

○ VOLUME 17 NUMBER 1, 2018

The Making and Breaking of Indonesian Muslim Queer Safe Spaces

Ferdiansyah Thajib

Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Against the backdrop of increasing hostility targeting sexual and gender minorities in Indonesia, this study analyzes the conterminous relationships between safe spaces and risks of violence within the lives of Indonesian Muslim queers as they reflexively and relationally engage with reparative gestures towards the injurious dimensions of the social world. In my analysis I discern two archetypical safe spaces: a waria beauty salon and an activist camp for youth queers. Respectively, these spatial configurations cater to and accommodate distinct meanings and aspirations attached to the idea of safety. The research protagonists featured in this paper articulate safety in conflicting affective registers, sometimes enabled by tropes of (hetero)normativity in sociopolitical discourse, and at other times constrained by them.

Introduction

Since early 2016, sexual and gender minorities in Indonesia have been increasingly confronted by public controversies. Not only do they face assaults from media rhetoric often voiced by conjoined state representatives and religious conservative figures, they also have to deal with threats of physical persecution by extra-legal forces (Hegarty & Thajib 2016). As prominent Indonesian gay rights activist Dede Oetomo and others have pointed out (Human Rights Watch 2016), this is not the first time that sexual and gender minorities in the country are exposed to everyday acts of violence. Throughout the nation's modern history, people with alternative sexualities and gender expressions, such as *waria* (commonly translated, inadequately, as male-to-female transgender women), have been dealing with ambivalent attitudes and moral censure coming from different parts of society (Blackwood 2007; Boellstorff 2004; Thajib 2014). However, it is only after the year 2016 in

which the entire group, under the acronym LGBT, is framed as a figure of national menace.

The controversy can be traced back to a Twitter message made by the Minister for Technology, Research, and Higher Education Muhammad Nasir in mid-January 2016. Upon learning from a media leak that a group of students at the University of Indonesia was initiating a Support Group and Resource Center on Sexuality (SGRC) as a part of the campus activities, Nasir called for the ban of LGBT student organizations on university campuses. This call was based on his personal concern that campus life should uphold certain standards of morality and decency. The existence of groups like SGRC, he added, does not reflect the purpose of universities to serve as spaces for an education that is beneficial for the nation and society. The minister's comments were endorsed by the university leadership, denying any connection to the group of students who had initiated the SGRC. Although Nasir rescinded his earlier comments with a series of less provocative addendums, his initial tweet effectively opened a Pandora's box releasing a deluge of strong reactions from key government and nongovernmental agencies, such as the national psychiatrists' association and local religious organizations (Human Rights Watch 2016) as well as public figures, who mainly suggested further exclusionary measures toward LGBT people. The media controversy continued to unfold in fits and starts for over a month after Nasir's tweet. Numerous print and electronic media reported a bewildering array of claims: that 'LGBT' is equal to terrorism and connected to drugs; that it weakens national masculinity, destroys morality, is contrary to the idea of the nation and its foundational principles of the state philosophy *Pancasila*; that it promotes 'free sex' and exacerbates the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and, finally, that 'LGBT' equates to sexual abuse of children.

Verbal intimidation, online persecution and institutional harassment notwithstanding, the initiators of SGRC continue to hold their activities in providing Indonesian LGBT youth with a peer support network. On a local online platform called Qureta, a member of SGRC with the pseudonym ER wrote a blog entry expressing his/her support on the role of SGRC as 'a safe space to learn and discuss about sexuality and gender, from sexual orientation all the way to gender disparity in everyday life.'¹ ER's statement corresponds with similar notions of safe space articulated by promoters of human rights and democracy. The rise of safe space as a political imaginary among the LGBT activist scene in Indonesia is entwined with the history of democratization in the country as it entered the so-called *Reformasi* era, following the demise of the authoritarian regime of former president Suharto in 1998.

Contrary to the more optimistic views that compounded *Reformasi* with more liberal channels for alternative sexual and gender expressions, this political process also serves witness to the unleashing of what Tom Boellstorff (2004) describes as 'political homophobia'. This term underlines the perception of sexual minorities within the national public culture as a threat to regnant masculinist and heteronormative logics of

national belonging. This situation reflects Christina Hanhardt's (2013) account of the formation of LGBT space in the U.S. during the 1990s. In her work Hanhardt describes the assumed paradox between the increasing visibility of queer communities and the risks of violence: 'new rights led to more visibility, which produced more backlash—which, in turn, led to the need to find new ways to protect rights' (2013, p. 104). By extension, as the public controversy surrounding SGRC exemplifies, even without apparent claims for visibility, the university students' initiative to create avenues that provide refuge for sexual and gender minorities from psychic and physical violence suffice to draw hostilities from the conservative front.

From this rather broad view on the ways *queer* safe space are cultivated and problematized in Indonesian public discourse, I turn the discussion on the potential limits of such projects from the inside out: how do the excluded subjects invoke the notions of safe space while navigating hegemonic understandings of safety? I begin with a brief overview of how queer safe space has been theorized by some scholars and the complications involved in the different analyses. Then, I draw from ethnographic materials collected during my fieldwork in urban and peri-urban nodes of predominantly Muslim societies, namely in Aceh and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The fieldwork was conducted from 2013 to early 2015, shortly before the vitriolic campaign against LGBT people pervaded the country's political landscape. This paper is written as a part of a larger research project which investigates the emotional struggle of Indonesian Muslim *queers* in inhabiting the manifestly irreconcilable discourses of religion and non-normative intimacies in Islamic contexts (Boellstorff 2005b; Yip 2004).

To draw the reader's attention to the different contexts at play I selectively italicize the term *queer* throughout this paper. This textual strategy follows the format introduced by Tom Boellstorff (2005a) in his reference to Indonesian *gay* and *lesbi*. Boellstorff's categorization underscores the global and local dynamics in understanding of 'gay' and 'lesbian' identities in a non-Western context. The popular use of the term 'queer' has been developing in later stages of sexual-identity construction in Indonesia since 2000, as it is added to the already existing terms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual/tsransgender (LGBT) categories in social activists' environment. This term functions to accommodate discursive spaces for allusion and euphemism to the already stigmatized words of 'gay' and 'lesbian' (Munir 2011).

Unlike Boellstorff (2005b), who italicizes the terms *gay* and *lesbi* to highlight their deployment as lived concepts rather than an analytical perspective, my approach here is to frame the *queer* as analytical prism and social category that includes non-normative subjectivities which do not define (and do not have the privilege to define) themselves in terms of identity categories based on sexual practices and/or desires (see Thajib 2014). On the other hand, the non-italicized version of *queer* is used whenever I am referring to a global perspective of queerness. This approach informs the larger research project that this article is based

on, as it continues to problematize the social relations built around identities and norms, including terms that are predominantly considered incommensurable in nature, such as Muslim *queer*. Furthermore, as fellow scholars in the field of queer studies in the Anglophone tradition commonly use the term queer as the main signifier, I would like to develop sufficient empirical and theoretical traction in reintroducing the secondary signifier of Muslim into a main category of thinking.

