

**International  
Institute of  
Social Studies**

The logo for the International Institute of Social Studies, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

**Beyond The Contraceptive  
A Study on Women's Sexuality in Indonesia**

A Research Paper presented by:

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

**Social Policy for Development  
SPD**

Specialisation:

**Women and Gender Studies**

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The Hague, The Netherlands  
December 2021

***Disclaimer:***

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*To the women, beyond body, time, and space.*

## Acknowledgement

This research would not have been possible without support and guidance from my supervisor, dr. Karin Astrid Siegmann and my second reader, prof. dr. Irene van Staveren. They provided invaluable feedback on my analysis and framing. Their levels of patience, knowledge, and ingenuity are something I will keep aspiring to.

Thank you to the StuNed programme for financial assistance for my postgraduate programme. Thank you to the International Institute of Social Studies that provides the foundation for analytical and critical thinking on the relationship between knowledge production in gender, sexuality, and development studies.

I am thankful for countless support from my friends. I cannot mention all your names here because it will make thousands of pages. Thank you for giving colours to my life.

Thank you to my sister and brother, who never stop believing in me. Lastly, thank you, my mother, for your endless love and my father in heaven; I did it!

I am grateful to myself for travelling this far. Thank you, next!

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## List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BKKBN	Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
FP2020	Family Planning 2020
GERWANI	Gerakan Wanita Indonesia
GTAS	Greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ID	Identity Card
IDHS	Indonesia Demographic Health Survey
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
ITGSE	International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education
IUD	Intrauterine Device
PERDA	Peraturan Daerah
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia
PKS	Penghapusan Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan
RUU	Rancangan Undang-Undang
SIM	Subscriber Identification Module
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STI	Sexual Transmitted Infection
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNPFA	United Nations Population Fund
USD	United States Dollar

## Abstract

Being a single woman in Indonesia is full of challenges. Access to basic state institutions places a lot of emphasis to one's marital status and nuclear family, making family cards and marriage licenses central to the governance of Indonesian society. The family card is an essential document to make a passport, identity card and activate your mobile phone and identity cards display marital statuses as either married, widow, and not yet married. For single women this brings a particular set of challenges, as marital status has the power to open access for women to get reproductive health services, including contraceptives. My personal experiences as a single woman and the scrutiny I have received in trying to get reproductive health services without having a 'married' status on my identity card inspired me to dive deeper into women's lives and sexuality to find out "*what are Indonesian women's experiences regarding their sexuality?*" and "*what are Indonesian women's desires regarding their sexuality?*".

I answer these questions by applying a feminist standpoint theory and circle of sexuality. This research is based on life history interviews that expose how history and culture shapes knowledge about and inside the individual, through a collection and analysis of their stories. I interviewed seven Indonesian women. All respondents did the interview online and voluntarily. The interviews were conducted two times per person and followed by personal chats through WhatsApp. I designed and elaborated the questions based on the Circles of Sexuality model to analyse women's sexuality.

This research focuses on analysing sexuality, which is not limited to sensual physical activity but is related to power relations between individuals and many aspects that intersect in society. Women's sexuality are historically, socially, and politically constructed journeys in women's lives. In their journeys, women are negotiating sexuality and power. Women's sexuality is about stories of struggle, resistance, resilience, and full of the negotiation process between sexuality and power. Many power models are embedded in family, religion, culture, intimate relationships, peer groups, and/ or social communities. The power has shaped women's lives into specific and similar forms that are believed to be parts of an official pattern, as *kodrat perempuan* (women's nature). This research calls this pattern *the illusion of women's pathway*. This pathway consists of four steps: *childhood, youth, young-adult, adult-marriage*. This illusion pathway traps women in the domestic sphere and limit their agency in public, especially in the political arena.

However, this research found that in each step there are spaces for negotiating sexuality and power. The negotiation process are often missed and continue to be underappreciated and undervalued. As we know, there is a power nexus applied in women's lives, and it causes us to have limited opportunities in our lives. We have *kodrat*; we need to believe in it and live under the shadows of *kodrat*. The negotiation process happened in between to survive and continue our lives. Even though women are trapped in the illusion of women's pathway, women always show their agency and become a subject of themselves by negotiating sexuality and power in their lives. Even though women are always 'becoming', we never lose ourselves by realising our experiences and bravely admitting our desires; we will find ourselves in sublime alienation.

## Relevance to Development Studies

For many years women's sexuality was seen as a taboo and shameful topic, especially in science. However, due to hard work from feminist research and researchers, science started to

acknowledge women's struggle and her representative. This research is important to define and reform the practice of epistemic authority and the epistemic virtue of women. This situation composed women's sexuality as part of women's lives experiences and is recognised as knowledge produced historically, socially, and politically. Focusing on women's sexuality in development studies transforms the epistemological, ontological, and methodological implications of feminist thinking on the research and intervention in development. This research is also open the opportunity of the intersections of gender with other social relation, social formation, and transformation, such as reproductive health, reproductive labour, sexual identity and social policy.

### **Keywords**

Feminist standpoint; *kodrat perempuan*; the illusion of women's pathway; women's experiences and desire; women's sexuality

# Chapter 1

## Introduction - Heteronormative underpinnings of Indonesian Family Planning Programme at Women's Expense

*"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" (Lorde 2007: 283).*

### 1.1 No Single Story of Single Woman

I will start this research with my journey as a single woman in Indonesia. In my opinion, to be a single woman in Indonesia is far from easy. First, you should associate with your family to be registered on the family card. One of the requirements to make your own a family card is you should have a marriage license. Additionally, as an Indonesian citizen, you need to have a family card if you would like to make a passport, identity card, and even to activate your SIM card on your phone. Based on those conditions, as a woman, you should be dependent on your family or marriage with someone and have your own family. There is no such thing to be solitary and independent.

My second challenge is the identity card. It consists of the card number, name, place and date of birth, sex, address, religion, profession, nationality, expired date, and marital status. This ID card played a significant role for me and Indonesian citizens, such as opening a bank account, buying an aeroplane ticket, joining the gym, and activating the new sim card for your phone. Based on information about marital status, this ID card has the power to make three categories of woman: *married woman*, *widow*, and *'not yet' married woman*, but also for men, even though will affect differently, This status shows that the government and society expected all Indonesian women to be in a marital institution. The marital status is not only an identity, but it has the power to open access for a woman to get contraceptive services. In Indonesia, access to contraceptives and reproductive health is regulated under several laws: Government Regulation No. 61 of 2014 on Reproductive Health, Law No. 52 of 2009 on Population and Family Development, Law No. 36 of 2009 on Health. Those laws state that reproductive health services, including contraceptive services and medical abortion, are only legally provided for heterosexual married couples.

Article 23 on Law 52/ 2009 on Population and Family Development states that access to contraceptive services and information is only for a husband and wife. However, data from Indonesia Demographic Health and Survey (IDHS) 2017 shows a different reality. 10% of Indonesian women become sexually active before 17 years old, 46% of women aged 20 – 49 years old are using contraceptives (modern and traditional method), and 36,2% of them are unmarried or living together with their partners (BKKBN et al 2018). From IDHS, there is no available information on how and where the unmarried couple gets the contraceptive services. Still, we know that condom is available in drug stores, mini markets, and online stores. We can also buy birth control pills from online stores without any requirement, such as showing your identity card or prescription from the doctor. Unfortunately, I had a different experience; I got a question about my marital status instead of the prescription from my doctor when I would like to buy contraceptive pills in the drug store in Jakarta. Those data show a contradiction between regulation and implementation. The implementation of the regulation is fuzzy and hazy. This uncertainty puts women's lives at risk, especially those in

emergency conditions, such as rape victims. In my opinion, the state fails to protect their citizens, especially women. The government does not give them their rights to access the contraceptive needed to protect themselves from harmful practice; instead, they choose to ban the contraceptive for unmarried people without precise control on the field.

On the other hand, Indonesia Commitment Self Reporting for FP2020, from 2015-2019, The Government of Indonesia commits to implementing a rights-based family planning programme. They are also allocating a budget of USD 1,6 billion for the family planning programme and, by the end of 2019, integrated the provision of family planning services, including contraceptive services, under the National Health Insurance (BKKBN 2020). The data on contraceptive needs and commitment of the Government of Republic Indonesia on FP2020 contrasts with the existing family planning and health regulation.

This contradiction made my life and other unmarried women's lives complicated and threatened. Due to the legal restriction, "unmarried people, especially girls, will face reproductive and sexual health problems, for instance, unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion, maternal mortality and morbidity, violence, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV" (UNFPA 2012: 7). In my story, firstly, I got the acceptance letter from the International Institute of Social Studies, became an awardee of scholarship, and took a 20 hours flight to legally gain access to contraceptive pills. My personal story and the marital status on reproductive health services accessibility in Indonesia inspired me to dive deeper into women's lives and sexuality since my first month at the International Institute of Social Studies.

## 1.2 Feminist Epistemology as Lenses

My story above is not the first study about women's lives in Indonesia. A lot of research have written about women's lives in Indonesia, such as women's childhood, puberty, marriage, pregnancy, and so on. Based on Google Scholar, there is 141.000 research conducted about women's lives in Indonesia. I also searched Google Scholars with the 'women's childhood in Indonesia' keyword and found 12.800 research. I continued with 'women's puberty in Indonesia' as a keyword and found 4.610 research. Based on the research number, I can argue knowledge about women's lives in Indonesia is not invisible. While some studies (Bennet 2005, Davies 2020) have taken into account women's voice in their work, others (Reese at all 1975, Hull at all 1977, Warwick 1986, Hull 2002, Diarsvitri et al 2011, Pakasi 2013, Seiff 2014 and Sapagnoletti et al 2018) still treat women as a homogenous identity.

In the 1970s, the awareness of glaring contradiction between women's lives experiences was raised on the research. These studies (Harding 2004) highlight how science has historically ignored women ventures and the representation of women in the sciences. Some feminist and women scientists worked to mainstream women's voices, such as their activities, experiences, and perspective on the research. They also critique positivism about the objectivity of knowledge, which consistently promotes neutral instruments and value-free researcher. Instead, focusing on the objectivity of the research, feminists focus on the representation of 'the other', the marginal, women's experiences. It is because feminists believe knowledge is not objective but situated politically and socially (Harding 2004). Knowledge about women is rooted in everyday lived experiences and their struggles.

Feminist research brings women's experiences, struggle and resistance to the study and change them into knowledge. "Feminist research challenges the basic structures and ideologies that oppress women. Feminist research goals foster empowerment and emancipation for women and other marginalised groups, and feminist researchers often apply their findings in the service of promoting social change and social justice for women" (Brooks and Biber

2007: 4). Feminist research comprehensively combines all research processes from theoretical, data collection, methodological, and formulation of the research questions until the research findings are presented with a feminist perspective. “Feminist researchers emphasise the synergy and interlinkages between epistemology, methodology, and method” (Ibid.).

Based on my desk review, *Women, Islam, and Modernity* by Linda Rae Bennet (2005) is one example of feminist research that brings women’s experiences with women’s sexuality and reproductive health in Indonesia. Linda did ethnographic research on young single Muslim women’s sexuality and reproductive health in Lombok. Unfortunately, it is rare to find another study that brings Indonesian women’s experiences on their sexuality and reproductive health as a focus of the research. I found a few studies about sexuality, reproductive health, and young people in Indonesia, but it does not focus centrally on women (Diarsvitri et al 2011, Pakasi 2013, and Sapagnoletti et al 2018). Based on my desk review, most studies on reproductive health are about family planning programmes, contraceptive prevalence rate, type of contraceptive, the fertility rate, abortion services, and so on (Reese at all 1975, Hull at all 1977, Warwick 1986, Hull 2002, Seiff 2014). At best, I found several feminist research on sexuality and mostly is related to history, politics, religion, nationalism, and sex education (Suryakusuma 1996, Bennet 2001, Holzner and Oetomo 2004, Dwyer 2012, and Wierringa 2015).

