

Pretty, Pure and Pious: Policing Women in Indonesia

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GENDER DIVERSITY IN INDONESIA

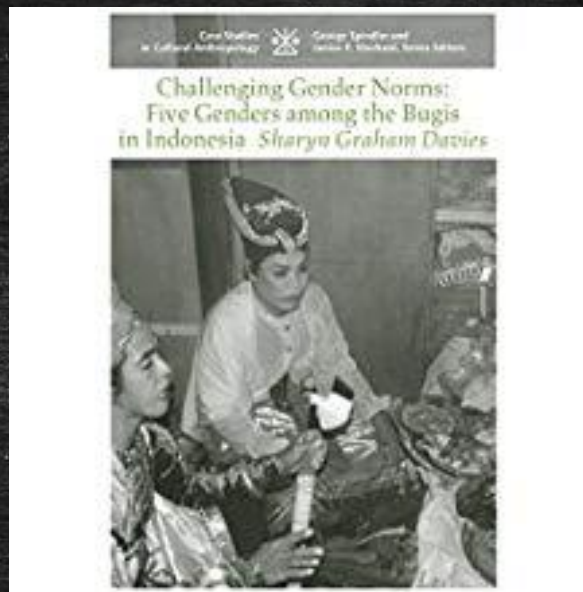
Sexuality, Islam and queer selves

Sharyn Graham Davies

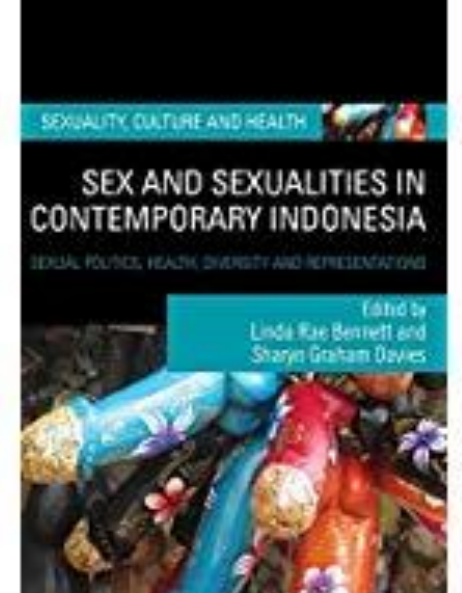


KEBERAGAMAN GENDER DI INDONESIA

SHARYN GRAHAM DAVIES



Challenging Gender Norms: Five Genders among the Bugis in Indonesia



SEXUALITY, CULTURE AND HEALTH

SEX AND SEXUALITIES IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA

SEXUAL POLITICS, HEALTH, DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

Edited by Linda Rae Bennett and Sharyn Graham Davies



SEKSUALITAS DI INDONESIA

Politik seksual, kesehatan, keberagaman, dan representasi

Editor: Linda Rae Bennett, Sharyn Graham Davies, Irena M. Kuntz



Introduction



Skins of Morality: Bio-borders

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Articles

Skins of Morality: Bio-borders, Ephemeral Citizenship and Policing Women in Indonesia

Sharyn Graham Davies

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Abstract

Indonesia's policewomen were rarely in public (or even police) consciousness prior to 2013. Yet the succeeding five years saw an explosion in visibility. Public furor concerning forced virginity testing of recruits, national debate over permitting women to veil on duty, and social media sites consumed with beauty concomitantly propelled policewomen into the limelight. I draw on these three examples to illustrate how various forms of power are levelled precisely at the borders of a woman's body, what I frame as bio-borders. I focus on three bio-borders: hymens, veils and beauty. Drawing on Franck Billé's (2017) work on skin and geopolitical boundaries, I analyse these bio-borders as sites where Indonesia's neoliberal moral authority is asserted and contested. As an enforcer of state law, a policewoman's virginity, purity and appearance signify Indonesia's moral standing and mandate overt surveillance and control. Policewomen

People also read

Introduction
Contestations of Gender, Sexuality and Morality in Contemporary Indonesia

Maria Platt et al.
Asian Studies Review
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Intersections: The Pretty

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Issue 37, March 2015

The Pretty Imperative: Handcuffing Policewomen in Indonesia

Sharyn Graham Davies and Hanny Savitri Hartono

The beauty myth is always actually prescribing behaviour and not appearance. Naomi Wolf^[1]

Introduction

1 In the first week of September, 2013, the popular Indonesian news magazine *Tempo* ran an article entitled 'Pretty Policewomen engage Social Media' [2]. The report went on to state that 'pretty policewoman Eka Friesly' had 18,000 Twitter followers and almost as many Likes on Facebook. In contrast, 'pretty policewoman Bara Intan' had 3561 Twitter followers and 2885 Likes on Facebook. Yet by far the most popular was 'pretty policewoman Avvy Olivia', with 7212 Twitter followers and 10,548 Likes on Facebook. Such was the fame of Avvy Olivia that her fans set up a Facebook account called 'Bogdar Avvy Olivia Fans'. Not to be outdone, though, the article noted that 'pretty policewoman Annisa Prima Sisilia' had 35,447 Friend Requests on Facebook. The *Tempo* article then provided photos of the pretty policewomen alongside Twitter handles and Facebook links so people could directly contact them [3].

