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From divine designation to discursive contestation: The constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities

Teguh Wijaya Mulya

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
The University of Auckland, New Zealand
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Abstract

This purpose of this thesis is to offer greater insight into the processes by which Indonesian Christian young people come to understand themselves as sexual beings. Previous sexuality studies investigating young Indonesians have focused mainly on managing sexual health risks or on controlling young people’s sexual practices, and have been generally conducted among Muslim participants. Subsequently, the complexities of young Indonesians’ sexual subjectivities in other social and religious contexts are largely unexplored. Employing a Foucauldian theoretical approach, this thesis addresses this gap by researching how young Indonesian Christians have drawn on, and, particularly, resisted, dominant discourses of sexuality in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities.

Twenty-two Indonesian young people aged 16-24 with Christian backgrounds participated in this study. Qualitative data were produced through autobiographical writing and semi-structured interviews conducted via email and instant messenger.

This thesis identifies four key discourses involved in the constitution of these young peoples’ sexual subjectivities, namely: the discourses of sexual health, sexual morality, sexual desire, and sexual violence. The discourse of sexual health has constituted Indonesian young people as vulnerable, hormone-driven, and at-risk. The discourse of sexual morality has positioned them within a binary of moral/immoral sexual subjects. Through the discourse of sexual desire, the belief that everyone has a relatively fixed sexual desire – which can be identified, specified, and categorised – has been normalised. Within the discourse of sexual violence, men have been constituted as desiring, women as asexual, adults as exploitative, and children as innocent. The main argument of this thesis is that Indonesian Christian participants do not simply adopt these dominant ways-of-seeing or take up subject positions offered by these discourses; rather, the formation of their sexual subjectivities is complex, nuanced, and involves practices of resistance towards those dominant discourses of sexuality. The findings revealed diversity of participants’ sexual subjectivities in relation to those key discourses, resembling what Foucault (1985) calls the aesthetics of existence. The implications of this research are discussed in relation to future sexuality educational practices in Indonesia which might connect with the diversity of young people’s needs, interests, and their unique ways of being sexual subjects.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all Indonesian young people who have taken the road less travelled

We’ve been outnumbered, raided, and now cornered.
It’s hard to fight when the fight ain’t fair.
We’re getting stronger now, find things they never found.
They might be bigger, but we’re faster and never scared.

Because these things will change!
Can you feel it now?
These walls that they put up to hold us back will fall down.
It’s a revolution! The time will come for us to finally win.
And we’ll sing hallelujah, we’ll sing hallelujah…

(“Change” by Taylor Swift, 2008 ©)
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I would like to thank the Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education who granted a scholarship for the undertaking of this doctoral study. I also would like to thank the University of Surabaya for their support in facilitating the allocation of this scholarship from 2011 to 2013.

I would like to acknowledge my supervisors for their guidance and support throughout this journey. Thank you to Louisa Allen for always believing in me and challenging me. It is an honour to work with a brilliant scholar like you. Thank you to Caroline Blyth for your patience and reassurance, and for showing me what kind of academic (and person) I want to be. It is a pleasure to work with you. I cannot thank both of you enough. I promise to keep working, researching, and pushing the boundaries of knowledge – as you have always shown me.

I also would like to acknowledge the work of Sue Osborne in proofreading the final draft of this thesis, which includes (and is limited to) checking grammar, spelling, punctuation, and consistency.

For the Larrikins, thank you for being there and making this journey less lonely.

And for Julian, thanks for everything…
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Chapter 1
Introduction:

Why Research Indonesian Christian Young People’s Sexual Subjectivities?

Introduction to the Study

In the last two decades there has been a significant growth in national and international research into sexuality in Indonesia (Boellstorff, 2015; Parker, 2008; Shaluhiyah & Ford, 2014; Utomo & McDonald, 2009). While this growth is noteworthy, S. G. Davies and Bennett (2015) stated that more studies are needed to explore the extraordinary diversity of sexual practices, identities, cultures, and politics in contemporary Indonesia – which is impossible to “simplify, condense, and stereotype” (p. 2). In general, sexuality studies in Indonesia are still considered taboo, given the powerful socio-political-religious discourses surrounding this subject. Some universities even forbid any sexuality-related research (Boelstorff, 2015) on the basis that it is (perceived to be) associated with immorality and often results in rejection of such researchers from local communities, academic authorities, and future students. Consequently, scholars of Indonesia may risk their career if they focus on researching sexuality. In spite of these pressures, researchers do continue to contribute resistant voices against the dominant homogenising and moralising discourses of sexuality in Indonesia (Bennett & S. G. Davies, 2015). Joining this group, my thesis attempts to add to this body of literature by investigating the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities – an area which currently remains understudied.

Global and local socio-political changes in the last two decades have opened up the circulation of discourses of sexuality previously unfamiliar in Indonesia. Discussions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendersed, and other (LGBT+) sexualities, condom-use, and HIV/AIDS, for example, started to appear more frequently in popular culture, mass media, and academic studies in Indonesia since the 1990s (Blackwood, 2008; Murtagh, 2013; Suvianita, 2013; Utomo & McDonald, 2008). While researchers and politicians have expressed their concerns about young people’s sexual practices in the face of these changes (e.g., Manggala, 2013; Virdhani, 2013, February 18), knowledge concerning how Indonesian young people understand sex and sexuality within these contemporary contexts is sparse. A significant proportion of previous research involving young Indonesians and sexuality has
focused on describing and controlling young people’s sexual attitudes, behaviours, and the risks associated with those behaviours (e.g., Diarsvitri, Utomo, Neeman, & Oktavian, 2011; Ford, Shaluhiyah, & Suryoputro, 2007; Simon & Paxton, 2004). There has, however, been a paucity of research exploring the complexities of young people’s ways of giving meaning to their sexual selves. For instance, little is known about young people’s practices of resistance to dominant discourses of sexuality (i.e., contestation of the dominant regime of “truth”) or their alternative ways of being sexual subjects. A deeper understanding of how Indonesian young people come to know themselves as sexual beings is crucial for developing educational strategies that connect with these young people’s sexual realities.

In order to better understand and engage with young people’s sexual selves, this thesis focuses specifically on the constitution of Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities in the context of contemporary Indonesia. Central to their subject-formation process is the nexus of power relations that (re)produce various discourses of sexuality which have enabled/constrained the meaning young people are able give to their sexual selves. The main question underpinning this study is: How do Indonesian Christian young people understand themselves as sexual subjects? Following a Foucauldian poststructuralist theoretical approach to subjectivity and resistance (Foucault, 1978, 1982, 1985; Weedon, 1987), this question is further explicated by two sub-questions: (a) How do Indonesian Christian young people draw on dominant discourses of sexuality in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities? (b) What alternative subjectivities do they demonstrate which might contest discourses of sexuality that are dominant in contemporary Indonesia? Such an investigation seeks to contribute to critical research on Indonesian young people’s sexuality (Bennett, 2007; Parker, 2008, 2009, 2014; Smith-Hefner, 2006). Simultaneously, it responds to international researchers’ calls to examine the complex interplay between sexuality and religion among young people in diverse international contexts (Allen & Quinlivan, 2016; Lamb, 2013; Nynäss & Yip, 2012; Rasmussen, 2010, 2012).

In addition to the dearth of sexuality research among Indonesian Christian young people, my personal history as an Indonesian Christian has also played a role in shaping this thesis’ main questions and the choosing of the context. For most of my life, my understanding of myself as a sexual being has been constituted by/through (conservative) discourses of sexuality circulating within my family, church, school, and also in Indonesian mass media. Finding the ways of seeing sexuality offered by these discourses too constraining, I decided to pursue a
doctoral degree in sexuality studies overseas, which – unanticipatedly – also resulted in a radical redefinition of my sexual and religious subjectivity. More details about my personal history and its implications for this study will be discussed in Chapter 3 Methodology.

These research questions are explored with Indonesian Christian participants aged 16-24 years through semi-structured online interviews and autobiographical writing. Through these anonymous qualitative methods, the complexities of participants’ ways of seeing and being sexual subjects are analysed using thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The constitution of their sexual subjectivities is reported in relation to four key discourses of sexuality in contemporary Indonesia as identified in the literature review (Chapter 2), namely, the discourses of sexual health (Chapter 4), sexual morality (Chapter 5), sexual desire (Chapter 6), and sexual violence (Chapter 7).

This introductory chapter will first consider the importance of the research questions in relation to current Indonesian research and social contexts, such as socio-sexual changes after the 1998 democratic reformation, the absence of formal sexuality education in schools, and the lack of research on Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities. The conceptual framework informing this thesis and how it was chosen will then be discussed. Finally, the thesis structure will be outlined.

**The Importance of the Research Topic: Young People and Sexuality in Contemporary Indonesia**

This section discusses the importance of researching Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities in relation to this nation’s political, historical, educational, legal, academic, and religious contexts. Indonesia, the world’s fourth most populous country and home of the world’s largest Muslim population, has experienced a myriad of social, political, and economic changes in the last two decades. These changes are illustrated by Boellstorff (2015) as being akin to a steaming pot whose lid is lifted and the steam goes every which way. With the ending of the 32-year military regime of Soeharto in May 1998, Indonesia has witnessed democratic elections (both parliamentary and presidential), steady economic growth, and openness towards new ideas and ways of thinking (Parker & Nilan, 2013). On the one hand, since the 1998 democratic reformation, discourses of human rights, gender equality, and individual freedom have circulated more widely. This can be seen in the
establishment and increasing role of the National Commission on Human Rights (founded in 1993) and the National Commission on Violence against Women (founded in 1998). Simultaneously, discourses of religious–moral conservatism have also grown extensively (Utomo & McDonald, 2009; Wieringa, 2015b). Focusing on individual moral obedience as the means to achieve social order, conservative movements have gained momentum and popularity under the shadows of chaotic political, social, and economic conditions around the 1998 reformation, corruption at virtually all government levels, and memories of the peace and economic stability offered by the previous conservative military regime (Nilan, 2008). Tensions between these discourses have characterised Indonesian contemporary politics ever since – including social practices and politics around young people and sexuality. As I will demonstrate below, discourses around young people and sexuality in contemporary Indonesia have largely revolved around tensions between “conservative” (religious–moralising) traditions and more “progressive” movements such as LGBT+ movements, sexual health promotion, and anti-violence campaigns.

One recent change characterised by these conservative–progressive tensions is the debate around the provision of sexuality education for Indonesian young people. Due to the changing patterns of young people’s dating relationships, some parents have urged schools to provide sexuality education for their children (Utomo, 2003; Utomo & McDonald, 2009). A generation ago, dating meant a man comes, sits, and talks with a woman in her parents’ house. In contrast, contemporary young Indonesians’ dating involves going out to the cinema, café, park, or mall (Kuiper, 2011; Parker & Nilan, 2013; Smith-Hefner, 2005). The concern for contemporary parents is that, while virginity is hugely important, strict supervision of their children’s dating is not possible, and talking about sex with their children is culturally inappropriate and embarrassing (Manggala, 2013; Parker, 2009). Currently, there is no sexuality education in Indonesian curricula other than a Biology lesson on reproductive anatomy in year 8 (± age 13) and year 11 (± age 16) (Bennett, 2007; Parker, 2009). Until now the Ministry of Education has refused to include sexuality education in the national curricula based on the belief that “sex is a natural act” which “young people should have known themselves” (Burhani, 2010, June 9; Kertopati & Mukti, 2014, May 5). Moreover, in 2013 this ministry proposed an increase in the number of hours that schools spend teaching Religious Education in order to tackle young people’s “moral problems,” including premarital sex (Virdhani, 2013, February 18). Amid these debates between adults (parents, educators, and policymakers), the process of how young people themselves learn and
understand their sexuality is largely unknown. To date, there are only a limited number of studies that have focused on Indonesian young people’s perspectives of their own sexuality (e.g., Bennett, 2005a; Parker, 2009, 2014; Smith-Hefner, 2005, 2006, 2009). By employing critical methodologies that prioritise young people’s views, this thesis aims to start to provide an empirical foundation for future Indonesian sexuality education which is relevant and considered useful by young people themselves.

Although sexuality is currently not taught in schools, there are sexuality education programmes available for some Indonesian young people offered by non-government organisations (NGOs) and the National Board of Family Planning (under the Ministry of Health). These programmes are generally short-term, small-scale, non-compulsory, and sexual-health-focused. Such initiatives were responses to the call by Indonesian sexual health researchers who drew attention to the risks of unprotected sex, such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, and unplanned pregnancy (Ford, Shaluhiyah, & Suryoputro, 2007; Simonin, Bushee, & Courcaud, 2011). These sexual health researchers concertedlily suggested provision of sexuality education to dispel young people’s ignorance about the risks of sex, and condom-use as protection against STIs and unplanned pregnancy (e.g., Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Leerlooijer et al., 2014; Sarnan, 2012; Widyastari, Isarabhakdi, & Shaluhiyah, 2015). The importance of promoting safer sex has been persistently voiced by these researchers; however, there is no research around whether these safer sex methods have been effectively adopted by Indonesian young people. More studies are needed to explore the constraints and complexities of practising (and resisting) such methods among Indonesian young people. To use condoms consistently, for instance, might not be simple and straightforward, but requires young people to negotiate various competing social-political discourses that enable/constrain their possibilities of engaging in such practices (Flood, 2003; Kippax, 2010). Therefore, to add to the existing studies (Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Leerlooijer et al., 2014; Widyastari et al., 2015) that have mainly focused on the mechanics of health risks avoidance, this thesis will examine the operation of power and discourse in constituting Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities and providing possibilities for action.

One possible (discursive) constraint that hinders Indonesian young people from adopting safer sex practices is opposition from conservative groups who often condemn sexual health education as encouraging the “immoral” practice of premarital sex. The Ministry of Health’s condom-awareness programme, for example, was eventually cancelled due to objections from
conservative religious groups (Natahadibrata, 2013, Dec 5). Young people’s possession of condoms is often considered problematic by schools, parents, and religious authorities because this is interpreted as preparation to engage in sex outside of marriage. Accordingly, access to contraceptive services in Indonesia is legal only for married couples (Manggala, 2013; “Undang-undang,” 2009). Considering this legal-political situation, S. G. Davies and Bennett (2015) noted that, although sexual health promotion by some NGOs and the Ministry of Health has achieved a degree of success, the prospect of seeing compulsory sexual health education in Indonesian national curricula remains in the distant future. These tensions indicate how religious–moral conservatism has competed with more progressive discourses, such as sexual health promotion, in constituting meanings around Indonesian young people’s sexuality. However, there has been little research into how Indonesian young people negotiate these discursive tensions in understanding themselves as sexual subjects (Harding, 2008).

Beyond educational settings, moral rejection of any sexual expression and relationships outside of marriage can also be seen in everyday Indonesian political, legal, and social practices, which sometimes involve violent acts. From time to time, there are media reports on raids carried out by both neighbours and the police to catch unmarried (heterosexual) couples engaging in consensual sex, either in their own homes, rented rooms, or motels (e.g., Padang, 2012, April 9; Wibisono, 2012, February 14). The police also conduct schoolbag inspections at Internet cafés and schools searching for pornography (Sarifudin, 2012, February 28; Sawabi, 2010, June 9; Surbakti, 2012, April 26). Since 2008, every form of pornography and its production, dissemination, and consumption have been prohibited in Indonesia (“Undang-undang,” 2008). Drawing on moralistic arguments, violent protests conducted by hard-line Islamic groups have also successfully cancelled various events deemed incompatible with Indonesian sexual values (Parker, 2009). These include Lady Gaga’s 2012 concert in Jakarta (Liu, 2012, May 27), the 2010 ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Intersex Association) Congress in Surabaya (Akbar, 2010, 26 March), and a human and sexual rights seminar for transgendered people held by the National Commission on Human Rights (Astuti, 2010, April 30). Such examples indicate that attempts to discipline young people into becoming abstinent (hetero)sexual moral subjects are prevalent in Indonesia. In order to contest this dominant discourse of sexual morality, it is crucial to investigate and uncover how Indonesian young people have engaged in practices of
resistance; that is, how they have cultivated alternative ways of being sexual against those homogenising and moralising political-legal-social practices.

As indicated above, religious beliefs and groups are often involved in, and somewhat inseparable from, moralistic arguments and actions disciplining sexuality in Indonesia. In general, religion has become a major part of everyday Indonesian social-political existence, such as how the “belief in one God” has become the first point in our state ideology, or how all Indonesian citizens are required to write the name of the religion they adhere to on their national identity card. Therefore, in relation to researching Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities, it is important to gain deeper knowledge about how religion has become one of the contexts influencing how these young people understand themselves as sexual subjects (Nilan, Parker, Bennett, & Robinson, 2011). As 87.2% of the Indonesian population identify as Muslims (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010), previous studies and media reports around sexuality have largely analysed and represented narratives from Muslim communities (Bennett 2007; Kailani, 2012; Kholifah, 2005; Parker & Nilan, 2013; Smith-Hefner, 2006; van Wichelen, 2010). Consequently, there is a paucity of sexuality research on other religions in Indonesia. This situation and my personal background as a Christian, Christianity is chosen as one of the contexts of this study’s investigation of young people’s sexual subjectivities, and participants recruited are those who identify themselves as having a Christian background.

Contributing approximately 9.9% of Indonesia’s population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010), Christian groups are rarely involved in public debates and violent protests; nevertheless, dominant Christian teachings in Indonesia have supported and (re)produced the moral imposition of sexual abstinence outside of (heterosexual) marriage. For instance, a prominent Christian figure in Indonesia, Dr Andik Wijaya and his organisation, the Yada Institute, have conducted seminars, workshops, counselling, and youth programmes to promote heterosexuality and sexual abstinence among Christian young people (Yada Institute, 2011). My previous research among Indonesian church leaders (Wijaya Mulya, 2010a) also indicates that sex outside of (heterosexual) marriage is generally considered sinful, while Christian young people are typically encouraged to maintain complete sexual abstinence. Such religion-related disciplinary practices continuously support the dominant discourse of sexual morality which, in return, constrain other ways of giving meaning to Christian young people’s sexual practices. In order to contest the dominance of this discourse, it is critical to
focus on alternative subject positions taken up by young Indonesian Christians in relation to
the discourse of sexual morality. While such alternative positions might have been taken up
by some Indonesian Christian young people (as indicated in participants’ narratives in
Chapter 5, for example), they are considerably underrepresented in the current academic
literature.

There are more progressive Indonesian Christian communities who resist this dominant
moralistic approach to sexuality, which might offer alternative discursive resources for young
Indonesian Christians in giving meaning to their sexual selves. The Jakarta Theological
Seminary, for instance, has expressed endorsement for contraceptive use and acceptance of
LGBT+ sexualities through their monthly support group and annual LGBT+ event (Hoon,
2016; S. Suleeman, personal communication, November 24, 2014). This unique position is
enabled through their progressive theological tradition and access to international studies
(e.g., Gross, 2008; Maher, 2006; Yip, 1999, 2005) and theologies (e.g., Althaus-Reid, 2000,
2003; Goss & West, 2000; Guest, Goss, West, & Bohache, 2006) that challenge
heteronormative Christian doctrines. These competing discourses of sexuality within
Christianity offer different ways of seeing and being sexual subjects for Indonesian Christian
young people. However, no studies have documented how Indonesian Christian young people
negotiate these discourses in making sense of their everyday sexual realities.

Support for LGBT+ sexualities from the Jakarta Theological Seminary reflect the fact that
larger (secular) LGBT+ movements in Indonesia have grown significantly since the 1998
democratic reformation. Indonesian LGBT+ movements are currently regarded as the oldest
and largest in Southeast Asia (Laurent, 2005; Suvi Suvianita, 2013). These LGBT+ movements
have successfully circulated ideas around LGBT+ sexualities in Indonesia previously
unfamiliar, and have offered alternatives to the dominant heteronormative understandings of
young people’s sexuality. LGBT+ sexualities have featured in mainstream Indonesian movies
(Murtagh, 2013), reported in national media (e.g., Andhini, 2010, March 26; Sukmana, 2016,
February 15), and have been increasingly studied by Indonesian researchers (e.g., Boellstorff,
2007; S. G. Davies, 2010; Murray, 1999; Wieringa, 2010). One significant event in these
movements was the inauguration of the Yogyakarta Principles (Corrêa & Muntarbhorn, 2007)
which involved international experts gathering in the University of Gadjah Mada,
Yogyakarta, Indonesia and discussing the application of international human rights law in the
field of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Yogyakarta Principles are often
considered a ground-breaking achievement in the contemporary international LGBT+ movement (O’Flaherty & Fisher, 2008), and have also been utilised by LGBT+ activists in Indonesia (e.g. Fahmina, 2011, May 8). However, despite all these efforts, these movements have still not achieved any legal recognition from the Indonesian government, or protection for LGBT+ sexualities. By investigating how Indonesian Christian young people engage with (and resist) discourses around LGBT+ sexualities in becoming sexual subjects, this thesis aims to add new texture and contextual specificities (i.e., Christian contexts) to the increasing number of studies among Indonesian LGBT+ young people (e.g., Boellstorff, 2007; McNally, Grierson, & Hidayana, 2015; Rodriguez, 2015), and simultaneously identify new possibilities of political resistance.

After the 1998 reformation, reactionary responses against LGBT+ movements have also grown extensively in Indonesia. Recent examples (in 2016) include the closing down of a transgender Islamic boarding house in Yogyakarta by the local authorities after a complaint from Front Jihad Islam, the cancellation of a pro-LGBT+ peaceful rally in Jakarta and Yogyakarta by the police, and the statement from the Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education that LGBT+ sexualities “corrupt” Indonesian values and norms (Amnesty International, 2016, March 18). Earlier, in 2015, The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Muslim leaders) issued a fatwa (i.e., formal recommendation to the government based on an Islamic point of view) that “sodomy, homosexuality, or gay and lesbian practices” should be punished with a death sentence (Mutiara, 2015, March 4). This fatwa was a response to the infamous case of child sexual violence in the Jakarta International School (JIS), in which kindergarten boys were threatened and then penetrated in the toilet by male school cleaners (Sari, 2014, April 14). Using this case, the Council of Indonesian Ulama demonised same-sex sexuality by conflating it with paedophilia and sexual violence, and furthered their conservative agenda of stronger surveillance, control, and punishment for sexual immorality. The JIS then installed more than 400 surveillance cameras in the school buildings to prevent such incidents from happening again (Rahmawati, 2014, April 15) – a move which was then followed by many other schools. Such views and disciplinary actions exemplify the complex interplay between discourses of sexual orientation, sexual morality, and sexual violence in Indonesia, which Indonesian young people may draw on (or contest) in giving meaning to their sexual realities. It is these complexities of Indonesian young people’s becoming sexual subjects that are still under-researched, and therefore are the focus of this thesis.
The JIS case above is one example of how sexual violence cases have become national media headlines in Indonesia. In general, sexual violence (particularly against women and children) has gained public attention after the 1998 reformation, partly because of the awareness-building efforts by the National Commission on Violence against Women. Due to public demand, this commission was established in October 1998 after the systematic mass rape of hundreds of Chinese Indonesian women during the riots that toppled president Soeharto (Berfield & Loveard, 1998; Blackburn, 1999). One of the commission’s achievements has been the passing of the Domestic Violence Law (“Undang-undang,” 2004) which criminalises various acts of domestic violence, including sexual violence by family members. Through this commission’s advocacy and campaigns, a discourse of sexual violence previously unfamiliar in Indonesia became more widely circulated. This commission also identified that one barrier to eliminating the increasing number of sexual violence cases in Indonesia is the justification of violence through conservative interpretations of religious beliefs (Komnas Perempuan, 2013, 2015). Responding to this report, religious leaders argued that increasing statistics of sexual violence documented by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan, 2015) and the National Commission for Child Protection (Wahyuni, 2015, July 30) is caused by deviations from the moral standard of sexual abstinence outside of (heterosexual) marriage (Mutiara, 2015, March 4). This debate around sexual violence provides another example of how competing discourses (i.e., sexual morality and sexual violence) are at play in constituting meanings around sexuality in Indonesia. However, how young people’s sexual subjectivities are constituted through these discourses of sexual violence and sexual morality has not yet been explored extensively (Bennett, 2005a; Parker, 2009).

It is against this social, political, historical, and religious backdrop that Indonesian Christian young people in this study come to understand themselves as sexual subjects – where tensions between discourses of sexual morality, sexual health, sexual orientation, and sexual violence have characterised everyday socio-political-sexual practices. While these tensions are apparent in public discussions such as those reported in the national media (Mutiara, 2015, March 4; Padang, 2012, April 9; Sukmana, 2016, February 15), little is known about how Indonesian young people have engaged with, negotiated, and resisted these discourses in their ways of understanding themselves as sexual beings. Consequently, decisions regarding how young people should be educated about sexuality – such as the Ministry of Education’s increasing of Religious Education hours to address “sexual immorality” – might have been
detached from young people’s own ways of being sexual. It is this gap that my thesis seeks to fill: where the complexities of young people’s sexual subjectivities are explored from their perspectives, including their resistance towards dominant discourses of sexuality in contemporary Indonesia. Since sexuality research in Indonesia is generally still considered a sensitive topic (Boelstorff, 2015), this study utilises computer-mediated-communication techniques to recruit and interview participants anonymously so that they could express their views without being identified. Additionally, to complement previous studies that focused largely on the mechanics of behavioural change (Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Leerlooijer et al., 2014; Widyastari et al., 2015), the current research explores young people’s intricate ways of being sexual subjects by using a theoretical framework that enables the analysis of power and discourse in constituting subjectivities. In the next section, I will address the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis, namely, Foucauldian poststructuralist thought (B. Davies, 1991, 2010; Foucault, 1978, 1982, 1985; Weedon, 1987).

**The Conceptual Framework**

In order to investigate the complexities of young people’s ways of understanding themselves as sexual, the Foucauldian (1978, 1982) concept of subjectivity is employed in this thesis. The concept of subjectivity is appropriate for this investigation because it requires the examination of power and discourses that constitute young Indonesian Christians’ ways of being sexual in their specific social-political-historical contexts (Foucault, 1982; Weedon, 1987). Other similar concepts, such as “identity,” might not require this examination of power and discourse since the self is not understood as contextual and discursively-constituted, but as continuous, unified, rational, and coherent (Davies, 1991). Simultaneously, the concept of subjectivity in this theoretical tradition recognises the subject’s agency, that is, in *drawing on* and *resisting* dominant discourses in the constitution of their subjectivities (B. Davies, 1991, 2010). As indicated earlier (see Introduction to the Study), such possibilities of political resistance form an important purpose in this thesis, that is, to address the second research sub-question.

I am cognisant that any choice of theoretical framework always entails limitations. A poststructuralist approach I have chosen in this thesis has enabled a recognition of the constitutive nature of discourse and the agency of the subject in my analyses of young Indonesian Christians’ sexual subjectivities. However, this decision – as in any other choice
of theoretical framework – inevitably constrained my analyses in various other ways. For instance, its approach to subjectivity as discursively constituted and continuously reworked constrains analyses of Indonesian young people’s sexual self-identification (e.g., lesbian, gay, heterosexual, or bisexual) as fixed, permanent, and essential. Considering advantages and limitations of Foucauldian analyses for my thesis, its relevance with the aim of this study, and also my personal connectedness with his thoughts, a Foucauldian theoretical framework is chosen in this thesis to investigate the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities.

This section will discuss several key concepts within a Foucauldian poststructuralist tradition, namely, power, discourse, subjectivity, and agency. To some extent my engagement with these concepts has been influenced by, and mediated through, feminist (re)readings of Foucault (i.e., Butler, 1990, 1997; B. Davies, 1991, 2010; Weedon, 1987). I will draw attention to the continued utility of Foucault’s ideas in sexuality studies and how they have given shape to the theoretical approach of this thesis.

**Power**

As opposed to the traditional understanding of power as the system of domination over the will of the people, Foucault conceptualises modern (or disciplinary) power as a “multiplicity of force relations” (1978, p. 92) which hold together and permeate all aspects of modern society. Power does not just constrain individuals, but is productive, enabling, and resourceful. Its strategies and mechanisms are subtle, hidden, and exercised differently at different levels and in different contexts (Foucault, 1978, 1979), such as surveillance, examination, training, and correction. In this subsection, I will focus on how Foucault’s concept of power is related to sexuality and subjectivity.

According to Foucault, pre-modern power expressed its murderous splendour by killing enemies or torturing individuals who did not comply – resulting in continuous revolts which were both costly and created social instability (Foucault, 1978; Jagose, 2015). In contrast, in order to manage distribution of resources and keep the population secure, modern power administers, regulates, and transforms individuals into docile subjects who desire to conform to the norms and support the existing power relations (Foucault, 1979). Through apparatuses such as schools, hospitals, prisons, factories, and churches, individuals are disciplined into a
healthy and (re)productive workforce, living “happily” in a stable, heteronormative family to serve the interests of capitalist society. A contemporary, sexually related example of this disciplinary operation of power is the persistence of health risk management topics (e.g., STIs, contraception, sexual hygiene) in sexuality education resources for young people. Such topics have occurred from the early 1900s, when the theme of personal hygiene was dominant (Carlson, 1992; Elia, 2005; Martin, 2004), to the current international sexuality education guidelines which emphasise prevention of STIs and unplanned pregnancy, such as those developed in the U.K. (Department for Education, 2000; Strange, Forrest, Oakley, & Stephenson, 2006), the U.S. (Fields, 2008), New Zealand (Allen, 2005b, 2011a), and in UNESCO’s “Technical Guide on Sexuality Education” (2009). Through these educational initiatives, power disciplines young people into (sexually) healthy subjects ready to be productive citizens.

In the operation of modern power, sexuality has become an important site of regulation because of its reproductive potential. Sexuality is the meeting point between demographic administration and management of the body (Foucault, 1978; Jagose, 2015) – sexual bodies must be regulated so that population figures can be controlled. Since the 18th century, sexuality has been subjected to various scientific inquiries in order to discover how it might be effectively managed – what Foucault (1978) called the scientia sexualis project. Scientific “facts” were gathered through research, counselling, surveys, experiments, clinical trials, and quantification. These data were then accumulated and disseminated under certain strands of academic disciplines, such as the medical theories of sexuality, the biology of reproduction, and the pathology of sex. This scientia sexualis project becomes perceptible when contrasted with pre-modern engagements with sexuality, where it was less about truth and more about pleasure – or what Foucault (1978) called ars erotica. Here, the focus was not on the theories, laws, or principles of sex, but on sexual pleasure and how to maximise its intensity, quality, and duration. Knowledge about the art of sex was not gained through scientific methods, but through an esoteric personal journey with a teacher or a master who held secret knowledge about sex. When power became concerned with governing bodies and demography, however, knowledge of ars erotica becomes less important than knowledge produced in scientia sexualis. The understanding and management of sexuality is more crucial for the stability of the society, rather than the knowledge of how to maximise pleasure.
In this study Indonesian young people’s understandings of themselves as sexual beings are analysed in relation to these Foucauldian conceptualisations of power, discipline, and the governance of society, that is, through knowledge and (discursive) mechanisms that enable them to be constituted as sexual subjects. This thesis does not approach young people’s sexual knowledge as “objective” or “neutral,” but instead, as political and supportive of certain power relations. In Chapter 6, for instance, participants’ taking up of LGBT+ labels is examined in relation to scientia sexualis mechanisms that discipline their sexual desires into certain governable categorisations. In order to further explore the operation of power (theoretically) in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities, the next section will discuss the relationship between power and knowledge, through Foucault’s (1972) conceptualisation of discourse.

**Discourse**

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation. (Foucault, 1972, p. 38, original emphasis)

In this thesis, discourse is understood as a formation of interconnected ideas which define the “nature” of certain experiences or things, constitute ways of seeing the world, and guide possibilities for action (Weedon, 1987). Foucault (1972) uses the word “regularity” as one of the main features of his conceptualisation of discourse to highlight how this formation of interconnected ideas exists and is reproduced repeatedly in relatively established patterns so that it appears as regular, ordinary, or “natural.” A discourse of gender, for example, consists of a formation of ideas about the “nature” of men, women, and transgendered persons, which constitutes how we understand gendered social relationships, and guides possibilities for certain actions. In this subsection, I will discuss features of the concept of discourse in a Foucauldian tradition, and how this relates to the thesis focus.

Discourse is not singular, nor static, but is instead contextual, multiple, and open for contestation. In every domain of cultural practice, there are competing and contradictory
discourses which offer multiple ways to give meaning to reality (Weedon, 1987). Some of these discourses are more dominant, and others are marginalised. A discourse of sexual morality, for instance, involves ways of giving meaning to sexuality where rules of action around sexual practices are strictly defined (e.g., maintaining complete sexual abstinence outside of heterosexual marriage) and subjects are expected to be obedient (Foucault, 1985, 1986). This discourse of sexual morality is always in competition with other discourses in giving meaning to sexuality, such as a discourse of ethics (Foucault, 1985). In a discourse of ethics, there are no fixed rules or prohibitions in sexual relationships. Instead, the task of the subject is to engage in personal reflection and self-limitation, analysis and calculation of the use and moderation of pleasure, and thus negotiate their desire in the light of societal boundaries (Foucault, 1985). In various historical and cultural contexts, the configuration of which discourses are more dominant in giving meaning to sexuality is always different, changing, and can potentially be reversed. Dominant discourses of sexuality operating among contemporary Indonesian Christian young people, for example, might be different from dominant discourses among older Indonesian Christians or among young Indonesian Muslims, but those dominant discourses are always open for contestation. Based on this conceptualisation of discourse, this thesis seeks to identify what discourses of sexuality are dominant among contemporary Indonesian Christian young people, and how these discourses might be contested in the constitution of participants’ sexual subjectivities.

Foucault (1978) argues that it is through discourse that power governs the knowledge circulated in society and regulates which ways of thinking are deemed intelligible. In each field of knowledge, discourses that are more dominant appear as “natural” or commonsense. They tend to reproduce existing power relations, and are often supported by state apparatuses and social institutions. Some discourses are less popular and represent marginal political interests, but they always have potential to gain greater currency. A dominant discourse of sexual morality in Indonesia, for example, has constituted all sex outside of (heterosexual) marriage as immoral. This discourse has been supported by religious groups in parliament and is featured in some Indonesian laws such as the Marriage Laws (“Undang-undang,” 1974) and Anti-Pornography Law (“Undang-undang,” 2008). It is also expressed in everyday social events such as public debates, religious sermons, and sexuality education classes. In contrast, other discourses such as the discourse of sexual rights – which constitutes sex and sexuality as individual rights that must be protected by the state – have not yet enjoyed such wide circulation in Indonesia (Wieringa, 2010). Foucault is particularly interested in
analysing how some discourses have shaped and created meanings that gained the status of “truth,” such as in the cases of punishment (1979), madness (1965), and sexuality (1978, 1985, 1986). In analysing dominant discourses of sexuality in the constitution of Indonesian young people as sexual subjects, this thesis will examine how those discourses have normalised certain meanings around Indonesian young people and sexuality as “truth.” For instance, Chapter 7 identifies and examines how the notion of “boys always want sex and girls do not” (first identified by Hollway, 1989, as the male sexual drive discourse) has gained wide circulation among Indonesian Christian participants in this study and has been drawn on by them in understanding their sexual realities.

A crucial feature of the Foucauldian concept of discourse in this thesis is its constitutive character. Discourse is not just a way of thinking and producing meaning, but it constitutes social reality and a sense of self, and guides possibilities for actions (Foucault, 1972; Weedon, 1987; Willig, 2013). The dominant discourse of heterosexuality in Indonesia, for instance, has constituted heterosexuality as the only “normal” sexuality. It enables individuals to recognise and give meaning to their sexual selves in certain ways, such as a sense of being “normal” when they are attracted to the opposite sex. It also structures various aspects of everyday social practices, such as marriage laws, tax laws, demography reports, biology lessons, teen magazines, TV serials, and even the design of toilets. Although there are other discourses which oppose such constitutions, the dominance of this discourse has, to some extent, constrained Indonesian young people’s possibilities of engaging in certain actions, such as same-sex relationships.

Discourse is not a product of individual thoughts, rather, individuals’ sense of self is constituted through discourses. Discourses offer individuals a range of ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being in the world (i.e., subject positions) to be “taken up” (Weedon, 1987), so that they can construe their experiences from that position. A young Indonesian participant’s understanding of himself as gay (see Chapter 6, Section 4), for instance, does not come from his individual thoughts, but arises from discourses that constitute him as gay. This gay subject position appears to be constituted via a discourse of sexual desire\(^1\) – a set of interconnected discourses.

\(^1\) The discourse of sexual desire I refer to here is different from that of Fine’s (1988) “(missing) discourse of desire.” In her seminal article, Fine associated the discourse of sexual desire with a set of meanings around sexual entitlement, pleasure, and explorations of “what feels good and bad, desirable and undesirable, [which are] grounded in experiences, needs, and limits” (p. 33). My use of sexual
ideas which constitute sexual attraction and practices as categorisable, nameable, specifiable, and relatively unchanged. This discourse offers various positions of sexual “orientation” to be taken up, such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, polyamorous (Tweedy, 2011), mostly heterosexual (Savin-Williams & Vrangalova, 2013), and asexual (Bogaert, 2004, 2006). In this way, individuals are not authors of their own “identity” or their understandings of themselves, rather, individuals' subjective experiences always reflect their engagement with wider discursive meanings circulating around them.

Having discussed some features of Foucault’s conceptualisation of discourse in relation to this study, the next subsections will focus on the central theoretical concept employed in this thesis, namely, subjectivity. I will detail how the concept of subjectivity is understood in this research, how it relates to discourse, and how individuals are made into subjects. I will also discuss how Indonesian Christian young people as sexual subjects are not simply and passively positioned by discourse. Rather, they are capable of exercising agency (in a poststructuralist sense, B. Davies, 1991, 1997) and engaging in practices of resistance towards dominant discourses of sexuality around them – which is crucial for answering my research questions.

**Subjectivity and subject formation**

Drawing on Weedon’s (1987) reading of Foucault, the concept of sexual subjectivity in this thesis refers to one’s thoughts and emotions about their sense of being sexual, their ways of understanding their sexuality, and how those thoughts and emotions relate to everyday social realities. These thoughts and emotions are dynamic and multiple, always in a continuous process of becoming, and always positioned in relation to certain discourses (Foucault, 1982; Rabinow, 1984; Weedon, 1987). The sexual subjectivities of Indonesian Christian young people are investigated in this thesis with an understanding that their thoughts, emotions, and senses of being sexual are not singular, coherent, and static. Instead, they are multiple, fragmented, continuously being reworked, and always constituted in relation to the particular discourses of sexuality they draw upon. By recognising Indonesian young people’s subjectivities in this way, the complexities of their (contradictory and multiple) ways of understanding sexuality can be acknowledged, both contextually and historically.

desire here is drawn on Foucault’s (1997) definition, that is, a concept has been employed to specify, categorise, (de)pathologise, or determine the “truth” of one’s sexual subjectivity (Davidson, 2001).
The process of constituting individuals as subjects – the subject-formation process – takes place early, continuously, and involves a contradictory engagement with discourse, that is, being a subject of discourse and subjected to discourse (Butler, 1997; Jones, 1997; Weedon, 1987). As a subject acquires language, they start to give meaning to their experiences by drawing on certain ways-of-seeing-the-world offered by discourses available in their situation. In order to exist, the subject must subscribe to these ways-of-seeing, which they cannot choose because such ways-of-seeing have existed before their access to language (Butler, 1997; Weedon, 1987). In this way, subjectivities are both enabled and constrained by discourses (Foucault, 1982). The subject is not passive in this process, but their subjectivities are constituted via active and continuous acts of constituting their experiences, which are enabled by discourses available in any given situation. Accordingly, participants’ sexual subjectivities in this study are always discussed in relation to certain discourses of sexuality, which they have both drawn upon and resisted in their becoming sexual subjects. Due to the multiple, conflicting, and ever-changing nature of discursive formations, young Indonesian Christian participants must constantly negotiate which discursive resources they draw on in this subject-formation process.

Since the discursive resources given rise to subjectivities are ever-changing, my analyses in this thesis acknowledge the temporariness of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. The constitution of Indonesian young people as sexual subjects is not just a one-off occasion, but a continuous practice – enabling possibilities of future change. Extending Foucault’s account of subject formation, Butler (1990) identified that – in order to make their existence socially intelligible – the subject must engage in continual acts of re-enacting, reproducing, and reiterating certain discursive constructions, patterns, or norms so that their sense of self congeals and appears as “natural.” She refers to this process as performativity (1990). The illusion of “fixed” and “stable” self comes from this consistent positioning within frequently used discourses which provides a repertoire of “story lines” through which one’s existence can be comprehended in a meaningful way (B. Davies, 1991). While this understanding of subjectivity might raise some methodological concerns (discussed in Chapter 3), it enables an examination of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities as discursive, performative, and continuously negotiated. For instance, in analysing the discourse of sexual violence (where young people’s sexuality is given meaning via the possibilities of violence in their engagement in sex), some participants’
understandings of sexual violence as “normal” (Chapter 7) were not treated as individual thoughts or beliefs that are relatively fixed or permanent. Instead, these were examined in terms of the discursive resources that have given rise to their ways of seeing sexual violence, how it has been performatively repeated and becomes intelligible for these participants.

**Resistance and agency**

As discussed earlier in the subsection “Discourse,” dominant discourses are never monolithic and immutable but are continuously shifting, strengthened, resisted, and reversed. It is within this changing and unstable nature of discursive formation that the possibility of resistance lies, and thus, integral to the operation of modern power itself. Foucault (1978, p. 96) has stated: “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.” Resistance is characterised by its disruptive and reversing nature which is unintended by power both logically and historically (Butler, 1997). To resist dominant discourses means drawing on alternative discourses to challenge dominant sets of meanings which have both enabled and constrained the subject to understand and take action in their world. Resisting the dominant discourse of heterosexuality, for instance, involves contesting the dominant meaning that sexual desire, attraction, and practice are always universally heterosexual (M. Warner, 1993). Contestation of dominant discourses is a crucial aspect of this thesis’ question, that is, how Indonesian young people are enabled to resist dominant ways of being sexual offered by the discourses of sexuality around them. Therefore, Foucault’s conceptualisation of resistance will be outlined in this subsection, particularly in relation to the concept of subjectivity.

In his last writings (1982, 1985, 1986), Foucault explored the potentiality of resistance in the constitution of novel sorts of subjectivity, what he called the aesthetics of existence (1985). In the continuous process of becoming, the subject may draw on alternative discourses and exercise agentic disruptions to the dominant discourse by cultivating new forms of subjectivity. In other words, resisting the dominant ways of how one’s subjectivity is constituted is one aspect of political resistance. As he wrote (1982, p. 785): “Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are.” Refusing the constitution of one’s same-sex desire as pathological, for instance, involving drawing on alternative discourses that make possible such de-pathologisation, and simultaneously opening up possibilities of political movement towards legal recognition of same-sex rights. Considering
the homogenising moralising forces that are still dominant in Indonesia (discussed at the beginning of this chapter), this thesis will not just present accounts of how various dominant discourses of sexuality have been drawn on by Indonesian Christian young people in their becoming sexual subjects. It will also discuss how these discourses have been resisted in their cultivation of alternative subjectivities. For instance, in Chapter 5 I examine how participants’ alternative ways of being Christian might contest the religious moral imposition of (hetero)sexual abstinence. Such an investigation seeks to add to the current academic literature on Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities and resistance (Bennett, 2005b; Holzner & Oetomo, 2004).

Since this research explores Indonesian young people’s agentic practices of resistance in becoming sexual subjects, one crucial question regarding a Foucauldian conceptualisation of resistance and subjectivity is what the role of individual’s agency is. Foucault was often criticised as having no theory of agency, because his theorisation of the subject invalidates individuals’ capacity to make independent choices – which is the (traditional) definition of agency (Caldwell, 2007). The Foucauldian subject is not an autonomous, rational, free-willed individual, but rather, a “fabricated” subject who is constituted by a set of power relations through discursive mechanisms (B. Davies, 2010). Often paraphrased as “the subject is dead,” Foucault indicated that choices made by the subject were never their own independent choices, but in a way were “forced choices” enabled by discourses that have been drawn on by the subject (B. Davies, 1991, p. 46). However, this does not mean there is no possibility of theorising agency in a Foucauldian poststructuralist tradition. Among others, B. Davies’ (1991) articulation of poststructuralist agency has had a significant influence upon this thesis. She explains (p. 51):

Agency is never freedom from discursive constitution of self but the capacity to recognise that constitution and to resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted. It is the freedom to recognise multiple readings such that no discursive practice, or positioning within it by powerful others, can capture and control one's identity. And agency is never autonomy in the sense of being an individual standing outside social structure and process. Autonomy becomes the recognition that power and force presume sub-cultural counter-power and counter-force and that such
sub-cultures can create new life forms, which disrupt the hegemonic forms, even potentially replacing them.

B. Davies (re)conceptualised poststructuralist agency as a subject’s capacity to resist, modify, and move between and within discourses, and to refuse discursive mechanisms operating upon them. The subject is agentic not because of the independent choices they make, but because of their capacity to go beyond the given meanings constituted through certain discourses, and develop new meanings by drawing upon other available discourses. Accordingly, the alternative subjectivities cultivated by Indonesian Christian young people in this thesis are not understood as their “autonomous” choice, but as an exercise of their agency in creating new life forms by drawing on alternative discourses to which they have access. For instance, a participant’s resistance toward the binary of men as sexually aggressive/women as asexual (Chapter 7, Section 1) is analysed in relation to contextual conditions and discourses that have enabled her agentic decision to resist that binary. In this way, the complexities of Indonesian young people’s exercise of agency can be explored in terms of their discursive situations, rather than simply assigning their agency to an individual’s decision.

This section has addressed theoretical concepts underpinning this thesis, namely, power (Foucault, 1978, 1979), discourse (Foucault, 1972; Weedon, 1987), subjectivity (Butler, 1990; Weedon, 1987), and agency (B. Davies, 1991). I have indicated how these concepts are connected with, and have shaped, the analyses of young people’s sexual subjectivities in this thesis. In the next section I will briefly describe the thesis outline.

**Thesis Outline**

Following this introduction, the Literature Review (Chapter 2) examines Indonesian and international sexuality studies from which this thesis draws and to which it seeks to contribute. The chapter is organised into four sections with each discussing a key discourse pertinent to the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. The first section engages with the discourse of sexual health, which I argue has been drawn on extensively by previous researchers in investigating Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities. I will discuss what is problematic about the dominance of this discourse, such as its positioning of Indonesian young people as uninformed and vulnerable. The second
section addresses another dominant discourse namely, the discourse of sexual morality. Through this discourse Indonesian young people are disciplined to become obedient moral subjects using mechanisms of censorship, surveillance, and punishment. I argue that the moral imposition of sexual abstinence has constrained possibilities of Indonesian young people to understand and practice sex ethically. In the third section, I identify how a discourse of sexual desire has both enabled and limited Indonesian young people’s understandings of themselves as sexual subjects. I will discuss how Foucault’s notion of *ars erotica* might complicate the categorisation of sexual desires or “orientations” widely drawn on by previous studies on Indonesian LGBT+ communities. The final section examines the discourse of sexual violence, which has positioned men as desiring, women as asexual, children as innocent, and adults as exploitative. I argue that these discursive positionings have sustained and normalised sexual violence among Indonesian young people. In each section I also consider some roles of the state and its apparatuses in circulating meanings around young people and sexuality, such as the absence of official sexuality education in the national curricula, the passing of 2008 anti-pornography bill, and the establishment of the National Commission on Violence Against Women. These institutions and institutional practices are understood as the effects of (and therefore discussed in relation to) these four dominant discourses.

Chapter 3 addresses the methodological aspects of this thesis. It starts with a discussion of how a Foucauldian poststructuralist theoretical approach has influenced the ontological, epistemological, and methodological framework of my thesis. I will focus on how this framework has shaped the methodologies of this study, such as the purpose of research, the approach to data, and the role of the researcher. Subsequently, I detail the research processes, including the research methods, participant recruitment, data-production processes, and techniques used to analyse data. I also describe some ethical considerations in applying these research methods.

The next four chapters present the research findings. Chapter 4 unpacks how the discourse of sexual health has been drawn upon in the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. This chapter argues that some participants have been informed by this discourse to understand their sexual selves. However, by drawing on alternative discourses some participants have resisted the positioning of young people offered by this discourse. Two specific constitutions which they have resisted are examined in this chapter, namely, the
positioning of young people as (1) hormone-driven and hyper-sexual and (2) uninformed and vulnerable. Participants’ narratives exhibit other, competing, versions of understanding their sexual practice, health, and well-being. For instance, they took care of their sexual selves beyond concerns with STIs and unplanned pregnancy in ways that are unique and relevant to the contexts of their social worlds. This chapter adds new representations of Indonesian young people as (agentic) sexual subjects – while previous studies mainly represent them as passive recipients of sexual health knowledge (e.g., Naqiyah, 2010; Situmorang, 2011; Widyastari et al., 2015).

Examining the discourse of sexual morality, Chapter 5 illuminates how binaries of “right” and “wrong” or “moral” and “immoral” have permeated the ways participants think and practise sexuality, and how religion has played a role in their becoming moral sexual subjects. As evident in participants’ narratives, the discourse of sexual morality has positioned Indonesian young people within a binary of being either “moral” (maintaining abstinence) or “immoral” (engaging in sex). I argue that this binary has made other ethical sexual relationships and pleasures – such as consensual sex between two mature young people – unthinkable. This chapter provides evidence that the discourse of sexual morality has been contested in the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people as sexual subjects. Three alternative ways that participants resist the religious sexual moral codes imposed upon them are discussed, namely: casting off religion altogether, reinterpreting religious morality, and living the contradictions of being religious/sexual/moral/ethical.

