

Please do not cite from this draft without the author's permission

Constructing Masculinity in Southeast Asian LGBT Discourse

by TOH Heng Guan*

Abstract. Since the first Pride march after the Stonewall incident in 1969, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) discourses, from formal academic works and social movements to gay fashions and LGBT travel guides, have thrived in many parts of the globe. While some suggest that these movements have brought together an expanded space for the Southeast Asian LGBT community and improved the societal status and welfare of LGBTs in this region (Heng, 2001; First ASEAN LGBTIQ Caucus, 2011), this paper argues that, because LGBT discourses in this part of the world have remained largely focused on a male-based *homonormativity* derived from patriarchal heteronormative beliefs of the West and other cultural inheritances such as Confucianism and traditional values, these movements have *reinforced the constriction of LGBT people* rather than bringing them sexual or gender freedom. Via ethnographical surveys, analysis of LGBT-related official discourses (e.g. government stances), public discourses (including op-eds and magazine articles), as well as social discourses (such as Internet chatrooms and discussion forums), this paper attempts to chart the constructions of masculinity often hidden behind Southeast Asian LGBT discourses, and suggests potential directions for a more indigenous LGBT discourse in Southeast Asia by drawing upon a case study based in Singapore.

Keywords. Southeast Asia, LGBT discourses, sexualities, male-based homonormativity, patriarchal heteronormative, cultural inheritance, the West, Confucianism, traditional values, Singapore

Introduction

The 1969 Stonewall Pride march and subsequent social movements have inspired LGBTs from all over the globe to kick-off their own Pride movements in the past few decades. For instance, the Mardi Gras Festival in Australia, the LGBT Pride Parade in Cambodia, Ladlad in the Philippines, the Annual Gay Pride Festival in Thailand, the Pink Dot movement / Indignation Pride Season in Singapore, as well as the Seksualiti Merdeka in Malaysia all represent clear instances of this trend. Twenty-nine LGBT support groups and organizations across Southeast Asia came together in the first ASEAN Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) Caucus on 5th May 2011 in Jakarta and submitted recommendations for ASEAN

* Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, National University of Singapore, 10 Kent Ridge Crescent, Singapore 119260. Email: a0077506@nus.edu.sg

(Association of Southeast Asian Nations) leaders, demanding equal rights and the decriminalization and depathologization of sexual minorities.¹

On the academic side, works by Western scholars in the past few decades questioning heteronormative gender systems have prompted an explosion of LGBT academic discourses in Southeast Asia. The 2005 First International Conference on “Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia”, held in Bangkok, brought together six hundred academics and activists from across the region and beyond, from Colombo to Seoul to Tehran to Singapore.²

Today, SE Asian LGBT discourse is no longer restricted to mere public demonstrations and academic scholarship: it has extended to film and the arts, magazines and newspapers, Internet forums, cyberspace chatrooms, as well as smartphone applications. LGBT entertainment needs are answered by booming ‘pink dollar’ businesses including gay-themed tourism, massage parlors, pubs, discotheques, cafés, and saunas that have mushroomed across Southeast Asia in the last two decades.³

Broadly speaking, there are indeed more visible LGBT spaces across Southeast Asian societies now than in the 1980s. A closer examination, however, reveals that expanded discourses and new spaces seem to have largely focused on non-normatively gendered *males* and/or males with non-normative sexualities (including gay men and MTF(male to female) transsexuals), which I collectively refer to as “transgressed males”. For reasons described below, on the other hand, “transgressed females”, bisexuals, and others tend to be given less attention.

Revealing Male-based Homonormativity in Southeast Asian LGBT Discourse

According to the official website of Malaysia’s *Seksualiti Merdeka* (‘sexual freedom’), even though the movement produces an annual sexuality rights festival promoting “Sexuality Independence” for LGBTIQ (lesbian, gays, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queers), articles featured on its homepage have mostly concentrated on gay men or MTF transsexuals. There have

¹ See the press release on 5th May 2011 of ASEAN Civil Society at their official website at the following URL: <http://www.aseancivilsociety.net/en/news/press-release/item/79-press-release-gay-lesbian-bisexual-and-queers-take-stage-on-asean-people's-forum> . See also its news coverage from the same website that shows a list of 29 LGBT organizations that have signed the Caucus: <http://www.aseancivilsociety.net/en/news/news/item/85-the-lgbtqi-agenda-equality-now>

² Fran Martin, Peter A. Jackson, Mark McLelland, and Audrey Yue, Introduction, in “AsiaPacifiQueer: rethinking genders and sexualities”, edited by Fran Martin ...[et al], (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), p. 1

³ See Utopia, Gay Asia and Asian Gay and Lesbian Resources , <http://www.utopia-asia.com/>

been no articles on bisexuals, and articles on lesbians and FTM (Female to Male) transsexuals are comparatively scarce. Moreover, from the same website, in a document entitled “29 Ways Towards an LGBTIQ-Friendly Malaysia” advising against the use of slurs against LGBTIQs, five out of seven terms identified are those used against “transgressed males” (gay men, MTF transsexuals, and effeminate men), namely “gay”, “fag”, “pondan”, “bapok”, and “ah qua”. There are only two terms applied to transgressed females, both of which refer to tomboys (dyke” and “pengkid”).⁴

Despite the fact that Singapore’s Pink Dot movement generally addresses all members of the wider LGBT community, its organizers felt compelled to produce a single promotional video devoted exclusively to gay men, whereas this has not been the case for lesbians, bisexuals and others.⁵ This may be due to the heightened attention paid to men’s sexuality in patriarchal environments. In the party platform of the Philippines’ Ladlad, while all of its principles support LGBT rights and anti-discrimination against LGBTs, there is one plank that exclusively calls for anti-extortion efforts on behalf of gay men only, suggesting that the environment is such that lesbians, bisexuals and other minorities do not face this problem.⁶ Pride parades in Thailand are for gay men and MTF transsexuals only. A quick glance at the official websites of other LGBT movements in Southeast Asia also reveals higher membership and leadership participation on the part of gay men.

