

Behind Political Homophobia: Global LGBT Rights and the Rise of Anti-LGBT Rhetoric in Indonesia

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1. Introduction

In recent years, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (henceforth LGBT) issues have become a source of great divisiveness among nations. Although a number of Western countries, such as the Netherlands, Canada, and Spain, to name a few, have recognized same-sex marriage, several other countries have taken additional legal steps to acknowledge the non-binary gender category that is often dubbed as the “third gender.” In addition, there have been a series of actions to recognize, establish, and mainstream human rights standards to protect LGBT people. In 2006, a meeting on international human rights in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, resulted in the creation of the Yogyakarta Principles, which became a major legal instrument for LGBT movements. A similar historical move was then also followed by The United Nations in mandating the appointment of an independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity.

These developments have further helped to spread the globalization of discourse on LGBT rights into many parts of the world, including the Southeast Asia region. Two years ago, [Vietnam](#) finally lifted its ban on same-sex marriage, allowing many same-sex couples to plan for wedding ceremonies.¹ In 2016, the LGBT anti-discrimination bill finally reached the [Philippines' Senate plenary](#) for the very first time in 17 years² This historic victory has given hope to the LGBT community that the law will eventually be passed and help in combating LGBT discrimination, in light of the high transgender murder rate in the country. Similarly, in Bangkok, where transgender individuals are highly visible, [PC Air](#) – a Thai airline – has been recruiting transgender flight attendants since 2012.³ Despite progress, some reports reveal that stigma, discrimination, and bullying against LGBT individuals in those countries remain rampant.⁴

In 2015, the US Supreme Court ruling on marriage equality and emphasis on marriage rights also seemingly increased the LGBT rights discourse at the international level. This has unfortunately become a basis for apprehension and conservative backlash in many parts of the world.⁵ LGBT

1 See John Boudreau and Nguyen Dieu Tu Uyen, “Gay Weddings Planned as Vietnam Marriage Law Is Repealed,” *Bloomberg News*, January 1, 2015, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-01-07/gay-weddings-planned-as-vietnam-marriage-law-is-repealed>

2 See Camille Allemaia, “After 17 Years, LGBT Anti-Discrimination Bill up for Senate Debate,” *Rappler*, December 21, 2016, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/156139-lgbt-anti-discrimination-bill-senate-plenary>

3 See Kate Hodal, “Flying the Flag for Ladyboys: Thai Airline Takes on Transgender Flight Attendants,” *The Guardian*, January 17, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/17/pc-air-transgender-flight-attendants>

4 See the UNDP’s *Being LGBT in Asia – Thailand, Vietnam, The Philippines’ Country Reports* (2014), <http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/operations/projects/overview/being-lgbt-in-asia.html>

5 See Dennis Altman and Jonathan Symons, *The Queer Wars* (UK: Polity, 2015).

activism in Indonesia, for example, has increasingly become associated with efforts to legalize same-sex marriage, which has also led the government to announce publicly that there is no place for LGBT movements in the country. Equally frightening, the increasing visibility of LGBT issues also prompted Brunei Darussalam to adopt *sharia* law, which views homosexual practices as acts punishable by death by stoning. Section 377A of the British legacy Penal Code that outlaws “unnatural sex acts” in neoliberal Singapore also remains in effect.

Having considered different responses toward LGBT issues in Southeast Asian countries, I have selected a predominantly Muslim country, Indonesia, as a departure point to explore how the internationalization of the LGBT rights discourse generates national homophobia, which subsequently reveals its complexities and incongruities.

2. The rise and fall of LGBT issues in Indonesia

It is abundantly clear that 2016 was a significant touchstone for LGBT Indonesians. Although negative sentiment toward LGBT people from the state and religious fundamentalists has been intermittent over the past few decades, these attitudes began transforming into a series of public denouncements last year.

Ministers, public officials, religious organizations, and even some civil society organization representatives have made generalized and derogatory statements in public, criticizing efforts to legalize same-sex marriage and associating homosexuality with pedophilia, mental illness, and sinful and contagious behavior.⁶ As a consequence, the government also requested that the United Nations Development Programme and other international humanitarian organizations stop channeling financial and technical support to local LGBT organizations.