Chapter 6 considers how Indonesian Christian young people have both drawn upon, and resisted, the discourse of sexual desire in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities. It argues that some participants in this study have taken up subject positions offered by the discourse of sexual desire (e.g., bisexual, lesbian, gay, and asexual), but they have also resisted its scientia sexualis disciplinary mechanisms. Their resistances are not characterised by complete rejection of identity categories, but by cultivating alternative subjectivities that resemble Foucault’s (1978) ars erotica. By presenting participants’ artistic ways of being sexual, this chapter seeks to contribute new knowledge about creative possibilities of understanding sexual desire, pleasure, and relationships.

The last data chapter (Chapter 7) investigates how – in giving meaning to their sexual selves – young Indonesian Christians have drawn on another discourse that has increasingly
circulated in Indonesia since the 1998 reformation (discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1), namely, the discourse of sexual violence. This chapter presents narratives of participants who have taken up subject positions offered by this discourse. Specifically, they have taken up the binary positionings of men as desiring and women as asexual, and adults as powerful/exploitative and children as innocent/powerless. I argue these binaries have also been resisted by young people in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities. Following this thesis’ theoretical stance on agency and resistance (B. Davies, 1991; Foucault, 1985), my analysis here focuses on various contextual (discursive) conditions which have enabled these participants to resist the dominant meanings of sexuality constituted via the discourse of sexual violence.

It is important to note that while this thesis is conducted in the specific context of contemporary Indonesian Christian young people, what uniquely Christian, uniquely Indonesian, and uniquely young might not always be explicitly present in each and every data chapter. Instead, these data chapters seek to demonstrate how discursive positioning as Indonesians, Christians, and young people have given nuances to participants’ sexual subjectivities in multiple, intertwined, and complex ways. Further, participants’ narratives presented in these chapters were also selectively chosen based on their accommodation and contestation of the dominant discourse discussed in each chapter. These narratives are not representative of participants in terms of their demographic characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender and sexual identification, etc.), because this thesis does not aim to provide comprehensive and/or representative accounts of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities (more about this in Chapter 3 Section 1).

The last chapter (Chapter 8) summarises the main thesis findings and highlights their contribution to the existing knowledge around sexual subjectivity and Indonesian young people. The implications of these findings for improving pedagogical approaches and the practice of sexuality education in Indonesia are also discussed. Finally, I reflect on some limitations of this study and propose some possible future research directions.
Chapter 2

Literature Review:

Research on Indonesian Young People’s Sexual Subjectivities

In this chapter I review national and international research that makes reference to young people’s sexual subjectivities to situate this thesis within an existing body of knowledge about young people and sexuality in Indonesia. I argue that previous studies have shown how Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities have been constituted through various dominant discourses of sexuality, particularly the discourses of sexual health, sexual morality, sexual desire, and sexual violence.

The chapter is organised into four sections, each of which discusses one of these key discourses in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities. First, I will consider the discourse of sexual health, which I argue is the dominant discourse for constituting Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities within existing sexuality studies. Situated primarily within the field of public health, these studies focus on the prevention of health risks associated with young people’s sexual practices. Secondly, I will consider the discourse of sexual morality, used frequently by Indonesian national and religious leaders to address young people’s sexual subjectivities. In contrast to the risk-prevention measures promoted within the sexual health discourse, the discourse of sexual morality constitutes young people’s sexual practices as a moral (rather than a health) problem. This discourse is also frequently applied specifically to condemn Indonesian LGBT+ communities as immoral, although these communities have responded with their own discourse of sexual desire – my third area of inquiry – which brings meaning to a person’s sexual subjectivity in terms of the categorisations of their sexual desires. Fourthly, I will consider the discourse of sexual violence, where meaning has been given to Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities through a lens of the violence that occurred within sexual relationships.

One purpose of this thesis is to identify possibilities of resistance to these key discourses within the narratives of Indonesian Christian young people. To this end, I will consider how previous Indonesian and international sexuality studies have contested these discourses, that is, revealing their cracks and fissures, and thus opening spaces for new alternative sexual subjectivities. I will identify the possibilities for extending these critiques within my thesis, thereby endeavouring to contribute new knowledge to this field of study.
The Discourse of Sexual Health

This section engages with one of the dominant discourses in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities, namely, the discourse of sexual health. The discourse of sexual health is defined as the formation of taken-for-granted ideas that position health as the principal axis in giving meaning to sexuality. This discourse offers ways to think about, practise, and evaluate sexual experiences in terms of health criteria, such as mental, emotional, and social well-being and, most notably, the absence of STIs and unplanned pregnancy. Previous studies suggest that the discourse of sexual health has been widely drawn on in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities. I will start by identifying the emergence and the persistence of concerns around young people’s sexual health among Indonesian researchers in the last two decades. I will then review some critiques of such a preoccupation with sexual health, and explore possibilities of how my thesis will extend these critiques in an Indonesian context.

The discourse of sexual health in Indonesia

Since the 1990s, concerns about Indonesian young people’s sexual behaviours, STIs, and unplanned pregnancy have grown significantly. This growing interest is often attributed to the arrival of HIV/AIDS (Smith, Kippax, & Aggleton, 2000), changing cultural values around dating relationships (Smith-Hefner, 2005; discussed in Chapter 1), and increased access to the so-called “Western” discourse of sexual permissiveness (Harding, 2008; Utomo & McDonald, 2009). Informed by the discourse of sexual health, many studies have investigated Indonesian young people’s sexual behaviours (e.g., Huang & Lim, 2012; Simon & Paxton, 2004; Utomo, 1997), particularly by emphasising the health risks associated with those behaviours such as STIs and unplanned pregnancy (e.g., Ford et al., 2007; Hardon, Idrus, & Hymans, 2013; Munro & Butt, 2012; Simonin et al., 2011). Most of these researchers call for sexuality education programmes which address these risks, specifically those promoting harm-reduction methods such as consistent condom-use (e.g., Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Leerlooijer et al., 2014; Sarman, 2012; Utomo, 2003; Widyastari et al., 2015).

In response to this call, the Ministry of Health and a number of NGOs have sporadically conducted sexuality education programmes for Indonesian young people (discussed in
Chapter 1); the effectiveness of these programmes has also been the focus of a number of studies. These studies evaluated sexuality education mainly using sexual health criteria such as reproductive health knowledge and avoidance of unprotected sexual behaviours (Diarsvitri & Dwisetyani, 2011a; 2011b; Leerloijer et al., 2011; Pohan et al., 2011). The extensive use of such criteria among these studies indicates that the (re)production of academic knowledge around Indonesian young people and sexuality has been informed by the discourse of sexual health. As shown later in Chapter 4, the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities in this study to some extent reflects these researchers’ and educators’ concerns about how young people must avoid health risks in their sexual relationships. However, uncritical reliance on this discourse in researching and understanding young people and sexuality has resulted in some problematic consequences such as a positioning of young people as vulnerable and uninformed – which I will discuss in the next subsection.

**From vulnerable to responsible young people: The problems with the discourse of sexual health**

There are at least two problems with the dominance of the discourse of sexual health in the constitution of Indonesian young people as sexual subjects. Firstly, it positions Indonesian young people as uninformed and vulnerable in relation to sexuality. In addressing Indonesian young people, sexual health researchers often position them as (potential) health patients who have no knowledge about their own (sexual) body, are blinded by raging hormones, and therefore urgently need to be “saved” by sexual health educators (e.g., Leerloojier et al., 2014; Naqiyah, 2010; Situmorang, 2011; Widyastari et al., 2015). To illustrate this positioning, below is an excerpt from a recently published article in the *Journal of Health Research* conducted by Indonesian researchers examining young people’s reproductive health knowledge (Widyastari et al., 2015):

> Adolescents’ reproductive health in Indonesia is of growing concern today. The rapid social change from a traditional toward a modern society is marked by improved communications and flows of information … [T]he integration of global markets has also conveyed norms, values and lifestyles alien to Indonesia’s society. These disturbing effects are particularly affecting adolescents and young adults, those most vulnerable to ideas and values of all kinds during their transitional period from childhood to adulthood. (p. 67)
In the absence of trustworthy information from their nearest adults, adolescents then try to find out by themselves, through their peer [sic] and media … [and] thus become a source of concern … If only Indonesian government [sic] agreed to provide adequate reproductive health information at schools, adolescents would have qualified information and they will be able to prevent themselves from unsafe sexual behaviour. (p. 64)

A deep concern should be addressed to this particular matter [risk of pregnancy] because these incorrect knowledge and false belief [sic] have been spread among adolescents over the past decades. (pp. 67-68)

In this excerpt, Widyastari et al. (2015) position Indonesian young people as the “most vulnerable to ideas and values of all kinds during their transitional period from childhood to adulthood.” Young people are understood as possessing “incorrect knowledge and false beliefs” about sexuality, which need to be replaced with “trustworthy information from their nearest adults.” Without adult guidance, these young people are believed to be driven inevitably into “unsafe sexual behaviour,” not knowing the danger awaiting them. Fields (2008, p. 20) calls this situation “adultist protectionism,” in which young people are constituted as sexually innocent and ignorant, and their engagement in sexual activity is perceived as a social problem for adults to solve. Through the discourse of sexual health, Indonesian young people are constituted as ignorant, vulnerable, and hormone-driven and urgently in need of adults to “save” them from sexual risks and dangers.

This positioning, however, is problematic when such a dominant constitution of young people is constantly repeated (e.g., Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Manggala, 2013, Situmorang, 2011; Widyastari et al., 2015), to the extent that other ways of giving meaning to Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities become unthinkable. Young people as sexual subjects, for instance, were not recognised in these studies; yet they do exist, as identified in other international research (e.g., Allen, 2005b; Best, 2007; Kehily, 2007). Allen’s (2005b) study in New Zealand, for instance, demonstrated that not all young people are “empty vessel[s]” (p. 35) to be filled with sexual knowledge delivered by adult educators. Rather, they actively engage with, and are critical of, the information they receive from various sources. Previous studies concerning the discourse of sexual health have also demonstrated how this positioning
of young people as ignorant, hormone-driven, and in need of protection has constrained the constitution of young people as responsible sexual subjects (Allen, 2007a). Continuous positioning of young people through this discourse limits the possibility that they will be constituted as capable of making responsible and informed sexual decisions, which ironically has often been identified as the goal of contemporary sexual health promotion in Indonesia (Bennett, 2007; Diarsvitri & Dwisetyani, 2011b; Widyastari et al., 2015). To date, there is no Indonesian study documenting how this positioning of young people as uninformed and vulnerable has been engaged and contested. This is a gap that this thesis aims to fill. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, some Indonesian Christian young people in this study have both taken up and resisted this positioning that lies at the centre of the discourse of sexual health.

The second problem with the dominant discourse of sexual health is that it has promoted a mechanistic logic: if young people are provided with sexual health knowledge, they will follow the suggested risk management procedures and thus effectively avoid STIs and unplanned pregnancy (e.g., Pohan et al., 2011; Sarnan, 2012; Utomo, 2003). Through this discourse young people are positioned as vulnerable and uninformed before the provision of sexual health information; after this provision they are constituted as “enlightened” and responsible sexual subjects. In the excerpt of Widyastari et al.’s (2015) study above, for example, the assumption is that, when schools provide sexual health education, young people will be immediately transformed by that “qualified [sexual health] information” and therefore be “able to prevent themselves from unsafe sexual behaviour [sic]” (p. 64). The provision of sexual health knowledge by adults becomes a critical turning point: from ignorance to enlightenment, from vulnerability to capability.

Many international studies have demonstrated that this logic is flawed (Braun, 2013; Flood, 2003; Holland, Ramazanoglu, Scott, Sharpe, & Thomson, 1990, 1992; Kippax, 2010) and has resulted in what has been conceptualised as the knowledge–practice gap (Allen, 2001). Consistent condom-use, for example, was not easily practised by young people in their sexual relationships although they had adequate knowledge about STIs and condoms (Braun, 2013; Flood 2003). One explanation identified by these researchers is the construction of the condom as difficult to use, disrupting sex, and inhibiting intimacy. Feminine ideals of sexually innocent women have also caused more problems for young women in every stage of condom-use, from buying them, carrying them before a date, and negotiating them before
intercourse (Holland et al., 1992). Knowledge about STIs and condoms given to young people does not therefore translate straightforwardly into practice.

Allen (2001) offers another explanation regarding this knowledge–practice gap in which she argues that the gap is often understood from the perspective of adult educators or researchers who define sexual knowledge based on official information delivered in the classroom. In contrast, young people might have their own conceptualisations of sexual knowledge which are gleaned from their personal experiences, conflated with the official knowledge presented at school, and then practised in their sexual relations (Allen, 2001). Similar to Allen’s critique, Fletcher (2015) identifies that sexual health programmes often focus on facts-based, technical, and presumed-objective knowledge (episteme). On the contrary, Fletcher’s participants believe that young people need sexual knowledge in the form of phronesis, that is, practical wisdom to make judgements and decisions based on recognising the complexity of social situations. While these studies have highlighted that the mechanistic logic underpinning sexual health promotion is problematic, to date there is no study involving Indonesian young people that has taken these critiques into account. Therefore, this thesis (see Chapter 4) will examine the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities via the discourse of sexual health in relation to this knowledge-practice gap.

The previous section has reviewed how existing studies have drawn on the discourse of sexual health to understand Indonesian young people as sexual subjects. I argued that this situation may be problematic, in the way it has: (1) promoted the flawed logic of the knowledge–practice gap (Allen, 2001), and (2) positioned young people as vulnerable and uninformed, who then become “enlightened” and responsible after the provision of sexual health knowledge. Taking these critiques into account, this thesis will explore how young Indonesian Christian participants’ might contest the discourse of sexual health in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities, in order to contribute new knowledge to this field. The next section will discuss another dominant discourse that offers a different approach (compared to the discourse of sexual health) in understanding Indonesian young people’s sexual practice, that is, the discourse of sexual morality.
The Discourse of Sexual Morality

As described in Chapter 1, sexual health campaigns in Indonesia which promote contraceptive use often clash with another dominant way of understanding young people’s sexual practice, that is, the discourse of sexual morality. This discourse has positioned Indonesian young people’s sexual practice as primarily a moral problem because any sexual relationship outside of marriage is deemed “immoral.” This section will discuss how the discourse of sexual morality has constituted Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities through the mechanisms of censorship, surveillance, and punishment; it will also consider how religion has played a significant role in this process. I argue that subject positions offered to Indonesian young people via the discourse of sexual morality are either those considered “moral” (involving abstinence before marriage) or those rendered “immoral” (where sex outside of marriage takes place). Drawing on Foucault’s (1985) comparison between morality and ethics (discussed in Chapter 1), I identify a paucity of research focusing on alternative subject positions from which Indonesian young people give meaning to sexuality against the backdrop of Indonesian religious sexual morality.

The discourse of sexual morality in Indonesia

While moralistic arguments regarding young people’s sexuality are widely voiced in public (as discussed in Chapter 1), only a few academic studies have investigated how the discourse of sexual morality operates in Indonesia. Drawing on these limited studies, I will show how the moral imposition of complete sexual abstinence has been normalised through various mechanisms of censorship, surveillance, and punishment, which are endorsed by the state, local communities, and religious institutions. Through these discursive mechanisms, Indonesian young people are urged to take up the moral subject position of maintaining abstinence and avoid the immoral subject position of engaging in sex outside of marriage.

Studies in this area have identified that morality may be enforced through the censorship of sexual representations. P. Allen (2007) and Lim (2013), for instance, examined the Indonesian 2008 Anti-Pornography Law which criminalises all forms of sexual depictions and engagements therewith (making, buying, selling, watching, downloading, saving, and possessing). These researchers identified that complete censorship of sexual imagery espoused by this law has been underpinned by the discourse of (religious) sexual morality, as
indicated by the role of conservative religious groups in proposing and passing this law. Other studies scrutinised how public discussions and official statements around pornography-related cases, such as the publication of *Playboy Indonesia* magazine (Kitley, 2008) and the Peterporn celebrity sex-tape case\(^2\) (S. G. Davies, 2015; Wijaya Mulya & Cendrawati, 2012) drew heavily on the discourse of sexual morality. For instance, Kitley (2008) noted that national leaders and religious organisations were concerned that the publishing of *Playboy Indonesia* would “ruin national morality, especially the morality of the younger generation” (p. 94); the Public Prosecutor sued the Chief Editor of the magazine on the basis of “offending public morality” (p. 85). In the Peterporn case, numerous national and religious leaders commented to the media that these tapes normalise extramarital sex and thus promote immorality for young people (S. G. Davies, 2015; Wijaya Mulya & Cendrawati, 2012). These examples show how attempts to control sexually related materials in Indonesia were based on the moralistic belief that exposure to these materials would encourage young people to engage in the “immoral” act of sex outside of marriage.

In addition to the censorship of sexually related *materials*, previous studies have also identified how Indonesian young people’s sexual *practices* have been regulated through mechanisms of surveillance and punishment. As frequently reported in Indonesian newspapers (discussed in Chapter 1), the police and neighbours often inspect young people’s schoolbags for condoms, and raid motels and houses to catch young people and adults engaged in (consensual) extramarital sex. To date only S. G. Davies (2015) has examined these practices of surveillance and punishment academically; she identified that shaming has been deployed as a mechanism in these raids to publicly regulate permissible sexuality. Another example of shaming and punishing sexually “immoral” young people can be found in the practice of expelling pregnant students from school, which has long been an open secret in Indonesia despite the government’s encouragement to allow pregnant students to complete their education (Utomo, 2003; Utomo & McDonald, 2009). Schools could not afford to suffer the negative stigma of sexual immorality – which is still prevalent in Indonesian society – if they were to keep perceptibly pregnant students in the school (Shaluhiyah & Ford, 2014). These studies show that the discourse of sexual morality has been dominant in understanding young people’s sexual practices, so that it is deemed “normal” or

\(^2\) It is an infamous Indonesian sex-tape scandal where personal sex videos of Nazril Ilham, the vocalist of the Peterpan music band, with several female celebrities were stolen and published by his music director.
socially acceptable to examine, separate, shame, and punish those who do not take up the “moral” subject position.

The dominance of the discourse of sexual morality in Indonesia is also supported by its close association with religion, which still plays an important role in everyday Indonesian social and political life. Bennet’s (2007), Parker’s (2009, 2014), and Smith-Hefner’s (2006) research among young Muslims in Indonesia, for example, have identified how sex outside of marriage is considered immoral and associated with sinfulness by their participants. These participants’ talk about sex was dominated by religious terms such as “zina” (adultery) and “grave sin.” Smith-Hefner’s (2006) participants also identified Religious Education classes as the second most likely space (after Biology) to hear about sex at school, in which messages promoting abstinence and sexual morality were prevalent. Parker (2009, 2014, p. 19) identifies a lack of resistance to such moralising religious discourses, in the way that Indonesian young people themselves “give their consent to the authorities, displaying a striking commitment to social conservatism, local culture, and Islamic values.” For instance, almost all her participants consider “holding hands is the same as having sex” (2009, p. 86). Parker identified that the most “transgressive” (p. 31, 33) young people she could find were a girl who had two boyfriends simultaneously but who considered hugging and kissing were inappropriate, and another girl who held hands with her boyfriend secretly. This thesis seeks to extend these studies by focusing on Christian contexts and, more importantly, young people’s practices of resistance against the discourse of religious sexual morality (Chapter 5).

These previous Indonesian studies have demonstrated how meanings are given to young people’s sexual practice through the discourse of sexual morality using mechanisms of censorship, surveillance, and punishment. The problem with this situation is that the moral code of sexual abstinence has severely constrained possibilities for young people to be positioned as sexual subjects – they have to adopt either the “moral” or “immoral” subject position. While the standard of being “moral” requires total nullification of sexual desire and pleasure, the “immoral” position implies a representation of danger, irresponsibility, and sinfulness. This binary closes down numerous possibilities between these two extremes. The possibility of engaging in consensual sex between mature, but unmarried, young people, for instance, becomes unintelligible. There is no subject position from which young people can negotiate enjoyment and self-limitation, pleasure and responsibility, and desire and control. To contest this limited positioning of young people as sexual subjects, in the next subsection I
will discuss how some international researchers have critiqued the discourse of sexual morality, particularly by employing Foucault’s notion of ethics (1985), and will indicate how this thesis will extend those critiques.

**Contesting the discourse of sexual morality: Ethics, young people, and sexuality**

As discussed in Chapter 1, Foucault (1985) has contrasted the concepts of morality, where universal strictly defined codes or authorities determine what is permitted and forbidden, and ethics, in which the subject is responsible for cultivating their own practice of right and wrong through self-reflections. Through this notion of ethics, sexual enjoyment and restriction become an art, not an act of mechanistic obedience. The current subsection will review contemporary international studies that have drawn on this concept of ethics to contest the discourse of sexual morality. It will also discuss critiques of these studies in order to identify areas where this thesis seeks to contribute new knowledge to this field. Specifically, I will engage with critiques around secularism and poststructuralist theorisation of subjectivity (Rasmussen, 2010, 2012) to complicate these studies on ethics, sexuality, and young people.

As opposed to the moralistic approaches, some international sexuality researchers have promoted *ethical* approaches to understanding young people’s sexual relationships, particularly in the context of sexuality education (Carmody, 2015; Lamb, 2013; Steutel, 2009; Whitehead, 2005). These researchers emphasised the importance of young people making informed decisions in their sexual relationships rather than just accepting the imposition of a moralistic sexual abstinence. Whitehead (2005), for instance, argues that sexuality education that has an explicit moral agenda of abstinence is unrealistic and unethical because it denies young people’s right and autonomy to explore sexual pleasure. He proposed sexuality education approaches where young people are taught to develop their own ethical sexual values in order to make informed decisions and maximise sexual pleasure. Accordingly, Steutel (2009) advocated that, instead of promoting obedience to moral codes, ethical sexuality education should focus on the importance of voluntariness in sexual relationships and provide adequate information for young people to make informed choices. In these studies, young people are positioned as ethical subjects who actively make decisions and negotiate various aspects of sexual relationships such as pleasure, risks, consent, and rights.
However, some of these studies appear to have relied on the problematic assumption that individuals are autonomous, free to make decisions, and responsible for their own (sexual) choices (Butler, 1994; B. Davies, 2006; Jones, 1997; Lamb, 2010; Rasmussen, 2012; Rudy, 1999). Whitehead’s (2005) proposal above, for example, would seem to be predicated on a view of young people as autonomous agents who are able to make independent and informed decisions. Rasmussen (2012) argues that this way of understanding young people is problematic, in that it overlooks the operation of disciplinary power (discussed in Chapter 1) in enabling and/or constraining young people’s sexual decisions. This means that young people’s ability to develop ethical sexual relationships is not an individual choice independent from discourses that give rise to their ways of being sexual subjects. Taking up this critique, the analysis of Indonesian Christian young people’s subjectivities in this thesis will recognise the role of power and discourse in the constitution of young people as ethical sexual subjects (see Chapter 5).

Another tendency among these studies that has also been criticised is the inclination to dichotomise approaches to young people’s sexuality, associating religion with moralism and secularism with ethical stances (Rasmussen, 2010). Rasmussen identified that this binary may be too simplistic to address the diverse positions on sexuality within and between religious and secular groups, making it meaningless to claim – for example – a definitive Muslim, Christian, or secular perspective. Alternatively, Rasmussen suggested that sexuality educators recognise and engage with these multiple perspectives. She asserted (p. 710): “If sex education is to have relevance to young people it must reflect and engage the diverse contexts from which these young people come, even when these contexts cannot be easily reconciled.” Rasmussen’s call is then reiterated by other researchers such as Lamb (2013) who proposed an inclusion of religious–historical perspectives in sexuality education in order to acknowledge young people’s various backgrounds and facilitate self-reflections. Responding to this call by examining Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities, this thesis will attend to a particular religious context (i.e., Christianity) but with an awareness of the diversity of discursive terrains occupied by participants within this Christian context. In the data chapter (Chapter 5), for example, I explore the various ways Indonesian Christian participants have been enabled to cultivate ethical sexual subjectivities against the discourse of sexual morality dominant in Indonesian religious contexts.
The current subsection has discussed how Indonesian young people have been subjected to various mechanisms of censorship, surveillance, and punishment that attempted to discipline them into becoming obedient moral subjects. I have argued that, while the binary positioning of “moral” versus “immoral” young people has enabled certain sexual subjectivities, it has also closed down other possibilities of being sexual subjects. Drawing on Foucault’s notion of ethics (1985) and contemporary studies employing this notion, I have illuminated some possibilities regarding how this thesis might contribute new knowledge to the research on the discourse of sexual morality. Specifically, this thesis will take up previous researchers’ suggestions around using the poststructuralist concept of subjectivity to examine ethical subject formation in the context of religious young people (Lamb, 2013; Rasmussen, 2010, 2012). The next section will engage with another discourse that has competed with the discourse of sexual morality, namely, the discourse of sexual desire.

The Discourse of Sexual Desire

In Chapter 1 I described how religious moralistic condemnations in Indonesia are not just directed toward (hetero)sexual practices outside of marriage, but also toward LGBT+ sexualities. One example is the call by some religious leaders for the introduction of the death penalty in cases of same-sex sexual practice (Mutiara, 2015, March 4). Alongside the development of such religious conservatism, Indonesian LGBT+ movements have grown extensively since the 1998 democratic reformation. These LGBT+ movements represent another way to give meaning to young people’s sexual subjectivities, that is, through the discourse of sexual desire; this will be the focus of the current section. Based on Foucault’s definition (Davidson, 2001; Foucault, 1997), the discourse of sexual desire refers to a set of interconnected ideas that constitute sexual attraction and practices as categorisable, nameable, specifiable, and relatively unchanging. This discourse offers a range of subject positions or sexual “identities,” such as gay, lesbian, and bisexual, by which subjects can give meaning and legitimacy to their sexual selves. As I have noted in Chapter 1, the discourse of sexual desire I refer to here is different from that of Fine’s (1998) “(missing) discourse of desire” which she defined as a set of meanings around sexual entitlement, pleasure, and explorations of “what feels good and bad, desirable and undesirable, [which are] grounded in experiences, needs, and limits” (p. 33).
This section will begin with a review of studies carried out in Indonesia around the discourse of sexual desire. I argue that this discourse has been drawn upon to research LGBT+ communities in Indonesia. I will then discuss the limitations of using the discourse of sexual desire to constitute sexual subjectivity, such as how it constrains and excludes other ways of being sexual. Drawing on Foucault’s comparison of *scientia sexualis* and *ars erotica*, I explore alternative possibilities to extend these limitations and generate new knowledge around this discourse in my investigation of young Indonesian Christians’ sexual subjectivities.

*The discourse of sexual desire: Previous studies in Indonesia*

Existing studies around the discourse of sexual desire in Indonesia have focused on how LGBT+ people have not only been condemned, pathologised, and physically violated, but also how they demonstrated resilience by organising themselves into a social movement. Studies have documented how Indonesian LGBT+ people have experienced physical and emotional abuse and even death threats from family, employers, and community (Ariyanto & Triawan, 2008, 2012; Blackwood, 2007; Boellstorff, 2005). Same-sex sexuality was, and is still, represented in Indonesian newspapers, magazines, and television as being associated with mental illness, paedophilia, crime, and illegal drug use (Blackwood, 2007; Murtagh, 2011). Transgender sexuality is often linked with mental illness, the sex industry, and STIs (S. G. Davies, 2010; Prabawanti et al., 2011). An intersex child is considered shameful for parents and family, and is generally operated on soon after birth to conform to heterosexual binary (Wieringa, 2010, 2015a). Moreover, as they are often condemned by religious leaders, many Indonesian gays and lesbians have expressed both feelings of “sinfulness” and a wish to be “delivered” or “healed” from their “deviant desires” (Boellstorff, 2005; Oetomo, 2003; Wijaya Mulya, 2011). Some Indonesian gay men even explicitly labelled their own same-sex desire as a “social evil” (Krisanty, 2007). However, most of these existing studies only included gay, lesbian, and transgender sexualities in their analyses; a few studies have addressed bisexuality and intersexuality, but no research has been carried out in Indonesia documenting other “newer” sexual orientations such as polyamory (Tweedy, 2011) and asexuality (Bogaert, 2004, 2006). This will be one of the gaps I seek to fill in this thesis (see Chapter 6).
Drawing on the discourse of sexual desire which constitutes sexual orientations as normal, given, and relatively fixed, studies in Indonesia have also documented various resistance toward the pathologising and moralising discourses around LGBT+ sexualities. Despite heteronormative attempts to discipline them into heterosexual subjects, Indonesian gay men and lesbians have taken up subject positions offered through the discourse of sexual desire, refusing to deny their sexual “nature” (Boellstorff, 2005, 2007; Laurent, 2005; McNally et al., 2015; Murray, 1999; Rodriguez, 2015; Suvianita, 2013). Other studies have also identified how bisexual and transgender sexual subject positions have been taken up, and even had important spiritual roles in some indigenous cultures before the arrival of colonialism and monotheistic religions (S. G. Davies, 2010; Wieringa, 2010). However, I identify a concern that has not been attended to by these studies, namely, an unexamined reliance on the discourse of sexual desire to investigate sexual subjectivity. The next subsection will discuss this critique further in order to explore new evaluations of this body of knowledge.

**Scientia sexualis, ars erotica, and the limitations of the discourse of sexual desire**

The discourse of sexual desire has enabled certain ways of being sexual subjects, that is, through the specification and categorisation of sexual desires. This means of constituting sexual subjectivity has been crucial for providing social and legal recognition of LGBT+ sexualities in various countries in the last four decades (Alexander, 2003; Brookey & Miller, 2001; Foucault, 1997; O’Flaherty & Fisher, 2008). However, this constitution of sexual subjectivity through the discourse of sexual desire also entails some limitations. In the current subsection, I will discuss two of these limitations, examine how previous scholars have addressed them, and explore how this thesis might continue these scholars’ critiques, thereby extending knowledge around the discourse of sexual desire.

The first limitation to the categorisation of sexual orientation wrought by the discourse of sexual desire is that it implies relatively fixed and stable sexual categorisation or “identities.” While this has enabled sexual desires to be named, recognised, and validated, this fixity also constrains the possibility that sexual subjectivity might be multiple, fractured, and always in the process of becoming – a view espoused by poststructuralist theorisation of subjectivity (Foucault, 1982; Weedon, 1987). In support of this critique, some empirical studies have evidenced that sexual orientation categories might be fundamentally unstable and fluid (e.g., Better & Simula, 2015; Diamond, 2008). Overlapping with this critique, the second limitation
arises from the fact that the categorisation of sexual desires necessitates definitions and specifications, resulting in the exclusion of those who do not “fit” such a specification. Promoting polyamory as a sexual orientation (Tweedy, 2011), for instance, requires the construction of “criteria” that define what polyamorous desire entails. Klesse (2014) noted that contemporary studies around polyamory as a sexual orientation tended to prioritise loving relationships and long-term commitment, excluding other possibilities of multi-partner arrangements which can differ greatly in terms of closeness, emotionality, and commitment.

These limitations have been addressed by previous scholars who have explored other possibilities of the constitution of sexual desire. Some scholars have proposed a complete rejection of any sexual categorisations, embracing instead the radical instabilities and potentialities of sexual desire (Carastathis, 2008; Gamson, 1995, 2003; Nash, 2013). However, Foucault (1997) did not support such a total dismissal of the categorisation of sexual orientation. Rather, he acknowledged the importance of social movements based on fixed and stable sexual identities constituted through the discourse of sexual desire. In an interview, he explained (1997, p. 164):

(Interviewer:) Practically speaking, one of the effects of trying to uncover that secret has meant that the gay movement has remained at the level of demanding civil or human rights around sexuality. That is, sexual liberation has remained at the level of demanding sexual tolerance.
(Foucault:) Yes, but this aspect must be supported. It is important, first, to have the possibility and the right to choose your own sexuality. Human rights regarding sexuality are important and are still not respected in many places. We shouldn't consider that such problems are solved now. It's quite true that there was a real liberation process in the early seventies. This process was very good, both in terms of the situation and in terms of opinions, but the situation has not definitely stabilized. Still, I think we have to go a step further. I think that one of the factors of this stabilization will be the creation of new forms of life, relationships, friendships in society, art, culture, and so on through our sexual, ethical, and political choices. Not only do we have to defend ourselves, not only affirm ourselves, as an identity but as a creative force.
Foucault noted that identity-based movements which focused on sexual rights are “important,” “must be supported,” and have brought about a “real liberation process,” as in some Western countries in the early seventies. However, he also asserted that “we have to go a step further,” that is, to create new forms of life, relationships, and friendships beyond those sexual categorisations. Responding to this call within the context of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities, this thesis will search alternative ways of extending knowledge of sexual desires without completely rejecting categories of sexual orientation. In so doing the complexities of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities might be explored beyond the binary of fixed categorisation of sexual desire/complete dismissal of such categorisation. To this end, I will employ Foucault’s (1978) concepts of scientia sexualis and ars erotica (discussed in Chapter 1) to analyse participants’ sexual subjectivities.

Foucault (1978) has identified the concept of sexual desire as part of a wider political project of making sexuality an object of science, or scientia sexualis. As discussed in Chapter 1, through scientific analyses, classification, and theorisation of sexual desire, power administrates, regulates, (de)pathologises, and exercises disciplinary control over sexuality. Alternatively, Foucault offered the notion of ars erotica to think differently about sexuality – where the focus is less on the legal, scientific, or social “truth” about sex, and more on the creative pursuit of sexual pleasure. In investigating the constitution of young Indonesian Christians’ sexual subjectivities, I will employ the concept of ars erotica to complicate and extend the current knowledge on categorisations of sexual desire. While some previous studies have utilised scientia sexualis and ars erotica to analyse fiction (Cryle, 1994; Doherty, 1996), mythology and popular culture (Lingiardi, 2002; Puar, 2007), pornography (L. Williams, 1999), and the Bible (Boer, 1999), few studies have used these theories to analyse the art of sexual subject formation. As I will elaborate in Chapter 6, some participants have drawn on and contested dominant meanings circulated via the discourse of sexual desire in ways that resemble Foucault’s ars erotica. The constitution of their sexual subjectivities did not always involve mechanisms of naming, specification, classification, and (de)pathologisation of sexual desire, nor was it necessarily engaged in pursuing a scientific “truth” about their desire. Rather, it involved artistic engagement, imagination, creativity, fictionalisation, and embodiment of alternative sexual pleasures. This thesis therefore continues Foucault’s (1997) project of exploring new forms of life, love, relationships, and pleasure.
The Discourse of Sexual Violence

The final section of this chapter will discuss another dominant discourse in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities, namely, the discourse of sexual violence. Together with LGBT+ activist groups, movements against sexual violence in Indonesia have grown significantly in the last two decades (as discussed in Chapter 1). These anti-violence movements have drawn on the discourse of sexual violence, in which sexuality is given meaning via the possibility of non-consensual element in one’s sexual relationships. I will begin by examining how previous studies in Indonesia have been informed by this discourse. As in other international studies, these studies have identified gendered power relations as the primary condition that gives rise to sexual violence. Within these power relations, men are positioned as (hetero)sexually desiring and dangerous, while women, in contrast, are identified as asexual and vulnerable. This section will also discuss another binary that normalises sexual violence, namely, the positioning of adults as powerful and sexually exploitative, and young people and children as innocent and powerless. I argue that these binaries have been widely drawn on in the constitution of young people’s sexual subjectivities via the discourse of sexual violence. Throughout these discussions I will also identify some knowledge gaps in the research on sexual violence around these binaries which this thesis seeks to fill.

Previous studies on sexual violence in Indonesia

Existing studies on sexual violence in Indonesia have focused mainly on two areas. The first is research on sexual violence in times of crisis and conflict, such as multiple rape cases that occurred during the May 1998 riot (Berfield & Loveard, 1998; Marching, 2007), after the 2004 tsunami in Aceh (Carballo, Hernandez, Schneider, & Welle, 2005; Felten-Biermann, 2006), and in conflict areas such as Poso (Komnas Perempuan, 2009), Aceh (Green, 2004; Komnas Perempuan, 2006), and Papua (Wandita, 1998). In contrast with these studies, the second major area of research has focused on sexual violence by intimate partners in marital contexts (Aisyah & Parker, 2014; Bennett, Andajani-Sutjahjo, & Idrus, 2011; Idrus & Bennett, 2003; Hakimi, Hayati, Marlinawati, Winkvist, & Ellsberg, 2001; Hayati, Hogberg, Hakimi, Ellsberg, & Emmelin, 2011; Munir, 2005; Utomo, I. D., Utomo, A., Reimondos, McDonald, & Hull, 2014b). In this review, I will examine only this second group of studies further, because they are more relevant to the narratives of Indonesian Christian young people.
I discuss in this thesis (i.e., none of participants’ experiences of sexual violence took place in times of crisis and conflict, but in everyday situations and by intimate partners and acquaintances).

Previous studies have demonstrated how gendered power relations that normalise (hetero)sexual violence in marital contexts have been supported by various cultural, political, and religious discourses in Indonesia. Culturally, breaking the silence around marital sexual violence risks family honour by bringing shame to the whole family (Hayati et al., 2011; Idrus & Bennett, 2003; Wieringa, 2015b). In term of politics, the New Order regime (1966-1998) formally endorsed the idea of a “good wife” who sacrifices her own needs for the sake of her family (Andajani-Sutjahjo & Bennett, 2008). This positioning has (re)produced self-surveilling subjects who willingly position themselves under male sexual domination. As articulated by a participant in Andajani-Sutjahjo and Bennett’s (2008, p. 27) study: “No one forces me … it’s my duty [as a “good wife”]. Doesn’t matter how tired I am, I have to serve my husband … He never forces me to have sex with him; it’s just that I am forcing myself to do it.” Other researchers have identified how certain interpretations of religious doctrines have also supported gendered power relations in Indonesian marital contexts, such as when a wife’s complete submission to her husband is understood as a divine order (Munir, 2005; Wijaya Mulya, 2010b). However, these previous studies only considered sexual violence within the context of heterosexual marriage, so that research on everyday sexual violence beyond this context is lacking. This thesis seeks to contribute new knowledge to this area by presenting narratives of sexual violence from LGBT+ and heterosexual Indonesian young people, and examining different discursive contexts where this violence occurred, such as sexual violence by boyfriends, girlfriends, friends, and acquaintances (Chapter 7). In the next subsection, I will therefore review international studies on sexual violence and gendered power relations in order to situate this thesis in the international body of scholarship and outline how it will further contribute new knowledge to this field.

**Gendered power relations: Men as desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable**

Existing poststructuralist studies on sexual violence have been conducted mainly by feminist scholars, who identify the ways that gendered power relations have enabled, normalised, and sustained sexual violence against women both in marital and other (hetero)sexual relationships (Boonzaier, 2008; Clarke, 2012; DeShong, 2015; Kitzinger, 2003; Marcus,
Significant early work in this area is Hollway’s (1989) conceptualisation of the male sexual drive discourse and the have/held discourse. Through the male sexual drive discourse, men are constituted as “naturally” having a high need for sex, being aggressive, and going to great lengths to have sex. In contrast, the have/held discourse positions women as “naturally” passive, asexual, and vulnerable to violence. Studies have identified various consequences of this dominant binary positioning, such as blaming the female victim for not taking up the passive and asexual subject position (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003, 2004; Hlavka, 2014; Kiguwa et al., 2015; Mosha, 2013; O’Neill, 1998), the use of sexual violence to build masculine status (Boonzaier, 2008; Robinson, 2005), and the positioning of women as gatekeepers in managing the risks of sexual violence (Carmody, 2003; Marcus, 2002). These studies show that this binary positioning of men and women has been dominant and thus sustains sexual violence in heterosexual contexts.

While previous research has identified how this binary gives rise to (hetero)sexual violence, there are only a few studies providing examples of resistance towards these gendered power relations. For instance, at the end of their articles, both DeShong (2015) and Boonzaier and de la Rey (2003, 2004) noted that female survivors of (hetero)sexual violence participating in their study showed a sense of strength and determination to challenge and overcome the violence they had experienced, refusing to be positioned as passive and vulnerable. There are also narratives from young men in Allen’s (2003) study who challenged the construction of boys as “naturally” only wanting sex in their relationships, drawing instead on a discourse of love and romance. Robinson (2005) discusses an alternative narrative from a male student who challenged traditional meanings of masculinity and sexual violence by joining a ballet club and standing up against heterosexist harassment considered trivial by most of his male friends. This thesis will extend the knowledge in this area by also presenting underrepresented narratives of resistance which might rework this gendered positioning among young Indonesian Christians (Chapter 7). I will identify various contextual conditions – some of which have not been identified in previous studies – that have enabled them to resist those gendered power relations in their becoming sexual subjects via the discourse of sexual violence.

Another area that has been overlooked by previous studies on sexual violence relates to the heteronormative assumptions underpinning their own analysis (Braun, Schmidt, Gavey, &
The emphasis within this research on gendered power relations and heterosexual violence often means that the research fails to recognise and address same-sex sexual violence, which – as a number of studies suggest – is as prevalent as opposite-sex violence (Duke & Davidson, 2009; Halpern, Young, Waller, Martin, & Kupper, 2004; Russell, Franz, & Driscoll, 2001). A lack of discursive resources in making sense of same-sex sexual violence can be seen in examples such as the confusion among police officers regarding whom to arrest when they arrived at a scene after receiving a report of (same-sex) domestic violence (Knauer, 1999). Another example is a widespread disbelief among participants in Kiguwa et al.’s (2015) study that a woman can be perpetrators of sexual violence. Coupled with the general lack of social acceptance towards same-sex relationships, survivors of same-sex sexual violence have faced multiple difficulties when dealing with and reporting their assault (Knauer, 1999; Westlund, 1999). Therefore, scholars in this area have highlighted the importance of including various forms, contexts, and discursive positionings when analysing sexual violence, such as sexual violence in LGBT+ communities (Knauer, 1999; Malinen, 2013). Taking account of this critique, this thesis will examine narratives of sexual violence among non-heterosexual Indonesian Christian young people – which, to date, has not been studied – and investigate the complexity of discursive mechanisms operating in their ways of giving meaning to sexual violence.

Previous studies in this area have also been critiqued because of their uncritical reliance on the notion of gender equality in preventing sexual violence (Angelides, 2004; Carmody, 2003). As previous studies propose that unequal power relations between men and women sustain sexual violence, scholars in these studies have suggested that remedying such inequality will curtail the possibilities of sexual violence (e.g., DeShong, 2015; Hlavka, 2014; Kiguwa et al., 2015). However, this notion of gender equality is questioned by poststructuralist understandings of power and subjectivity (Foucault, 1982) – where there is no “equality” in terms of the exercise of power because everyone is positioned differentially in power and discourse structures. “Equality” of power is thus not a precondition for ethical relationships – otherwise all relationships would be considered unethical (Angelides, 2004). For instance, parent–child relationships always imply an unequal distribution of power (with the parent having more power than the child), but this does not mean there is no possibility of an ethical relationship between parents and their children. Thus, drawing on Foucault’s (1985) notion of ethics, Carmody (2003, 2015) suggests that, in addition to resisting gendered
power relations, another way to prevent sexual violence is by focusing on building ethical relationships (which involves care for the self and for others) within the complexities of power/social relations. Practically, she invites us to explore various ways young people ethically negotiate consent, desires, and pleasures in the specific discursive contexts of their sexual relationships. Taking up Carmody’s call, this thesis (Chapter 7) will flesh out these negotiations by analysing participants’ first-person narratives of their sexual subjectivities. To date, such empirical examples of young people’s ethical sexual relationships are rare in the existing literature.

In this subsection I have discussed how the binary positioning of men as desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable has provided conditions of possibility for sexual violence to take place. Previous poststructuralist studies around this field have been reviewed, including examples of resistance towards this binary. I have also identified possibilities to extend these studies, particularly by drawing on critiques from scholars working on same-sex sexual violence and on ethical relationships as sexual-violence-prevention strategies. In the next subsection, I will discuss another dominant positioning which is relevant with participants’ narratives in this thesis, namely, the binary of adults as powerful and children as powerless.

**Binary positioning of adults as powerful/sexually exploitative and children and young people as innocent/powerless**

As discussed in Chapter 1, incidents of child sexual violence are not unusual in Indonesia. Some participants in this study have also shared their own narratives of such violence. For some of them, this event continues to shape their self-understanding as sexual subjects. To better understand their experience of child sexual violence, in this subsection previous research on child sexual violence will be reviewed. My review covers international research, as Indonesian studies on child sexual violence are rare. For example, a brief Indonesian report published in the *Child Abuse and Neglect* journal over 30 years ago (Haditono, 1981) is hitherto the only study to appear in an international journal. I intend, in my thesis, to begin filling this gap. In accordance with my poststructuralist theoretical framework, I will review previous international studies to explore discursive conditions that give rise to, and sustain, child sexual violence.
Scholars have identified a problematic discursive construction underpinning child sexual violence, namely, the binary positioning of adults as powerful and sexually exploitative, and children as sexually innocent and powerless (Angelides, 2004; Burman, 2003; Clark, 2014; Egan & Hawkes, 2009; Grondin, 2011; Lamb & Plocha, 2014). On the one hand, this discursive positioning has given rise to social movements and legal measures protecting children from sexual violence (Angelides, 2004; S. Warner, 2001). On the other hand, this dominant construction has also constituted ways-of-seeing which deny children’s sexual agency and fail to recognise them as sexual subjects (Burman, 2003; Egan & Hawkes, 2009). For instance, the terms used to refer to children’s sexual expressions often imply a trivialisation of their sexuality, such as “sex play” and “sexual experimentation” (Angelides, 2004). Largely based on adult-oriented views on sexuality, children are desexualised and infantilised (Burman, 2003) as if they are not sexual beings. This representation of children, however, is flawed and unrepresentative (Egan & Hawkes, 2009), and confines children to the (potential) victim subject position. Through this positioning it becomes “normal” to view children as always in need of protection, because they are constituted as unable to understand and make decisions concerning sexuality while adults around them are constituted as powerful, exploitative, and may sexually abuse children at any time. Drawing on this notion of protection, excessive surveillance on children has often been accepted as “normal,” such as in the Jakarta International School case (in Chapter 1) where more than 400 cameras were installed in the school with the belief that this would help prevent sexual violence (Rahmawati, 2014, April 15).

In contrast to this positioning of children as sexually innocent, other studies have shown that children express interest in, experiment with, and make meaning out of their sexual experiences. In other words, they are sexual subjects (Allen, 2005). Studies have indicated that children express sexual interest and engage in sexually related behaviours with other children long before puberty (Lamb & Plocha, 2014). Historically, Foucault (1978) identified that, in the 19th century, children were not constituted as asexual or sexually innocent, but as having sexual potential and often indulging in masturbation. In the context of child sexual violence, it has been documented that child survivors were not always completely passive and powerless. Some survivors feel that they did make choices, however small, that led to the initial violent incident and its continuation (Lamb, 1986). These choices include returning to the perpetrator’s home or seeking gifts by engaging in sexual activities (Angelides, 2004). In a study of older children’s and teenagers’ sexual relationships with adults, Phillips (1999)
showed that her participants often reported a sense of initiation, willingness, and decision-making in these relationships. These studies evidence that children can be, and have been, constituted as sexual subjects who actively make meaning and exercise agency. This does not mean that children’s possibility of exercising power is relatively equal with adults, or that they are thus to blame for the violence or responsible for preventing it. What I want to foreground here is that, within the network of power relations that continuously deny children as sexual subjects and constrain their agency, there is evidence that they are meaning-givers and construers of their own sexual experience (Lamb & Plocha, 2014), and – to a limited degree – that they make decisions in their sexual engagements (Angelides, 2004; Lamb, 1986; Phillips, 1999).

Addressing this situation, scholars in this area have proposed some careful suggestions. Without undermining valuable efforts to protect children from sexual violence, Egan and Hawkes (2009) recommended that we must first recognise children as sexual subjects who actively make meanings about sexuality and exercise agency. Completely denying children’s and teenagers’ sexual agency might reinforce the idea that they are always lacking in power and control in any interaction with adults. As indicated above, this idea provides and sustains (discursive) conditions for sexual violence. By acknowledging children as sexual subjects, more spaces might be opened up to talk about, examine, and explore discursive resources that can be drawn on to expand children’s exercise of power. Secondly, we need to uncouple children’s sexuality from an adult-oriented model. This means that children’s sexuality must be acknowledged, not as trivial or merely a projection of adult sexuality, but as unique in its own right, including its multiple sexual expressions such as children’s “sex play.” Thirdly, we must cease using the notion of protection as an excuse to legitimise surveillance and excessive control. Rather, we need to encourage children to build ethical and respectful relationships as early as possible (Robinson, 2013), but without assigning responsibility to them to prevent sexual violence. To date, no study has fleshed out and examined these suggestions in empirical narratives of child sexual violence. This is a gap that this thesis will also fill (in Chapter 7).