In this paper I investigate how Indonesian Muslim *queers* deal with conterminous relationships between safe-space and risks of violence by reflexively and relationally engaging with reparative gestures towards the injurious dimensions of the social world. Towards this aim, I privilege my analysis to two archetypical safe spaces in my fieldwork encounters with Muslim *queers*, namely a *waria* beauty salon and a camp for youth *queers*. Respectively, these spatial configurations cater to and accommodate distinct meanings and aspirations attached to the idea of safety. Within these domains, the different actors involved articulate and enact often conflicting affective registers, sometimes enabled by tropes of (hetero)normativity in sociopolitical discourse, and at other times constrained by them.

The double-binds of safety

In *queer* discourses, safe space as both a physical and discursive site is teeming with contested meanings. Recent scholarship about queer safe spaces has called for a more nuanced understanding of the social contexts as well as the internal dynamics within these spatial configurations (Fox & Ore 2010; Hartal 2017; The Roestone Collective 2014). In her ethnographic work on a queer community space in Jerusalem, human geographer Gilly Hartal (2017) points to the modalities in which the discourse of queer safe space in her research site is embedded in (Western) liberal logics that valorize identity politics. Ideally, queer safe space is imagined as a 'protected place, facilitating a sense of security, and recreating discourses of inclusion and diversity. It is a metaphor for the ability to be honest, take risks, share opinions, or reveal one's sexual identity' (Hartal, David & Pascar 2014 cited in Hartal 2017, p.14). But what emerges from an operative mode of safety which is based on an identitarian notion is that hegemonic power relationships often get reproduced. Inadvertently, such a notion can effect unequal access to these 'protected spaces' or even a feeling of unsafety among the community members that safe spaces seek to address. As Hartal concludes, the premise of identity politics within the creation of queer safe space will remain a paradox that needs to be reflexively attended by the different stakeholders (*ibid*, p. 17). Moreover, since safe space is always embedded in particular contexts, navigating this paradoxical quality also requires taking into account the social and material conditions involved in experiencing safety (The Roestone Collective 2014).

In Indonesian parlance, the term for safe space is *ruang aman*. In this grammatical construction, the noun '*ruang*' is followed by the adjective

of *'aman'*, which implies the dual meaning of safety and security. The disparity of meanings of the Indonesian word *aman* is worth further explanation in trying to understand the local concept of safe space. Colloquially both connotations are used interchangeably in everyday situations. The first meaning refers to 'safety' as a state of being exempted from harm or risk, which also includes a sense of inner certainty. The second meaning, 'security', is understood as a state of being free from danger and external threat. It is in this latter sense that the term *aman*, and its proper noun *'keamanan'*, were typically deployed by the authoritarian regime of Suharto's New Order as a measure to control public order and repress dissent (Mundayat 2005; Sebastian 2006).

In popular, and sometimes politicized local interpretations, the word *aman* is often used in complementarity with two other Indonesian terms: *rukun* (roughly translated as social harmony) and *tenteram* (equanimity) (Stodulka 2017, p.60). The affective meanings of all three terms are irreducible to each other, but together they relate to the 'hypercognized' rules of interaction, which mark the cultural and moral imperatives of attaining subjective well-being through the avoidance of conflict with others and securing the public image of harmony. The politicized, and ironically often violent, meanings related to *aman* can still be found in present day Indonesia, when it comes to how elites construct realities to maintain the status quo. The state apparatus, embodied in Indonesian police forces, commonly uses the euphemism of 'reasons of security (*demi alasan keamanan*)' when it disperses public meetings or demonstrations.

In this sense, on the one hand, the local term *aman* serves emotives, or speech acts, that name and simultaneously generate feelings of safety and security. On the other hand, it points to the objects of these feelings (the operation of security systems and their resulting effects). Sara Ahmed (2004, p.14) describes this doubleness as an affective capacity of words as they do not only 'stick' while they are being reproduced and accumulate affective values, but can also 'slide' between meanings and shift subject positions (see also Thajib 2017). The circulation of safety/security as emotional complexes of bodily, discursive and relational elements (Burkitt 1997) also colors Indonesian Muslim *queers'* experience of everyday violence.

Because in the locations where I conducted fieldwork, ambiguously gendered and sexually nonconforming subjectivities have to deal with safety hazards on an everyday basis, in the following discussion all names are pseudonyms, and details of persons, places and situations have been altered. My research protagonists' exposure to everyday unsafety, also informed my decision to hold semi-structured interviews (or moments that I refer to as 'conversations') in private settings instead of meeting them in public spaces. During the various sessions, the protagonists and I were engaged in a *curhat*, which is an acronym for *curahan hati*; literally this means 'to pour out one's heart', i.e. to disburden oneself by having a heart-to-heart talk (Slama 2010; see also

Stodulka 2015; Thajib 2014). To explore how safety and violence are socially and personally understood through the lens of experience, I turn my attention to Maya, one of the research protagonists who gives a powerful account on the violent undertones of the word *aman*.

Abusive security

Only a handful of *waria* live in Namu, North Aceh, and most of them are working in hair salon businesses. Among these few, I had the privilege to get to know Maya, a 33 year old *waria* who is the owner of Salon Primadona. Not only had Maya been very supportive in paving the way for my attempt to conduct participant observation among the *waria* community in Namu, she also became my host during the later stage of fieldwork inside the hair salon, which also functions as her place of residence. I recall being hesitant when she invited me to stay at the hair salon, but her reasoning was practical: she thought renting a boarding room or a hotel room throughout my fieldwork would be too costly for me. But I doubted whether it was appropriate to stay at the hair salon because I would have had to sleep in her room and could have disrupted Maya's sense of privacy. Furthermore, I was concerned that a cisgender man like me, staying over for weeks in a house that belonged to a *waria* as co-habitation of nonmarried persons of the opposite sex is not only sanctioned by local regulations but also persecuted by vigilante community groups. I eventually accepted her invitation not only because I did not want her to misinterpret my refusal as rude, but also because this was a way for me to immerse myself in the communal lives of *waria* in Namu.

