Papuan waria belong to the imagined community of Indonesia. The underlying premiss of the event, however, was a call for basic recognition for all waria, that “*waria juga manusia*” (waria are also human). The whole setting of the event announced that waria in West Papua are part of the Papuan community, the national waria community (*dunia waria*), the progress-orientated Indonesian nation, and transnational humankind.

To summarise, to strive for belonging at the local communal scale, waria continuously seek a sense of belonging at the national and transnational scale. A significant part of that practice informs the ways in which waria pursue legible forms of beauty by drawing on various symbolic resources. Whether on the pageant stage or as part of street nightlife, waria strive for an imaginary bond with various promising elsewhere (such as Planet Bangkok or America) as well as with the categories of power (such as Miss Mexico, *dunia waria*, the Indonesian nation) that cater to their sense of belonging. However, the structuring ideals and imagined communities that waria rely on in these practices are deeply embedded in the context of the specific colonial histories and transnational influences that shape the perception of what is considered a successful, or at least legible, form of beautification. Despite the promise of belonging that can be found in the practices described in this paper, belonging is not an easily achieved state for any waria. Rather, it is a challenging strategy that helps waria cope with precariousness, violence and diminishment. The dynamics in these practices are even harder to cope with for indigenous Papuan waria.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused on life patterns, gendered subjectivity and the negotiations of belonging among waria in Indonesia, based on the anthropological fieldwork in the selected Indonesian cities of Java and Western New Guinea (Papua) carried out between 2010 and 2018. The dissertation in the first place provides a considerable contribution to the ethnographies of Indonesian waria of this period of time, but it also advances the theoretical and methodological pursuits in the fields of anthropology of gender, sexuality, and embodiment and provides a framework to consider the embodied notions of belonging.

Increasingly known in both local and international terrains as waria, these subjects, who are male-bodied, but who feel themselves as women and who often describe themselves through the specific distinction between their male body and the soul (*jiwa*) of a woman, are a visible group of people in Indonesia. While the Southeast Asian region has a long history of gender transgressive practices, the history of the waria subject position can be traced back to the late colonial era, characterised by the shift from traditional to commodified sexualities against the background of urbanisation and the expanded deployment of male labour at plantations and construction sites. The formulation of the contemporary waria subject position appeared during the New Order. However, the nationwide recognition of waria and their belonging to the Indonesian nation has been continuously contested as a result of the prevailing norm of reproductive heteronormativity and the constitution of the pious and moral citizenship. Waria and other subjects within the LGBT spectrum face relentless social exclusion, diminishment and limited access to resources such as education and the labour market. Since the Indonesian democratic turn after the resignation of the president Suharto in 1998, waria have also been targeted in the sometimes violent acts initiated by radical political Islamist groups.

Against the backdrop of these uneasy currents, the longing to belong is a widely shared sentiment among waria. But given the continuous politicisation of sexuality and the determined cultivation of biopolitically useful and moral subjects in Indonesia, the question of waria national belonging is more crucial than ever. In this thesis I have shown how waria navigate the structures of social exclusion through affective engagements with various others and by enacting strategies of belonging in their performative practice. While these enactments may be beneficial for their aspirations for belonging, they are nevertheless often precarious and ephemeral ways of dealing with the structural conditions in which waria find themselves embedded.

The thesis draws on my lengthy anthropological fieldwork in the cities of Yogyakarta and Surabaya in Java and Sorong and Jayapura in Papua between 2010–2012, accompanied by a couple of shorter follow-up research trips in 2015 and 2018. The field research consisted mainly of the methods of participant observation, semi-structured biographical interviews with 49 waria, themed

interviews and the sporadic use of camera. There are four main conclusions drawn from the study, which I will outline below.

Throughout this dissertation I have insisted on recognizing the specific forms of agency of waria by considering the performative and intersubjective as well as the more affective and sensorial processes of subjectivity, while simultaneously paying attention to the broader structures of exclusion. I have thus incorporated a methodological framework which on one hand concentrates on the phenomenological ‘lifeworlds’ (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973) of waria, their narrations and their conceptualizations of their lives (mainly the focus of Chapters 3 and 4), while at the same time, I draw on a more macro-level socio-political and historical analysis of the structural conditions that influence and shape waria lives (the focus of Chapter 2). Following the insights from the work of Douglas (2002[1966]), Kristeva (1982), and Butler (1993), I have used and developed the notion of abjection to analyse the various kinds of social exclusion that waria face – both the individually experienced forms of rejection and abuse as well as the more discursive productions and structural oppression within communities and regions or at the level of the nation. Abjection takes place within the vast, complex, and perpetual processes of performativity, which render simultaneously the norm as well as the abject. Of the various forms and scales of abjection at stake concerning waria and touched upon in the dissertation, I would here highlight the examples of family rejection during teenage years, as a result of which many young waria leave their homes and move to larger urban centres, where they are often left without access to education and family support, and their limited access to public spaces and professional positions. Waria lives are often structured by these kinds of abjection and subsequent migration, in which they seek acceptance, anonymity, a sense of belonging or new grounds for self-realization.

Throughout the dissertation I have used the notion of *dunia waria*, which translates from Indonesian as ‘the world of waria’. It is the perceived discursive and imaginary world of waria, which is also at once conjoining and productive in the subject formation. While *dunia waria* is an emic term widely used among waria in describing their lifeworlds, I have benefitted from the conception of *dunia waria* analytically in order to make sense of the socially productive character of the category waria and the agentic qualities of the spaces and practices it involves.

This leads to the first two main conclusions of the thesis. First, as a result and in response to the structures of social exclusion, waria seek self-expression, pleasure, self-affirmation and a sense of belonging at places and at times that are available to them, revealing the agentic qualities of the spaces where *dunia waria* is manifest – most visibly at beauty salons run by waria and at their street nightlife locations, which also include transactional sex between men and waria. I have argued that these key spaces of *dunia waria* are not only places of paid exchange that matter in terms of waria personal economics, but they are also productive and transformative spatialities, crucial to the waria sense of self and of belonging. These spaces hold the capacity to affirm waria subjectivity in

affective relations with their intimate partners, the community, the phantasmic promises of the transnational mediascape, as well as the Indonesian nation. Hence, the key spatialities of *dunia waria* are the sites of embodied world-making, providing strategies for more 'livable lives' (Butler, 2004).

The second and closely intertwined conclusion highlights the level of sociality involved in the processes of becoming a waria, including the category of waria, which is itself also productive, making *dunia waria* a locus of becoming as well as the category of belonging. Having shown how people come to identify with and feel related to the imagined community and the category of waria, it became apparent that *dunia waria* opens up arenas of belonging, while also articulating and forging specific forms of personhood and gendered enactments. Despite the capacity of *dunia waria* to foster self-affirmation and a sense of communal belonging among waria, it may also enforce certain patterns of lifestyle, which, however, may expose waria to further vulnerabilities as well as pose limitations on their national belonging.