Despite the fact that the media uproar surrounding LGBT issues at the national level subsided in mid-2016, an Islamic pro-family group continues to take legal steps to outlaw homosexuality in the country. Mostly consisting of women positioning themselves as “mothers,” the Family Love

⁶ See Hendri Yulius, “Double Standards: The Defining of Homosexuality As Pornographic in Indonesia,” *The Jakarta Post*, October 21, 2016, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2016/10/21/double-standards-the-defining-of-homosexuality-as-pornographic-in-indonesia.html>; Hendri Yulius, “LGBT Goes to Campus: What’s the Big Deal?,” *The Jakarta Post*, January 26, 2016, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/01/26/lgbt-goes-campus-what-s-big-deal.html>

Alliance (Aliansi Cinta Keluarga/ AILA) argues that “LGBT behavior” imperils children and the young generation; homosexuality is contagious through pleasure derived from anal sex; and same-sex marriage subsequently increases the incidence and spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and anal cancer. The association of LGBT people with the legalization of same-sex marriage is also widespread in the anti-LGBT rhetoric.⁷

Having gone through this anti-LGBT vitriol, what I found incredibly fascinating was that the [anti-LGBT groups inadvertently promoted and mainstreamed the term LGBT](#) and increased its use in public last year, despite misconceptions that surrounded the term.⁸ Previously, the term LGBT was only circulated among activist networks or people who were familiar with gender and sexuality issues. In addition, it was commonly circulated in urban middle-class spaces. Recently, I was surprised when [some people addressed me as "LGBT" instead of "gay"](#) and noticed that the term nowadays does not seem to be perceived as an acronym for a variety of sexual and/or gender identities. It rather becomes a single category to address people with non-normative genders and sexualities.⁹

More interestingly, the absence of the terminology in state policies – the Pornography Bill and the 2012 Ministry of Social Affairs’ classification of minority groups, to name a few – signaled the government’s unfamiliarity with sexual and gender labels. However, the unexpected popularization of the term LGBT in the country has further escalated its use in state discourse. The 2016 Ministry of Youth and Sports’ Creative Youth Ambassador Selection required participants to submit a medical certificate demonstrating that they were not involved in “LGBT behavior.”

7 See Hendri Yulius, “What Does the Indonesian LGBT Movement Want?,” *The Jakarta Post*, February 19, 2016, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/02/19/what-does-indonesian-lgbt-movement-want.html>; Hendri Yulius, “Indonesia and ‘Transparent Sex,’” *New Mandala*, January 16, 2017, <http://www.newmandala.org/indonesia-transparent-sex/>

8 See Hendri Yulius, “How Indonesia (Inadvertently) Promotes LGBT,” *Asian Correspondent*, October 22, 2016, <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2016/10/indonesia-inadvertently-promotes-lgbt/#bLk1wo2vCurvvbCy.97>; Hendri Yulius, “Who Constructed LGBT Identity in Indonesia?,” *New Mandala*, November 21, 2016, <http://www.newmandala.org/from-margins-to-centre/>

9 See Hendri Yulius, “Over the Rainbow,” *New Mandala*, February 23, 2017, <http://www.newmandala.org/over-the-rainbow/>

Before the use of LGBT, Indonesians with non-normative genders and sexualities identified themselves as "gay," "lesbi" (derogatory term for lesbian), "tomboy," and "waria" (which is inaccurately translated as transgender woman). These terms have been used mainly since the late 1970s, and there were, in fact, a number of gay and lesbian organizations during that period. However, human rights language was barely used. Rather, their practices formed something that I would call cultural activism – spreading awareness through publications and dialogues that homosexuality is normal, and forming networks of homosexuals throughout the archipelago.

Self-acceptance was still a major concern for activists. This was partially due to the fact that the discourse of LGBT rights was not yet widespread, and Indonesian society was still grounded on strong filial relations – individuality was immoral and undermined societal norms.¹⁰ The heterosexual and reproductive family principle strongly bound the state. Many gay Indonesians even married people of the opposite sex, since they perceived their sexuality as “abnormal,” “an illness,” and “against family norms.” There was no effort to defend the rights of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.¹¹ Such discourse was still far off.

When HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues became a concern in Indonesia, gay activists also used public health issues as a vehicle to reach out to their peers and sensitize them to sexual health-related information and self-acceptance. There was a natural convergence between sexual and reproductive health advocates and the movements for gay and lesbian acceptance. The growing concerns about HIV gave gay groups access to a strategic channel and financial support for strengthening self-worth and instilling confidence in gay men. Further, gay and lesbian activists began to formally include *waria* into their activism in 1994 as one of the resolutions from the first congress of Indonesian gay and lesbian activists.

The collapse of the authoritarian regime in 1998 led Indonesia toward democratization. These moves toward democracy have successfully led to the proliferation of human rights concerns to amend the state’s violations from the past. Freedom of expression and media have gained legal protection and guarantees. Human rights discourse and activism have flourished, with

10 See Baiden Offord, “Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia: Arrested Development!,” in Manon Tremblay et al., *The Lesbian and Gay Movement and the State* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010). He argues: “In my research over the years with gay Indonesians, for example, sexual identity is placed well after the priorities of family, nation, and Allah or Jesus, and has no explicit place in filial and social relations” (p. 145).

11 See Tom Boellstorff, *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

transnational connections and financial support from LGBT, HIV, and sexual health and humanitarian/human rights organizations helping to mushroom LGBT organizations. This has further helped to increase the use of the term LGBT as well as human rights rhetoric in their movements. The influx of foreign assistance and interactions with transnational LGBT movements enables the flow of Westernized knowledge on gender and sexuality into the local landscape. As a consequence, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) is increasingly being perceived as an innate feature of the individual.

This shift has gradually been transforming the local understanding of sexuality. Whereas in the past, sexual orientation was placed behind family and nation, it has increasingly been treated as a crucial part of the individual that needs to be accepted. Opponents of LGBT rights often argue that not criminalizing LGBT sexuality is a threat to the family principle. Aside from the family principle, LGBT has also been recognized as a serious threat to traditional gender norms.

Simultaneously, democratization was unpredictably providing a fertile ground for previously suppressed Islamic politics to burgeon, shown through [the rise of religious conservatism](#) in political landscapes.¹² The conservatives used decentralization in several provinces to enact *sharia*-based bylaws or local ordinances that police non-normative sexualities, including prostitution and homosexuality. What is intriguing about these bylaws is that they conflate homosexuality with prostitution and confuse gay/homosexual identity with same-sex practices.¹³ Moreover, other bylaws at the provincial level police individuals with non-normative genders and sexualities on the basis of being a “public nuisance.”¹⁴

Juggling through this mishmash, I see that these laws are difficult to implement practically and are not always applicable to every LGBT Indonesian. Many *warias*, due to limited access to employment, work as street musicians and/or sex workers; they are the ones who are more visible

12 See Hendri Yulius, “Ahok and Hate Speech: The (Unexpected) Outcome of Democracy,” *The Jakarta Post*, November 3, 2016, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2016/11/03/ahok-and-hate-speech-the-unexpected-outcome-of-democracy.html>

13 See Hendri Yulius, “Regulating the Bedroom: Sex in Aceh Criminal Code,” *Indonesia at Melbourne*, November 16, 2015, <http://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/sex-in-acehs-criminal-code/>. As I argued here, “The law criminalises *liwath*, which is defined as anal penetration between men... It is unclear whether criminalising *liwath* is intended to criminalise gay sexual orientation. There is an obvious difference between sexual practice and sexual orientation: not all gay men practice anal sex, for example, while some heterosexual couples do.”

14 As I explained in “Who Constructed LGBT Identity in Indonesia?”: “Today, *waria* or gender non-conforming gay men continue to be arrested alongside female sex workers by local public order officers, and sent to assessment camps for creating a public nuisance.” Their non-conforming gender expressions and visibility also increase their vulnerability to this discriminatory practice.

and easily become the targets of these bylaws, as they are a “public nuisance,” alongside homosexuals who cannot afford private spaces, and homosexual sex workers. Class and economic power thus inevitably complicate the vulnerability of LGBT Indonesians.