Even though the International Conference on “Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia” mentioned earlier is “an international interdisciplinary conference on studies of (LGBTQ) cultures and communities in Asia”⁷, the papers presented at its first conference in Bangkok demonstrated an overwhelming focus on the transgressed male. Out of thirty-nine papers, almost half focused on transgressed males, with the rest touching on transgressed females, asexuality, bisexuality, and general LGBT issues.⁸ During the 2007 Second Conference, more than two-thirds of the papers involved transgressed males. Despite the fact that the conference had a

⁴ See Seksualiti Merdeka, <http://www.seksualitimerdeka.org/>

⁵ See Youtube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDdoT7opmrg&feature=player_embedded

⁶ See Ladlad, http://www.ladlad.org/?page_id=2

⁷ See the background of 1st International Conference of Asian Queer Studies” from its permanent archive at: <http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/background.php>

⁸ See papers presented in the *First International Conference on “Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia”*, which are downloadable from the Conference’s permanent archive at <http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/papers.php>.

broadly Asian theme, a significant number of papers on transgressed males' issues were grounded within the Southeast Asian context as well, such as: "Beautiful Men in Jakarta and Bangkok: the Pressure to Conform in Recent Indonesia[n] Novel[s]", "Flexible Citizenship and Affective Labour in Thai Gender Reassignment Clinics", "Professional Type Mature Age Guy Looking for an Asian Boyfriend: Exploring Caucasian Desire for Asian Men", and "Love without Borders: A Narrative of GAM(Gay Asian Man)/ GWM(Gay White Man)" and others.⁹

This one-sided focus on the transgressed male is also found in LGBT public discourse. A recent example can be drawn from an op-ed written early this year by Yanapon Musiket, the author of a column entitled "Queer Eye" in the *Bangkok Post*. In his inaugural piece, Yanapon stated his intention to serve the "Thai LGBT community" by providing monthly LGBT stories on local scenes.¹⁰ However, while Musiket has written about 'policemen in ultra-tight uniforms', 'gay fashion designer Tom Ford', "Lady Gaga's parody, Lady Plara" and "ladyboys", not a single story or news item about lesbians or bisexuals have been featured in his articles. Instances where transsexuals and *kathoey*s were mentioned in his pieces were all cases of MTF transsexuals.¹¹

Yet another instance of "male-based" LGBT public discourse can be found in *Outrage*, a magazine that claims to be the "one and only LGBT magazine" in the Philippines. Aside from the fact that most of its articles are dominated by stories about gay men, the magazine cover and advertisements are always deluged with photos of naked men with chiselled chests, bubble butts, and six-pack abs. Masculinity worship and phallocentrism are prevalent themes in this magazine.¹²

In terms of LGBT entertainment spaces, in Southeast Asia there are spas, massage parlors, pubs, discos and travel resources specifically for gays and lesbians, but not for transgenders or

⁹ See <http://apq.anu.edu.au/qas/QASConfirmedPaper>

¹⁰ See Yanapon Musiket, "Celebrating a diverse society: Gender-Bending Culture Makes Thailand a Unique Place", *Bangkok Post*, Life Section: Queer Eye, February 3, 2011. This op-ed can be downloaded from the following link if it is still not expired:

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/arts-and-culture/film/219651/celebrating-a-diverse-society>

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² See the facebook of Outrage Magazine from <http://www.facebook.com/OutrageMag#!/OutrageMag?sk=info> . See also some of their magazine pictures that can be downloaded from the same facebook at the following link: <http://www.facebook.com/OutrageMag?sk=wall&filter=2#!/OutrageMag?sk=photos>

bisexuals. The number and types of gay establishments vastly exceed those targeted to lesbians.¹³ Gay-themed movies and plays are offered more often than those with lesbian, bisexual, and transgender themes. Last but not least, there are significantly more social networking chatrooms, forums, and smartphone applications for gays than for lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders.¹⁴

The above examples demonstrate a significant bias towards transgressed males. Why should this be the case within an emancipatory discourse ostensibly intended to advance equality for *all* genders and sexualities?

I term this tendency towards the visibility of transgressed males a *male-based homonormative order*. It is ‘male-based’ as the subject of this discourse is largely biologically sexed males, explaining why masculine females are excluded. The order is ‘homonormative’ as it focuses mainly on the monosexuality (property of being attracted only to one sex) in same-sex relationships, precluding co-existing heterosexuality and homosexuality in bisexuals, “for whom sex/gender is of little or no importance or relevance in their relationship choices.”¹⁵ In this connection, Japanese bisexual activist Hibino has written about his perplexity when asked which gender he prefers:

“Lesbians and gays might not have questions about the Binary Gender System itself..... [But w]hy so often do we have to be asked to choose only man or only

¹³ See footnote 3.

¹⁴ Although I have no official statistics on LGBT channels in cyberspace and smartphones applications, this phenomenon can be easily check through search engines. For a side reference however, according to Hui Jiang’s research paper presented in the 2005 *International Conference on “Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia”*, among the three hundred operating gay and lesbian websites, there are only twenty of them are specifically for the lesbian community. See Juang, Hui., ICCGL: Cultural Communication via the Internet and GLBT Community Building in China, p. 5. This paper can be downloaded from the Conference permanent archive at <http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/papers/Jiang.pdf>.

¹⁵ For further discussion on how bisexuality is oppressed by *monosexism* and stigmatized by both queer and straight community, see Hemmings, Clare., *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender*, (New York and London: Routeledge, 2002), pp. 27-29. Another instructive illustration can be seen from a 2006 postcard of the Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand oriented “men who love men”, in which a bisexual model is put alongside with other gay men categorized as “King” (sexually active), “Queen”(sexually receptive), and “Both” (sexually versatile), as if the bisexual do not love women at the same time. The 2006 postcard can be seen in Jackson, Peter A., ed., *Queer Bangkok: Twenty-First-Century Markets, Media, and Rights*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), p. 119.

woman?this kind of gender binarism takes roots also in our queer communities.¹⁶

Within the *male-based homonormative order* are hidden remnants of patriarchal heteronormativity—where the “male” is typically placed at the centre—that diffuse into homonormative sexual and social practices in Southeast Asia. *Tomboys* (masculine lesbians) in West Sumatra expect *lesbi* (feminine lesbians) to cook for them¹⁷. Gay men are split into two distinctive strands of “gay king” and “gay queen” in Thailand, where the latter is the “receptive bottom” who submits to the “insertive top”.¹⁸ Asian bisexuals are always expected to opt for just one sex¹⁹, a system derived from patriarchal heteronormativity in which the husband should only marry one wife, and the wife should always be loyal to her husband. *Phu-ying kham-phet* (transmen) in Thailand regard *farang* (foreigners) as potential partners who will take them as girlfriends and even bring them to their home countries, where long term financial support, marriage and family are offered— an ideal “family dream” which one may also read as a product of patriarchal heteronormativity.²⁰ Lastly, *male-based homonormativity* may also contain characteristics of masculinity worship and phallocentrism as shown in the example of the Philippine LGBT magazine mentioned above.

As illustrated above, there is no question that a domineering *male-based homonormative order* perpetuates a patriarchal heteronormativity which has the potential to *constrict* LGBTs (consciously or sub-consciously). But in what ways, precisely, is such a *homonormative order* constriction pervasive? In any given society some will be more influenced by homonormative orders than others. For instance, Evelyn Blackwood’s findings in West Sumatra tell us that while

¹⁶ Hibino, Makoto., “What is Necessary For Us, For Our Queer Movement in Japan?”, *International Conference on “Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia* , 2005 p. 5

¹⁷ See Blackwood, Evelyn., *Tomboys in West Sumatra: Constructing Masculinity and Erotic Desire*, in *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Nov., 1988), p 495. Although Blackwood also quoted other instances, in p. 511, where *tomboys* masculinity is not immutable and should not always be seen as product of male domination derived from patriarchal heteronormativity.