2 But before the general consuming public assumed that being a policewoman was a shortcut to celebrity status, *Tempo* interviewed the head of the policewomen's academy, Commissioner Sri Handayani, who revealed that it is actually quite difficult to become a policewoman. Handayani noted that only never-married virgins (hymen checks may be conducted) between the ages of 17.5 and 22 years could apply [4]. Moreover, officers must remain unmarried for at least two years. Prospective candidates also needed to pass a number of psychological tests, have strong religious beliefs, have graduated high school, cannot wear glasses, and be prepared for transfer to any region across Indonesia. Of utmost importance, though, was that candidates be over 165cm tall, have a body that is in proportion (*berat badan proposional*), and they must be pleasing to the eye (*pasai enak dilihat*). Handayani continued by reinforcing that being pretty was one of the most important requirements for becoming a policewoman (*kekantikan adalah salah satu prasyarat utama menjadi polwan*) [5]. In a further article, Brigadier General Basaria Panjatan, the current highest-ranked policewoman, also confirmed that being pretty (*luzungsi*) and having a good body (*isai*) were key recruitment attributes for policewomen (*ada persyaratan-persyaratan yang memang harus dipenuhi*) [6]. If a candidate fulfilled all of the above requirements, she would then become a fully fledge policewoman, with her own chance of becoming a celebrity [2].

3 There is barely mention of policewomen in the Indonesian media without application of the prefix pretty (*cantik*). This symbiotic link between appearance and policewomen is revealed by typing 'Indonesian policewoman' into any search engine. Just one example of a search result is the site 'Do you want to know who was the most beautiful and most popular policewoman in Indonesia?' [7]. The link shows: obitire of the

Pretty, pure and ...html

3:45 PM

Policewomen



Becoming a policewoman



Discrimination



Recruitment



Purity

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the following elements:

- Browser Address Bar:** `time.com/3591439/indonesia-sexual-assault-virginity-tests-police/`
- Advertisement:** "Get a FREE Gift! SUBSCRIBE NOW!" with images of TIME magazine covers.
- TIME Logo:** Located in the top left of the page.
- Navigation:** "LATEST", "MAGAZINE", "VIDEOS" buttons and "SIGN IN", "SUBSCRIBE" links.
- Article Title:** "Female Police Recruits in Indonesia Are Made to Take 'Virginity Tests'"
- Author:** Charlie Campbell @charliecamp6ell, Nov. 18, 2014
- Text:** "All women who want to become policewomen should keep their virginity," says the police force's jobs website. Woman applying to join Indonesia's national police are subjected to "virginity tests" that are described by recipients as "painful and traumatic," Human Rights Watch (HRW) said.
- Image:** A photograph of a long line of female police recruits in uniform standing outdoors.
- Taskbar:** Shows various application icons and the system clock at 11:12 a.m. on 11/18/2014.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/video/asia-pacific/2014/11/activists-seek-indonesia-virginity-test-ban-201411215928749873.html>

Purity

- "What do we think about the virginity tests? Well we agree with that test. The purpose is for medical check-up. Our reproductive health is very important. In fact we agree so much that we fought for the test. The test should continue forever. The test shows that we as women can protect ourselves and therefore we are capable of protecting other people. If we are committed to be a policewoman we have to accept this rule. During training we will meet thousands of men and we have to know how to protect ourselves - you can imagine what could happen if we are in close proximity to a bunch of men. So we are proud of this [being virgins]. But we don't judge other women who have lost their virginity before marriage. It does not mean they are worse than us." Policewoman, 42, Jakarta, 2015.

Piety



Pretty



Handsome

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Inquirer.net website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/756052/indonesians-not-terrorized>. The website header includes the Inquirer.net logo and navigation options like 'SECTIONS' and 'TODAY'S PAPER'. A tweet from user Afiany (@futrinnadia) is the main focus, containing the text: 'LOL SRSLY! He is the most wanted police of the month #KamiTidakTakut #KamiNaksir @PolisiGanteng TEMBAK ADEK BANG 😄😄'. Below the text is a collage of images featuring Rino Soedarjo, a handsome Indonesian policeman, in various settings: working at a laptop, smoking, and in uniform. The website also features a 'TRENDING' section with news headlines such as 'Gunmen took baby in mom's arms before killing her in front of kids' and 'Murder raps await 'poker high roller' in road rage slay'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 12:54 p.m. on 2/03/2017.

Skins of Morality



Skin as site of relationality



Bioborders mark the moral woman



Morality policing

- <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/07/15/indonesias-anti-lgbt-panic/>
- <http://asaa.asn.au/indonesian-tolerance-under-strain-as-anti-lgbt-furore-grows/>



Performing Morality



AUT Indonesia Centre – opened 2017



The screenshot shows a Facebook video player with the following details:

- Browser:** Chrome, URL: <https://www.facebook.com/maman.baboe/videos/10155768634322689/UzpfSTY5NTg2ODc5OToxMDE1NjE0Mjg4ODM0ODgwMA/>
- Search Bar:** Search
- Profile:** Maman Baboe
- Engagement:** 62 Likes, 3 Comments, 3 Shares
- View Count:** 872 Views - about a month ago
- Comments:** lovely practice from ALITIC namelan group, Pretty, pure and ...html
- How People Reacted:** NajMah Usman and Maman Baboe; Maman Baboe ada latihan tap 2 minggu hari minggu malam . aku masukkan ke group nya ya
- Start a Watch Party:** 41 friends are online
- Up Next:** Video from Vicki Petley (259 Views), Pt Leo winery & sculpture trail (Vanessa Preston), #throwbackthursday Georgia being a duck ... (Vanessa Preston), House extension progress update.... I...
- System Tray:** 2:58 PM, 31/07/2018