During the first weeks staying in the salon, I was often worried over the slightest thing: from the sound of a car tire screeching in wee hours outside on the intercity road to the curious gaze of the salon customers that were fixed at me every time I came down from the room upstairs to start my day. My apprehension was partly informed by circulating stories of local young men or the moral police raiding people's houses whenever an unmarried man and woman stayed too long inside a house after dark. Furthermore, for a number of occasions rumors in local neighborhoods about adulterous conducts taking place inside salons run by *waria* had prompted Shari'a police, or *Wilayatul Hisbah* (WH) to detain *waria* for further 'moral education'. In the beginning I tried to repress this anxiety, but then I decided to ask Maya about what she told people or neighbors if they wanted to know who I was and what I was doing there. She casually responded, 'Don't worry, I told them you are one of us, of course'. While I have never fully understood what she really meant when she said I was one of them, somehow at that very moment her remark had ultimately provided me with the feeling that I am *safe enough*. But the question remains as to how Maya and her *waria* friends understood safety, especially in a context where their always already embodied sexual and gender differences are continuously subjected to forms of everyday violence.

Maya used the term '*aman*' as she recollected her past experience when she went '*merantau*' (circular migration)ⁱⁱ to the capital of Banda Aceh. She recalled how a neighborhood vigilante group raided the boarding house that sheltered Maya and her fellow *waria* in a working-class area in the province capital of Banda Aceh:

It happened around midnight. We were all just tired after a whole day of work at the hair salon, some of us were still chatting, others stayed in their own rooms. There were 15 *waria* who stayed in the boarding house. But at that time not all of us were in female appearances (*dandan*), only five of us were. And suddenly the door was banged on by people from the neighborhood. They started to break through the doors: *gubraak debruk gubrak* [phonetic description of people breaking through the door] and shouting: 'Everyone out! You sinners!' Those among us who appeared like males were not taken. They only took those who looked like us, meaning those who are *dandan* and with long hair, all five of us. There was a huge hole on my door, a friend got slapped, things got stolen, our mobile phones, cash money. Then they brought us to the *meunasah* [village prayer hall], they asked for our IDs, none of us had it with her at that time. They wanted to 'cleanse' us with sewage water, they said we were committing vice during Ramadan. But when they were about to flush us with the dirty water, the police arrived, and they stopped them. We were then brought to the police office, but the crowd kept on following us. They acted as if they had been in a protest [chuckling], shouting to the police that they should kill us, because they had secured (*mengamankan*) us. Later on, one by one, we were interrogated by the police. (Conversation with Maya, July 7, 2014)

The next morning, Maya and her housemates were released and told to leave the neighborhood immediately. Maya continued: 'the local people were watching us as we packed our stuff in a hurry, many of them were brandishing big wooden sticks. But nothing happened that time. The police was there to ensure that we are *aman* (safe)'.

This series of unfortunate events took place during the fasting month of Ramadan in 2008, three years after the local government implementation of Islamic Shari'a. According to historian Michael Feener (2012), during this early stage of Shari'a implementation, relationship between Shari'a police and vigilante violence was still contentious. Local public officials stated that the implementation of the law, specifically through the installment of the Shari'a police, or *Wilayahul Hisbah* (WH), should be regarded as a measure to anticipate vigilante violence. However, human rights advocates reported that the Islamic penal code in fact encouraged local communities to police public morality in their own neighborhoods and carry out violent punishments of alleged violators of Shari'a-based norms, including beatings, sexual harassment, and the practice of publicly 'cleansing' accused wrongdoers with sewage water.ⁱⁱⁱ Moreover, with the passing of Islamic criminal code bylaw or *Qanun Jinayat* in the end of 2014 in Aceh, it becomes the only region in Indonesia where consensual same-sex acts is criminalized. Violators of this rule can be punished with up to 100 lashes or up to 100 months in prison. This recent circumstance

further cemented the association between juridical and vigilante forces as instruments of what Judith Butler describes as 'normative violence' (2004a, 2004b): i.e. the legitimation of certain violence against non-normative gender and sexuality as their noncompliance to the norms have made their existence unintelligible.

Departing from this Butlerian operation of normative violence against Muslim *queer* bodies, I wish to scrutinize how the normative notion of *aman*, as an affective register which encompasses the double meanings of safety and security, inherently contains and wields a certain degree of violence for those who do not conform to heteronormativity. As indicated in Maya's story, when the police 'secured' her and her friends from the angry mob, it was not clear on whose behalf this action was conducted: whether it was done to bring Maya and those targeted by the attacks away from harm, or to appease the angry mob and the moral values that they claimed to uphold. The affective consequences of such 'security measures' are also inimical. Maya and her friends were 'saved' as they were put under the local police custody only to become subject to interrogation, which implies the risks of being penally sanctioned as instigators of public disorder, rather than being acknowledged as having forcefully been exposed to this injurious situation. In the concluding event, the police forces reinforced public order by making sure that they were 'protecting' Maya and her then housemates at least until they were effectively thrown out of the neighborhood. The affective word *aman* in Maya's recollection is not only saturated with the violent discourse inherited from the past political regime, it also indicates its continued use to disserve and further marginalize Indonesian Muslim *queers*. In the following section, I discuss how vulnerable subjects spatially engage with the ambiguous meanings of safety through the vicissitudes of life.

Making place at the margins

Upon Maya's return to Namu in 2010, she opened her own hair salon business and founded a *waria* community organization. The group, which I call Rumoh Aceh, focuses on sexual reproduction rights and HIV/AIDS care and prevention. When she initiated the group, Maya had been surprised to find out that many of her *waria* friends living in the district were afraid to go to public places. As a peri-urban town, there is only a handful of places where the public goes for leisure activities. Apart from the beach located at the northern side of the town's center, I only know of one other location where the town's people spend their leisure time: an outdoor culinary place that I call Taman Kerang market. Many come to this location to hang out with their friends and kin in late afternoons, while consuming the food served by the rows of street-hawkers. For months after her return to Namu, Maya had difficulties in asking her *waria* friends to join her to hang out at Taman Kerang. They were too scared of being harassed by the other customers. This was not without precedent, as Maya explained:

At the beginning, as soon as we arrived at Taman Kerang, we would hear comments like ‘the hellfire group is here! (*rombongan api neraka datang*). But I told my friends to ignore them, we should not confront them, because if we did, then we would be the ones to be barred from this place. We kept on coming, mostly we just sat there and talked about our activities in the salon ... More friends started to join us, I told them not to be worried about WH. I encouraged myself and in turn encouraged them as well. Since we are in our own home here, why should we be afraid? We did nothing wrong. In fact if we did, then of course we should be afraid. While actually if you are afraid of stigma, it is everywhere, not only in Aceh. (Conversation with Maya, July 20, 2014)

When their after-work sessions became more frequent, Maya and her friends came to realize that their routine hang-out at Taman Kerang was no longer sufficient for them to socialize among themselves. Although they had become regular customers of the culinary center, their activities there would still arouse public scrutiny. At the time, Rumoh Aceh was still being set up, so Maya and her friends needed a more conducive environment for deep discussions. Hence Maya offered to use her hair salon as the physical place to hold their meetings:

So, I opened this salon for everyone, whether she is a new *waria* or not. I mean it was open for those who had just recently joined the community, as well as for those who came from the older generation. I did this because of my past experience when I was still working in Banda Aceh. That’s why I cook, I provide food in the salon, so no one will have to be hungry like me, when I had been working with others. Like Yasmin, who still has no skills at all in doing salon work. I told her to wash the customers’ hair. Actually, her own hair was still short, so I told her to wear a hair wig, I know who her true soul is (*aku tahu jiwa dia siapa*). I asked her if she would like to put on makeup and long hair, or whether she prefers to be a *waria* who looks like a man. She said she prefers to wear makeup, so I gave her my old wig, I lent her my foundation and anything she would like to use, including dresses. I want to repay all the pain that I had to endure in the past by reversing it ... not by taking revenge (*tidak membalas dendam*). All I want is that people won’t have to feel what I felt. (Conversation with Maya, July 20, 2014).