In this section I have discussed previous studies on the discourse of sexual violence pertinent to the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. I have identified two binary constructions that have been involved in the ways sexual subjectivities are constituted via the discourse of sexual violence. They are the binary positioning of men as
desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable, and the binary of adults as powerful/sexually exploitative and children as innocent/powerless. I have also highlighted some knowledge gaps in the existing literature and in what ways this thesis might fill those gaps in its investigation of Indonesian Christian young people as sexual subjects.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed previous studies around Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities in relation to discourses of sexual health, sexual morality, sexual desire, and sexual violence. I have argued that the discourse of sexual health has constituted Indonesian young people as vulnerable, hormone-driven, and uninformed. The discourse of sexual morality has offered Indonesian young people binary subject positions to take up, namely, either “moral” or “immoral.” Drawing on the discourse of sexual desire, the belief that everyone has a relatively fixed sexual desire which can be identified, specified, and categorised has been normalised. Through the discourse of sexual violence, women have been constituted as asexual, men as desiring, adults as exploitative, and children as innocent. In the ensuing data chapters, I will demonstrate how participants in this study have both drawn upon and contested dominant meanings offered by these discourses in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities. The next chapter will address the methodology and methods I have employed in conducting this research.
Chapter 3
Research Methodology

To gain a better understanding about the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities, in this study I recruited, interviewed, and analysed narratives from young Indonesian Christian participants. The first section of this chapter discusses how a Foucauldian theoretical framework has informed the methodologies of this thesis, such as the purpose of research, the approach to data, and the role of the researcher. The second section details the research process including participant recruitment, research methods, data production, and data analysis. Finally, I discuss some ethical considerations in conducting this research, namely, participants’ informed consent, psychological harm, cultural sensitivity, and the researcher’s interpretive authority.

Foucauldian Methodological Framework

In terms of its ontology, this thesis adopts the Foucauldian premise that there is no “objective” reality outside of language and discourse (Weedon, 1987; Willig, 2013). There are always numerous versions of realities and all are constituted through discursive mechanisms. Due to the ever-changing nature of discursive formations, a dominant version of reality in a certain context or historical time period – which often appears as natural or immutable – can always be replaced by less dominant ones. Following this ontological position, the methodology of this thesis does not seek to locate “real” or “objective” sexual realities of Indonesian Christian young people. Rather, it explores how Indonesian Christian young people have drawn on discourses that give rise to their particular versions of sexual reality.

This Foucauldian approach to reality is inextricable from its epistemological position, that is, its approach to knowledge. Since there is no objective reality “out there” independent from the knower’s ways of knowing, the distinction between ontology and epistemology becomes blurred. Any knowledge or “truth” is always constituted through specific (contextual and always shifting) discourses (Weedon, 1987); and thus, is fundamentally unstable and might be unintelligible in other discursive contexts (Prado, 2000). Consequently, this thesis does not aim to generate the “true” or “right” knowledge (Willig, 2013) about Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. Instead, it seeks to identify dominant regimes of “truth”
concerning their sexual subjectivities, uncover knowledges that have been marginalised, and explore possible ways-of-being, afforded by those marginalised knowledges.

Having clarified how Foucauldian ontological/epistemological understanding informs this thesis’ methodological position, I will now illuminate how various methodological aspects of this thesis have been shaped through this understanding. Specifically, I will focus on the role of the researcher, the approach to data, and the relationship between the researcher, participants, and data.

Regarding the role of the researcher, the knowledge generated in this thesis is understood as inseparable from the researcher and the discourses that have enabled them to produce that knowledge. Unlike positivistic approaches where the researcher’s voice is absent and knowledge produced is claimed to be objective, this thesis acknowledges that “the researcher authors, rather than discovers, knowledge” (Willig, 2013, p. 139). Narratives in this thesis – to a degree – were shaped by my theoretical, methodological, and personal positionalities. Instead of eliminating the researcher from the research, the methodology of this thesis reflexively attends to discursive contexts from which I, as the researcher, stood and spoke (Letherby, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Malterud, 2001). Since I have discussed my theoretical and methodological standpoint above, here I will focus on my personal (i.e., sexual, social, and religious) positionalities, and how they have shaped the methodologies of this study.

As the central concept in this thesis is sexual subjectivity, I start with my sexual identification as “straight with a twist” (Thomas, Aimone, & MacGillivray, 2000, p. 3), that is, a heterosexual who is committed to resisting the normalisation of heterosexuality. I am also a middle-class man who was born and grew up in Surabaya – the second largest city in Indonesia. Since 2005 I have worked as a full-time lecturer in the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Surabaya. I was raised in a Christian family (my father is a retired church minister), and I spent most of my life as a church activist. I find the discursive landscape I inhabited as an Indonesian Christian young person offered me very limited ways to give meaning to sexuality. It is mainly given meaning through a discourse of religious sexual morality, which constitutes youth’s sex and sexuality as principally a moral issue. While I understood myself as a devoted Christian at that time, sexuality has always been an issue in which I did not feel connected to my religious beliefs (e.g., its opposition to same-sex
relationships). In other words, sexuality continuously exposed discursive cracks in the ways-of-seeing offered by my Christian faith. Growing up in a theological tradition which emphasises single, objective “truth” as taught by the church, in the early phase of my doctoral study I encountered, was seduced, and struggled with poststructuralist onto-epistemologies which offer multiple, discursively-constructed truths and realities. Finding these new ways of understanding reality, knowledge, and sense of self becoming more and more make sense, in 2014 I decided to no longer identify myself as a (professing) Christian because I considered my self has drifted too far from traditional Christianity’s basic tenets.

These subject positions I take up have shaped the design and methodological processes of this thesis. When recruiting participants, for instance, I carefully designed the advertisement (Appendix E) and information sheet (Appendix B) to signal that I am not a heteronormative Indonesian psychology researcher who pathologises LGBT+ sexualities. During the interviews, my extensive involvement in various churches provided me with a sense of familiarity when listening to participants’ religious experiences. In addition, my recent disengagement from Christianity provided me with a critical stance when analysing their narratives. My job as a lecturer and my age (31 at that time) has also influenced my relationships with participants, such as how they addressed me formally as “sir” instead of the more informal terms “brother” or “uncle” (addressing older people by their first name is considered impolite). Within this atmosphere of formality and authority, participants may not have talked to me as they would to a friend. However, through attempting to project a non-judgmental openness and willingness to listen, interviews provided participants with a rare opportunity to speak openly and safely to a supportive figure of authority. These examples illustrate how my subjectivity as researcher has been woven into the research processes of this thesis.

Poststructuralist understanding of subjectivity as discursively constituted and continuously (re)produced (Foucault, 1982; Jones, 1997; Weedon, 1987) also shaped my relationship with participants, that is, as co-researchers. Participants’ narratives around their sexual subjectivities are not understood as “their stories,” but (re)produced contingently and collaboratively within our researcher–participant relationship. The researcher and the researched become co-researcher, co-participant, and co-shaper of data, both are enabled and constrained by discourses available to us in this research context (Quinlivan, 2013). The interview schedule (Appendix A), for example, was not designed in a structured way that
would emphasise my authority and full control as the researcher. Rather, it was designed to stimulate dialogue between participants and myself, that is, through open-ended questions. However, I am cognisant that the traditional, unequal positioning of researcher and participants to a degree still shaped my relationship with participants in this study. Therefore, I do not claim that participants are equal co-researchers in producing knowledge in this research. I am still the one who designed the methods, undertook the final interpretation of data, and wrote this thesis. My claim is that I have attempted, as best I can, to listen, prioritise, and understand participants’ ways of making sense of their worlds, and open myself to be challenged by them.

One example of my commitment to be more equal and dialogical with participants can be seen in my openness to be questioned by participants. During the interviews I often told participants to “feel free” if there were any questions about the research or about me personally. One participant, Heni (24, postgraduate student, female, asexual), took the opportunity and asked about how I negotiate my Christian faith and sexual subjectivity. My response was to honestly tell her about my personal struggles, while also make sure I only revealed myself as far as I was comfortable. To some degree, this reflexivity was enabled by the asynchronous nature of email interview method employed in this thesis (more discussion in the next section).

Besides shaping the researcher–participant relationship, poststructuralist understanding of the discursive nature of knowledge and subjectivity has guided this thesis’ approach to data. Data is not understood as a transparent window into participants’ lives. Instead, it is understood as discursively constituted within the interactions between the researcher, participants, and research contexts (e.g., interview settings, poststructuralist methodologies). During the process of data analysis, participants’ narratives were always in continuous interaction with me as researcher, with the academic literatures I read, and with data chapters I was writing. It is within these relational and negotiated contexts that research findings were generated from data.

This approach to data, coupled with an understanding of subjectivity as profoundly unstable and continuously reworked (Butler, 1990; Weedon, 1987), might raise some methodological concerns in relation to data production and analysis. As Browne and Nash (2010, p. 1) have questioned:
[If] subjects and subjectivities are fluid, unstable and perpetually becoming, how can we gather “data” from those tenuous and fleeting subjects using the standard methods of data collection such as interviews and questionnaires? What meanings can we draw from, and what use can we make of such data when it is only momentarily fixed and certain?

Taking this concern into account, the methodology of this thesis does not search for fixed or stable ways that young Indonesian Christians understand themselves as sexual subjects. Rather, it acknowledges the fluidity and instability of their subjectivities. Data are understood as a small mark in the multiple and endless paths of understanding Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. The significance of my data is not rooted in its fixity or stability, but in the opportunity it offers to identify ruptures and cracks of the regulatory regime, thus offering possibilities of resistance (Butler, 1990, 1993). It is this identification of discursive openings that I will focus on in this thesis by analysing the multiple and fleeting accounts of participants’ sexual subjectivities.

The poststructuralist-informed approach to the relationships between researcher, participants, and data in this thesis can be seen in an example where a key contact warned me about a participant (pseudo)named Jenardi (23, freelance, male, gay). She reminded me not to believe too easily what Jenardi said, because many of his friends often consider his stories as “exaggerated.” While I responded “yes, don’t worry” to her, during the interview and analysis I did not look for what “really” happened in Jenardi’s life, or what the objective facts were. Instead, I approached his narratives as a discursively constituted account of himself, Jenardi, as a sexual subject produced within our interactions in this research context. In other words, what I looked for in analysing Jenardi’s narrative was how he had drawn on and resisted certain discourses of sexuality in the constitution of his sexual subjectivity.

This section has illuminated how Foucauldian poststructuralist approaches to reality, knowledge, and subjectivity have shaped the methodological aspects of this thesis, such as the role of the researcher, the approach to data, and the relationship between participants and the researcher. Having elucidated this relationship between my theoretical and methodological framework, in the next section I will detail the research methods and processes of this study.
The Research Process

Participant recruitment

Two criteria were established to recruit the participants, namely: (1) being an Indonesian young person, and (2) having a Christian background. The point of reference for “young person” was not biological age nor according to any legal definition, but rested on participants’ own self-identified social-cultural positioning (Kehily, 2007). This means that anyone who identified themselves as an Indonesian young person could participate. However, in compliance with the University of Auckland’s ethics guideline, the minimum age (of consent) for participants was set at 16 years. The maximum age was identified in the advertisement as being approximately (but not necessarily) 24. While there is no precise age-limit in (socially) defining young people, beyond this age most Indonesian young people have generally completed their education and/or are employed. Therefore they are often identified by others or identify themselves as “adults” rather than as “young people.” The criterion of having a Christian background was not strictly specified, but relied on participants own religious self-identification. The advertisement also stated that “unique and different perspectives are welcomed” to signal the research was also interested in alternative sexual subjectivities of young Indonesian Christians.

After securing permission from the University of Auckland ethics committee, I travelled to Indonesia to recruit participants between April and May 2013. Participants were recruited through advertisements distributed to LGBT+ NGOs, Christian NGOs, universities, and key people in the community, such as pastors and seminary lecturers in several cities in Indonesia. To preserve confidentiality, the names of these cities and NGOs are not disclosed in this thesis, and all participants’ names are pseudonyms.

Twenty-four young people made contact via email and/or the short message service, and were sent the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (Appendix B) and Consent Form (CF) (Appendix C). Ten participants wanted to see me in person to ask questions before signing the consent form, while the others signed and returned the consent form electronically. All participants agreed to take part, except one. After reading the PIS, she decided she was unsuitable for this study because she felt she had no stories or experiences around sexuality. Another participant
did not reply to my emails at all after initially agreeing. Three others decided to stop halfway through the data production because they were too busy with their studies. However, they chose not to withdraw their participation entirely so their narratives are included in this thesis. The final number of participants was 22.

The participants are diverse in terms of demographical characteristics, gender identification, sexual experience, and association with Christian faith. Their ages ranged from 16 to 24 at the time of participation. Sexually, 2 participants identified as lesbian, 4 as gay, 1 as bisexual, 14 as heterosexual, and 1 as asexual. Twelve of them identified as male, 9 as female, and 1 identified themselves as neither gender. None of the participants were married. In terms of socio-economic status, the range was relatively wide, from a financially secure participant who studied overseas as a full-fee paying student, to ex-street children who lived in a Christian shelter. Six participants were high school students, 8 were university students, 5 were employed, 1 was self-employed, 1 was an activist, and 1 was a postgraduate student. Seventeen participants proudly expressed themselves as Christians and were actively practising their faith (i.e., going to church regularly, praying, reading the Bible), 4 identified as Christians but were not practising, and 1 considered herself no longer a Christian. Their experiences of sexual activity were also diverse, including maintaining strict abstinence or regularly engaging in sex. There were also participants whose experience with sex involved forms of violence. Full biographical profile of the participants in tabular form is provided in the Appendix F.

**Research methods**

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) research methods were employed to generate qualitative narratives of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. CMC refers to text-based conversational interaction that is mediated through a computer, and most commonly over the Internet (Mann & Stewart, 2000). Two types of online CMC widely used in qualitative research are asynchronous interview (i.e., via email correspondence) and synchronous interview (i.e., via instant messenger). These CMC research methods were chosen because they offer some key advantages in generating narratives of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities.
The first advantage is psychological comfort and security, particularly for participants involved in studies on sensitive topics like this thesis. Compared to face-to-face interviews, CMC research methods provide a greater sense of anonymity and privacy because there are fewer cues that could potentially lead to discrimination, prejudice, or researcher’s bias, such as skin colour, physical (dis)ability, or body shape (Ayling & Mewse, 2009; Chaney & Dew, 2003; McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). CMC research methods have been utilised in studies involving sensitive topics, such as women who terminated their pregnancy (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006), women with viral STIs (Cook, 2009), and gay and bisexual men who experienced discrimination (Ayling & Mewse, 2009; Chaney & Dew, 2003). Studies also documented that CMC research methods produce a liberating and empowering therapeutic effect because these methods provide a sense of privacy and control for participants to express themselves (Adler & Zarchin, 2002; Cook, 2009; James, 2016; Kralik, Koch, & Brady, 2000). As a result, CMC research methods have attracted a wider range of participants, for example those who would not usually participate in such a study for fear of being stigmatized in the process (Davis, Bolding, Hart, Sherr, & Elford, 2004; Mann & Stewart, 2000). Considering this advantage, CMC research methods were suitable for this thesis because discussing sexuality with Indonesian young people is considered a sensitive subject. Sexuality is generally socially not discussed and thus talking about it entails a degree of risk particularly if participants’ family, friends, or employers were to find out (discussed in Chapter 1). While CMC research methods offer such advantage, it does not mean that face-to-face methods are impossible. There were previous sexuality studies in Indonesian contexts that have utilised participatory ethnography methods (e.g., Bennett, 2005a; S. G. Davies, 2010; Parker, 2009). There were at least two other considerations (below) that contributed to the decision to use CMC research methods in this thesis.

Secondly, in accordance with the notion of participants as co-researchers (discussed in the first section of this chapter), asynchronous CMC research methods have been documented as enhancing a more collaborative and equal research relationships (James, 2016). An email interview format allows participants to respond in their own space and preferred time, and therefore offers a more reflective temporal–spatial quality as compared to a real-time, face-to-face interview. This reflexive space and time gives participants opportunities to respond in a considered way, such as revisiting what to include before sending their replies. In this way, participants have a degree of control over the speed and direction of the conversation (James, 2016). Coupled with my commitment to prioritise participants’ ways of understanding
themselves as sexual subjects, the email interview provided an advantageous platform to reduce the asymmetrical power relationship between me, as the researcher, and young Indonesian Christian participants.

Thirdly, CMC research methods offer a range of practical advantages in producing data in this thesis. By utilising the Internet, CMC research methods can reach participants in different geographical locations (Mann & Stewart, 2000). For researchers, this saves time and costs associated with travel and transcription (Mann & Stewart, 2000), and for participants, it gives flexibility in terms of time and place in replying to emails (Hinchcliffe & Gavin, 2009; McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). Such a practical advantage is important for this thesis because participants were from different cities in Indonesia. In addition to the practical advantages reported in previous studies, I found the asynchronous CMC research method also provided a valuable delay between replies, which gave me the opportunity to think carefully about how to respond and in what ways these replies contributed to answering my research questions. This opportunity proved to be beneficial, particularly because participants’ narratives were complex and multidimensional, requiring careful and thorough responses.

One disadvantage of CMC research methods is that it provides limited modalities to interact with participants, that is, only via written text (Kralik et al., 2000; Mann & Stewart, 2000). There are no visual cues such as bodily reactions, verbal intonations, or silences. This situation benefited those who were articulate in written expression, but disadvantaged those who would have preferred spoken or other forms of expression. I am cognisant that participants’ experiences are not reducible to written texts or any other non/linguistic expression, however, CMC research methods are still beneficial for this thesis considering the sensitivity of this topic in the Indonesian context (as discussed in Chapter 1). While all research methods are reductionist and can never fully capture participants’ fleeting subjectivities, CMC research methods at least offered a sense of safety and complete anonymity which increased the possibility of reaching marginalised participants. It is with this awareness of both its advantages and limitations that CMC research methods were chosen for this study.

Other disadvantages of CMC research methods involve technological difficulties and data management complexity. Studies have documented that technological difficulties were common in CMC research methods, such as Internet connection problems or unfamiliarity
with instant messenger applications (Ayling & Mewse, 2009; Davis et al., 2004; Hinchcliffe & Gavin, 2009; Mann & Stewart, 2000; McCoyd & Kerson, 2006; Seymour, 2001). Data management in CMC research methods also involves some complexities, because many email interviews are conducted simultaneously (Cook, 2009). This complexity might result in problems such as the researcher wrongly remembering participants’ previous emails or mixing up one participant’s narrative with another. However, these disadvantages are of a technical nature and can be managed by carefully developing the methodological design (which will be detailed in the next section).

In addition to email and instant messenger interviews, participants were asked to email a short piece of autobiographical writing about their life experiences around religion and sexuality. Autobiographical writing is a research method where participants write their “stories that include a temporal ordering of events and an effort to make something out of those events: to render, or to signify, the experiences of persons-in-flux in a personally and culturally coherent, plausible manner” (Sandelowski, 1991, p. 162). The aim of this method is to give participants time and space to think, (re)construct, and articulate their experiences in a way that privileges their perspectives, choices of themes or stories, and language style. It also provides an alternative textual context for expressing their sexual subjectivities, that is, in the form of a cohesive written expression, complementing the conversational context of the online interviews.

Application of research methods

The email and instant messenger interviews were guided by the interview schedule (Appendix A) which consisted of questions designed to stimulate discussion relevant to the research focus. Examples of the questions are, “tell me about your experience of being a Christian,” “do you ever have disagreements with the teaching at your church?” “how did you learn about sexuality?” and “is there any experience around sexuality that you want to tell?” The email interview was conducted first, and then the instant messenger interview followed with the purpose of probing more specific topics participants have brought up in the email interview. After the email and instant messenger interview, participants were given a short and open-ended instruction to write an autobiographical narrative: “Please write about your sexuality and your faith. Feel free to write in any way you like (any type of writing – prose, poem, personal journal, etc.; any length; using everyday language; etc.).” Most
participants tended to write around themes that already discussed in email and instant messenger interviews. For those who took part only in autobiographical writing, they wrote as per the instruction. Based on the general encouragement to write, it appears that they tended to focus only on specific topics which were relevant to their experience. Through these questions, participants’ ways of understanding themselves as sexual subjects were explored, as well as the dominant discourses of sexuality they drew on and resisted.

Each participant engaged in 10-20 email exchanges over 4-12 weeks and one session of instant messenger chat. All interviews were conducted in participants’ first language (Indonesian). The narratives presented in this thesis were translated to English by the researcher. The interviews were loosely structured, and developed depending on the conversational dynamics. Consequently, each participant’s narrative has different emphases, for example, some focused on sexual experiences, some on sexual identity, and others on sexual violence. In the email interviews some participants replied in short paragraphs while others wrote longer passages, but most wrote 500-1000 words for each reply. Not all participants were able to complete all three methods (continuous email correspondence, chatting session, and writing an autobiographical narrative), because they could not commit the time to do so. Seven participants did complete all three methods, 4 participants used two methods (2 participant in email interview and then instant messeger interview, 1 participant in email interview and then autobiographical writing, and 1 participant in autobiographical writing then instant messenger interview), and 11 participants adhered to one method (7 in autobiographical writing and 4 in email interview). Although not all participants completed the three methods, the length and complexity of narratives generated by each participant did not simply depend on the number of methods they took part in. Some participants who only engaged in one method produced longer narratives than participants who took part in all three methods.

To minimise technological difficulties during data production, I required participants to have regular access to the Internet at least once a week. This requirement might have excluded some potential participants, such as those of lower socio-economic status. However, during recruitment none of the potential participants withdrew and none of community keypersons complained in relation to this requirement. This situation might indicate the limitation of my recruitment networks which relied on LGBT+ NGOs, Christian NGOs, universities, and other urban middle-class communities. The exceptions to this were the ex-street children
participants living in a Christian shelter which has Internet access. To further reduce chances of technological problems, I asked each participant to choose an email and an instant messenger account that they were familiar with (e.g. MSN, Yahoo, Facebook, Skype). I then created an account for each participant from the provider they chose, so that they could anonymously use that account for this study.

As part of my research method, I address the concern of data management complexity in CMC research methods by carefully preparing an administration system. As suggested by Cook (2009), I documented all interactions with each participant in password-protected word-processor files coded by date and pseudonym. All original emails were directly and permanently deleted after data were copied to these files. I read the file thoroughly before engaging with each participant, to ensure that I was aware of all information they had shared previously. I replied to all emails in a fixed period (1-2 days) to express my commitment and genuine interest while also giving enough time for me to think before replying (Cook, 2009; Kralik et al., 2000). I sent a reminder when participants did not reply after one week; and after two weeks, I followed up with an email asking whether or not they wanted to withdraw their participation. As explained in the PIS (Appendix B), participants had the right to withdraw their participation at any stage before the report was completed, without the need to offer any reason.

At the end of data production, each participant was sent all their previous emails and chats to read and withdraw any parts if they wished. None of the participants withdrew (parts of) their data. In November 2013 all participants had completed the data production. As I have stated in the PIS (and as approved by the ethics committee), participants who were interested were then sent a general data summary in everyday Indonesian language so that it was accessible for them. Instead of highlighting general patterns, this anonymous summary emphasised participants’ diverse sexual and religious experiences. Consistent with the purpose of this study, this emphasis was intended to encourage alternative modes of thought and existence, instead of homogenising gestures implied in reports that focus on general patterns.

Data analyses

After combining email correspondence, instant messenger chats, and autobiographical narratives into word-processor files, I analysed data using thematic analysis techniques
suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). I first familiarised myself with data, generated initial codes, then searched, reviewed, and defined the themes within it. In accordance with the aim of this thesis, throughout this analysis I looked for discourses that have given rise to participants’ ways of being sexual, and various ways participants engaged with and resisted those discourses.

One problem with this coding-based analysis is that it tends to “dry up” the richness of data in its preference for structure and categorisation. As noted by MacLure (2013), the practice of coding classifies, categorises, names, abstracts, and therefore reduces the complexity of data. Using examples from her data on children’s first-year schooling experience, MacLure demonstrates how the practice of coding simplifies children’s emotions, acts, silences, and bodily reactions into one code, namely “problematic behaviour.” However, MacLure does not suggest a complete rejection of the practice of coding. She argues instead that all language inevitably reduces and fixes meaning to a certain structure. Alternatively, she encourages slow, nuanced, and embodied analysis as opposed to quickly moving away from data through coding, abstracting, and generalising. Taking up MacLure’s suggestion, data analysis in this thesis is understood as a contradictory practice of both structuring and resisting the desire for structuration. During analysis, codes were generated to structure and simplify data, but this process was conducted with an awareness that codes were reductionist and should be challenged whenever possible. For instance, my initial coding simplified participants’ experiences of learning sexuality into “formal” and “informal education.” Simultaneously, I critically examined how participants’ rich learning experiences might not fit this binary of formal/informal education, such as when formal sources (i.e., teachers) gave suggestions in an informal conversation, or when participants sought and read academic sources (i.e., academic journals) out of personal curiosity rather than as part of their formal education.

In this section I have discussed the details of the research process including participant recruitment, research methods, and data analyses. I have also explained how these research methods are related to my research question and theoretical framework. In the final section below, I will address some of the ethical considerations in designing and conducting this research.
**Ethical Considerations**

A number of ethical considerations have been taken into account in designing and conducting this research, namely, participants' psychological harm, informed consent, confidentiality, and the researcher's cultural awareness, interpretive authority, and incidental findings. Regarding psychological harm, this research recognised the possibility that recalling and disclosing sexual experiences may cause unease or distress (Kralik et al., 2000). In New Zealand, the common practice is to provide psychological/conselling referrals in situations where participants experienced distress. However, since visiting such services in Indonesia is often associated with mental illness, a provision of free counselling services in this situation might have posed ethical issues itself. Alternatively, psychological harm in this study is addressed based on poststructuralist views of young peoples as (agentic) subjects (Allen, 2005b; Kehily, 2007). Throughout the interviews I encouraged participants to exercise agency such as reflecting on their emotions, refraining from answering if uncomfortable, withdrawing from the research, or taking other viable actions to care for themselves – including psychological or pastoral referrals if they wished.

Despite my concerns about the potential for participants’ psychological health to be negatively affected by the interview process, there was no apparent expression of distress during the interviews. Most of the participants showed excitement at the opportunity to talk about sexuality in the non-judgemental setting that this research provided. However, there was one concerning moment when a participant reported having had suicidal thoughts several years previously and was also currently having trouble dealing with her self-injury practices (which had originated some years previously). Further inquiry revealed that, at the time of these interviews, she felt that she had an adequate level of support from relevant authorities, that is, from church leaders and the key person in her community from whom she had heard about this study. In the last interview, she said that she enjoyed being part of this study and that our interactions had given her more energy and a sense of excitement. A follow-up contact a few months later indicated that her psychological health was stable.

Regarding informed consent, prior to the interviews, participants had been fully informed about their voluntary participation, right to withdraw, minimum age of consent, anonymity and confidentiality of their participation, details of the data-production process, and data storage (Appendix C). However, due to the semi-structured character of the interviews,
signing the consent to participate did not eliminate possibilities of involuntary engagement throughout the study (Josselson, 1996; Smythe & Murray, 2000). To some extent, the participants and I were unable to precisely predict how our conversation would develop and how these conversations might put us in situations we did not anticipate. Therefore, during the interviews I carefully negotiated how far our conversation might disrupt our taken-for-granted assumptions. For example, one participant, Hardi (22, office worker, male), reported a constant attraction to people of the same sex since he was very young, which he understood as the “sin of homosexuality.” At the end of the interviews Hardi asked me to suggest how he could deal with this “sin.” Before honestly and carefully presenting my opposition to heteronormativity, I asked Hardi whether he was open to a different view on same-sex sexuality and Christian faith, and he said he wanted to know more. In this way, informed consent is more than acquiring a participant’s signature before the interviews. Instead, voluntary consent is continually negotiated during the process (Allen, 2009a; Carmody, 2005; Smythe & Murray, 2000). Throughout the interviews I also constantly reminded all participants that they had the right to refuse answering any questions and to withdraw from participation without giving a reason.

In relation to cultural awareness, my personal history has provided a degree of social and cultural sensitivity in conducting this study. I grew up in Indonesia, speak Indonesian as my first language, have been extensively involved in various churches for more than 20 years, and have previously conducted studies on sexuality among Indonesian Christian young people using qualitative methods (Wijaya Mulya, 2010a, 2010b, 2011). To some extent I understand how normative spaces of Indonesian churches, families, schools, and workplaces might bring spiritual, psychological, physical, and material consequences to those who have different views on sexuality (as discussed in Chapter 1). Therefore, complete anonymity and confidentiality in every stage (recruitment, interview, analysis, data storage, translation, and report writing) have been maintained. All data files were password protected. Names in the final report were pseudonyms, including names of other people that participants referred to during the interviews (Josselson, 2007). Some participants’ details have also been changed so that they are less identifiable.

Another ethical concern during data analysis was the issue of interpretive authority. In analysing participants’ narratives I was committed to respecting and prioritising their views, feelings, and ways of understanding themselves as sexual subjects. However, I also brought
my (discursively constituted) knowledge, theoretical approach, and analytical perspective to the interpretation of their narratives, which sometimes did not precisely match participants’ self-articulations. For instance, in reading Bianda’s story (Chapter 6) – in which she speaks about consistently engaging in multiple relationships since early adolescence – I was tempted to read her stories as indicating her polyamorous desire in addition to her self-identification as bisexual. The problem became, as Borland (1991, p. 64) has asked: “How, then, might we present our work in a way that grants (participants’) interpretive respect without relinquishing our responsibility to provide our own interpretation of (their) experience?”

Previous scholars have discussed this concern of interpretive authority and proposed some suggestions (Borland, 1991; Chase, 1996, Josselson, 2007; Smythe & Murray, 2000). One such recurring suggestion is to extend the conversation with participants as co-researchers into the final stage of analysis and exchange ideas about researchers’ ways of reading their narratives (Borland, 1991; Smythe & Murray, 2000). However, this suggestion has been criticised on several grounds. Firstly, the academic language used in the final analysis might not be accessible to most participants (Josselson, 2007). Secondly, discussing work-in-progress does not necessarily lead to an agreement on how the interpretation should be made (Chase, 1996). Some differences might never be resolved, particularly when participants’ views largely reflect dominant or oppressive power relations (Allen, 2007). Thirdly, participants’ subjectivities are multiple and changing, while researchers’ analyses of participants’ subjectivities are contingent and selective (Josselson, 2007). Fourthly, considering complex power relations around researcher–participant relationships, a belief that participants can, and should, fully speak for themselves is “illusory” (Borland, 1991, p. 64). Moreover, researchers who claim that participants are equal co-researchers may be “deluding” themselves (Josselson, 2007, p. 549). For instance, due to traditional power relations between me (as researcher, lecturer, adult) and young Indonesian participants, my reading of their narratives might be accepted by them as “truth” (as in an “expert judgment” or a “doctor’s diagnosis”) rather than challenged or critiqued.

Alternatively, as suggested by Chase (1996) and Josselson (2007), the position I adopted in this research is that I openly and honestly claim interpretive authority. I acknowledge that the final analysis is my interpretation of participants’ narratives, which has been written as respectfully as I can with regard to their dignity (Josselson, 2007) and the complexity of their subjectivities (Allen, 2007b). On the one hand, I wrote with great sensitivity, imagining how
participants might feel being written about in such a way. On the other hand, I do not claim that my analysis has “given voice” or perfectly reflects participants’ perspectives. This position is based on studies that have evidenced no significant or long-term harm for participants who find their narrative interpreted differently by the researcher as compared to what they meant, except in the rarest of cases (Bakan, 1996; Hadjistavropoulos & Smythe, 2001; Josselson, 2007). In this way, I am loyal to my ethical commitment to a respectful relationship with participants while refusing to let myself, as researcher, be paralysed by the fear of overestimating my interpretive authority (Chase, 1996; Josselson, 2007).

The final ethical consideration I address here is one over incidental findings about what might be interpreted as illegal activities according to Indonesian law. The first concern is participants’ engagement with online pornography (i.e., watching and downloading), which has been declared illegal since the controversial passing of the Anti-Pornography Law in 2008 (“Undang-undang,” 2008). The second concern is over past experiences of sexual violence, either as perpetrator or survivor. One participant reported he had harassed a female classmate a few years prior to the interview. A number of participants spoke of having experienced intimate partner violence, and others being encouraged as children to participate in sexual experiences with adults (particularly family members and acquaintances).

My response to this situation is based on the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee’s (UAHPEC) guiding principles (2013), Indonesian law regarding the obligation to report criminal activity (Soesilo, 1976), suggestions by the American Sociological Association (O’Connell, 2010), and previous studies on researching illegal activities (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2006). UAHPEC guiding principles (2013) suggest that confidentiality should not be compromised in such situations, except when “the life or health of any person may be at risk” (p. 12). Correspondingly, according to the American Sociological Association (O’Connell, 2010), most legal experts in the U.S. agreed that the citizen is expected to inform authorities only with regard to very few serious crimes. Otherwise, it is the role of the prosecutor to collect information. The Indonesian legal system has a similar position in this case. As stated in the Criminal Law Code chapter 165 (Soesilo, 1976), the obligation to report crime and/or intention to engage in crime applies only to certain serious criminal cases such as premeditated murder, rape, and kidnapping. Other than the crimes mentioned, there is no legal obligation to report a crime. Moreover, the primary emphasis is on whether such reporting would prevent the crime from happening. In terms of
the researcher’s ethical responsibility, a previous study (Wiles et al., 2006) documented that most researchers broke confidentiality only in the rarest of cases where someone was in serious harm and where breaking confidentiality was clearly in the best interests of the person involved. Considering all these legal, institutional, and ethical suggestions, my response to any incidental findings in this study is to maintain participants’ confidentiality. Specific details of participants have been concealed so that they are unidentifiable.

In this chapter I have described the methodology and research methods by which data in this thesis was produced. The next four chapters will present the research findings of this study which have been generated through these methodologies.
Chapter 4

“I’m Afraid of STIs and Pregnancy, but What Can I Do?”:
The Constitution of Indonesian Christian Young People’s Sexual Subjectivities
Through the Discourse of Sexual Health

In this first data chapter I investigate how young Indonesian Christian participants’ sexual subjectivities have been constituted through the dominant discourse of sexual health. As discussed in Chapter 2, the discourse of sexual health has offered ways to understand and evaluate young people’s sexual practice in terms of health risks, such as STIs and unplanned pregnancy. Through this dominant discourse young people are positioned as hormone-driven, vulnerable, and uninformed; who then become “enlightened” and responsible (i.e., maintaining abstinence or using condoms consistently) after the provision of sexual health knowledge. Examining how participants inhabited this discursive landscape, the current chapter argues that Indonesian Christian young people do not simply adopt those dominant meanings or take up subject positions offered by the discourse of sexual health. Instead, the formation of their sexual subjectivities is complex and contradictory, involving both engagement with, and contestation of, the dominant discourse of sexual health.

The first section of this chapter demonstrates how participants’ understandings of themselves as sexual subjects are informed by the discourse of sexual health. Some participants have taken up subject positions offered by this discourse, namely that of “ignorant and vulnerable young people,” who subsequently become informed and responsible once exposed to sexual health knowledge. Their narratives reproduced the dominant meaning assigned to Indonesian young people’s sexual practice in existing literature, as primarily a matter of risk avoidance.

In contrast, the second section explores how participants do not always draw on the notion of risk avoidance in understanding their sexual practices. Their narratives exhibit other, competing, versions of giving meaning to their sexual selves, which contested those of the discourse of sexual health. For instance, they have refused the positioning of young people as uninformed about sex, ignorant, and hormone-driven (which is common in previous studies, e.g., Diarsvitri & Dwisetyani, 2011a; 2011b; Leerloijer et al., 2011; Widyastari et al., 2015). Employing Allen’s (2001) reconceptualisation of sexual knowledge from young people’s perspective (see Chapter 2), I argue that young Indonesian participants do not always understand themselves as vulnerable and passively waiting for adults to “save” them by
providing sexual health information. Instead, they are agentic sexual subjects, who actively
learn and take care of, their (sexual) selves via the mobilisation of the discourses available to
them (B. Davies, 1991).

The Constitution of Sexual Subjectivities through the Discourse of Sexual Health

As discussed in Chapter 2, in drawing on the discourse of sexual health, Indonesian young
people are positioned as (hyper)sexual beings whose raging hormones are uncontrollable, and
thus inevitably engage in sexual activities once they are involved in a dating relationship
(e.g., Diarsvitri & Dwisetyani, 2011a; 2011b; Ichwanny, 2010; Simon & Paxton, 2004;
Widyastari et al., 2015). While their sexual potential is acknowledged, it is also constituted as
too strong, and too predatory, for them to handle. Sexuality education becomes the “saviour”
that provided the much-needed sexual health knowledge to save them from the risks of sexual
activities, such as unplanned pregnancy and STIs. Once these young people are provided with
this knowledge, they are rendered as “enlightened” sexual subjects who practise safer sex
responsibly or maintain abstinence to avoid those risks.

Such constitution of sex as predatory and sexual knowledge as the “saviour” are evident in
two kinds of participants’ narrative. The first, are narratives from participants who embody
the representations of young people as vulnerable, at-risk, and driven to sex by their raging
hormones. Their stories show how they have engaged in sexual activities, but do not seem to
know or care about managing sexual health risks, such as using birth control to prevent
unplanned pregnancy. The second, are narratives from participants who take up the
“enlightened” subject position, that is, those who have already been exposed to sexual health
knowledge and act “responsibly” in order to avoid sexual health risks. For instance, some
participants used condoms consistently in their sexual relationships after they received
information about STIs and unplanned pregnancy prevention.

The first kind of narrative – where young people’s ways of giving meaning to sex do not
include risk avoidance – can be found in Daniel’s (17, high school student, male,
heterosexual), Anindya’s (16, high school student, female, heterosexual), and Ishak’s (19,
high school student, male, heterosexual) stories. Their narratives show that they have
engaged in sexual activities with romantic partners without knowing or caring about the risks
involved. They left the possibility of contracting STIs and getting pregnant completely to
chance as indicated in the narratives below – where they express a belief that, because there was nothing they could do about sexual health risks, they just do not think about it.

Teguh : Have you ever thought about sexually transmitted diseases when you engage in sexual activities?
Daniel : No, I never thought about those diseases.
Teguh : Why?
Daniel : Mmm… I just don’t think about it.

Teguh : *Pernah mikir tentang penyakit menular seksual ngga waktu ngelakukan seks itu?*
Daniel : *Ngga pernah tuh mikir tentang itu.*
Teguh : *Kenapa?*
Daniel : *Mmm.. ya enggak mikir aja.*

(Daniel, 17, high school student, male, heterosexual, instant messenger interview)

I don’t really know about how to prevent pregnancy. I heard something from my friend, but I’m not sure. I’m actually afraid of getting pregnant, but what can I do. I just don’t think about it.

_Aku ngga terlalu tau tentang pengaman mencegah kehamilan. Pernah denger dari temen sih. Aku ya sebenarnya takut hamil, tapi ya gimana lagi. Aku ngga mikir apa-apa._

(Anindya, 16, high school student, female, heterosexual, autobiographical writing)

At that time I was badly behaved as a teenager: brawls, smoking, dating a girl and doing those indecent things. I am afraid of diseases, and pregnancy too; but what can I do, my lust covered my fear. There was one time when my girlfriend had morning sickness. I was really anxious, but luckily she was not pregnant. I once tried a condom, but it doesn’t feel good, so I don’t use it anymore.

_Tapi gimana lagi. Nafsuku menutupi rasa takutku. Pernah pacarku mual-mual._
Daniel, Anindya, and Ishak had engaged in (hetero)sexual activities and to a degree knew there were risks of engaging in sex, but they did not express concern, knowledge, or an ability to manage those risks. Ishak’s statement: “what can I do, my lust covered my fear” implies a sense of helplessness in dealing with his sexual desire – it was too strong for him to resist. Although he vaguely knew and feared sexual health risks such as STIs and unplanned pregnancy, he was just “driven” into sex. Anindya said that she did not really know about birth control, and Ishak once tried using a condom but did not like it. Daniel, Anindya, and Ishak did not show that they have adequate knowledge or ability to manage those risks. Instead, their responses towards those risks were: “what can I do?” (Anindya, Ishak) and “I just don’t think about it” (Daniel, Anindya). Daniel, Anindya, and Ishak’s narratives represent a positioning of young people through the discourse of sexual health, that is, an understanding of young people as inevitably driven into sex, remaining ignorant about its consequences, and appearing in urgent need of sexual health knowledge to save them from the possibilities of unplanned pregnancy and contracting STIs.

In contrast to the above narratives, the second kind of narrative provides evidence of how the discourse of sexual health has positioned young people who have received sexual health information as “enlightened” or responsible sexual subjects. Young people’s sexual practice is no longer constituted as predatory, since its risks are now manageable through various prevention measures, particularly condom-use. This conceptualisation of young people and sexuality is featured in some participants’ talk about their sexual selves, such as Anggi (22, office worker, female, heterosexual) and Jenardi (23, freelance, male, gay). These participants are aware of, and knowledgeable about, condoms, STIs, and unplanned pregnancy. They talked about young people’s sexual relationship in terms of avoiding health risks:

I think having sex is okay, as long as you are being responsible. If you don’t wanna be pregnant then use protection. Pregnancy scares (we heard at school) should only be scared by those who do not practise safe sex. If you do not
practise safe sex, there are risks of STDs. But if you check up regularly, keep the hygiene, and practising safe sex, there is no such risks.

*Aku nganggap having sex is okay, asal lu tanggung jawab. If you don’t wanna be pregnant then use protection. Pregnancy scare di sekolah kita zaman dulu itu harusnya cuman ditakuti ama orang2 yang not having safe sex. Ya kalo mereka ga menerapkan safe sex, ya berisiko STD donk. Kalau mereka rutin cek, keep the hygiene, trus safe sex ya g bakalan berisiko donk.*

(Anggi, 22, office worker, female, heterosexual, email interview)

My worst sexual experience was when I almost had sex without a condom. I put myself in danger. I was heavily drunk, and almost unconscious. I just felt pain around my anus. Most likely I have done it with him. I started to feel anxious. I told my mentors and they took me to hospital to have my blood checked. They said HIV/AIDS can be detected in this way. Since then I have my blood checked every month and always use condom. I’m lucky that I do not have any genital diseases.


(Jenardi, 23, freelance, male, gay, email interview)

Anggi and Jenardi’s narratives above show how they are knowledgeable and pay attention to sexual health concerns, such as unplanned pregnancy, STIs, hygiene, regular check-ups, and safer sex. Anggi considers young people’s sexual relationships as acceptable as long as they are “being responsible,” that is, using protection against the risks of unplanned pregnancy and STIs. Jenardi also emphasises the importance of condom-use by describing his one incident of unprotected sex as his worst sexual experience. Other than this incident, Jenardi has
always put his knowledge of sexual health into practice, that is, using condoms consistently and having his blood regularly tested for STIs. Anggi and Jenardi drew on the discourse of sexual health in which young people are positioned as responsible sexual subjects after receiving sexual health information. They compliantly and consistently put their knowledge into practice (Waldby, Kippax, & Crawford, 1990). This situation resonates with previous international (Allen, 2005a, 2011a; Fields, 2008; Holland et al., 1990, 1992; Strange et al., 2006) and Indonesian studies (Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Pohan et al., 2011; Sarnan, 2012; Utomo, 2003) which have demonstrated that the main purpose of sexual health campaigns is to provide knowledge to dispel young people’s ignorance and promote condom-use to avoid health risks.

As Jenardi’s narrative has indicated, through the discourse of sexual health condom-use has been seen as one of the most important ways to avoid risks associated with sex. This logic has enjoyed wide currency among participants in this study. Condom-use was immediately associated with safer sex, particularly by those who occupied the “enlightened” subject position. This construction of “safer sex means condom-use” is evident in Susanti’s narrative (22, college student, female, lesbian). Susanti considers herself as quite knowledgeable about sex, because she has learned about sexuality from various sources such as the Internet, newspaper, and sex education sessions at school and church. Like Anggi and Jenardi, Susanti also considers safety as one of the most important aspects of young people’s sexual practice. When she was asked what she meant by safe, her immediate reply was using condom to prevent STIs and unplanned pregnancy.

Teguh: In your opinion, it is okay to ML (make love) outside of marriage, isn’t it?
Susanti: In my opinion, no problem, as long as it’s safe.
Teguh: Can you explain what you mean by safe?
Susanti: Using a condom? Or other birth control or disease prevention?
Teguh: I see. But wait, in lesbian sex there is no penis involved, right? Where do you put the condom on? And there is no way you can get pregnant, is there?
Susanti: Hmm… then making sure my partner STD-free? I know she has many experiences.
Teguh: How you can make sure she’s STD-free?
Susanti: I don’t easily believe what people say (about themselves). If a medical test is the only way, then what else can we do? To make it fair, I’ll do the test too.

Teguh: Menurutmu pribadi, ML itu boleh dilakukan di luar nikah kan?
Susanti: Menurut saya pribadi, ngga masalah sih, asal safe aja.
Teguh: Yg kamu maksud safe itu gimana?
Susanti: Paku kondom? Ato alat yang bisa mencegah kehamilan ato penyebaran penyakit?
Teguh: Oh gitu.. Eh, lho kalo ngga ada penis yg terlibat (spt dlm lesbian sex), pasang kondomnya dimana dong? Dan ngga mungkin hamil juga kan.
Susanti: Mastiin dia ngga ada STD? Dan dia emang ada banyak pengalaman.
Teguh: Gmn caranya mastiin dia ngga ada STD?

(Susanti, 22, college student, female, lesbian, instant messenger interview)

Susanti’s narrative indicates how she has drawn on the discourse of sexual health to understand sexual relationships, that is, as primarily a matter of risk avoidance and (male) condoms as the most important means to avoid those risks. Her immediate reference to the (male) condom when being asked about safe sex demonstrates how the notion of “safe sex means condom-use” has enjoyed the dominant status in her understanding of sexual practice, although it is not always relevant to her situation as a lesbian. Anggi, Jenardi, and Susanti’s narratives show how meanings around condom-use and safer sex – which are (re)produced through the dominant discourse of sexual health – have informed their ways of understanding young people’s sexual practice.

The importance of avoiding risks associated with sexual activity can also be found in participants’ understanding of, and suggestions about, sexuality education. In drawing on the discourse of sexual health, some participants viewed sexuality education as a way to “save” the ignorant and vulnerable Indonesian young people from the risks and dangers of sex.

3 In this narrative Susanti did not refer to female condoms because her response to my question about where to put condom on if there is no penis involved was to make sure her partner was STI-free instead of explaining that what she referred to was a female condom.
Many participants who took up the “enlightened” subject positions underscore the importance of breaking the silence around sexuality at school, particularly for the sake of protecting (other) young people from sexual health risks.

There should be more sex education (at school) and it should be more focused too. It is really important to discuss various genital diseases in detail. Showing videos about abortion is also important, like how the foetus is retrieved. It seems quite extreme, but this is very good to remind them about the danger of engaging in sex.

_Edukasi harus diberikan lebih banyak (di sekolah) dan harus lebih mengena. Membahas detail penyakit yang dapat disebabkan hubungan seksual sangat diperlukan. Juga dengan memberi video2 pengguguran bayi, proses pengambilan bayi. Di sini memang kesannya ekstrim, tetapi ini sangat baik untuk mengingatkan kembali sangat bahayanya melakukan hubungan seksual._

(Jenardi, 23, freelance, male, gay, email interview)

My suggestion for sexuality education is that we don’t need to be naïve, condoms must be introduced. It doesn’t mean free sex (sex outside of marriage) is encouraged, like many people say; but it’s for self-protection. How to put condom on must also be taught. And the risks of having sex. Also training about how to be responsible.

_Di sekolah perlu pastinya (pendidikan seksualitas), ya ga usah naïf tapi kita perlu ngenalin kondom juga. Bukan mau biarin seks bebas kayak yang dibilang orang tapi kan untuk memproteksi diri. Cara pakainya gimana juga dikasitahu. Trus dikasitahu tentang resiko kalo melakukan hubungan seks itu apa. Dilatih untuk berperilaku yang bertanggung jawab._

(Heni, 24, postgraduate student, female, asexual, email interview)

Heni and Jenardi’s suggestions above echo the arguments of most Indonesian sexual health educators and researchers who view sexuality education as primarily a risk prevention initiative (e.g., Diarsvitri & Dwisetyani, 2011a; 2011b; Leerloijer et al., 2011; Pohan et al., 2011; Widyastari et al., 2015). This way of understanding sexuality education draws on the discourse of sexual health which positions sex as dangerous and Indonesian young people as ignorant and at-risk. When young people are not provided with knowledge about sexual
health, they are in danger. When they possess that knowledge, they are completely aware of STIs prevention and birth control, and therefore, safe.

Promotion of sexual health knowledge is crucial for enabling contemporary Indonesian young people to understand and manage sexual health risks (as discussed in Chapter 1). However, this way of constituting young people, sex, and sexuality has limitations too. Through the discourse of sexual health, possibilities for what can be said, felt, and done in being an Indonesian young person are made available, regulated, and constrained in ways that I argue are too simplistic. By positioning Indonesian young people as either hypersexual-ignorant-vulnerable or enlightened-responsible-safe sexual subjects, the possibilities beyond this binary to take up other alternative subject positions are closed down. For instance, the possibility of a young person not always being driven by their sexual urges is unthinkable. Young people who sophisticatedly consider various positive and negative consequences of sex beyond STIs and unplanned pregnancy are difficult to imagine. Those who make an informed decision to take care of their sexual selves instead of mechanistically following safer sex protocols become severely underrepresented. Sexual knowledge is confined to a set of formal, medical, and scientific information possessed by experts and transferable to young people’s unknowing minds. Alternatively, sexual knowledge might also be understood as personal knowledge about one’s own sexual desire which is gained from experience and exploration. In the next section I discuss these alternative possibilities and how they might contest the dominant discourse of sexual health in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities.