I found a correlation between limited feminist research in Indonesia and Chandra Mohanty’s (1988 and 2003) argument that women in the Global South are mostly seen as Other with singular and monolithic categories. We are seen as a homogenous group that share the same struggles. Our experiences and stories are excluded because we do not have the power to conceptualise ourselves. We are always defined as poor, uneducated, oppressed, domesticated, victimised, and powerless. We are also constantly compared with women in the North that are perceived to represent the ‘educated and modern’ women, who have the freedom to make decisions for their own bodies. Women in the Global South are characterised and defined by their status as ‘victims’.

All the constructions of women as mentioned above happened because knowledge about a woman is gendered and situated in particular approaches. It is related to the asymmetric power relation in the production of knowledge. The visible and invisible power cause women’s activities, experiences, and voices to be rarely heard. “Power relations are structured in terms of unilateral and undifferentiated sources of power and a cumulative reaction to power” (Mohanty 1988: 79). Knowledge about women primarily excludes women from inquiry, denies our epistemic authority, diminishes our experiences, and produces theories of women that represent us as inferior. Knowledge production is subordinating and not valid for women because it only perpetuates the social hierarchies and reinforces gender in society (Anderson 2000). Science, research, and the state can produce knowledge about women, but women never can write their own stories. These facts indicate an urgency to conduct research that brings women experiences and aspirations.

The conception of how knowledge is gendered and situated has directed me to apply the feminist approach as a researcher. I will make women’s perspectives the central of this research. Through this research, I will define and reform the practices of epistemic authority and the epistemic virtue of women and our sexuality. This research will produce texts that share women’s stories about their experiences and desire regarding their sexuality. In this research, I will focus on women's experiences by asking them questions about their relationships, access to contraceptives and family planning services in Indonesia, and their sexual experiences and desire. I want to bring women’s experiences as empirical data that is important to find out how their sexuality developed by using a question about contraceptives as a starting point. In Indonesia, the implementation of contraceptive services is related to population control programs. The implementation of the population control itself is an act

of “repression of sexuality...The family planning programs work not only to control births and bodies but also to create spaces for competing articulations and experiences of sexuality...” (Dwyer 2012: 29-30). I can argue that asking contraceptives as opening questions in my research is possible to open everything of sexuality but also possible to get nothing. It will be present in this research and will show women’s dynamic journeys when it comes to sexuality, norm, religion, and moral value in the society as part of being Indonesia citizens.

### 1.3 Research Questions and the Objective

Women struggle with multiple oppression in our lives; we are always looked at as a single identity, either a daughter, wife, or mother. It is essential to conduct non-traditional research to produce new knowledge about women, including presenting how the production of the knowledge itself developed. This research offers a discussion on collective emotions, sexuality, sexual experiences, and desires of women in Indonesia. This research does not aim to solve the problem but to present the colourful journey of women’s lives in relation to their sexuality.

This research was conducted to present how the sexuality of Indonesian women is constructed by analysing women’s experiences and desires related to their sexuality. This research integrates questions about family planning services as an entrance to talk about women’s sexuality, which includes listening to their stories about contraceptive use, abortion experience, pregnancy, marriage, sexual desire, also the development of their self-image as part of their sexuality. I would like to articulate women’s consciousness on their experiences, life journey, emotions, and sexuality as propitious knowledge for the society and government in Indonesia to accomplish women’s needs and rights. The articulation and analysis work will start with two research questions:

1. *What are Indonesian women’s experiences regarding their sexuality?*
2. *What are Indonesian women’s desires regarding their sexuality?*

These two questions are related and intersected with one another. It is about the past, present, and future of women’s lives. Even though I am an Indonesian woman, I cannot claim to speak for all Indonesian women. However, as a researcher, I can create a safe space for Indonesian women to open, reflect, and question their own experiences and desires, especially sexuality. The research questions are aimed to produce knowledge about women and from women. By giving space to women to share their experiences and desire, this research shows women’s resistance, transformation process, validation of women’s emotions and feelings. The question about desire is to understand women’s aspirations and dreams. By questioning these, we can see the power dynamic that shapes and develops women’s lives and sexuality because either one experience can limit their desires or open other doors that can give them different desires and opportunities. Additionally, two questions about experiences and desires will show the negotiation process in women’s lives.

To answer the two questions above, I will distribute my writing into five parts. After this introduction part, in chapter two, I discuss theoretical issues that support this research. I applied ‘feminist standpoint theory’ and ‘circles of sexuality’. I combine them to show the relevance for understanding sexuality itself, the power relation on women’s sexuality experiences in Indonesia and how their sexuality is constructed. Chapter three presents the contextualisation and correlation why I brought a question about contraceptive access in Indonesia as the opening question to analyse women’s sexuality in Indonesia. Chapter four shows my analysis of the history of women’s sexuality since Dutch colonial times and my data

finding from interviews to explain the negotiation process experienced by women. I group the stories of women from my interviews into three parts to show their live's correlation and pathway. In the last part, I review the overall finding and write relevant conclusions.

## Chapter 2

# Searching Methodology and Theories

### 2.1 Feminist Standpoint Theory

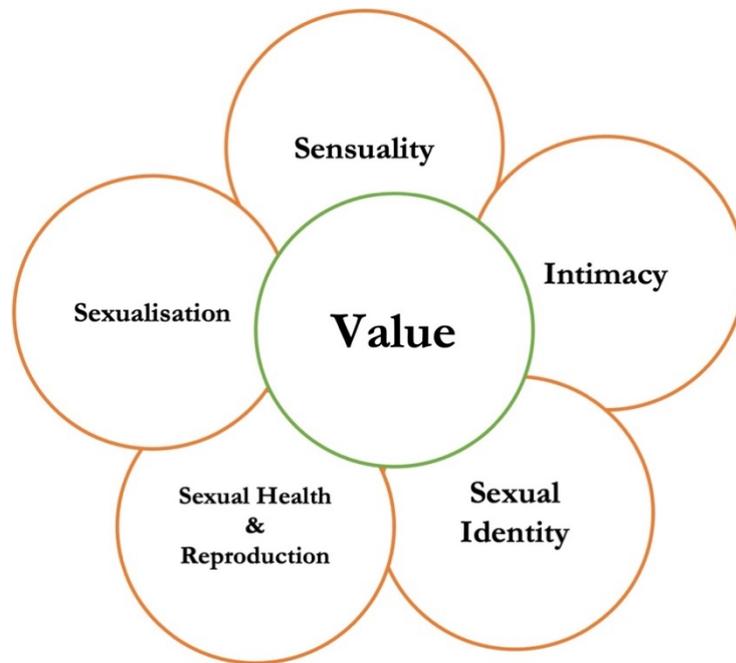
Sandra Harding (2004) mentioned the science and philosophy from the modern West positioned against the ‘folk thought’, which society put women’s experience as part of it. Feminist standpoint theory aims to make folk thought visible through understanding their experience and how it is shaped. It also “helps to produce oppositional and shared consciousnesses in oppressed groups” (Harding 2004: 3), including women. As previously explained, in virtue of this research aimed to documented women’s sexuality experiences and would like to make women become a subject of knowledge.

Feminist standpoint theory is part of feminist research that is raised from second-wave feminist thinking. It emerged from stories of the political struggle of marginalised people, including women. Standpoint theory is helping this research by offering a new perspective on epistemological and methodological approaches by discovering, analysing, and drawing the power-knowledge nexus on women’s sexuality journey. By using this theory also shows the effects of power structures on knowledge production on women’s sexuality. Feminist standpoint theory supports me in creating space for women as a part of a marginalised group to speak up. This theory will analyse women’s stories, find out why they have the stories, and how the power-operated on their stories.

I applied feminist standpoint theory because it focuses on knowledge production's historical, political, and social location. By doing research with feminist standpoint theory, we can transform a source of oppression into a source of knowledge. We can contribute to social justice projects and create a recommendation on social policy by showing the production of knowledge about women’s lives (Harding 2004). This research has intension to create a safe space for women to share their life stories, especially related to their sexuality. Hance, feminist standpoint theory is the proper theory that can analyse women’s sexuality journey in Indonesia.

### 2.2 Circles of Sexuality

Sex is rooted in human biologies, such as chromosomal, gonadal and anatomy (body parts), including human genital (Monash University 2021). Furthermore, our biological condition is always connected with many aspects of our life, such as economic, political, cultural, social, and religion. It causes sex to become beyond the physical and not singular. It is called sexuality. The International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) states that sexuality is connected to human attraction, behaviour, and identity. Sexuality is a “fundamental aspect of human life and related with our physical, psychological, spiritual, social, economic, political and cultural dimension” (UNESCO 2009: 2). Another thing that we need to be aware of is the power that exists in the relation between individual sex and all the aspects that intersect with. This power also produced gender that articulated women position, behaviour, and identity in society. It shows that sex, sexuality, and gender intersect and are embedded in women’s lives.



### 1.1 Circles of Sexuality

Sexuality is huge and complex, from biological organs, behaviour, norms, economic, affection, psychological conditions, politics, and many things. All the things are overlap and intersect. The best way (so far for this research) to explain sexuality is an antique model from Dr Dennis Dailey, a professor emeritus from the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare. This model was introduced forty years ago in 1981 through his course on Human Sexuality in Everyday Life. I decided to use this model because Circles of Sexuality (The Inter-agency Gender Working Group 2017, Turner 2020) can explain sexuality comprehensively, not only on reproductive health and sexual rights but also provide space to analyse agency and power nexus that applied in everyday human life. Let's have a look!

I will embark on the first circle, '*sensuality*'. Sensuality is "the psychological and physiological enjoyment of one's own body and often, a partner, including but not limited to genital; and the tension release of orgasm" (Dailey 1981: 316). Sensuality is related to feeling and awareness about the human body - our own body and other people bodies. It can allow us to enjoy and give pleasure because we can feel our bodies look, feel, and what they can do through sensuality. Sensuality is also related to body image, physical attraction, and fantasy. Second is '*intimacy*', the ability and need to be emotionally close to other people and return. The sensuality aspect can relate here, for instance, caring, sharing, and being vulnerable. Sexual intimacy and sensuality are two aspects that can develop a relationship with humans, physical and emotional. Those aspects can produce attachment, not only good but also traumatic. Sexual intimacy and sensuality show that how experiences in their life develop human sexuality.

The next circle is '*sexual identity*' that helps humans understand themselves sexually and as sexual beings, including gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. The '*sexual health and reproduction*' is the fourth circle that explains that human beings also have behaviours and attitudes that support sexual rights, health, and enjoyment. In this circle, we can understand sexual anatomy, reproductive health, sexual rights, reproductive rights, sexual health, contraception's, abortions, sexual transmitted infection, HIV AIDS, and

so on. The fifth circle is '*sexualisation*', which explains that our behaviour and action can influence, manipulate, and control others. It is close to the power relation between humans. It is not always negative but possible to positively influence others, such as using condoms and regular STD tests. The last circle values affect all circles. It is related to human values such as religious norms, culture, morals, and other social norms. The last circle shows a power that produces value on sexual relations, such as negotiating, having consent, influencing, or controlling.