Religious conservatism, coupled with the government’s inaction to control religious vigilantes, has led to a number of violations in civil private spheres. Increased visibility and the mushrooming of LGBT organizations after the collapse of New Order also provoked counter-movements from the conservatives. Religious vigilante groups, particularly the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), have been the main perpetrators of raids and attacks at queer-related activities and events. The activists thus consolidated their organizations for the very first time at Indonesia’s LGBTIQ Forum [*Forum LGBTIQ Indonesia*] in 2010, not so long after the raid against the first International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) conference in Surabaya. In order to avoid potential raids, the activists avoided using the term LGBT publicly, distributed information through limited communication channels, removed any attributes that might associate the event with LGBT, and held the events surreptitiously.

Although it is relatively easy to see that democratization has been detrimental to LGBT Indonesians by helping the resurgence of Islamic politics to counter-attack LGBT, I tend to see the democratization period as a frame in which multiple events happened, converged, and interacted with each other. The globalization of LGBT rights discourse, including the push for same-sex marriage, also happened during Indonesia’s democratization period, and it has been continually and significantly contributing to recent anti-LGBT vitriol, which I address in the next section.

3. The LGBT Globalization and Political Homophobia

Since the 2000s, the internationalization of LGBT rights has been strong and widespread thanks to The Yogyakarta Principle, the UN advocacy messages and mandates on sexual orientation, and the push for same sex marriage and fulfillment of LGBT rights in many countries¹⁵. Human rights language is increasingly deployed to advocate for the protection and recognition of LGBT people. What I see vividly through this LGBT globalization is the universalization of LGBT

15 See Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001); Dennis Altman and Jonathan Symons, *The Queer Wars* (UK: Polity, 2015).

identities and the merging of variations of same-sex and/or non-normative sexual desires and practices into one category: “LGBT.”

For example, *bissu* (indigenous non-binary gender shaman in Bugis society) and *waria* (*wanita-pria* / female-male or inaccurately translated as male-to-female transgender) began to be associated with LGBT.¹⁶ Although they provided strong justification that non-normative genders and sexualities do not originate from the West, the moves to label other same-sex practices and other gender-diverse indigenous cultures as “LGBT” run [the risk of erasing local practices and reducing them to LGBT identity](#).

The rise of LGBT discourse has led to sexual practices being recognized as a part of one’s identity, bringing greater visibility and citizenship rights, which, in turn, gave birth to what is now popularized as “LGBT rights” – a concept that is still foreign to Indonesian society, in which sexuality is taboo and barely talked about in public.¹⁷ Heterosexual marriage and building a family remain intact as the primary markers of an ideal citizen and adulthood in society.

The US marriage equality and human rights language deployed in international LGBT discourse has also provoked a reactionary response toward LGBT Indonesians, since their movements are always associated with efforts to legalize marriage equality and Western infiltration. Minister of Defense Ryamizard Ryacudu even argued that LGBT movements are a form of proxy war to culturally defeat another country.¹⁸ Opponents of LGBT movements also claim that marriage

16 As I argued in “Over the Rainbow”: “It is interesting to see how *waria* and *bissu* – two local elements of gender and sexual identities – have also increasingly been conflated with Western LGBT identity in Indonesia. The term *waria* (*wanita-pria*/female-male) often frivolously translated as male-to-female transgender, was introduced by the Indonesian government in 1978, while the term *bissu* held a special status in Bugis society that instilled androgyny with a sacred meaning – a God can descend only to a gender-free body. These local identities and indigenous practices definitely provide strong justification for the contemporary Indonesian LGBT movements to demonstrate that non-normative gender and sexual expressions and identities do not originate from the West as Indonesian conservatives believe and often claim. However, the emergence of the term LGBT in Indonesia last year has inadvertently changed the way people see non-normative gender expressions and identities. Besides entering everyday language, the Indonesian public now increasingly associates men with feminine mannerisms with being LGBT.”

17 See Hendri Yulius, “The War on Homosexuality,” *New Mandala*, September 30, 2016, <http://www.newmandala.org/war-homosexuality-indonesia/>. I argued, “LGBT is now not only a sexual or gender identity category but also suffused with citizenship rights, including marriage. Unexpectedly, this sexual citizenship model has become increasingly universalized.”