Contesting the Dominant Discourse of Sexual Health

So far in this chapter I have discussed how some participants drew on the discourse of sexual health in giving meaning to their sexual practices. In contrast, in the next section I explore how Indonesian Christian young people have been enabled to resist this dominant discourse in their becoming sexual subjects by drawing on other, alternative, discourses. Specifically, I will demonstrate how some participants’ narratives have contested the positioning of young people as (1) hormone-driven (hyper)sexual subjects, and (2) uninformed and vulnerable.
Resisting the positioning of young people as hormone-driven (hyper)sexual subjects

As discussed in previous section, the discourse of sexual health has constituted Indonesian young people as inevitably engaging in sex whenever they have the opportunity because of their raging hormones (Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Utomo, 1997; Widyastari et al., 2015). However, participants’ narratives also demonstrate that this positioning of young people through the discourse of sexual health does not always correspond to their ways of being sexual. A significant minority of participants have drawn on other discourses which resisted this positioning in their talk about their sexual experiences.

Mawar (21, college student, female, heterosexual) is one of these participants. She has had a number of dating relationships since she was in intermediate school. At that time her father did not allow her to date. She describes her past relationships as “some serious and some were just puppy love (cinta monyet)” (email interview). When she participated in this study she was not living with her parents but in a student boarding house close to her university in another town. She considers her sexual knowledge as “very little” (email interview) because there was no sexuality education at all at her school and she has “never watched or read about sexuality” (email interview). The only moment her parents talked about sexuality was a short message about the importance of virginity for girls. When Mawar’s narrative is given meaning through the discourse of sexual health, her situation could be perceived as “risky.” She is lacking sexual knowledge, lacking in parental supervision, and has had many dating experiences even before she was allowed to date. Coupled with the positioning of young people as hormone-driven (hyper)sexual subjects, Mawar is at risk of engaging in sex without knowing the dangers awaiting her. However, Mawar has been enabled to resist such positioning by drawing on discourses she had access to that do not constitute sex as something that young people are inevitably driven into in their dating relationships. She did not engage in sexual activities with her boyfriends and it was not difficult for her to stay away from sexual activities (other than kissing).

Teguh: What have you learned about sexuality from informal sources, for example, maybe from your dating experiences?

Mawar: I have been dating since I was in intermediate school, but I’ve never done (sexual) things I’m not supposed to do. In my dating relationships, the furthest I did was just kissing. I’ve never gone
further than that. My boyfriend (and ex-boyfriends) never asked more than that anyway.

_Teguh:_ Ada ngga informasi yang kamu dapet dari sumber2 informal, kayak misalnya dari pengalaman dengan pacar?

_Mawar:_ Saya dari SMP sudah mulai berpacaran, tapi saya juga tidak pernah melakukan hal-hal yang seharusnya tidak saya lakukan. Kalau dalam hubungan pacaran saya paling mentok istilahnya itu ciuman aja, Pak, gak pernah lebih dari itu. Pacar(-pacar) saya juga ga pernah minta yang macem2 pak.

(Mawar, 21, college student, female, heterosexual, email interview)

Similarly, Anggi’s narrative (22, office worker, female, heterosexual) also evidences how some participants have been enabled to resist the positioning of young people as always wanting sex. Anggi grew up in a small town in Indonesia, and then studied overseas for her tertiary education where she met new friends from different countries. A dominant theme in Anggi’s narrative is the topic of preserving virginity, which she understands as maintaining a condition in which one has never had sexual intercourse. Speaking from the “enlightened” and responsible subject position (as discussed in previous section), Anggi expresses her opposition toward the dominant norm of preserving virginity before marriage in Indonesian societies:

Most of my friends in my hometown still think like people in the past, they consider having sex before marriage is totally wrong, plus they got pregnancy scares. So they still consider having sex before marriage = big mistake, broken life, equated with drug addicts, or notorious clubbers. My new friends here are diverse, they come from various parts of the world, so their thinking is very different. Their value is “work hard, play hard.” So they consider sex is okay, as long as you are responsible. If you wanna party just party but don’t let it too loose, don’t drink too much, don’t get too drunk, don’t stay nearby strangers that look suspicious, just stay away from trouble. And I think ITS LOGICAL! I mean come on, who doesn’t need sex? At least know about it. We are grownups. We have to know what’s going on. … Losing your virginity isn’t like losing both of your hands.
Temen-temen saya yang masih berdomisili di (kota x) itu masih berpikiran sama seperti dulu, mereka anggap having sex before marriage itu totally wrong apalagi mereka dapet ancaman “pregnance scare.” Jadi mereka masih anggap having sex before marriage itu = salah besar, rusak, setara rusak sama orang yang ngobat, notorious clubbers. Rata-rata temenku (di tempat kuliah) macem2 asalnya dari seluruh dunia, jadi mereka pemikirannya udah beda banget. Mereka berprinsipnya “work hard, play hard.” Jadi mereka nganggap having sex its okay, asal lu tanggung jawab. If you wanna party just party but don’t let it too loose, don’t drink too much, don’t get too drunk, don’t stay nearby strangers that look suspicious, just stay away from trouble.

Itu yang aku mikir logikanya, ITS LOGICAL! I mean come on, who doesn’t need sex? At least know about it. We are grownups. We have to know what’s going on. ... Losing your virginity isn’t like losing both of your hands. (Anggi, 22, office worker, female, heterosexual, email interview)

Anggi once posted a status on her social media page about her attitude toward virginity. She was then immediately accused by a friend of no longer being a virgin and of having sex repeatedly. Anggi’s frank and provocative language in undermining the importance of virginity has made her vulnerable to such accusations. However, openly opposing the preservation of virginity does not mean Anggi is inevitably driven to engage in sex. In fact, Anggi still maintained her virginity at the time I interviewed her. When I asked why, she gave two reasons:

1. Painful. LOL. I heard that the first time is painful, so I better don’t do it now, and I don’t know if my partner will be good or not. What if he just pretends he’s good then it hurts? A friend told me that she had sex with a guy who was not really serious with her, and the guy just “stabbed” her like that, and she cried painfully. So I am a bit afraid. (sorry for my frank language, Teguh..LOL). And the second reason, I haven’t found a boyfriend who makes me feel “I’m into him”, so that I wanted to have sex with him. This is my own boundary. If I’m not really in love and not really serious, I won’t have sex with him, instead of regretting it.

1.Sakit.LOL.denger2 kan kalau pertama kan sakit, jadi mending ga dulu deh, blom tau juga kan partnernya pinter apa ngga, kalo sok2 bisa trus sakit
banget gimana? ada tuh temen yang aku ceritain dulu dia have sex sama cowo yang g serius sama dia trus cowonya maen tusuk aja, nangis deh dia kesakitan. dia cerita gitu aku jadi takut kan. (sorry yaa Pak, saya gamblang & cablak banget) trus yang ke 2, aku masi belom punya pacar yang bikin "I'm too into him" yang sampe bikin aku mau having sex sama dia. ini juga batasanku, kalau aku ga terlalu "jatuh cinta banget" and kaya nya ga serius2 banget, ya aku ga terlalu bersedia buat having sex, daripada nyesel.

(Anggi, 22, office worker, female, heterosexual, email interview)

At the time of the interview Anggi lived far away from her parents, had a boyfriend who was sexually experienced, did not think virginity was essentially important, had close friends who engaged in sexual activities, and is knowledgeable about safer sex, STIs, and pregnancy prevention. However, this situation does not mean she engaged in sexual activity. She had other considerations such as her emotional readiness around the physical pain of first intercourse and wanting the right person with which to have her first sexual experience. Drawing on these discourses in her talk has enabled Anggi to resist being positioned as a hormone-driven (hyper)sexual young person who inevitably engaged in sex once she started dating.

Similar to Anggi’s second reason, Urip’s (24, salesperson, male, heterosexual) narrative also contested the constitution of young people as hormone-driven (hyper)sexual subjects by drawing on the romantic discourse of “the right chemistry.” Growing up in a “very warm and loving family” (email interview) and doing well at university, Urip calls his sexual life his “other side” (email interview) because he thinks no one would ever believe he has already had sex with multiple partners. He has dated a number of girls since high school, and he had sexual intercourse with them. Considering the social importance of virginity especially for Indonesian girls (Chapter 1), I asked Urip how he initiated sex with his girlfriends. Urip replied: “There is no special method. At first I just made them feel comfortable around me, then – because of the conducive atmosphere such as nobody being around and the weather is good – it just happened, Teguh:)” “Sebenarnya tidak ada cara khusus. Mungkin pertama saya membuat mereka nyaman berada di dekat saya, karena suasana yang mendukung, misalkan sepi dan hawanya membuat nyaman, hal itu terjadi dengan sendirinya, Pak.” (email interview). I also asked how he avoided parental and societal surveillance, such as whether or not he got raided by neighbours (Chapter 1). Urip explained that he always found
safe places to enjoy sex with his girlfriend where no one will know or care, such as in his rented room, in his girlfriend’s rented room, or in the car. He even managed to have sex in his bedroom (at his parents’ house) when his parents were at home. However, he engaged in sexual intercourse with only four out of seven girlfriends. Considering his experiences and creativity in finding ways to engage in sex, I was curious as to why he did not have sex with \textit{all} his girlfriends. Do young people not want sex whenever they have the opportunity, especially male young people (Hollway, 1989) like Urip? Or did some of his girlfriends refuse? Urip answered:

Urip: No, it’s not because they refused. Mmm… how to explain it… Of course as a guy sometimes I want to have sex with my girlfriend, but I just feel.. I feel not good to myself if I do it when I do not feel really sure about her.

Teguh: Not sure about her? Do you mean STIs?

Urip: No, I’m not talking about STIs, Teguh. It’s like. I just didn’t feel “clicked” with them emotionally.

Urip: \textit{Bukan karena mereka gak mau. Gimana yah mengistilahkanya. Memang kalo kayak gitu (cowok itu maunya sex aja) memang ada pikiran kayak gitu. Cuman ya gitu gak enak perasaanku. Saya gak enak kalo ngelakukan itu kalo aku sendiri gak yakin sama dia.}

Teguh: Gak yakinnya karena takut dia berpenyakit kah?

Urip: \textit{Bukan gitu juga, Pak. Kayak perasaanku belum “klik” sama dia gitu.} (Urip, 24, salesperson, male, heterosexual, instant messenger interview)

Urip quickly clarified his accommodation of the male sexual drive discourse (Hollway, 1989) by saying “of course as a guy sometimes I want to have sex with my girlfriend,” however, his narrative showed that it is not the only discourse he drew upon. By also understanding his sexual self through discursive resources that value romance and the “right chemistry” in sex, Urip took up an alternative subject position from which he did not need to put STI and unplanned pregnancy prevention at centre stage. Risk avoidance as the main criterion for sexual decisions offered by the discourse of sexual health competed with other criteria such as emotional connectedness. In this way, young people’s sexual practice is constituted as something more than a hormone-driven act loaded with risks that must be prevented through contraception, but it is also about relationships, feelings, and chemistry. Urip’s way of giving
meaning to sexual relationships through discourses of love and romance resonates with previous findings (e.g., Allen, 2003, 2007; Redman, 2001) which have identified how discourses of romance have gained more currency in the constitution of young men’s sexual subjectivities.

The dominant discourse of sexual health has offered subject positions where Indonesian young people are conceptualised as hormone-driven (hyper)sexual subjects who always want sex. However, some Indonesian Christian young people in this study have taken up alternative subject positions which contest those conceptualisations of young people’s sexual subjectivities. Their narratives demonstrate that not all Indonesian young people are simply driven to engage in sexual activities although they have the opportunity, they do not consider virginity important, and they have the knowledge and skill to initiate sex with their partner. Quite the opposite, they take into account many considerations (beyond STIs and unplanned pregnancy) in order to take care of themselves, such as the avoidance of physical pain, emotional readiness, the right chemistry; or they just do not want sex in each and every dating relationship.

**Resisting the positioning of young people as uninformed and vulnerable**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the discourse of sexual health in the existing literature has also positioned Indonesian young people as uninformed about sexual health, not making any effort to find sexual health information, and thus exposing themselves to various health risks in their sexual relationships (e.g., Diarsvitri & Dwisetyani, 2011a; 2011b; Leerloijer et al., 2011; Pohan et al., 2011; Widyastari et al., 2015). Educators need to provide sexual health education for them, especially about the dangerous risks of sexual activity and the ways to avoid those risks, such as using condoms consistently. While some of the participants took up these subject positions as I have discussed in the first section of this chapter, other participants have been enabled to resist these positionings and give alternative meanings to their sexual practices. In this section I discuss these alternative meanings by employing insights from Allen (2001) around the conceptualisation of sexual knowledge.

Allen (2001) argues that the notion of sexual knowledge has been largely constituted from an adult perspective, and it can be reconceptualised differently from young people’s perspectives. She identifies that the dominant understanding of sexual knowledge often refers
to medical knowledge about puberty, STIs, conception, pregnancy, and condom-use, which commonly occurs in official settings such as sexuality education. In her research Allen found that there is at least one other type of sexual knowledge, that is, the knowledge young people have gleaned from their own/other young people’s sexual experiences in unofficial settings such as dating relationships, peer interactions, and pornography (Allen, 2005b, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2013a). It contains knowledge such as what sexual activity is like, how to initiate interaction that might lead to sexual activity, and how sexual activity develops in a relationship. Allen’s re-conceptualisation of sexual knowledge opened up spaces for previously subjugated knowledges to be recognised. In a similar vein to Allen’s critique – in which young people’s subjugated knowledge is explored – this subsection will uncover participants’ alternative perspectives in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities, particularly as sexually un/knowledgeable. As revealed in discussion below, some of the participants did not understand themselves as passive, uninformed, and at-risk, although they were hardly officially provided with sexual health information.

While most Indonesian parents and schools are silent about sexuality (as discussed in Chapter 1), many Indonesian young people in this study are actively – and subversively – learning about sexuality. Like young people in other international contexts (e.g., Allen, 2001; Edwards, 2015), these young Indonesian participants have developed their own sexual knowledge by utilising various learning opportunities available to them. Urip (24, salesperson, male, heterosexual), for example, read books about human reproductive anatomy (he could not remember where he got them from) soon after watching his first pornography at age seven. Lusi (22, medical student, female, heterosexual) unintentionally watched a documentary on television about virginity and cultural values. Indra (19, college student, male, heterosexual) knew about condoms from late night television advertisements. Anto (24, NGO activist, male, gay) googled pictures of penises every day after school and found the word “gay” for the first time, which later provided him with a sense of identity. Putri (22, college student, lesbian) found where the clitoris is when they used a wash hose in the toilet, long before they knew the word “clitoris” itself. Heni (24, postgraduate student, female, asexual) watched her dogs copulate. Jenardi (23, freelance, male, gay) initiated conversations about STIs with an older gay couple he considered his mentors. These young people do not understand themselves as ignorant sexual subjects who passively wait for adults to provide them with sexual knowledge. Instead, they actively seek out, and give meaning to, sexuality using various resources available to them.
It can be argued that these kinds of self-learning are very limited and very likely to be “inaccurate.” The sexual knowledge young people develop could be medically “incorrect” since the sources available to them are “unreliable” such as pornography, their own experience, friends, or TV shows. The knowledge these young people develop might not necessarily be the same as the medical knowledge advocated by sexuality educators. However, I argue that it is not less important and not less relevant to their situations, particularly in order to cultivate their own ways of taking care of themselves (Foucault, 1986). As I will demonstrate below, their narratives show alternative ways to understand sex and its risks beyond the universalised-medicalised-standardised-official knowledge of sexual health. For instance, while sexual health educators often promote condoms as the most reliable prevention against unplanned pregnancy and STIs, some participants found other ways to avoid those health risks and to take care of their well-being. I do not claim that these ways are better or as “reliable” as modern medical knowledge. My aim here is to disprove the view that Indonesian young people are always completely unknowledgeable and careless when there is no adult providing them with official sexual health information – which is the view (re)produced through the dominant discourse of sexual health.

Regarding unplanned pregnancy, the participants show more concerns and knowledge about avoiding it compared to avoiding STIs. This is similar to previous studies (Flood, 2003; Hillier, Harrison, & Bowditch, 1999), in which young people view avoiding pregnancy as more important than avoiding STIs. Juwanto (18, high school student, male, heterosexual), for instance, lived on the street for three years and engaged in “various kinds of sin almost every day, such as: smoking, drinking, drugs, watching pornography, and masturbation. But [he] didn’t have sex with girls like [his] friends did, because [he] was afraid the girl got pregnant” “Dan tidak hanya rokok, melainkan minuman keras, obat-obatan, film porno, onani saya lakukan hampir setiap hari. Saya sudah terlalu terikat oleh dosa-dosa tersebut selama 3 tahun. Waktu di jalan teman-teman banyak main perempuan, tapi saya ngga mau. Takut perempuannya hamil.” (autobiographical writing). Juwanto simply maintained abstinence to avoid unplanned pregnancy, because he knew that a man who impregnated a woman was traditionally (Smith-Hefner, 2005) made, by the woman’s family, to “marry and set up a family” with her (autobiographical writing). Daniel (17, high school student, male, heterosexual) was unable to maintain abstinence like Juwanto, but before he had sex he made sure pregnancy would not occur: “At my first time I was confused and afraid she will get
pregnant. I asked her and she said she’s on the pill so she won’t get pregnant” “Di sana saya mulai melakukan hubungan seks walaupun bingung dan takut dia hamil. Saya tanyakan dan dia berkata kalau dia menggunakan pil sehingga tidak akan hamil.” (autobiographical writing). Another method used by some participants to prevent pregnancy is coitus interruptus, which was practised by Yuyun (16, high school student, female, heterosexual), Urip (24, salesperson, male, heterosexual), and Lusi (22, medical student, female, heterosexual). Also, the calendar method was practised by Urip (24, salesperson, male, heterosexual) and Lusi (22, medical student, female, heterosexual). While most of these young people barely had access to official, medical sexual health knowledge of condom as contraceptives, drawing on these alternative discourses has enabled them to resist being positioned as ignorant, uninformed, and unconcerned about the risk of unplanned pregnancy.

These narratives indicate that participants understand that sexual intercourse between a man and a woman can lead to pregnancy. This seemingly simple knowledge is not readily available to all Indonesian young people. Utomo, McDonald, Reimondos, Utomo, and Hull (2014a) surveyed Year 6 (±12 years old) students in Indonesia about how pregnancy can occur and the results indicated only 52% of the participants understands that sex between a man and a woman can cause pregnancy. Utomo et al. interpreted this result as a lack of sexual knowledge, which is the result of a lack of official sexuality education in Indonesia. Correspondingly, Widyastari et al.’s (2015) study among 10,980 Indonesian young men aged 15-24 shows that only 28.5% had correct reproductive health knowledge and 51.3% wrongly believed that pregnancy cannot occur after one episode of sexual intercourse. Widyastari et al. (2015) also attribute this situation to the lack of sexuality education in Indonesia. However, there are other ways to give meaning to these findings which emphasise young people’s agency instead of their vulnerability. In Utomo et al.’s study, for example, the results showed that 52% of year 6 students managed to find the information about pregnancy without official sexuality education being provided to them. They successfully found ways to learn about sexuality themselves. They are not uninformed sexual subjects passively waiting for adults to provide sexual information to them.

Regarding STI prevention, some participants in this study also do not rely on condoms as the main method in practising safer sex but other methods instead. Indra (19, college student, male, heterosexual), for instance, replied with certainty when I asked about STIs and his sexual relationships: “Oh she’s clean, Teguh” “Oh dia bersih koq, Pak” (email interview) –
which means his girlfriend had never engaged in sex before. Indra did not know about various types of STIs and ways to prevent them, but he knew he was safe by relying on classic categorisation of “clean” and “unclean” women (Waldby, Kippax, & Crawford, 1993). Another example is Hardi (22, office worker, male) who enjoyed sex with multiple partners within his gay community. When I asked about STIs, he said: “I never used a condom, but we never inserted penis to anus anyway. We just kissed, hugged, oral, held each other’s penis, till the sperm came out. That’s all.” “Saya gak pernah menggunakan kondom, dan kita juga gak pernah melakukan sampai memasukan penis ke anus. yang dilakukan hanya sebatas ciuman, pelukan, oral, saling pegang penis, sampai keluar sperma itu aja” (email interview). Hardi has never used condoms, but he knows that the risks of STI infection are much lower where there is no penetration into the body. Within the limited information available to them, these young people show that their understanding of sexual health is not absolute zero. They are relatively informed and paying attention to STI prevention, although their knowledges are not structured around the notion of condoms as prevention against STIs.

Not relying on condom-use to avoid STIs does not mean their knowledges are less valuable, particularly considering the contexts of their sexual experiences. Their alternative knowledges might have provided them with more contextual and relevant practices of taking care of their sexual selves. Put another way, the universalised-medical-official sexual health knowledge of condoms as prevention against STIs and unplanned pregnancy is not always the best in all situations (Bolander, 2015). Rather, it narrowly confines the notion of safer sex into very limited, mechanistic practice. It assumes that sex is only vaginal/anal in heterosexual relationships, and always anal in gay men relationships. As Hardi’s (22, office worker, male) narrative above has illustrated, sex among young Indonesian gay men is not necessarily anal, and thus, condom-use is not the most relevant prevention against STIs. This dominant constitution of sex as a penetrative act has been criticised by previous researchers using the concept of the coital imperative (Jackson, 1984; McPhillips, Braun, & Gavey, 2001). These researchers called for alternative constitutions of sex beyond coitus, which could also offer more possibilities for practising sex safely in terms of STIs and unplanned pregnancies. Although these acts of sex without penetration are still often unthinkable (McPhillips et al., 2001), what these alternatives look like has been articulated by Hardi: “We just kissed, hugged, oral, held each other’s penis, till the sperm came out. That’s all.”
Likewise, the notion of (male) condoms as the ultimate risk-prevention measure is not relevant in the context of lesbian sexual relationships, which do not involve a penis and thus there is no risk of getting pregnant. This is what Bianda (24, office worker, female, bisexual) utilised to enjoy sex without fear of unplanned pregnancy. Identifying herself as bisexual, Bianda chose to engage in sex only with girls because “ML (making love) with girls cannot cause pregnancy, but with boys there is a possibility to get pregnant, that’s why I never tried it (with boys)” (email interview). Bianda also said she has never thought about STIs:

Teguh: Have you ever thought about STIs when having sex with your girlfriend?
Bianda: Nope.
Teguh: Weren’t you afraid you could be infected with STIs? Are you sure your partner’s free from STIs?
Bianda: Well, I think as long as it’s girl with girl, no STIs can be passed. Besides, I did it with certain girls whom I think are free from those things.
Teguh: Trus terkait ML dgn cewek, kmu pernah mikir ttg penyakit menular seksual ngga?
Bianda: Ngga pernah Pak
Teguh: Ngga pernah takut tertular kah? Pasanganmu pasti bebas penyakit?
Bianda: Yaa saya pikir kalo cewek sama cewek mana bisa dtularkan penyakit. Lagian saya melanakannya dengan org2 tertentu yg saya kira bebas dr hal2 begituan

(Bianda, 24, office worker, female, bisexual, instant messenger interview)

Bianda’s convictions are not entirely safe, in that STIs can be passed through sexual activity between women, and her perception of an STI-free local community could be misleadingly dangerous (Flood, 2003). However, she is correct to the extent that STI infections are considerably rarer when no penis is involved (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Bianda’s narrative shows an alternative way to resist the positioning of young people as completely ignorant or uncaring about unplanned pregnancy and STIs. Instead of focusing on condom-use as offered by the discourse of sexual health, she engaged in another practice which might not be less effective, that is, by limiting her sexual relationships only to women.
Another evidence of contestation toward the dominant meaning of “safer sex means condom-use” can be seen in participants’ narratives who utilised communication technology to engage in and explore sexuality. They show that they have paid attention to their safety and well-being beyond just avoiding STIs and unplanned pregnancy. Jenardi (23, freelance, male, gay), for instance, decided to leave the gay communities in his hometown as he felt tired with “too many jealousy, drama, and terror” (email interview), including threats of violence from his boyfriend’s exes. He realised that his relationships caused danger, not just in terms of STIs and emotional well-being, but also to his physical safety. As he started dating a man from another town, Jenardi found that a sexual relationship mediated by communication technology is much safer in this regard: “We used the 3G feature in our mobile phones to see each other and he often felt aroused when he saw me. So he masturbated during our video calls. Doesn’t matter, at least this is much safer” “kita menggunakan fitur 3G yang ada di HP jadi saling melihat cam dan dia sering nafsu ketika melihat saya dan dia melakukan onani dalam cam itu, ya setidaknya tidak apalah yang penting ini jauh lebih safe.” (email interview). Correspondingly, Lusi (22, medical student, female, heterosexual) also utilised communication technology to explore and experience sex safely. She had engaged in sex chats with strangers from overseas since she was in intermediate school. When I asked whether she felt afraid when she first had a sex chat, she said: “No fear at all. It’s because I’m sure that I will not meet that person. Besides, we all use fake names, so no worries at all” “Tidak ada rasa takut kalau dari saya. Sebab saya tau tidak akan bertemu dgn orangnya. Selain itu kan pakai nama samaran jadi tenang2 saja hahaha” (instant messenger interview).

Jenardi’s and Lusi’s narratives are reminiscent of Hillier and Harrison’s (2007) study on how the Internet can offer a positive and productive space to learn safely about sexuality for young gay and lesbian students. Hillier and Harrison challenged the assumption that adults need to “police” the use of the Internet by (assumed-to-be) helpless and endangered young people, such as gay and lesbian young people. While the Internet is not sterile from danger, violence, inappropriate contents, and abusive bullies, Hillier and Harrison identified that gay and lesbian young people have also utilised the Internet to build friendships, develop intimate relationships, and explore sexuality safely. Jenardi, Lusi, and the young people in Hillier and Harrison’s study (2007) present another possibility for resisting the positioning of young people as vulnerable and in urgent need of being saved by adult sexuality educators. While acknowledging there are potential dangers in exploring sexuality, their narratives showed that
they have navigated resourcefully in order to learn, experience, and redefine what safer sex might mean.

This subsection has discussed how participants in this study have been enabled to resist the positioning of Indonesian young people as uninformed and vulnerable unless they are provided with official sexual health knowledge by adults. These participants demonstrate that they are knowledgeable and actively take care of themselves by drawing on the alternative discourses available to them. The meanings they give to sexual practice and risk avoidance are not exactly the same as those promoted by sexual health educators. Safer sex does not always mean condom-use, and risks are not always associated with STIs and unplanned pregnancy. I argue, however, that these alternative knowledges and practices are more relevant, contextual, and in some cases, more effective in managing the risks of youth sexual practice. More importantly, this section demonstrates that not all Indonesian young people are (sexually) ignorant and vulnerable. Rather, within the limitations of their situations they have taken care of their own health, safety, and well-being.

**Conclusion**

The discourse of sexual health which constitutes young people as always wanting sex, uninformed, and thus vulnerable, denies them recognition of agency. The binary positioning of young people as either completely ignorant (before being provided with sexual health knowledge) or completely responsible (after being provided with such knowledge) is problematic in that both assume young people are merely following either their uncontrollable sex drive or adults’ advice. Launched from a different premise where the subject is understood as an active agent, this chapter investigated how Indonesian young people take up, negotiate, and contest the dominant meanings around young people, sex, and sexual health via the mobilisation of the various discourses to which they have access.

This chapter has presented a range of subject positions occupied by young Indonesian Christian participants including those offered by, and resistant to, the dominant discourse of sexual health. I have identified how some participants have taken up the positioning of young people as ignorant and uninformed, and others have taken up the knowledgeable and responsible subject position in relation to official sexual health knowledge. However, there are also participants who refuse to take up these binary positions offered by the discourse of
sexual health. The latter have demonstrated that there are alternative possibilities for giving meaning to notions of young people, sex, and sexual health which are no less important and relevant to their situations.

It is important to note that this analysis does not intend to undermine the valuable efforts sexual health researchers and educators have made to promote sexual health to Indonesian young people – an endeavour that I committedly support. Instead, this analysis aims to highlight the possibilities and the limitations afforded by the ways of seeing and being sexual subject that are offered by the discourse of sexual health. As in all other ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being, they are always both enabling and constraining, and in need of being continuously contested and reworked.
In this chapter I scrutinise another dominant discourse in the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities, namely, the discourse of sexual morality. As discussed in Chapter 2, the discourse of sexual morality has constituted Indonesian young people’s sexual practice (outside of marriage) as primarily a moral problem. Engaging (or not) in sexual activity is considered a moral decision, because all sexual relationships outside of religiously sanctioned heterosexual marriage are deemed immoral. Through various social and institutional mechanisms including censorship, surveillance, and punishment, Indonesian young people are positioned in a binary of moral (i.e., sexually abstinent) and immoral (i.e., engaged in sexual relationships). This chapter examines how Indonesian Christian young people in this study engaged with, negotiated, and resisted these positionings. I argue that, while some participants have given meaning to their sexual selves by drawing on the discourse of sexual morality, some others have taken up alternative subject positions beyond the moral/immoral binary which might contest this dominant discourse.

The first section of this chapter is concerned with how participants’ ways of giving meaning to their sexual experiences, thoughts, and feelings have been informed by the discourse of sexual morality. It also considers how religion has played an important role in this subject-formation process. Through analysis of their narratives, I identify that the dominant discourse of sexual morality has enabled Indonesian young people to understand themselves as moral sexual subjects. Some participants have taken up the binary subject position offered by this discourse, that is, moral and immoral young people. However, using Foucault's (1985) comparison of morality and ethics, I argue these limited subject positions offered by this dominant discourse have simultaneously constrained, marginalised, and to some extent, made other alternative subjectivities unthinkable.

On the contrary, the second section of this chapter presents a range of alternative subject positions taken up by participants beyond the binary of moral and immoral young people. I discuss three ways in which Indonesian Christian young people have given alternative meanings to their sexuality, religion, and morality. These alternatives are: (1) casting off the
religion altogether, (2) reinterpreting religious morality, and (3) living the “contradiction” of being moral, religious, and sexual. I will explore how these alternative ways of being a sexual subject do not just resist the constitution of young people’s sexual practice as a moral problem, but also contest the discourse’s association between religion and morality in an Indonesian context.

The Constitution of Sexual Subjectivities through the Discourse of Sexual Morality

In this section I examine how participants have drawn on the discourse of sexual morality to give meaning to their sexual selves, and have taken up the subject positions of moral and immoral young people offered by this discourse. One participant who embodies the binary of moral/immoral positions in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities is Yuyun (16, high school student, female, heterosexual). She was 16 years old and studying in Year 11 when I interviewed her. She felt her life at that time was “sinful,” “useless,” and “far from God,” unlike her childhood when she was a “good” girl and went to church regularly. Her story below demonstrates how her sense of being sexual has been constituted through the dominant discourse of sexual morality:

My mom has taught me about Christianity since I was very young. We went to the church, read the Bible, and learned to know God. That was my childhood days. But now everything has changed, and I have moved away from God. It all started when I was in Year 8 (age 13). I have almost never gone to church since then. All I have has gone. My precious thing has gone. I’ve gone too far, uncontrollably. I make friends with the devil and sin. Every day I do things that make God sad. I started to become mean, confront my parents, smoke, drink alcohol, and engage in free sex. My life is useless.

No one in my family cares about me. At my home there is no love, no peace. I don’t feel happy at home. I just want to hang out with my friends. I don’t want to be controlled by my parents. I am like a wild kid who has never gone to school.

Then I started dating a guy. I really loved him. One day he asked me to make love with him. I actually didn’t want to, because I didn’t want to lose my
virginity. But then I abandoned everything because I really loved him. I was wrong. I overly trusted him. He is a liar and a deceiver. He was really cunning in stealing my heart. After we did it, a few days later he left me, and married another girl whom he had impregnated. I was really angry and sad. Apparently he is a fucking bastard.

After that my life get worse. No single thought about repentance crossed my mind. After I lost my virginity I felt like my life has no meaning and myself no value. So every time I knew a guy and fell in love with him, I always did it. I actually feel ashamed, ashamed because my life has been broken, like a prostitute, I did it repeatedly. But I’m so stupid. I was always tricked by boys.

I know God wants me to repent. But I can’t. My dream is, I want to change. Stop smoking and drinking, get a good job, pay for my sister’s education. I want to meet a Christian guy and have an everlasting relationship.


*Di dalam keluarga saya, tidak ada yang peduli. Di rumah ngga ada kasih sayang, ngga ada damai, ngga betah di rumah, pengennya main sama temen2. Saya mau hidup bebas dan tidak mau diatur-atur sama orang tua, seakan-akan saya anak liar yang tidak pernah sekolah.*

Wah hidup saya semakin menjadi, tidak ada terlintas untuk bertobat. Setelah saya kehilangan keperawanan saya, saya merasa hidup dan diri saya tidak ada arti dan harganya lagi, hingga setiap saya mengenal orang yang saya sayang, saya selalu melakukan (making love). Sebenarnya saya malu, dan malu, diri saya sudah rusak dan seperti pelacur, melakukan hubungan seperti itu berkali-kali. Tetapi bodohnya saya itu saya selalu ditipu oleh cowok.

Saya ngerti Tuhan suru bertobat, tapi akunya sendiri yang kadang bisa, kadang ngga bisa. Impian saya pengen berubah, berhenti merokok dan minum, pengen kerja yang enak, bisa sekolahin adik. Pengen ketemu pasangan yang seiman, terus hubungan langgeng.

(Yuyun, 16, high school student, female, heterosexual, autobiographical writing)

Yuyun divides her life into two episodes, before and after Year 8. Before Year 8 she viewed herself as a good girl, a churchgoer, a virgin, who was always obedient to her parents. After Year 8 she describes herself as someone who “has almost never gone to church,” is not a virgin, is “like a wild kid,” “makes friends with the devil and sin,” is “like a prostitute,” and “has no value.” Her future aspirations are to be a “good girl” again, which means getting a good job, having a long-lasting relationship with a Christian guy, and not doing things associated with “immorality” such as, drinking, smoking, and casual sex.
In drawing on the discourse of sexual morality there are only two subject positions thinkable for Yuyun, namely, being a moral virgin or an immoral prostitute. This binary limits numerous other possibilities between these two extremes. The moral standards of being a “good girl” are unrealistic and unattainable in her current situation, because she can never be an innocent virgin again. It is also very difficult for her to stop hanging out with her friends and just stay home where “there is no love, no peace.” The moral standards she understands require her to nullify – as opposed to moderate – all the pleasures she had enjoyed such as friendships, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex. The “only” option for Yuyun is to take up the immoral position. Since the moral position is virtually unreachable, she cannot see any reason to not go all the way on this immoral path – she has already been immoral anyway. She views herself as ignoring all moral values, being “like a wild kid,” and having sex every time she “knew a boy and fell in love with him.” Accordingly, the notion of repentance – which implies a complete turnaround from her currently “sinful” life – emerges in Yuyun’s future aspirations. Repentance as she sees it, is the only way out. It is what she believes God wants her to do.

A similar way of positioning oneself in either the moral or immoral category also appears in other participants’ narratives. Anindya (16, high school student, female, heterosexual), who has “made love” with her boyfriend, describes herself as “dirty and sinful” and is “not worthy of going to church” (autobiographical writing). She finds the moral standards expected by the church do not suit her current sexual practice, although she also “really wants to go back to God.” Both Yuyun and Anindya view their sexual experience as primarily a matter of morality aligned with their Christian faith. They eventually distance themselves from the church which they see as demanding high moral standards. Yuyun and Anindya’s narratives show how they have given meanings to their sexual selves through the discourse of sexual morality and taken up the immoral subject position offered by this discourse.

In contrast to Yuyun and Anindya, other participants take up the moral subject position, especially those who report a narrative of repentance such as Juwanto (18, high school student, male, heterosexual), Daniel (17 years, high school student, male, heterosexual), Indra (19, college student, male, heterosexual), and Hardi (22, office worker, male). They narrate their past as dark, sinful, and immoral, but after they found God, they repented and left their past sins behind completely or are at least in a constant struggle with those sins. Juwanto (18, high school student, male, heterosexual), for instance, describes his experience as follows:
“After that [meeting God] I am changed. No more porn, masturbation, drinking, and smoking. I battle these sins. I fight them. Desires for those still haven’t gone, it needs process, but I believe they can go.” “Setelah itu (bertemu Tuhan) saya berubah. Saya berhenti dari dosa-dosa yang saya lakukan. Harus bener-bener serius melawan, memerangi dosa, ya ku-ketat-i, kupaksa. Dorongan nonton film porno dan onani, minum dan rokok belum bisa hilang, butuh proses, tapi pasti bisa hilang.” Speaking from the moral subject position (i.e., maintaining sexual abstinence), Juwanto articulates his engagement with his desire for pleasures such as sex, alcohol, and smoking in the language of a battle. In a battle, the options available are often binary: winning or losing, friend or enemy, fight or surrender. By representing young people’s sexuality as a battlefield between sinful desire and religious moral codes, the possibilities for moderation and negotiation become severely constrained. Negotiation with the enemy or making a peace agreement with sinful desires hardly make sense for these young people. There is no half-sinning; it is always either holy or sinful, good or bad, moral or immoral. Such limited ways of seeing and being sexual demonstrate the regulatory power of the discourse of sexual morality in constituting these young people’s sexual subjectivities.

Contrasting Yuyun and Anindya’s narratives with Juwanto, Indra, Daniel, and Hardi’s, it appears that a discourse of gender asymmetry has played a role in their positioning in the moral/immoral binary. Female participants tend to be constituted or understand their engagement in sex as “immoral.” Male participants – although their engagement in sex is also considered immoral – appear to have more leeway to take up the moral position by drawing on the notion of repentance. I am cognisant that attributing the differences of their meaning-giving practice to the binary of male/female might be reductionist and might limit possibilities for a more complex/multidimensional analysis. However, existing studies have reported similar findings in which gender continues to shape the meanings given to one’s sexual experiences (Carpenter, 2002, 2005; Guggino & Ponzetti, Jr, 1997; Sprecher, Barbee, & Schwartz, 1995; Tsui & Nicoladis, 2004). These studies document how gender has influenced the bifurcation of meanings around young people’s sexual experiences: young women’s sexual activities (outside of marriage) are associated with shame and guilt, while for young men these are associated with pride and joy (Holland et al., 2000; Sprecher et al., 1995). The perceived “irreversibility” of female virginity loss (Carpenter, 2005) or the notion of women being “damaged goods” once they lose their virginity has limited the possibility women drawing on the repentance narrative. They can repent, but they can never be the same
because the “defect” is evident and irreparable. However, (male) participants in this study also show that occupying the moral position – although preferable – is not always pleasant and guilt-free.

The “battle” to maintain oneself in the moral position (i.e., to continuously align oneself with the religious moral standard of complete sexual abstinence) requires a constant nullification and suppression of sexual desires. For some participants, it is a difficult and endless struggle, and loaded with feelings of guilt. Daniel, for instance, describes his experience:

I always feel regretful every time I fall [in sexual sin]. I feel like the problems in my family, like my mother’s illness or her working in another city, are because I am naughty and sinful. It is not a punishment from God, but it’s because I’ve left God. I asked God: “If you bring back my mom, I will stop masturbing. If needed, I’ll chop my hands off.” I once masturbated and cried at the same time.


(Daniel, 17, high school student, male, heterosexual, autobiographical writing)

Daniel believes God watches his behaviours – a belief that is common among Indonesian religious communities. God, in mainstream Islam and Christian faiths (which comprises 97% of the Indonesian population), is generally viewed as omniscient and all-knowing. Panoptic surveillance of one’s acts by God is understood to be constantly taking place at any time, in any place, and in any situation. This feeling of being seen penetrates the interiority of Daniel’s self as it relates to commonly accepted ontological beliefs about God, humans, and morality in Indonesia. Daniel cultivates a self-surveilling subjectivity that continuously monitors his own sexual morality. Feelings of guilt and regret are inescapable once he transgresses sexual moral standards, particularly when coupled with the understanding that sin always brings negative consequences to one’s life. For Daniel, these consequences are his
mother’s illness and her mother being away working in another city. To take up the moral subject position offered by the discourse of sexual morality, Daniel must abolish his sexual desire (until marriage when it is deemed acceptable), which might not be realistic in his situation.

These narratives show the power the discourse of sexual morality has for Indonesian Christian young people in giving meaning to their sexual selves. It has enabled and restricted what these young people can think, say, and do. For some participants, taking up subject positions offered by the dominant discourse of sexual morality means maintaining complete sexual abstinence and giving meaning to their sexual practice as utterly sinful (except within marriage). For others, it is taking up the immoral position which means having the “freedom” to enjoy sex but remaining haunted by guilty feelings and having no hope for a good future. It is either nullification of one’s sexual desire, or engagement in the immoral enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Consequently, as demonstrated in the narratives above, the possibilities for alternative subject positions beyond this binary are virtually closed down. Positioning oneself as religious, moral, and sexually active, for instance, is often unthinkable in this way of understanding young people as sexual subjects. Further, same-sex sexual practice is constituted as always immoral since same-sex marriage in Indonesia is not legally recognised and is generally condemned by mainstream religious communities (see Chapter 1). There is no alternative for gay/lesbian young people to understand their sexual practice outside of the immoral category. In the next section, I will discuss how the narratives of some participants in this study have contested these dominant meanings around sex, morality, and young people. I will demonstrate that alternative ways of being sexual which resist this dominant discourse exist among Indonesian young people.

**Contesting the Dominant Discourse of Sexual Morality**

Based on the premise that meanings are (re)produced within specific discursive contexts and are always open to redefinition (Foucault, 1978; Weedon, 1997; Willig, 2013), in this section I investigate how participants give alternative meanings to their sexual selves which contest those of the discourse of sexual morality. By drawing on various discursive resources available to them, some young people in this study have refused to take up the binary position of either moral or immoral young people. Instead, they occupy subject positions from which
they can resist, reinterpret, and even abandon the constitution of young people’s sexual practice as a moral problem.

Alternative subject positions taken up by Indonesian Christian young people are characterised by what Foucault (1985) conceptualised as ethics-oriented morality (discussed in Chapter 1). As opposed to code-oriented morality (in which prescriptive moral codes are imposed by authorities and total obedience is expected), the cultivation of the ethics-oriented subjects involves personal responsibility in developing their own practices of right and wrong. In order to live ethically, the task of the subject is more than following what is permitted or forbidden by the authorities, but to engage in personal reflection, analyse and calculate the use of pleasure, and to negotiate various societal boundaries.

This section discusses at least three ways participants take up and/or are positioned as ethical sexual subjects. The first is casting off religion altogether, in which the strongest foundation of sexual morality is ousted so that moral/immoral subject positions become irrelevant. The second is reinterpreting religious morality, in which the prescriptive character of code-oriented morality is rejected and authoritative moral codes are replaced by personal interpretation of religious doctrines. The last is living the contradiction, in which both moral/immoral/ethical subject positions are, counter-intuitively, occupied simultaneously.

**Casting off religion altogether**

The first example of resistance towards the discourse of sexual morality is demonstrated by Susanti (22, college student, female, lesbian). She has taken up an alternative subject position in her becoming a sexual subject, by abandoning her Christian faith. Throughout her life, Christianity has enabled her family, church, school, and friends to impose a set of moral values upon her sexuality. Her mother is actively involved in church activities, prays and reads the *Bible* every day, and has been elected to be one of the church elders. Her father is not as committed to church activities, but he understands Reformed Theology. Susanti describes him as “a fundamentalist Calvinist.” He wished Susanti to be a church minister, just like her uncle. During her adolescence Susanti was involved in church activities like joining the choir and playing music, and she read many Christian books. When she was studying at university she started to recognise inconsistencies between the *Bible* and (“scientific”) history. She also finds Christian sexual morality particularly regarding LBGT+ people is full
of hatred. The more she learned and read, the more she doubted her Christian faith. Eventually, she decided she does not believe in God anymore. This is an exceptionally subversive decision, considering atheism has long been associated with the Indonesian Communist Party that was declared to be a state enemy and which was violently attacked by the Soeharto regime (1966-1998). Below is her story in her own words:

I once told my dad I am a lesbian and I want to live as a lesbian. We had a big quarrel at that time, and my dad told me I will go to hell. I asked my lecturer in the Religious Education class at uni about my sexuality. He said perhaps it was just a feeling of admiration for my female friend, as if I did not know the difference between falling in love and friendship feelings. I asked my pastor at church about homosexuality and he just said “don’t talk with LGBT people again and don’t visit LGBT websites again.”

I felt guilty and condemned at that time because I felt that being a lesbian is wrong and sinful. I was confused as to why, after I invited God into my heart I was still a lesbian. I tried harder to obey God, prayed more, read the Bible more, and got involved in church ministries, so that I can be straight. I went to counselling sessions, with both psychiatrist and pastor, but I still failed (to be straight). I tried to date a guy, but I ended up just hurting his feelings because I had no feelings for him at all.

I then read the Bible and other writings that said the Bible is historically invalid, such as articles in the ex-christian.net website and also Christian doctrines about LGBT which are full of hatred. So I no longer believe in the Bible. The climax was when my close friend told me that I will go to hell because being lesbian is sinful. I was really angry and had had enough of Christian doctrines and of God Himself. I can’t understand why religion that’s so-called full of love is actually full of hatred. So I decided to be an atheist. I read atheism blogs, talked with the leader of an Indonesian atheist organisation, and involved in the ex-christian.net online forum.

I know about sex from watching pornography when I was little. I know masturbation too. I used to believe that sex is only for married people, and
masturbation is a sin. I tried to stop watching porn after I invited God into my
heart, but after five months I did it again. After I became an atheist, my mind
was opened. Sex is a biological need, not a sin. The concept of sin is basically
like this: God will punish humans if they do something wrong, thus humans
will not do wrongdoings anymore. So they do the “right” thing, because they
are afraid of punishment. If there is no hell, will they still do the right thing?
So I say sex is a biological need, there should be no problem with it. Some
people can restrain it, some people can’t. Who said there were no genital
diseases in the medieval ages when Christianity was thriving all over Europe?
One of the women of King Henry VII of England got syphilis and so did the
King. It’s just because the medical knowledge hadn’t really advanced. The
disease is purely biological, not a punishment from God. It’s just the way
ancient people thought.

I believe morality is created by humans so that we can live comfortably. I
myself do not steal or kill people because I clearly know it hurts people. I
don’t want to be hurt, so I don’t hurt people. People engage in crime not
because they don’t have religion, but because they have the opportunity and
they decide to do it. That’s it.

Saya pernah bilang sama papa saya lesbian dan saya mau hidup sebagai
lesbian, pas itu lagi tengkar hebat, baru trus papa bilang saya bakal masuk
neraka. Saya pernah debat sama (dosen) pendeta di kelas saat kelas etika
agama. Saya tanya dia tentang seksualitas saya, dia malah bilang mungkin
saja itu perasaan kagum pada sahabat, kayak saya ngga bisa tahu mana jatuh
cinta mana perasaan ke sahabat aja. Saya juga pernah ke pendeta di gereja
saya tentang homoseksual, dia malah bilang jangan bicara dengan kaum
LGBT dan mengunjungi situs LGBT lagi.

Saya merasa berdosa karena waktu itu saya merasa itu (lesbian) salah, terus
saya merasa terkutuk. Saya bingung, abis terima "tuhan" koq masi lesbian.
Sudah taat “tuhan”, doa, baca alkitab, dan pelayanan. Saya disuruh ke
psikiater Kristen dan pendeta juga, mereka berusaha menganahkan saya
menjadi straight, dibilang lesbian ngga normal. Tapi ya masi nda bisa (jadi
straight). Saya pacaran sama cowo karena waktu itu saya pikir mungkin bisa jadi straight, ternyata nda bisa. Malah nyakiti perasaan dia krn saya nda ada perasaan.

Waktu itu setelah baca alkitab dan baca dari pihak yang berkata alkitab ngga cocok sejarahnya, dan beberapa tulisan dari ex-christian.net, baca tentang bukti sejarang kristen yang ngga valid, dan ngga cocok, dan juga doktrin kebencian terhadap LGBT. Puncaknya saya ngga percaya tuhan yaitu pada saat bahkan temen dekat saya bilang saya bakal masuk neraka karena lesbian itu dosa. Saya waktu itu beneran marah dan muak terhadap doktrin kristen, dan tuhan itu sendiri, dan saya ngga habis pikir kenapa agama yang bilang penuh kasih ternyata penuh dengan kebencian. saya mutusin jadi atheis. saya baca2 blog atheis, baca dan diskusi dengan dosen saya yang mengenalkan saya dengan pemimpin indonesian atheist, saya diskusi dengan dia, saya diskusi dengan temen2 di ex-christian.net.

Saya malah belajar seks dari nonton video porno dari kecil. Mastubarsi pernah juga. Saya dulu mandang seks itu buat orang menikah saja, masturbasi dsb itu dosa, berusaha berhenti liat video porno abis percaya tuhan, 5 bulan kambuh lagi. Setelah jadi atheis baru pikiran saya terbuka, seks itu kebutuhan biologis bukan sesuatu yang dianggap dosa. Tapi ginilah, konsep dosa kan maksudnya tuhan akan menghukum manusia bila berbuat salah, karena itu manusia tidak berbuat salah, jadi istilahnya, secara tidak langsung mereka berkata bahwa mereka berbuat "benar", hanya karena mereka takut hukuman. Jadi bila tidak ada ancaman neraka, apa mereka masih dapat berlaku benar? Dan biasanya sih saya bilang seks itu kebutuhan biologis, harusnya ngga masalah, ada yang bisa nahan ada yang ngga. Dan siapa bilang dari dulu ngga ada penyakit kelamin dari jaman medieval dan pertengahan sewaktu kristiani berjaya di eropa? bisa saja ada sakeng karena kedokteran belum maju mungkin belum bisa diketahui lah wong salah satu wanita raja inggris Henry VIII bisa dapat syphilis dan akibatnya si raja juga dapat kok padahal pas itu kan jaman medieval inggris. Saya rasa penyakit itu pasti ada dan penyakit itu murni biologis bukan karena hukuman tuhan, itu mah pemikiran orang kuno.
Saya pribadi bilang bahwa moralitas itu diciptakan oleh manusia agar hidupnya lebih nyaman, saya sendiri tidak mencuri atau membunuh orang karena saya jelas2 tahu itu dapat merugikan orang lain, saya ngga mau dirugikan orang lain karena itu saya tidak merugikan orang lain. Orang melakukan kejahatan bukan karena dia tidak beragama, itu karena ada kesempatan dan dia memutuskan untuk berbuat jahat, itu aja.