The hair salon not only functioned as a place for gathering but also as a space which enabled Maya’s fellow *waria* to express themselves according to their inner gendered soul (*jiwa*)—an opportunity a lot of them do not have elsewhere, including in their family homes. Maya’s affirmative gesture is driven by her desire to not reproduce the feelings of injury caused by physical and psychic violence in her past as a form of ‘revenge’ (*balas dendam*). Sometimes, in order to provide for the need of her fellow *waria*, she even went as far as letting her friends and their respective partners use her room to make out, a decision which could actually jeopardize her own safety and her hair salon business to the moral control mechanisms that structure public life in Aceh. She described how her heart beat very fast every time a crowd of friends came and gathered in the hair salon, because she was scared that

people from the neighborhood would suddenly break in to ransack her place. This articulation of fear brings us back to the discussion on how in the context of normative violence, tactics of moving away from individual seclusion towards collective safety merges with the risky consequences of newfound visibility (Hanhardt 2013; Murray 2009). In the next section, I further explore the affective ways Maya navigates these dyadic themes of visibility and vulnerability, safety and risks within the contentious politics of *queer* place-making.

Safe spaces as enclosures

As a spatial structure, Primadona beauty salon occupies a *ruko* building complex located on the main road, which connects the provincial capital of Banda Aceh to the city of Medan in the neighboring province North Sumatra. *Ruko*, an acronym for *rumah-toko* (shop-house), is a common outlook of Indonesian urban and peri-urban fabrics. The *ruko* building complex generally comprises between three to six single units, each with differing sizes, depending on the investment values. Most units are divided into two floors, with tenants/owners usually functioning the first floor for their businesses, and the second floor as a living quarter. Various small to middle-size commercial and official enterprises are accommodated in the *ruko*: from bank branch, dentist, small restaurant, internet café, laundry business, and cellphone repair shop to local branch offices of political parties.

Maya's hair salon belongs to a smaller size *ruko* complex. It is lodged in between two other units, comprised of a motorbike repair shop and a small kiosk. The front part of the hair salon is the main area where Maya and her two employees receive their clientele. An area for facial and hair wash is located in the middle part of the first floor, and the back section functions as a kitchen and toilet. On the second floor, there is an empty hall with two rooms tucked towards the front part of the *ruko* unit. These are the rooms where Maya and her housemate *cum* employee Alia slept. Aside from the flow of clients in and out of the hair salon to receive services provided by Maya and her two employees, friends, and family members also accessed the space downstairs. A couple of *waria* working in the adjacent salons would drop by during cigarette breaks, other friends would randomly pay a visit to exchange gossip and latest updates about their romantic or sexual interests. Members of Rumoh Aceh would gather from time to time to talk about their planned activities together. When they were too many to fit the front part in the ground floor, they usually would go to the empty hall upstairs.

Throughout my entire stay in Namu, I counted only a few times when Maya, her friends and I actually went out of the salon together during daytime. For a couple of occasions, we did manage to go out together after the salon was closed to get some midnight meals and unwind after finishing their 12 hours work shift. By proceeding into the public space as a group only in late evenings, the *waria* seek to avoid unwanted attention from the townspeople, as usually after 10 pm the streets would

turn quieter. Even then, en-route between the salon and the food stall where we regularly hung out, our motorbike entourages could invite whistles and jeers from a few men who were still hanging around on the street late at night. The midnight hang-out routine among the protagonists reveals how their movements within the town are subject to public control, enclosing them to limited timing and designated sites such as hair salons.

Within the transnational network of LGBT activism, mainly centered in urban areas, safe spaces typically operate through certain scripts. As Marie Thompson (2017) points out in her essay on grassroots feminist, queer, and anti-racist activism mainly in the U.S. and U.K., safe space typically operates through 'a set of principles, expectations, and 'ground rules' agreed by consensus, which seek to provide a supportive, compassionate environment in which participants can talk about issues, experiences, and resistive strategies; and in which harmful behavior is collectively addressed and met with consequences'. This description entails that the process of achieving collective safety involves a certain formulation of institutionalized mechanics. In contrast, I did not see a similar pattern in the Primadona beauty salon and its tied-in collective initiative, Rumoh Aceh. The atmosphere of collective safety in this site is at best interstitial (see also Fenkl 2007). By interstitial, I mean an affective quality of safety that tends to dwell in the status of in-betweenness rather than moving towards a categorical understanding. Within this neither public nor private site; being neither business nor intimate venue and being neither a fully banished nor liberated social space, Maya and her friends engage in what they loosely describe as a community space (*ruang komunitas*). The 'space' within this community space does not only pertain to a physical location but also operates as a discursive space where members of the particular community articulate feelings of belonging and access mutual recognition (Boellstorff 2005a, pp.127-128).

While the spatio-temporal features of this *queer* community space bears interstitial quality, they can also bring in a heightened sense of risk. At the same time these very risks neither seem to compel Maya to stop her friends from coming over to Salon Primadona, nor deter her attempts in affectively holding Namu in particular, and Aceh in general, as a place called home. As virulent as the violence may be, Salon Primadona in particular, and to some extent Namu, are perceived as *safe enough* spaces (see also Stengel 2010). The term *safe enough* here refers to a certain preparedness of being exposed to unknown and unforeseeable forces. This is implied in Maya's earlier statement on how 'stigma against *waria* is not exceptional to Aceh, but also prevails elsewhere in the country'. Furthermore, she also talked about a variety of resources that nourish her capacity to endure the shadow of violence that keeps haunting *waria* bodies:

I feel pity (*sayang*) about leaving Aceh behind. No matter that there is still zero acceptance for *waria* in this environment, it just feels comfortable here. Another reason is because I already started my business here, this is where my source of livelihood is, this is also

the rice pot for most of my friends here ... I am not here just for my own benefit. Those who are jobless come over to help around, so that they can get some pocket money ... Even if they just come here and hang out, I make sure that there is always some coffee and other foodstuffs in case they get hungry. I take all of this from my own salon income. Of course, I never expose this to them, because if I did then it wouldn't be a *pahala* (divine reward) ... But if I closed down the salon and moved out of here, where would my friends go? So, let it be just like this (*begini-begini saja*), the most important is that I have a decent job, and enough income for my family, myself and friends. (Conversation with Maya, July 20, 2014)

