

# **Social Relation and the Construction of Gay Identities in Yogyakarta**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to investigate the construction of gay identities as happened through social relation and socialization informed by informants in Yogyakarta. The construction of gay identity has been understood through socio-psychological development to understand, accommodate and accept it as parts of the personality of gay men. The processes and stages has been always interplaying with the social relation as well as socialization experienced by gay men both within their exclusive gay/homosexual communities and the wider dominantly heterosexual society, which sometimes are not ready to accept their existence. The field research had been conducted by adopting qualitative methods, involving 6 gay men and using qualitative and life-history interviews to gather the data. The interviews had documented the experience of the informants as gay men in understanding, accommodating and accepting their homosexual desires; and their interaction happened with the vigilantes of the society as well as the prominent role of the Internet and social media as the primary arena for socialization with the other gay and homosexual people.

The result of the study is elaborated as follows. *First*, the stage to learn, recognise and accept the same sex sexual orientation has happened in the pretty younger age – about 13-15 years old; and to have the first sexual intercourse in the age 16-19 years old. *Second*, as parts of the Millennial and/or Generation Z, the role of the Internet and social media networks has been very prominent for them to learn and understand about homosexuality; as well as to socialise on becoming gay men including to seek other gay friends for hangout and to find gay sexual partners. Yet, their younger age has further shaped their sexual, intimate and romantic relationship, which were understood to very active and tended to be open with different partners. Finally, the rise of vigilantes against them by the society combined with the government policy not to recognise them have led them to keel low profile avoiding any presence in the public sphere including to form and/or to join permanent social/political gay or LGBT organisations and communities in the country. Then, their homosexual life has been looked like only for the seeking of sexual pleasures with limited or no commitment for a long-term intimate/romantic relationship; without a serious concern with issues on their sexual health; and without an adequate understanding on their sexual-citizenship rights to fight for their future existence in the increasing democratization in Indonesia.

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