In this research, I am using Circles of Sexuality as a foundation to explain the complexity of human sexuality, especially women. Based on the six circles that intersect, I analyse women's stories about their experiences on contraceptives, sexual activity, sexual identity, and intimacy with others. I also analyse their relationship with family and friends to capture how power relations applied among them. Through Circles of Sexuality, I can draw the power structure between women, their families, peers, the significant other related to values that they applied in their life, for instance, moral and religious values. It will be like opening the onion – many layers, and possibly making my eyes watery, but this is women sexuality, multiple and complex.

## 2.3 The Story of Collecting and Limitation

The story began from the discussion with my supervisor about my nerves on women's sexuality and contraceptive access in Indonesia for an unmarried woman. My nerves became complicated when I realised there were a lot of challenges if I travelled to Indonesia due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet my passion was still on fire to record women's experience on sexuality. Other than that, I always believe every human in this world has a non-single story in their life. The discussion led me to choose an online life history interview as a data collection method. Like making a good friend, to understand an individual deeply, we need to understand their life history and the dynamic of her life until she becomes what she is (Chamberlayne, Bornat, and Wengraf 2000 in Lim 2011).

Life history interview is the method that put individual agency as a first concern. We can learn how history and cultural values shaped knowledge about and inside the individual by collecting stories from people. Additionally, life history interviews are part of feminist research because we can bring women experiences to the centre of the research. "The life history can reveal women's perspectives by encouraging them to talk freely and flexibly" (Anderson and Jack 1991 in Lim 2011: 3). Women can share untold stories and reflect on them because they may have never shared their stories before. We can show the dynamic of women's lives and how the power nexus works (Lim 2011). Additionally, as part of feminist research and qualitative interview method, a life history interview is proposed to bring Indonesian women's voice on their sexuality. "Interview methods have long been popular because of their potential to bring forth the lived experiences and voices of the group that have traditionally been excluded from the knowledge production process" (DeVault and Gross 2012, Hesse-Biber 2014 in Library and Hamel 2017: 98). In this research, feminist standpoint theory combined with the life history interview will bring the research to focus on the individual, the agency of women that always voiceless, marginalised and overprotected by the government. "Life history research not only has the potential to impact the viewpoints and actions of the researcher and participants, but it can also inform public policy and transform societal conditions that marginalise many and privilege others" (Tierney and Lanford 2018 in Spooner 2018: 515).

All respondents did the interview voluntarily, and I appreciate their openness to support my research. I gathered purposeful sampling by creating a WhatsApp broadcast chat by mentioning several criteria and shared to my network in Indonesia. The online and digital world became the best option for fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic because in-person contact was impossible. The interviews were conducted through several online platforms, such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and Skype. Selected online platforms are based on the respondent's convenience. I interviewed two women from Jakarta, a woman from Bali, a woman from Jambi, a woman from Semarang, a woman from Balikpapan, a woman from Jayapura.

After all, due to the financial resources, deadline of the thesis and not possible for the in-person interview, I limited my respondent with these criteria: Indonesian women who live in Indonesia, 18-55 years old, keen to share their contraceptive use and sexual experience, also committed to doing several online interviews. I was sure with those open criteria because I was aware that the self-representative of all respondents are multiple, fluid (Willemse 2014) and changing many times, according to my analysis process. Herewith all concern from my respondents, I used my power as a researcher to articulate their narratives. It is important to be concerned about how their stories are recorded and how to read and analyse their stories. I did not put them on the identity boxes based on their background; for instance, I did not create different questions for each respondent because I wanted to open room for any possibilities from the respondents to show their identity and agency during the interview process (Willemse 2014).

Name <sup>1</sup>	Age	Marital Status	Location	Occupation	Education Background
Laksmi	33	Divorced	South Jakarta – DKI Jakarta	Private employee	Bachelor
Anggun	34	Single	Bekasi – West Java	Entrepreneur	Postgrad
Cantik	27	Single	Legian – Bali	Waitress	High school
Elok	29	Single	Jayapura – Papua	NGO staff	Bachelor
Ayu	44	Married	Semarang – Central Java	Teacher	Bachelor
Jelita	27	Married	Pontianak – West Kalimantan	Housewife	Bachelor
Juita	25	Married	Kota Jambi – Jambi	Housewife	Bachelor

### 1.1 List of respondents

In-person interaction is not a constant standard for an interview, and online methods are a valid approach for research (Howlett 2021). However, creating a safe space online is tricky because I need to maintain my personal space and communicate with the respondents. To open communication with strangers, incredibly personal and sensitive issues was challenging. I became a 'traveller' (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009) during the interview process and

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<sup>1</sup> I am using the pseudo name for all my respondents

was aware of my position, sometimes I was an ‘insider’, and I could shift in a moment to be an ‘outsider’ (Adu-Ampong and Adams 2019). As a researcher and an Indonesian woman who have my journey with my sexuality, my research became complex because my representation is not singular. I decided to open my journey with the respondent, became vulnerable, and did reflection many times after the interview. I feel that was a solidarity and intimate moment with them. It was my privilege to have the opportunity to meet (online) and listen to life stories from seven Indonesian women.

The interview was conducted two times per person and followed with a personal chat by WhatsApp. Both interview and chatting process took almost two months to build the chemistry and safe space from August to September. This research operates with a structured interview by asking questions about women’s experience on contraceptive use as an opening question. The second question is about sexual experiences, and the next question is followed by a topic on relationships with their partner or significant other, family, and peer (friend). The last topic is about their knowledge and understanding of policies in Indonesia related to family planning, sexual reproductive health, and rights. The second round of interviews was conducted based on the answer from the first round. Every woman got different questions but on the same topic. There are three topics, first is follow up for some answers from the first round. The second topic is about self-image, and the third is about sexual desire and their future. Additionally, I designed and elaborated the questions (first and the second-round interviews) based on the Circles of Sexuality model to analyse women’s sexuality.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Contextualising Family Planning Programme in Indonesia**

### **3.1 Introduction - History of Family Planning Programme**

Family planning programmes implemented in developing countries since the 1950s, and the first programme was in India. The idea of family planning programmes in developing countries started in the early 20th century by Margaret Sanger and Marie Stopes. Their family planning movement focused on women's well-being, rights, and empowerment, especially related to unwanted pregnancies. John D. Rockefeller III led the second movement, a philanthropist from America and his big support was to the Population Council. Malthus's theory inspired the second movement on population growth. Thomas Robert Malthus, in 1798 wrote *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, and he stated that population growth could cause food supply catastrophe and a lower standard of living. This movement had less concern about individual well-being (women's rights etc.) and more focus on the wellbeing of society. They worked on human population planning and managed the balance between humans and the food supply. Continuously, in 1952 these two movements were merged, and their focus was rapid population growth in developing countries, including Indonesia (Robinson and Ross 2007).

The family planning movement continues differently around developing countries. In the mid to late 1960s, the family planning programme in the Western world started giving financial support and technical assistance for population programmes to developing countries, including Indonesia. Historically, family planning in Indonesia has existed since 1950 by some doctors concerned about women's health. In 1956 some doctors from Indonesia joined training on family planning techniques in New York sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development funds. Soekarno refused to consider government support for family planning and forbid the family planning programme in Indonesia. It showed on Criminal Code Article 534 and 535 that preventing pregnancy and disturbance of pregnancy can count as criminal activity. In early 1965 the leadership shifted from Soekarno (Old Order) to Suharto (New Order), and in 1967 he signed the World Leaders' Declaration on Population and did the pilot project of family planning in Jakarta. In 1970 the National Family Planning Coordinator Board (BKKBN) was established. With support from international donors such as Ford Foundation and World Bank, BKKBN launched a strategy of village-based contraceptive delivery in Java and Bali and spread to a select number of outer island provinces (Hull 2007). The family planning programmes are continued until today, distributed in different ways, and part of Indonesia national health insurance.

### **3.2 Why Contraception?**

Why did I start with a personal story about my experience to access contraceptives in Indonesia as a single woman? Why did I start with the questions about contraception to all my respondents? In my opinion, in Indonesia, contraception is not a taboo issue because you can find that information easily on the internet, whether it is wrong or right. We also can see

the promotion from the government in public. Additionally, asking other women about their contraceptive methods is not prohibited. It is like a common question with a stranger in the waiting room at the clinic. This is the ground idea to make contraceptives a kick-off question on the interview process to discover more about women's sexuality. I assumed if I come with a 'warm question' about contraception can be possible to open conversation.

However, I do have a historical and political reason. There are three primary reasons: contraceptive use is mainly understood as a personal matter for women, but it is essentially political. The second reason is that family planning programmes in Indonesia are related to political acts of the government over women's bodies. The third reason is that family planning programmes and regulations in Indonesia excluded unmarried women from accessing contraceptive services.

Contraceptive is mainly seen as a personal matter for women because women have a womb and mostly understood only to prevent pregnancy. Contraceptive for man is rare to use in Indonesia. Based on Indonesia Demographic and Health Survey, male condom users in 2017 were only 3%, compared with injectables for women with 29% users. Additionally, 41.5 % of male in Indonesia understand that contraceptive is women responsibility (BKKBN 2018). In the end, all that is left are women and their burdens. If contraceptive is a personal matter, why does the government work hard on this programme?

In 2014 contraceptive services became part of the universal health coverage programme in Indonesia. It has improved 23,500 capacity of family planning clinics across the country (Budiharsana 2017). Logically, contraceptive services and other family planning services are for all Indonesian citizens. Furthermore, in the previous years, the Government of Indonesia participated in ICPD 1994 and 2012 London Summit on Family Planning. All the participants, including Indonesia, declared that "access to contraceptives is both a right and a transformational health and development priority" (Budiharsana 2017: 69). However, Indonesia has Law No. 52 of 2009 about Population and Family Development and Law No. 36 of 2009 about Health that regulates family planning programmes, including contraceptive access. Those exclude unmarried women from the rights to get contraceptive services.

The first paragraph from article 23 on Law No. 52, mention "central and local governments are required to improve access to and quality of information, education, counselling, and contraceptive services by providing contraceptive methods in accordance with the choice made by a husband and wife, taking into account age, parity, number of children, health condition, and religious norms" (Ibid). Article 72 on Law No 36/ 2009 mandates all information and resources for health and safe reproductive and sexual services only for a legally married partner, in line with religious norms and moral values (Budiharsana 2017). It is clear enough that structurally the government eliminated unmarried women from their rights to get contraceptive access, and their reproductive health needs have continued to be ignored and unmet. Automatically it presented the government political act and power to control unmarried women's bodies.

This political act is rooted in Indonesia's political history, especially in 1965 when the Suharto regime brought women back to domestic and limited their political move<sup>2</sup>. I want to borrow sexual politics from Saskia Wieringa. She defined "sexual politics as the regulation of bodily, emotional, mental, symbolic, and aesthetic sensations; in this process, the pleasures, as well as fears and obligations, are constructed in which the private and the public merge to create imbricating networks of power relations" (Wieringa 2003: 71-72). Sexual politics itself pledge with "the moral, sexual, symbolic, cultural, and political code in which individuals, families, and the nation are linked" (Ibid). I want to argue that limited access for

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<sup>2</sup> The complete description of what happened with women in 1965 will explain in the next chapter under part '*Women's Sex and Sexuality in Indonesia*'.

unmarried women is part of the sexual politics of the government to our bodies. The government regulated women's bodies, especially unmarried women, through family planning programmes based on moral values. Unmarried women were articulated as non-sexual or asexual bodies because society and the government expected women to be sexually active only under marriage institutions. The government created unmarried women as a symbol of the asexual body. Sexual activity is fear and obligation for women instead of pleasure and basic human needs.