(Susanti, 22, college student, female, lesbian, email interview)

Susanti’s narrative shows how her sexuality has been subjected to various moralising mechanisms. Her father, her pastor, her lecturer, her psychiatrist, and even her close friend had attempted to normalise her into a sexually moral subject, which means being abstinent and heterosexual. Their moral messages (in)formed Susanti’s ways of giving meaning to her sexual self, so that she felt guilty. She then tried really hard to fix her “moral” problem by performing religious rituals such as praying, reading the Bible, and being involved in church ministries. Ironically, all the invitations, pressures, and condemnations gradually fuelled Susanti’s desire to uproot the whole of her Christian faith.

By drawing on resources she had access to (e.g., atheist forums, criticisms of the Bible from history and sexuality studies), Susanti had been enabled to abandon her Christian faith and take up an atheist subject position. This moment of conversion became the milestone in her understanding of morality, which she describes as a mind-opening experience (“After I became an atheist, my mind was opened”). She was enabled to leave the binary logic of morality, such as sinful/holy, punishment/reward, heaven/hell, and replace these with the ethical principle of reciprocity (“I don’t want to be hurt, so I don’t hurt people”). It became possible for her to de-sacralise morality, that is, from divine instruction to human invention (“I believe morality is created by humans so that we can live comfortably”). Atheism has provided the means for Susanti to reject the association of religion with sexual morality (e.g., her awareness of STIs in Medieval Christendom), and religion with morality in general (“People engage in crime not because they don’t have religion”, “I myself [an atheist] do not steal or kill people”). She moved from the understanding of sex as a moral problem to a biological explanation (“Sex is a biological need, not a sin”). Once the strongest foundation of sexual morality in her life – that is, Christian faith – was ousted, more discursive spaces were opened for her to cultivate her own ethical, sexual self. She was enabled to reflect,
negotiate, and redefine her understandings of sexuality, instead of obediently following what
the authorities said. Here, the binary positioning of moral/immoral young people became
irrelevant for her since her ways of seeing sexuality were no longer constituted through the
discourse of sexual morality.

Exploring other alternative discourses Susanti draws on to understand “right” and “wrong” in
sexual practice, during the subsequent instant messenger interview I asked Susanti about her
opposition toward abstinence until marriage:

Teguh: You said previously that sex outside of marriage is okay, as long as it
is safe. And it should take place in a loving and committed
relationship. Why do you think so? What about people who make
love only for fun just because they just like to do it?
Susanti: I try not to judge people, but I personally feel it shouldn’t be like that.
Teguh: I see. Btw, what about your future aspiration? You still want to marry
a woman, don’t you?
Susanti: I’m still thinking about whether or not marriage is necessary.
Teguh: Cool! Why do you think it’s not necessary?
Susanti: People can live together without the bond of marriage, because
marriage does not guarantee the relationship lasts.
Teguh: I see. So you want to have a lasting relationship but it doesn’t have to
be in a wedlock?
Susanti: Many people get married, then divorced. Divorce costs more money
and I feel people marry just because of tradition and religion. So I
think, do we really need to prove love with marriage? If you know
your love is true, do we need to prove it again? That’s what I think.
Teguh: Kamu kan pernah bilang kalo ML diluar nikah itu ngga apa-apa, asal
safe aja. Dan mestinya berdasarkan cinta dan komitmen. Kenapa
begitu? Gmn dengan orang-orang yang bercinta utk fun2 tok?
Susanti: I try not to judge people.. tapi klo saya pribadi ngrasa harusnya ngga
duit sih
Teguh: I see. Pandangan ke depan sekarang. gimana gambaran masa
depanmu? Kmu pengen menikah dgn perempuan kan?
Susanti: Saya masih berpikir apa menikah itu perlu.
Teguh: Mantab2. Knp kmu rasa ngga perlu?

Susanti: Bisa saja kan hidup bersama tanpa ikatan pernikahan secara menikah ngga jamin orang bisa langgeng selamanya.

Teguh: Sip! Jadi kamu pengen punya pasangan yg langgeng, tapi ngga harus menikah, Gitu yah?


(Susanti, 22, college student, female, lesbian, instant messenger interview)

The subject position Susanti occupies differs considerably from those offered by traditional discourses of Christian sexual morality. It has enabled her to not just transgress the idea of abstinence outside of marriage, but also to challenge the notion of marriage itself as unnecessary. Her previous Christian sexual moral codes were then replaced with her own ethical values which drew on discourses of love, commitment, and safety. Accordingly, her sexual practice was guided by these values. For instance, during the last interview Susanti said that she had just started a relationship with a girl she knew from an online atheist community. In less than a week of their relationship beginning, her girlfriend had asked her to “make love.” Susanti refused because she wanted to engage in sexual activity only in a loving and committed relationship, which she believes develops over time. By drawing on this discourse of love and commitment⁴, Susanti has navigated a way to resist the dominant discourse of sexual morality in the constitution of her sexual subjectivity.

Susanti’s narrative also illustrates that no ways-of-seeing remain dominant for ever because any particular regimes of truth are dependent on their discursive contexts – which are ever-changing. Her sense of right and wrong had not just moved away from Christian teachings, but also from the belief that her worldview and moral values are relatively fixed as she

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⁴ I am cognisant that such discourse of love is also regulatory in other ways. It might prioritise loving and committed sexual relationships, and impose moralistic judgement on other forms of sexual relationships. It has also been documented both promoting and inhibiting safer sex among heterosexual women (Braun, 2013; Gavey & McPhillips, 1999; Rosenthal, Gifford, & Moore, 1998; Warr, 2001).
learned from Christianity. In the last interview Susanti expressed her disappointment with atheism, and she began to explore pantheism:

I was a bit disappointed with this atheism and I feel it doesn’t make sense. Because they claim with certainty that God does not exist. I think they should say they don’t know. Also, I don’t know why, but I feel explaining God using Occam’s razor seems wrong. Perhaps what I don’t believe is the idea of a personal God who is able to answer prayers and so on. That’s why I now read pantheism and feel interested.


(Susanti, 22, college student, female, lesbian, instant messenger interview)

As opposed to her previous Christian faith that offered a relatively fixed epistemological view (in which truth is understood as singular, timeless, and originating from God), Susanti’s current spiritual journey is more flexible and negotiated. It is not impossible that, in the future, the meanings she gives to her sexuality will change once her epistemological view changes. Her biological explanation of sex, for example, is common among atheist communities who often replace biblical explanations about reality with explanations from the natural sciences (e.g., Dawkins, 2006; Stenger, 2009). As Susanti’s epistemological beliefs moved away from atheism, there is a possibility that in the future her biological explanation of sex will also change.

The current subsection has shown an alternative subject position an Indonesian Christian young person has taken up beyond the moral/immoral positions offered by the dominant discourse of sexual morality. By drawing on various other discourses such as love, commitment, and safety, Susanti has been enabled to resist the constitution of young people’s sexual practice as primarily a moral problem. The way she cultivated an alternative subjectivity is via a conversion from Christian faith to atheism. In this way, the whole set of meanings around a morality which is rooted in religious beliefs became more open to
redefinition. Specifically, the universalising, prescriptive, and moralistic approach to sexuality normalised through religious authorities was replaced with more personal and negotiated ethical approaches to sexuality. However, it is important to mention that alternative discourses she draws upon inevitably have their own regulatory work and enable/constrain her sexual subjectivity in various other ways.

Susanti’s radical conversion from Christianity is not without consequences. After her conversion to atheism a relative told her: “It is regretful for your parents to have you as their daughter!” It made her felt that she was “not worthy to be in the family” because of her religious decision. Susanti also felt her father does not respect her atheism because she is “still continuously told to pray and go to church.” The friendships she had from the church gradually disappeared, while atheism provides her with only online communities. She describes the predominant emotion during her journey as an atheist was “meaninglessness” because atheism does not give her the sense of purpose that Christianity did. Although the moral burden of being a lesbian had been relieved, she said she still struggles with “loneliness,” constant “challenges from homophobes,” and “anxiety about a future partner” (email interview). Previous studies show that a radical conversion like Susanti’s is not commonly documented among religious LGBT+ people (e.g., Gross, 2008; Gross & Yip, 2010; Radojcic, 2016; Thumma, 1991; van Klinken, 2015; Yip, 1997a, 1997b, 2005). These studies identified that staying within the Christian faith and reinterpreting their religious morality are much more preferable to them. Accordingly, among participants in this thesis only Susanti performed such a radical conversion. The next section discusses another, more common, way to resist the dominant discourse of sexual morality among participants, that is, reinterpreting religious doctrines.

Reinterpreting religious morality

The second way participants took up subject positions beyond the moral/immoral binary was by reinterpreting the moral codes taught by religious authorities. Drawing on alternative discursive resources, these participants rejected the positioning of young people as moral subjects through the discourse of sexual morality. They reinvented their “own” sexual ethics based on their understanding of the Bible or the all-loving character of God (Gross & Yip, 2010). In doing this they “reconciled” their Christian faith and their ways of seeing sexuality.
They proudly identify themselves as Christians and go to church regularly, but their sexual ethics are quite different from what their church prescribes.

One participant who practises this reinterpretation is Anto (24, NGO activist, male, gay). He had just completed his university education and was actively involved in an LGBT+ NGO at the time I interviewed him. As an activist he focused on promoting the health of LGBT+ people, mainly by encouraging them to come out and to use condoms. He himself has proudly come out as gay and he does not support sexual abstinence. Although Anto grew up in a Christian family, he has explored various other religions. He describes his Christian faith as “liberal.” In recent years he has gone to a Pentecostal mega-church which is known for its conservative theology, charismatic leadership, strong evangelism, and miraculous signs. Anto describes this church as “very conventional in terms of sexuality,” where it is “a taboo to talk about sex,” and “the idea of precreation is dominant.” When I asked why he chose this church, Anto said it is because he has a nice and caring mentor there, and most of the congregation are “good looking.” Anto was also actively involved in evangelical activities in this church (i.e., telling people about Jesus). Since the beginning of 2013 he had devoted one hour per day to reading the Bible and his plan was to finish reading the Bible in one year.

So how did Anto take up what he calls a “liberal” subject position in terms of Christianity (and sexuality) against the conservative backdrop of his church? Anto explained that he had no problem reconciling his faith and sexuality by developing his own understanding of Christian faith which focuses on love. He quoted John 15:12-19 to describe his relationship with God.

(John 15:12-19; Jesus said:) This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the
world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world – therefore the world hates you.

(Anto:) These are the verses that made me believe that I was born as a Christian not without a reason. I really like Jesus’ teachings about love, how He taught me to call Him friend. For me, the closeness between friends is much more meaningful than servant-master. No one else boldly said this other than Jesus. That is why I always believe God loves me as what I am.

The meaning of Christianity is so deep for me. Although I learned other religions, I found comfort in this religion. Regardless what the pastors preached, when I read the Word of God, immersed myself in the meaning of it, I felt how great is the love He gives. It convinced me that He accepts me just the way I am.

Jesus is really important in my life. He is a very close friend of mine. Sometimes when I need to talk heart-to-heart, I just close my eyes, and I tell him my experiences. He has never disappointed me. Somehow when I had problems and did not know what to do, I just prayed, and it calmed me down. I know I can always rely on Him.

dari dunia, melainkan Aku telah memilih kamu dari dunia, sebab itulah dunia membenci kamu.

Anto: Itu adalah ayat yang membuat ku yakin bahwa aku lahir sebagai Kristen bukan tanpa alasan, Aku sangat suka ajaran dari Yesus tentang Kasih, bagaimana DIA mengajari aku untuk memanggil DIA sahabat, bagiku kedekatan seorang sahabat akan jauh lebih bermakna dari pada hamba-Tuan. Tidak ada pribadi yang dengan lantang bisa berkata seperti itu kalo bukan Yesus,

Makna Kekristenan bagi aku sangat dalam, dimana walaupun aku mempelajari agama lain, tapi aku merasakan kenyamanan dengan agama ini, terlepas dari pengajaran-pengajaran pendeta, ketika aku membaca sendiri Firman Allah, dan mendalami maknanya, aku merasakan bagaimana Kasih yang DIA berikan begitu besar, itu juga yang membuat aku yakin, bahwa DIA akan menerima apa adanya aku.

Yesus sangat berarti bagiku, DIA pribadi yang sangat deket, kadang ketika aku ingin curhat, aku akan tutup mataku, dan menceritakan banyak hal, DIA belum pernah mengecewakanku, somehow ketika aku ada masalah dan bingung harus ngapain, begitu aku berdoa, aku langsung tenang, dan apa yang aku takutkan tidak pernah terjadi, bahkan masalahku terselesaikan, hingga aku tanpa ragu mengandalkan DIA.

(Anto, 24, NGO activist, male, gay, email interview)

Anto’s narrative around his Christian faith is characterised by a deep personal relationship with God and his understanding of the loving character of God. He understands God as an intimate figure to whom he can always talk to as a friend. Anto learned who God is from within this context such as when he was in emotional difficulties and he believed God calmed him down through prayer. This personal relationship has provided Anto with a foundation upon which to build his “own” understanding of God and Christianity, which does not necessarily correspond to what the pastors taught from the pulpit. By doing this, Anto is enabled to desacralise some parts of the Christian moral codes and replace those with his own versions. For instance, while his church condemns gay, lesbian, and young people who
engage in sexual activities, Anto dismissed the condemnation by believing that “God accepts me” and “God loves me as what I am.” By appealing to the loving “nature” of God himself, Anto was enabled to refuse to take up the immoral subject position offered by the dominant discourse of sexual morality.

Anto’s understanding of Christian faith, which draws on the notion of God’s love to oppose church teachings, is relatively common, both in previous studies and among other participants in this study. Yip’s (Page & Yip, 2012; Yip, 1997a, 1997b, 2002, 2005, 2007; Yip & Page, 2013) works among LGBT+ religious young people in the U.K. have shown similar ways of reinterpreting heteronormative religious teachings which condemn same-sex and other sexualities. Many of Yip’s Christian participants separated church teaching from the “true” Christian faith by arguing that the church can be wrong as, for example, in the way it supported slavery in the past (1997a). In this way, biblical interpretive authority is relocated from religious leaders to personal interpretation (Yip, 2002, 2007). Sacred texts are then used as a foundation to de-centre institutional authority and democratise religious beliefs and values (Page & Yip, 2012; Yip & Page 2013). Likewise, other participants in this thesis such as Heni also divorced the church’s authority from her Christian faith:

I am proud with my Catholic faith because it is basically full of love. But unfortunately, I feel that this has been forgotten by many Catholics. They just talk about it but in reality their practices are different. If we go to church, we should look for God. The priests are just a means to God. We must understand they are humans too. We don’t need to believe all what they said. If we listen carefully, they are not always right. Their interpretations of the Bible can be wrong.


(Heni, 24, postgraduate student, female, asexual, email interview)
In an Indonesian context, previous studies have reported similar reinterpretations within progressive Muslim communities (Bennett, 2007; Smith-Hefner, 2009; Wieringa, 2010). These scholars have documented how Islamic traditions which generally taught that strict sexual-abstinence-until-marriage can provide resources for different interpretations around sexual morality. Smith-Hefner (2009), for instance, studied a controversial young Muslim preacher, Iip Wijayanto, who uncovered Indonesian young people’s sexual “promiscuity,” demonstrated the failure of current Islamic sexual morality, and called for alternative ways of understanding Islam and sexuality. Bennet (2007) detailed how some progressive Muslim scholars in Indonesia have supported a more comprehensive approach in teaching sexuality according to their interpretation of the Islamic sacred texts. Wieringa (2010) quoted the view of a progressive Muslim scholar, Professor Musdah Mulia, whose understanding of Islamic sexual morality acknowledged sexual diversity beyond heterosexuality. These studies show the possibilities of various (re)interpretations in reading religious texts to challenge the sexual morality currently dominant in Indonesia.

What is unique about Anto’s way of contesting the universalising religious morality as compared to those in the previous studies and other participants in this study, is his relational and emotional source of critique. Like Heni’s, participants’ narratives in previous studies above contested the discourse of sexual morality by using hermeneutical arguments, such as pointing to the church’s incorrect interpretations. In contrast, Anto’s narrative shows that resistance toward church teachings does not have to rely on the logic of arguments. Instead, it can be based on an individual’s experience of their personal and intimate relationships with God – or, what Yip (2010) called doing theology and religion based on embodiment and experience rather than sacred texts. The sense of trust Anto developed in his personal relationship with God provided him with the confidence to differ significantly from common Christian doctrines. For example, the widespread doctrine of heaven and hell – which is usually linked with the reason behind some Christians’ moral practice – is very different in Anto’s view:

I never thought that non-Christians will end up in hell. There is no such concept in my head, and I also never thought that I will go to heaven because I am a Christian. The concepts of heaven and hell have long gone from my head. What’s in my head is that the role of religion is to make people
comfortable in this world, without being occupied by thoughts that they will
go to heaven or hell. I come to Him not because I want to end up in heaven,
but it’s because I miss Him. It’s like a desire to “visit” a close friend.

Because I am liberal, I can easily accept various teachings without being
bothered whether it is right or wrong. Regarding sex, my understandings came
from (academic) journals, lecturers, and so on. We need to understand that a
human is basically not just a social being, but also a sexual being. This means
that sex is a human basic need. Since it is a basic need, it needs to be met,
right? What is different about sex from other basic needs is that sex is often
associated with taboo, norms, religion, morals, etiquette, and various rules that
hold sex more tightly than other needs. So it is more difficult to meet our
sexual needs.

_Aku tidak pernah berpikir bahwa orang di luar Kristen akan masuk neraka.
Konsep tersebut tidak ada di kepalaku, aku juga tidak pernah berpikir bahwa
karena aku Kristen aku akan masuk sorga. Bahkan konsep surga dan neraka
sudah lama hilang di kepalaku, yang ada lebih kepada peran agama sebagai
sesuatu yang membuat aku nyaman di dunia ini, tanpa memikirkan nantinya
mau masuk surga atau neraka. Aku datang kepada DIA bukan karena agar
aku masuk Surga, tp lebih kepada rasa kangen dan kewajiban ku sebagai
sahabat untuk “mengunjungi” sahabat._

_Karena aku yang liberal, aku bisa menerima banyak pengajaran tanpa
mempermasalahkan apakah salah atau benar. Pemahaman seksualitas jelas
aku dapat dari jurnal-jurnal, pengajar, dll. Berbicara mengenai seks, kita
harus juga pahami bahwa pada dasarnya manusia selain Mahkluk sosial juga
adalah Mahkluk seksual, artinya seks menjadi kebutuhan dasar manusia, nah
namanya kebutuhan dasar manusia ini perlu untuk dipenuhi kan? Namun,
yang membedakan antara seks dengan yang lain karena seks dianggap
sebagai sesuatu yang tabu, norma, agama, susila, tata krama, peraturan yang
mencengkram seks lebih ketat dari pada yang lain, sehingga proses untuk
memenuhinya jadi sulit._

_(Anto, 24, NGO activist, male, gay, email interview)_
By drawing on his personal relationship with God, Anto has been enabled to refuse the transactional character of traditional Christian morality, in which Christians obey God because they will be rewarded with going to heaven. Anto’s religious morality is relational (“I come to God ... because I missed him”) and worldly (“the role of religion is to make people comfortable in this world”). His sense of morality is not focused on the distinction between what is right/wrong or holy/sinful according to Christian doctrines, but he considers many other views and sources such as scholarly work. In this way, there are more discursive spaces for Anto to develop his own sexual ethics, which apparently draws upon the notion that “sex is a basic human need” that “needs to be met.” By de-sacralising sex into merely a human need, it becomes possible for Anto to reject the religious morality of (hetero)sexual-abstinence-until-marriage which is generally promoted by Indonesian churches. Accordingly, as an LGBT+ activist, Anto promoted condom-use for young people instead of sexual abstinence.

Anto’s narrative represents another way of Indonesian young people taking up alternative subject positions beyond those offered by the discourse of sexual morality. From this position he has been enabled to challenge the constitution of young people’s sexual practice as a moral problem, which is a view generally imposed by religious authorities (see Chapter 1). However, unlike Susanti who rejected the whole set of her religious beliefs, Anto challenged specific aspects of religious morality taught by his church that are prescriptive and universalising. He radically reinterpreted Christian moral teachings by drawing on his personal relationship with God as the foundation of his sense of right and wrong. Using ideas such as “God is love” and “sex is a human need” has allowed him to develop his own understandings of young people’s sexuality. By giving meaning to his sexual self through these alternative discursive resources, Anto is enabled to resist the narrow positioning of Indonesian young people as either moral or immoral sexual subjects.

So far in this section I have presented narratives of resistance towards the discourse of sexual morality from Susanti who abandoned her Christian faith and Anto who reinterpreted traditional Christian doctrines. Such resistances have opened up possibilities to align their sexual identities and practices with their religious beliefs. Similarly, in some previous studies (e.g., Gross & Yip, 2010; Mahaffy, 1996; Thumma, 1991; Yip, 1997a, 1997b, 2005; Yip & Page, 2013), LGBT+ participants are reported reinterpreting their religious–moral values to resolve the gap or “dissonance” between their beliefs and sexual practice or identity.
However, other participants in this thesis did not necessarily try to attain such coherency. Their narratives demonstrate how resistance toward the dominant discourse of sexual morality – that has attempted to dichotomise Indonesian young people into either moral or immoral subject positions – does not have to be consistent, coherent, or without contradiction.

**Living the contradiction**

The third way that alternative meanings might be given to young people’s sexual subjectivities beyond those offered by the discourse of morality is in living the contradiction. Here, the alternative subject position participants took up is ostensibly counter-intuitive. These Indonesian Christian young people acknowledged the sexual moral codes taught by religious authorities and did not try to challenge or reinterpret them, but their sexual practice transgressed those moral codes and they felt all right about it. Compared to Yuyun and Anindya who experienced similar situations and then took up the immoral subject position, these other participants did not feel immoral or “dirty and sinful” as did Yuyun and Anindya. They proudly proclaim their Christian faith and go to church regularly. While acknowledging the church’s moral standards and their failure to conform to them, they also develop their own ethical beliefs of how sex should be practised by drawing on other discursive resources. Somewhat contradictorily, they have been enabled to both take up and resist the moral/immoral subject positions offered by the discourse of sexual morality.

Several previous studies have used the notion of contradiction in analysing subjectivity, such as how resistance and subjugation co-exist or ostensibly contradictory subject positions are taken up simultaneously (Baldwin, 2002; Maxwell, 2007; Moran & Lee, 2012; O’Brien, 2004, Whitlock, 2006). A similar argument across these studies is that contradiction need not be understood as a problem to be solved, but rather, it is a condition by which we live. O’Brien’s (2004) study, for example, demonstrated that her participants acknowledged and even took for granted the constitution of gay/lesbian Christian as contradictory, either in pride parades (where they found being Christian is often not welcomed) or in their churches (where their same-sex desire is condemned). Another example is Moran and Lee (2012) who showed that their female heterosexual participants have always been contradictorily resisting and confirming the dominant discourse of heterosexual monogamy. In analysing Indonesian Muslim gay men, Boellstorff (2005) illustrates the inevitability and acceptance of
contradiction in their subject formation using the dubbing of foreign movies – which was prevalent in Indonesian television – as an example. Here, viewers take for granted mismatches between actors’ lips movements and the voices they heard because they know it is a dubbed movie. Similar expectations about the mismatch between gay subjectivity and Islamic morality is also taken for granted by his participants, which Boellstorff called “inhabiting incommensurability” (p. 575). However, the dominant nuance in reading these studies is quite bleak and disheartening. For instance, O’Brien (2004) described the experiences of her gay/lesbian Christian participants in the language of difficulties such as “gay predicament,” “integrative struggle,” and “wrestling the contradiction.” Contradiction is constituted as an unresolvable and uncomfortable situation that, unfortunately, has to be lived by these participants.

In contrast, some participants’ narratives in this study display a similar contradictory engagement but engenders different feelings for them, that is, without such a sense of uneasiness. Urip, a 24-year-old heterosexual male who works as a salesperson, is one example. His narrative represents an alternative subject position beyond the immoral/moral young people offered by the discourse of sexual morality, which is characterised by contradictions. Coming from a “nice and warm Catholic family,” he is known by his family and neighbours as a “good boy” (email interview). He describes himself now as “a devoted person in terms of religion,” that is, he prays and goes to church regularly. Here, his talk about his religious life seemingly aligns with the category of moral young people. However, Urip has secretly engaged in sexual activities, or what he calls his “other side.” It started when he watched pornography with other children in his neighbourhood when he was seven years old. Every time one of their houses was empty, they gathered and watched pornographic videos. Since then he has masturbated, and after completing high school he has engaged in sex with his girlfriends. These experiences are not commonly expected from a religious Indonesian young person, considering the importance of abstinence among Indonesian religious communities (Bennett, 2007; Faidah, 2010; Ihsan, 2009). Here, in drawing on the discourse of sexual morality, one of the subject positions available for Urip to take up would be the immoral position, however his narrative does not take up this subject position.

Urip gives meaning to his sexual self in a way that resists the discourse of sexual morality and is characterised by contradictions. Unlike Anto, Urip did not reinterpret the morality
taught by his church. He completely agrees with the church’s sexual morality that considers sex outside of marriage as sinful. He explained:

The church definitely forbids free sex [sex outside of marriage]. I personally believe that before God each individual is responsible for such conduct. I am not sure what the punishment is, but I know certainly that it is sinful.

Gereja sudah pasti melarang adanya seks bebas, namun untuk saya pribadi, itu semua tergantung dari individunya. Untuk soal "ganjarannya" saya tidak tau pasti tapi itu adalah tanggung jawab masing2 pribadi dengan yang "Di atas". (Urip, 24, salesperson, male, heterosexual, email interview)

With such beliefs about sex and sin, it is likely that Urip would understand himself as sinful, immoral, or at least a not-very-religious person, because his sexual practices do not match his religious–moral values. However, throughout my interviews with Urip, a sense of sinfulness or immorality did not dominate his narrative. Unlike Yuyun and Anindya who felt “dirty and sinful” and thus avoided going to church, Urip did not talk about himself as immoral or condemned, so much that he felt reluctant to go to church. Unlike Juwanto, Indra, Daniel, and Hardi, who considered their past sexual experiences as sinful and therefore they repented, Urip did not express interest in repentance. Quite the opposite, the general nuance in Urip’s narrative is positive, confident, and resourceful, both in talking about his sexuality and particularly about his religion. He comfortably used religious languages such as answering “Praise the Lord, I’m good” when I asked how he has been. He also used many “smileys” (such as, :p , :-) , :-0 , -_- , and x_x ) and written expressions of laughter such as “hehehe,” “hihihi,” and “wkwkwk.” Below is an example of Urip’s tone when talking about his religion:

About my religion, at first it was my parents who pushed me to practise and learn Catholicism, but it’s because I was a child and hadn’t really known about this religion. Now I really believe that Catholicism is the way and the guide for me to the truth, that is, to God. I feel really grateful and glad to be born in a family that can guide me to know and have faith in Catholicism. I know that I still have much to learn about this faith, but I will always learn and learn and learn :-(
Dalam hal religi, bisa dikatakan saya terpaksa menjalani atau mengenal agama ini, namun itu semua dikarenakan saya masih anak2 dan belum benar-benar mengenal tentang Agama ini :') Sekarang saya sangat yakin dengan agama ini yang akan dapat menuntunku untuk menuju jalan yang "benar" menurutNYA. :'D Saya bersyukur dan bahagia dilahirkan dalam keluarga yang bisa menuntunku hingga perlahan-lahan mengenali dan mengimani kayakinanku ini :') Memang masih banyak yang belum saya ketahui mengenai keyakinan ini, namun saya akan terus belajar hingga saya benar2 mengamini keyakinan saya :')

(Urip, 24, salesperson, male, heterosexual, autobiographical writing)

Regarding his feelings about his sexual practice, Urip admitted that his sexual experiences brought some negative consequences such as guilty feelings, but he was not really troubled by that. He mentioned that he felt “addicted” to sex when I asked about the consequences of watching porn from a young age. He had an intention to change, but he did not really have any specific or serious plan about it.

Teguh: Is there any negative consequences you felt from your experience of watching porn from a very young age?

Urip: Negative consequences? Eh… sometimes I felt guilty after I made love. But until now I don’t think there is a direct effect. Indirectly perhaps I became “addicted” [to sex], and after I tried it with my girlfriends I became even more addicted -_- 

Teguh: Was your “addiction” affecting your daily life? Like your study, work, relationships, or religious rituals?

Urip: The addiction was not really bothering me. Only sometimes when I feel like I “want to do it,” it will dominate my thoughts (oh gosh I feel embarrassed, Teguh x_x) but that was very rarely.

Teguh: Oh don’t worry, Urip. Sex is always a part of youth life, isn’t it? Do you have plans to manage this “addiction”?

Urip: Ehmm... I’m not sure about reducing this habit, Teguh… but I think I’m trying.

Teguh: Dari pengalamanmu, menurutmu nonton bokep di usia yang sangat dini itu berdampak negatif ngga sih?
Urip: untuk dampak negatif dari monton bokep sendiri, ehm... sampai saat ini secara langsung blm ada, tpi secara gak langsung saya jadi "ketagihan" dan stlh mempraktekan jadi semakin addict -_____-"
Teguh: apakah menurutmu itu sampai mengganggu kehidupan sehari2mu (kuliah, kerja, ibadah, belajar, relasi, dll)?
Urip: Efek dari ketagihan sih sebenarnya tdak menggangu pak, hanya saja saat merasakan "kepengen" kadang yg ada di pikiran yg selalu soal "itu" (aduhhh saya malu x_x) tapi hal itu sangat jarang terjadi.
Teguh: Gpp santai aja. seks kan udah jadi bagian wajar kehidupan anak muda zaman sekarang. Kmu ada rencana gmn mengatasi “ketagihan” ini?
Urip: Ehmm...saya belum tau pak akan memulai bagaimana untuk mengurangi kebiasaan ini...tapi saya sedang berusaha...

(Urip, 24, salesperson, male, heterosexual, instant messenger interview)

Urip stated that he accepted and kept trying to conform to the church’s moral standard of abstinence, but his intention was not reinforced by specific plans or extra efforts. Simultaneously, he also developed his own ethical values in practising sex with his partners. In doing this, he drew on discourses such as an individual’s capability to give consent and make choices instead of religious reinterpretation.

Teguh: Do you have, like, a moral guideline in making love?
Urip: I have no specific rules in making love, hehehe, just put it simply like this: whatever we do, as long as we both feel comfortable and there’s no coercion, feel free to do it. Hehehe.

Teguh: Do you think you ruin the “reputation” of the girls you made love with, considering what most people in Indonesia think about sex outside of marriage?
Urip: I think it depends on the individual who did it. If the girl did not feel completely willing to do it, so she will feel ruined.

Teguh: Menurutmu apa sih panduan moral dalam bercinta itu?
Urip: waduh soal moral sihh sbenarnya tdak ada aturannya hehehe simplenya apapun yg kami lakukan saat ML, asal sama2 nyaman dan tdak memaksa ya monggo hehehe...
Urip’s narrative demonstrates how another alternative subject position can be occupied beyond the binary of moral/immoral young people. By drawing on various alternative discourses, Urip had been enabled to present himself confidently and contradictorily as both religiously devoted and sexually active. He showed how subjectivity needs not to be unified and coherent, but instead, fractured and conflicting. His story illustrates how contradiction as a condition to live for can be inhabited without distress. Contradiction does not have to be associated with challenging and uncomfortable situations, or a hard struggle as documented in previous studies (e.g., Boellstorff, 2005; O’Brien, 2004). Rather, Urip’s narrative shows that one’s “good” side and one’s “other side” might co-exist. He is not worried how to resolve the “dissonance” – if it is to be framed so. He simultaneously felt proud and embarrassed, sinful and grateful, transgressive and ethical. By conceptualising Urip’s story in this way, I have provided an empirical narrative that gives expression to the theoretical montage that the theologian Kathy Rudy (2007, p. 43) has wished for:

What I need is a theory of subjectivity that would allow me to be two contradictory things at the same time, that would allow me to say “I believe” and “I don’t” in a way that does not require coherent explanation. I need a theory that will allow me to be fragmented, not as a temporary stopgap measure until I figure out where I will end up, but a theory that will allow me to understand myself as divided, now and forever. I need a model that does not obligate me to be only one, unified person, that does not rest its idea of subjectivity on Enlightenment individuality, that sees fragmentation as a natural state and not one to be worked through.

Conclusion

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This chapter has offered insights into the constitution of young people’s sexual subjectivities through the discourse of sexual morality. It presents empirical narratives of how this discourse has been both drawn upon and contested in an Indonesian context. I have argued how the positioning of young people as either sexually moral or immoral has failed to capture the complexity of young Indonesian Christians’ sexual subjectivities. While drawing on the discourse of sexual morality has enabled these young people to be positioned as moral/immoral sexual subjects, it has also limited the possibilities of giving meaning to their sexual selves beyond this binary. Possibilities of being ethical sexual subjects who negotiate various considerations of engaging in sex instead of obediently following moral code of abstinence, for instance, have been severely constrained. Participants’ narratives in this study have also evidenced how this dominant discourse of sexual morality can be resisted. This chapter has identified at least three alternative ways Indonesian young people contested such moral/immoral positioning. These Indonesian Christian young people have abandoned their faith altogether, reinterpreted the moralistic parts of their religious beliefs, and comfortably lived the contradiction between their religious morality and sexual practices.

It is important to reiterate here that in examining the discourse of sexual morality in this chapter I do not intend to associate religion with moralism and the secular with ethical approaches in young people’s sexual relationships (Rasmussen, 2010, 2012). My aim is to demonstrate participants’ diverse ways of being religious and sexual subjects, and possibilities for actions afforded from those various subject positions. Analysis of Anto’s narrative, for instance, indicated that taking up a religious subject position does not always mean subscribing to moralistic religious teachings; but rather, it is about engaging in ethical negotiations of one’s faith, sexual desire, sexual practices, and social situations.

In the next chapter, I will further complicate this picture of existing knowledge around Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities by examining another dominant discourse in this field, namely, the discourse of sexual desire.
This chapter engages with another dominant discourse in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities, namely, the discourse of sexual desire. As a part of making sexuality a scientific project or scientia sexualis (discussed in Chapter 1 and 2), the discourse of sexual desire has constituted sexual attraction and practices as categorisable, nameable, specifiable, and relatively unchanged. The subject positions offered by this discourse are also categorisable and nameable, such as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, polyamorous, and asexual. Historically, this specification of sexual desires has been crucial in providing social and legal recognition for some alternative sexualities in various countries (Foucault, 1997; O’Flaherty & Fisher, 2008). However, as indicated by some scholars (Carastathis, 2008; Gamson, 1995, 2003; Klesse, 2014; Nash, 2013), such specification and categorisation imply fixed and stable sexual identities, and tend to exclude those who do not “fit” such a specification.

Acknowledging that the discourse of sexual desire has been both enabling and limiting, this chapter aims to extend the knowledge around this discourse by examining Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities using Foucault’s comparison of scientia sexualis and ars erotica. Specifically, it argues that young Indonesian Christian participants have taken up subject positions offered by the discourse of sexual desire, but their narratives also resist the discourse’s scientia sexualis disciplinary mechanisms. Their resistance is conducted — not by completely rejecting identity categories, but — by cultivating new ways of being sexual subjects that resemble Foucault’s (1978) ars erotica. This means that these participants’ ways of becoming sexual subjects indicate less emphasis on truth, fact, method, verifiability, classification, and specification; and more on creativity, beauty, pleasure, relationship, and new possibilities.

Four narratives exhibiting the art of cultivating alternative subjectivity in relation to the discourse of sexual desire are presented in this chapter. The first section examines Bianda’s (24, office worker, female, bisexual) narrative, which demonstrates how the naming and specifying of her desire as polyamorous (in addition to her bisexual self-identification) can
both open up new possibilities and constrain her ways of being a sexual subject. In analysing her narrative I will focus on her creative ways of cultivating a new form of sexual relationship. The second section presents Heni (24, postgraduate student, female) who took up an asexual position, but also intensively engaged in a world of art called *otaku* where sexuality is enjoyed and celebrated. While *otaku* sexuality is often not considered as a “real” sexual desire, Heni’s narrative challenges the boundaries between fiction and real, beauty and pathology, and sexual and non-sexual pleasure in understanding one’s sexual self. The third section discusses Putri (22, college student, lesbian) who identified themself as a lesbian. Simultaneously, Putri’s narrative also demonstrates the possibility of other alternative desires/pleasure which Putri does not recognise as a sexual orientation. Putri’s resistance is reminiscent of Foucault’s statement: “we can produce pleasure with very odd things, very strange parts of our bodies, in very unusual situations” (1997, p. 165). Finally, Anto’s (24, NGO activist, male, gay) story represents contemporary embodiment of learning sexuality as a masterful art (Foucault, 1978). Anto’s journey of taking up gay identity was characterised by mystical-like contemplation, secret personal exploration, unexpected encounters with pleasure, and social/sexual experimentation. His narrative embraces both the *scientia sexualis* of specifying sexual desire and the *ars erotica* of becoming a sexual subject in an “esoteric” manner (Foucault, 1978).

This chapter seeks to contribute to, and continue, Foucault’s (1985) project of promoting the creation and proliferation of alternative ways of being in the world, or what he called the “aesthetics of existence.” Specifically, findings add new knowledge regarding creative possibilities of understanding sexual practice, relationship, and pleasure – or the art of being sexual subjects – without specifying new sexual identifications and without completely rejecting the existing LGBT+ category either (discussed in Chapter 2).

**Bianda’s Story: To Name or Not to Name One’s Desire?**

Bianda (24, office worker, female, bisexual) had just completed her university degree and was working as an office worker when I interviewed her. She identified herself as bisexual, a term she learned from her friends at university. Here, Bianda drew on the discourse of sexual desire in the constitution of her subjectivity and took up the bisexual subject position offered. Her narrative also indicated a resistance toward this discourse of desire as shown in the complexity of her occupying this bisexual position. More than just bisexual, her journey of
becoming a sexual subject demonstrated a constant tendency of engaging in simultaneous multiple relationships since the first time she was involved in an intimate relationship. She did not label this constant tendency using a fixed sexual identification, such as “polyamorous.” I argue that her refusal to categorise her sexuality under a certain identity might open up a new, alternative, way to (dis)engage with/from the discourse of sexual desire, that is, through the art of developing various forms of relationship. To prioritise Bianda’s own perspective and articulation of herself, below I present her story in her own words:

I didn’t know about homosexuality until I went to uni. I have some friends who called themselves lesbian there. I’ve been dating girls before but I thought it’s just a joke, just for fun. I don’t think I’m a lesbian, because I like boys too. I think I’m a bi. It’s not my choice. It is my fate which God has decided.

When I was in intermediate school (± 12-15 years old), my friends already called me a playgirl because I changed boyfriends many times. It’s my bad habit. I’m easily bored with things, and lovers too! I started dating girls when I was 16. I dated both boys and girls. Even when I was in a relationship with a boy, I still can get close to girls. They didn’t know, of course. I thought girls and boys are different, so no need for jealousy. But now I know it’s wrong. They both have feelings.

My first girlfriend was, let’s call her, J. She said she likes me, and I like her too. So we were together for 2.5 years. Then I broke up with her because I like another guy, and he asked me to leave my girlfriend. But I was only with him for 1.5 years. After that I came back with J, and for the first time I fell in love with her. When I was close with J, I was introduced to her friend, L, who also seems like a butch. L was interested in me too. I actually didn’t want to be with L, because I loved J. But L told me stories about J that hurt my feelings. Eventually I dated L, and I felt comfortable with her. While I was in a relationship with L, there was another butch said she likes me, let’s called her U. But I didn’t want to be with her. So we just became good friends, L, U, and me. After I broke up with L, I returned to my ex-boyfriend and we were together again. Then we broke up and I got close with N, another butch. But
it’s a relationship without status, because I didn’t want any commitment. After one year, we split. Then I got close to another butch, let’s called her B. We were together for 1.5 years, until I met a guy who looks like my ex-boyfriend and I dated him. But it was not long, just around one year. Then I returned to B. I was with B until I met another guy, his name is E. After I broke up with E I haven’t had any relationships. I am just close to my ex-girlfriend, B, but she already has someone else now, so I can’t get too close to her.

I’m now officially single. I am now close with a new guy, but it’s a relationship without status. I like this “relationship without status” thing. Haha. He knows in the past I had relationships with girls. But he doesn’t know that I am now also close to my butch, B; whereas B knows I am with this guy.

I know my relationship with a girl will never end up in marriage. So my dream is to marry a guy. But I don’t know… very likely, although I am married, I will still be interested to have a relationship with girls. Haha! And I will never let him know. That’s impossible! I definitely will keep it secret. He will be very disappointed if he knows. No husband will let me have relationships with girls. Although, it would be awesome if that kind of guy exists!


Sekarang saya lagi jomblo Pak. ... skrg masih dekat ajah sm cowok baru, tapi hubungan tanpa status. Saya kan suka hubungan yg tanpa status... Hehe.. cowok saya sudah tau kalo saya ini pernah belok. Tapi dia tidak tau kalo skrg saya dekat dengan butchi lagi. Sedangkan butchi saya yang skrg tau kalo saya sedang dekat dengan cowok ini.

Hubungan saya ma cewek gak akan sampek menikah dan saya tau itu.
Menikah ma cowok itu impian saya. Ngga tau yah.. kemungkinan biarpun

(Bianda, 24, office worker, female, bisexual, email interviews)

A reading of Bianda’s narrative through the discourse of sexual desire may identify Bianda as a bisexual woman who is also polyamorous. Polyamory refers to the engagement in consensual simultaneous multiple relationships which may be both emotional and/or sexual in nature (Barker & Langdridge, 2010). Scholars have suggested that polyamory be included in sexual orientation categories; these scholars found that polyamory is a relatively fixed state and deeply embedded in one’s sense of self (Tweedy, 2011). As her narrative has repetitively shown, Bianda has developed many relatively stable intimate relationships with women and men, ranging in length from 1-2.5 years. Her relationships often ended because Bianda was interested in another person, and the person she was having a relationship with could not accept that although Bianda actually still wanted to be with them. For example, she first broke up with J and L because she was close to another person, but eventually she returned to J and L because she still wanted to be with them. Even at an early age, she was called a “playgirl” because she tended to change boyfriends frequently. More than being bisexual, Bianda showed a constant tendency to develop multiple relationships. She did not just develop a new relationship with a girl when she had a boyfriend or vice versa (because of her bisexuality), but also had new relationships with other girls when she already had a girlfriend. This polyamorous desire is also evident in her future aspiration to marry a man but also have relationships with women. Through the discourse of sexual desire, Bianda can be seen as occupying a polyamorous subject position in addition to her bisexuality.

There are two concerns in this way of reading through the discourse of sexual desire. First, naming and specifying Bianda’s desire as polyamorous risks the confinement of her sexual potentialities into an identification with limited meanings attached to it. The dominant meanings around polyamory which prioritise loving and long-term commitment (Klesse, 2014), for example, might limit Bianda’s possibilities in understanding and practising sexuality. However, naming her desire as polyamorous might also open up access to discursive resources which can offer Bianda a new way of seeing and being a sexual subject.
She might view her inability to stay with one lover as a sexual orientation, not as a problem. Second, there is a concern over interpretive authority (discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3) in reading Bianda’s desire as polyamorous. Since she did not refer to this term herself, a reading of her sexual desire as polyamorous can be seen as standing on ethical thin ice. As the researcher I imposed an interpretation or label which participants themselves might not agree to be read as such, and thus, might not feel respected.

Therefore, my discussion here will attempt to escape this tension of naming and not naming Bianda’s sexual desire. I will attempt to relinquish this analytical desire of scientia sexualis (identifying, naming, specifying) by exploring alternative ways Bianda’s narrative might resist the discourse of sexual desire without focusing on the classification of her desire. I will approach her narrative as an artwork, like a prose or poem, not as a qualitative empirical fact (Boje, 2001; Herman & Vervaeck, 2005; Sandelowski, 1991). To this end, I will utilise one of the analytical tools suggested by Billington (1995) in his literary approach to the Bible (in which the Bible is not approached as a historical fact, but as a literary artwork), namely, plot analysis. In this approach textual analysis is focused on the arrangement of events and ideas in the narrative. Instead of searching for underlying “truth” or the hidden “facts” of how Bianda has actually engaged in and resisted the discourse of sexual desire, I will examine her narrative temporally, that is, as an (unfinished) story with a beginning, middle, and (temporary) end. I will trace various changes, themes, tones, or rhythms along this journey – that is, the journey of understanding her sexual desire, her sexual selves, or her art of being a sexual subject.

While Bianda has taken up the bisexual subject position offered by the discourse of sexual desire, in her narrative she did not talk much about this identity, such as its nature, characteristics, or specifications. She talked about it in the beginning, as to how it was not her choice or how she came to understand herself as bisexual, but the larger theme in her narrative is her relationships, not her desire. Her narrative exhibits a rich variety of ways in engaging in intimate relationships from the bisexual position she occupied. In the beginning she had multiple simultaneous relationships which she kept secret from each of her partners. After she realised that it hurt her girlfriends’/boyfriends’ feelings, she tried monogamous relationships. Most of these attempts resulted in break-ups, particularly because there was a third person. However, a return to an ex after breaking up was not uncommon in her narrative. Near the end of her story, Bianda’s rhythms of relationships slowed down slightly.
She explored alternatives to the expectation of fidelity in a traditional monogamous relationship using the notion of “relationship without status” (more discussion below). She described it as “I am close with” instead of proclaiming boyfriend/girlfriend status. As to her future aspiration, Bianda mentioned a (monogamous) heterosexual marriage, although she was not sure she would or could deny her longing for relationships with women. Here, there are at least four different kinds of relationship Bianda had engaged in or aspires to have: multiple simultaneous relationships, serial monogamous relationships, “relationships without status,” and marriage.

There are also different tones in Bianda’s descriptions of her relationships. There is a slightly “innocent” tone in the beginning when she did not know about bisexuality and the expectation of fidelity. There is a faster rhythm and somewhat excited tone when she briefly narrated each of her monogamous dating relationships. Toward the end there is a tone of carefulness in initiating new relationships, particularly because she tried to respect others’ commitment in a relationship (“she already has someone else now, so I can’t get too close”). A tone of ambiguity can be felt in her final remarks on marriage and her future aspiration. These rich textures show that, in her journey of being sexual subject the naming of her desire as bisexual is only half of the story, and another half is exploring and developing relationships from that subject position. Instead of seeking for the truth about the “nature” of her desire, Bianda has engaged in exploring creative possibilities in generating new forms of relationship.

While one’s sexual relationship generally corresponds with one’s sexual orientation, Bianda’s narrative shows that each sexual orientation has the potential for multiple types of relationships. Instead of reading Bianda’s story through the discourse of sexual desire (where she is seen as a bisexual who is also polyamorous), an alternative reading resisting this discourse might view Bianda as a bisexual with creativity in developing various kinds of relationship. Put another way, Bianda’s narrative demonstrates that sexual practices and relationships might not always be neatly contained in a category of sexual orientation. Sexual categories, orientations, or identities might be specified and taken up, but this does not necessarily exclude the possibility of the proliferation of different forms of life, love, relationships, and ways of being (Foucault, 1985) which are driven by this energy called sex.
While most of Bianda’s forms of relationship are not genuinely “new,” one example that is quite new is the notion of “relationship without status” which she has drawn on near the end of her story in giving meanings to her relationship. The notion of “relationship without status” has been quite popular among contemporary Indonesian young people (Smith-Hefner, 2007). Known by the abbreviation HTS (*hubungan tanpa status* = relationship without status), it refers to a situation when two Indonesian young people get intimately close, but they do not make any commitment as in a dating relationship, and they do not declare any boyfriend/girlfriend status. Popular websites, magazines, and song lyrics depict this situation as sad, uncertain, and uncomfortable (e.g., Dewi, 2013; Merpati Band, 2011; Syaaf, 2013). On the contrary, Bianda likes it. Using this arrangement Bianda has escaped the expectation of fidelity in the traditional monogamous dating relationship. Bianda has showed that, in her becoming a sexual subject, she does not need to name her desire (i.e., polyamorous) and confine her sexuality to an orientation. Rather, she explored new possibilities by naming the relationship, not the desire.

In this section I have discussed the narratives of an Indonesian Christian young person which represents both accommodation and contestation of the discourse of sexual desire. Her narrative indicates how she has both drawn on and resisted the discourse of sexual desire by taking up the bisexual position and/or/not polyamorous, and naming her relationship in preference to naming her desire. This analysis contributes to the tension between naming and not naming one’s sexual desire, that is, by focusing on the problematic, productive, and intertwined exchanges between sexual desire and sexual relationship. Following Foucault’s (1997) call for the proliferation of new ways of being, this alternative reading of Bianda’s narrative encourages and contributes a possibility of new forms of relationship and love. In the next section I will present another narrative from an Indonesian young person which will further complicate what sexual desire might mean and how it might be engaged/resisted.