The third main contribution is a more theoretical one, foregrounding the intersubjective and embodied nature of gendered subjectivity. My enquiries emanate from my focus on the 'lived bodies' – bodies as they come into being through practice and relations. I conceptualize gender as an embodied experience and a performative process that is enacted through intersubjective relations. Based on the ethnographies on waria, I have described how waria gendered subjectivity formulates within the continuum of intersubjective relations to various others. These can be human others such as men, women and other waria, but also the structuring ideals of gender and imagined communities and cartographies such as the nation or *dunia waria*. I have articulated the notion of embodied subjectivity as grounded in the space in-between the 'felt sense' (Salamon, 2010) and the cultural practice as well as across the imagined reaches towards the symbolic resources, imagined communities, cartographies and other structuring entities within the cultural, historical and social contexts they are embedded in. Hence, I have argued that embodied subjectivity evolves through these continuous intersubjective engagements with human and non-human others, which can be described as at once performative and affective. My thesis thus emphasises that the performativity of gender cannot be considered without first attending to the affective and intersubjective dimensions of subjectivity, and, secondly without properly addressing the spatiality in which the subject is embedded, the local context along with its colonial, racialised and modernisational histories and its connections to other world areas, in line with the approach of the critical regionalities (Johnson, Jackson, & Herdt, 2000). Gendered performances take place in particular situational contexts, but they are also always already rooted within the wider socio-cultural context that nevertheless penetrates all meaningful action.

A related contribution with regard to the intersubjective dimension in gendered subjectivity is an emphasis on desire in the waria conception of gender. Romantic and sexual encounters with men are one of the important markers in the process of becoming waria, as well as in the ways in which waria describe

themselves. The street nightlife caters for the intimate encounters of waria with men, with or without the accompanying monetary exchange, serving their own sexual pleasure, while also providing them the opportunity to feel attractive and desired in their preferred gendered presentation. Attraction towards men is one of the main aspects in addition to soul and clothing that make one a waria. Hence, desire can also be understood as a feature of intersubjectivity which affirms the waria sense of gender. My emphasis on the sensorial, social and pleasurable aspects of waria street nightlife reveals aspects of waria sex work that go beyond the political economy of such work, adding an important angle to some of the previous accounts of waria sex work which have associated it with primarily or only with economic causes (e.g. Ariyanto, Radjab, & Sundari, 2007). However, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge that many waria engage in street sex work for economic reasons, and it is necessary to pay continuous scholarly and activist attention to the structural conditions that force waria into these positions as well as to the physical and psychological dangers these practices may involve.

The fourth contribution builds on all the previous ones, outlining a framework of belonging. This conclusion addresses the strategic uses of the embodied enactments that waria deploy when striving for a sense belonging. Going beyond a geographical register, I consider belonging as a feeling of being accepted in a particular community, but this may also include a sense of participation in the imagined communities and cartographies through affective and performative engagements. As I have shown, waria make use of the contextually relevant symbolic resources in their gendered enactments when pursuing a sense of belonging. Furthermore, waria often pursue belonging on the transnational or national scales in order to claim communal belonging. The glamorous enactments of beauty and spectacular femininities often build on the affective relation to the structuring ideals such as 'Miss Mexico' or 'Miss Netherlands', Cinta Laura or Britney Spears. These examples illustrate some of the ways in which waria participate in and draw resources from the wider cosmopolitan culture to affirm their sense of self, as a result of which, however, they are often prosecuted. The imagined mobility within these kinds of affective conversions have the capacity to detach waria subjective experience from the conditions that normally surround them, shifting it towards the all-encompassing metropolis. Similar patterns are noticeable in the embodied enactments that serve national belonging. These imagined reaches reflected upon bodies fit well into the context of Indonesian national modernity and the notion of *maju* (progress), which in turn mould their legitimate renderings within the desired audiences. This in turn caters for communal belonging. Hence, the aspirations for transnational and national belonging enacted through somatic techniques of beauty, the presentation of glamour and spectacular femininities are strategically put into use to claim belonging locally. However, just as performativity's establishment of the normative body needs to be considered alongside the attention to the specific socio-spatial and historical embeddedness of the subject, in a similar manner the means of achieving a sense of belonging is always

contextually dependant. The sense of belonging unfolds within the productive performative tension between the embodiment and the imagined reaches towards the categories one aspires to belong to or the specific cultural resources that may support belonging to the locally surrounding communities.

Beauty for waria, therefore, is not only a means to engage with their sense of gender, their soul of a woman (*jiwa perempuan*), and the practice of *déndong*, which is one aspect that makes one a waria. It is also a resource to claim recognition. Waria participate in the performative practice of beauty mainly in two ways. First, through their own embodied technologies such as *déndong*, which make them intelligible for others as waria; and secondly, through their work in hair and beauty salons, in which waria use their skills in beautifying others. The salon work is considered a good example of waria talent in Indonesia, the site of *prestasi* – their contribution to society with ‘good deeds’ (Boellstorff, 2007, p. 105), thus catering for their aspirations for national belonging. Papua and other developing urban centres in turn provide fruitful grounds for salon business and waria economic self-realization as the agents of beauty. At the same time, the position of beauty purveyor is put to use to articulate national belonging and subsequently to claim belonging locally.

Although waria do not generally aspire to change their maleness physiologically, their gendered enactments and performances of beauty provide them certain legibility, the opportunity actually to be ‘like women’ as they feel themselves like women, a feeling often articulated as having the ‘soul, heart or instincts’ of a woman. Beauty, therefore, is one of the means to claim oneself the subject position of a waria and also to situate oneself in society. For people who have often lost ties to their immediate families and who constantly need to stand up for themselves and justify their subject position, these gendered enactments create new forms of kinship and attraction as well as the sense of belonging to the imaginary global and the Indonesian national worlds, which in turn provides the means to strive for communal belonging.

While the enactments in the pursuit of self-affirmation, a sense of belonging and better adjusted ways of life may help to cope with the structural conditions that normally surround waria, they are nevertheless precarious ways of dealing with these circumstances. The potential of these enactments in opening up the access to the categories of belonging is far from being easily achievable, however, and neither it is equally accessible to all bodies at all times. The conventions of style always function in their historical and contemporary contexts, which position some bodies in a more vulnerable and marginal position than others. While beauty can be seen as a resource for waria, not only economically, but in their processes of striving for recognition, not all waria look ‘cute’, ‘feminine’, ‘sexy’, ‘proper’, ‘*halus*’ or young, or respond in other ways to the popular Indonesian ideals of gendered beauty. The youthful appearance that is well promoted within the conceptions of beauty in Indonesia is unavoidably tied to ageing. Furthermore, indigenous Papuan waria have a much harder time coping with the dynamics of beauty practice compared to the migrant waria who stand closer to the dominant Indonesian image of beauty of straight hair and fair skin. Even

though the question in Papua is not so much about racialised beauty as about aspirations of class and modernity, the play with the labels that refer to global beauty culture among waria point towards hierarchies of perceived embodied beauty. The cultivation of lighter skin colour among indigenous Papuan waria as well as the widespread enactments of the symbolic resources of the global beauty culture articulate the ways in which certain bodily forms and transformations hold significant capacity to provide access to or, on the contrary, withdraw from certain categories of belonging. This in turn influences the feelings of worthiness and value, but also becomes conditional for the forces of abjection, and is thus crucial in determining the potential for liveable lives. This is why it is necessary to pay continuous attention to the ways in which structural forces shape the embodied notions that are crucial for achieving belonging.