¹⁸ See Jackson, ed., (2011) under footnote 16 and Jackson, Peter., *An American Death in Bangkok: The Murder of Darrell Berrigan and the Hybrid Origins of Gay Identity in 1960s Thailand*, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Volume 5, Number 3, 1999, p. 398.

¹⁹ See footnote 15 on monosexuality. See also Hibino, Makoto., “What is Necessary For Us, For Our Queer Movement in Japan?”, *International Conference on “Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia* , 2005 p. 5. This paper is downloadable from: <http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/papers/Hibono.pdf>

²⁰ See Winter, Sam., *Transpeople (Khon Kham-phet) in Thailand*, in Jackson, Peter A., ed., *Queer Bangkok: Twenty-First-Century Markets, Media, and Rights*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), p. 261.

relatively older and less internationally-exposed *tombois* may abide by masculine representations of traditional high-ranking Minangkabau husbands who expect to be served in the house, those of the younger, more internationally-exposed generation, despite continuing to identify some part of themselves with tomboys/*lesbi*, may no longer find such gender-normative ideas satisfactory²¹.

Beyond Blackwood's finding, there are other factors which contribute to the importance of male-based homonormative orders within societies. Amidst constant cross-cultural interactions, especially in today's world where transnational knowledge can be easily accessed with a mouse click (except in Myanmar, where internet access is still heavily regulated by the military government),²² it is not surprising to observe a re-shaping of sexual minorities' positions based on transnational knowledge from "foreign" sources and a reconstruing of this knowledge for 'local' use. Sometimes, such knowledge is even re-adopted by foreign sources. For instance, Singapore's Pink Dot movement was originally inspired by the West. However, when it brings people together to form a giant pink dot in public space (with LGBT supporters wearing pink), this action is neither a Pride march nor a demonstration. By specifically incorporating family members into the event²³ it avoids alienating those who hold so-called "family values" advocated by patriarchal Asian leaders.²⁴ According to the Singaporean press, Pink Dot's success "has inspired people around the world to start their own Pink Dot events, with pink dots popping up in New York City, London, Hong Kong and even Anchorage, Alaska."²⁵ Robert Phillips argues that the virtual world is instrumental to the success of Singapore's LGBTs in overcoming regulated public spaces and extends beyond its initial limits in the virtual world.²⁶

²¹ See footnote 17, pp. 510-511.

²² See Kelly, Sanja., [et al.], ed., *Freedom on the Net 2011, A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, (New York: Freedom House, 2011), p. 76. I understand from my colleagues who went to Myanmar in May last year for an ASEAN regional forum at Mount Pleasant Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw, that neither the internet nor cell phones were assessable.

²³ See Giant Robot News, "Pink Dot 2011: Growing LGBT Pride in Singapore", 18 June 2011, at the following website: <http://www.giantrobot.com/news/pink-dot-2011-growing-lgbt-pride-in-singapore/>

²⁴ See Peletz, Michael G., "'Asian Values' and New Types of Criminality" (in Chapter 5) in *Gender Pluralism: Southeast Asia Since Early Modern Times* (Routledge 2009), p. 201.

²⁵ See Seah, Alan., and Pink Dot, "National Day Special: To love and be loved", in *Today*, August 9, 2011, p. 8. This news report can also be downloaded from its publisher's website(MediaCorps) at: <http://imcmsimages.mediacorp.sg/CMSFilesServer/documents/006/PDF/20110809/0908HNP012.pdf>

²⁶ See for instance, Phillips, Robert F., *Queering Online: Transnational Sexual Citizenship in Singapore*, Thesis (Ph.D.), University of California, Irvine, 2008, pp.83-85.

In summary, LGBT masculine constructs across Southeast Asia are characterized by different levels of pervasiveness attributable to ethnic, age, class, and situational conditions and constant interactive multi-directional negotiations between local and transnational dialogues. The hybridization of such masculine constructs is a highly fluid and complex phenomenon.

Some LGBTs may feel content with their current societal positions and do not find the pervasiveness of the male homonormative order oppressive and worthy of attention (as my research findings that I will be presenting in a later part of this paper will show). However, such comfort should not grant us an excuse to dismiss the study of male-based homonormativity in Southeast Asian LGBT discourse— *constriction* may manifest not in the form of conscious oppression but at a sub-conscious level as a *constricting mind-set*. Moreover, under patriarchy men also suffer from direct and indirect oppression by both male and female members. For example, it is not uncommon to find emotionally ‘constipated’ men who do not ‘mind’ being socially regulated by patriarchal male-gendered norms.

In order to assist in the restoration of a balanced LGBT discourse, I have developed a four-fold framework for charting the trajectory of the male-based homonormative order in Southeast Asian LGBT discourse. The framework consists of four interrelated questions, as follows:

- (1) Have lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders been marginalized by transgressed males?
- (2) If yes, why are they still willing to hold joint activities with those transgressed males (under the aegis of Pride events or the ASEAN LGBTIQ Caucus, for example), working together with their “oppressors” in the name of equality?
- (3) If they have not been marginalized, does this mean that males are in fact more oppressed and therefore legitimately require more attention than other LGBTs?
- (4) Lastly, in what ways have LGBT movements re-enforced the constriction of Southeast Asian LGBTs, and what precisely can be done to improve the situation?

The entrenchment of the *male-based homonormative order* in terms of prevalence and nature of constriction varies from place to place in Southeast Asia. The more we are able to obtain detailed answers to questions regarding LGBT identity, the more we will be able to advance specific proposals to restore balance to Southeast Asian LGBT discourses.²⁷

The following sections illustrate the above by drawing upon a case study based in Singapore. To better address the questions in the four-fold framework, I first provide some key information on Singapore's historical and socio-political environment, followed by a sketch of its LGBT landscape.

The “Big Patriarchal Environment”

Singapore, a place with infertile land and without natural resources, was a barely inhabited tropical island until it was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles, who managed to utilize its strategic location along the Straits of Malacca. Raffles developed Singapore into a free port capable of attracting traders from regions like India, the Middle East, China, the Straits of Malacca, Magindanao, Borneo, Europe, Japan, and others to an obscure little island in Southeast Asia for business opportunities and a new life.²⁸ Descendants of these immigrants formed the 5.07 million-strong population (Statistic Singapore, 2010) of modern Singapore, with the Chinese constituting the majority at 74.1%, followed by the Malays at 13.4%, Indians at 9.2%, and other races at 3.3%.²⁹ To ease concerns around economic stagnation and an aging population, the government continues its recruitment of foreigners in order to increase its population, with a goal of 6.5 million by 2027.³⁰ The policy of “global-trade friendliness” started off by Raffles has

²⁷ I do not claim, however, that male-based homonormative orders do not exist in locations outside Southeast Asia; this paper is written partly in response to the recent ASEAN LGBTIQ Caucus and highlights the fact that constrictions may remain even if ASEAN leaders were to endorse the Caucus.