This fragment of my conversation with Maya sums up the reparative impulse that I hinted to in the earlier section. There is neither the pretense of struggling for political recognition nor other grand aims in terms of social transformation and recovery in her hopeful attachment to the idea of safety. At best, it modestly pertains to the condition of comfort in being '*begini-begini saja*', denoting an ordinary promise of everyday, economic and existential survival. Maya's everyday entanglements with violence and its sporadic ramifications of fear in daily circumstances demonstrate how for some Muslim *queers*, the attainment of safety is not about a search for an escape from violent acts, but rather a struggle to endure the unendurable. Shot through by material values (from attaining daily income to providing others with pocket money) and spiritual gains, Maya's narrative on safety as a condition of possibility for survival fundamentally overlaps with reparative gestures towards the social.

Camping for activism

So far, through the accounts of Maya and the *waria* community in Namu, Aceh, I have looked at the intersections of the grassroots, community-based safe space initiative and its more institutionalized counterparts in urban areas. Against this backdrop, I shift my geographical focus to Yogyakarta, the city where I encountered a group of youth Muslim *queers* who organized an activist camp called the *Young Queer Camp on Faith and Sexuality* (from here on addressed as 'the camp'). The annual camp was in its third year by the time I joined in 2014 and was always held in a discrete location. The camp organizers opted for this strategy as, in contrast to the popular representation of Yogyakarta as a 'city of tolerance' (Stodulka 2017), the city has become a volatile ground for horizontal conflicts, including xenophobic hostility and anti-*queer* campaigns (Boellstorff 2004).

In the sessions that took place throughout the five-day camp, I mainly talked to the camp organizers. Since I had agreed to the camp organizers' condition that my role was limited to observing the dynamics that take place within the camp and take notes of the process, while keeping verbal engagement with the participants at a minimum. The camp organizers proposed this policy as they considered my presence as an exception: the camp enforced an age range between 18-30 years, whereas I was already 37 years of age by the time I

attended the event. Aside from the camp participants and the 15-person committee, there were also two additional volunteers who helped in running the day to day operation of the camp. They were mainly responsible for taking minute details of the whole proceedings. At the second day of the camp during lunch break, I spoke to Sari, one of the camp coordinators, about the background and qualifications for participating in the camp:

One of the aims of this camp is to provide a safe space for youth to share experience and express themselves. This is not an easy task to do, you know? We have almost 120 written applications this year alone, and from this amount a committee had to select 90 people, and then we conducted online interviews and cut the applicants down to 60 people. From this number we assigned them to work in smaller groups and gave them reading materials. It's like an online study group, which is facilitated by different members of the committee. 40 people passed through this process and we did a second interview, and we filtered them down to the number we have now: 23 listed participants. (Conversation with Sari, September 6, 2014)

When I asked Sari about the reasoning behind this seemingly elaborate and time-consuming procedures, she replied:

Well, last year the selection process was more loose, we accepted people from more diverse backgrounds; LGBT activists, students from *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), theological schools, and public universities, through two processes: written applications and interview. But then the result was not so fruitful, there was no real dialogue during the actual camp. Most of the debates often ended up hurtful. On one hand, issues of sexuality and religion were, and still are, 'sensitive'. But the way they were discussed then was not constructive. We did not get to the roots of the problems, and nothing concrete came up out of this experience. So by the time the camp ended last year, most of the participants returned to their own ideological 'bubbles'. There were only a few who could achieve the transformations we were aiming for. (Conversation with Sari, September 6, 2014)

By assigning the list of candidates into study-groups in the last selection process, the camp committee intended to build affiliations and shape group dynamics before the camp activities took place. Thus, not only the potential participants could get to know each other much sooner, the organizing committee could anticipate potential conflicts through simulating the discussion online. It is in the light of such strategies that the committee's directive of my 'minimal interaction' with the participants becomes understandable. Aside from the apparent age difference between myself and the youth participants, my untimely arrival into the group and aleatory role as a participant observer could have risked disrupting the affinity-building process that had already been well in place.

Sari's description of the camp's aim to provide a space for youths to talk about issues of sexuality and faith also appeared in the camp's

slogan 'The Circle of Love, Diversity of Expressions'. This slogan was printed on the T-Shirts worn by the committee members as well as on the huge banners hanging at the *pendopo* (Javanese for outdoor hall-veranda) where the main sit-in class sessions took place. Hidden behind the green lush resort located in the hilly outskirts of Yogyakarta, the semi-open hall functioned as the main location for most of the programmed activities from morning to evening: lectures, group discussions and the various games prepared by the organizers to enhance a sense of togetherness within the group.

To nurture feelings of safety within the camp, the organizers highlighted the feeling-word of comfort (*nyaman*), a term that Maya also used earlier in this text. Mainly conveyed in a didactic manner by the camp mentors, comfort was construed as a feeling that the camp participants should strive for in dealing with issues relating to faith and the body. From day one of the camp, comfort was promulgated, when mentors repeatedly promoted *penerimaan diri* (self-acceptance) as an alternative to self-denial, and coming-in, to coming-out. The mentors also employed these notions when the participants inquired about how to deal with forms of discrimination, intolerance or bullying in their immediate surroundings. One way to achieve comfort, as prescribed by the camp mentors, was by being honest to oneself about one's own feelings and the need to openly share one's 'actual' feelings to others.

This approach echoes Ruth Holliday (1999, p.481) who identifies that comfort functions as a signifier of 'what one feels from the degree of fit between the outside of one's body and its inside' in terms of how the inner as the 'authentic' self is mapped onto the body. On the one hand, the ways in which the camp mentors espoused safety through emphasis on comfortable feelings are indicative of their recognition of the youth participants' struggle in dealing with everyday forms of violence. On the other hand, various critics also challenge the pedagogical drive to normalize comfort as the only pathway to learning (hooks 1994; Stengel 2010). Sara Ahmed (2004, p.149), for instance, points out the promotion of comfort as a marketing strategy, where consumers feel comfortable at the expense of exploited labourers. In foregrounding comfort as the affective mandate of safe spaces, we are running the risk of replicating hegemonic structures of privilege and exclusion. To describe the bleak consequences of not recognizing these emergent paradoxes I now turn to an incident that took place halfway through the camp's proceedings.