This anthropological study of waria provides a lens through which to consider the politics of gender and sexuality in Indonesia. With regard to the embodied display of cultural resources, the management of bodies and sexualities and their capacities to belong to certain groups or categories, it also presents a compelling case study of body politics more generally. In a world that is exceedingly inter-related, yet where the tensions around the establishment of borders – physical, cultural or social –, the continuous attempts to constitute the in-groups and out-groups, the proper and genuine Self and the decadent, decayed or perverse Other have seen a considerable rise in many parts of the world within recent years, it is continuously necessary to critically reflect on the ways in which belonging to a community or a nation is achieved, negotiated and contested. Within these debates, struggles and tensions, some bodies are positioned in much more endangered positions than others, holding considerably less access to resources and opportunities to change the circumstances in which they are embedded. The conditions of abjection and the strategies that waria enact to cope with their marginal positions are not entirely alien to other groups that are assigned to intersectionally vulnerable positions elsewhere in the world. The transgender population – those who embody a different gendered position from that assigned at birth – whether in Indonesia, Estonia or the United States, are amongst the most vulnerable groups of population in the struggle to make their lives bearable and to make their lives matter. This is why we need to pay steady scholarly and activist attention to the less visible and more marginal groups, practices and other forms of the assemblage of life, including that of the non-human, as well as to the structural constraints that continue to condition any subaltern position. But we also need to persist in accounting for the various kinds of organization of life which hold the promise of more sustainable, durable, self-affirming, co-creational and happy futures.

The frameworks and insights offered in this research open up interesting pursuits for future research too. The methodologies used in this dissertation, and specifically my use of camera, paved ways to put performativity into dialogue with the approaches of visual anthropology. In the introductory part of this

thesis, I touched upon the notion of spectacularity following Ochoa's (2014) conception and weaved it together with some points developed in the articles viewed in the context of using camera in the field. As it turned out, waria often consciously enacted spectacularity as a register of performativity when encountering my use of camera. It enabled them to feel a sense of visibility, of participation in the production of the media and of their mediated selves. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to develop such a potentially useful methodological framework to any degree, it is one of the more promising paths along which to travel in order to advance my insights and the methodologies employed in considering the performativity of gender through the approaches of visual anthropology.

I also encourage further research with regard to waria sexuality, sexual practice and safety. While I have touched upon these matters by expanding the knowledge about waria street sex work and by pointing to the notion of desire in the waria conception of gender, more research is needed specifically for the purposes of healthcare and HIV/AIDS prevention strategies. These questions were not amongst my core interests here. Also my access as a female researcher from outside Indonesia remained limited in terms of the men who have sex with waria. Hence, further research with the male clientele of waria sex workers is encouraged.

Initially I had planned to include in this study the themes of waria religiosity, religious practice and the impact of these on bodily sensitivity. I soon realized, however, that such phenomena exceed the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, given that religion is one of the primary bases of discriminatory behaviour against waria, as well as a source of insecurity and a sense of moral ambiguity for waria, not to mention one of the reasons why many waria have rejected the idea of bodily modification, including gender reassignment surgery, there is the need to further assess the effect and the dynamics of religion on waria bodily sensitivity and their national belonging. The deployment of the framework of the embodied belonging developed in this thesis might prove beneficial in this regard.

While I hope that the insights and conclusions presented in this dissertation provide value in the anthropological approaches to gender, sexuality, transgender, and Indonesia, the ethnographies of waria that I have drawn upon are nevertheless representative of roughly the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As I finalise the writing of this thesis in mid to late 2019, the government of Indonesia is discussing the introduction of a new criminal code which would have a potentially dreadful impact on sexual and gender minorities as it seeks to criminalize same-sex activity as well as extra-marital and pre-marital sex. Since August 2019, a series of turbulent protests in Papua broke out, foregrounding the idea of the prospects for Papuan independence once again, but essentially rebelling against the racist contempt towards indigenous Papuans. Just as the Indonesian political climate with regard to gender and sexuality minorities has undergone substantial change within my study period, so waria ways of life and forms of identification have shown at least some signs of potentially very significant shifts.



One of the thesis' conclusions emphasised the productivity of the social category waria. Remarkably, during my most recent fieldwork with the waria of Yogyakarta in 2018, for example, I heard of another term circulating within some waria and healthcare activist circuits – that of *transpuan*, a portmanteau word of transgender and *perempuan* (woman), that could be translated as the Indonesian equivalent for the English transwoman. Does the term indicate a growing transnational impact on the Indonesian activist and healthcare related communities? Will the term be taken over by young waria and gain widespread use? If so, how would it be understood and enacted by its subjects? And following the main contributions of this thesis, what shifts in identifications and embodied subjectivities could this bring about? There are lots of questions that still remain open concerning waria and the politics of gender in Indonesia, and I do hope that this thesis paves the way to many fruitful future enquiries.

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## ARTICLES

## SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

### ***Kehastatud elud, kujuteldavad ulatused: Indoneesia waria'de sooline subjektsus ja kuulumuspüüdlused***

Käesoleva väitekirja fookuses on *waria*'d. Mehe kehades sündinud, kuid end naisena tundvad subjektid Indoneesias kirjeldavad end sageli oma mehe keha ja naise hinge (*jiwa*) või südame (*hati*) vahelise lahknevuse kaudu. Viimasest tulenevalt soovivad *waria*'d riietuda naiselikult ja kanda vähemalt teatud aja vältel meiki – praktika, millele nad sageli viitavad *déndong*'i mõiste kaudu. Samuti meeldivad *waria*'dele mehed, keda nad peavad heteroseksuaalseteks. *Waria* termin on tuletatud indoneesiakeelsetest sõnadest *wanita* (naine) ja *pria* (mees) ja selle kuulutas ametlikult välja president Suharto 1970. aastate lõpus. Ajalooliselt vanemad mõisted, mille kaudu siinse uurimuse subjekte kirjeldatakse, on *banci* ja selle versioon *waria*'de slängis *béncong*. Mõlemad väljendid kannavad tänapäeval halvustavaid konnotatsioone, samas kui *waria* nimetust kasutatakse nii kohalikus, rahvuslikus kui rahvusvahelisel väljal üha rohkem.

*Waria* subjektipositsioonil on keeruline ent vältimatu suhe Indoneesia rahvusega, mis on iseenesest võrdlemisi hiljutine postkoloniaalne nähtus – kujuteldav kogukond (Anderson, [1983]2006), mida vormis hollandi kolonialism. Kuivõrd *waria* subjektsus ei ole otseselt seotud ühegi piirkondliku või etnilise traditsiooniga ning see on valdavalt linnakultuuri nähtus, võib seda pidada osaks Indoneesia rahvuslikust kultuurist.