The leadership is shifting from Soekarno to Suharto, and between 1965 - 1970, the crucial years for the political situation in Indonesia. We had a mass killing (Indonesian Communist Purge) in 1965-1966 (Wieringa 2003), just less than five years before Suharto established Indonesia's first family planning project. Additionally, during the Soekarno regime, before 1965, Indonesia had a love and hate relationship with the UN due to confrontation with Malaysia. Indonesia also was fighting over West Papua with the Netherlands. Suharto needs to repair Indonesia's position on the international stage, reconcile the diplomatic relation with Malaysia, and control the population growth to gain development funding (Hull 2007). Based on the political history of family planning programmes in Indonesia, I can argue that Suharto politicised the family planning programme. Suharto's decision to open the door for a family planning programme in Indonesia was a political strategy to get attention from an international, especially international donor.

## Chapter 4

# ***HERstory* – Indonesian women’s experiences negotiating sexuality and power**

### **4.1 Women’s Sex and Sexuality in Indonesia**

We need to be aware that the power exists between individual sex and all the intersecting social aspects. This power also produced gender that articulated women position, behaviour, and identity in society. It shows that sex, sexuality, and gender intersect and are embedded in women’s lives. The power shaped different understandings of sexuality, especially women’s sexuality. In Indonesia, commonly, sexuality is understood as an act that is related to the human genital. It causes sexuality to become a shameful and taboo topic. Indonesian called our genital ‘kemaluan’ that is rooted in malu (shame). Additionally, shame is not only about singular people, but it associates with the whole family, the kinship of shame (Davies 2015). It is because, as humans, especially a woman, we have never been seen as singular in Indonesia. Our agency is always chained and intersect with some aspects of life, like gender, family, religion, culture, etc.

The current perspective of Indonesian on women’s sexuality is historical and social constructed, but it can be “central to the formation of personal subjectivity” (Bennett 2005: 3). I can argue, in Indonesia, our sexuality is not limited to sensual physical activity. Still, it is more about power relations between individuals and many aspects that intersect in society. Related to how power play in the connection between human sexuality and societal elements; I will describe how the journey of women’s sexuality in Indonesia is articulated. I can argue that as a woman and Indonesian, even though I cannot represent all Indonesian women to explain our sexuality journey, I believe in this research, at least I can capture some stories of women and make their story be heard. Three eras had a substantial influence on women sexuality development in Indonesia: Colonial, Old Order, and New Order.

#### **4.1.1 Indonesian Women’s Sexuality in the Colonial (Before 1945)**

To understand the journey of women’s sexuality during the Dutch colonial era, I choose to look at some texts produced during the colonial period. The stories and fantasies of Indonesian women are diverse, from the image of a strong woman, Kartini or the notion of ‘*Nyai*’, a mistress and concubine stories between the native women with Dutch men in Indonesia. Let’s start with Kartini! I choose to talk about Kartini because her life was documented and recorded by her letters. She articulates her life by her letters to her friends. Kartini is the Javanese Princess that read and wrote in Dutch, fight for education for Indonesian women, re-evaluated Javanese tradition. Still, she swelled the bitter pill; she ended up on polygamy marriage and dead by complication childbirth when she was 25 years old. Kartini wrote letters to her friend, Rosa Abendanon and Stella Zeehandelaar. Her letters to Rosa were published by J.H. Abendanon (Rosa’s husband) into *Door Duisternis tot Licht (Out of Dark Comes Light)* in Dutch in 1911 and translated to English as *Letters of a Javanese Princess* by Agnes Louise Symmers in 1921. Her letters to Stella were published into *On Feminism and Nationalism* and translated by Joost Cote in 1995.

Based on her letters (Symmers 1921, Cote 1995), we can see her agitation as an Indonesian woman, such as puberty, marriage, and *kodrat perempuan* (destiny of woman or intrinsic

nature of woman). First, from her letter, we see her journey as a rebellious girl who questions Javanese tradition and marriage. Second, her desire to study in Holland to pursue her freedom as a woman. Third, she changed her mind to withdraw her scholarship and decided to accept the marriage proposal from a man she did not know. In her letter also we can see her battle between her desire and her family, especially her father. She showed her position and identity as a Javanese Muslim woman who lived during the colonial era. She also showed her consciousness about all privileges she had. Furthermore, she also mentioned that she had limited power to decide for their life, such as her future husband, pregnancy, kind of clothes, and attitudes in public. Like Kartini wrote about puberty, a woman's puberty is a sign that she will move out from her father's house, but it is not for free because basically, she only will move into her husband's house. Puberty is also a sign that she will have new roles as a wife and mother. She also mentions the possibility of a concubine, and when her husband has another woman, she will lose her role as a wife (Tiwon 1999). Marriage is not an option for a woman at that time. It is mandatory, part of her *kodrat* (destiny).

Another story is about 'Nyai' or mistress of the Dutch man. The phenomena of 'Nyai' mostly happened in the Java Island because of Agrarian Laws in 1870, and there was a lot of expansion of plantation in the Java Island. Some situations were conditioned by the needs of European (men) communities, for instance, slaves who worked at their house, gratification, traders, and including to satisfy their lust. Additionally, concubines happened because formal marriage between Dutch men and native women was forbidden. (Hull 2017). I choose to use the fictional characters of Nyai Dasima and Nyai Ontosoroh because they are famous in Indonesia and a lot of literature that analyse their story.

I will start first with Nyai Dasima, the fictional character from novels<sup>3</sup> and films<sup>4</sup>. Nyai Dasima is a Muslim Sundanese woman from the village, became a mistress of a European Man (in one novel mentioned a man is Dutch but another one is British), live in Batavia (Jakarta) and had a daughter from this concubine relationship. Nyai Dasima's life changed after getting a lot of material support, such as jewellery from her man. That condition became Indonesian men envy and want her, such as Samiun. Shortly after the lure of being a respected Muslim wife, Nyai Dasima married Samiun (she became his second wife), and unfortunately, her life changed drastically. She was being used, physically and material, by Samiun's family. Nyai Dasima asked for a divorce, but Samiun rejected it. Nyai Dasima ended up being robbed and killed. Samiun was the one who planned that. (Taylor 1999).

The second story is about Nyai Ontosoroh from *Buru Quartet* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. She was sold by her father and became a mistress of Herman Mellema. Nyai Ontosoroh was written as an intelligent, romantic, and empowered woman. After Mellema passed away, she could manage the large farms and continue her life with her daughter. Pram wrote Nyai Ontosoroh as a character that influenced Minke (the main character on *Buru Quarter*) a lot and has a lot of revolutionary ideas about Indonesia (Toer 1981). Nyai Ontosoroh is a woman that transcendent from the notion of native women at that time.

Both Kartini and 'Nyai' stories show how Indonesian women's behaviour, identity, attractiveness was constructed during the colonial era. Indonesian women never have their bodies. From both stories, we can say that "Indonesian women are seen as victims, victimisers, or subject" (Sears 1999: 5). Both are part of concubine practice. Even though Kartini was from Priyayi (a high-class Javanese family), she could not escape from an arranged marriage and sacrificed her dream to get higher education in the name of women's destiny. Other

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<sup>3</sup> G. Francis wrote the first novel in 1896. This novel was also translated into Dutch by A.Th. Manusama in 1926 and Bahasa Indonesia by S.M. Ardan in 1965 (Taylor 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Tan Films made the first film in 1929, and session 2 of this film was made in 1930. Another version of Nyai Dasima film was made in Indonesia in 1940 and 1950 by anonym. Another film was made in 1970 by Chitra Dewi Film Production (Ibid).

women who did not come from a high-class family became servants with ‘extra’ services in the Dutch man's house. They became a mother and had kids from her Dutch man; however, they could not have an equal position to be a wife because interracial marriage was forbidden. Woman's body owned by customary, cultural, and colonial regulations. A woman's body was an economic commodity, especially for *Nyai* because their family could sell them to a Dutch man. Women's bodies were also a colonial object because colonialism discovered the land, explored native women as exotic icons, and civilised them with Western rule. I can argue that sexuality and colonialism are intertwined through historical experiences and related to economy, politics, and power. Colonialism had governed women's sexuality, domesticity, and motherhood. Through colonialism, sexuality was about control, producing knowledge about natives, and creating the imagined future of women.

#### **4.1.2 Indonesian Women's Sexuality in the Old Order Era (1945 – 1964)**

After Dutch colonialism, between 1950-1964 (until the end of the Old Order era), women in Indonesia were in the state of political consciousness and employed their political agency. I can argue, women in the Old Order era lived with Kartini's spirit on women emancipation. They also redefined the meaning of *kodrat perempuan* (women's destiny) designed since Dutch colonial. The most significant movement had come from GERWANI (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia – Indonesian Women's Movement). GERWANI was the mass-based left-wing women's organisation that aimed to fight for democracy (especially on marriage law), women's rights and a higher standard of living. GERWANI is aware of gender, class, and citizenship that ruled women in Indonesia as part of the consequences of colonialism. GERWANI had the spirit those women have the same opportunity, ability, and rights as men to support the Indonesian revolution in public through social and political activities. GERWANI also realised that many women were trapped in forced marriages (including child marriages and concubines), raped, and could not participate in decision-making. It was important for GERWANI to raise awareness of women in Indonesia to fight for their rights. GERWANI also empowered other women by conducting literacy courses, teacher training, cooking, and sewing courses in the villages. Those activities made GERWANI have 3 million members, but also their spirit escalated to a lot of women in Indonesia, from peasant women, urban working class until middle-class housewives (Wieringa 2019).

Before 1965 I would like to argue that women's sexuality in Indonesia was represented by their fight to have equal rights with men in marriage institutions (against polygamy), active in public, and participation in politics. At that time, women also fight to implement Land Reform Law (paragraph 9), free Irian Jaya, and anti-Malaysia campaign (Ibid). They proved that their place is not only in bed and kitchen, but they also redefined the meaning of *kodrat perempuan* and showed that they have the same capability as men to be leaders and mobilised people. Their militant action shows that their sexuality was not passive, subordinate, and domestic. Until 1961 GERWANI held four congresses, and unfortunately, before they had their 5<sup>th</sup> congress, the 1965 Tragedy ruined everything (Wieringa 2019). I would like to borrow the term from Wieringa (2009), women sexuality is also a political battlefield. I agree with Wieringa because what happened in 1965 contributed to the construction of women's sexuality in Indonesia. It is not only how colonialism constructed women sexuality but also the dark history of Indonesia participated in shaping women's sexuality.

#### **4.1.3 Indonesian Women's Sexuality in the New Order Era (1965 – 1998)**

We will continue this journey with a talk about the 1965 Tragedy. The fifth congress of GERWANI in December 1965 never happened, and “women political agency had been

restricted, being associated with sexual butchery and social turmoil” (Wieringa 2011: 544). Six generals were murdered and brought to Lubang Buaya (Crocodile Hole). It was not literary a crocodile hole, but it was where Gerwani and Pemuda Rakyat (youth organisation from Indonesia Communist Party) were trained for the anti-Malaysia campaign. This location was prepared with several holes to bury the generals. Later the history was made with the slander that PKI (Indonesia Communist Party) was the one who organised the coup, and GERWANI had participated in some harmful activities to the general, such as gouging out the generals’ eyes and severing their penises. GERWANI also slandered that they did naked and sexual dancing. Even though GERWANI did not relate with all the coup activities<sup>5</sup>, the military media circulated the slander stories that GERWANI did “dance, alleged sexual perversions and cut off of penises of the generals” (Wieringa 2011: 551). However, the autopsy result proved that all generals died because of gunshot and heavy trauma. Their genital and eyes were complete. The dioramas at Lubang Buaya Museum<sup>6</sup> present the bloody clothes of the generals with the gunshot marks, and the generals’ eyes are still in the place (Wieringa 2009 and 2011). Unfortunately, these horror and slander stories were available on newspaper, radio programmes, and television broadcasts. Moreover, they put these stories as part of history lessons in the school in Indonesia. This horror fantasy was already spread out by military mass campaign, and it was a terror to all women, not only their members but also women who had GERWANI spirit. This tragedy became the end of Soekarno leadership and the early Suharto dictatorship (New Order).