**Heni’s Story: Real Desire, Real Pleasure, Real Sex?**

Heni (24, postgraduate student, female, asexual) identifies herself as asexual. She considers herself as never having had any sexual interests or attractions to either men or women. In specifying herself as asexual, Heni has drawn on the discourse of sexual desire in which humans are grouped according to their fixed and categorical sexual desires. As previous studies have demonstrated, there have been some efforts to include asexuality in the
categories of sexual orientation in addition to the established LGBTI categories (Bogaert, 2004, 2006; Cerankowski & Milks, 2010; Przybylo, 2011; Scherrer, 2008; Scott & Dawson, 2015). Drawing on this discourse has enabled Heni to identify, articulate, and label herself in relation to her desire. However, although considering herself as having no sexual interests, Heni’s everyday life is extensively involved in various things related to sexuality. Sexuality was the topic of her postgraduate thesis, her work as an activist is around LGBT+ sexualities, and in her free time she entertains herself by reading yaoi (Japanese gay-themed comics). In this section I argue that, while Heni has been enabled by the discourse of sexual desire to identify herself as asexual, she has also resisted its scientia sexualis underpinning by exhibiting a unique stylisation of being an asexual sexual subject. Specifically, Heni’s narrative displays the art of exploring new sexual possibilities and enjoyment without necessarily categorising, naming, and specifying them. Analysis of Heni’s narrative in this section complicates the boundaries between sexual and non-sexual pleasure, reality and fiction, beauty and pathology, and thereby extends/questions the meaning of being a/sexual.

I will begin by presenting Heni’s story about her asexuality:

I’ve never dated anyone. Well, I had a crush on boys, but it’s not like on the TV, movies, or teen novels. I don’t want to have a relationship with him, or have sex with him. Not even in my fantasy. I just want to be with him, feel comfortable around him. Crushes on girls, I don’t think I had one. But it’s clear that I’ve never wanted to have sex, although I want to have kids. I also want to be a surrogate mother for a gay couple.

The first time I realised that I’m different was when my close friends were sad and cried because they haven’t got a boyfriend. I felt like, “What? Does that really matter?” They thought I was as desperate as them. Honestly I was like, “I’m cool, guys!” When I was asked whether I fantasised myself as one of the characters in the gay comic I read, I answered “no” because I’ve never fantasised like that. When I was asked whether I was aroused when watching a sex scene in gay movies, I replied “no.” When I was asked whether I had wet dreams, I said “Ehhmm… not yet.” I was a bit confused [about] why they talked about sex as if it is something really WOW, as if it is really an important
thing, and it must be there. For me, sex is not everything. Sex is not in my brain.

I actually don’t really care, I am what I am. But my friends in the NGO keep asking me, “what are you?” Until one day I read a post about asexuality in an LGBTQI Facebook page, and I felt like “aha”. So I think I’m asexual.


Sebenarnya aku sama sekali gak kepikiran ma hal itu, ya udah ini aku, gituuh. Mikir itu gara-gara sering ditanya ma temen-temen di NGO, aku itu apa. Nah, sampailah aku baca tentang aseksual di FB group tentang equality LGBTQI gituh dan saat itu, kayak tiba-tiba "cling" gituh. Okay,, kayaknya aku aseksual deh.
In this narrative, Heni understands herself using a sexual identification constituted through the discourse of sexual desire, namely, an asexual person. Before, Heni actually did not care to label her sexuality. She simply thought that “I am what I am.” However, it was not intelligible for her friends in an LGBT+ NGO, who “keep asking” about her sexual desire. Her friends’ repetitive and continuous questionings are based on an assumption that everyone must assume a (label of) sexual desire. Eventually, Heni managed to find a label to identify herself with: asexuality. By taking up this asexual subject position, Heni was able to explain her sexual subjectivity through the discourse of sexual desire – a discourse that appeared to be dominant among her friends in her LGBT+ NGO.

However, in examining closely Heni’s narrative in relation to the traditional understanding of asexuality, it is difficult to ignore how sexuality has played an important role in her sense of self. Her work, her study, and her hobby are all related to sexuality. She studied transgendered people’s sexuality for her master’s thesis. She has been intensively involved as an activist in an LGBT+ NGO for several years. One of the topics during our interviews in which Heni showed great passion and excitement in talking about was her interest in yaoi (Japanese gay-themed comics). In this section I will discuss this interest further, as it might have opened up a new possibility of being a (a)sexual subject and simultaneously resist the dominant meanings circulated through the discourse of sexual desire.

Yaoi refers to a fan culture that rereads and reconstructs male heterosexist society along the lines of female desire, particularly in the form of fictional materials around gay relationships (Kotani, 1994). Yaoi is a part of the Japan-originated otaku culture, that is, groups of fans who have strong affinity with fictional characters, possess the object they love through fictionalisation, or make the fiction itself their sexual object (Tamaki, 2007; A. Williams, 2015). Below is Heni’s narrative on her engagement with yaoi:

When I was at Year 4 (±9-10 years old), a friend gave me a yaoi because she said it’s very cute. It’s a kind of comic that was made by a fan, based on the characters in other famous comics/movies. So the writer can pair any characters they like. Starting from this kind of comic, I then explored other things like original gay comics, gay cartoons, and gay movies. Sometimes I
also explored lesbian and transgender movies too. I learned a lot about sexuality from these comics. If I’m not too busy, I usually read at least one fan fiction entry every day.

In Indonesia, there are many yaoi fan clubs. We have our own online forums based on our favourite characters and pairings. Perhaps people will see me and my friends as freaks or mad, because we believe, hope, and want these characters and pairings to be real. Quite often we have online wars (via Twitter, and Tumblr) because we don’t like our favourite character being paired with another character by another fan club. If you have been in this yaoi world for a while, you’ll be able to differentiate which fans really believe the pairings, and which ones are just following popular trends. If you’re just following the trend, you will think that these pairings are just cute “bromance” fantasy in fan fictions. You’ll never think these gay lovers can be real.

When reading yaoi, for me the erotic scene was not the sex, but the moment before sex, when they kiss; and after sex, after ejaculation, when they hug each other. These are my favourite moments.

Eventually I decided to come out to my mom that I like yaoi and so on. My mom was not surprised. She is okay and stayed cool.


Di Indonesia banyak fujoshi, dan kita ada forum-forumnya sendiri tergantung fandom dan pairing yang kita suka. Mungkin orang bakal liat saya dan teman-teman freak atau sudah gila. Karena kita sampai percaya, berharap, dan ingin tokoh-tokoh pairing kita itu real. Gak jarang juga di dunia fandom ituh, cuma
gara-gara pairing itu kita bisa online war, lewat twitter, lewat tumblr. Kalo sudah lama berkecimpung dalam dunia itu, kadang kita bisa sampai bedain mana fujoshi yang bener2 belief di pairing itu atau mereka cuma sekedar have fun ajah, mengikuti arus fandom, mereka lihat itu sebagai bromance, mereka gak pernah sekalipun menganggap di dunia nyata, pairing-pairing itu bakal real, itu cuma fantasi, cute, dan hanya di fanfiction.

Yang aku anggap erotic waktu baca cerita yang ada seksnya itu bukan waktu hubungan seksnya, tapi sebelum mereka berhubungan seks, jadi waktu ciuman gituh, dan setelah berhubungan seks, setelah ejakulasi lah, pas pelukan gituh. Ituh moment yang paling aku suka.

Kalo dari ibuku itu, gak tau kenapa gitu, aku akhirnya memutuskan buat come out kalo aku suka yaoi, cerita gay, bla bla bla. Tapi ibuku komentarnya tetep datar dan biasa ajah.

(Heni, 24, postgraduate student, female, asexual, email interview)

Heni’s relationship with these erotic materials is more than just a hobby, rather, it has become an inseparable part of her sense of self. She has devoted her time every day to read yaoi. She joined a yaoi community. More than just a temporary interest, Heni’s relationship with yaoi has lasted for more than 14 years. She differentiates herself as one who is a “real believer” of this fictional reality from those who are just “following popular trends.” As described by Tamaki (2007), in Japan there is an unwritten consensus that a “real” otaku must do certain things that separate them from run-of-the-mill fans, such as coming to otaku events and dressing up as their favourite character. Heni is also not reluctant to get involved in “online wars” to defend her favourite character from being paired with other characters. She articulates her relationship with yaoi using the same language as an LGBT+ person might by using the term “come out” when she told her mother about it. In her autobiographical writing, Heni describes seven things that represent herself or what she called her “twins,” and one of these twins is yaoi. These narratives show that Heni has developed a long-term, profound, and intimate emotional (and, in a way, sexual) relationship with these materials. Such a relationship fits the criteria of sexual orientation (Corrêa & Muntarbhorn, 2007) if the object is a human being. Reading her narrative through the discourse of sexual desire, it can be
argued that Heni might not be completely asexual. Instead, she might have a kind of sexual
desire which is yet to be named.

Again, there are at least two problems with a reading of Heni’s narrative through the
discourse of sexual desire. The first is a concern over interpretive authority. Heni herself does
not consider her passion and relationship with these fictional materials as her sexual
orientation. Rather, she considers herself as asexual. Naming her desire as something else in
this analysis, to a degree, overrides her way of understanding herself. Secondly, such “desire”
for sexual enjoyment through fictional materials (otaku sexuality) is often considered as not a
“real” sexual desire. Previous studies in Japan have shown that otakus like Heni have often
been stigmatised with various pathological labels (Kotani, 1994; Tamaki, 2007, 2011). Some
traditional assumptions about otaku include immature people who are unable to let go of
infantile transitional objects such as anime and monsters, lacking in social skills and common
sense, solitary and maladjusted, and paedophiles who are incapable of dealing with mature
adults. The common statement people employed toward otaku is “grow up and face reality.”
The dominant meaning circulated around otaku sexuality is that this “desire” is not a real
sexual desire, but is just fictional and immature.

Another dominant meaning around otaku sexuality is that the erotic pleasure enjoyed in these
fictionalised contexts is not “real” (bodily) sexual pleasure, as it is “supposed” to be enjoyed
by mature adults in “real” sexual relationships. Rather, it is seen as merely a “mental
entertainment” just like reading a book or watching a drama series. Heni’s narrative indicates
some textures of erotic pleasure that she enjoyed in reading these yaoi comics, such as the
moments she likes during a kissing scene before sex and a hugging scene after sex. While we
might never know how, and in what ways, reading yaoi brings pleasure to Heni (whether it
was just a kind of mental entertainment or also gave her a bodily sexual sensation), previous
studies have documented that even the pleasure of watching sexually explicit material and
masturbation are still often not considered as “real” sexual pleasure. As articulated cynically
by Azuma (as cited in Tamaki, 2011, p. xxiii): “masturbating to a picture doesn’t add up to
anything … there is a huge difference between masturbation and actual sex acts … Isn’t
masturbation an extension of oral auto-eroticism? Like thumb sucking?”

There have been some attempts to de-pathologise otaku sexuality particularly by arguing that
it can be understood as a “real” or “authentic” sexual desire. The dominant pathologising
meanings around *otaku* sexuality are evidently not always accurate. Heni’s narrative, for instance, does not match these dominant representations of *otakus* as immature and lacking in social skills. She showed that an *otaku* can do (and has done) well in her education, enjoyed her social life with many friends, and held an important position in her LGBT+ NGO. Some scholars (e.g., Kotani, 1994; Tamaki, 2007, 2011) have also argued that this sexual desire within fictional contexts can be understood as “real.” Using Baudrillard’s concept of hyperreality (1994), these scholars argued that, in the technologically advanced postmodern era, reality and the simulation of reality are becoming more and more difficult to distinguish. There is no clear demarcation line between fiction and reality – where one ends and the other begins. Since our access to reality is always constituted through language and discourse, what we understand as the real is actually something layered and increasingly devoid of any fixed foundation. Tamaki (2011) argued that *otaku*s do not avoid reality as is often assumed. Instead, they understand that realities are multiple, and the reality of daily lives is no more “real” than the fictions they read or watch. *Otakus* believe that their sexual attractions to fictions and fictional characters are just as real as those of flesh-and-blood humans.

Whether it is authentic/real or pathological/unreal, naming this fictionalised sexual enjoyment as a desire entails both an enabling and a limiting of possibilities. It specifies a kind of sexual “identity” with certain characteristics, definitions, and categorisations attached to it. While this specification enables a way of giving meaning to one’s sexual subjectivity, it also simultaneously pins down radical potentialities of (*otaku*) sexuality into those specifications. Additionally, in relation to Heni’s narrative in this thesis, a gesture of naming still faces the problem of interpretive authority. Therefore, in order to explore new possibilities and generate new knowledge, my analytical move here will be to discard the tension between to name/not to name Heni’s desire, and begin exploring a new analytical path in engaging with her narrative.

One alternative possibility for reading Heni’s narrative is by focusing on the *ars erotica* of enjoying pleasure instead of the *scientia sexualis* of categorising desire. For, according to Foucault, pleasure has the capacity “to detach the individual from the stable, coherent identity through which modern sexuality is administered and regulated” (Jagose, 2010, p. 523). In analysing Heni’s narrative, this means exploring new possibilities of sexual pleasure instead of new possibilities of sexual orientation. In her narratives Heni actually did not really worry about naming or labelling her desire, except to satisfy her friends who had nagged her
continuously. The larger part of her narrative exhibits more of her excitement, passion, and pleasure in engaging with yaoi materials, including its community, online wars, “unreal” hope, and “madness” or “freak-ness”. Heni has invested her time and energy for more than half of her life in the world of yaoi, not because it is who she is, but because she enjoys it. She reads at least one yaoi fan fiction every day because it gives her pleasure. Her involvement in the yaoi online community and wars has brought passion and excitement into her life. In her autobiographical writing, Heni included yaoi as one of the projections of her self which she described as a friend whose house is very interesting and comforting: “In their house you will feel a great happiness and comfort. You know why? Because they seem to really enjoy everything they do.” These narratives show that pleasure and enjoyment, not any specification of desire, have been a central theme in Heni’s engagement with yaoi.

Heni’s narrative has presented the possibility of engaging in sex and sexuality in a different way, one which is exciting and pleasurable. Although it still can be argued that her pleasure might not be sexual at all, I argue that whether a pleasurable experience is sexual in nature or not will depend on how sex and sexuality are understood. As Rudy (2012) has noted and illustrated:

Sex itself is difficult to define; sexuality pervades many different levels of many different relationships; and sexual identity is famously unstable. Sex is an energy that can be tapped into but never nailed down … if we think we always/already know what sex is … we don’t. (p. 602)

I know I love my dogs with all my heart, but I can’t figure out if that love is sexually motivated … How do we cordon off sexual desire from all the other desires that move our lives? What does sex mean? Do I think I’m having sex with my dogs when they kiss my face? How do we know beforehand what sex is? (p. 605)

Following Rudy’s remark above, we might never know for sure the “nature” of Heni’s pleasure in engaging with yaoi; whether it is sexual or not, just like Rudy herself does not know the “nature” of her relationship with her dogs. Here, instead of seeing this enigma as an analytical limitation, I view this situation as a resistance toward the binary of sexual/non-sexual. By positioning herself as asexual, Heni has occupied a subject position from which
she gave meaning to herself as having no sexual interests or attractions. However, her engagement with *yaoi* resisted this discourse – not by rejecting the whole idea of sexual categorisation, but – by bringing into question the very meaning of sexual interest, attraction, pleasure, and desire. Can we think of Heni as completely not having sexual interest? If not, can we think of Heni as having a kind of sexual interest or attraction (which makes her no longer asexual)? What should we call her sexual orientation then? Is her pleasure in reading *yaoi* completely non-sexual? If not, is it a “real” sexual pleasure? Can her way of being sexual be seen as creative and artistic, an example of Foucault’s aesthetic of existence (1985)? Or is it just immature and pathological? These unanswerable questions substantiate both Rudy’s (2012) statement that we don’t know what sex, sexuality, and sexual desire are and Foucault’s assertion that “no one knows what pleasure is” (Rabinow, 1997, p. 268).

Heni’s narrative has complicated meanings circulated through the discourse of sexual desire which categorises humans into groups of sexual orientation, by indicating the im/possibility of categorising sexual desire as such. While she still occupies one of the subject positions offered, she simultaneously shows an alternative way of being sexual from within/beyond that subject position.

In this section I have discussed a participant, Heni, who has both drawn on and resisted the discourse of sexual desire in the constitution of her sexual subjectivity. She took up the asexual subject position from which she gave meaning to herself as having no sexual interest or attraction. At the same time, her way of understanding her engagement with *yaoi* has brought the discourse of sexual desire into question by showing the complexity and the im/possibility of categorising people into sexual/asexual subject positions. Her narrative also opens up the possibility of new, alternative sexual “desire” or “pleasure” which exists only in fictionalised contexts. This pleasure or desire might be seen as non-sexual, immature, and not a “real” desire, or – in contrast – a site of possibilities, creation, and recreation (Allen & Carmody, 2012); nevertheless, Heni has shown how they have been important parts of her sense of self and sexuality. Her narrative has revealed another form of contestation toward the desire to theorise, categorise, and (de)pathologise sexual desire, and offering a new possibility of engaging sexuality in a pleasurable way. This way of reading is also more faithful to Heni’s own way of describing and articulating herself. In the next section, I will explore another possibility of a new form of sexual pleasure which involved – as Foucault (1997, p. 165) has noted – “very strange parts of our bodies, in very unusual situations.”
Putri’s Story: An Erotic Art of Pleasure/Pain?

The next narrative I discuss is Putri’s (22, college student, lesbian), who was in the last year at university and doing an undergraduate thesis when I interviewed them. Through the discourse of sexual desire Putri has identified themself as a lesbian, and in term of gender, neither man, woman, nor transgender (therefore, addressed here as they). One of the main themes during the interviews is the engagement in what Putri called self-cutting or self-injury behaviour, in which Putri secretly cut their skin with a razor blade when they was in a difficult emotional condition. In analysing this narrative I argue that Putri has both drawn on the discourse of sexual desire in the constitution of their self as a lesbian, and simultaneously resisted this discourse by developing a new alternative of bodily pleasure but without specifying new sexual identification. My analysis of Putri’s narrative invokes Foucault’s (1997) call to cultivate the art of exploring bodily pleasure (which Putri showed through their self-cutting practice), as opposed to the science of specifying, categorising, and (de)pathologising sexual desires. Below is Putri’s story:

Now I start accepting myself as a lesbian. But sometimes, when there were triggers, like difficult circumstances, my hatred toward myself came again. I tried to destroy myself. But I am grateful it is not as bad as it was.

One day, I was feeling down. I didn’t want to do anything. Just stayed in my room. Doing nothing. I have no desire to live. Then I was thinking of taking my own life. It’s better for me to die rather than bring shame to people around me. But suddenly my whole life flashed in front of me, from my childhood to that day. I saw God has always been there, lending me a helping hand. Since then, I promised to never give up, to keep bouncing back, whatever the problem I had.

Now it’s only self-injury that I find really difficult to let go. I still can’t stop cutting. It actually helps me. When I see blood come up, I feel relieved. I am satisfied when I feel pain and blood comes up from my body. If not, I won’t be satisfied. Sometimes I still do it secretly. Not very often, depending whether I can hold it or not. Like recently, it was quite frequent, once a week or fortnight. I gave it all to Jesus, and just keep trying to not do that again.
Sekarang aku mulai bisa terima diriku sebagai seorang lesbian. Tp kalo ada pemicu, kayak banyak masalah gitu, bs muncul lg kebencianannya. Meskipun sekarang masih ada usaha2 untuk menghancurkan diri, tapi aku bersyukur karena ga separah dulu.

Waktu itu aku bener2 lagi down, ga mau ngapa2in, sukanya diem di kamar. Berusaha untuk merasa aku masih hidup. Sering terpikir untuk bunuh diri. Lebih baik aku mati daripada mengecewakan keluarga dan orang2 yang sayang sama aku. Tiba2 terlintas perjalanan hidupku, dari aku kecil ampe saat itu, dan aku melihat Tuhan ternyata selalu ada dan Dia selalu turun tangan untuk semua masalahku. Sejak itulah aku sadar dan selalu berusaha untuk bangkit dari masalahku.


(Putri, 22, college student, lesbian, email interview)

In the constitution of their sexual subjectivity, Putri has taken up a lesbian subject position offered by the discourse of sexual desire. Drawing on this discourse has enabled the constitution of Putri’s sexual attraction to women as an orientation, and Putri has learned to “accept” it as a part of their identity. While Putri’s understanding of their desire is based on this scientia sexualis specifications and categorisations, their narrative also shows an alternative potential of the body to produce pleasure beyond those categorisations of desire. Specifically, I argue that there might be a possibility to see Putri’s engagement with self-cutting as a kind of sexual pleasure, and that this pleasure might be enjoyed ethically – without necessarily being specified as a new sexual orientation.

Previous scholars have identified the relationship between self-cutting (like Putri has practised) and sexuality, through psychoanalysis. Almost always taking place after puberty,
self-cutting has been documented as relating to childhood sexual abuse (Chaplo, Kerig, Bennett, & Modrowski, 2015; Gladstone et al., 2004; Lev-Wiesel & Zohar, 2014; Maniglio, 2011), but with very little awareness of the sexual “nature” or underpinning of one’s self-cutting practice (Suyemoto, 1998). These findings correspond to Putri who started practicing self-cutting after puberty, did not link their sexuality and their self-cutting, and had experiences of child sexual violence (more details in Chapter 7, Section 2). Self-cutting has been analysed as an attempt to self-destroy or self-punish the body, which is viewed as deserving punishment (Hooley, Ho, Slater, & Lockshin, 2010; Klonsky, 2007). Likewise, Putri describes the cutting as a part of their larger desire to “destroy themself” because Putri does not want to “bring shame” to the people around them. By taking control of penetration and pain, self-cutting functions as a defence against an unpleasant sexual complex by turning passive into active engagements (Favazza, 2011; Messer & Fremouw, 2008; Suyemoto, 1998). The sado-masochistic character of self-cutting also accommodates the need to be in control of the painful/pleasurable relationship with the body (Asch, 1988; Gardner, 2013; Parfitt, 2005). Correspondingly, it is this pleasure of pain in an active and fully controlled situation that Putri seeks in self-cutting: “When I see blood came up, I feel relieved. When I feel pain, I am satisfied.” These studies have demonstrated that there is a possibility of giving meaning to Putri’s self-cutting as a sexual engagement, or at least containing some kinds of sexual texture.

However, such reading of Putri’s narrative has again raised an ethical concern of interpretive authority. Putri themself does not give any sexual meaning to the self-cutting. While psychoanalytic scholars above have argued that sexual issues give rise to self-cutting subconsciously, this gesture risks an overriding of Putri’s own way of articulating their (sexual) self, and possibly, a denial of Putri’s agency as a sexual subject. Alternatively, Foucault’s (1997, p. 165) invitation to explore bodily pleasures without necessarily linking them to the notion of sexual pleasure might offer a new insight for this situation. Below is an excerpt from Foucault’s interview with Gallagher and Wilson in 1982:

Michel Foucault: The idea that bodily pleasure should always come from sexual pleasure as the root of all our possible pleasure – I think that’s something quite wrong. These practices are insisting that we can produce pleasure with very odd things,
very strange parts of our bodies, in very unusual situations, and so on.

Interviewer: So the conflation of pleasure and sex is being broken down. Michel Foucault: That's it precisely. The possibility of using our bodies as a possible source of very numerous pleasures is something that is very important.

Following Foucault’s remark above, one way to analyse Putri’s narrative is by focusing on the exploration of new possibilities of pleasure rather than new categorisations of desire. Here, there is no urgency to ask questions such as whether Putri’s pleasure is sexual or not, normal or pathological. Instead, relevant questions will be how to maximise, to intensify, and to ethically engage in these pleasurable acts. As long as they are pleasurable and ethical, it does not matter whether or not they are sexual/non-sexual/normal/pathological/cannot be separated that way. It does not matter they involve very odd things, very strange parts of our bodies, or very unusual situations. By focusing on Foucault’s notion of pleasure instead of desire, the analysis of Putri’s subjectivity might escape from the discourse of pathology and abnormality commonly associated with the concept of desire within scientia sexualis. For, as Foucault identified, “desire holds a grip on the subject which is central to the constitution of a science of sexuality” (Davidson, 2001, p. 213). In contrast, pleasure is only related to itself, it is free of use and almost devoid of meaning (Allen & Carmody, 2012). There is no “abnormal” or “pathology” of pleasure (Davidson, 2001).

Therefore, my discussion here will now shift to the question of ethics: Can self-cutting as an alternative source of bodily pleasure be practised ethically, that is, in term of caring of the self? Although these are very limited, some studies have examined the possibility of self-injury as a pleasurable and ethical practice. Race (2008), for instance, has used Foucault’s ars erotica and scientia sexualis to discuss harm reduction in relation to sex, drugs, and public health. He proposed a recognition of the therapeutic value of pleasure in de-dramatising risks around sex and drugs, and fostering conditions where people can make better choices around care and safety. More specifically, some studies (e.g., Chandler, 2010, 2012; Inckle, 2007, 2011) have argued how self-injury can, and should be, seen as a legitimate and beneficial coping strategy because it provides relief and temporary means of emotional survival. While self-injury has been commonly misunderstood as attempted suicide, these studies showed that self-injury functions as a survival mechanism (Suyemoto, 1998), which is the opposite of a
suicidal act. These researchers have demonstrated how a preventive or “abstinence” approach which attempts to eradicate a person’s self-injury behaviours completely has been ineffective and even intensified the person’s distress. Alternatively, they suggested a harm minimisation approach which views that self-injury may be necessary to provide pleasurable relief at a given point. This approach focuses on supporting the person’s self-injury so that the risk and damage can be minimal but the pleasure is optimal. In this way, self-injury is constituted as an ethical and pleasurable choice one can practise with one’s own body as long as the harm is carefully managed.

Practically, Inckle (2011) has suggested at least three components of a harm-minimisation approach which her participants have demonstrated as beneficial. The first is better support in understanding the risks inherent in different types of self-injury. For self-cutting, it is the attention to nerve, tendon, ligament, and artery which might cause permanent damage or even death when they are cut. The second is better support for the aftercare and wound treatment. She demonstrates that ensuring appropriate aftercare treatments of the wound are not just improving physical well-being, but also enabling self-care and encouraging the emotional well-being of her participants. The third is promotion of safer injuries. In a heightened state of distress, many people have hurt themselves with whatever at hand. For self-cutting, it might be unclean, second-hand, or infected items. Instead of confiscating their tools of self-injury as is often done in the preventive approach, Inckle suggests the provision of a kit of the necessary supplies for safer injuries and aftercare. By doing this, the pleasure and pain of self-cutting can be optimised while still maintaining a reasonable level of safety. Alternative theorisations of self-injury and practical suggestions offered by these scholars have shown how self-cutting might be engaged as an alternative, pleasurable, and ethical practice of self-relation.

In this section I have presented another possibility of engaging with/resisting the discourse of sexual desire as demonstrated by a participant, Putri. In the constitution of their sexual subjectivity Putri has taken up a lesbian subject position offered by the discourse of sexual desire. However, Putri’s narrative also shows resistance toward the discourse of sexual desire – not by challenging the whole idea of sexual categorisations, but – by cultivating alternative subjectivity which fosters a new form of bodily pleasure (Foucault, 1997). Specifically, Putri’s subjectivity disrupts dominant meanings around pleasure/pain and sexual/non-sexual dichotomies by engaging in an erotic art of bodily pleasure through the practice of self-
cutting. While Putri does not identify self-cutting as sexual, they considered it somehow pleasurable and giving them “relief” and “satisfaction.” I have argued that there is a possibility to engage in this pleasure ethically, that is, by understanding and practising self-cutting safely as suggested in the harm-minimisation approach. In analysing Putri’s narrative this section has presented an example of the exploration of pleasure instead of specification and categorisation of new desire (Foucault, 1978, 1997). In the next section I will examine another mechanism of scientia sexualis operating through the discourse of sexual desire, which has also been contested by another participant in this study.

**Anto’s Story: The Art of Discovering, Taking Up, and Enjoying Sexual Desire**

The last section of this chapter will discuss the narrative of Anto (24, NGO activist, male, gay). At the time of interview Anto had just completed his bachelor degree and had been involved in an LGBT+ NGO as an activist for two years. He describes himself as “very out and proud” with his gay identity. In this section I will demonstrate how Anto has taken up a gay subject position offered by the discourse of sexual desire. Simultaneously, his narrative has also resisted the scientia sexualis mechanism of this discourse by showing how his journey of being a gay sexual subject is more esoteric than scientific.

At the age of 7, I already felt different. I was more comfortable playing with girls rather than boys. But I still had one male friend, my neighbour. His name was Johnny. He was naughty and often stole my toys. But I liked playing with him. One day, when there was no one at home, I didn’t remember who initiated, but suddenly we stopped playing marbles and we played doctor. I was the doctor, and I asked him to remove his pants. For the first time in my life I saw a penis other than mine. I touched his penis meticulously to satisfy my curiosity. Then he asked for his turn. Since then, we often did that when we were alone.

At Year 3 (± age 8-9), my cousin often came and played at my house. He was 15. He was funny and liked to play with me. One day, he asked me: “Have you ever played doctor?” I nodded enthusiastically. He lowered my pants and with his big hand he held my penis. I thought it was like me and Johnny playing doctor, but this time it’s different. His hand moved up and down like whisking.
I said: “It’s ticklish..!” But he said: “That’s okay, we’re playing doctor, aren’t we? So you must follow what the doctor said if you want to feel better.” So I stayed silent and let him do what he did. I said: “It feels like I want to wee..!” But he stroked even faster. I shouted “I… wwwwweeed!” and my body shook, but there was no urine. Since then, he often did it with me for almost one year.

I just knew that it’s called masturbation from my friend when I was at intermediate school (± age 12-15). At that time my (male) friends and I watched porn together at school. I was just curious, so I watched it with them. He said, “It’s called onani, dude.” I asked: “What’s that?” “Stroking [the] penis like that.” I said to myself silently, “So what my cousin did to me is called onani!” When I watched that porn, I didn’t realise that my gaze only focused on the male actor. My heart’s racing every time he sighed or showed his penis. When my friends talked about the actress’ breasts – which I thought was not interesting – I felt once again that I am different.

During my intermediate school years I often browsed the Internet. One day I was thinking of browsing male genitals. I typed “penis” and it resulted in various pictures of this heirloom of men in front of my face! Lub-dub-lub-dub-lub-dub. My eyes moved up and down reading lists of website on the screen. Gay… a word that attracts my attention. This word was very alien for me at that time. I typed this word on Google, and the results… I wanted to scream!!! I am not alone!!! Until then I thought I was the only strange creature who is attracted to a same-sex person. But that day, everything was so bright! It’s like a bucket of ice was poured on my head. An overwhelming feeling of relief I could not describe!

Since then, I played my double lives cleverly; high-achieving, good student, but secretly practising gay relationships. But like an Indonesian saying, as skilful as a squirrel jumps, eventually it falls anyway. My mom found out. So I wrote a note, saying that I’m leaving rather than bringing shame to the family. I’ll be back when I’m ready. Depressed, frustrated, ashamed, and fearful were my emotions at that time. Bringing only a few clothes and a little money, I went and stayed with a friend – a gay Muslim preacher living in an Islamic
boarding school. Soon after that my pastor called my mobile. He heard from my mom that I left home. He said I can stay at the church if I’m not ready to go home. After 2 weeks, my pastor told my mom that I stayed at church. She rushed to the church. We sat silently, tearfully. My mom broke the silence, saying that she loves and accepts me just the way I am.


Kakakku terus mengulangi perbuatan itu selama hampir kurang setahun.

Aku tidak tau apa yang terjadi jika Internet tidak menyambangi areaku (saat SMP). Saat itu, terbesit pikiran untuk melihat kemaluan lelaki. Ku ketik di google, "kontol" dan bermunculah berbagai macam gambar yang mempertontonkan pusaka pria. Deg, deg, deg, Mataku terus naik dan turun membaca setiap website yang tertera di layar. Gay... Itu adalah satu kata yang menarik perhatianku. Kata itu sangat asing kala itu. Lalu aku mencoba mengetik kata itu di dalam google. Dan hasilnya... Aku ingin teriak!!! Ternyata aku tidak sendirian!!! Selama ini aku mengira aku adalah satu-satunya makhluk aneh yang tertarik pada sesama. Tapi... hari itu semuanya begitu cerah. Bagaikan disiram es di atas kepalaku,, kelegaan yang tidak bisa aku ungkapkan...

Itu kalimat pertama yang diucapkan ibuku memecah keheningan kami.

(Anto, 24, NGO activist, male, gay, autobiographical writing)

The gay subject position offered by the discourse of sexual desire has enabled Anto to understand his same-sex attraction in a way which he found liberating. He describes that moment as “an overwhelming feeling of relief,” “like a bucket of ice was poured on my head” (a positive experience, because it is generally hot and humid all year in most parts of Indonesia), and “everything was so bright.” The Internet and its search engine have opened up Anto’s access to this discourse and allowed him to find out that he was “not alone” as he thought he was before. The specification, categorisation, and naming of his desire through the discourse of sexual desire were very important and enabling in his understanding of himself as a sexual subject.

As I have discussed in Chapter 2, Foucault (1978) identified how such specification of sexual desire has been a part of the scientia sexualis project, that is, making sexuality an object of science. The focus is on discovering laws, theories, principles, or the “truth” about sexuality. To this end, it has been studied, analysed, theorised, and the findings are disseminated through academic publications. These “truths” are also distributed to a broader audience particularly the younger generation whose sexuality “urgently needs to be regulated.” It is the role of sexuality educators to identify relevant knowledge about sexuality for young people, compile it into lesson plans, and deliver it in the classroom. The purpose is to provide young people with “accurate” scientific knowledge so that they can understand how sexuality works and then make responsible decisions (Allen, 2007a; Steutel, 2009; Whitehead, 2005). For instance, it would have been beneficial for Anto if he was provided with sexuality education at school which informed him about sexual orientation (that he is not “the only strange creature who is attracted to a same-sex person”), and where to find support when one’s mother found out that her son is gay (rather than running away from home). If young people
make responsible decisions about their sexuality (e.g., practising safer sex, avoiding unplanned pregnancy, finding professional support in emotional difficulties, and knowing their sexual rights), then they will be a healthy, happy, and productive future generation. In this way, sexuality education is not just a part of the *scientia sexualis* project, but part of a larger project of power disciplining and governing modern society.

However, Anto’s narrative shows resistance towards this *scientia sexualis* mechanism which reduces sexual desire into a set of “truths” discoverable through academic inquiries and teachable in educational settings. His becoming a gay sexual subject is closer to what Foucault described as the *ars erotica* project rather than the *scientia sexualis* project, that is, an esoteric personal journey instead of a lesson/unit plan. As Foucault (1978) has described, in *ars erotica* the way to gather knowledge is not through scientific methods, but through explorations and personal journeys with a master who holds secret knowledge of sex. Exposed to a kind of formal sexuality education only during the final year of his university study, Anto has learned more about sexual pleasure and desire from various encounters and opportunities beyond school and classroom. His “teachers” were Google, friends, a cousin, childhood sex play, pornography, and religious leaders. His learning involved secret personal exploration, unexpected encounters with pleasure, and social/sexual experimentation. The knowledge, skills, and strategies he learned are more like a masterful art, not a one-size-fits-all prescription. For instance, in Anto’s specific family contexts and specific moments, a runaway from home might have been a much more effective way to let his mother learn to accept gay sexual identity, rather than a well-argued scientific explanation about the “nature” of sexual desire. In the constitution of his sexual subjectivity Anto has shown that to be gay is not only about *scientific* naming and specification. Rather, it is about an *art* of engaging and resisting various discourses of sexuality, an art of negotiating family expectations and one’s desire, and an art of being a sexual subject.

It is important to note that the indirect juxtaposition of formal sexuality education with a personal esoteric journey in this analysis might be (mis)read as a comparison or a judgement in which one is “better” or preferable than another. This is not my aim. There are new possibilities for being sexual subjects which can be opened up through formal sexuality education in Indonesia, particularly that which recognises various sexual orientations. Some of Anto’s experiences might also be concerning in terms of ethics, such as when his older cousin touched and stimulated his penis when he was very young. School-based education for
young children about the body and (not) letting others touch their bodies might have enabled more-informed decisions in such a situation. My point here is that the discourse of sexual desire (with its scientia sexualis mechanisms including sexuality education) has enabled certain ways of seeing and being a sexual subject, and simultaneously constrained other ways. One of these other ways that has been constrained, as Anto’s narrative has shown, is the artistic and personalised approach to learning about sexual desires – where truth and falsehood were not centre stage, but where beauty, pleasure, and self-mastery were. Anto’s experiences of understanding, taking up, and enjoying gay sexual desire are too rich, exciting, and delicate to be contained in a formal classroom setting.

In this section I have discussed one participant, Anto, whose experience contributes a new way to contest the discourse of sexual desire. His narrative displays how the discourse of sexual desire has been drawn on and one of the subject positions offered has been taken up. Simultaneously, resistance toward the scientia sexualis underpinning of this discourse has also been presented in Anto’s narrative. His journey of discovering and taking up this position resembles Foucault’s ars erotica, an esoteric exploration of pleasure and understanding of self in relation to others.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the dominant discourse of sexual desire has been drawn on and resisted by Indonesian Christian participants in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities. Their narratives show alternative ways to resist scientia sexualis mechanisms operating through the discourse of sexual desire which, in some ways, is reminiscent of Foucault’s ars erotica. This means that these participants did not reject the LGBT+ category offered by the discourse of sexual desire, but they took up alternative subject positions from which their sexuality is given meaning in terms of pleasure, relationship, and new possibilities, instead of naming, specification, and classification. For instance, alternative subjectivities they cultivated include some possibilities of a new form of sexual relationship (e.g., Bianda’s relationship without status), pleasure (e.g., Putri’s self-cutting), and learning (e.g., Anto’s journey of taking up of gay identity).

I do not encourage a mere imitation of the alternative ways of understanding and practising sexual desire/pleasure exhibited by participants in this chapter. For instance, I do not suggest
anyone might simply engage in a “relationship without status” like Bianda, to read yaoi like Heni, to cut their skin like Putri, or to run away from home like Anto as a means of resistance. These examples are intended to illustrate new possibilities of being a sexual subject in relation to the discourse of sexual desire, and not intended as prescription. My expectation is that the erotic art of exploring pleasure I discussed here is approached as a site of possibility (Allen & Carmody, 2012), rather than as a manual or a doctrine. After all, the main purpose of this chapter (and this thesis) is the proliferation of new forms of life, love, relationships, pleasures (Foucault, 1997), and new ways of seeing and being a sexual subject.
Sexual violence was initially not one of the foci of my inquiry, however, during interviews many participants brought experiences of sexual violence into our conversations. Their narratives included a range of non-consensual sexual experiences, such as sexual harassment, forced sex, and attempts of forced sex. Some participants had been perpetrators, and others were survivors. Some survivors were violated when they were children, while others when they were teenagers/young people. Some were violated by intimate partners (boyfriend/girlfriend), and others by relatives or acquaintances. For some participants, violence had become an inseparable part of their ways of seeing and being sexual subjects.

This chapter examines the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities through the discourse of sexual violence. Through this discourse, young people’s sexuality is given meaning primarily via the possibility of sexual violence. As discussed in Chapter 2, the discourse of sexual violence has offered at least two binary positions for young people in relation to sex and violence. The first is the heteronormative binary of men as desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable (Boonzaier, 2008; Clarke, 2012; DeShong, 2015; Hollway, 1989; Kitzinger, 2003; Mehta & Bondi, 1999). The second is the binary of adults as powerful/sexually exploitative and children and teenagers as sexually innocent/powerless (Angelides, 2004; Burman, 2003; Clark, 2014; Egan & Hawkes, 2009; Grondin, 2011; Lamb & Plocha, 2014). Previous studies have demonstrated that these positionings have enabled, normalised, and sustained sexual violence particularly against women and children (e.g., Angelides, 2004; Boonzaier, 2008; Egan & Hawkes, 2009; Marcus, 2002; Robinson, 2005), such as through the victim-blaming logic (see Chapter 2 Section 4). In this chapter I argue that, while some young Indonesian participants have taken up these positionings of men, women, adults, and children, their alternative sexual subjectivities have also contested these binary subject positions.

The first section of this chapter discusses the first binary, that is, of men as sexually desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable. The second section focuses on the second binary, namely, the positioning of adults as powerful and sexually exploitative, while
children and teenagers are seen as sexually innocent and powerless. In each section I firstly show how such positioning of men, women, adults, and children featured in participants’ talk about their experiences of sexual violence, and subsequently in the ways they understand themselves as sexual subjects. From the position they occupied, they have been enabled (and constrained) to think, experience, and explain sexual violence in certain ways – which, I argue, tends to justify and normalise sexual violence. I will also examine how some participants have been enabled to resist these binary positionings via a mobilisation of alternative discourses available to them. The unique contribution of this chapter will be its empirical exploration of contextual conditions that have enabled resistance toward the dominant discourse of sexual violence in Indonesia – some of which have not been identified in the existing literature around sexual violence (Chapter 2, Section 4).

**Heteronormative Binary of Men as Desiring/Dangerous and Women as Asexual/Vulnerable**

In this section I argue that the heteronormative binary positioning of men as desiring and dangerous and women as asexual and vulnerable has been drawn on and resisted by young Indonesian Christian participants in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities. As discussed in Chapter 2, this binary has positioned men as “naturally” having a high need for sex, as aggressive, and willing to go to great lengths to have sex with women. In contrast, women are constituted as “naturally” weak, not having much interest in sex, and vulnerable to sexual violence by men (Hollway, 1989). This section will demonstrate how this binary has been both enabled and restricted young Indonesian Christians in giving meaning to their sexual selves in relation to sexual violence.

Ayub (18, male, heterosexual, high school student) is a participant who understood his sexual selves through the positioning of men and women offered by this binary. He talked about his experience several years ago at intermediate school when he considered himself to be “very naughty.” Ayub spoke of sexual violence as mundane, every day, and ubiquitous – as if it is a “normal” part of young people’s lives.

When I was in Year 7 (±13 years old), I was very naughty. In my class at that time there was a girl, like, an easy girl. One day other boys and me played a prank on her. When there was no teacher in the class, we turned the light off,
then we stormed her and grabbed her things (i.e., sexual parts of her body such as vagina, breasts, & buttocks).


(Ayub, 18, male, heterosexual, high school student, autobiographical writing)

As it can be seen in this narrative, this incident did not take place by accident – Ayub and his friends had premeditated the act. They did not do it to random girls in the class, but the survivor was chosen before the incident. They made a plan to specifically target a particular girl. It was not an incidental power cut (which quite often happens in some parts of Indonesia), instead Ayub and his friends turned the lights off. They also did not touch random parts of her body. In his narrative Ayub used the Indonesian words _itu nya_ which I translated here as _her things_. Indonesian young people often replace the official names of sexual parts of the body or any sexual activities with the pronoun “it” or “that thing” since it is socially inappropriate to mention them explicitly. In Ayub’s case, “her things” referred to the vagina, breasts, and buttocks of the survivor. This harassment was done publicly – in a classroom, within school hours, and in the presence of other students.

Ayub used at least two ways to justify and normalise this incident, both of which draw on the heteronormative binary of men as sexually desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable. Firstly, Ayub portrays this incident as a “prank” which implies that it was something not serious, jokey, and common among young people. He trivialises the incident as a “prank,” which is something “normal” among young people. This is similar to participants in Robinson’s (2005) study in which Australian male students drew on the notion of “it’s only a joke” (p. 25) and “it was normal” (p. 26) to explain the sexual harassment they carried out. Harassing girls is considered as a “normal” part of being boys – who are assumed as heterosexual, sexually desiring, and “naturally” aggressive.

Secondly, Ayub refers to the survivor by using the term “easy girl.” As I have noted above, the survivor in this incident was not a random girl but was specifically selected because she was (understood as) an “easy girl.” While Ayub did not elaborate what he meant by this term,
another participant, Daniel, talked about this “easy girl,” and provided his own definition of this term:

> It is a girl who is willing to give you anything (i.e., sex) as long as you give her a little attention. The life of this kind of girl will definitely be broken. It is impossible for them to build a family, they surely will cheat. There are many easy girls at school, but not many people know which ones.

*Cewek gelemen itu asal diperhatikan pasti mau ngasi segalanya. Hidupnya pasti rusak. Ga mungkin membina rumah tangga dengan baik, pasti selingkuh.
*Cewek gelemen banyak koq di sekolah, tapi jarang yang tau.*

(Daniel, 17, high school student, male, heterosexual, instant messenger interview)

The original term Daniel and Ayub used was Indonesian-Javanese slang *cewek gelemen* which I translated here as “easy girl.” The word *cewek* means girl, and the word *gelemen* refers to the nature of being willing to do anything. Based on Daniel’s description, an “easy girl” is a girl who is perceived as one who easily gives in to sex, and therefore she is understood as having no future in terms of a long-term, stable, married relationship.

Perceived as behaving “inappropriately” (i.e., she had previously engaged in sex), the easy girl position represents a failure in conforming to the binary of men as desiring and women as asexual, and thus, she must take the blame when men harass her. Since she had refused to comply with “acceptable” social practices, it is rendered “logical” that she became the victim of the boys’ harassment. She had “provoked” men to engage in violence against her. Previous studies identify this way of understanding sexual violence as the victim-blaming logic (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003, 2004; Hlavka, 2014; Kiguwa et al., 2015; Mosha, 2013; O’Neill, 1998). Another participant, Ishak, also confirms this way of thinking: “If I date a good girl I will also do good to her, I will not destroy her life (i.e., he will not have sex with her); but if I date an easy girl I will definitely do that sinful act (i.e., having sex)” *Jika saya mendapatkan cewek yang baik-baik saya akan juga gak bakal melakukan yang aneh-aneh, tidak mau menghancurkan hidupnya. Tapi jika saya mendapatkan cewek yang nakal saya pasti akan melakukan hal yang berdosa tersebut.* (Ishak, 19, high school student, male, heterosexual, autobiographical writing). By positioning the survivor as an “easy girl,” these young Indonesian Christians were enabled to conceive of their sexual harassment as “normal”
or as a “logical” consequence for women who do not behave in accordance with gendered norms in relation to sex.

The binary of men as sexually desiring and women as asexual – which underpins the victim-blaming logic of this incident – is not just drawn on by male participants in this study. Some female participants also drew on this binary in giving meaning to their sexual selves. Yuyun (16, high school student, female, heterosexual), for example, describes herself in a way that is reminiscent of Daniel’s description of an easy girl. However, she did not use the term “easy girl” to identify herself, rather, she used the term “like a prostitute.” In her story, Yuyun initially considered herself as a “good girl,” but then she consented to engage in sex after her boyfriend (whom she loved very much) asked her repeatedly, and then he left her to marry another girl who was already pregnant by him. After that, Yuyun began to engage in sexual relationships with other boys; or in her words, she began acting “like a prostitute.”

After I lost my virginity I felt like my life has no meaning and my self has no value. So every time I knew a boy and fell in love with him, I always did it [i.e., sex]. I actually feel ashamed, ashamed because my life has been broken, like a prostitute, I did it repeatedly. But I’m so stupid. I was always tricked by boys [into sex].

*Setelah saya kehilangan keperawanan saya, saya merasa hidup dan diri saya tidak ada arti dan harganya lagi, hingga setiap saya mengenal orang yang saya sayang, saya selalu melakukan (making love). Sebenarnya saya malu, dan malu, diri saya sudah rusak dan seperti pelacur, melakukan hubungan seperti itu berkali-kali. Tetapi bodohnya saya itu saya selalu ditipu oleh cowok.*

(Yuyun, 16, high school student, female, heterosexual, autobiographical writing)

As it is evident in this narrative, Yuyun devalued (“my life has no value”), shamed (“I actually feel ashamed”), and somehow blamed herself (“I’m so stupid”) for her engagement in sex with multiple partners. She believes that her failure to conform to the asexual ideal of the “good” woman has made her life have “no meaning” and her self to have “no value.” While she also expressed anger toward her boyfriend in her narrative (more in Chapter 5 Section 1), she also pointed the finger at herself (“I’m so stupid. I was always tricked by
boys.”). Drawing on the gendered binary where boys are constituted as “naturally” sexually desiring and willing to go great lengths to have sex, it is the girl’s own fault if she lets boys trick her into sex. She should know they are dangerous and she is vulnerable, so she should stay away from them. In other words, she should be the gate-keeper of her (a)sexuality (Gavey, 2005; Hlavka, 2014; Lees, 1997). Here, there is no recognition of women’s sexual desire, because they are positioned as completely asexual. This narrative shows how Yuyun has drawn on the binary of men as desiring and women as asexual in giving meaning to her experience and her sexual self.

In addition to Yuyun’s self-blame, another point I want to draw attention to here is the way Yuyun articulated the “consensuality” of her experience of sex. She did not say that she was forced or threatened, but rather, she decided to accept her boyfriend’s requests for sex. Using the understanding of sexual violence as non-consensual sexual acts, Yuyun boyfriend actually did not do anything violent – neither force nor threats were used by him to make Yuyun have sex with him. Instead, he made Yuyun “really love[s] him,” so that she was willing to “abandon everything” including her virginity (autobiographical writing). This might not be understood as sexual violence; however, Yuyun’s narrative demonstrates how her boyfriend did not show any intention of building an honest and ethical sexual relationship with her. Considering the social importance of girls’ virginity in Indonesian society, exiting his relationship with Yuyun abruptly after having sex with her may be seen as unethical – a decision which made Yuyun feel her life had “no meaning” and her self to have “no value.” This is reminiscent of Carmody’s (2003, 2015) suggestion of moving away from conventional sexual-violence-prevention strategies, such as teaching Yuyun how to say “no” to her boyfriend’s request for sex, to a focus on building an ethical sexual relationship for all (not just for girls). To discuss this point more comprehensively, I will return to this notion of ethical relationships later in this chapter when I discuss other participants’ narratives in the next subsection.