Fractured comfort

On the third day of the camp, the morning session was filled by Sari's presentation on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expressions and Bodies (SOGIEB) in local contexts, a topic that has become a generic material in Indonesian LGBT activist education. Most participants were attentively following Sari's explanation on the nuanced differences between sexual identity, orientations, gender, gender roles in society and gender identities. All the participants and myself were seated on

the wicker mats rolled out on the *pendopo* floor. In the left corner of the *pendopo* was Anna, a member of the camp committee in charge of making the video documentation of the whole proceedings. Anna is one of the few people within the committee whom I had got to know long before the camp. Being the only person in the audience who was sitting on a chair to attend the video camera, Anna was the only person in the room who had an overall view of the subsequent event.

As Sari continued her lecture, she projected some images on the screen behind her, to help her in describing traditional gender expressions in different ethnic cultures in Indonesia. Sari's presentation went relatively smooth up to the point when she projected an image of a bare-chested woman in olden days Bali. I was preoccupied with my own thoughts and taking notes, so I was not paying too much attention to the scene that suddenly followed. Some of the audience gasped, and I could hear some chuckles. And then I heard Anna shouting: 'Hey, what did you do just now?' she pointed her finger to one of the young male participants of the camp, whom I call Iwan. All eyes were on him, and I could see that he was still crawling back passing through the rows of participant sprawling on the floor. Again, Anna shouted: 'Repeat what you just did now! I did not get to see it clearly, what did you do?' Iwan gave a devastated look while bawling, and he said: 'Nothing, it was just a joke. I did not mean to harass anyone, I know how it feels to be harassed'. Anna still insisted that he should repeat his action. So reluctantly, Iwan crawled back to the front side of the *pendopo*, and stood on his knees while using both his hands to make a gesture as if he was cupping the breasts of the bare-chested Balinese woman's image which was projected onto the screen.

During this re-enactment, everyone was in total silence. In the meantime, Sari was seemingly flabbergasted by the situation as she was looking the other way when Iwan initially performed his actions. Then Anna responded, still in a trembling voice:

Ok, now I see it. I was not sure before as I was focusing on the camera. But you pointed to it yourself just now without me even asking. By saying it is not a kind of harassment, you are exactly doing the opposite. (F. Thajib field notes, September 8, 2014)

Again, a long intense silence followed, until Anna suggested to Sari to continue her presentation, after announcing that she would like to talk privately with Iwan during the break.

That night when all participants returned to their designated cabins, at the end of day the camp organizers gathered to evaluate the day's event and how to plan for the next. On the evening of the incident, Anna reported that the one-on-one conversation with Iwan did not take place as he seemed to avoid her. By morning, as I re-entered the *pendopo*, I could quickly sense some tension. One committee whispered to me that Iwan had left the camp the previous night without telling anyone. Throughout the rest of the day, I could see that Anna looked troubled, and so did a few core members of the committee. I could hear the

buzzing among the participants as well as some organizers, that it was somehow Anna's fault that Iwan ran away.

To address the tension within the camp, Sari and the core committee members decided that after lunch they should bring this issue up to the entire forum. To initiate the conversation, Anna was asked by her fellow committee members to clarify her intervention of the previous day. When it was Anna's turn to speak, she stood up and said:

Here I am speaking not on behalf of the committee, I only speak for myself. I would like to apologize to what has happened yesterday, I am aware that the effect was disruptive to the running of the session. But I would like to point out that since all of us here agree that this is a safe space, I think what happened yesterday was a form of violence, and my reaction was also quite violent. I hope that this will never happen again. (F. Thajib, field notes, September 9, 2014)

The audience whispered amongst themselves. Apparently, they were not convinced by Anna's apology. Then suddenly, Dito, one of the volunteers who had been taking the minutes of the session when the incident happened, raised his hand. Dito is a *priawan* in his early 20s who also worked in a local LGBT advocacy group in Yogyakarta. *Priawan* is an acronym of the two Indonesian words, *pria* (man) and *wanita* (woman) and is used to describe female-to-male transgender persons. This local term was invented by the Indonesian *queer* community as a play of word for *waria*. In a nervous tone, Dito spoke up:

Before I want to say sorry, I was quiet the entire time because I am not a part of the committee, I am only a volunteer. But I think I want to speak now on behalf of the person who is no longer here now. What happened yesterday was inappropriate, because all of us are actually coming here to learn, am I right?

'Yaaa!' some participants interjected while Dito continued:

So, if what happened yesterday was a mistake, the committee members should have reacted more wisely, they should have not treated the person in such a way. So it was normal for him to feel humiliated and leave the camp. What we need is an explanation and an apology from the committee, since what happened yesterday clearly is also an act of violence. After all, all of us are still in the process of learning here. (F. Thajib field notes, September 9, 2014)

As Dito was putting the microphone down, some of the camp participants applauded. The situation ended in a stalemate since even though the participants waited for Anna's further reaction, she remained silent. Then Sari took over the floor and said that the organizers would take Dito's feedback into account and discuss further among themselves on how to further proceed with the situation as now participants and mentors had to move on to the next lecture session.

There are multiple, complex layers of issues shaping this particular conflict. On one hand, the evening before Anna had told me that her strong reaction to Iwan's seemingly ludicrous action came out of a personal trauma. The image of the Balinese woman presented on the screen reminded her of her mother who ended her life when Anna was still a teenager. She read Iwan's gesture not only as sexist, but it also afflicted painful memories of her past experience. On the other hand, Dito raised an important point when he hinted the involvement of an abuse of power when Anna humiliated Iwan in front of the other participants. This abuse becomes apparent particularly if we are to consider Anna's more privileged position of power as a host of the camp activities.

This predicament echoes the wider debates about call-out culture that are currently taking place in online environment. In a progressive activist scene, call-out tactics are employed to single out individuals when they make comments or actions of an offensive or discriminatory nature, making it known that what these individuals said or did can be harmful to others. This method is not at all recent, particularly among black feminist activists in US contexts. But it has regained critical purchase in the wake of increasing use of social media platforms as a part of activist movements. Numerous online think-pieces have been taking the discussion on call-outs to quite divergent ends. Those who are in favor perceive these tactics as effective measures to hold people accountable for harmful gestures and to ensure that these do not go unnoticed (see Uprichard 2013). On the critique's side, many point out the performative tendency of call-outs as dialogue-stoppers because these practices tend to exclude individual complexities rather than engaging with them (see Ahmad 2015; O'Neill 2016). In my view, while these seemingly factious opinions respectively make valid points, they also reveal a shared framework: The pitfalls of call-out culture in current contexts are not located within the nature of call-out *per se*, but they are more related to the ways the practice is performed.