Until today we do not know the reason for the 1965 mass murders. It has “hidden under deep layers of fear, guilt, horror and shame” (Wieringa 2011: 545). For more than 50 years, the New Order successfully created imagination about the coup by PKI and sexual act by GERWANI. On top of that, until today, the Indonesian Government never admitted that mass murder happened in 1965. This slander developed imagination and manipulated the collective memories, cultural, religious, social norms, and values. GERWANI as “communist whores” (Ibid: 554) became a national enemy that must be destroyed. GERWANI became a national gosh that give terror through the sexual powers of women. Women's political agency threatened men (with their patriarch and masculinity) and made obedient women disappear in the entire society. This caused Suharto to bring women back to our original place – kitchen, bed, and well. I borrowed from Wieringa (Ibid) the idea from Suharto was “their own women’s chastity has to be defined and protected, while the other women are either constructed as objects of rape or disciplined in other ways”.

In my opinion, based on the history of slander acts to GERWANI, New Order developed by masculine hysteria against women’s political agency, and Suharto is the symbol as *Bapak Pembangunan* (Father of Development). New Order made women limited only as submissive and devoted daughters, wives, and mothers. Women lose their position (leadership and public activities) in the revolutionary work in Indonesia. New Order pointed out the sexual politics to construct the state by linking moral, sexual, symbolic, cultural, and political with individuals and families. All of them “interplay between sexed and gendered bodies and the social-political realm” (Ibid). Women manipulated by her sexual symbols to be powerless only have a responsibility to be obedient to the state and family. New Order made women homogenic (powerless, submissive, and obedient), and it became the hegemonic ideology embedded in our lives until today (Weiringa 2011).

The New Order’s repressive action to women was also acclaimed in the 1974 Marriage Law and the first Family Planning Programme. The 1974 Marriage Law legislated women

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<sup>5</sup> Some volunteers of GERWANI that present at Lubang Buaya did not participate on all the coup activities and none of GERWANI leadership present there during that tragedy (Wieringa 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Lubang Buaya Musume or PKI Slender Museum is a museum located in East Jakarta that exhibit all slender act by PKI in 1965. This museum is in the same area with Pancasila Museum. These museums developed under Suharto dictatorship regime.

and men roles in the family and household. Women were identified as having responsibility only inside their house, and men were identified as being active in public as breadwinners. The Family Planning programme in early 1970 was designed only with the female method, such as birth control pills and implants. It was because women have a womb and their *kodrat*. Additionally, the family planning programme was designed nationally for married couples, and it happened until today. Suharto's sin to women continued in 1998 Riot at the end of his leadership period. This tragedy involved mass organised rape, torture, and murder of Chinese Indonesian women, mainly Jakarta. It caused trauma to a lot of women, especially the Indonesian Chinese community. Suharto and his military department were involved in this riot and mass rape. (Robinson 2015).

After the dictatorship regime under Suharto, Indonesia started the Reformation Era (1999-2014) with B.J Habibie as the 4<sup>th</sup> president, the 5<sup>th</sup> was Abdul Rahman Wahid (Gus Dur), and the 6<sup>th</sup> was Megawati. During Reformation Era, even though Megawati could be the first woman to be a president in Indonesia, women's sexuality was still governed by controlling women's clothes, expression, and participation in the public. There was a clothes raid in Aceh through Perda Syariah (local regulation with fundamental Islamic law)<sup>7</sup> and local regulations about prostitution in Tangerang that forbid women to go out at night<sup>8</sup>. In 2006 the Bill against Pornography and Pornoaction (Robinson 2015) established, even though the bill has been revised, this law still regulated the clothes, freedom of expression, physical movement, the exposure of women's bodies, and including cultural expression, for instance, dance and traditional clothes. The fundamental Islam value had politicised morals and controlled women's behaviour by promoting norms that did not stop in the Reformation era but continued until this research was conducted. The newest thing that happened in Indonesia is Indonesian Government did not prioritise the draft of the sexual violence eradication bill (RUU PKS - Rancangan Undang Undang Penghapusan Kekeasan Terhadap Perempuan)<sup>9</sup>. It happened because RUU PKS is opposite to Indonesian norms and religious values (which is fundamental Islam value). The government and fundamental Islam group are concerned with morals instead protect women life. Women and their sexuality, once again, were pushed back and locked in their houses.

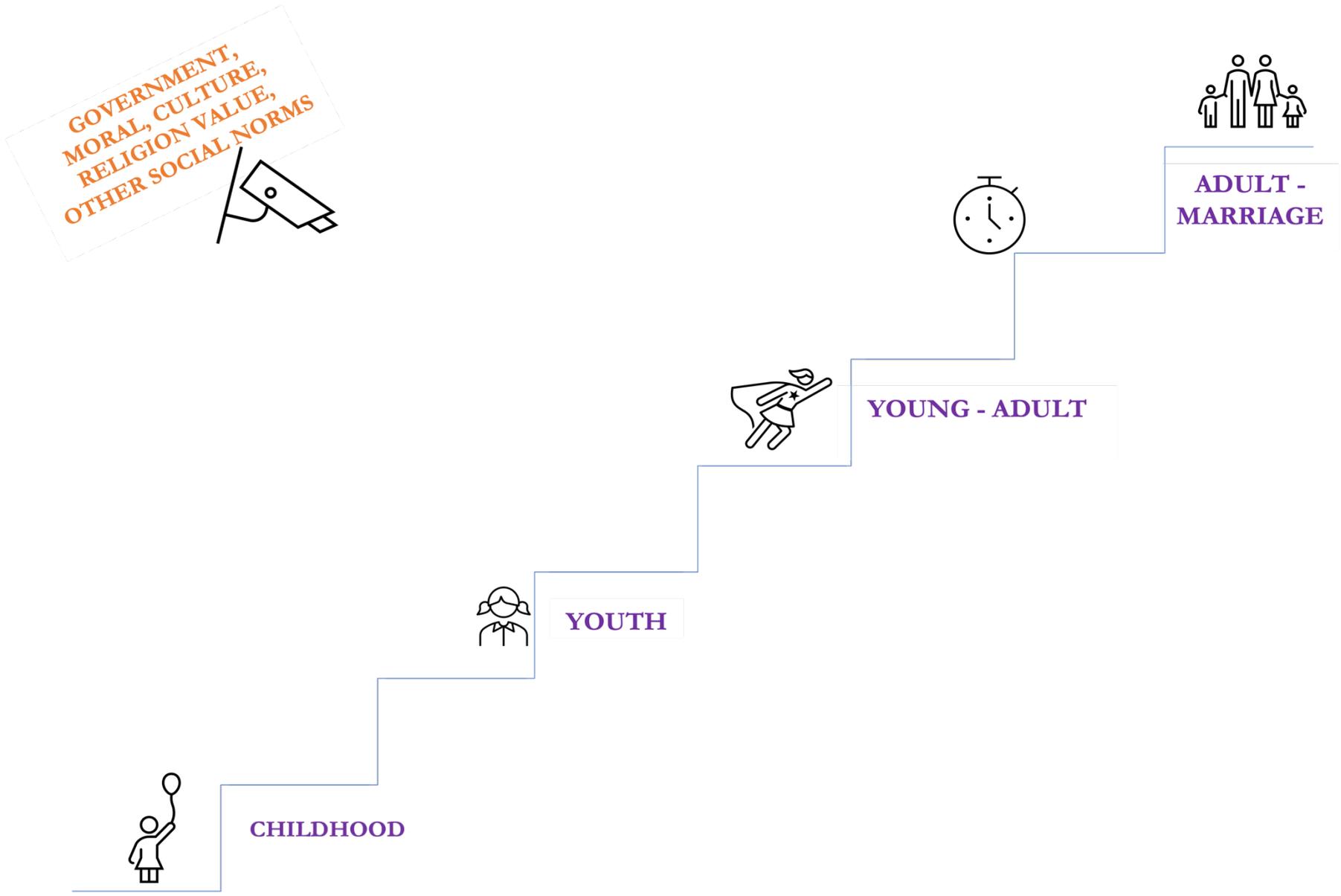
The explanation of women's journey from the colonial era until the dictatorship regime clearly shows that the government, with their 'panopticon', always watches every inch of women's bodies and our move(ment)s. The controlling is continued and internalised in women minds. The government takes women's rights for granted. Moral values establish hegemonic masculinity. It is embedded in women's lives, produces dilemmas, and affects the negotiation process between women's and moral desires. Like Nyai Ontosoroh said, "...because you write, the wind will not swallow your voice; it will be eternal, far, far in the future" (Toer 1996: 336-337); through this research, I continue to record women's journey, capture their desire, and write their life negotiation.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://voi.id/en/news/87672/sharia-police-nets-dozens-of-women-in-tight-clothing-and-men-in-short-pants-in-west-aceh-for-coaching>

<sup>8</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6632239.stm>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2021/09/08/activists-slam-latest-draft-of-sexual-violence-bill-for-neglecting-victims-rights.html>



1.2 The Illusion of Women's Pathway

## 4.2 The Illusion of Women's Pathway

I wrote the history of women's sexuality in Indonesia above, intending to show women's sexuality is rooted in our political history. It is a modality for me to analyse the data collected from the life history interview with seven women in Indonesia. I argue that political history in Indonesia has shaped the perspective and thought of women in Indonesia. The state, either colonial or post-colonial, had governed women based on their sexual biological condition and articulated it based on moral value. "Women's sexuality had historically been policed and regulated in a way which (heterosexual) men's had not" (Scott and Jackson 2015: 40). The state conducts women's lives by putting them under specific authority to guide what they do and what happens to them. The state has techniques and procedures for directing women's behaviour, including their sexuality (Foucault 2007); for instance, the state was controlled women's political activity during 1965 by sharing the sexual slender news about Gerwani (Wieringa 2003).

Women's sexuality is stories of struggle, resistance, resilience, and full of the negotiation process between sexuality and power. Many power models are embedded in family, religion, culture, intimate relationships, peer groups, or social communities. The power has shaped women's lives. Historical data from my desk study and life stories from my respondents show that there is a specific and similar form in women's lives that believed it is an official pattern for women. I called it *the illusion of women's pathway*. This pathway consists of four steps: *childhood, youth, young-adult, adult-marriage*. Women's behaviour and their thought are constructed in each step. Additionally, there is specific expectations, responsibility and mandate that need to be completed by women in each step. That expectations, responsibilities and mandates are also constructed by power. It shows that women are not born but becoming, as Simone de Beauvoir (1949) said in her masterpiece, *The Second Sex*.

I divided the illusion of women's pathway based on the stories from the respondents and connected it with the political histories on women's sexuality development in Indonesia. The moral panics in the colonial and post-colonial era, including 1965 against Gerwani, were used as a political strategy to control women's lives and continue until today. It had ordered and maintained the hegemony of women subordination. During the colonial era, women's subordination, which we called *kodrat* (women's destiny), was seen as 'traditional norm' and 'normal' (Wieringa 2009). This illusion pathway is trapped women in the domestic sphere and limited their agency in public, especially in the political arena. Additionally, it also causes the women movement in Indonesia to be stumbling and punched by moral values.