Olgugi et *waria*'d on Indoneesias silmapaistev sotsiaalne grupp, ei aktsepteerita neid kõikides valdkondades ega peeta võrdselt väärikateks perekonnaliikmeteks ja ühiskonna osaks. *Waria*'de rahvuslik kuuluvus on olnud pidevalt poliitiliselt terav küsimus, kuivõrd domineerivad riiklikud diskursused marginaliseerivad ja survestavad praktikaid, mis erinevad heteronormatiivsest ja reproduktiivsest sotsiaalsest rollist. Seksuaalsuse jätkuva politiseerituse ja biopoliitiliselt kasulike moraalsete subjektide kujundamise taustal on küsimus *waria*'de kuulumuspüüdlustest erakordse kaaluga. Kuna *waria*'de elusid ilmestab sageli migratsioon, mille käigus katkevad perekondlikud suhted ning nad kogevad märkimisväärsel määral stigmatiseerimist, diskrimineerimist ja vägi-valda, on kuulumustunde igatsus *waria*'de seas laialt levinud emotsioon.

Vastusena sotsiaalsele kõrvalejäämisele väljendavad *waria*'d oma kuulumustunde igatsust sageli kehalise performatiivse praktika kaudu. Lähtudes ja panustades vaatepunktidele, mida on esitletud eelnevates *waria*'sid puudutavates etnograafilistes töödes, nagu Boellstorff (2004a; 2007) *waria*'de rahvuslikust kuulumusest (*national belonging*) ja Hegarty (2017b; 2018) *waria*'de 'rahvusliku glamuuri' esitlustest, arendan doktoritöös välja raamistiku, mille kaudu käsitleda kuulumuse kehalisi aspekte. Kirjeldan kuulumuspüüdust kehalisuse ja kujutluste vahelises pingeväljas, milles soovi kuhugi kuuluda väljendatakse kehalise praktika kaudu. Kuulumust kogetakse ennekõike vahetu kogukonnapoolse omaks-

võtuna. Samas võib sellena mõista ka osalemist kujuteldavates kartograafiates ja tunnustust kujuteldava kogukonna, näiteks rahvuse tasandil. Nii võivad *waria*-d otsida kuuluvustunnet oma ilupraktika, aga ka kujuteldavate ulatuste kaudu. Sellest lähtuvalt väidan, et kehalised praktikad, mille abil püüeldakse kujuteldavates kategooriates ja kartograafiates osalemise poole, toimivad sageli strateegiliste vahenditena, mille abil taotletakse kohalikku omaksvõttu. Teisisõnu, kogukonnatasandi kuuluvuse saavutamiseks otsivad *waria*-d kuuluvustunnet rahvuslikul ja rahvusülesel tasandil.

Väitekiri tugineb minu pikaajalistel etnograafilistel välitöödel Yogyakarta ja Surabaya linnades Jaava saarel ning Sorongi ja Jayapura linnades Uus-Guinea saare läänepoolses piirkonnas Paapuas vahemikus 2010–2012, mida toetasid mõned lühemaajalised järelvälitööd aastatel 2015 ja 2018. Välitöödel rakendasin peamiselt osalusvaatlust ning viisin läbi poolstruktureeritud biograafilised intervjuud 49 *waria*-ga. Lisaks teostasid ka teemapõhiseid intervjuusid ja kasutasin kaamerat.

Tuginedes etnograafilisele materjalile ja antropoloogilisele analüüsile, panustab käesolev väitekiri nüüdisaegsetesse teaduslikesse aruteludesse (trans)-soolisusest, seksuaalsusest ja kehalisusest. Doktoritöö keskseid mõisteid – sooline subjektsus ja kuuluvus – arendan seoses performatiivsuse, seksuaalsuse ja afektiga. Samuti käsitlen neid seoses mitmesuguste diskursiivsete ja ajalooliste kontekstidega nagu rahvus, religioon, rahvusülene dünaamika, koloniaalajastu pärand ning moderniseerumine – selleks et näidata nende rolli sooliste positsioonide kujundamises ning võimekuses avada või sulgeda potentsiaalseid kuuluvusrume. Doktoritöö peamised eesmärgid on:

- kirjeldada *waria*-de soolist subjektsust pidevas intersubjektiivsuses erinevate teistega, nii intiimsete ja lähedalasuvate inimestega kui ka imaginaarsete teistega, nagu struktureerivad ideaalid ja kujuteldavad kogukonnad.
- Analüüsida *waria*-de eludes esinevat ruumidünaamikat läbi abjektsiooni ja agentsuse ilmingute.
- Uurida produktiivsete ja transformatiivsete ruumide kujunemist *waria*-de eludes ja viise, kuidas need omakorda mõjutavad ja kujundavad subjektsust.
- Laiendada teadmisi strateegiatest, mida *waria*-d kasutavad oma kuuluvustunde taotlustes rahvuslikul ja kogukondlikul tasandil.

Väitekirja esimeses peatükis puudutan peamiselt uurimuse metodoloogilisi lähenemisi ja probleeme. Esmalt tutvusin *waria*-dega dokumentaalfilmiprojekti „Wariazone“ (Kiwa, Toomistu, 2011) kaudu, mille jaoks tehtava töö käigus viisin läbi mahuka pilootuuringu käesolevaks doktoritööks. Selle väitekirja aluseks olev pikaajaline etnograafiline osalusvaatlusel põhinev välitöö keskendus *waria*-de kogukondadele Jaaval ja Paapuas. Seega käsitlesin paralleelselt piirkondi, mida võib pidada Indoneesia rahvuslikus kujutelmaks keskseks (Jaava) ja marginaalseks (Paapua). Selline valik toetas metodoloogiliselt minu huvi *waria*-de kui rahvusliku kategooria vastu.



Metodoloogiliselt keskendun ühelt poolt põhjalikult *waria*’de fenomenoloogilisele kogemusele, nende endi narratiividele ja kontseptsioonidele, tuginedes pikaajalistele etnograafilistele välitöödele (3. ja 4. peatüki fookus). Teisalt toetun märkimisväärselt ka makrotasandi sotsiopolitiilisele ja ajaloolisele analüüsile struktuuridest, mis mõjutavad *waria*’de elusid (2. peatüki fookus). Kirjeldan ülevaatlilikult töö asetumist ja sisendit feministliku antropoloogia ja transsoolisuse uuringute valdkondadesse. Antropoloogilised uurimused sootransgressiivsetest nähtustest globaalses lõunas on andnud transsoolisuse fenomeni uuringutesse olulise panuse. Just need võimaldasid näidata, et sugu ja seksuaalsus, mida Lääne mõttemaailmas tavaliselt kahe eraldiseisva ja ilmselge kategooriana kujutatakse, pole tingimata midagi sellist, mida erinevates kultuurides lihtsalt mõnevõrra erinevalt kogetakse. Need samad kategooriad võivad ka ise vastavalt kultuurilisele kontekstile muutuda. Tõstes esile kire olulisust *waria*’de soolises enesekirjelduses, panustab ka käesolev töö sellesse diskussiooni.