The discursive buildup around call-out culture as a practical mechanism of emotional display within the debates of safe-space among the academic and activist Left in the West has important implications for the phenomena I describe, given the varying established connections between local and transnational activist scenes. However, here I focus on the understanding of safe space in the context of Indonesian national history, given that the category is entangled with hegemonic discourse on '*keamanan*' (which conflates safety and security) and its entanglements with the affective register of '*nyaman*' (comfort) and the cultural prescriptions of *rukun* (social harmony) and *tenteram* (feelings of equanimity). Both cases of Iwan's avoidance of Anna after the incident, which then led to his running away in the dead of night, as well as Anna's ineffective apology to the camp participants can be read against the predominance of social harmony as a cultural norm in the local context of Java in particular, and Indonesia in general. In a social-cultural context where feelings of comfort (*nyaman*) are often equated with the feeling of being at peace with others through a culture of avoidance of open-conflict, the crucial task for creating a *queer* safe

space is thus to lay bare the processes in which power inequalities are being reproduced through the idealization of comfort.

In her essay, Marie Thompson (2017) calls for a shift of focus from normalizing comfort in safe spaces to creating safe(r) spaces along with their inherent tension: 'The perennial difficulty of safe(r) spaces means they are often far from comfortable [...] Safer spaces may also be discomfoting insofar as they require us to come face to face with uncomfortable truths about our own complicities and ignorances' (Thompson 2017, p. 6). In this sense, the burst of anger that Anna felt toward Iwan for his manifestly sexist joke, Iwan's displays of shame and remorse after having been called-out by Anna, and eventually the general participants' disappointment towards Anna's impulsive reaction that are voiced by Dito, can all be understood as processes of re-learning on ways of relating with each other, that can get quite discomfoting. The camp as an educational setting proves to be an important site for learning not only for the person being excluded but also other participants who felt the discomfort upon viewing the fragility of safety when it comes to holding our peers, and those whom we share affinity with, accountable. By extension, situated within a longer temporal context, the camp organizers could have made use of this conflictual moment as a productive means towards the aim of collective transformation. The challenge that Dito articulated can be read as a critical invitation to constantly be mindful to the relational work involved in putting comfort and safety into practice.

In retrospect, I wonder what would have happened if instead of moving on to the next session, Sari and her fellow committee members had been more tenacious in giving more time and space to address the accumulating dissonance in the aftermath of Iwan's departure from the camp. While perhaps prolonging the discussion might have created more discomfoting feelings among those attending the camp and indeed, factually it was a little too late then for the injured parties to resolve their differences, I also see the potentialities of this critical moment for acknowledging that no space is free from domination and risk (Fox & Ore 2010; Hartal 2017; Stengel 2010; The Roestone Collective 2014). This experience could have been taken up as an emergent opportunity for more reflective interrogations among both mentors and participants regarding to how issues of privilege, power and difference play out in the camp and in the larger socio-political domains.

These are all of course my own, as Sara Ahmed (2014) puts it, 'willfull' speculations to counter one of the demotivating narratives in queer collective space-making. At the same time, thinking alongside scholars like Sara Ahmed (2004), Anna Cvetkovich (2012) and Lauren Berlant (2011), I also believe in the importance of taking the affective experience of impasse more seriously as a political category. The feeling of discomfort attached in a situation where there is a shared inability to forward a better solution might not be a sign of failure.

Instead, it could open up more possibilities in imagining different ways of inhabiting togetherness.

Conclusion

I opened the discussion in this paper by addressing a quasi-prologue to the explosion of anti-LGBT sentiments that have taken center stage in the Indonesian public sphere in early 2016. Safety is gaining more traction amidst concerted actions of violence toward sexual and gender minorities. In this distinct scenario, *queer* safe space initiatives are created for and by the marginalized subjects to continue living and thriving. But, as exemplified by the case of the student-led initiatives at the University of Indonesia, the quest for collective safety was unwittingly drawn to a vicious circle where issues of vulnerability and visibility are deeply entangled. Beyond the spectacular outlook of public contestations surrounding issues of *queer* collectivizing through safe space formations, from my own encounters with Indonesian Muslim *queers*, I have sketched out the different ways people invoke notions of safety and security.

The case study on the *waria* community in Aceh has shown how these terms remain convoluted with historically normative meanings as means of control and exclusion. At the same time, these actors were also actively navigating these seemingly unviable conditions by creating interstitial spaces, such as exemplified by the hair salon as a *safe enough* space to carve out a communal belonging. In regard to the more institutionalized attempts to create safe space, I discussed the unfolding dynamics in an activist camp in Yogyakarta that was specifically aimed as a platform for youth to collectively deal with the manifestly irreconcilable discourses of religion and non-normative intimacies. In this setting, the feeling-word 'comfort' was forwarded by the camp organizers in order to empower the youth participants in coping with everyday violence. A predicament arose at the moment safety was equated with a strictly affirmative outlook on comfort. Framed not as a means but an end in itself, the unexamined assumption of safety in the camp had inadvertently reproduced normative blind-spots related to gender violence and revealed the asymmetrical power relations structuring this pedagogical activity. One strategic way to circumnavigate these pitfalls, as I have argued, is to give more time and space to attend the dissonances accumulated through negative feelings such as discomfort, anger, trauma, shame and disappointment in collective space-making. This call resonates with invitations voiced by other scholars (Fox & Ore 2010; Thompson 2017) to shift the mandate of constructing safe spaces to cultivating safe(r) spaces for marginalized subjects. Within this latter understanding, together we can unlearn dominant interpretations of safety.

Throughout this paper, I described the various modes Indonesian Muslim *queers* are interacting with different feelings and aspirations attached to the idea of safety. While I have presented analytical distinctions between the practical and affective modalities of safe

space, safe enough space and safe(r) space, it is important to note that they do not necessarily operate in a linear manner, but are rather situated as different malleable processes. From the present on, the struggles for safety for Indonesian Muslim *queers* are being constantly confronted not only by external threats but also internal conflict. These are complex, and often painful, affective terrains that limit and simultaneously sustain those who are involved in negotiating new relationships both to their different social environments, and not least importantly, between themselves. The fragility of the subjectivities involved cannot be overstated (Hartal 2017).

However, since a critical understanding of queer safe space is also built upon the idea of creating collective engagement with these difficult feelings, emerging irritation and conflicting desires cannot be dealt with by employing strategies of avoidance, answering them with aggression and exclusionary gestures or rushing to reconciliation. In this sense, the fragile configuration of queer safe space necessarily implies an unfinished and incomplete process of negotiating with shifting power relations and multiple contexts. I believe this insight provides an area of inquiry for future research beyond the existing repertoire that defines safe space as a platform in which people can exercise identity politics comfortably. Focusing on the ambivalence of queer safe space as a conflictual zone will bring to light the possibilities of reclaiming difference and dissonance as means for creative channeling.

Ferdiansyah Thajib is a Phd Candidate at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin. His life work is situated in the intersections of theory and praxis, with specific research interests on queer modes of endurance and forms of affective entanglement in everyday life. He is also a member of KUNCI Cultural Studies Center (Yogyakarta, Indonesia), a research collective which focuses on critical knowledge production and sharing through cross-disciplinary encounter, artistic practice, action-research and vernacular education within and across community spaces.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Samia Dinkelaker, the anonymous reviewers and the editors for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of the article. I also wish to thank all the un-named research participants for their valuable contributions toward this paper. This research is conducted with funds from the German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD, scholarship and The Researchers' Affects project, a joint cooperation between FU Berlin and Institute of German Literature, University of Berne, Switzerland, funded by The Volkswagen Foundation.