²⁸ For an entertaining history on Singapore, see Discovery Channel, History of Singapore. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O12Lwol3iaY>

²⁹ Sew www.sg Your Official Gateway to Singapore at <http://app.www.sg/who/1/Singapore-at-a-Glance.aspx>

³⁰ See Burton, John., “Singapore goes back to its roots”, Financial Times, August 1, 2007. (<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ad489ffc-4045-11dc-9d0c-0000779fd2ac.html#axzz1YHTtyTtT>)

been carried on even after Singapore gained its independence from the British in 1965. Today, Singapore “remains the best country in the world in which to run a business”³¹ .

Despite operating under a liberal economic formula, however, Singaporean society itself is not so liberal, suggests current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. During a parliamentary debate on repealing Section 377A of the Penal Code (Singapore), which criminalizes sodomy, Lee described Singapore as a conservative society, with the family as a building block. He argued:

[By] family in Singapore, we mean one man, one woman marrying, having children and brining up children within that framework of a stable family unit...It's not so in other countries, particularly in the West anymore but it is here... I acknowledge that not everybody fits into this mould. Some are single, some have more colorful lifestyles, some are gay, but a heterosexual, stable family is a social norm. And I think the vast majority of Singaporeans want to keep it this way, want to keep our society like this”³²

This is not the first time that Singapore politicians have used “family values” rhetoric to argue against ‘Western practices’. Michael Peletz notes that former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew used rhetoric grounded in Asian ‘family values’ to argue against Western ideas and validate patriarchal governance, as follows:

Lee Kuan Yew [.....] repeatedly cited the need to defend “Asian values” against Western incursion. He also insisted that Westerners do not understand Asians, who place the interests of the group over the interests of the individual and are quite content to be ruled by what he euphemistically referred to as “strong governments’ as long as they deliver economic prosperity.³³

Fortunately, not all politicians cleave to “family values” as a reason to keep 377A. Understanding that the majority population, the Chinese, draw upon Confucian filiality to condemn homosexuals for being unable to produce an heir to sustain the family line,

³¹ See Ghosh, Palash R., Singapore remains world’s best to do business: World Bank, International Business Times, 4 Nov 2010. The report can also be downloaded from the following link:

<http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/78672/20101104/singapore-world-bank.htm> .

³² Ibid.

³³ See footnote 24.

Singaporean Member of Parliament(MP) Baey Yam Keng deliberately made an appeal of this nature not just to Parliament, but to the majority population, in Mandarin:

As the Chinese saying goes, 不孝有三, 无后为大 (*Bu Xiao You San, Wu Hou Wei Da*) which means, “There are three unfilial acts, the greatest is not to have a son.”³⁴ This is an important concept in a traditional and oriental society like ours. Parents are hoping that their sons will have wives and their daughters will be married, and the children also understand that it is an obligation for them to get married and have children.....When parents find out that their children do not like the opposite sex, their immediate reaction is that of shock, sadness, shame, anger or remorse, and they try to find out what has gone wrong - why their children had become homosexuals. Some of the parents chose to run away from reality and one of my friend's mother had gone to the temple to pray..... They do not know what to do and some of them even chase their son out of the house, but if they were to take time to think it through calmly, I do not believe that they will charge their son in court and send him to prison for two years.³⁵

Although Baey singles out local Chinese gay men as suffering under the yoke of patriarchal tradition, minority Malay and Indian gay men are not necessarily any less subject to such traditions. In fact, Phillips’ research in Singapore shows that relatively less affluent Malay and Indian gay men are far more “closeted” and obligated by “family traditions” than Chinese gay men, who are generally better off economically. Most of Phillips’ Indian interlocutors would not even accept to be identified with the term “gay”, while there were more Chinese Singaporean interviewees who readily self-identified as “gay” or “lesbians”. Phillips concludes:

³⁴ A popular Chinese saying today that can be traced back to the *Book of Mencius*, *Li Lou Shang* (4th century BC). Other similar themes on procreation can be drawn from Chinese proverbs such as *chuánzōng jiédài* 传宗接代 (continuing the ancestral line) or *chuánchéng xiānghuǒ* 传承香火 (passing down the tradition of burning incense for the ancestors), which is a traditional ritual to remember and pay respects to ancestors as an act of continuing filial piety.

³⁵ Hansard of Parliamentary debate on Penal Code (Amendment) Bill 23 Oct 2007, p. 11. This Hansard is downloadable from Yawning Bread at: http://yawningbread.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/file_201103_23.pdf . Till this day, Section 377A is not repealed.

[t]he ability of Chinese-Singaporeans to “come out” to family and self-identify as “gay” is the result of their greater socioeconomic success within society. This success cancels out some of the negative overtones associated with having a gay child and allows openness not afforded [by] the less successful. Many Chinese-Singaporeans informants indicated that their financial success allowed them to move out of the familial home and live more independent lives. This independence involved less parental interference and allowed some to share a home with a same-sex partner. Interviews indicated that this type of socio-economic success was out of reach of many Indian-and Malay-Singaporeans. The inability to succeed financially precluded any attempts at independence and led many of my [Indian and Malay] interlocutors to, as one 39-year-old put it, “throw in the towel, and just do whatever it takes to make (their) parents happy.”³⁶

“Asian values”, Confucianism, and traditional family values are forms of patriarchal heteronormativity that are invoked against the decriminalization of homosexuality, but one should also not forget that 377A is a British colonial legacy that can be traced back to seventeenth century England and its colonies when sodomy was penalized due to its “its hostility to reproduction”³⁷.

Furthermore, some branches of Western thought, in particular Christian theology, teach against homosexuality. According to a recent book based on 16 interviews with former Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, “Christians have begun to make their voice heard in public policy debates over issues ranging from casinos to homosexuality”.³⁸ This observation is poignant especially after MP Thio Lee Ann, a Christian, referred to theological morality in a speech against the repeal of 377A³⁹, and former Law Faculty Dean Thio Su Min (Thio Lee Ann’s mother) led a group of women to take over AWARE, a secular women’s support group which had included the topic of homosexuality in its sex education program. In response to the challenge of religiosity against government secularism, Lee’s interviews end with a note of

³⁶ See footnote 26, pp. 57-58.

³⁷ Katz, Jonathan., “Before Heterosexuality: Looking Backward,” *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (Chicago University Press, 1991),p. 38.

³⁸ Han Fook Kwang...[et al.], *Lee Kuan Yew: Hard Truths to Keep Singapore Going*, (Singapore: Straits Times Press, c2011), p. 224.