Sissejuhatuse teises peatükis tutvustan töö peamist uurimisalast subjekti, andes ülevaate *waria*’de positsioonist Indoneesia ühiskonnas nii ajaloolises kui kaasaegses perspektiivis. Sootransgressiivsusel on Indoneesias, nagu ka mujal Kagu-Aasias, pikk ajalugu. Selliste subjektide olemasolu saab selgitada varamodernsete kosmoloogiate kaudu, kus maskuliinne ja feminiinne soobinaarsus oli ületatav ning transsooline käitumine seotud šamanistliku või riitusliku praktikaga (Blackwood, 2005a; Peletz, 2006; 2009). Need traditsioonid on valdavalt kadunud, kuid veel tänagi kasutab näiteks bugide rahvas Sulawesi saarel viie kategooriaga soosüsteemi, tunnustades lisaks naisele ja mehele ka vastavad trans-positsioone *calalai* ja *calabai*, kellest viimane vastab rahvuslikule kategooriale *waria*. Viiendat bugide sookategooriat *bissu*’t võib pidada androgüünseks šamaaniks, kes viib läbi kogukondlikke ja individuaalseid riituseid ning suhtleb teispoolseusega (Davies, 2010). Soolise binaarsuse jäigastumist Indoneesias mõjutas hollandlaste koloniaalperiood, aga ka islami ja kristluse levik. President Suharto autoritaarse režiimi ajal (1968–1998) juurutati soonorme vastavalt reproduktiivsele peremudelile, mis kinnistas ideaalse naise ja täiusliku mehe kuvandid. Ent just sel perioodil kujunes ka *waria*’st nähtav element arhipelaagi kultuuriväljal.

Pärast Indoneesia demokraatlikku pööret 1998. aastal, mil president Suharto astus oma 30-aastase valitsemisperioodi järel tagasi, tõstsid ühiskonnas pead mitmed radikaal-islamistlikud organisatsioonid. Need rühmitused haarasid ka küsimused seksuaalsusest ja moraalist oma agendasse. Soo- ja seksuaalvähemused, eriti oma organiseerunud vormides, langesid sageli nende grupeeringute vägivaldsete rünnakute ohvriks. 2016. aasta alguses toimus viimane suurem tagasilöökk, mis ühtlasi nihutas konservatiivse seksuaalvähemusi ründava diskursuse peavoolule lähemale. Kuigi *waria*’sid stigmatiseeriti juba siis, kui nad 1950. aastatel ilmusid esimest korda rahvuslikku kujutelmale (Hegarty, 2017b), nähakse *waria*’sid ja teisi LGBT spektrumi subjekte kaasajal rahvusliku ohuna. Teised aktiivselt toimivad stigmad kujutavad LGBT subjekte kõrvalkaldena loomulikkusest ning religiooni ja moraali vastuoluna (Bahaya Akut Persekusi

LGBT, 2018, p. 11–18). Indoneesias elab küll maailma suurim moslemikogukond, kuid sealset islamit võib pidada võrdlemisi paindliku ja erinevustele vastuvõtlikuna. Ent lähtuvalt hiljutisest hukkamõistva diskursuse lainest, rakendatakse religiooni ja moraalseid väärtuseid sageli diskrimineeriva kohtlemise õigustuseks.

Tuginedes Douglase (2002[1966]), Kristeva (1982), ja Butleri (1993) töödele, analüüsin erinevaid *waria* 'dele osaks saavaid halvustamise, vägivalla ja sotsiaalse kõrvalejätuse vorme abjektsiooni mõiste kaudu. Abjektsioon toimib osana pidevatest ja keerulistest performatiivsuse protsessidest, mis samaaegselt loovad normi ja abjekti. Need erinevad abjektsiooni vormid, nii individuaalselt kogevad, nagu perekondlik lahtiütlemine, aga ka laiemad diskursiivsed vormid kogukondlikul või rahvuslikul tasandil, struktureerivad märkimisväärselt *waria* 'de elusid.

Nende nähtuste taustal ilmestab paljude *waria* 'de elusid migratsioon. Noored *waria* 'd lahkuvad sageli oma kodukülalt või vanematest, kes ei lepi lapse teistsuguse soolise väljendusega. Tavaliselt lähevad nad suurematesse linnadesse, kus omasuguste toel otsitakse lepitust ja tunnustust. Seejuures on *waria* 'de liikumine seotud ka elujärje parandamisega, mistõttu on kiire majanduskasvuga piirkonnad nagu näiteks Paapua rannikulinnad atraktiivseteks sihtkohtadeks. Arhipelaagi suuremaid linnu läbivatel trajektooridel müüakse ellujäämiseks sageli seksuaalteenuseid, mille kõrvalt õpitakse juuksuritööd ja meigikunsti.

Kolmanda peatüki keskmes on *waria* 'de sooline subjektsus, markeerides seega väitekirja metodoloogilist nihet *waria* 'de elusid kujundavatelt struktuuridelt lähemale nende eluilmale. Peatüki esimeses alapeatükis annan põhjaliku teoreetilise ülevaate käsitlustest, mille abil analüüsin *waria* 'de subjektsust, kehalisust, agentsust ja kuuluvustunnet. Minu teoreetiline raamistik põhineb fenomenoloogilisel lähenemisel performatiivsusele. Lähtudes Butlerist (1993), on sugu performatiivselt konstrueeritud. Ent sinne doktoritöö joonib alla selles performatiivses praktikas esinevad intersubjektiivsed ja afektiivsed suhted. Kirjeldan soolist subjektsust alaliselt kehalisena, pidevas dialektilises suhtes performatiivse kultuurilise praktika ja soolise tunnetuse vahel. Samas on see ka afektiivsete ja kujuteldavate ulatuste kaudu seotud kultuuriliste kategooriate ja teiste struktureerivate üksustega, nagu näiteks kujuteldavad kogukonnad ja soo-ideaalid. Sellest lähenemisest lähtuvalt mõtestan omakorda ka soolise subjektsuse ja kuuluvuse seoseid.

Oma eluilmast kõneledes kasutavad *waria* 'd sageli ruumilist väljendit '*waria* 'de maailm' (*dunia waria*). Kasutan seda väitekirja läbiva analüütilisi mõistena, mis võimaldab mõtestada *waria* 'de kategooria sotsiaalset produktiivsust ning seotud ruumide ja praktikate tegutsemisvõimet (*agency*) toetavat kvaliteeti. *Dunia waria* on kui sotsiaalne ja kujuteldav *waria* 'de maailm, mis hõlmab endas kõike *waria* 'de elu puudutavat: moodi, slängi, meiki, kogukondlikke traditsioone ja teisi iseloomulikke väljendusviise, aga ka toimetulekustrateegiaid. Ruumilises plaanis avaldub *dunia waria* aga ennekõike ilusalongides, kus paljud *waria* 'd töötavad, ning teatud paikades linnaruumis,

kuhu kogunetakse öösi. Just nendes kohtades kompavad paljud noored oma identiteeti ja avastavad enda jaoks teistsuguseid sotsiaalseid kehastusi.