Notes

ⁱ ER, 'On my sexual identity, Catatan anggota SGCC UI (A note by SGRC UI member)', *qureta*, viewed 10 January 2017, <http://www.qureta.com/post/my-sexual-identity>

ⁱⁱ As described by Johan Lindquist (2013) *merantau* means 'to go out into the world before returning home again'.

ⁱⁱⁱ In his monograph on Muslim laypersons' ethical improvement in Aceh, David Kloos (2017) calls for caution not to place vigilante violence and morality policing exclusively within the framework of state Shari'a. He highlights that the 'dominant focus on the legal particularities of Shari'a hides from view the ways in which local conflicts about public morality issues are connected to broader contestations about public space [...] as well as the impact of Shari'a law on processes of negotiating individual space for action' (Kloos 2017, p. 196).

References

Ahmad, A 2015, 'A note on call-out culture', *briarpatch*, viewed 1 May 2017, <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/a-note-on-call-out-culture>

—2014, *Willfull subjects*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.

—2004, *The cultural politics of emotion*, Routledge, New York.

Berlant, L 2011, *Cruel optimism*, Duke University Press, Durham & London.

Blackwood, E 2007, 'Regulation of sexuality in Indonesian discourse: normative gender, criminal law and shifting strategies of control', *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 293-307.

Boellstorff, T 2005a, 'Between religion and desire: being Muslim and gay in Indonesia', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 107, no. 4, pp. 575-585.

—2005b, *The gay archipelago: sexuality and nation in Indonesia*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

—2004, 'The emergence of political homophobia in Indonesia: masculinity and national belonging', *Ethnos*, vol. 69, no. 4, pp. 465-486.

Burkitt, I 1997, 'Social relationships and emotions', *Sociology*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 37-55.

Butler, J 2004a, *Precarious life: the powers of mourning and violence*, Verso, London, New York.

———2004b, *Undoing gender*, Routledge, London.

Cvetkovich, A 2012, *Depression: a public feeling*, Duke University Press, Durham & London.

Feener, M 2012, 'Social engineering through Shari'a: Islamic law and state-directed Da'wa in contemporary Aceh', *Islamic law and society*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 275-312.

Fenkl, H 2007, 'Introduction', in D Sherman & T Goss (eds.), *Interfictions: an anthology of interstitial writing*, Interstitial Arts Foundation.

Fox, CO & Ore, TE 2010, '(Un)Covering normalized gender and race subjectivities in LGBT "Safe Spaces"', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 629-649.

Hanhardt, C 2013, *Safe space: gay neighborhood history and the politics of violence*, Duke University Press, Durham & London.

Hartal, G 2017, 'Fragile subjectivities: constructing queer safe spaces', *Social & Cultural Geography*, viewed 10 June 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2017.1335877>

Hegarty, B & Thajib, F 2016, 'A dispensable threat', *Inside Indonesia* 124, Apr-Jun, viewed 20 January 2017, <http://www.insideindonesia.org/a-dispensable-threat>

Holliday, R 1999, 'The comfort of identity', *Sexualities*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 475-491.

hooks, b 1994, *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*, Routledge, New York.

Human Rights Watch, 2016, 'These political games ruin our lives': *Indonesia's LGBT community under threat*, viewed 15 January 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/08/10/these-political-games-ruin-our-lives/indonesias-lgbt-community-under-threat>

Kloos, D 2017, *Becoming better Muslims religious authority and ethical improvement in Aceh, Indonesia*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Lindquist, J 2013, 'Rescue, return, in place: deportees, 'victims', and the regulation of Indonesian migration', in B Xiang, B SA Yeoh & M Toyota (eds.), *Return: nationalizing transnational mobility in Asia*, Duke University Press, Durham.

Mundayat, A 2005, *Ritual and politics in New Order Indonesia: a study on discourse and counter-discourse in Indonesia*, Unpublished dissertation, Swinburne University of Technology.

Munir, M 2011, 'Queering the epistemology of 'Coming Out': the representation of male same-sex relationship in Nia Dinata's *Arisan*', *Jati*, vol. 16, pp.113-129.

Murray, D 2009, 'Introduction', in D Murray (ed.), *Homophobic: lust and loathing across time and space*, Duke University Press, Durham.

Oetomo, D 2001, 'Gay men in the Reformasi era: homophobic violence could be a by-product of the new openness', *Inside Indonesia* 66: Apr-June, viewed 15 September 2015, <http://www.insideindonesia.org/feature-editions/gay-men-in-the-reformasi-era>

O'Neill, M 2016, 'The pitfalls of call-out culture', *Brown Political Review*, viewed 15 May 2017, <http://www.brownpoliticalreview.org/2016/05/26760/>

Sebastian, L 2006, *Realpolitik ideology: Indonesia's use of military force*, Institute of South East Asian Studies.

Slama, M 2010, 'The agency of the heart: internet chatting as youth culture in Indonesia', *Social Anthropology*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 316–330.

Stengel, B 2010, 'The complex case of fear and safe space', *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 524-540.

Stodulka, T 2017, *Coming of age on the streets of Java: coping with marginality, stigma and illness*, Transcript.

———2015, 'Emotion work, ethnography and survival strategies on the streets of Yogyakarta', *Medical Anthropology: Cross-Cultural Studies in Health and Illness*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 84-97.

The Roestone Collective 2014, 'Safe space: towards a reconceptualization', *Antipode*, vol. 46, no. 5, pp. 1346-1365

Thajib, F 2017 'Kaleidoscopic feelings: faith narratives among Indonesian Muslim queers', *Emotion, Space and Society*, vol. 25, pp. 127-135.

____ 2014, 'Navigating inner conflict: online circulation of Indonesian Muslim queer emotions', in T Stodulka & B Röttger-Rössler (eds.), *Feelings at the margins: dealing with violence, stigma and isolation in Indonesia*, Campus-Verlag.

Thompson, M 2017, 'The discomfort of safety', *Society & Space*, viewed 17 May 2017, <http://societyandspace.org/2017/02/14/the-discomfort-of-safety/>

Uprichard, L 2013, 'In defence of call-out culture', *Huffington Post*, viewed 1 May 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/lucy-uprichard/call-out-culture_b_4507889.html

Yip, A 2004, 'Embracing Allah and sexuality? South Asian nonheterosexual Muslims in Britain', in K Jacobsen & K Pratap (eds.), *South Asians in the diaspora. Histories and religious traditions*, Brill, Leiden.