The hegemony of subordination of women has already been embedded since **childhood**, the first step from women's lives journey. An illusion projected a woman is a complete human being if she reached all the steps. When she is young, she is a daughter of her parents, and when she is an adult, she is a wife to a man and mother to her children—a woman articulated as daughter, wife and mother, no other identity. Sexuality, including sexual development, started since a baby was born. It is not only about organs but also sexual knowledge and behaviour. Sexual development is influenced by their ages, what the child observes (including the sexual behaviours of the family), and what the child is taught by the family, related to the values that family beliefs (Coleman 2009). Due to the subordination, women were thought to be passive and did not allow them to understand their sexuality. The family have the power to block all information about sexuality because childhood is seen as an innocent period. They end up collecting all the puzzle of information on their own by learning the behaviour from their parents and their experiences (Scott and Jackson 2015).

Additionally, based on my interviews, the family, especially parents, dramatically influences how women understand themselves, including their sexuality. During childhood,

sexuality is an impossible topic to be discussed with their parents. Sexuality is taboo and not a polite topic. As I already mentioned above in the earlier section of this chapter, sexuality is only related to the genital organs and is a shame. Below are some statements from my respondents about their relationship with family, childhood, and sexuality.

*“My parents and I, we never talked about sex. It is not polite and taboo. I was raised with a conservative parenting model. From elementary school until high school, my life was only about the book, student competition, and school. We lived in the village, but my parents provided me with radio, magazine, and music cassette, to keep me up to date” (Ayu 2021).*

*“My mother has been a single mother since I was in third grade in elementary school. She was depressed and rare to talk with me. I never talked about sex with my sister too” (Laksmi 2021).*

The second step is **youth**. The youth did not see as innocent like a child, but they are powerless because adults (especially parents and the state) have the power to define them. Based on Law No 44 of 2009 about Youth, youth is the age between 16 and 30 years old in Indonesia. The state sees youth as a functional and strategic role and shapes them as the spearhead in delivering the nation and state of Indonesia as independent, united, and sovereign. The state wants to create youth who believe and fear God Almighty, have the spirit of hassle, volunteerism, responsibility, and chivalry. Youth expected to be critical, idealistic, innovative, progressive, creative, dynamic, reformist, futuristic, and have leadership, entrepreneurial, pioneering, and national spirit based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Government of Indonesia 2009). Those are enormous expectations!

All expectations above seem genderless; unfortunately, those expectations will be different for women since we are already subordinated and have limited opportunity in the public sphere. Additionally, the family planning and reproductive health services are limited only for married couples; it shows that the state expected youth, including girls, to be asexual until they get married. So, it makes sense, even though youth experienced puberty and their biological organ changed, sexuality is still an undercover and taboo topic for them. Women in their girlhood still collecting the puzzle to understand their body and sexuality. Access to information about their body is not part of their rights, or maybe there is no such thing as youth rights. Based on the explanation above, the state sees youth as their benefit instead of their rights. Youth is an asset for the state and must be protected. Is it the real protection or control? On the one hand, the regulations limit youth access to reproductive health information and services. Still, on the other hand, there are many unwanted pregnancies and early sex debut cases that I already mentioned in the introduction chapter.

Those expectations and controls from the state continue to the next step, the **young adult**. After they completed all expectations and became ‘super youth’/ ‘super girl’, to make it perfect, youth, especially girls, should find their ‘soulmate’ and get married. Like I already mentioned in the introduction chapter, in Indonesia, the marital status is available in the identity card, and there is an expectation by the state for women to be in the marriage institution. There is a clock icon in the model that I draw to show a ‘deadline’ for women between young adult steps to adult marriage. The primary purpose of the young adult step for the girl is maidenhood. During their maidenhood, “women surrender their childhood at menarche and culminate in their arrival at the adult destination of marriage and motherhood. Women’s passage from girlhood to womanhood encompasses the social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development integral to the formation of female sexuality and subjectivity” (Bennett 2005: 1).

The most important thing for a woman during their maidenhood is her virginity. In this step, women should be fulfilling all expectations as good girls, keeping their virginity, and finding their soulmates before their ‘deadline’. The IDHS 2017 reported, “72% of women aged 15-49 are married or living with a partner. Median age at first marriage is 20.8% among

all women aged 25-49 years old” (BKKBN et al 2018). Additionally, the government set up the minimum age for marriage to prevent child marriage. In 2019, the government revised Marriage Law No 1 of 1974 with Law No 16 of 2019; the minimum age for men and women is 19 years old. The deadline is based on the value that is applied in their life. There is no official ‘deadline’ from the government, but remember, the government limited unmarried women to get reproductive health services, especially contraceptives. In substance, the government push women structurally to be in the marital institution

The final step in the illusion of women’s pathway is **adult-marriage**. In this step, women will receive their final identity as wives and mothers to make themselves perfect human beings. “Motherhood is seen as central to women’s motivations for and roles within marriage” (Bennet 2005: 1). After women were expected to be married, women were expected to be a mother. In Indonesia, women are seen as incomplete human beings without having a child. Motherhood is an indicator of adulthood and successful members of society; unfortunately, it is not applied reciprocally with fatherhood. The state shaped motherhood as central to women’s identities, like Julia Suryakusuma, mentioned on ‘State Ibuism’. The state constructed motherhood as “the systematic domestication of women, officially positioning them as appendages to their husbands, and valuing women solely on their ability to reproduce, raise children and nurture the ‘modern’ Indonesian nuclear family” (Bennet 2012: 3). This ideology has affected women who work outside the home seen less able to care properly for their families, especially their children. The worker women are accused neglected their *kodrat* as mother and wife. As motherhood is shaped like women’s primary role in society by the state, it turns out that reproductive matters, especially family planning, are only women’s responsibility (Bennet 2012). Additionally, as mothers and wives at home, we need to be aware that they are also working; cooking, cleaning, caring for children, and soon. Their reproductive labour is always seen as undervalued and mostly unpaid. We need to consider that women’s work is always politicised. Unfortunately, I will not continue discussing women’s reproductive labour due to the limitation of the topic, words, and time.

### 4.3 The voice from resilient

This is an essential part, and in the same way, it is the emotional part to write on. The illusion of women’s pathway can convey the consciousness of how power play on women’s sexuality developed in Indonesia. The important thing that I found from my research is women are negotiating sexuality and power in each step. The negotiation process is mostly missed to be appreciated and valued. As we know, there is power nexus applied in women's lives, and it causes us to have the limited opportunity in our lives. We have *kodrat*, we need to believe in it and live under *kodrat* shadows. The negotiation process happened in between to survive and continue our life. In my research, I saw that even though women are trapped on the illusion of women’s pathway, women always show their agency and become a subject of themselves by negotiating sexuality and power in her life. Additionally, I also want to state that stories from women here show that desire is not always about sexual pleasure. It has a broad range, from education, marriage, motherhood, love, travel, and other personal ambitions.

I want to admit that we are trapped on the illusion of women’s pathway, consciously or not. We are never born but always becoming. Our agency is developed by a power outside ourselves, such as family planning regulation and moral values. However, at the same time, during the negotiation process between her sexuality and power, the woman found herself as a subject. Women emancipate and empower themselves by being aware of their agency while negotiating their position, making decisions for her life, and dreaming about their

desires. Even though women entangle on this illusion, we continue our battle. Even though women always becoming, we never lose ourselves; like Julia Kristeva (1982) said, we find ourselves in sublime alienation.

### 4.3.1 The unwanted and life-changing

This part will explain the stories of two women who did not chase the pathway in the ‘correct way’ because they got pregnant before marriage. The interview started with a question about their experience with contraceptive services. Laksmi and Ayu are contraceptive users even though Laksmi decided to stop using it last year. She decided to do that because she does not feel comfortable with IUD inside her body. Sometimes her partner uses a condom or natural contraceptive methods (calendar system and coitus interruptus). Ayu is still using IUD because she does not have a plan to have more kids.

*“We were two lovebirds, young, clueless on sex, and afraid to buy condoms” (Laksmi 2021)*

The quote above is a part of an interview with Laksmi, who faced unwanted pregnancy when she was seventeen years old. She did not want to continue her pregnancy, but she did not have the option for that.

*“I do not want to have a kid; I do not like to have a kid” (Laksmi 2021).*

She said, if she could travel back, she would do that, and she would ask her boyfriend to use a condom, but it was too late. It was a simple mistake, and it caused a lot of things and changed her life. She ended up married to the father of her child, but the marriage was not going well.

*“We were young people who lonely at our home and hate our family. I thought if I have a family with him, it would be better; unfortunately, it was not like my dream” (Laksmi 2021).*

Another story comes from 42 years old woman who faced unwanted pregnancy when she was 20 years old. She was active, brilliant, and always outstanding in her academics. Due to her pregnancy, she should marry her boyfriend (her current husband) and finish her study on time.

*“I took eight years 11 months to finish my bachelor. I throw myself to the ‘bad world’, and I made a mistake. I got pregnant and got married when I was young” (Ayu 2012).*

Unwanted pregnancy on girls in Indonesia is seen as a common secret in society. Based on the desk study, I could find data on unwanted pregnancy for married women<sup>10</sup>. Still, I could not find the official national data from the government about unwanted pregnancies on (unmarried) girls in Indonesia. The best data that I found was the 2010 Greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey (GTAS) showed “from 1382 respondents, there are 10% of births were premarital conceptions, and 5% were premarital births” (UNFPA 2013). In Indonesia, mostly (adolescent) unwanted pregnancy cases are solved by marriage even though it directly brings them to the child or early marriage. Based on a study from Rumah Kita Bersama, 36 out of the 52 studied cases of child marriage was motivated by pregnancy (Marcos and Dwianti in Horii 2021).

I argue here that without the official data from the government on (adolescent) unwanted pregnancy, the government never takes this issue seriously. Unwanted pregnancy is a crucial women’s sexuality issue. It is about sexual health and reproduction circle and touching the value, sensuality, intimacy, sexualisation, and sexual identity because all the circles

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<sup>10</sup> The percentage of unwanted pregnancy among married women in Indonesia is 15,7% (Muth-mainnah et al 2020).

intersect. Based on this care, the value applied in family and society has the power to decide women's lives. She could not decide for herself because she never had the power to her own body.

*"He (father of her child) talked to my family. They who decided to get married. I was still looking for other options to cancel the marriage plan, but there is no other way" (Laksmi 2021).*

This story indicates a condition in Indonesia that tried to keep women following the pathway, to be in marriage institution, even research data state that conception is (should be) an act under marital relationship. Women do not have another option because abortion is illegal, and being a child born outside marriage will be called by society an illegitimate child (*anak haram*). These two women surrender to marriage institutions and cause them to delay their dream, leaving their girlhood directly to the motherhood phase.

I will not focus on analysing the unwanted pregnancy case in Indonesia, but I will focus on the women's experiences and their stories. Their surrender is a form of women's agency inside the sublime alienation. They are not hopeless but developing themselves as a subject of their life by negotiated sexuality and power. Yet Ayu became a wife and mother; she decided to finish her study and become a civil servant. She agreed with her husband if she could be a civil servant, her husband should find other occupations that make him stay at home and be responsible to the household. It was not an easy dialogue because of many questions from people and conflict with the neighbour and big family.

*"When I married him (her husband), we had an agreement; if one of us can be a civil servant, the other one will stay at home. I could be a civil servant earlier than my husband. I said, if you love me, please give me space to actualise myself. It was not a lot of questions from people, but we committed to our agreement" (Ayu 2021).*

She told me what happened to her had taught her about life. She transformed herself to be someone new. Ayu is currently active to empower and giving education to women in her neighbourhood on contraceptive and reproductive health. Her encounter with unwanted pregnancy did not define her only based on motherhood but as a woman who fought for her life and was aware of her sexuality.

