

**Research Proposal**  
**(Dissertation Project of Wisnu Adihartono)**

***Migration and Family Support:  
The Case of Indonesian Gays in Paris***

Homosexuals are almost everywhere, a discriminated minority, marginalized and devalued. These three facts have been caused by the norm and ideology of hetero-normativity. One of the French thinkers, Michel Foucault said that a bio-politics make an indication that the state is an agency to contribute the marginalization of homosexuality as a perverse because no doubt that heterosexuality is considered as natural and normal and limited between men and women. Heterosexuality produces a binary product in this world like a French feminist; Monique Wittig said that hetero-normativity is such a political system,<sup>1</sup> or we can say that there is an ideology behind them. No doubt that according French philosopher, Louis Althusser, ideology changes the individual as a subject<sup>2</sup>. The ideology which was adopted by one country shapes the construction of thinking about individual, between their self and the others. Thus the consequences of thus binary are that violence and harassment through the homosexual community all over the world.

Modern Indonesia of course has inherited values and traditional representations of Asia where it's drawn by many rules, especially habits and customs that govern on our daily life. Thus Indonesia generally considers homosexuality as an abnormal set of acts, forbidden by the norms and contrary to religion. In this difficult situation, Indonesia cannot be compared with other South East Asian countries, for example Thailand where many homosexual's communities could express their expression though Indonesia does not have a particular law dealing with homosexuality. At the same time Indonesian government does not accommodate them at least provide a protection. Thus in order to express their liberty, the homosexual communities in Indonesia demands their all rights. Actually ancient Indonesian culture of homosexuality has long been existed about centuries ago. We can observe that there is an existence of 'Bissu' in South Sulawesi, 'Warok Gemblak' in Ponorogo, East Java, the traditional dance of 'Seudati' in the province of Aceh, Sumatra, the traditional dance 'Indang' in South Sumatera, etc. Paradoxically Indonesian government did not want to preserve it as a cultural asset but the government consider as a perverse acts. Their existence is being

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<sup>1</sup> Susann Henenn-Wolff, *Homosexualités et Stigmatisation*, Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 2010, p. 96

<sup>2</sup> Cited from Tom Boelstroff, *The Gay Archipelago, Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 86

destroyed and they are considered as a member of Indonesian Communist Party or 'Partai Komunis Indonesia'.

Recently after the fall of president Soeharto in 1998, there are some domains where gays are openly known in particular in a field of television (entertainment) and advertising. Gay themes were regularly transmitted by the Indonesian television channels, for example in a program of "talk show". But not only on these domains, there was an Indonesian film with the title "Arisan" or in English "Reunion" directed by Nia Dinata which is show the gay relations in Indonesia. In addition, there is also an event of "Indonesia Queer Film Festival" organized by John Badalu who has an aim to introduce the homosexuality (LGBT-Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) in Indonesia. In the area social and politics, the developments of some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) are becoming faster than before. As I noted that in the year of 1980's, the first Indonesian LGBT's NGO, "Lambda Indonesia" was created by Dédé Oetomo (now GAYa Nusantara) and today there are other NGO's who has an aim to fight LGBT rights, such as "Our Voice", "Arus Pelangi", "Suara Srikandi", etc.

Although there are a lot of developments of gay live, we can see that there are still Indonesian gay who do not want to confess their sexual orientation. A sense of "Shame" or in Indonesian language "Malu" plays an important role. It is better not to say that "I am a gay" because instead of having a good treatment, they were marginalized. Thus in order to cover their sexual orientation, they obey the request of their parents to marry a woman who was chosen by their parents.

This PhD project will be conducted in Jakarta and Paris as a capital and urban city. For initial data collection or I can say as a secondary data collection, I have conducted interviews with 20 gays Indonesian in Jakarta and 20 gays Indonesian in Paris (this is the most important sample) in order to know their personal lives, their opinion about gay live in Indonesia particularly in Jakarta, their desires for making a better live, their aim to move to other country, etc. Those interviews brought two important hypotheses:

1. The existence of "Gender Belief System" which has a strong relationship with the values differences. In this system appears a strong stereotype between women and man in a society thus this stereotype has a relation with a traditional culture. The "Gender Belief System" certainly points out that heterosexual society does not allow

the existence of gay because they have assumed a typical stereotype of women. In addition, they believe that the existence of gay can become a great threat.

2. The existence of the authoritarian system in heterosexual society. In this system is known a rigid division between “Us” and “They” therefore the effect is a prejudice against members of “Out-Group”. This ideology assumes that that members are the group that can threaten the existence of the traditional values thus in order to avoid this threat, this ideology support the traditional values by building an opinion that man is always superior that women, moreover the position of gay. The form of authoritarianism does not limit not only in the private space but also in the public space thus this system looks gay as a victim.

From these two hypotheses, there are three values into the background, which are:

- Individual which refers to the self of the person, for example a totally freedom, same-sex marriage, homo parents, the adoption of children, the same rights between the gay couples.
- Family (traditional value) which refers to the strong relationship with family members particularly a nuclear family.
- Culture (gender belief system and gender role belief) which refers to the expectation of society, for example a man should play a role as a man and women as well.

### **Research Questions**

The point of my central question is a sociological comparative study (focusing primarily on Indonesian gay in Paris, with a counterpoint on Indonesian gay in Jakarta) and will be focus on their life according to the social and cultural relations. Thus the two areas of inquiry are in Paris as a main pitch and in Jakarta as a secondary landside. Thus concretely, the questions that will appear on my project are:

- Why do Indonesian gay move to France, in particular to Paris?
- How the effects of these three (individual, family (traditional culture) and culture (gender belief system and gender role belief))?
- How are their relationships with their family, friends and colleagues in French and in Indonesia?
- And after having analyzed, are there any other obstacles to be an Indonesian gay in the contemporary era?

## **Expected Research Outcome**

I know that there are many researches on homosexuality in Indonesia but I hope that my research will be a reference in the domains of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) sociology; in particular those who want to know the sociology of relation of Indonesian gay abroad. What I mention here that the discourse of “relational” is very important and urgent in order to understand the significance of relationship between gender, cultural belief (gender belief system, gender role belief and hegemonic cultural belief) and social structured (including cultural rules and social relational context), moreover on the subject of gay relations. On the other hand, the simplest thing that I would like to explain is to open the awareness of Indonesian society that “perhaps your family, your friend or your colleague is a gay” and we cannot close our eyes to this fact. In the future, I hope that there is publisher who can print my research in to a book thus every Indonesian people has a sensibility to aware that gay peoples are exist and the more important is that they are a human being and they can contribute their ideas for Indonesia. It’s difficult to achieve it but I am sure that I can make it.

## **Reference List**

Boelstroff, Tom, *The Gay Archipelago, Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2005

Henenn-Wolff, Susann, *Homosexualités et Stigmatisation*, Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 2010

### **Some of these books will be used in my on-going PhD project :**

Borrillo, Daniel (2000), *l’Homophobie*, Paris: PUF

Bozon, Michel, *Sociologie de la Sexualité*, Paris : Nathan, 2002

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Pickett, Brent L. (1967), *Historical Dictionary of Homosexuality*, Mayland: Scarecrow Press

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Sullivan, Norma (1994), *Masters and Managers : A Study of Gender Relations in Urban Java*, St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin

To name others