So far in this section I have discussed the narratives of Indonesian Christian young people who understand their sexual selves through the binary of men as sexually desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable in relation to the discourse of sexual violence. Corresponding with previous studies (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003, 2004; Hlavka, 2014; Kiguwa et al., 2015; Mosha, 2013; O’Neill, 1998), accommodation and reproduction of this binary have made possible the logic of victim (self-)blaming among these young Indonesian
participants, and therefore, serve to help normalise sexual violence against women. In the next part, I will explore narratives of resistance towards this binary in the constitution of Indonesian Christian participants as sexual subjects.

Participants’ narratives in this thesis display various examples of resistance towards the binary of men as sexually desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable. Each of them have their own ways of opening up the possibility of alternative sexual subjectivity and also their own limitations. One participant who demonstrates a kind of resistance is Anggi, who has shared her story about how she refused her ex-boyfriend’ attempts to make her have sex with him.

It was not easy to refuse him [boyfriend] at that time. I was alone, this is unsafe actually, in my flat in another town. I was on a management trainee program there for a few months. That night we hung out, had dinner, then he drove me home to my flat. Yeah, a little cuddling, smooching, then it’s going a bit further. But I stopped it when it started to move to the bed. We’re still in our clothes. I said I’m not ready. He asked why. I repeated that I’m not ready. I was not easy to convince him. He kept asking why I’m not ready. He said, “Come on, I promise I’ll be gentle.” I replied, “I’m just not ready. Don’t push me!” Then, because my voice was raised, he stopped. Well, I understand why he was like that. It’s because he was sexually active with his ex. Then he met me, who made it clear that if I say no it means no, and don’t even try to push me.

Memang situasi pas nolak mantan itu susah, aku sendirian, dan sebenarnya ngga aman, aku lagi di kost, dan itu di kota “X”, aku waktu itu sedang ikut program management trainee, jadi well, detailnya adalah setelah hanging out, dating, dinner, trus dia anter pulang trus ya, a lil cuddling, smooch, trus its going a bit further ya, tp aku berhentiin pas udah mulai ke bed (masi pakaian lengkap) , aku blg aku blom siap, trus dia nanya knapa, ya aku blg belom siap, agak susah ngeyakinin nya, dia trus nanya "knapa belom siap? ayolah, aku pasti pelan2 kok." ya aku bilang, aku belom siap aj, jangan maks. trus dia ngerti soalnya aku ganti nada yang agak sinis. well, aku ngerti juga dia begitu, karena dia kan dulu nya sexually active sama mantannya, trus ketemu aku yang jelas2 klo ngga mau ya ngga mau & jangan maks.
Reading Anggi’s narrative through the binary of men as sexually desiring and women as vulnerable, it can be considered “normal” for Anggi’s boyfriend to ask for sex in this situation. Anggi’s decision to take her boyfriend to her flat alone after dinner and then have “a little cuddling and smooching” might be interpreted as “asking for it,” so that it was not her boyfriend’s fault if she was forced into sex. However, Anggi does not subscribe to this way of understanding sexual violence. Rather, she believes no one should engage in sexual activity unless it is completely consensual. Anggi does not consider a boyfriend pressuring his girlfriend as a “normal” or “everyday” matter, but as something to be taken seriously. She made it clear to her ex-boyfriend that asking her repeatedly to have sex is offensive to her. Although she is considerate of her ex-boyfriend’s sexual history, it does not justify his attempt to make Anggi engage in sex without her full consent.

Drawing on the notion of “sex must be consensual” has enabled Anggi to resist the positioning of women as vulnerable. Her narrative presents an example of how women need not be passive and weak, but able to speak up and stand up for what they believe. In her situation, the strategy of “just say no” seemed to work, in that it stopped her boyfriend’s pressure to make her have sex with him. However, there are also limitations to this act of resistance. As feminist scholars have previously argued, the strategy of “just say no” is problematic on several grounds (Gavey, 2005; Holland et al., 1998). Firstly, it still locates the responsibility of preventing sexual violence to women. It reinforces the idea that men are “naturally” desiring, so that women need to manage the risks of sexual violence by refusing or stopping them. In other words, women are still the “gate-keepers” of sexual violence. This positioning of women leads to the next limitation of this strategy, that is, it still reproduces victim-blaming logic. Since women are the gate-keepers, they can be blamed if violence eventually occurs. It is still her fault for not stopping the violence from happening. Another limitation is that it still denies women as legitimate sexual subjects (Allen, 2005b). The strategy of “just say no” implies that women do not have sexual desires, so that they can easily say “no” because they have no desire to engage in sexual activity. This relocates women to the asexual subject position.

Another example of resistance – which specifically challenges this presumed asexuality of women – is demonstrated by Lusi (22, medical student, female, heterosexual). Below is her
story around her sexual experience with her boyfriend which indicates her understanding of herself as a sexual subject:

Coming from a not-so-good family relationship, I want more love and intimacy. So I have sex with my boyfriend. I think nowadays such a thing is quite common, depending in which community you are. My boyfriend tends to be passive in our dating relationship. We’ve been together for one year and he never took initiatives, even like holding my hand. Quite the opposite, it is me who is aggressive in this relationship. The first time we did it was when we went for a vacation. To save money we only booked one hotel room. A twin-bed. But because of the hotel’s mistake we ended up in a double-bed room. That was the first time we slept together in a bed. At first nothing happened. We just slept at the opposite ends of the bed because we were still shy. But because basically I’m an aggressive person, I started to hug him and kiss his lips when we were on the bed. After a couple of vacations like that, our relationship has developed into what we do now (i.e., sex). Usually when we want to do it, we just book a hotel room. But most of the time, we did it when we were on vacation. I have to hold myself back a little bit, because I know my boyfriend is a passive person. (email interview)

In a way Lusi’s story is a reversal of Yuyun and Anggi’s narratives, in that she – instead of being pressured to have sex or struggle to refuse sex – is the one who wanted, initiated, and took control of the sex. She even had to “hold herself back a little bit” to balance the relationship with her boyfriend. Lusi also does not hesitate to label herself as “aggressive” in her relationship, as compared to her boyfriend who is described as sexually “passive” because he “never took initiatives.” Lusi does not view her sexual engagement and initiative as unique or different from other young people, but “normal” and common among her peers (“such a thing is quite common, depending in which community you are”). She also does not see herself as “easy,” “stupid,” “sinful,” or “immoral.” Instead, she expresses a sense of entitlement to her sexual desire (Fine, 1988), in which she believes she deserved to experience love and intimacy through sex with her boyfriend because her family upbringing did not really satisfy her need for love and intimacy. The way Lusi understands herself as a sexual subject in relation to her boyfriend contests the binary of men as sexually desiring and women as asexual. Her narrative demonstrates a reversal of this binary, in which she as a woman is positioned as desiring and her boyfriend as lacking in sexual desire.

This kind of reversal narrative is very rare in my research and previous research among Indonesian young people, and possibly rare more generally as well given the sexual mores of Indonesian society. In order to explore (discursive) conditions that might have given rise to her alternative subjectivity, here I will investigate Lusi’s narrative closely particularly her family, religion, and education backgrounds. Lusi describes herself as coming from a family that “struggles financially” and her parents wanted their children to “understand the condition.” Her parents demanded “academic achievement” of their children so that they can have a better future. Her mother left for work in another town when she was 10 years old, and her father passed away when she was in high school. She describes her studying in medical school as the result of her hard academic work. She used to take care of herself and makes decisions independently quite early, such as when she decided to go to church alone riding her bicycle when her mother left for work in another town. She also decided to leave the
church after she was disappointed with the lack of support from the church when her father passed away. Throughout the interviews, Lusi expressed herself as an independent, hard-working, and courageous person. In terms of sexual experiences, Lusi explored and engaged in sex chats with foreigners when she was in intermediate school. She started to think about having sexual intercourse when she studied at the university.

There was a subject on the biology of human development which taught me that desire for sex is basically normal. It is a normal human need. It’s only the moral and religious values that repress this need. Some of my friends at uni often talked about their sexual experiences. What they think is quite the same with me: as long as you maximise the protection, sex is all right. (email interview)

Ada pelajaran mengenai perkembangan biologis manusia yang salah satunya menyebutkan bahwa keinginan manusia untuk berhubungan sexual sebenarnya adalah hal wajar bila tidak terbentur oleh nilai moral dan agama. Beberapa teman juga dengan enjoy menceritakan tentang pengalaman-pengalaman mereka. Kira-kira yang mereka ceritakan juga sama, tentang apa yang mereka pikir bahwa sex itu seharusnya tidak dilarang, asal memaksimalkan pengamanan maka melakukan sex itu tidak apa-apa.

By drawing on the biological discourse that sexual desire is “normal” for a human being (not just for men), Lusi has been enabled to understand herself as a legitimate sexual subject who is entitled to engage in sex. This discourse is predominant amongst her friends at the university too, so that Lusi was able to see this understanding of sex as “common” or “normal.” Additionally, her disappointment with, and distancing from, the church has enabled her to doubt the authority of religious moral discourses that repress this “human need” (“it’s only the moral and religious values that repress this need”). Her family upbringing, religious experiences, university education, and circle of friends in some ways have also contributed to her sense of independence and confidence in making decision, including her decision to engage in sex with her boyfriend.

However, Lusi’s alternative sexual subjectivity that resists the binary of men as sexually desiring and women as asexual also entails some limitations. One limitation is that it still operates within a heteronormative model of a sexual relationship, in which sexual
relationship (including the possibility of sexual violence within it) occur among opposite sexes. Another participant in this study demonstrated how resistance toward this binary can be done by challenging the heteronormative foundation of this binary. Below is a narrative from Bianda about her experience of sexual violence.

Teguh: I want to learn from you about ML (making love) in the bisexual and lesbian world. Any experience you want to share?

Bianda: My first time was when my ex (-girlfriend) forced me. She threatened to leave me if I refused. So I reluctantly did it.

Teguh: How do you feel about it?

Bianda: That first experience made me hate her, [I was] emotional, and regretful. I regretted why it has to be her, my ex, who forced me and not somebody else. But it is a lie if I say I didn’t enjoy it. But still, in doing it I felt so unwilling. After that incident, I started to get used to doing it [making love]. I feel like I have broken my promise to myself [about not having sex], so what’s the point, let’s go all the way. But I make a new commitment: I will only have sex with women, not with men.

Teguh: Saya pengen belajar dari kamu tentang ML di dunia bi dan lesbi. Ada pengalaman yang kamu mau ceritakan?


Teguh: Gimana perasaanmu tentang pengalaman pertama itu?


(Bianda, 24, office worker, female, bisexual, instant messenger interview)
As previous studies have noted (Kramer, 2015; Knauer, 1999; Malinen, 2013), same-sex sexual violence has disrupted the heteronormative assumptions behind the binary of men as desiring and women as asexual. Same-sex sexual violence is difficult to comprehend through this binary (Braun et al., 2009; Gilroy & Carroll, 2009). For instance, this heteronormative binary cannot be drawn on to understand Bianda’s experience of sexual violence on the part of her girlfriend: if women are passive and asexual, why did her girlfriend do it? Bianda’s experience does not just position women as desiring, but also able to perform sexual violence – a situation which goes entirely against the positioning of women as asexual and vulnerable.

This situation might be heteronormalised again by designating the female perpetrator as taking up the “male” role in the relationship. However, Bianda did not give meaning to her experience through such a heteronormative way of understanding same-sex sexual violence. Instead, as her narrative indicated, Bianda finds her experience of sexual violence difficult to comprehend. She is confused as to why her intimate partner did it to her (“Why it has to be her, my ex, who forced me?”). In a way, being forced into sex by her girlfriend was unthinkable for her. Her girlfriend is a woman whom she knew well, not a (random) man who is “naturally” desiring and sexually aggressive. She was also unprepared to experience a mixture of negative feelings and pleasure during the incident, such as how she used the phrase “it is a lie if I say I didn’t enjoy it” – as if she should not say it is enjoyable but because she wanted to be honest, she said it. Previous studies have documented that some survivors of sexual violence experienced a sensation of pleasure during the incident (Allen, 2012; Angelides, 2004; Ford, 2009). Some of these survivors felt guilty about it, because such pleasure incited a degree of self-blame. To some extent Bianda also took the blame as seen in how she said she had broken her “promise to not having sex,” instead of her girlfriend forcing her. After the incident Bianda stayed in the relationship, and she consented to the subsequent sexual activities (“I started to get used to doing it.”). As Elizabeth (2003) has noted, lacking discursive resources to understand sexual violence has made survivors unable to make decisions to leave or confront an abusive partner. Bianda’s narratives show her experience of same-sex sexual violence has challenged the heteronormative binary of men as desiring and women as asexual. However, the dominance of this binary has also resulted in a lack of other discourses for her to draw on in giving meaning to same-sex sexual violence.
So far, examples of contestation of the binary of desiring men/asexual women presented here are from female participants’ narratives. The next example will be a narrative from a male participant, Daniel (17, high school student, male, heterosexual). His narrative demonstrates how the dominant meanings around men, women, and sexual violence can be reworked, but at the same time also still reproduce this binary.

I have decided to repent and leave all my past sins. Through all the teaching, mentoring, and especially three Promise Keepers camps I have gone through, I have made a commitment to not tricking girls anymore. Now I believe that sex is created by God to be enjoyed in a true relationship (i.e., marriage). I know I am still weak and often fall in this sin, but I try as best I can to pursue purity. My heart becomes restless when I’m living in sin. Now I am always honest, no more lies in any relationships. I don’t want to date girls anymore. Dating is only for fun, seeking reputation as a stud. Now I will only engage in a committed and respectful relationship. (autobiographical writing)


Daniel has engaged in sexual activities with his girlfriends in the past. Since he became a born-again Christian, his intense involvement in church activities has changed his way of seeing life, including in relation to sexuality. He has made a commitment to refrain from any sexual practices (“to pursue purity”), such as sexual intercourse, masturbation, and pornography. One important milestone in this process is the Promise Keepers camp which he had attended three times. Promise Keepers is a worldwide evangelical Christian men’s movement which promotes moral, spiritual, and sexual purity (Claussen, 2000; Donovan, 1998; R. Williams, 2001). In Indonesia their camps and rallies are often conducted on a
massive scale, and filled with strong messages, testimonies, and challenges for men and boys to radically change their lives. Some of these challenges include a return to the functional role of father as the leader in the family, a promise to be faithful to their wives (or to be sexually abstinent before marriage), and most importantly, a commitment to pray, go to church, and follow Jesus’ example (Claussen, 2000; Donovan, 1998).

While the Promise Keepers movement and Daniel’s narrative do not challenge traditional gendered power relations, they at least have opened up a possibility to rework the positioning of men as sexually desiring and dangerous in relation to sexual violence. Being a man is no longer associated with a “Rambo-like figure who make sense [of] his world only through violence” (Deardorff, 2000, p. 85). Instead, it is about love, integrity, faithfulness, and “leadership [over women] through humble servitude” (Deardorff, 2000, p. 85). Here, violence becomes unacceptable for gaining masculine status (Flood, 2015; Robinson, 2005). As Hartley (1994, p. 99) puts it: “Our masculinity is not determined according to the size of our biceps. Instead, our masculinity is determined in part by how effectively we can embrace our wife and draw her close to our side.” Daniel articulates his redefinition of sex and masculinity by highlighting his commitment to “not tricking girls anymore” and to engage with them in a “committed and respectful relationship.” Drawing on this understanding of men, women, and violence, the blame in an incident of sexual violence is now removed from the women survivors to men’s failure to live in God’s truth. While men’s sexual desire is still understood as “normal,” the violent and unethical expressions of it are not. In this way, men and boys are acknowledged as sexual subjects, but these subjects also have to control their desires and pursue an abstinent lifestyle.

Daniel’s narrative presents an alternative way to resist the normalisation of sexual violence through the binary of men as desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable. While his narrative in a way still reproduces this binary positioning of men and women, it rejects the normalisation of sexual violence traditionally associated with it. Drawing on the redefinition of masculinity from a Christian evangelical movement, Daniel has been enabled to de-naturalise violence in young people’s sexual relationships and focus on building respectful relationships. In Indonesian contexts, a similar redefinition of masculinity has also been offered by some NGOs, such as Aliansi Laki-laki Baru (New Men’s Alliance) which is influenced more by feminism and progressive Islamic teachings (“Aliansi,” 2014).
This section has discussed how Indonesian Christian participants have both drawn on, and resisted, the binary of desiring men and asexual women in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities via the discourse of sexual violence. I have demonstrated various conditions that have given rise to (and constrained) their subjectivities within the discursive landscape they inhabit. By identifying various possibilities of resisting this binary, this section seeks to contribute new academic critiques in the struggle against sexual violence in Indonesia. In the next section, I will examine another binary positioning that is dominant among young Indonesian participants, namely, the binary of powerful adults and powerless children and young people.

**The Binary of Adults as Powerful/Sexually Exploitative and Children as Innocent/Powerless**

The discourse of sexual violence has offered another binary for young Indonesian Christians to understand their sexual selves, namely, the binary of adults as powerful/sexually exploitative and children as innocent/powerless. As discussed in Chapter 2, in this binary children and teenagers are constituted as sexually innocent, unable to understand and make decisions about sexuality, and thus vulnerable to sexual abuse by adults (Egan & Hawkes, 2009; Robinson, 2013). Children are not recognised as sexual subjects, and thus have no sexual agency. In contrast, adults are positioned as powerful, predatory, and sexually exploitative in relation to children and teenagers. Previous studies have indicated that the dominance of this binary might have enabled and normalised child sexual violence (Angelides, 2004; Burman, 2003; Clark, 2014; Grondin, 2011; Lamb, 1986). By positioning children and adults through this binary, it becomes “natural” for adults to exercise overwhelming power over children, and this overwhelming exercise of power might always be easily abused, particularly sexually. Consequently, constant surveillance and excessive control of children’s sexuality by adults have become acceptable methods of prevention of child sexual violence (Angelides, 2004; Egan & Hawkes, 2009). This section examines narratives from three young Indonesian Christians who have engaged in sexual interaction with adults when they were children or teenagers. I will firstly demonstrate how these participants have access to and have drawn on this binary in giving meaning to their experience of sexual violence. Subsequently, I will explore how their alternative subjectivities might resist dominant meanings circulated by the discourse of sexual violence through this binary.
One of the participants who experienced sexual violence when they were children was Putri. Below is Putri’s story which shows how this binary has been drawn on in their understanding of child sexual violence:

I was harassed several times by different people since I was in elementary school: a friend of my uncle, 2 female cousins from another town, and another female cousin from my hometown who asked me to oral her body. All these have left scars in my heart. But the one that traumatised me was my parents’ employee. Same person, three times, at my house, when nobody’s home. He knew that I cannot do anything when someone yelled at me. When my parents found out, they never leave me alone at home anymore. … Since then, I hate the penis. I feel nauseous every time I see any thick liquid. This experience made me think that all men are bastards. I really hate men, sex, and marriage – I am afraid of all those things. I am afraid to marry. I am afraid and hate sexual relationships with men, because it’s always painful for me. Their world is cruel. They can ask and force others to do anything they want. They touched all my body without feeling guilty. I was just a 12-years-old kid, they should protect and care for me. But they treated me as their sexual object, to satisfy their evil lust.

As seen in this narrative, these incidents of sexual violence when Putri was young have shaped the way Putri gives meaning to understanding sex and their own sexual selves. Putri describes how those incidents have deeply and permanently wounded them (“traumatised me,” “left scars in my heart”). Putri’s feelings about “men, sex, and marriage” were marred because of these experiences of sexual violence. Although also harassed by women (three female cousins), Putri was particularly “traumatised” by the sexual violence by a man (i.e., their parents’ employee). As a result, Putri is both “afraid of” and “hate[s]” men. Putri cannot stand seeing a penis, and even “any thick liquid” makes them “nauseous.”

Underpinning Putri’s account of their experience of sexual violence is the binary of adults (in this case adult men) as powerful/sexually exploitative and children as powerless/innocent. Putri believes that “all men are bastards,” particularly in terms of their exploitative character (“they touched all my body without feeling guilty”). Putri describes adult men as sexually predatory, are full of “evil lust,” and “cruel,” and Putri’s relationships with them were always “painful.” Putri also views adult men as powerful and unstoppable (“they can ask and force others to do anything they want.”). In contrast, Putri describes themself as a child/teenager as innocent and in need of protection (“I was just a 12-years-old kid, they should protect and care for me”). Putri uses the word “sexual object” to illustrate how those adults have treated them—which implies a sense of passivity, powerlessness, and lack of agency. During the incident Putri “[could not] do anything” when the perpetrator yelled at them, because he knew it would immobilise Putri. Drawing on this binary, the solution taken by Putri’s parents was by not leaving Putri alone at home anymore – an adult had to stay with Putri to protect them at all times. While it has evidently given Putri a degree of protection, this prevention method further normalised the belief that adults are powerful and children are powerless and vulnerable. Alternatively, in the next discussion I will examine other participants’ narratives in order to explore possibilities of resisting this discursive binary in the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities.
One participant’s narrative that might contest the positioning of adults and children through this binary is Daniel’s story. Beside his repentance narrative in the previous section, during the interview Daniel also shared his experience of sex with an adult when he was 12.

When I was 12 years old there were two female seminary students from another town came to my church to do their internship. I was interested in one of them because she had a pretty face and a sexy body. After one month we were involved in church activities together, we engaged in this sexual sin. It started when we were alone in the church’s music studio. At that time we were just looking at paintings on the wall. Then I approached her, and I don’t know why I just suddenly had the courage to kiss her cheek. She looked at me. I was terrifyingly afraid. But then she suddenly pulled me and kissed my lips. We kissed, and then she led me to the church attic to do something more. I was confused and afraid she might get pregnant. I asked her and she said she was on the pill so she won’t get pregnant. Then we had sex there. For the next three months, we did it almost every day in her bedroom within the church area. I told my friends at school and my cousins about it (but not my friends at church) and it made me feel proud. I didn’t feel ashamed at all. After a while I started to feel bored with her and I ditched her by coming only when I wanted sex. One day she said her internship was almost finished and she would soon return to her hometown. I was happy because finally I would be free from the commitment and responsibility. I distanced myself from her by saying I wanted to repent from this sin, and also because she was 6 years older than me. She was upset and perhaps bitterly angry with me, because one week before she left I didn’t talk to her at all. Later, after she left I felt guilty. I tried to apologise but I wasn’t able to contact her.

Ketika saya berusia 12 tahun, datang 2 mahasiswi dari STT di kota “X” yang mau pelayanan di gereja saya. Awalnya saya hanya tertarik pada salah satu yang mempunyai wajah yang cantik dan tubuh yang sexy. Hingga 1 bulan kita pelayanan saya pun jatuh dalam dosa seksual. Cerita berawal ketika saya dan dia berada di studio musik gereja. Saat itu kami hanya berdua melihat-lihat lukisan di studio tapi saya mendekati dia dan entah bagaimana tiba-tiba saya berani mencium pipinya. Dia hanya melihat saya dan saya

(Daniel, 17, high school student, male, heterosexual, autobiographical writing)

This narrative presents a sexual relationship between Daniel as a teenager and a woman who was six years older than him. Drawing on the binary of adults as powerful and children/teenagers as powerless, Daniel might be positioned as the vulnerable victim. However, this narrative can also be understood through the binary of men as sexually desiring and women as vulnerable – which, in contrast, positions Daniel as the desiring and dangerous (because he is male), and the seminary student as the vulnerable victim (because she is female). This narrative does not involve one person using force or threats to make the other person engage in sex. Rather, it involves two persons who were willingly engaged in a sexual relationship, but one of them was considered unable to give consent because of his age. Located at the intersection of these binaries, Daniel’s narrative might offer some possibilities to contest the dominant discourse of sexual violence, that is, the possibility of reversing and complicating these binaries. Additionally, I will also discuss an example of ethical negotiations in sexual relationship (Carmody, 2003, 2015) this narrative might offer as an alternative to sexual violence.
Daniel’s story troubles the binary of adults as powerful/sexually exploitative and children and teenagers as innocent/powerless, because as the teenager in this narrative he did not show sexual innocence and powerlessness. Daniel considers himself as the one who had the first physical/sexual interest in the other person (“I was interested in one of them because she has a pretty face and a sexy body”). He also initiated the first intimate physical contact (i.e., “kissing her cheek”). Different from the teenage participants in Phillips’ (1999) study who agentically made a decision to enter the relationship but struggled to maintain and exit the relationship, Daniel was able to make decision both to initiate and end the relationship (“I started to feel bored with her and I ditched her”). This analysis showed how Daniel is not the innocent victim in this relationship, but rather, to a degree he has taken up the role of the active and desiring agent. A discourse of men as sexually desiring might have enabled Daniel to give such meaning to his sexual self. Daniel’s bragging about his sexual experience (“I told my friends … and it made me feel proud”), for instance, might indicate his accommodation of the gendered meanings of sex – in which for young women it is shame and guilt and for young men it is pride and joy (Holland et al., 2000; Sprecher, Barbee, & Schwartz, 1995). By drawing on this discourse, Daniel has been enabled to understand himself as a desiring sexual subject, and thus disrupted the dominant positioning of adults as powerful/exploitative and children and teenagers as innocent/powerless.

However, Daniel might not be the only active and desiring agent in the relationship. As Johnson (2010) has demonstrated, female adults in her study did not directly initiate sexual relationship with the young male teenager. Rather, they set up situations where intimate relationships could take place, so that they can just passively give in to the temptation. Without Daniel’s awareness, the seminary student might have been “preying” on him and staged situations where Daniel could make his first move. Why were they looking at paintings alone in a sound-proof church music studio (instead of practising music or doing rehearsal)? Why was she on contraceptive pills if she had no plan to engage in sex? As Phillips (1999) has identified among her participants, teenagers may not realise the problems with their relationship with adults when they were in the relationship, but after the relationship ended they can look back and see how the relationship was, in some ways, exploitative. This possibility showed that the binary of adults as exploitative and children as innocent is not as clear-cut as claimed, but there are complexities within an adult–teenager sexual relationship that cannot be accommodated by this binary. Daniel was not the
powerless one all the time, and the seminary student was not powerful all the time. Daniel might be both the unknowing victim and the active and desiring agent (Angelides, 2010, p. 75).

Further, what I am more interested in, in terms of analysing Daniel’s narrative is the possibility of ethical negotiation in his sexual relationship. Here I do not refer to ethics in relation to the discourse of morality discussed in Chapter 5. Instead, I attempt to flesh out Carmody’s (2003, 2015) proposal of building ethical relationships, and Egan and Hawkes’s (2009) suggestion of recognition of children as agentic sexual subjects. To date, empirical analysis of these proposals is barely available in the existing literature. I am focusing on how a recognition of Daniel as sexual subject (who has desire and agency, who is enabled/constrained by discourses) has made possible a kind of ethical negotiation.

In Daniel’s narrative there are examples of negotiation between Daniel and the seminary student around sex, desire, and ethics. Within the limited discursive resources he had access to, Daniel negotiated his sexual desire toward the seminary student by considering a possibility of a consensual relationship rather than violence. Instead of physically harassing her such as touching sexual parts of her body, Daniel kissed her on the cheek – which in the Indonesian context can be an expression of affection and/or sexual gesture. His state of being “terrifyingly afraid” after the kiss indicated his lack of both certainty and intention to exploit. The pause after the kiss shows that Daniel expected a response, which could be an angry slap, a turning away, or a return kiss. This subtle cycle of initiation and response represent a kind of conversation or negotiation – the opposite of forceful violence. Here I do not suggest that this kissing on the cheek without asking is always ethical. My point is that, within Daniel’s limited knowledge, vocabularies, and experience to express his desire, this kiss might have been the most ethical move he could think of, and do, in that moment.

After the initiation and the “consenting” response, their sex had not then “just happened” but there were other negotiations. They avoided the possibility of people discovering them having sex, by moving to the church attic. This time the seminary student initiated (“she led me to the church attic”), and Daniel’s response was to follow her lead. In the attic, they did not just become “carried away” by engaging in sex, but Daniel asked about a possible consequence of their sex, that is, pregnancy. Only after the seminary student assured him it would not happen, they then engaged in sex. By considering possible consequences such as
pregnancy and people discovering them having sex, Daniel and the seminary student have engaged in a kind of ethical negotiation in terms of openness, honesty, and care of the self and others. In contrast, Yuyun’s narrative in the previous section involved two “consenting” young people of a similar age, but her boyfriend’s act did not imply any effort to build an honest, respectful, and caring relationship with Yuyun.

However, Daniel’s narrative also exhibits examples of unethical gestures in the relationship. Daniel’s bragging about his sex might not be considerate toward the seminary student’s feeling. Daniel dealt with his boredom (“feel bored with her”), self-centredness (“coming only when I want sex”), and avoidance of “commitment and responsibility” by ditching the seminar student instead of ethically negotiating it with her. As Carmody (2003) has noted, building ethical sexual relationships cannot just involve a one-off consent, but continuous negotiations – which make room for changes throughout the relationship. Daniel himself realised his unethical actions and attempted to apologise, but unfortunately he could not find her.

In the constitution of his sexual subjectivity, Daniel’s story has shown a contestation toward the discourse of sexual violence in at least two ways. Firstly, his narrative has shown that the binary of adults as powerful/sexually exploitative and children and teenagers as innocent/powerless might be too simplistic and unrepresentative of the diverse ways of seeing child sexual violence. Secondly, his narrative substantiates Egan and Hawkes’s (2009) argument that the possibility of ethical negotiations could not take place unless children and teenagers are recognised as sexual subjects. Negotiations between Daniel and the seminary student can be constituted as negotiations in this analysis because both of them are understood as sexual subjects who are able to make decisions and exercise agency (B. Davies, 1991). The subject positions they occupied might not grant them exactly the same possibilities to exercise power, but – as their narrative has shown – it does not mean there is no space for ethical negotiation.

While Daniel’s story occurred when he was an older child or a teenager (12 years old), the final narrative I will examine in this chapter, Hardi’s story, occurred during childhood. Hardi narrated his experiences of sexual interaction with adults since he was five years old. Below is his narrative which indicates a possibility of child sexual agency, and thus, might further challenge the binary of adult as powerful/exploitative and children as innocent/powerless:
Hardi: It all started when I was 5 years old. I already experienced sexual harassment, but I just enjoyed it. At that time my mom worked in a rural town. One day I was invited by a young guy in that neighbourhood. He asked me to hold his penis. I did what he said till his fluid came out. I didn’t know what fluid it was, but I just enjoyed it. This happened repeatedly, including my friends at the same age with me asked me to do that too.

Then my family moved to another city. There, I experienced the same thing. Young men there invited me to do the same, and I just enjoyed it. I was also asked to oral his penis and I did it.

I did all those things but I have not yet experienced the peak. Until one day I also can feel how pleasurable it was when that white fluid came out. My intermediate and high schools were the time when I really enjoyed such activities. Almost every day I masturbated and did same sex activities like that.

Thanks to God after high school, uni, and until now I am not bound to those sins like I was. It’s all because of my struggles with God so that I can leave all those sinful deeds.

Teguh: I know it has been long time ago, but as far as you can remember, were you “forced”, or “invited by them and then you were willing”? Or perhaps it’s hard to describe that experience in these ways? And how do you feel about those experiences now? Like, do you hate those young men, or do you feel nothing?

Hardi: As far as I remember, I was playing around the neighbourhood, then a young guy invited me, and I don’t know why, I just followed him. At that time I was only 5 years old, if I’m not mistaken. My feeling now? Just ordinary. I remember at that time I just enjoyed it without knowing what I was doing. I never hated those guys. I don’t know where they are now, and I don’t care. I totally forget it.

Hardi: Masih SD saya berumur 5 tahun kalo gak salah ya. Saya ingat saya sudah mengalami pelecehan tapi saya menikmatinya saja. Dulu ibu saya tugas di daerah pedalaman. Nah suatu ketika saya di ajak sama salah seorang pemuda di kampung tersebut, dia menyuruh saya
memegang penisnya, dan saya menurutinya sampai keluar cairan tapi saya tidak tahu cairan apa itu, tapi saya nikmati aja tanpa mengerti. Dan hal tersebut berulang-ulang terjadi bahkan ada juga teman-teman saya yang seumuran dengan saya saat itu mengajak saya melakukan hal tersebut.

Singkat cerita, saya pindah ke kota “X”. Nah di sana saya pun mengalami hal yang sama, saya di ajak sama pemuda di sana untuk melakukan hal yang sama dan saya menikmatinya begitu saya, saya disuru oral penisnya saya ikuti saja.

Selama melakukan hal tersebut saya belum pernah mengalami yang namanya mencapai puncak. Hingga suatu saat saya bisa merasakan gimana nikmatnya ketika cairan putih itu bisa keluar. Masa-masa SMP dan SMA merupakan masa-masa dimana saya menikmati sekali melakukan hubungan seperti di atas. hampir setiap saat masturbasi dan melakukan hubungan sesama itu.

Puji Tuhan setelah SMA, kuliah sampai sekarang saya sudah tidak terikat kayak dulu. Semua itu karena perjuangan saya dengan Tuhan untuk meninggalkan semua perbuatan dosa itu.

Teguh: Saya tahu hal ini sudah terjadi lama sekali, tetapi sejauh yang kamu ingat, apakah kamu itu “dipaks” atau “diajak dan kamu mau” atau sulit dideskripsikan seperti itu? Dan apakah perasaanmu berubah-ubah tentang pengalaman-pengalaman tersebut? Misalnya apa kamu jadi benci sama pemuda2 di kampung itu, atau kamu biasa aja?


(Hardi, 22, office worker, male, email interview)
On the one hand, Hardi’s subjectivity in this narrative can be seen as both informed by and reproducing the binary of adults as powerful/exploitative and children as innocent/powerless. As a child Hardi has “innocently” engaged in sexual activities since he did not know what was happening (“I don’t know why, I just followed him,” “without knowing what I was doing,” “I didn’t know what fluid it was”). To some extent Hardi also showed a lack of agency at that time, in which he described himself as “just following” what those adults asked him to do. Correspondingly, the adult men in this narrative were the ones who initiated and controlled the sexual interactions. They can be seen as exploitative in the way they made Hardi hold and insert their penis in his mouth for their own sexual pleasure. The child in this narrative was innocent and powerless and the adults were powerful and exploitative.

On the other hand, there are some complexities within his sexual subjectivity which might pose a disruption toward this binary and the dominant discourse of sexual violence. One of these complexities is Hardi’s lack of reference to his experience as sexual violence. Other than a mention of “sexual harassment” at the beginning of his story, Hardi did not use any words associated with violence such as “threaten,” “forced,” or “unwilling” in articulating his experience. Instead, he used words such as “invited” and “followed him,” even after I intentionally juxtaposed the word “forced” and “invited” and asked him to choose. As Kitzinger (2003) has noted, most children do not refer to their experience of sexual violence as sexual violence per se. It is when they are adult and are able to understand their experience through the discourse of sexual violence that they begin to think about it as sexual violence. Thus, one way to understand Hardi’s lack of reference to his experience as sexual violence is because there were no discursive resources he could draw on to understand it as sexual violence. As an innocent child he was unable to comprehend the violent and sexual nature of his experience, and it is through this lack of understanding that he remembered the incident as he did. However, there is another way to interpret Hardi’s narrative – which might resist the positioning of children as innocent and powerless – that is, by recognising his lack of reference to sexual violence as an agentic exercise of power.

Before I proceed, it is crucial to clarify that in this analysis I do not intend to justify or condone the incidents Hardi experienced. My aim is to identify alternative ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being that might disrupt the binary of adult as powerful/exploitative and children as innocent/powerless. I will explore the possibility of Hardi’s exercise of agency as sexual subject when he was a child – not as a means to locate the responsibility on him so that he
might be blamed. Instead, my intention is to acknowledge him as a sexual subject who exercises agency, however minimal. I will demonstrate both possibilities and limitations of the way Hardi understands sexual violence from the subject position he occupied. My purpose is that this analysis might challenge the normalisation of child sexual violence via the positioning of adults and children in this binary.

An alternative reading of his narrative might view Hardi’s lack of reference to sexual violence as an agentic resistance towards the positioning of the powerless victim. Different from the case in Jakarta International School (in Chapter 1) where the child was unwilling and was then threatened by the adult perpetrator, Hardi’s way of narrating his experience does not show a sense of unwillingness or feelings of being violated sexually. Hardi refused to employ the term “forced” that I offered in the interview – a word which implies a sense of victimisation and non-consensuality. Rather, he prefers the term “[he] invited me, and … I just followed him,” which implies a sense of willingness and a non-forceful act. Hardi did not draw on the dominant meanings offered by the discourse of sexual violence, which constituted his experience as sexual violence and thus positioned him as the victim. Hardi’s alternative sexual subjectivity resisted the positioning of children as powerless by showing the possibility of exercising a degree of agency.

By understanding Hardi’s lack of reference to sexual violence as resistance, possibilities and limitations afforded by his alternative subject position might be explored. Once Hardi recognised his experience as child sexual violence, he is immediately “hailed” or positioned as the victim or the survivor – with its discursive meanings that enable and constrain his ways of being a sexual subject. A victim subject position, for instance, necessitates a sense of helplessness, a devastated condition, a need to be healed, and an urgent need of external support and help (Jordan, 2013; Lamb, 1999; Whetsell-Mitchell & Morse, 1998). The survivor position offers a better sense of agency, but that agency is built around their specific experience of sexual violence. Such positioning as survivor, in turn, reproduces the centrality of the incident of sexual violence in one’s sense of self throughout their lives (Dunn, 2005; S. Warner, 2001). By refusing to take up these positions, Hardi’s subjectivity is not confined to these limited ways of seeing himself as a sexual subject. He is enabled to feel “just ordinary” and “[didn’t] care” about the perpetrators and the experience. He is not forever haunted by their “violence” and feelings associated with it such as anger, sadness, a feeling of being victimised, or a need to forgive and to be resilient. He was able to just “totally forget it.”
However, it is important to note that I do not claim that the subject position Hardi occupies is “better” or more “beneficial” in terms of fighting against child sexual violence. While this position limits him in many ways (e.g., from getting professional help, or more protection from parents), what I intend to highlight here is that it also opens up other possibilities for him (e.g., to not being positioned as powerless victim with those various meanings attached to it).

Another possibility afforded by Hardi’s alternative subject position in relation to sexual violence is his resistance toward the “trauma of rape” discourse – in which the impact of sexual violence is constituted as always traumatic and devastating (Gavey & Schmidt, 2011). Different from Putri’s story (in previous subsection) where experience of sexual violence is constituted as traumatic and continuously shapes her sexual self, in his narrative Hardi did not show similar effects of his early sexual experience on his ways of being. Throughout the interviews Hardi did not blame or refer to this experience as problematic in his journey of becoming a sexual subject. Rather, his “struggle” is to repent from “sinful deeds” such as “masturbation” and “same-sex [sexual] activity,” which he attributed to human’s sinful nature as he understood from Christian teachings. In a way, Hardi’s story has brought Marcus’s (2002) call – to refuse the idea that the (devastating) impact of sexual violence is self-explanatory – into being.

Instead of “violent” or “devastating,” Hardi articulates those sexual experiences with adults as pleasurable. Hardi used and repeated a phrase “I just enjoyed it” at least four times in this narrative to describe his sexual experience with adults. While the existence of pleasure does not justify sexual violence, it offers an example of children’s capacity for pleasure in a sexual interaction (Angelides, 2004; Foucault, 1978; Lamb & Plocha, 2014). Again, this challenges the positioning of children as purely sexually innocent or asexual victim. Hardi’s narrative demonstrates that children are sexual subjects who make meaning out of their experiences. Continuously denying their agency and sexual capacity could further confine them into (potential) victim subject positions. It could also make them feel guilty and betrayed by their body when they found a kind of erotic bodily sensation in an incident of sexual violence (Allen, 2012; Angelides, 2004; Ford, 2009). As Snitow, Stansell, and Thompson (1983) have noted, sex might generate a complex mixture of feelings: inspiring and degrading, ecstatic and abusive, pleasurable and objectifying.
Hardi’s narrative has shown a possibility for resistance in the constitution of his sexual subjectivity through the discourse of sexual violence. His alternative subjectivity disrupts: (1) the discursive positioning of children as innocent and powerless, (2) the dominant construction of the devastating effect of sexual violence, and (3) the continuous denial to recognise children as legitimate sexual subjects. In this way, Hardi’s narrative may contribute to the enactment of Gavey’s (1999) call for more complex and less certain constitutions of sexual violence and its effects. This means that all kinds of survivors’ interpretations of their experience of sexual violence and its effects are acknowledged and examined. In highlighting these resistances I do not intend to approve/disapprove of examples of adult–children sexual interaction presented here. Instead, I seek to complicate the dominant discursive constructions and binaries which might normalise children sexual violence by using these narratives of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined and problematised the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities via the discourse of sexual violence. It has discussed at least two binaries within the discourse of sexual violence that Indonesian Christian young people have drawn on, and resisted, in understanding themselves as sexual subjects. These binaries are the binary of men as desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable, and the binary of adults as powerful/exploitative and children as innocent/powerless. The findings contribute to the existing literature in this area by providing empirical and contextual analyses of this discourse in the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. In so doing this chapter seeks to complement and advance previous theoretical proposals in battling sexual violence (e.g., Carmody, 2003, 2015; Egan & Hawkes, 2009). By illuminating how these proposals might unfold in young Indonesian Christians’ becoming sexual subjects, this chapter provides everyday examples – not as a template to follow, but – as a means of enacting alternative possibilities of resistance towards the dominant discourse of sexual violence.
Chapter 8
Conclusion

This thesis has examined the key discourses of sexuality that young Indonesian Christian participants have drawn on and/or resisted in becoming sexual subjects. Driven by Foucault’s (1985) call for the creation and proliferation of alternative ways of being in the world, the findings have exhibited diversity of participants’ sexual subjectivities in relation to those key discourses. In this last chapter I will firstly summarise the main findings of this study and highlight their contribution to existing academic literature. The second section will discuss the implications of these findings for improving pedagogical approaches and the practice of sexuality education in Indonesian contexts. Considering the specific focus and scope of this thesis (i.e., a study on Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities), these implications are intended to be neither prescriptive nor comprehensive, but are merely resources to conceptually improve, or think differently about, sexuality education in Indonesia. I will then reflect on the limitations of this study in terms of sample size, participant recruitment, and methodology. Finally, I propose some directions for future research based on the narratives and themes that arose from data production, such as the role of information technology in the constitution of young people’s sexual subjectivities and young people’s negotiation of different sexual discursive resources due to their increased geographical mobility.

Main Research Findings

The current research has focused on exploring the complexities of Indonesian Christian young people’s understandings of themselves as sexual subjects. Four discourses involved in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities have been identified from the research findings, namely, the discourses of sexual health, sexual morality, sexual desire, and sexual violence. The main argument throughout is that Indonesian Christian participants do not simply adopt dominant ways-of-seeing or take up subject positions offered by these discourses; rather, the formation of their sexual subjectivities is complex, nuanced, and involves practices of resistance in relation to these dominant discourses of sexuality. The findings revealed diverse possibilities for being sexual subjects which are currently under-represented in the Indonesian mass media and academic literature. As discussed in Chapter 1 (Section 1), homogenising moralising messages have dominated media reports around young people’s sexuality, while
previous scholars have generally focused on controlling the risks pertaining to Indonesian young people’s sexual practice.

This study has identified that existing studies involving Indonesian young people’s sexuality have largely drawn on a discourse of sexual health (Chapter 2, Section 1). This dominant discourse has positioned Indonesian young people as at risk of contracting STIs and experiencing unplanned pregnancy unless they are provided with knowledge about safer sex. Chapter 4 documents how participants have taken up one of the subject positions offered by this discourse, either that of the vulnerable and uninformed young person (who inevitably engages in sex without knowing the risks), or the “enlightened” young person (who practises safer sex consistently) after being provided with sexual health information. This chapter also demonstrated how some participants have occupied alternative subject positions, that is, they were informed and took good care of their (sexual) selves without sexual health information being officially provided to them. These participants showed that not all Indonesian young people are hormone-driven or are always wanting sex once they are involved in a dating relationship (Allen, 2005). Their narratives contribute to, and critique, previous studies that have positioned Indonesian young people mainly as passive recipients of sexual health knowledge (e.g., Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Leerlooijer et al., 2014; Situmorang, 2011; Widyastari et al., 2015) instead of agentic subjects who actively take care of their own well-being.

The discourse of sexual health’s focus on the risks of young people’s sexual practice contradicts the view espoused by the discourse of sexual morality in contemporary Indonesia (see Chapter 1). Instead of managing health risks, the latter emphasises the sense of right and wrong in giving meaning to young people’s sexual practice. Findings in this thesis indicate that the discourse of sexual morality has also played an important role in the constitution of young Indonesians’ sexual subjectivities in this study. In Chapter 5, I demonstrated how young Indonesian Christians have taken up the binary subject positions offered by this discourse, namely, that of moral or immoral young people. I have argued that this binary ignores the complexities of Indonesian young people’s subjectivities. As shown by some participants, their understandings of themselves as sexual subjects are multiple, nuanced, and cannot be neatly positioned in this simplistic binary.
Drawing on alternative discourses, some participants have refused to take up the moral/immoral subject positions, by abandoning their Christian faith, reinterpreting religious morality, and living the “contradiction” of being both sexual and religious. This discussion contributes new textures to previous international studies concerning religion and sexuality (Bennet, 2007; Boellstorff, 2005; O’Brien, 2004; Yip, 1997a, 1997b, 2005) in at least two ways. Firstly, this chapter proposes that resisting religious-sexual morality does not have to rest on the logic of hermeneutical arguments, such as by reinterpreting sacred texts (which is common in previous studies, e.g., Bennet, 2007; Yip, 1997a, 1997b, 2005). Instead, it can be based on a personal and emotional relationship with God (e.g., Anto in Chapter 5). Secondly, this analysis adds a new dimension to the existing literature on the personal negotiation of religion and sexuality. Previous studies recognise contradictions in negotiating sexuality and religion mainly as a form of struggle or a challenge (e.g., Boellstorff, 2005; O’Brien, 2004; as well as some participants in this thesis). However, some Indonesian Christian participants demonstrated that multiple, fragmented, and contradictory selves can be seen as a natural/comfortable state (Rudy, 2007) in being a religious sexual subject (e.g., Urip in Chapter 5).

This research also reveals the workings of a discourse of sexual desire in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities. Chapter 6 examines the narratives of four participants who have both accommodated and resisted the discourse of sexual desire in ways that resemble Foucault’s (1978) *ars erotica*. Within this conceptualisation, sexual knowledge is less about truth but more about pleasure, creativity, and new possibilities. In understanding themselves as sexual subjects they have drawn on scientific specifications and categorisations of sexual identity offered by the discourse of sexual desire (e.g., gay, lesbian, asexual, and bisexual). However, they also circumvent its *scientia sexualis* (scientific pursuit of truth about sexuality) mechanisms by cultivating new forms of love, relationships, and pleasure around those categorisations. For instance, one participant, Putri – who identifies as lesbian – has developed a unique, pleasurable bodily practice, namely self-cutting which, in a way can be seen as sexual and ethical (Chapter 6, Section 3). Such analysis offers alternatives to Indonesian LGBT+ studies (Boellstorff, 2005; McNally et al., 2015; Murray, 1999; Rodriguez, 2015; Suvianita, 2013) that have relied on the discourse of sexual desire in examining young people’s sexual subjectivities. This chapter also adds narratives of polyamory and asexuality hitherto unavailable in existing Indonesian sexuality studies. In focusing less on the scientific truth of the nature of sexual desire and more on the *art* of being...
sexual subjects, the finding demonstrates various possibilities for sexual desires, pleasures, and subjectivities within, beyond, and without dismissing LGBT+ categories.

Another consideration in this thesis has been the operation of a discourse of sexual violence in the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities. Since the 1998 democratic reformation (see Chapter 1) discourses of anti-(sexual) violence have gained wider circulation in Indonesia. In Chapter 7, I engaged with narratives of sexual violence from young Indonesian Christian participants and examined what discourses they have drawn on in giving meaning to their experiences of violence. The analysis showed that some young Indonesian participants have taken up subject positions offered by the discourse of sexual violence. These positions include the binary of men as desiring/dangerous and women as asexual/vulnerable, and the binary of adults as sexually exploitative and children as innocent and powerless. Drawing on alternative discourses, participants’ alternative subjectivities also demonstrated possibilities of contesting these binaries. For instance, their narratives reveal that women can be sexually desiring, male perpetrators might not always blame the female survivors of sexual violence, and children might be able to exercise a degree of agency in an incident of sexual violence (Chapter 7, Sections 1 and 2). These findings contribute to the existing literature by empirically fleshing out previous poststructuralist theoretical proposals of resistance towards the discourse of sexual violence (e.g., Carmody, 2003, 2015; Egan & Hawkes, 2009), demonstrating how such possibilities of resistance might look in everyday life.