18 See Hendri Yulius, “The Burkini, LGBT People, and the Global Sex Wars,” *The Jakarta Post*, August 30, 2016, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2016/08/30/the-burkini-lgbt-people-and-the-global-sex-wars.html>

equality would dismantle family principles, traditional gender norms, and societal norms. Therefore, with all of this misjudgment, the government has stated that there is no such place for LGBT movements in the country.

Scholars Dennis Altman and Jonathan Symons have an interesting outlook on this trend.¹⁹ Although LGBT rights discourse cannot be seen as separate from shared liberal values in Western societies, efforts to transplant it to non-Western countries could be counterproductive and would only result in further damage and peril to local LGBT communities. Also, an unfortunate fact we have to acknowledge is that most of the Indonesian public still views homosexuality as a mental illness and sinful behavior and as being [irreconcilable with Indonesian culture and society](#).²⁰ The persistent enforcement of LGBT rights and a liberal approach would simply lead nowhere, if not provoke a conservative backlash.

However, as I talked anonymously to some ministerial staff members working on health and social inclusion for minorities to explore the impact of the anti-LGBT vitriol in 2016, I unearthed some surprising facts. Far from total denial toward the existence of LGBT people, these ministerial members are actually still working for gay men, men having sex with men, and transgender people by supporting shelters for *warias*, sensitizing health workers to provide non-discriminatory health services to men having sex with men (MSM)²¹ and gay men, and providing livelihood skills for *waria* to eradicate this stigma. Many *warias* are still stigmatized as sex workers and public nuisances. Compared to their gay and lesbian counterparts, many of them come from poor socio-economic backgrounds, exacerbated with the structural impediments to enter the workforce and higher education, just because of their non-normative gender expression.

According to my key informant, the program his office implemented trains *warias* to be good hairdressers or to have other livelihood skills. This program gradually eradicates the stigma of

19 As Dennis Altman and Jonatan Symons (2015) argued: “It is difficult to separate the idea of an ‘LGBT’ identity or community from a particular set of individualistic values that are not necessarily shared beyond western liberal societies, and we recognize that the language of activism has helped promote a backlash. Above all, the emphasis on same-sex marriage has become a touchstone for unease in many parts of the world” (p. 107).

20 See Victor Hoff, “POLL: Indonesia Sees Sharp Spike In Anti-Gay Hate,” *Queerty*, October 29, 2012, <https://www.queerty.com/poll-indonesia-sees-sharp-spike-in-anti-gay-hate-20121029>. The report demonstrates that “The Indonesian Survey Circle (LSI) reported that almost 81% of those surveyed would object to having a gay or lesbian neighbor, about double the number who would object to someone of a different religion.”

21 This term refers to “men who have sex with other men, but do not label themselves as gay.” It is commonly used in public health, particularly HIV and other STD-related discourses.

being *waria* in her surroundings. For example, a *waria* begins to be known as “Anita, a good hairdresser,” instead of her *waria* identity. He also argued that their sexual practices would not be problematic as long as they were practiced in private spaces.²²

This discussion brought me forward to the cultural concept of “achievement” [*prestasi*], which resonates strongly within Indonesian society. Contribution to society at large remains a valuable asset to influence people’s perceptions of an individual. Boellstorff (2007) argues that *prestasi*, which can come in the form of personal achievement or contribution to society, could help the public to change its negative prejudice against LGBT people. By succeeding in one’s career or contributing positively to people around one’s self helps loosen the association of being gay and the myth of gay sexual promiscuity. Taking advantage of *prestasi* potentially serves as an entry point for gradually obtaining social acceptance. Differing significantly from Western gay discourse, which overemphasizes sexual identity, this Indonesian model places a greater significance on the achievements and contributions to society, rather than “coming out as LGBT.”²³

Similarly, since HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are quite prevalent among MSM and gay men, one of the ministerial offices still works on sensitizing health providers to gender- and sexuality-related information, or what she referred to as “SOGI” (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) training. My key informants told me that this program was really useful to equip the health workers with adequate knowledge on MSM and gay men’s health issues. In addition, it also reduces the stigma against homosexuals among healthcare providers.