Doktoritöö sissejuhatuse neljas peatükk koondab mitmed eelkirjeldatud punktid ning nendest lähtuvalt käsitlen *waria*-de kehaadel avalduvaid kuuluvuspüüdlusi. Esiteks, kirjeldan *dunia waria*-t kui kujunemisruumi ja kuuluvuskategooriat. Teiseks kirjeldan *waria*-de ilupraktikate seoseid rahvusliku kuuluvuse ja moderniseerumise narratiiviga. Lõpetuseks analüüsin spektakulaarsete feminiinsuste (Ochoa, 2014) rolli nendes praktikates ning sellest johtuvalt visandan võimaluse analüüsida sooperformatiivsust visuaalantropoloogilise meetodi kaudu.

Väitekirja kokkuvõttes esitan neli peamist väidet. Esiteks, sotsiaalset kõrvalejäetust süvendavate struktuuride tulemusel, aga ka nendele vastu seistes otsivad *waria*-d eneseväljendust, naudinguid, enesekinnitust ja kuuluvustunnet kohtades ja aegadel, mis on neile võimalikud. Siit tuleneb kohtade, kus *dunia waria* avaldub, agentsust soosiv kvaliteet – kõige nähtavamalt *waria*-de ilusalongides ning tänava öөлupaikades, kus toimub ka kaubanduslik seks meeste ja *waria*-de vahel. *Dunia waria* võtmepaigad ei ole ainult rahalise vahetuse kohad, mis on *waria*-dele majanduslikult olulised. Need on ka produktiivsed ja transformatiivsed ruumid, mis on määrava tähtsusega *waria*-de enesekinnituses ja kuuluvustunnetuses. Nendes kohtades avaldub võimekus kinnitada oma subjektsust selle afektiivsetes suhetes intiimpartneritega, kogukonnaga, rahvusülese meediamaaastiku illusoorsete lubadustega, aga ka Indoneesia rahvusega. Seega on *dunia waria* ruumilisus kehalise maailmalooma paik, mis pakub strateegiaid 'elavamate elude' ('*livable lives*', Butler, 2004) loomiseks.

Teine seotud järeldus rõhutab *waria*-ks saamise protsessi sotsiaalsust, mis peegeldub ka *waria* kategooriale. Näidates viise, kuidas inimesed identifitseerivad ja tunnetavad sidet *waria*-de kujuteldava kogukonnaga, muutus ilmseks seegi, et *dunia waria* avab kuuluvusrume ning samaaegselt kujundab teatud iseolemise vorme ja soolisustatud väljendusviise. Vaatamata nendele positiivsetele omadustele, võib *dunia waria* siiski ka võimendada *waria*-de haavatavust ning piirata rahvuslikku kuuluvust – seda peamiselt seksitööd silmas pidades.

Kolmas peamine väitekirja panus on teoreetilisem, joonides alla soolise subjektsuse intersubjektiivset ja kehalist loomust. Tuginedes *waria*-de etnograafiale, kirjeldan seda, kuidas sooline subjektsus kujuneb mitmesuguste intersubjektiivsete suhete kontiinumis. Need suhted puudutavad teisi inimesi, nagu mehed, naised ja teised *waria*-d, aga ka struktureerivaid ideaaale ja kujuteldavaid kogukondi nagu rahvus või *dunia waria*. Kehaline subjektsus avaldub enesetunnetuse ('*felt sense*', Salamon, 2010) ja kultuurilise praktika vahel. Seejuures kujuneb see ka seonduvalt kujuteldavate ulatustega kultuurilistes, ajaloolistes ja sotsiaalsetes kontekstides toimivate sümbolressursside, kujuteldavate kogukondade, kartograafiate ja teiste struktureerivate üksuste poole. Neid suhteid saab kirjeldada nii performatiivsete kui afektiivsetena. Väitekirja seega toonitab, esiteks, et sooperformatiivsust ei saa käsitleda, ilma et kriitiliselt adresseeritaks subjekti ümbritsevat ruumi – nii situatsioonilist ruumi, aga ka laiemat konteksti koos koloniaalse, rassilise ja moderniseerumise ajalugudega ning suhetes teis-

tesse maailma piirkondadesse. Teiseks ei saa mööda vaadata subjektsuse afektiivsest ja intersubjektiivsest dimensioonist.

Soolise subjektsuse intersubjektiivse dimensiooniga seonduvalt tõstab doktori-töö esile kire olulisust *waria* 'de sookäsitluses. Romantilised ja seksuaalsed kogemused meestega on olulisteks markeriteks nii subjekti kujunemisel *waria* 'ks kui ka nende enesekirjeldustes. Tänapäevaelu toetab *waria* 'de intiimset suhtlust meestega, vaatamata sellele, kas seksiga kaasneb rahaline vahetus või mitte. Need suhted toetavad *waria* 'de endi seksuaalset naudingut, pakkudes samaaegselt ka võimalust tunda end atraktiivse ja ihaldatuna oma soolises esituses. Seega võib ka kirge kujutada ühe intersubjektiivsuse vormina, mis kinnitab *waria* 'de soolist tunnetust.

Dissertatsiooni neljas peamine järeldus lähtub kolmest eelnevast ning puudutab kehaliste aspektide strateegilist kasutust, mille abil *waria* 'd püüdnud kuuluvustunde poole. *Waria* 'd kasutavad oma soolises esituses kontekstile vastavalt relevantseid sümboleid, mille abil püüdnud kuuluvustunde poole. Glamuursed ilu esitused ja spektakulaarsed feminiinsused loovad afektiivse sideme struktureerivate ideaalidega, mis tõstab *waria* 'de subjektiivse kogemuse kõrgemale nendest tingimustest, mis neid tavaliselt ümbritsevad ja viib selle (post)koloniaalsest seisundist kõikelubavasse metropoli. Taolised kujuteldavad ulatused asetuvad hästi Indoneesia rahvusliku modernsuse ja progressi (*maju*) diskursusesse, mis omakorda võimaldavad soovitud sihtgruppides asjakohaseid tõlgendusi. Seega rakendatakse kehalised ilutehnikad, glamuuri ja spektakulaarsuse esitused, millega püüdnud rahvusliku või transnatsionaalse kuuluvuse poole, strateegiliselt kohaliku tasandi kuuluvuse taotlustes. Niisiis ei saa ka ilu mõista vaid vahendina, millega suhestutakse oma soolise tunnetusega ('naise hingega') ja *waria* identiteedi juures olulise *déndong* 'i praktikaga. Ilu on ka märkimisväärne ressurss, millega *waria* 'd taotleavad tunnustust. Olgugi et *waria* 'd valdavalt lepivad oma füsioloogilise kehalisusega, võimaldavad soo ja ilu esitused iludusvõistlusel, ööelus või argipäevas *waria* 'dele teatud legitiimsust, olla 'justkui naine', sest nad tunnevad end naistena. Inimestele, kes on sageli kaotanud sideme oma perekonnaga ning kes peavad pidevalt enda olemasolu eest seisma, pakuvad sellised kehalised väljendusviisid uusi sidemeid ja kuuluvustunnet kujuteldavasse globaalsesse ja Indoneesia rahvuslikku maailma, et seeläbi muuta oma elu *waria* 'na elamisväärsemaks.