Documenting the complexities of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities serves to develop an empirical basis upon which young people’s sexual agency can be acknowledged. This analysis offers resources for designing future sexuality education in Indonesia which does not impose an adult-defined moralising agenda (discussed in Chapter 1). Rather, findings might contribute to developing sexuality education practices that are relevant to young people’s needs, interests, and contextual situations (Allen, 2005). Such a sexuality education approach (i.e., apposite to young people’s unique ways of understanding sexualities) will be more likely to be considered useful by young people themselves, and therefore, more effective. The next section will discuss how the findings of this thesis might inform and enrich sexuality education practices for Indonesian young people.
Implications for Sexuality Education

As discussed in Chapter 1 (Section 2), the former and current Indonesian government undermines the importance of sexuality education for young people by dismissing any proposal of school-based sexuality education programme. To address this situation, previous researchers have made a case for official school-based sexuality education in this country (Bennett, 2007; Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Leerlooijer et al., 2014; Utomo, 2003; Widyastari et al., 2015). Extending these researchers’ proposals, this section will focus on educational approaches or practices that connect with, and accommodate the complexities of, young people’s sexual subjectivities explored in this thesis. My main argument here is that educators might find benefit in directing curriculum attention from teaching the “correct” sexual knowledge to accommodation, examination, and contestation of multiple sexual knowledges. For, as participants’ narratives in data chapters have shown, Indonesian young people’s ways of being sexual subjects are multiple, complex, and contradictory. A focus on one “correct” sexual knowledge might not be able to accommodate such complexities. In contrast, young people might find sexuality education practices that acknowledge (and critically examine) multiple sexual knowledges are more connected with their complex ways of understanding sexuality, and thus, are more likely to be practised in their sexual relationships. Based on participants’ narratives, I will elaborate on how these practices might look in sexuality education settings. This section therefore links a poststructuralist analysis of young people’s sexual subjectivities and pedagogical practices to the context of sexuality education in Indonesia. Sexuality education here is understood in a broad sense, that is, the ways adults, parents, churches, schools, activists, journalists, and the government engage with young people and their sexualities.

My discussion is based on the premise that, in order to better engage with young people’s sexual subjectivities, it is important to recognise the complexities of their ways of being sexual (Allen, 2005). By taking into account these complexities, sexuality educators and policymakers might develop educational strategies that correspond to the ways young people in this study understand themselves as sexual beings. Chapter 4, for instance, calls for recognition of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities as complex and nuanced, in ways that do not simply conform to those offered by the discourse of sexual health. Instead of assuming that all young people are inevitably driven into sexual activities when they start dating, sexual health education may find additional value in acknowledging that, for some
young people (like Mawar in Chapter 4), sexual relationships are just one part (or perhaps play no part) of their dating experience. Educational messages may also recognise that sex is not always heterosexual and coital, so that the risks of unplanned pregnancy might not be the only consideration for young people in deciding whether to engage/not engage in sex. Rather, there are other kinds of sexual practices that Indonesian young people engage in, such as same-sex, non-coital, (Hardi and Bianda, Chapter 4) or computer-mediated sexual activities (Jenardi and Lusi, Chapter 4). There are also other health considerations to take into account, such as their physical safety (Jenardi in Chapter 4) and emotional readiness (Anggi and Urip in Chapter 4). It is these insights and complexities that this section attempts to draw together, and subsequently, employ to generate some suggestions for sexuality education practice in Indonesia.

The discussion in this section also acknowledges various agendas underpinning existing sexuality education initiatives in Indonesia, and is simultaneously cognisant of this thesis’ own poststructuralist position in approaching sexuality education. Some previous sexuality education initiatives in Indonesia have focused on building a healthy future generation free from STIs and unplanned pregnancy (e.g., Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Ichwanny, 2010; Utomo, 2003), some promoted a religious–moral standard of sexual abstinence until marriage (e.g., Faidah, 2010; Ihsan, 2009), and others emphasised the recognition of LGBT+ identities and rights (e.g., Mazdafiah 2011; Suvianita, 2013). Following the poststructuralist framework employed in this study, the goal of sexuality education is to challenge dominant discourses of sexuality and encourage socio-political-sexual transformation (Foucault, 1988; Taylor, 2014). I am aware that this agenda might not be (politically) relevant for some researchers and practitioners in this area. Educators who emphasise a moral code of (hetero)sexual abstinence based on conservative religious interpretations, for instance, might find young people’s narratives of ethical sexual relationships (Susanti, Anto, and Urip in Chapter 5) irrelevant. Considering that this poststructuralist approach to sexuality education is not common among Indonesian educators and policymakers, my suggestions here might not be welcomed by those who do not share a similar approach to education, knowledge, and social change. Therefore, the aim of this section is modest, that is, to provide possible resources for those who find it relevant, and hopefully draw the interest of those who do not.

One implication of acknowledging and accommodating the complexities of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities is that sexuality education might need to embrace the
contradictory nature of knowledge as both enabling and constraining (Foucault, 1978; Weedon, 1987). As the findings of this thesis indicate, some participants have given meaning to their sexual selves in certain ways, such as through educational messages about safer sex, STIs, condoms, and unplanned pregnancy (Jenardi, Heni, Anggi, in Chapter 4). However, at the same time, those messages have also constrained these participants’ ways of seeing their sexual selves, such as when young people are positioned as vulnerable and passive recipients of sexual health information. In Chapter 4 (Section 2) I discussed how some participants do not understand themselves as passive, but rather, as agentic sexual subjects. To accommodate these complex and multiple ways of being sexual, sexuality education might need to acknowledge the importance of both learning a new set of knowledge and simultaneously contesting it (e.g., analysing its limit, unearthing its assumptions, and examining its implications).

Another example of the enabling/constraining nature of learning sexuality can be seen in Chapter 6, where Anto narrated his initial lack of access to official knowledge about LGBT+ sexualities. Receiving educational messages about LGBT+ sexualities earlier might have enabled him to understand his same-sex desire as legitimate. However, as I have argued in Chapter 6, some participants’ ways of understanding sexual desire are much more complex, contradictory, and cannot be contained in scientific specification and categorisation of LGBT+ sexualities. Embracing contradiction in learning about sexuality might also be beneficial in understanding the complexities of sexual violence. For example, a survivor’s agency (as demonstrated by Hardi in Chapter 7) might be acknowledged but without condoning the perpetrator and blaming the survivor. By recognising the contradictory nature of knowledge and learning as such, Indonesian sexuality education might connect better with Indonesian young people’s multiple and nuanced ways of being sexual.

A further educational implication of recognising the complexities of young people’s sexual subjectivities might be that educators could acknowledge the limitations of their knowledge (and any sexual knowledge). Participants’ narratives of resistance in this thesis evidenced that any existing “truth” about sexuality and young people is a discursive constitution of sexual realities that have been (re)produced, shared, and believed by specific communities. In Chapter 5, for example, Susanti’s, Anto’s, and Urip’s narratives demonstrated how religious-sexual morality – which in Indonesia is often considered as absolute divine truth (Chapter 1) – can be rejected, (re)interpreted, or practised differently. To accommodate such diversity in
being a sexual subject, learning sexuality might not be able to focus solely on filling students’ minds with the “right” sexual knowledge, or replacing one version of sexual knowledge with another. Instead, learning sexuality might need to be a series of meaning-making activities in which different sexual knowledges are acknowledged and scrutinised.

This approach to learning sexuality might open up educational space where information from educators, religious leaders, activists, parents, and medical practitioners is treated as recommendations rather than being prescriptive. Simultaneously, young people’s personal experiences (e.g., in Chapters 4 and 6, where subjects recalled watching their pet dog copulate, or finding their clitoris when using the toilet wash hose, or reading gay comics) can be acknowledged as valuable sources of sexual knowledge. Young people can then be encouraged to reflect on and discuss these (discursively constituted) personal learning moments, as well as information they receive from formal sources, in order to develop their own sexual knowledges, values, and make decisions. Through a recognition and examination of various sexual knowledges (including their limitations), sexuality education might engage more effectively with the complexities of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities, and encourage more diverse ways of being sexual.

Indonesian sexuality education might also benefit from providing students with opportunities for resistance in the continuous reworking of young people’s sexual subjectivities. Participants’ narratives have shown how their subjectivities have been constantly reworked and how, within this reworking, there lie opportunities for resistance towards dominant discourses of sexuality. Daniel’s understanding of himself as a sexual being (Chapter 7, Section 1), for example, has evolved alongside his journey of becoming a born-again Christian. In the reworking of his sexual subjectivity, he has been enabled – in a way – to resist discourses that normalise sexual violence. In educational settings, educators might facilitate students to identify, question, and redefine dominant knowledges or regimes of truth taken for granted in the classroom, in order to seek more ethical understandings of sexuality. Educators and students might already have assumptions about sex and religious morality (Chapter 5), for instance, or about categorisations of sexual desire (Chapter 6), or about birth control and STI prevention (Chapter 4). While these various knowledges are accepted, it might also be beneficial to provide resources and invite students to exchange questions so that both educators’ and students’ understandings of sexuality can be enriched and elaborated.
A practical example of such an opportunity for resistance is bringing Indonesian young people closer to the life of certain groups in order to contest the dominant assumptions surrounding those groups, such as LGBT+ people, asexual people, polyamorous people (Chapter 6), “easy” girls, and survivors of sexual violence (Chapter 7). Inviting them or bringing their narratives to the classroom might enable educators and students to engage with the complexities of these people’s lives and scrutinise dominant ways of thinking about them, while being critical of the tendency to exoticise or fetishise them (Padva, 2008). In so doing, sexuality education might be more relevant to young people’s diverse ways of being sexual subjects that (as the participants have shown), are always being reworked and involve resistance towards dominant discourses of sexuality.

In discussing the implications of this research for sexuality education in Indonesia, there are various structural, policy, and everyday barriers to implementing some of the educational practices suggested above. As described in Chapter 1, these barriers include the Minister of Education’s opposition to the inclusion of sexuality education in the Indonesian curriculum, the suggestion of a death sentence for engaging in same-sex sexual practice by the Indonesian Council of Ulama, and the widespread social practice of surveillance and raids with regard to extra-marital, consensual sex. Underpinning such impediments are homogenising moralising discourses around sexuality, that mainly promote obedience to a religious moral code rather than accommodating the diversity of young people’s sexual subjectivities. However, if Indonesia is committed to continue the 1998 democratic reformation in various social-political spheres, the diversity of (ethical) ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being in any subject including in sexuality might need to be acknowledged and respected. This commitment is also faithful to the official national motto of Indonesia (derived from the third point of Indonesia’s state ideology) Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, that is, Unity in Diversity.

**Limitations**

In this section there are three areas I draw attention to with regard to the limitations of this study, namely: small sample size, limited avenues for recruiting participants, and text-based research methods. As to the number of participants, the small sample of Indonesian Christian young people in this study has limited the scope and breadth of the analysis. On the one hand, this small sample has shown a range of demographical and sexual diversity, and revealed the
degree of complexity of young Indonesian Christians’ sexual subjectivities (Chapters 4–7). On the other hand, such findings based on this small sample cannot lay claim to comprehensive knowledge about young Indonesian Christians’ sexual subjectivities. Since Christianity in Indonesia is not a unified and uniform faith, there are multitudes of theological, historical, and local contexts yet to be explored in this area. For instance, Christian faith in various ethnic, geographical, political, and denominational settings might provide different conditions for the constitution of Indonesian Christian young people’s sexual subjectivities.

The focus of this thesis on Indonesian Christian young people also implies the analysis here may not always correspond with young people’s experiences from other social, cultural, or religious contexts. Although participants’ narratives in this study might resonate with other young people beyond this limited context, the constitution of young people’s sexual subjectivities is always dependent on discourses of sexuality to which they have access and may draw on. Other religions, for example, could have enabled and constrained young people to understand themselves as sexual subjects in different ways. Even among young Indonesian Christians themselves, there are possibilities of a very different experience due to their unique personal histories and/or discursive access.

Regarding participant recruitment, this research has also been limited by my social network and access to LGBT+ NGOs, universities, seminaries, and community key persons who were largely from urban areas. Consequently, participants of this study were mainly from major cities and towns in Indonesia. This means that my analysis was limited to this context and negated the exploration of young people in rural Indonesia, who may inhabit different discursive landscapes. For instance, in contrast with some previous studies in smaller towns/rural areas in Indonesia (e.g., S. G. Davies, 2010; Parker, 2009, 2014; Smith-Hefner, 2005, 2006, 2009), participants in this study did not indicate the role of ethnic or cultural traditions in the constitution of their sexual subjectivities. It appears that, in participants’ urban contexts, ethnic or cultural traditions might not be very dominant in (in)forming their ways of being sexual.

Methodologically, data production in this study has been both enabled and limited by its computer-mediated research methods. While these methods have generated complex narratives relevant to the purpose of this study, they also entail some limitations. One such is
that, both online interview and autobiographical writing have relied heavily on linguistic articulation of participants’ experience, particularly in written form. It reduced participants’ intricate and multifaceted experiences into very limited forms of representation, and might have marginalised participants who are not articulate in written expression. Future research may utilise various methods that can address these limitations, such as visual methodologies (Allen, 2009, 2011b, 2011c, 2015; Gillian, 2007; Knowles & Sweetman, 2004); but with an awareness that any methods employed are still reductionist and never able to fully represent the complexities of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities.

Areas for Future Research

Narratives of the young Indonesian Christian participants in this thesis have offered a closer look into the complexities of their being sexual subjects. However, due to the scope and focus of this research, some specific narratives and themes that arose from the data production have not been explored in depth. This section discusses some of these themes which deserve further investigation of their own.

The role of information technology in the constitution of young people’s sexual subjectivities has occurred sporadically throughout the interviews with participants. These narratives include Lusi’s engagement in online sex chats and Jenardi’s utilisation of video calls in his sexual relationship with his boyfriend (Chapter 4). Future research might explore further how information technology plays a role in young people’s understanding of themselves as sexual beings and how it shapes their offline sexual lives. Young people’s sexting, for example, has been increasingly studied in international contexts (Allen, 2013; Dobson & Ringrose, 2016; Nielsen, Paasonen, & Spisak, 2015; Ringrose, Gill, Livingstone, & Harvey, 2012) but to date there has been no study about sexting among Indonesian young people.

While the utilisation of information technology in participants’ narratives is relatively limited, one exception is their engagement with online pornography. Almost all participants in this thesis mentioned online pornography as a part of their learning about sex and sexuality. My previous quantitative research (Hald & Wijaya Mulya, 2013) also indicated that more than 80% of participants in that study had been exposed to pornography at certain points in their lives. However, no study has documented the way pornography specifically functions in the constitution of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities. As indicated
by participants in this present thesis, some Indonesian young people appear to draw on discourses that consider pornography as “normal” for young people (e.g., Jenardi, Lusi, Susanti) and some others find it utterly sinful (e.g., Juwanto, Daniel, Indra). Future studies are needed to investigate what discourses of sexuality are at play in Indonesian young people’s engagement with pornography and how those discourses have been drawn on and resisted in their ways of understanding sexuality.

Another area of future research arising from participants’ narratives can be found in Heni’s (Chapter 6) unique and complex engagement with a specific erotic material, namely, yaoi (Japanese gay comics). Heni’s narrative showed that her engagement with yaoi has become important in the constitution of her alternative ways of being sexual. The popularity of Japanese erotic comics and animations in Indonesia, as indicated by the growing number of fan clubs and festivals (e.g., id.fanpop.com, Indonesia’s Fujoshi Forum; Pemita, 2015, September 29), appears to have an increasing role in the constitution of some Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities. Fluid and transgressive depictions of sexuality in these imaginative realms (Tamaki, 2007; A. Williams, 2015) might have offered alternative discursive resources to understand (same-sex) sexuality differently. Counterintuitively, Heni identified most of her female friends (fujoshi) in her yaoi fans club as “homophobic” in real life, regardless of their passion for gay comics. Such complexities of Indonesian young people’s sexual subjectivities in relation to these erotic materials still need to be explored in future studies.

In relation to sexual geopolitics, some participants mentioned how sexuality is understood and practised differently across various regions in Indonesia (and overseas). As also identified by Davies and Bennett (2015), Anto described in his narrative how Bali has been a sexual paradise for young Indonesian gay men like him in learning and exploring same-sex desires. On the contrary, there have been reports from the special region of Aceh about the growth of conservative sexual values, such as the newly passed law which allows for public caning to punish adultery (“Unmarried couples,” 2015, June 12). Due to the advancement and affordability of transportation technologies, contemporary Indonesian young people have more geographical mobility including travelling overseas – enabling them to access different sexual discursive landscapes. Anggi pointed this out in her narrative (Chapter 4) when she compared how differently sexuality is understood by her friends in her small home town in Indonesia, her university overseas, and her workplace in a major Indonesian city. Susanti (in
Chapter 5), on the other hand, expressed an aspiration to move overseas where her same-sex desire is recognised and protected, but financially, is unable to afford to do so. Future studies are needed to investigate how Indonesian young people have moved around, explored, and negotiated different geographical contexts and discursive configurations in their becoming sexual subjects.

The final future research direction I propose here concerns Indonesian young people’s experiences of sexual violence. Sexual violence was not originally a focus for this thesis, but a significant number of participants reported their experience of sexual violence as an important part of their sexual subjectivities. In retrospect, it is apparent that more specific questions around sexual violence are needed in the interview schedule, such as participants’ resistance towards the discourse of sexual violence. Future research could explore the agency of child and young survivors of sexual violence, and unearth new possibilities of resistance toward discourses that sustain and normalise sexual violence in Indonesian contexts (some have been identified in Chapter 7). These explorations are crucial and timely considering the current socio-political shifts in understanding sexual violence and growing movements against sexual violence in contemporary Indonesia (see Chapter 1).

To conclude, I reiterate Foucault’s (1997) call, that has driven this research, for the creation and proliferation of “new forms of life, relationships, friendships in society, art, culture, and so on through our sexual, ethical, and political choices” (p. 164). It is with this radical opposition towards homogenising discourses that I hope future research may continue to explore the extraordinary diversity of ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being sexual in Indonesia.
Appendix A: Interview schedule

The interview guideline is as follows:

- General information (± 1st-2nd correspondence):
  - Demographic background:
    - In which town do you live at the moment? Were you born and raised there too?
    - Are you currently working/studying? Where and what do you do/study?
    - How old are you?
  - Family background:
    - How many siblings do you have in your family?
    - Do you live with your parents?
    - How old are your parents? Do they still work/are they retired? What is/was their occupation?
    - How would you describe your parents?
  - Motivation:
    - Why are you interested to participate in this study?

- Experience with Christian faith (± 3rd-5th correspondence):
  - How did you come into contact with Christian faith? Is Christianity the faith of your family?
  - Community involvement and religious practices:
    - What church(es) did/do you attend?
    - What kind of church activities are you involved in?
    - Do you observe personal practice such as prayer, devotion, etc.?
    - How would you describe your friendship at church/within Christian communities?
  - Spiritual experiences and meaning of being Christian:
    - How would you describe yourself as a Christian? Or, what kind of Christian do you think you are?
    - What are the best/worst things about being a Christian?
    - What have been the significant moments in your journey as a Christian?
    - How do you feel about your Christian faith? Do you feel comfort, love, joy, or strength, or maybe judgment or condemnation, or all of these or none of these?
    - Can you tell me what your faith means to you?
    - Is your faith important for you? If yes, how is it important? If not, why not?
    - Can you identify a Biblical story that relates to your life experience? Why did you choose that story?
  - Religious beliefs and values:
    - Do you believe in God/supreme being? If yes, how would you describe God/supreme being? If not, why not?
    - What are the important things for you in friendship/relating to others?
    - What are your dreams/future plans? Why are they important to you?
    - Which church teachings are significant/memorable for you?
o Have you ever experienced disagreement with church teachings? Which teachings? Why do you disagree? How have you responded to that situation?

o Experience of sexual learning (± 6th-8th correspondence):
  ▪ Do you remember learning anything about sexuality at school?
  ▪ Have you received any formal sex education class/session/program? Where and when?
  ▪ What about school and parents/family? What do they tell you about sexuality?
  ▪ How do school/parents implement their understanding about sexuality in everyday practice/conversation/dos and don’ts? Any specific examples?
  ▪ What is the climate at school/family/church when discussing sexuality?
  ▪ What other informal sources do you find useful to learn about sexuality? Friends? Movies? Internet? Romantic partner? Extended family?
  ▪ What does your church(es) teach you about sexuality? How do they implement that teaching in everyday practice/conversation/dos and don’ts?
  ▪ Did you agree with and follow what they (church/parents/school/friends/internet/etc.) said?
    • If yes, why?
    • If no, why not? How then did you respond to their expectations? What did they do when you refused to follow what they say?

o Sexual feelings and experiences (± 9th-11th correspondence):
  ▪ Is sexuality a positive part of your life?
    • How is it positive?
    • How is it negative?
  ▪ With whom do you talk about sexuality? What topics did you talk with them about?
  ▪ Do you think your experience of sexuality is typical of other young people in Indonesia?
  ▪ How would you describe yourself as a sexual person?
  ▪ What was your best experience of sexuality?
  ▪ What was your worst experience of sexuality?
  ▪ Is there any relationship between your Christian faith and your sexuality?
    o If yes, how would you describe this relationship?
    o If no, why not?

o Closing (± 12th-13th correspondence):
  ▪ Any other experiences you want to share?
  ▪ Do you have any questions that you want to ask?
  ▪ What do you feel about this study?
  ▪ Any suggestions for improvement?
  ▪ Do you have friends that you can recommend to participate in this study?
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheets (PIS)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (PIS)
For Participant

**Project title**: Understanding the sexuality of Indonesian Christian Youth

**Name of Researcher**: Teguh Wijaya Mulya

**Introduction**
Hello! My name is Teguh. I was born and raised in Surabaya; I have also worked there for several years, but now I am studying towards my PhD in the School of Critical Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland New Zealand, under Postgraduate Overseas Scholarship scheme from the Indonesian Ministry of Education. My research is around sexuality, particularly among my fellow Christians in Indonesia.

**Description & Invitation**
My study aims to explore the sexual experience of Indonesian Christian youth. I believe that these unheard narratives are positive, and can contribute to a better sexuality education in the future.

I would like to invite you to be part of my research. If you are aged 16-24, have internet access, and consider yourself as a Christian (or ex-Christian), you can be my participant!

**Procedures**
If you are willing to participate, you just need to send the consent form to t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz. You do not need to tell me your name, just choose a pseudonym. Then, I will set up a new email and instant messenger account for you, so that you can use that account for our correspondences. This email and instant messenger account should not be used for other purposes.

The study will last 4-8 weeks, involving email correspondences, chatting sessions, and a short essay about yourself. We will have discussions via email (8-16 correspondences, approximately 10-30 minutes per correspondence, total 1.5-8 hours) and instant messenger chats (2-3 one hour chats). I will also ask you to write a short essay about yourself (the length is up to you! Generally you will need approximately 1-2 hours to write this). The topic of our discussions will be around your faith and sexuality, and how you negotiate the two. Feel free to say anything; also, you don’t have to answer if you don’t feel comfortable.
At the end of our correspondence I will email you all of our previous emails and chats, so you can read, change, or withdraw certain parts of the data if you wish. I will also ask whether or not you want to receive an email regarding the summary of the findings after I have finished the final report.

Voluntary Participation & Right to Withdraw from Participation

Your participation is completely voluntary, which means you only participate if you want to. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your relationship with any party, including the organisation from which you get the advertisement for this study. During the data collection process, I will send you a reminder if you do not reply to my email within one week; and after two weeks, I will email you asking whether or not you want to withdraw your participation. You may withdraw your participation and withdraw your data at any time before the thesis is completed (30 November 2014), without giving a reason (and without feeling bad too!).

Confidentiality

Pseudonyms will be used in this study. No participant is identifiable in the thesis or summary of findings. After each correspondence, I will copy our conversations into password-protected computer files, then, I will permanently delete the email/chats. However, internet communication is never completely secure. There are always methods people can use to hack online communication. Therefore, it is important to choose a pseudonym that is not easily identifiable to you.

Confidentiality will always be maintained as best as possible throughout the study. However, if you reveal information that suggests the life or health of someone, including yourself, may be at serious risk, I am obliged to report this to the appropriate authorities.

Benefits & Risks

Benefits for you may include:

1. Having the opportunity to think, reflect, discuss, and write about your own experience in a safe and supportive environment may strengthen your confidence, self-worth, and self-understanding.
2. Your perspectives can be listened to, and acknowledged as important academic data.
3. In a larger context, you will contribute to research that aims to develop sexuality education in Indonesia.

However, even in a warmly non-judgmental research environment which I aim to provide, recalling and disclosing sexual and spiritual experiences can still be potentially embarrassing and distressing. In the unlikely situation that you experience psychological distress, I will facilitate and provide access to support such as a free youth sexuality counselling service nearest to your location.

On rare occasion, different attitudes toward sexuality also could damage someone’s employability, professional or personal relationships. Therefore, confidentiality will always be maintained as best as possible.
Data Storage & Use

After the thesis is completed (30 November 2014), all email accounts created by the researcher will be deleted permanently. All data files will be stored on a compact disc and will be kept for six years in a locked cabinet in the supervisor’s office in New Zealand, and then destroyed through a secure disposal service. Data collected will only be used for this research thesis and possible subsequent publications. No other party will have access to your data.

Contact Details

If you have any questions, or wish to know more before deciding to participate or not, please do not hesitate to contact me. Remember, you must be at least 16 years old to be able to participate. Thank you.

Teguh Wijaya Mulya
Email: t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz
Phone: +62 813 1556 3045 (Indonesia)

My supervisors in this project are:

Associate Professor Louisa Allen
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
The University of Auckland
Phone: +64 9 623 8899 extn. 85140
E-mail: le.allen@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Caroline Blyth
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Faculty of Arts
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E-mail: c.blyth@auckland.ac.nz

The Head of School is:
Dr Airini
School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Phone: +64 9 623 8899 extn. 48826
E-mail: airini@auckland.ac.nz

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
Phone: +64 9 373 7599 extn. 87830/83761. E-mail: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 12/03/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9046.
Judul Penelitian: Memahami seksualitas anak muda Kristen di Indonesia
Nama Peneliti: Teguh Wijaya Mulya

Pengantar

Deskripsi penelitian
Penelitian saya bertujuan untuk mengungkap pengalaman seksual anak muda Kristen. Saya yakin pengalaman yang jarang diungkap ini positif dan bermanfaat untuk pendidikan seks yang lebih baik di masa depan.

Saya mengundang kamu untuk menjadi partisipan penelitian saya. Kalau kamu berusia 16-24 tahun, punya akses internet, dan berlatarbelakang Nasrani, kamu bisa jadi partisipan lho!

Prosedur
Kalau kamu mau berpartisipasi, kamu tinggal mengisi dan mengirim lembar kesediaan ke t.wijyamulya@auckland.ac.nz. Kamu bahkan tidak perlu memberitahu namamu, karena nama samaran saja cukup koq. Setelah itu saya akan membuatkanmu akun email dan instant messenger untuk kita berkerespondensi. Akun email dan instant messenger ini hanya boleh dipakai untuk penelitian ini.


Setelah selesai semua, saya akan mengemalikan semua korespondensi dan chat kita, jadi kamu bisa baca, edit, atau hapus bagian tertentu kalo kamu mau. Saya juga akan menawarkan apakah kamu mau dikirimi ringkasan hasil penelitian setelah penelitian ini selesai.

Partisipasi sifatnya sukarela dan kamu berhak berhenti kapan aja
Kerahasiaan


Kerahasiaan akan selalu kita jaga sepanjang penelitian ini. Kecuali kalau kamu memberikan informasi yang membahayakan dirimu atau orang lain (ada teman yang mau bunuh diri misalnya), maka saya wajib menyampaikan hal itu ke pihak yang relevan.

Manfaat & Risiko

Manfaat kalau kamu berpartisipasi:
4. Kamu bakal mendapat kesempatan untuk berpikir, merenung, mendiskusikan, dan menulis pengalaman hidupmu dalam suasana yang positif dan nyaman. Ini bisa menguatkan kepercayaan diri, pemahaman diri, dan perasaan berharga.
5. Pandangan-pandanganmu bakal didengarkan dengan serius, dan dipakai sebagai data penelitian yang penting.

Tapi gimanapun juga, sekalipun penelitian ini sifatnya positif dan non-judgmental, namanya membicarakan pengalaman seksual dan spiritual tetap bisa menimbulkan rasa malu atau emosi negatif lain, atau terkadang stres. Kalau itu terjadi (meskipun kecil kemungkinannya) saya akan membantu dan menyediakan akses ke layanan konseling anak muda gratis yang dekat dengan kamu.

Ada kalanya juga, sikap dan identitas seksual yang unik membuat seseorang sulit mendapat pekerjaan, dipecat, atau ditolak keluarga/komunitas. Oleh karena itu, kerahasiaan mesti kita jaga sebaik mungkin dalam penelitian ini.

Penggunaan dan Penyimpanan Data


Kontak

Kalau kamu ada pertanyaan, atau pengen tau lebih detail sebelum memutuskan mau berpartisipasi atau tidak, silahkan menghubungi saya. Ingat, kamu mesti minimal 16 tahun untuk bisa berpartisipasi ya. Terimakasih.

Teguh Wijaya Mulya
Email: t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz
HP: +62 87 851 476 496 (Indonesia)
Nama pembimbing saya:
Professor Louisa Allen
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Phone: +64 9 623 8899 extn. 85140
Email: le.allen@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Caroline Blyth
School of Theology
Faculty of Art, The University of Auckland
Phone: +64 9 373 7599 extn. 87067
Email: c.blyth@auckland.ac.nz

Nama Kepala Departemen:
Dr Airini
School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Phone: +64 9 623 8899 extn. 48826
E-mail: airini@auckland.ac.nz

Kalau ada masalah etis seputar penelitian ini, kamu bisa menghubungi Ketua Komite Etik Universitas Auckland:
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
Phone: +64 9 373 7599 extn. 87830/83761.
Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

Telah disetujui oleh Komite Etik Universitas Auckland pada 12/03/2013 selama 3 tahun, nomor referensi: 9046.
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (PIS)
For Organisation

Project title: Understanding the sexuality of Indonesian Christian Youth
Name of Researcher: Teguh Wijaya Mulya

Introduction
Please allow me to introduce myself. I am Teguh Wijaya Mulya. I am currently studying towards my PhD in the School of Critical Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland New Zealand, under Postgraduate Overseas Scholarship scheme from the Indonesian Ministry of Education. My research is around sexuality, particularly among Christian youth in Indonesia.

Description & Invitation
My study aims to explore the sexual experience of Indonesian Christian youth. I believe that these unheard narratives are positive, and can contribute to a better sexuality education in the future.

I am seeking your permission and your help to distribute this information to the members of your organisation to take part in this research. The criteria for my participants are aged 16-24, they consider themselves as Christian (or ex-Christian), and have internet access to use their email once a week.

I invite you to support my project by making the initial approach to potential participants, such as putting my advertisement (attached with this letter) on your notice boards, forwarding my advertisement to your mailing lists, announcing this opportunity in your meetings, and giving the Participants Information Sheet (PIS) for Participants to your members.

Procedures
Participants who are willing to participate just need to send the consent form to t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz. They do not need to disclose their name, as only a pseudonym is needed. Then, I will set up an anonymous email account for them, so that they can use that email account for our correspondences.

The study will last 4-8 weeks, involving email correspondences (8-16 correspondences, approximately 10-30 minutes each, total 1.5-8 hours), on-line chat sessions (2-3 one hour chat), and a short autobiography essay (1-2 hours of writing). The topic of the discussions will be around faith and sexuality, and how to negotiate the two.
Voluntary Participation & Right to Withdraw from Participation

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, which means someone only participates if they want to. Participation or non-participation will not affect the relationship of potential participants with any party, including your organisation. Participants may withdraw their participation and withdraw their data without reason at any time before the thesis is completed (30 November 2014).

Confidentiality

Pseudonyms will be used in this study. No participant is identifiable in the thesis or summary of findings. All conversations with participants will be copied into password-protected computer files, and then the emails/chats will be directly and permanently deleted.

Benefits & Risks

Benefits for participants may include:
1. Having the opportunity to think, reflect, discuss, and write about their experiences in a safe and supportive environment may strengthen their confidence, self-worth, and self-understanding.
2. Their perspectives can be listened to seriously, and acknowledged as important academic data.
3. In a larger context, they will contribute to research that aims to develop sexuality education in Indonesia.

However, even in a warmly non-judgmental research environment which I aim to provide, recalling and disclosing sexual and spiritual experiences can still be potentially embarrassing and distressing. In the unlikely situation that participants experience psychological distress, I will facilitate and provide access to support such as a free youth sexuality counselling service nearest to their location.

Data Storage & Use

After the thesis is completed (30 November 2014), all email accounts that were created by the researcher will be deleted permanently. All data files will be stored on a compact disc and will be kept for six years in a locked cabinet in the supervisor’s office in New Zealand, and then destroyed through a secure disposal service. Data collected will only be used for this research thesis and possible subsequent publications. No data will be revealed for other purposes. No other party will have access to participant’s data, including your organisation.

Contact Details

If you have any questions, or wish to know more before deciding, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Teguh Wijaya Mulya
Email: t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz
Phone: +62 813 1556 3045 (Indonesia)
My supervisors in this project are:

Associate Professor Louisa Allen
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Faculty of Education,
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Phone : +64 9 623 8899 extn. 85140
E-mail : le.allen@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Caroline Blyth
School of Theology
Faculty of Arts,
The University of Auckland
Phone : +64 9 373 7599 extn. 87067
E-mail : c.blyth@auckland.ac.nz

The Head of School is:
Dr Airini
School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Phone : +64 9 623 8899 extn. 48826
E-mail : airini@auckland.ac.nz

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
Phone: +64 9 373 7599 extn. 87830/83761. E-mail: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 12/03/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9046.
LEMBAR INFORMASI
Untuk Organisasi

Judul Penelitian : Memahami seksualitas anak muda Kristen di Indonesia
Nama Peneliti : Teguh Wijaya Mulya

Pengantar

Deskripsi Penelitian
Penelitian saya bertujuan untuk mengungkap pengalaman seksual anak muda Kristen. Saya yakin pengalaman yang jarang diungkap ini positif dan bermanfaat untuk pendidikan seks yang lebih baik di masa depan.


Saya memohon bantuan Anda untuk menempelkan iklan penelitian ini (terlampir) di papan pengumuman Anda, atau mengemailkan iklan tersebut ke milis organisasi Anda, atau mengumumkannya di pertemuan-pertemuan, atau memberikan lembar informasi ke calon partisipan.

Prosedur
Calon partisipan yang ingin berpartisipasi cukup mengisi dan mengirimkan lembar kesediaan ke t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz. Mereka tidak perlu memberitahu nama mereka, karena nama samaran saja sudah cukup. Setelah itu saya akan membuatkan akun email dan instant messenger untuk mereka berkorespondensi dengan saya.

Pengambilan data melibatkan korespondensi email (sekitar 8-16 korespondensi, masing-masing sekitar 10-30 menit, jadi total 1,5-8jam) dan chatting (sekitar 2-3 kali chatting, masing-masing satu jam). Semua ini dilakukan dalam periode 4-8 minggu sejak partisipan bersedia berpartisipasi. Saya juga akan minta partisipan menulis esai pendek tentang dirinya (sekitar 1-2 jam untuk menulis esai seperti ini). Topik pembicaraan adalah seputar iman Kristen dan seksualitas, dan bagaimana kedua hal itu berinteraksi.

Partisipasi sifatnya sukarela dan berhak berhenti kapan saja
**Kerahasiaan**

Partisipan akan memilih nama samaran untuk penelitian ini, sehingga partisipan tidak akan bisa diketahui identitas aslinya di laporan penelitian. Semua korespondensi email/chatting akan disalin ke file word yang diproteksi dengan password, lalu saya akan langsung menghapus email/chat history tersebut.

**Manfaat & Risiko**

Manfaat bagi partisipan:

7. Partisipan akan mendapat kesempatan untuk berpikir, merenung, mendiskusikan, dan menulis pengalaman hidupnya dalam suasana yang positif dan nyaman. Ini bisa menguatkan kepercayaan diri, pemahaman diri, dan perasaan berharga.

8. Pandangan-pandangan mereka akan didengarkan dengan serius, dan dipakai sebagai data penelitian yang penting.


Bagaimanapun juga, sekalipun penelitian ini sifatnya positif dan non-judgmental, membicarakan pengalaman seksual dan spiritual tetap dapat menimbulkan rasa malu atau emosi negatif lain, atau terkadang stres. Jika hal tersebut terjadi (meskipun kecil kemungkinannya) saya akan membantu dan menyediakan akses ke layanan konseling anak muda gratis yang relevan.

**Penggunaan dan Penyimpanan Data**


**Kontak**

Jika Anda memiliki pertanyaan, atau membutuhkan informasi lebih detail sebelum memutuskan, silahkan menghubungi saya. Terimakasih.

Teguh Wijaya Mulya
Email: t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz
HP: +62 87 851 476 496 (Indonesia)

Nama pembimbing saya:
Professor Louisa Allen
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Phone : +64 9 623 8899 extn. 85140
Email : le.allen@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Caroline Blyth
School of Theology
Faculty of Art, The University of Auckland
Phone : +64 9 373 7599 extn. 87067
Email : c.blyth@auckland.ac.nz

Nama Kepala Departemen:
Dr Airini
School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Phone : +64 9 623 8899 extn. 48826
Kalau ada masalah etis seputar penelitian ini, Anda dapat menghubungi Ketua Komite Etik Universitas Auckland:
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
Phone: +64 9 373 7599 extn. 87830/83761. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

Telah disetujui oleh Komite Etik Universitas Auckland pada 12/03/2013 selama 3 tahun, nomor referensi: 9046.
Appendix C: Consent Forms (CF)

CONSENT FORM (CF)
For Participant

Project title: Understanding the sexuality of Indonesian Christian Youth
Name of Researcher: Teguh Wijaya Mulya

I (participant) have read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) for Participant, have understood the purpose and the method of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that:

• My participation in this research is completely voluntary (which means I do not have to participate if I do not want to). My participation or non participation will not affect my relationship with any parties, including the organisation from which I get the advertisement for this study.
• I have the right to withdraw from this research and withdraw my data at any time before the thesis is completed (30 November 2014).
• I understand that in order to participate I must be at least 16 years old.
• I do not need to reveal my identity, because I will choose a pseudonym for myself in this study.
• I will be given a new email and instant messenger account by the researcher, which will be used for this research only, to keep the security of my data. However, I am aware that internet communications are never completely secure.
• The data collection will be around the topics of sexuality and Christian faith, conducted approximately 4-8 weeks over the internet using email interviews (8-16 correspondences, approximately 10-30 minutes per correspondence, total 1.5-8 hours) and instant messenger interviews (2-3 one hour chats), and a short written autobiography (around 1-2 hours of writing).
• At the end of the data collection, I have the right to read, change, or withdraw certain parts of the data if I wish.
• I will be offered the opportunity to receive an email regarding a summary of the findings after the final report is completed.
• All data will be stored in a secure location for 6 years and then destroyed through a secure disposal service.
• In the unlikely situation that I experience psychological distress during my participation, I will be provided with support such as information about a free youth sexuality counselling service nearest to my location.
• I understand that on rare occasion, different attitudes toward sexuality could damage someone’s employability, professional or personal relationships. Therefore, confidentiality will always be maintained as best as possible.

By ticking the box below and sending this form to t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz, I agree to take part in this research under the terms indicated in the information supplied.

[ ] Yes, I am willing to participate

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 12/03/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9046.
LEMBAR KESEDIAAN
Untuk Partisipan

Judul Penelitian : Memahami seksualitas anak muda Kristen di Indonesia
Nama Peneliti : Teguh Wijaya Mulya

Saya (partisipan) telah membaca LEMBAR INFORMASI UNTUK PARTISIPAN dan telah memahami tujuan dan metode penelitian ini. Saya mengerti bahwa saya bisa mengajukan pertanyaan jika ada yang belum jelas dan pertanyaan saya itu sudah dijawab dengan memuaskan.

Saya mengerti bahwa:

- Partisipasi saya dalam penelitian ini sifatnya sukarela. Saya tidak perlu berpartisipasi kalau saya tidak bersedia. Entah saya berpartisipasi atau tidak, tidak akan berdampak ke hubungan saya dengan pihak lain, termasuk organisasi/orang yang mengenalkan saya ke penelitian ini.
- Saya berhak mengundurkan diri dari penelitian dan menarik semua data yang pernah saya berikan kapanpun juga sebelum penelitian ini selesai (30 November 2014).
- Saya harus berusia minimal 16 tahun untuk dapat berpartisipasi.
- Saya tidak perlu mengungkapkan identitas saya, karena saya akan memilih nama samaran untuk penelitian ini.
- Agar data saya aman dan rahasia, saya akan diberikan akun email dan instant messenger baru oleh peneliti untuk berkorespondensi dalam pengambilan data. Tetapi saya juga mengerti bahwa komunikasi online selalu mengandung risiko bisa di-hack oleh orang lain.
- Pengambilan data seputar topik seksualitas dan iman Kristen, dilakukan selama 4-8 minggu melalui korespondensi email (8-16 korespondensi, masing-masing 10-30 menit, total 1,5-8jam), chatting (2-3 sesi chatting, masing-masing satu jam), dan menulis esai pendek tentang diri saya (sekitar 1-2 jam menulis).
- Di akhir pengambilan data, saya berhak membaca, mengubah, atau menarik data saya jika saya mau.
- Saya akan ditawari kesempatan untuk menerima ringkasan hasil penelitian.
- Data akan disimpan di tempat yang aman selama 6 tahun, kemudian dimusnahkan memakai layanan secure disposal.
- Seandainya saya mengalami stres dalam partisipasi saya, saya akan dibantu oleh peneliti misalnya dengan informasi tentang konseling anak muda gratis yang dekat dengan saya.
- Saya mengerti bahwa ada kalanya sikap dan identitas seksual yang unik membuat seseorang sulit mendapat pekerjaan, dipecat, atau ditolak keluarga/komunitas. Oleh karena itu, kerahasiaan akan dijaga sebaik mungkin dalam penelitian ini.

Dengan memberikan tanda cawang (✓) pada kotak di bawah ini dan mengemukakan ke t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz, saya menyatakan bersedia menjadi partisipan sesuai dengan informasi yang sudah saya baca.

[ ] Ya, saya bersedia berpartisipasi

Telah disetujui oleh Komite Etik Universitas Auckland pada 12/03/2013 selama 3 tahun, nomor referensi: 9046.
CONSENT FORM (CF)  
For Organisation

Project title : Understanding the sexuality of Indonesian Christian Youth  
Name of Researcher : Teguh Wijaya Mulya

I (Head of organisation) have read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) for Organisation, have understood the purpose and the method of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that:

- My organisation’s participation in this research is completely voluntary. We can refuse to participate without providing any reason for refusal.
- My role is to make the initial approach to potential participants within my organisation, such as putting the advertisement on notice boards, forwarding the advertisement to mailing lists, announcing this opportunity in meetings, or giving out the Participants Information Sheet (PIS) for Participant.
- I assure that participation or non-participation will not affect the relationship between potential participants and any party, including my organization.
- Individuals participating in this research:
  - are completely voluntary. They can refuse to participate without giving a reason.
  - have the right to withdraw their participation and withdraw their data at any time before the thesis is completed (30 November 2014).
  - do not need to reveal their identity. Only a pseudonym is needed.
  - will engage in approximately 4-8 weeks data collection around sexuality and faith topics, using email and instant messenger interviews, and a short written autobiography.
  - at the end of the data collection, have the right to read, change, or withdraw certain parts of the data if they wish.
  - will be offered the opportunity to receive an email regarding a summary of the findings after the final report is completed.
  - in the unlikely situation that participants experience psychological distress during their participation in this research, they will be provided with support such as information about free youth sexuality counselling services nearest to their location.
• Data collected will only be used for this thesis and subsequent publications. No other party will have access to the data. All data will be stored in a secure location for 6 years and then destroyed through a secure disposal service.

By ticking the box below and sending this form to t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz, I and the organisation I represent agree to take part in this research under the terms indicated in the information supplied.

[   ] Yes, we are willing to participate

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 12/03/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9046.
LEMBAR KESEDIAAN
Untuk Organisasi

Judul Penelitian : Memahami seksualitas anak muda Kristen di Indonesia
Nama Peneliti   : Teguh Wijaya Mulya

Saya (perwakilan organisasi) telah membaca LEMBAR INFORMASI UNTUK ORGANISASI dan telah memahami tujuan dan metode penelitian ini. Saya mengerti bahwa saya bisa mengajukan pertanyaan jika ada yang belum jelas dan pertanyaan saya itu sudah dijawab dengan memuaskan.

Saya mengerti bahwa:

- Partisipasi kami sifatnya sukarela. Kami dapat menolak berpartisipasi tanpa perlu menyediakan alasan.
- Peran kami adalah menyebarkan informasi tentang penelitian ini pada calon partisipan di organisasi kami, seperti menempelkan iklan penelitian (terlampir) di papan pengumuman, atau mengemalkan iklan tersebut ke milis organisasi, atau mengumumkannya di pertemuan-pertemuan, atau memberikan lembar informasi ke calon partisipan.
- Dalam proses itu kami menjamin bahwa entah calon partisipan memilih berpartisipasi atau tidak, tidak akan memengaruhi hubungan kami dengan calon partisipan tersebut.
- Individu yang berpartisipasi di penelitian ini:
  - Berpartisipasi dengan sukarela. Mereka dapat menolak tanpa memberikan alasan.
  - Berhak mengundurkan diri kapanpun sebelum penelitian ini selesai (30 November 2014).
  - Tidak perlu mengungkapkan identitas dirinya, cukup memberikan nama samaran.
  - Akan terlibat dalam pengambilan data seputar seksualitas dan iman Kristen, selama kurang lebih 4-8 minggu, melalui korespondensi email, chatting, dan menulis esai singkat.
  - Di akhir pengambilan data, berhak membaca, mengubah, atau menarik bagian-bagian dari datanya jika mereka mau.
  - Akan ditawari untuk mendapat ringkasan penelitian setelah penelitian ini selesai.
  - Seandainya mereka mengalami stres dalam partisipasinya, mereka akan dibantu oleh peneliti misalnya dengan informasi tentang konseling anak muda gratis yang relevan.
- Data yang terkumpul hanya akan digunakan untuk disertasi ini dan publikasi terkait. Tidak ada pihak lain yang memiliki akses ke data. Semua data akan disimpan dengan aman selama 6 tahun, kemudian dimusnahkan memakai layanan secure disposal.

Dengan memberikan tanda cawang (v) pada kotak di bawah ini dan mengemalkan ke t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz, saya dan organisasi yang saya wakili menyatakan bersedia mengambil bagian dalam penelitian ini sesuai dengan informasi yang sudah saya baca.

[ ] Ya, kami bersedia berpartisipasi

Telah disetujui oleh Komite Etik Universitas Auckland pada 12/03/2013 selama 3 tahun, nomor referensi: 9046.
Appendix D: Ethics approval letter

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Research Integrity Unit

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

12-Mar-2013

MEMORANDUM TO:
Dr Caroline Blyth
Critical Studies in Education

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 9046)
The Committee considere your application for ethics approval for your project entitled Understanding the sexuality of Indonesian Christian Youth.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 12-Mar-2016.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz or the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: 9046.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Critical Studies in Education
   Assoc Prof Louisa Allen
   Teguh Wijaya Hulya

Additional information:
1. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, giving the dates of approval and the reference number, before you send them out to your participants.

2. Should you need to make any changes to the project, write to the UAHPEC Administrators by email (humanethics@auckland.ac.nz) giving full details of the proposed changes including revised documentation.

3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, please advise UAHPEC of its
completion.

4. Should you require an extension, write to UAHPEC by email before the expiry date, giving full details along with revised documentation. An extension can be granted for up to three years, after which a new application must be submitted.

5. If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Manager – Funding Processes, UoA Research Office. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

6. Please note that UAHPEC may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the research has been carried out according to the approval that was given.
Appendix E: Advertisement

Tell Your Story!
I want to listen

I am looking for participants for my thesis about sexuality among Christian youth.

If you are:
• from Christian background, and
• aged 16-24,

YOU ARE THE RIGHT PERSON!!

Your story will help other youth understand how sexuality and Christian faith are lived

No judgment in this study,
Unique and different perspectives are welcomed!

Teguh Wijaya Mulya
Faculty of Education
University of Auckland, New Zealand

Contact me: t.wijayamulya@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 1/1/2023 for 3 years, Reference Number 123456/6.
## Appendix F: Participants’ Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Study/Work</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender and Sexual Identification</th>
<th>Association with Christian faith</th>
<th>Research Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anggi</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Office worker</td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>Female, Heterosexual</td>
<td>Professing and practicing</td>
<td>Email interview, IM interview, &amp; autobiographical writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anindya</td>
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<td>High school student</td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>Female, Heterosexual</td>
<td>Professing but not practicing</td>
<td>Autobiographical writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anto</td>
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<td>NGO activist</td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>Male, Gay</td>
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<td>Email interview, IM interview, &amp; autobiographical writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>High school student</td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>Male, Heterosexual</td>
<td>Professing and practicing</td>
<td>Autobiographical writing</td>
</tr>
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<td>Professing but not practicing</td>
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<td>Batakne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Male, Heterosexual</td>
<td>Professing and practicing</td>
<td>Autobiographical writing &amp; IM interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardi</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Office worker</td>
<td>Ambonese</td>
<td>Male, Having constant attraction to men, but consider it a sin and seeking to return to heterosexuality</td>
<td>Professing and practicing</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Interview Methods</td>
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<td>Ishak</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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