These discrepancies between the state’s public denouncement and the real practices of some ministerial offices reveal the complexities of political homophobia.²⁴ The state is always about

22 As I argued in “The War on Homosexuality,” the idea of “sexual rights” is still foreign to Indonesian society. Further, “The globalization of sexual identity politics and related rights has condensed varieties of same-sex or non-normative sexual desires and practices into one category – ‘LGBT.’ This consequently sees the emergence and universalization of LGBT identities. And when sexualities become identities, they are imbued and entangled with citizenship rights, which in turn gave birth to the notion of sexual rights and citizenship.”

23 See Hendri Yulius, “Overcoming the Catch-22: Reflection of the Current Anti-LGBT Hysteria in Indonesia,” *Huffington Post*, April 6, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hendri-yulius/overcoming-the-catch22-a-_b_9589264.html

24 In *The Emergence of Political Homophobia in Indonesia: Masculinity and National Belonging* (2004), Tom Boellstorff argues that political homophobia (and/or homophobic violence) is seen as “the properly masculine response to these events [which] indicates how the nation may be gaining a new masculinist cast. In the new Indonesia, male–male desire can increasingly be construed as a threat to normative masculinity, and thus to the nation itself.” However, in this article, I reveal that political homophobia is more complex than just restoring masculinist ideas to the nation.

both representation and practices, which can be either coherent or contradictory. In this case, political homophobia actually operates primarily at the representational level. The idea of ideal/common citizens or what the state apparatus refers to as the “public” has been envisaged through normative attributes – heterosexual, religious, moral-oriented, and reproductive. The widespread anti-LGBT pressure from various elements of civil society and religious groups confirms these persisting ideas; citizens demand that the state fulfill and endorse these normative ideals.

In other words, the state’s representation of political homophobia here aims to cater to the “normative public” upon which the state relies, and from which the state derives its power and legitimacy. At a practical level, although the state is still working for these non-normative groups, it frames the practices in a “non-liberal” way – it is about access, health, and poverty reduction, and does not coincide with liberal identity politics. Nevertheless, it should be noted as well that the state comprises multiple institutions that might contradict one another. Although some particular state institutions might be working for the rights of gay or transgender people, other institutions might be working to oppose such actions.

For example, the recent arrests of gay participants in the alleged “gay sex party” in Surabaya and Jakarta were actually carried out by police. Alongside the international media hysteria on the issue, it should be noticed that the criminalization in these cases is actually deployed through the anti-pornography law and the information and electronic transaction law.²⁵ It is not through their homosexuality per se that the outlawing process occurs, but through other practices – the possession of pornographic materials and the transactions occurring before the participants joined those gay sex parties.

4. What is next?

I do not finish this article with a conclusion. A conclusion is often too limiting. Realities are multiplying and shifting rapidly these days, as do LGBT issues in ASEAN, particularly Indonesia. As such, the increasing visibility of LGBT people and the globalization of LGBT rights have inadvertently affected the region. Unfortunately, LGBT issues have not been discussed thoroughly

²⁵ See Hendri Yulius, “Moral Panic and the Reinvention of LGBT,” *Indonesia at Melbourne*, May 17, 2017, <http://indonesiatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/moral-panic-and-the-reinvention-of-lgbt/>

yet, although the criminalization of behaviors and political homophobia have been rampant in some countries such as Brunei, Malaysia, and also Indonesia.

In 2006, ethics philosopher Peter Singer simply argued that homosexuality is not immoral because it harms no one.²⁶ The Indonesian case of homophobia (or even some other ASEAN countries) reveals that homosexuality issues are more complex and are more than just moral or immoral debates. They are about national reactions to the rapid transmission of global discourse, the dynamics of movements and counter-movements in democracy, and also about the state's multifaceted representation which place sexuality as a political issue of our contemporary time. Hence, in the "50 Years of ASEAN," no exaggeration that LGBT issues are the pressing issues for the region. ***

[This article was written from January to March 2017, when the author was doing fieldwork for his thesis.]

26 See Peter Singer, "Homosexuality Is Not Immoral," *Project Syndicate*, October 16, 2006.