³⁹ Devan, Janadas .,: "377A And The Rewriting of Pluralism" (ST, 27/10/2007)

caution: “Will there be forces that ride on religious sentiment to get into Parliament?”⁴⁰ If this occurs, what will be the effects on Singaporean LGBTs?

At the moment, there are no laws against female homosexuals. Lawrence Leong argues that lesbianism does not officially exist in Singapore as 377A is exclusive to male homosexuals only.⁴¹ By extension, as there are no laws that specifically pertain to bisexuals, bisexuality does not officially exist either. For transsexuals, since the amendment of the Women Charter in 1997, “individuals who are ‘sexed’ male or female at birth but subsequently undergo surgical re-alignment to ‘psychological gender’ are permitted to marry.”⁴² However, all my non-gay men informants (i.e. lesbians, bisexuals) told me that their pressure in coming out is not necessarily less than gay men due to the conservative attitudes of the general public.

We can sum up the sources of ideologies contributing to patriarchal hegemony as follows: “Asian family values”, Confucianism, traditional family values of Malay and Indians, Western idea of procreation, and other religious thinking. Aside from ideologies however, patriarchal heteronormativity permeates entertainment sources like television programs or movies (local or foreign imports) that preach about “marriage” and the “family dream” of the heterosexuals. Although the Media Development Authority (MDA) of Singapore in 2010 agreed that “minority interests should also be considered and that a flexible and contextual approach should be taken for content depicting homosexuality”⁴³, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, transsexualism, and transvestism are still grouped under the same “unglorifiable group” along with pedophilia and incest in its Free-to-Air TV Program Code today.⁴⁴ A sideline on pornography however: according to MDA, visiting pornographic websites is not illegal but the dissemination of pornographic materials downloaded from the Internet is technically illegal and a chargeable offense.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ See Leong, Laurence Wai-Teng, “Singapore”. In West, D. J. and Green, R. (Eds), *Sociolegal Control of Homosexuality: A Multi-Nation Comparison*. New York: Plenum, 1997, pp. 127-44.

⁴² Lyons, L.T., *Sexing the nation: normative heterosexuality and the construction of the ‘good’ Singaporean citizen*, University of Wollongong Research Online Faculty of Arts-paper, 2004, pp. 11-12.

⁴³ Report of Censorship Review Committee 2010, p. 24.

http://www.mda.gov.sg/Public/Consultation/Documents/CRC_2010_Report.pdf

⁴⁴ Free-to-Air TV Programme Code. Accessed on 20 Sep 2011.

http://www.mda.gov.sg/Documents/PDF/industry/Industry_TV_ContentGuidelines_FTATVProgCode.pdf

⁴⁵ See MDA’s Top 5 Most Popular FAQs at: http://www.ifaq.gov.sg/mda/apps/fcd_faqlmain.aspx

Furthermore, heterosexual marriage and healthy relationships for building stable and extended family units are ‘preached’ by sexuality education programs under the Ministry of Education (unsurprisingly, homosexual acts are expected to be taught as illegal⁴⁶). Last but not least, for graduates who are single, the Singapore Development Unit under the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports sends out mailers inviting these graduates to heterosexual networking events constantly till they are married.

Singapore’s LGBT Landscape with a Predominant Masculine Presence

In Singapore’s tug of war between building a competitive economy and ostensibly conservative familial needs, the former has, however, won some public spaces for gay Singaporeans in the past decade. Chris Tan argues that Singapore’s failing economy in the early 2000s—attributed to falling birth rates and over-comfortable Singaporeans who are less open to “risk-taking” entrepreneurship—has prompted the government to recruit foreign talents. In order to make the country more attractive to migrating foreign talents, Tan argues that the government has had to soften its image, and one of the ways is the announcement of the accepting of gay civil servants in 2003.⁴⁷ Although 377A is still not repealed, now “Homosexuals work in all sectors, all over the economy, in the private sector as well as in the civil service. They are free to lead their lives, free to pursue their social activities⁴⁸”, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Long during the 2007 Parliament debate on 377A. He assured others that “the gays do have space and they are not harassed⁴⁹”. Indeed, since former Minister Mentor Lee Kwan Yew made a statement on CNN in 1998 that the government will leave the gays alone as long as they do not impinge on the lives of others, the police entrapments and raids on gay establishments mentioned by Singapore academic scholar and activist Russell Heng⁵⁰ have virtually ceased.

As of today, there is a list of around 50 massage parlors and spas for gay men served by muscular and good looking masseurs from mainland China, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines,

⁴⁶ See Ministry of Education, Policies on Sexuality Education from the following link: <http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/programmes/social-emotional-learning/sexuality-education/policies/>.

⁴⁷ Tan, Chris K.K., “Turning the Lion City Pink: Interrogating Singapore’s New Gay Civil Servant Statement”, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, presented in the 1st International Conference of Asian Queer Studies”, 2005.

⁴⁸ See footnote 32.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ See Heng, Russell Hiang Khng 2001 “Tiptoe Out of the Closet: The Before and After of the Increasingly Visible Gay Community in Singapore”. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 40 (3/4).

Malaysia and a few locals. There are around 10 gay pubs and discos, and some gay friendly restaurants. Mens' lifestyle shops are booming as well, with one in Chinatown selling swimwear, underwear, apparel, sex toys and others targeted at gay clients.⁵¹ Another fashion store called NewUrbanMale.com, better known as NUM, has established 13 outlets since its establishment in 2003, and was nominated in The Power List 2007 for Fashion & Design by the Straits Times (local press).⁵² NUM's flip-flops and T-shirts, carrying cheeky slogans such as "Life is not a straight line" and "Boys are a good source of protein"⁵³ set the tone for local gay fashion.

Public spaces for lesbians pale in comparison to gay establishments. For instance, there is only one massage spa for lesbians listed on Utopia and there are no sex-toy or fashion stores that cater to lesbians. Pub- and disco-wise, there are only about three to four of them in Singapore, though some gay discotheques, such as Happy, increased lesbian space by allotting one weekday evening for "lady's nights".

There is an amazingly vast number of LGBT informal groups in the form of discussion group, chatrooms, and blogs in the cyberspace, which may extend to gathering and outing in the real world. As of this date, there are about 38 of them catering to various needs: a counseling body for LGBTs, a gay Buddhist discussion group, a gay Christian group, Asalam Singapore for LGBT Muslims, Women's night for lesbians and bisexuals, SGRainbow for young gay men and bisexuals, transgender support group, transwomen support group, and others.⁵⁴ Including the international internet portal such as gay.com and smartphones apps like "grindr" and "(el)", there is something for almost any Singaporean LGBT.