## I artikkel

**Toomistu, T. (forthcoming 2019). Between abjection and world-making: Spatial dynamics in the lives of Indonesian waria [Abjektsiooni ja maailmaloomel vahel: Ruumidünaamika Indoneesia *waria*'de eludes]. *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 13(2).**

Väitekirja esimeses artiklis käsitletlen Indoneesia *waria*'de elusid sageli kujundavat ruumidünaamikat, tuginedes ja panustades feministliku inimgeograafia käsitlustesse ruumist ja kohaloomest. Sotsiaalse kõrvalejätuse tulemusena, sellest tingitud majanduslikest vajadustest ning ulatuslikust migratsioonist, on *waria*'de seas levinud teatud elustiilimuster. See sisaldab päevatööd ilusalongis ja seksitööga seotud ööelu tänavatel. Lähtudes oma etnograafilistest välitöödest Jaaval ja Lääne-Paapuas, näitan artiklis, et vaatamata *waria*'de laialdasele ruumilisele abjektsioonile, võib *waria*'de ilusalonge ja nende tänavaööelu kujutada ka produktiivsete, transformatiivsete ja ühendavate ruumidena. Need kohad toetavad *waria*'de subjektust selle afektiivsetes suhetes intiimpartnerite, kogukonna, transnatsionaalse meediamastiku illusoorsete lubadustega ja Indoneesia kui rahvusega. Olgugi et ilusalongid ja öised kogunemiskohad võivad tekitada moraalseid hinnanguid ja suunatud vägivalda, on nad sama-aegselt ka agentsust toetavad paigad, kus *waria*'d kogevad enesekinnitust ja kuuluvustunnet, kehasdades oma soolistes esitustes kujuteldavaid mobiilsuseid rahvuslikul ja rahvusülesel skaalal. Artikkel näitab seega, kuidas subjektused ja kohad toetavad mõlemapoolselt üksteise kujunemist, ning kuidas teatud ruumidel on märkimisväärne võimekus marginaalsuse tunnetust ümber kummutada.

## II artikkel

**Toomistu, T. (2019). Playground love: Sex work, pleasure, and self-affirmation in the urban nightlife of Indonesian waria [Armastuse mänguväljak: Seksitöö, nauding ja enesekinnituslik praktika Indoneesia *waria*'de urbanistlikus ööelus]. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 21(2), 205–218.**

Teises artiklis käsitletlen *waria*'de seas laialdaselt levinud tänavapõhise seksitöö praktikat. Seksitöötajatest *waria*'de suurt hulka selgitatakse tavaliselt majanduslikust vaatepunktist. Ent ometi pole *waria*'de öine kogenemine teatud linna-ruumi paikades alati seotud tööga ning sageli isegi mitte seksiga. Artiklis väidan, et *waria*'de ööelu toetab nende agentsust, mis tuleneb naudinguliste kehaliste praktikate kaudu saavutatavast enesekinnituslikust kogemusest. Need kehalised praktikad hõlmavad suhteid intiimsete (seksuaalpartnerid), lähedalasuvate (teised *waria*'d ja mehed), aga ka kaugelasuva (struktureerivad ideaalid) teistega. Lähtudes aastatel 2010–2015 läbi viidud välitöödest Jaaval ja Lääne-Paapuas, analüüsin artiklis kõigepealt *waria*'de seksitöö poliitilist ja majanduslikku organiseeritust. Seejärel kirjeldan *waria*'de tänavaööelu sotsiaalseid ja sensoorseid aspekte.

### III artikkel

**Toomistu, T. (2019). Embodied notions of belonging: Practices of beauty among waria in West Papua, Indonesia [Kehastatud kuuluvus: Waria'de ilupraktikad Lääne-Paapuas, Indoneesias]. *Asian Studies Review*, 43(4), 581–599.**

Doktoritöö kolmandas artiklis keskendun *waria*'de kogukonnale Uus-Guinea saare läänepoolses Indoneesiale kuuluvas piirkonnas Lääne-Paapuas. Erinevalt ülejäänud Indoneesiast tekkis *waria*'de kogukond Paapuas võrdlemisi hiljuti. *Waria*'d on paremate majanduslike väljavaadete otsinguil migreerunud Paapuas alates 1970. aastatest. Sellega seondult, aga ka laiematest sotsiaalsetest muutustest tingituna, on kogukonnaga liitunud ka põlisrahvustest *waria*'sid. Paljude *waria*'de elusid ilmestab ilusalongis töötamine ja aktiivne ööelu. Nende nähtuste taustal võib *waria*'sid Paapua kontekstis pidada iluagentideks. Ilupraktikad, mida *waria*'d kehastavad ja ka loovad oma salongitöö kaudu, peegeldavad Paapua koloniaalajalugu, kättesaadavaid kujuteldavaid kogukondi ja transnatsionaalset ilukultuuri, mis omakorda vormivad kuuluvuskategooriaid.

Tuginedes Paapua rannikulinnades läbi viidud antropoloogilistele välitöödele ning kirjeldades seejuures ka *waria*'de iludusvõistlust, näitan artiklis, kuidas reaktsioonina sotsiaalsele kõrvalejääetusele püüdleval *waria*'d tunnustuse poole ning rakendavad selle saavutamiseks kuuluvust toetavaid strateegiaid. Selleks et taotleda kogukonnu kuuluvust, pürgivad *waria*'d oma ilupraktikate kaudu rahvusülese ja rahvusliku tasandi kuuluvuse poole. Artikkel tõstab esile, et ilu saavutamine Paapuas on seotud nii Indoneesia rahvusega kui ka kohalike moderniseerumise püüdlustega. See aga omakorda asetab paapuatest *waria*'d interseksionaalsesse positsiooni, milles põimuvad nii sugu kui rassilised iluideaaliid.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### Education:

2011–2019 University of Tartu, PhD studies in the Department of Ethnology (2015–2017 on an academic leave due to the production of the documentary film *Soviet Hippies*).  
2017–2018 Visiting researcher in University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, in the Department of Anthropology, DoRa Plus Estonia grant, Archimedes Foundation.  
2013–2014 Visiting student researcher in University of California, Berkeley, U.S. in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies. Fulbright scholarship.  
2012 Visiting student at Baltic Film and Media School, Tallinn University.  
2008–2011 University of Tartu, MA (*cum laude*) in Ethnology.  
2008–2011 University of Tartu, MA (*cum laude*) in Communication Studies.  
2010–2011 University of Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Dharma-siswa scholarship.  
2009 Visiting student at Voronezh State University, Russia. Voronezh State University scholarship.  
2004–2008 University of Tartu, BA in Economics.  
1992–2004 Paide Ühisgümnaasium, graduated with honours.

### Employment:

2019 University of Tartu, Department of Ethnology, Junior Research Fellow.  
2017–... Cece OÜ, member of the board.  
2011–2017 Kultusfilm OÜ, contractual director.  
2008 Trendmark media agency, the assistant of the office.  
2006–2007 Tartu Forselius Gymnasium, lector.  
2005–2010 Sisalik Meedia OÜ, member of the board.  
2002–2004 Järva Teataja, journalist.