*"I think I learn a lot from the past. Maybe it was a mistake, or perhaps it was not a mistake. My past could not stop me to actualise myself. I think God planned to teach me to understand my life.*

*Before I met my husband, I had a relationship with a man who wanted me to be a wife who stayed at home. If I did not get pregnant with my current husband or marry someone else, maybe I would lose myself. My current husband is giving me space to be active, and we are teamwork" (Ayu 2021).*

Since she was young, Ayu has been an active person and has continued participating in the organisations' activities. She is an agent for a family planning programme from BKKBN in Central Java. She educates and empowers wives and women in her neighbourhood to get information about contraceptives and reproductive health. She is also a counselling teacher in high school and faces many problems related to sexuality and young people. She realised that her parents never gave information about sexuality, even about menstruation. Based on her experience, she needs to improve her knowledge of sexuality and young people issues. She joined some training and workshop with some organisations that work on SRHR and young people issues. She educates her children and her students at school about sexual reproductive health and rights.

*"I am trying to be open about sexuality with my children, but I am still educating them with religious value. Even though sexual desire is natural, I teach my children some consequences that they will face if they do premarital sex. However, if something bad happens, for instance, my daughter is pregnant before marriage, I will inform her of some options, including abortion, and decide by herself. I will respect my daughter decision" (Ayu 2021).*

During the interview, Ayu did not feel comfortable talking about her sexual desire. She said her passion is not limited only to sexual activity. She has warm sexual life, sometimes has a date with her husband, but she said their relationship is beyond sexual activity. She and her husband focus to raise their children and keeping healthy as much as they can. She and her husband dream to reiterate their favourite activities before they get married, such as travelling and watching football in the stadium. Her desire was constructed by her experiences negotiating her sexuality and power that applied in her life. She did not have much quality time with her husband before they married, and she wanted to return the memories. She also desires her children and students to access the correct information on sexuality as much as possible. She wants her children and students can make wise and intelligent decisions for their own life.

*"In my opinion, in the relationship is not only work but also communication to keep it on fire. My husband and I always bring problems to the table and find new things to warm our relationship. It is not only about romance but also about the skill to understand yourself. You need to know what you want, your partner desire and find possibilities for how it can work well. It is not easy but worth trying" (Ayu 2021).*

Laksmi also said a lot of things happened after her pregnancy. She did a reflection on her life during the interview process. It was a precious moment for me as a researcher because she could reflect on what happened to her life and realise her agency through this research.

*"I can say I am lucky, or maybe that was part of my hard work. I also had a good support system and a lot of privileges. I decided to continue my education, and my parents in law took the financial responsibility of my study.*

*If I did not continue my study, the best possibility is to become a stewardess; the worst is an illegal prostitute.*

*I think I already passed a lot of things, I had been pregnant, I am a mother of a teenager, I did abortion, married, divorced, and currently I have long term relationship with my partner" (Laksmi 2021).*

Laksmi is a young professional, a mother of a teenager and divorced. She became a mother, wife, and widow at an early age. Motherhood did not stop her from continuing her study and becoming a career woman. She realises she is not the best mother, especially with the social standard. She is negotiating her position as a mother and standing up for herself to be a free woman. Even though she has a partner, she decided to live in the same house with her ex-husband, daughter, and parents-in-law. Her family knew about her separation, but she is not sure about her parents in law.

She knew she could not change the past; she decided to take responsibility for her daughter to live by keeping her relationship with her ex-husband, but she did not lose herself. Her relationship with her ex-husband is like a friend; they carry out their parental duties, support, and respect each other personal life. She decided to fall in love again, open new possibilities, and celebrate her sexuality. She said her encounter with unwanted pregnancy transformed her became a woman who has a dream and desire. She was a girl who was always bored, hated her family, and did not have a lot of friends. Currently, she has a lot of dreams and wants to have a better life.

*"I still like to enjoy my 'me time'; read comics, watch rom-com movies, eat my favourite foods. I still want to be alone, without my daughter. It does not mean I hate her; I just realise I need my own time; for rest and being me.*

*I am not a perfect mother, or maybe I am not 100% adult. I miss my teenager, but I cannot take it back. I do not know it is wrong or not, but I just want to be happy. I want to spend my free time with myself or with my partner. I cannot be like a 'regular mother'; who is not appropriate to express her emotions, should be solid and mature, cannot have their own life, cannot romanticise her teenage life. I just want to work, keep my saving, happy, if possible, together forever with my partner and my daughter" (Laksmi 2021).*

She desires to have a family with her partner, but she is also afraid to fail like her previous marriage. She was pregnant several years ago with her partner, but they decided to do an abortion because her partner was in his postgraduate programme. She was not sure her partner could give her financial support and did not want to repeat the same mistake. It was an illegal abortion, but she made an appointment with her gynaecologist. She lied if she had a miscarriage at home.

*"It was in 2015; my partner was doing his postgraduate programme. We went to the hotel. I think he got the pills from his friends. We stayed a night together. I felt it come out; I saw it.*

*It was sad, we fought, I think we broke up after that, but we are back again. It was a hard decision, but I did not want to make the same mistake in my life.*

*I am not using any contraceptive, but currently, we are old, our sperm and ovaries' qualities are not same anymore. Sometimes we said, if I am pregnant right now, it will be a good thing." (Laksmi 2021).*

Laksmi also shared her desire to celebrate her sexual life. Her passion was shaped by her experiences when she was young. She never had her girlhood, explored sexual life when she was young. There are a lot of values in society that limits woman to have sexual desire. Women's desire is both in body and socially constructed. Mostly in 'proper intercourse', women tend to give the pleasure of a male partner until the male achieves his orgasm (Holland et al 1994). Laksmi is different; she is aware of her pleasure, acknowledges her sensuality, does not shame to start intimacy with her partner, and values her performance and orgasm. She redefines her previous sexual life with her ex-husband. Her relation is not male-centred, never faking orgasm, and exploring a lot of possibilities to keep the sparkling sex.

*"I am a romantic person. I also like to romanticise my moment with my partner when we were in university, for instance, having sex in the living room.*

*We like to explore our sexual life. It would be nice to invite someone else, but we focus on learning Kamasutra for now. We prefer intimacy and duration. The sex will be deep, passionate, and long. It will be a great orgasm for us" (Laksmi 2021).*

After I write down stories from Ayu and Laksmi, I argue that they are an example of anomaly mothers who *smash* the concept of motherhood from the New Orde. They do not follow the idea of the 'modern' Indonesian nuclear family, decide to be active in public while carrying their parental duty, and the important is the motherhood never define them. They did not lose themselves under the patriarchal model of motherhood, even finding the new self to pursue their happiness. They discovered their agency and realised themselves as a subject of their life, like a phoenix rising from the dust.

### 4.3.2 Looking for my soulmate

This chapter is about stories from Cantik, Anggun, and Elok, unmarried women on their journey looking for their soulmates. I decided to use the term 'soulmate' because their stories are beyond looking partner for married. They have different backgrounds, such as education, economic status, religion, and their city. The thing that gathers them in this chapter is their stories looking for their soulmate. If we follow the illusion of pathway, they are in the same step on the young adult phase, on their maidenhood, on their 'deadline' to find true love. During the interview process, there was a moment I felt on the same pathway with them; sometimes, I was an outsider, but sometimes I was an insider. I could relate to their negotiation process as a single woman living in Indonesia, especially finding reproductive health services.

As already mentioned above, the important thing in the young-adult step is virginity. It is not allowed for women to do sexual intercourse before getting married. Even though it is applied to men too, but this world treated women different. The discourse of virginity is only applied to women, from medical that marked by hymen or several myths in the society (Bennett 2005 Davies 2015, Platt 2018). It happened because sexuality is rooted in shame in Indonesia. The shame is not only for a person but the entire family, also possible one village. "The kinships of shame operate as a form of biopower regulating sexuality outside the formality of governmental institution. Avoiding shame by ensuring women are virgins at marriage is thus one way in which surveillance and shame work together to shape sexuality in Indonesia" (Davies 2015: 33-34). With this fact, are young couples in Indonesia still enjoying their sexual relationship? Yes! They are doing secret relationships and presenting the image of sexual purity.

*"Oh, a second, I need to close my door to talk about sex. My father will get a heart attack if he knows I did sex before married" (Anggun 2021).*

*"No, are you crazy? Impossible! My parents never know about my sex life" (Cantik 2021).*

*"My parents knew I have a boyfriend, but they do not know if I did sex with my boyfriend" (Elok 2021).*

I started the interview with my experiences on contraceptive services in Indonesia and the Netherlands. I decided to open myself first because I feel we are on the same page, and it was a great decision. They are happy to share their experiences contraceptives, reproductive health, air sexual life with me. It was my honour to listen to their experiences and bring their stories to my research. Cantik, Elok, and Anggun are revolutionary women who brave make choices for their bodies. They understand the stigma, moral values, and how they need to keep secrets from their parents. Sometimes they had a guilting feeling with their parents, but it already happened, and they cannot change it. They also said it was a mistake, but they were happy and in love.

*"I was in love. I trust him. I was happy even though there is a conflict inside me like I knew it is not allowed by my religion and moral values. Still, it was not just sex, we were making love" (Anggun 2021).*

*"It was in Jogjakarta. I had a holiday with my boyfriend. I knew it was wrong, but I wanted to feel it; I wanted to know how it felt when we got an orgasm. He was older than me, but he was my fantasy. I like a man who is much older than me. I was happy even though it was hurt" (Cantik 2021).*

*"We did not plan it. We did that because we were horny, in love, and we want to feel that. I knew it was wrong, but I was happy" (Elok 2021).*

Their experience on sex debut shows how they negotiate their sexuality with power; they countered all moral values and religious values, but on the other hand, they understand their desire for intimacy, sensuality, affection, and love. This is part of their process to find their soulmate. They were brave to appreciate their passion and manage it as a secret because they respected their parents and family. The negotiation processes also shape their desire and differences in each other women. Their sexuality is also their battlefield because looking for a soulmate is not like looking for a job.

Anggun is 34 years old, looking for her soulmate, and she negotiated her sexual identity. She said sexuality is a journey. Through her journey, the sad and the happy part, she could open her eyes and see the world holistically. She studied and lived in the United States, experienced different cultures, met diverse men, had a conflict with her father, found herself as not heterosexual, and so on. All her experiences shaped and guided her to be an adult who understands what she wants in her life. She also bravely expressed her desire. It was not easy to understand her sexual orientation and identity. She negotiated her sexuality with her family and religious values until she found what she wanted in her life.

*"I was finding what I want. I was angry, miserable, in conflict with my father, lost my mother, and had a broken heart. You know, the broken-hearted girl will attract the broken-hearted boy. I was run from my life.*

*For now, I want to have a relationship with a man. Even though sometimes I still have the sparkling feeling if I meet a woman. I realised I have a lot of feminine sides in myself, and I like a woman who has a lot of masculine sides. It is complicated; if I am with a man, I miss the feeling with a woman. If I am with a woman, I crave feeling with a man. Sexuality is a journey, isn't it?*

*I decided to find myself. I am not looking at the exit plan, but I am examining how this thing can work. I stopped running; I chose to understand what had happened to me. I want to live holistically.*

*Yes, I want to marry a Catholic man; I prefer an Indonesian man because I do not want to adjust to many things. I want to work on another thing with my future partner, beyond religion and cultural adjustment. I want a man who I can bring to meet my family, especially my father. If I get a Catholic man, I will solve several problems and make my life easier. So, I can develop another thing, like business and can empower people around me. No more adjustment for something that possible cannot work face the reality and enjoy my life" (Anggun 2021).*

Elok has had a relationship with her boyfriend for quite a long time. They have been broken up but manage to get back together. Her parents knew that she had a boyfriend, but they never asked her when she would marry. She said her parents are not demanding, always support her, and try to understand what she wants in her life. Her neighbour or family member sometimes asks her mother about Elok status and why she does not get married yet. Her mother usually complains to her. She always tries to make her mother calm by making a joke about a wedding.