However, according to informants, the more popular internet portals used by LGBTs are the two commercial portals known as Fridae⁵⁵ and Trevvy⁵⁶, the latter having won the title of 'the most visited website by gays and lesbians in Singapore' for four consecutive years. Both portals are, nonetheless, dominated by gay men and pictures of male models and muscular topless male bodies with chiselled chest and six pack abs; it is not uncommon for members to put

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See NewUrbanMale website at: <http://www.newurbanmale.com/>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See Sgwiki, a locally produced "wiki version" on LGBT groups: http://sgwiki.com/wiki/Singapore_LGBT_organisations

⁵⁵ See Fridae website at <http://www.fridae.asia/>

⁵⁶ See Trevvy website at <http://www.trevvy.com/>

up personal ads with pictures of their muscular torsos. The two commercial portals are popular due to their longer histories as well as their personal ads and chatrooms that allow members of the LGBT community to find potential partners or a casual encounter.

By far, Oogachaga is the most important LGBT organization in Singapore, and the only successfully-registered LGBT charity body with a physical office.⁵⁷ Oogachaga is also the only LGBT body from Singapore to participate in the first ASEAN LGBTIQ Caucus on 5th May 2011.⁵⁸ The charity has a balanced coalition of LGBT support groups ranging from men and womens' support groups to a transgender support group. On top of these support groups, Oogachaga pays extra attention to older gay men under their "Mature Men Project" and gay men looking for dates by offering the "Gay Men Dating Survival Guide". That such attention is not given to gay or bisexual women and the rest of the sexual minorities suggests that gay men may encounter more personal issues than the rest of the LGBT community. This is not a surprise as Singaporean gay men issues are indeed more commonly addressed in academic works than those of other sexual minorities in the past two decades⁵⁹. In terms of literary works, movies, and the arts, be it locally produced or imported, there are more works on gay men than lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders available in Singapore.⁶⁰

With regards to sexual or social practices, of the 25 LGBTs whom I interviewed, there were 3 bisexual women but only 1 bisexual man. In terms of relationship roles, most of the female participants in my anonymous survey selected "unrestricted" or "androgynous". Although there are some who preferred not to mention their roles, I may conclude that most of the women who love women fell out of the dominant butch-submissive femme paradigm. This is consistent with the 2010 survey report of Sayoni, a queer/lesbian/bisexual/transsexual Asian women platform based in Singapore. According to Sayoni's report, the majority of queer women living in Singapore (67.3%) did not identify themselves with either butch or femme. From the same survey report, there were only 14.4% of the queer women identified themselves as "butch", while there were 18.2% of the survey participants identified with the "femme" label. Among the men who love men, although most of the men I surveyed face to face selected "unrestricted" or

⁵⁷ See Oogachaga website at <http://www.oogachaga.com/>

⁵⁸ See footnote 1.

⁵⁹ See Sgwiki at http://sgwiki.com/wiki/Singapore_gay_literature

⁶⁰ Ibid.

“versatile”, there is a higher percentage of men who identify themselves as “top” or “bottom”. In general, compared to females who opted for “butch” or “femme”, there was a higher number of gay men who readily identified themselves as “bottom”, and a few as “tops”, in the chatroom. Tellingly, Oogachaga listed the myth that ‘There must be a [dominant] top and [submissive] bottom in a gay relationship’ in its 2011 “Gay Men Dating Survival Guide” as its ‘Number 1 Myth’⁶¹. It seems undeniable that in Singapore a higher number of gay men than lesbian women adopt patriarchal heteronormativity as the ideal model of a same-sex relationship, and have experienced difficulty in finding a partner. Some of my informants told me that the entire Trevvy chatroom is full of “bottoms” and lack of “tops”. Some even feel that they would have to introduce themselves as “top” to even start a chat with anyone. Paradoxically, however, “bottom” is always associated with “effeminate” by Singaporean gay men, and “effeminate” is deemed as unattractive by gay men who like “men” only. The gay columnist Tim points out the stereotypical mindedness of gay men in Trevvy’s column as follows:

The disconnect between the masculine exterior and the feminine behavior is considered unattractive to gay men. Hence, the phrase “gay men like men” is often used as a justification for being unattracted to effeminate men..... There is a general disdain for the effeminate traits of submissiveness and expressiveness that often comes at the expense of competency. Compound this with the ideal that men should behave with masculinity and it’s easy to see where this sentiment comes from.⁶²

By extension, MTF transgenders, whom are usually seen as the extreme end of effeminacy, may also be avoided by gay men. Though sympathetic to effeminate men, Tim is, nonetheless, less generous with bisexuals. To him, ideal bisexuals are expected to conform to monogamy:

[Bisexuality] may be a matter of diverse taste- but that doesn’t mean you’re incapable of sticking to one main course.⁶³

⁶¹ See Oogachaga, Gay Men Dating Survival Guide (2011), p. 5. (<http://www.oogachaga.com/gaymendatingguide>).

⁶² Tim, Gender Bender, in Trevvy Features, 19 June 2008, (http://www.trevvy.com/scoops/article.php?a_id=356)

⁶³ Tim, Swinging Bisexual, in Trevvy Features, 25 May 2008 (http://www.trevvy.com/scoops/article.php?a_id=341)

If gays have demanded their sexuality be accepted and their right to love someone of the same sex, by extension, should not a bisexual's concurrent love for a man and a woman be accepted? Or should they conform to the monogamous monosexuality of the homonormative order? My ethnographical survey thus far indicates that bisexuals have to blend into either the lesbian and gay world; there is no space specifically for bisexuals in Singapore's LGBT community. Lesbians, however, seem to be more tolerant towards bisexuals, judging from the higher number of bisexuals in their circle compared to that of the gay men. As for transgenders/transvestites/transsexuals, according to my informant, they are even less visible in the LGBT community as most of them tend to assimilate into the heterosexual crowd after their gender transition, especially for transsexuals.

Answering the four-fold question

(1) Have lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders been marginalized by gay men?

As shown above, there is indeed a predominance of gay men in Singapore's LGBT landscape. Commercial portals that claim to be LGBT websites are dominated by gay men. The number of lesbian establishments such as pubs and discos is a far cry to those of gay men. Bisexuals have to abandon their "bisexual space" and adopt homonormative monosexuality as they enter either the gay men or gay women crowd. The transgender likewise have virtually no space in the LGBT community.

However, as one informant pointed out: "LGBT spaces are dominated by gay men, but not exclusive". Indeed, just this early September, when I went to Tantric, a gay bar, on a weekday evening to carry out my ethnographic survey, though the majority there were gay men, there was a MTF transgender and there were two young ladies—a bisexual lady and a lesbian—in the bar as well, who agreed to be interviewed. Although both of them agreed that LGBT spaces are dominated by gay men, they have no problem accessing them and enjoying gay spaces' acceptance. They do not feel oppressed or discriminated against by gay men. In fact there are some who even feel that they are not being marginalized. For instance, one bisexual woman whom I interviewed made the following remark:

There are definitely more gays in gay pubs and more lesbian in lesbian pubs.