### Selected publications:

Toomistu, T. (2019 forthcoming). Between abjection and world-making: Spatial dynamics in the lives of Indonesian waria. *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 13(2).  
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- Toomistu, T. (2013). Warias: Transfrauen mit großer tradition [Warias: Trans-women with great tradition]. P. Eicker, E. Koepping, & T. Sauer (Eds.), *German Queer Travel Magazine*, 1, 6–9.
- Toomistu, T. (2013). Mis on, ei ole; mis ei ole, on [What is, is not; what is not, is]. *Värske Rõhk*, 35, 39–53.
- Toomistu, T. (2012). Nõukogude sümbolika tähendustest siirdepõlvkonna hulgas Eestis ja Venemaal [On the meanings of Soviet symbols among the generation of transition in Estonia and Russia]. In P. Runnel, A. Aljas, T. Kaalep, R. Ruusmann, & T. Sikka (Eds.), *Eesti Rahva Muuseumi aasta- raamat* (pp. 96–115). Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum.
- Toomistu, T. (2011). Indoneesia pingestatud pluralism [The tense pluralism in Indonesia]. *Universitas Tartuensis: Tartu Ülikooli ajakiri*, 6, 33–35.

### **Selected creative work:**

- Kiwa, & Toomistu, T. (2013–2018). *Soviet Hippies: The Psychedelic Underground Culture of 1970s Estonia*. Multi-disciplinary traveling exhibition. Presented at Estonian National Museum (March–August 2013), Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden (September–October 2013), Uppsala Konstmuseum, Uppsala, Sweden (February–May 2014), Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver, Canada (June–August 2014), Red Gallery, London, U.K. (September 2016), Galerie KUB, Leipzig, Germany (September–October 2018). Curator.
- Toomistu, T. (2017). *Soviet Hippies*. Documentary film (75' & 52', Kultusfilm (EE), Kinomaton (DE), Moukka Filmi (FI)). Director, scriptwriter.
- Kiwa, & Toomistu, T. (2011). *Wariazone*. Documentary film (58'). Co-director, co-producer, co-writer.



## ELULOOKIRJELDUS

Nimi: Terje Toomistu  
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### Haridus:

2011–2019 Tartu Ülikool, doktoriõpe etnoloogia erialal (2015–2017 õppetööst eemal seoses dokumentaalfilmi Nõukogude hipid produktiooniga).  
2017–2018 Külalisuurija Amsterdami Ülikoolis, Hollandis, antropoloogia osakonnas, DoRa Plus Estonia grant, Archimedes.  
2013–2014 Külalisuurija Kalifornia Ülikoolis Berkeley's, Ameerika Ühendriikides, soo- ja naisuuringute osakonnas. Fulbright stipendium.  
2012 Külalisuurija Balti Filmi- ja Meediakoolis, Tallinna Ülikool.  
2008–2011 Tartu Ülikool, MA (*cum laude*) etnoloogias.  
2008–2011 Tartu Ülikool, MA (*cum laude*) kommunikatsiooniuuringutes.  
2010–2011 Indoneesia keele ja kultuuriuuringute õpe Sanata Dharma Ülikoolis, Yogyakarta, Indoneesias. Darmasiswa stipendium.  
2009 Külalisuurija Voroneži Riiklikus Ülikoolis, Venemaal. Voroneži Riikliku Ülikooli stipendium.  
2004–2008 Tartu Ülikool, BA majandusteaduses.  
1992–2004 Paide Ühisgümnaasium, lõpetanud kuldmedaliga.

### Teenistuskäik:

2019 Tartu Ülikool, etnoloogia osakond, nooremteadur.  
2017–... Cece OÜ, juhatuse liige.  
2011–2017 Kultusfilm OÜ, lepinguline režissöör.  
2008 Trendmark meediaagentuur, büroo-assistent.  
2006–2007 Tartu Forseliuse Gümnaasium, lepinguline õpetaja.  
2005–2010 Sisalik Meedia OÜ, juhatuse liige.  
2002–2004 Järva Teataja, ajakirjanik.

### Valitud publikatsioonid:

Toomistu, T. (2019 forthcoming). Between abjection and world-making: Spatial dynamics in the lives of Indonesian waria [Abjektsiooni ja maailmalooime vahel: Ruumidünaamika Indoneesia *waria*'de eludes]. *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 13(2).  
Toomistu, T. (2019). Embodied notions of belonging: Practices of beauty among waria in West Papua, Indonesia [Kehastatud kuuluvus: *Waria*'de ilupraktikad Lääne-Paapuas, Indoneesias]. *Asian Studies Review*, 43(4), 581–599.  
Toomistu, T. (2019). Playground love: Sex work, pleasure and self-affirmation in the urban nightlife of Indonesian waria [Armastuse mänguväljak: Seksitöö,

- nauding ja enesekinnituslik praktika Indoneesia *waria* 'de urbanistlikus ööelus]. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 21(2), 205–218.
- Toomistu, T. (2019). Sugu, rahvus ja urbanism Indoneesia *waria* 'de keha del. *Vikerkaar*, 4–5, 105–112.
- Toomistu, T. (2018). Such a Strange Vibration: Rock Music as the Affective Site of Divergence among the Soviet Estonian Nonconformist Youth [„Selline kummaline vibratsioon”: Rokkmuusika kui afektiivne eristumise paik Nõukogude Eesti mittekonformsete noorte hulgas]. *Res Musica*, 10, 11–27.
- Toomistu, T. (2018). Nõukogude hipide passiivne protest. *Vikerkaar*, 10–11, 108–119.
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- Toomistu, T. (2011). Indoneesia pingestatud pluralism. *Universitas Tartuensis: Tartu Ülikooli ajakiri*, 6, 33–35.

### **Valitud loometöö:**

- Kiwa, & Toomistu, T. (2013–2018). “Nõukogude lillelapsed: 70ndate psühhe-deelne underground Eestis.” Multidistsiplinaarne rändnäitus. Väljapanekud: Eesti Rahva Muuseumis (märts-august 2013), *Moderna Museet*’is, Malmös, Rootsis (september-oktoober 2013), Uppsala Kunstimuuseumis, Uppsalas, Rootsis (veebruari-mai 2014), *Presentation House* galeriis Vancouveris, Kanadas (juuni-august 2014), *Red Gallery*’s Londonis, Ühendkuningriigis (september 2016), *Gallerie KUB*’is Leipzigis, Saksamaal (september-oktoober 2018). Kuraator.
- Toomistu, T. (2017). Nõukogude hipid. Dokumentaalfilm (75’ & 52’, Kultus-film (Eesti), Kinomaton (Saksamaa), Moukka Filmi (Soome)). Režissöör, stsenaarist.
- Kiwa, & Toomistu, T. (2011). *Wariazone*. Dokumentaalfilm (58’). Kaas-režis-söör, kaas-produktent, kaas-autor.

## DISSERTATIONES ETHNOLOGIAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

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