*I think I am still young. Relax everybody! I am still enjoying my job; I like the issue that I focus on, like working with children in the school; I am passionate about education topics. If possible, I also want to continue my study. Right now, I am studying social-emotional and mindfulness. I want to have self-discipline, want to have minimalist and mindful life. I do want to marry, with my boyfriend or maybe someone else. It's just about time, but not in one or two years. I want to focus on my personal development" (Elok 2021).*

I respected Elok, who did not want to share her sexual desire because it was not her focus. Based on her stories, she never regrets her sexual intercourse with her boyfriend, does not worry about their relationship and trust her boyfriend. She is focusing on her personal development and her life. She wants to marry one day, but she wants to prepare her life first. She wants to enjoy her life; work, saving, and marriage life is not her priority. This is her negotiation process as a single woman who focuses on self-development and relaxing with what will happen in the future, including marriage life, because she believes she will always have her parents on her back. She decided to keep secret her sexual life from her parents because she knows her parents trust her, and she does not want to break it.

*"I went to the clinic after my vagina bleeding, felt the burn, and it was hurt, especially during penetration. The doctor told me it was a sexually transmitted infection, but I did not know. The doctor did the blood test and vaginal swab. I did not get the result and did not take all the medicine, just the important one. I said to the doctor, I do not have enough money, and it is true. I am ok right now, and I will use a condom if I have sexual intercourse with a man" (Cantik 2021).*

I did my first interview with Cantik. She shared a lot of her sexual experiences because she wanted a lot of people to read her story and learn from it. She had encountered a lot of broken hearts and unfortunately got STI from her last partner. She also shared her sexual desire; she is passionate about her sex life and has her ideal boyfriend image.

*"I want to marry a bule (expatriate in Indonesia); a mature man, has a job in Indonesia, older than my age. I like Caucasian men because they are good looking and blonde. OMG! It is my fantasy. I want a*

*tall man with tattoos and a beard. I like them because they are polite, romantic, keen to foreplay, good in bed, and big penis. I want a man who will guide me and be a leader in the family because I am not mature and need someone to control and be dominant. (Cantik 2021).*

She told me her experience with STI made her understand the function of a condom. She did not hesitate to share it with her peer and suggested they do a pap smear and check their sexual health in the clinic. During the interview process, she also asked about my experiences, for instance, contraceptive services and my sexual life. I could not answer her question about medical health. Still, I gave her several organisations, affordable clinics, and doctors that can help her and her peers access reproductive health services.

She met mostly men from online dating, and after her encounter with STI and some broken hearts, she decided not to use online dating anymore. She wants to have a severe relationship with a Christian man who has a job and wants to build a family with her. Based on her experiences and desires, she understands that she needs to negotiate several things in her life to get what she wants, for instance, to have a family. She is living by herself in Bali, have a lot of peers but not close friends. She is still happy to pursue her desire, and at the same time, she negotiates to follow the illusion of pathway that she still needs to marry a man who will be accepted by her family and can support her life. Her experiences brought her a long-term dream for her life, and she hopes one day in Indonesia, unmarried women can get access to affordable reproductive health services. After I interviewed her, I felt emotional because the regulation in Indonesia is unpleasant and depressing for unmarried women who want to enjoy their sexual life.

The stories from three unmarried women who enjoy their sexual life and are proud of their desire show that motherhood is not the centre of their motivation within marriage. They are women who are brave to pursue their dream and desire. Virginity is no longer a significant issue because they focus on finding self-image, self-development, and desire. Those stories proved that women sexuality is complex and shaped by many aspects in women's lives. However, those stories also show that the illusion of women's pathway only focuses on the life-stages, for instance, virginity in maidenhood, but absent from focusing on their reproductive health and rights (Bennett 2005).

### 4.3.3 When the party is over

In this last chapter, I will share stories from Jelita and Juita, two married women who passionately want to be a mother. Like other interviews, I also started with a question about contraceptives. Jelita has never used contraceptives ever in her life. Juita used it since 17 years old, from male condoms, pills, and currently, she has injections. If we follow the illusion of women's pathway, Jelita and Juita are reached the last stairs, the adult-marriage step. Juita has already reached her final identity as a perfect woman. She is a daughter, a wife, and a mother. Almost the same with Jelita; she is on maternity programme.

*"I decided to get married because my father is old; I do not know how long he will be able to be with me. I also do not have a mother anymore. I do not want to regret that I could not give grandchild to him.*

*It was complicated because I had a relationship with two men, my boyfriend and friend with benefits (FWB). I had a long-distance relationship with my boyfriend, and he did not care about me anymore. I met my FWB at work, and he filled my boyfriend absence.*

*I want to get married soon; I just spill the tea! My boyfriend could not answer, but my FWB spilt the tea back and asked me to have an official relationship and have a family together. I was breaking my boyfriend's heart, but I want real action from a man; I want to be a mother and devoted daughter" (Juita 2021).*

Juita decision to jump into motherhood step is part of negotiating sexuality and power in her life. Juita understands that she desires to have intimacy with her partners, feel sensuality and affection, and want to be a mother. She bravely asked her partner if he was going to join her to pursue her desire. We designed to prevent from pursuing our aspirations, including in marriage and our sexuality. Women are shaped not to express their desire, passive, cannot make a decision, and are just waiting to be chosen by men (Bennett 2005). Juita is different; she decided to make the first move and decided what she wanted in her life.

The interview with Jelita was full of love. She is a new wife and on the maternity programme. She openly shared her first sexual intercourse with her husband and how happy she was with her marriage. Jelita is a woman who follows religious values and respects her parents. At the same time, Jelita is a woman who has sexual desire, craving intimacy, and love affection, like most of us in the world.

*“It is nice to have a new life. I can be with my husband every day. We did sex at least three times a week. In my opinion, sex is important in marital relationships.”*

After she finished her postgraduate study, Jelita decided to marry her boyfriend. She already stated in the early relationship that she wanted to have a serious relationship. Her boyfriend met her parents in the first semester of their relationship; after being together for a year, they decided to make it official.

*“I do not feel I lost myself. This is the life that I want; live together with my husband, have kids, manage our life like teamwork, independent from our family.”*

Jelita wants to live in her own life, together with their love, and celebrate her sexuality, but she needs to negotiate with the value that is applied in their lives. She negotiated their sexuality with a lot of power, such as family values, religion, morals in society, and so on. She got her agency by melting herself with societal values and negotiating her sexuality to be fit in society under the marital institution.

I decided to bring stories from Juita and Jelita because I want to show women’s lives dilemmas. Above I already mentioned that on the one hand, the New Order politicised motherhood as a perfect image of women and raised the opinion that women who work outside their home are neglected their *kodrat*. However, we need to rearticulate *kodrat* itself because women are also doing a lot of works at home. In the end, wherever women did a lot of work, at home or outside the house, their work was always undervalued, less appreciated, and worthless. Women who work outside their home are neglecting their families and children; at the same time, their reproductive work is never valued for women who work at home. This dilemma shows that after the last step, after the women received her final identity as wife and mother, after their wedding party, we should question, what happened when the party was the offer?

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

I started my research with two research questions; “*what are Indonesian women’s experiences regarding their sexuality?*” and “*what are Indonesian women’s desires regarding their sexuality?*”. I answered my question by applying feminist standpoint theory and circle of sexuality. I worked with life history interview to expose how history and culture shaped knowledge about and inside the individual by collecting and analysing their stories. I interviewed seven Indonesian women. All respondents did the interview online and voluntarily. The interview was conducted two times per person and followed with a personal chat by WhatsApp. I designed and elaborated the questions based on the Circles of Sexuality model to analyse women’s sexuality.

Sexuality is not limited to sensual physical activity but is related to power relations between an individual and many aspects that intersect in society. Research findings show that women’s sexuality is a historically, socially, and politically constructed journey in women’s lives. In their journey, women are negotiating sexuality and power. It has happened since the colonial era. Based on the literature study, I found three eras substantially influenced women sexuality development in Indonesia: Colonial, Old Order, and New Order. In the Dutch colonial era, the construction process presented from Kartini’s letter and texts that produced about *Nyai*, a mistress and concubine stories between the native women with Dutchmen in Indonesia. Kartini letters represented how privileged Indonesian women negotiate with Javanese tradition, Muslim values, family, and her desire to get her freedoms; to decide her partner and continue her study in the Netherlands. Women’s puberty symbol that women will have new roles; from the devoted daughter, she will be a devoted wife and mother; it is *kodrat Perempuan* (women’s destiny). The notion of *Nyai* shows unprivileged Indonesian women who serve Dutchman, as a servant and mistresses. *Nyai* is the submissiveness symbol of women’s bodies as an economic commodity; colonialism discovered the land, explored native women as an exotic icon, and civilised them with Western values. Colonialism had governed women’s sexuality: controlling, producing knowledge about natives, and creating the imagined future of women.

Women in the Old Order era tried to redefine the meaning of *kodrat Perempuan* designed since Dutch colonial through GERWANI, the mass-based left-wing women’s organisation that aimed to fight for democracy (especially on marriage law), women’s rights and a higher standard of living. GERWANI is aware of gender, class, and citizenship that ruled women in Indonesia as part of the consequences of colonialism. However, in 1965, in the political transition process to the New Order era, the government restricted women’s political agency. GERWANI was being associated with PKI and participated in the coup and killed several generals. Since 1965 participation of women in politics related to sexual butchery and social turmoil. The New Order era had locked women in their houses and brought back their *kodrat*. Monitoring from the government continues until today, for instance, family planning regulation that limited unmarried women’s access to reproductive health services.

Second, based on the historical studies and interviews, I found a specific and similar form in women’s lives that believed it is an official pattern, as *kodrat perempuan*. I called it *the illusion of women’s pathway*. This pathway consists of four steps: *childhood, youth, young-adult, adult-marriage*. This illusion pathway is trapped women in the domestic sphere and limited their agency in public, especially in the political arena. Additionally, it also causes the women movement in Indonesia to be stumbling and punched by moral values. However, this research found that each step there is full of negotiating sexuality and power. The negotiation

process is mostly missed to be appreciated and valued. As we know, there is power nexus applied in women's lives, and it causes us to have the limited opportunity in our lives. We have *kodrat*; we need to believe in it and live under *kodrat* shadows. The negotiation process happened in between to survive and continue our life. Even though women are trapped on the illusion of women's pathway, women always show their agency and become a subject of themselves by negotiating sexuality and power in her life. Even though women are always 'becoming', we never lose ourselves by realising our experiences and bravely admitting our desire; we will find ourselves in sublime alienation.

Third, present women's experiences on the research are massive political action from scholars. It is important to define and reform the practices of epistemic authority and the epistemic virtue of women, especially related to their sexuality. Science should not ignore women ventures and the representative of women herself on science. By bringing women's experiences, scholars can focus on the representative of 'the other' and the marginal. Knowledge is not objective but situated politically and socially. Knowledge about women is rooted in everyday life experience and their struggles. I hope in the future there will be more research that presents women's experiences, struggles, and resistance; analyse and change them into knowledge to support social policy.

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