Fridae is dominated by gay men too. It is inevitable because when it started out,

that's their target audience. I would say that gay men have their own spaces, and gay women have their own spaces. When there is a neutral event like Indignation (of course that depends on the topic of discussion) or Pink Dot, the crowd is quite a good mix of both crowds.

Hence, even though gay men may be the predominant group in Singapore's LGBT community, the rest of the sexual minorities do not necessarily feel oppressed or discriminated by gay men. For some, as long as they are able to negotiate a "space" for themselves, they may not even be conscious of the marginalization in terms of physical space, and they are happy with the current status. Moreover, there is a vast number of informal LGBT groups established on the net that cater to different needs of LGBT. Though slow, Fridae has been trying to open up to other sexual minorities' interests and Trevvy is thinking of expanding its client base as well.

The answers above, hence, render the second question of the "four-fold question" irrelevant. Hence, I shall jump straight to the third question.

(3) If they have not been marginalized, does this mean that males are in fact more oppressed and therefore legitimately require more attention than other LGBTs?

As mentioned in "Big Patriarchal Environment", oppression of gay men seems to be the most salient among LGBTs. Yet, it is the heteronormative propaganda by the state— through instruments of legislation, media censorship and education—rather than Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, or traditional family values, that has played the most crucial role in shaping the mindset of Singaporean citizens towards the belief that anything of the non-heteronormative order is a crime that is 'unglorifiable'. Still, however, only male homosexual acts are criminalized as of this date.

Among the LGBTs I have surveyed, although none of the queer women felt that there is less pressure in their "coming out" than for gay men, all agreed that gay men face more social stigmatization when showing affection to the same sex. A very common example of gay men pressure quoted by both queer women and men is the "holding of hands in public". Indeed, it is unproblematic for two girls holding hands in public, but far more noticeable when men do so in Singapore. Unsurprisingly, one gay informant used this example to justify that queer women

spaces has not been marginalized by gay men as they have a lot more space outside the LGBT circle. However, nobody minds straight or queer Tamil men holding hands in Little India, a district in Singapore populated by South Indian foreign workers. One may be surprised when seeing that for the first time, but would gradually get used to it and recognize that as a form of Indian culture rather than gay practice. This double standard is worth further interrogation.

(4) Lastly, in what ways, precisely, have LGBT movements re-enforced constriction on Singaporean LGBTs, and what precisely can be done to improve the situation?

Admirably, and admittedly, LGBT emancipatory movements have generated increased space for Singaporean LGBTs in the decade or two. Most of my interlocutors agreed. As Phillips has argued, introduction of LGBT portals to Singapore has allowed LGBTs to interact at ease without fear of being stigmatized by the public. In effect, some LGBTs have managed to use these as tools to regain physical space to hold their Pride events with high turnout without using any mass-media, such as television, forbidden by authorities.⁶⁴

Nonetheless, a patriarchal heteronormative environment has shaped patriarchal mindsets of gay men. As mentioned in my description of the LGBT landscape, patriarchal heteronormative practice of dominant tops and submissive bottoms is still relatively high among gay men. Such patriarchal heteronormativity is in-turn transformed into a patriarchal homonormative pattern where masculinity is worshiped and feminity is disdained. This situation leads to a paradoxical dating problem among gay men: scarce supply of “tops” and over-supply of “unwanted bottoms”. MTF transgenders are certainly not wanted by masculinity-worshiped-bottoms. Although Oogachaga has issued the “Gay Men Dating Survival Guide” this year to bust the top-bottom myth and encouraged gay men to think beyond the patriarchal box, whether or not it will succeed, it is still too early to tell.

There are signs of phallocentrism as well among gay men. In a critique against such mindset, one of my female informants indicated:

I think for [bisexual] women, it is really the person and not the gender that we fall in love with. And once in love, sex comes naturally. Sorry if this is tmi[too much

⁶⁴ See note 26.

information], I said this in oppose to a comment that my gay friend made, “much as I feel that emotional connection, virgina just turns me off.”

Tevvy columnist Tim made similar comments in his article on Bisexuals:

It must be hard to be a bisexual man. You’re obviously not part of the straight community, since you like your wieners. And yet at the same time you’re not quite part of the gay community, because they are wary of your escapades with seafood.⁶⁵

As for lesbians, although they are relatively less restrictive towards gender roles in relationships, this does not mean that there are no patriarchal homonormative practices among gay women. In fact, some still identify themselves with the “femme”/”butch” categories. Sayoni 2010’s survey report shows that queer women at the younger age group between 15 and 24 were especially liken to this binary, whereas the 24 years old and above are less prone to such binaries.

Though lesbians are more tolerant towards bisexuality than gay men, both lesbians and gay men expect of bisexuals homonormative monosexuality and monogamy⁶⁶, both products of patriarchal heteronormativity⁶⁷. However, ontologically speaking, bisexuals can find both men and women attractive, and hence possess the capacity to fall in love with them at the same time. Gay men and lesbians who demand that bisexuals adopt monogamy constrict them into a patriarchal homonormative order. The heterosexual world has already closed the door to potentially bigamous practices⁶⁸ of bisexuals, and the success of LGBT in attaining equal marriage rights as heterosexuals may spell the end of bisexuality’s bigamy, particularly in light of the fact that most “bisexuals” have chosen to “blend” into the gay and lesbian crowd. Granted that homosexuals would seek for a partner of the same sex only, but why would homosexuals limit their love and affection to just one person in the fashion of heterosexuals’ patriarchal

⁶⁵ See footnote 63

⁶⁶ By homonormative monogamy here, I am referring to both formal marriage with state’s sanction and relationship arrangement without state’s sanction between two parties of the same sex.

⁶⁷ For my argument that monogamy is a form of patriarchal heteronormativity, see p.6 of this essay.

⁶⁸ By bigamous arrangement, I am referring to both formal marriage with state’s sanction and relationship arrangement without state’s sanction between a bisexual and two partners of different sexes.

monogamous normativity and judge those who manage bigamous/polygamous arrangements⁶⁹ or prefer to be single?

Hence, although LGBT movements in Singapore have expanded spaces for and stronger voices among the sexual minorities, they have at the same time and in the same space nurtured the constrictive and discriminatory mindset of male-based homonormativity derived from patriarchal heteronormative order, masculinity worship, and phallocentrism. Fortunately, gay men are willing to share their physical spaces with the rest of the LGBT community, and some of them appear to be sympathetic towards the rest of the sexual minorities. However, the male-based homonormative mentality and, especially, the privileging of patriarchal heteronormative monogamy, are still prevalent among gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals as illustrated above. This is not to claim that monogamy is an antithesis to LGBT life style, and polygamy should be encouraged, but rather to critique LGBTs who frown at their fellow members who may arrange a bigamous, polygamous, nor otherwise counterhegemonic relationship, when ironically LGBT is supposed to be an emancipatory discourse in terms of both individuals' mindset and public space. While public space is less of an issue in Singapore, there are still rooms for improvement. Much work still needs to be done to make visible and challenge the prevalence of male-based homonormative order among LGBTs and its conflicting and discriminative nature.

Conclusion

We have explored extensive evidence of the prevalence of a male-based homonormative order in Southeast Asia LGBT discourse, whereby “transgressed males” are pervasively at the center of attention. Unarguably, demanding ASEAN leaders' legislative recognition of LGBT rights through the ASEAN LGBTIQ Caucus' proposal is a big step in gaining gender and sexual freedom for sexual minorities. However, if the pervasive order is not addressed, it will still cause LGBTs to suffer *constriction* in the conduct of their everyday lives. The pervasiveness of this order varies according to location, with each locality demanding different approaches to the reduction of such construction. In the case of Singapore, while LGBTs of all stripes are able to

⁶⁹ By polygamous arrangement, I am referring to both formal marriage with state's sanction and relationship arrangement without state's sanction among partners of same sex or different sexes.

negotiate and share queer spaces, constrictive mindsets that continue to generate discrimination and community conflicts must still be addressed.

References

Newspapers and magazines

Outrage Magazine, Augst, 2011

Bangkok Post, Life Section: Queer Eye, February 3, 2011

Financial Times, August 1, 2007

International Business Times, 4 Nov 2010

Straits Times, Devan, Janadas .,: "377A And The Rewriting of Pluralism", 27 Oct, 2007

Today, August 9, 2011

Archival Sources

Kelly, Sanja., [et al]., ed., Freedom on the Net 2011, A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media, (New York: Freedom House, 2011)

Hansard of Parliamentary debate on Penal Code (Amendment) Bill 23 Oct 2007

Report of Censorship Review Committee 2010

Sayoni 2010 Survey Report

Internet Sources

ASEAN Civil Society, First ASEAN LGBTIQ Caucus (2011), at their official website

<http://www.aseancivilsociety.net/en/news/press-release/item/79-press-release-gay-lesbian-bisexual-and-queers-take-stage-on-asean-people's-forum> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

<http://www.aseancivilsociety.net/en/news/news/item/85-the-lgbtiq-agenda-equality-now>
Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Channel News Asia

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/307344/1.html> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Fridae

<http://www.fridae.asia/> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Free-to-Air TV Programme Code. Accessed on 20 Sep 2011.

http://www.mda.gov.sg/Documents/PDF/industry/Industry_TV_ContentGuidelines_FTATVProgCode.pdf

First International Conference of Asian Queer Studies”

<http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/background.php> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

<http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/papers.php> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Giant Robot News

<http://www.giantrobot.com/news/pink-dot-2011-growing-lgbt-pride-in-singapore/> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Media Development Authority

http://www.ifaq.gov.sg/mda/apps/fcd_faqmain.aspx Accessed 23 Sep 2011

NewUrbanMale

<http://www.newurbanmale.com/> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Seksualiti Merdeka

<http://www.seksualitimerdeka.org/> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Sgwiki

http://sgwiki.com/wiki/Singapore_gay_literature Accessed 23 Sep 2011

http://sgwiki.com/wiki/Singapore_LGBT_organisations Seksualiti Merdeka

<http://www.seksualitimerdeka.org/> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Trevvy

<http://www.trevvy.com/>

Tim, Gender Bender, in Trevvy Features, 19 June 2008,

(http://www.trevvy.com/scoops/article.php?a_id=356)

Tim, Swinging Bisexual, in Trevvy Features, 25 May 2008

(http://www.trevvy.com/scoops/article.php?a_id=341)

Utopia, Gay Asia and Asian Gay and Lesbian Resources

<http://www.utopia-asia.com/> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Yawning Bread

http://yawningbread.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/file_201103_23.pdf

Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Youtube

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDdoT7opmrg&feature=player_embedded Accessed 23 Sep 2011

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O12Lwol3iaY> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Ladlad

http://www.ladlad.org/?page_id=2 Accessed 23 Sep 2011

www.sg Your Official Gateway to Singapore

<http://app.www.sg/who/1/Singapore-at-a-Glance.aspx> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Oogachaga

<http://www.oogachaga.com/> Accessed 23 Sep 2011

Secondary sources

Blackwood, Evelyn., Tombois in West Sumatra: Constructing Masculinity and Erotic Desire, in Cultural Antropology, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Nov., 1988)

Fran Martin, Peter A. Jackson, Mark Mclelland, and Audrey Yue, Introduction, in "AsiaPacifiQuer: rethinking genders and sexualities", edited by Fran Martin ...[et al], (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008)

Han Fook Kwang...[et al.], Lee Kuan Yew: Hard Truths to Keep Singapore Going, (Singapore: Straits Times Press, c2011),

Hemmings, Clare., Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender, (New York and London: Routedledge, 2002)

Heng, Russell Hiang Khng 2001 "Tiptoe Out of the Closet: The Before and After of the Increasingly Visible Gay Community in Singapore". *Journal of Homosexuality*, 40 (3/4)

Hibino, Makoto., "What is Necessary For Us, For Our Queer Movement in Japan?", *First International Conference on "Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia* , 2005

Jackson, Peter A., An American Death in Bangkok: The Murder of Darrell Berrigan and the Hybrid Origins of Gay Identity in 1960s Thailand, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Volume 5, Number 3, 1999

Jackson, Peter A., ed., Queer Bangkok: Twenty-First-Century Markets, Media, and Rights, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011)

Juang, Hui., ICCGL: Cultural Communication via the Internet and GLBT Community Building in China, *First International Conference on "Sexualities, Genders, and Rights in Asia* , 2005

Katz, Jonathan., "Before Heterosexuality: Looking Backward," *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (Chicago University Press, 1991)

Leong, Laurence Wai-Teng , "Singapore". In West, D. J. and Green, R. (Eds), *Sociolegal Control of Homosexuality: A Multi-Nation Comparison*. New York: Plenum, 1997

Lyons, L.T., Sexing the nation: normative heterosexuality and the construction of the 'good' Singaporean citizen, University of Wollongong Research Online Faculty of Arts-paper, 2004

Peletz , Michael G., "'Asian Values' and New Types of Criminality" (in Chapter 5) in *Gender Pluralism: Southeast Asia Since Early Modern Times* (Routledge 2009)

Phillips, Robert F., *Queering Online: Transnational Sexual Citizenship in Singapore*, Thesis (Ph.D.) , University of California, Irvine, 2008

Tan, Chris K.K., *Turning the Lion City Pink: Interrogating Singapore's New Gay Civil Servant Statement*", University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, presented in the 1st International Conference of Asian Queer Studies", 2005.

Winter, Sam., *Transpeople (Khon Kham-phet) in Thailand*, in Jackson, Peter A., ed., *Queer Bangkok: Twenty-First-Century Markets, Media, and Rights*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011)