

DEDE OETOMO: HIS STRUGGLE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY FROM 1978 TO 2016

Wina Sumiati dan Muhamad Nandang Sunandar

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten

Email: wina.sumiati@uinbanten.ac.id; nandang.sunandar@uinbanten.ac.id

ABSTRACT. Dede Oetomo, born in 1953, is Indonesia's first LGBT (currently popular with LGBTQ+) activist. He uses the LGBT organisation GAYa NUSANTARA as a vehicle for LGBT to obtain safe sex education, to gain their emancipation in same-sex marriage, and to struggle anti-social and political discrimination. In this research essay, I will explain Oetomo's struggle from his childhood to adulthood when he struggled for the LGBT emancipation in Indonesia, a Muslim-majority country. I use qualitative method to conduct the research begun with collecting primary sources like old magazines and photos from the GAYa Nusantara website. The result of the research shows that although Oetomo has had some minor success with his LGBT organisation to gain legal same-sex marriage and abolishing discrimination against LGBT, Oetomo keeps struggling to bring LGBT emancipation acknowledged in the Indonesian law.

Keywords: Indonesia; LGBT; Islam; discrimination

ABSTRAK. Dede Oetomo, lahir pada 1953, adalah aktivis LGBT pertama di Indonesia. Dia mendirikan organisasi GAYa NUSANTARA sebagai wadah para LGBT untuk mendapatkan pendidikan seks yang aman, merealisasikan hak-haknya dalam hal pernikahan sesama jenis, juga untuk memperjuangkan anti diskriminasi sosial dan politik. Pada penelitian ini, Penulis menjelaskan perjuangan Oetomo dari awal masa kecilnya mengenal homoseksual sampai masa dewasa ketika dia benar-benar memperjuangkan kesetaraan hak para LGBT di Indonesia yang merupakan negara mayoritas Muslim. Penulis menggunakan metode kualitatif yang dimulai dengan mengumpulkan sumber primer seperti arsip majalah dan foto-foto dari situs GAYa NUSANTARA. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Oetomo belum memperoleh hasil yang signifikan dari organisasinya untuk melegalkan pernikahan sesama jenis dan menghilangkan diskriminasi terhadap LGBT di Indonesia, Oetomo tetap berusaha untuk memperjuangkan hak emanispasi LGBT diakui dalam hukum Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Indonesia; LGBT; Islam; diskriminasi

INTRODUCTION

Not many Indonesians knew the term LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) before the Cornell University graduate Dede Oetomo, from East Java, passionately introduced the LGBT organisation GAYa NUSANTARA in 1987. It was not the first gay organisation in Indonesia – as five years earlier, Oetomo founded Lambda Indonesia, which lasted until 1984 – but GAYa NUSANTARA had more impact than the former organisation. The new organisation demanded not only tolerance but also equality for homosexuals including same-sex marriage. Such a goal seems incompatible with Indonesia's current political climate, which includes some Islamic conservative organisations, such as Front of Islamic Defenders (Front Pembela Islam, *FPI*) and Islamic Umma Forum in East Java (Forum Umat Islam, *FUI*). However, it is interesting to ask to what extent Oetomo's struggle face challenges in Indonesian society? This paper shows that Oetomo had gained some success to reach his goal, but he found many difficulties to ensure the Indonesian government about the LGBT emancipation. The situation in Indonesia was not like in few Western countries that legalised equal marriage for any genders.

This paper divides Oetomo's struggle to reach the homosexual emancipation into three

parts. The first part narrated Oetomo's life when he was young, starting from 1953 to 1977, that led us to see the correlation between his childhood and his homosexuality. I also included other gays' motivations to compare and see the similarity between Oetomo and his experiences. Most of my arguments showed his unique characteristics and motivation compared to the others; secondly, from 1978 to 1984, the explanation of Oetomo's biography entered the second part of this paper in which New York's gay movement influenced Oetomo's motivation to establish the first gay organisation, Lambda Indonesia, in 1982. I prefer to include the story of Lambda Indonesia in this section because it was founded when Oetomo still was an overseas student in New York, but he could manage his time for study, working, and writing for Lambda Indonesia's magazine in Indonesia. The last part focused on Oetomo's struggle in Indonesia starting from the year he returned to Indonesia in 1984 until he used GAYa NUSANTARA as a media through which to gain same-sex marriage. Here, I described his struggles with the Indonesian authorities, who opposed equal rights for same-sex marriage, through several methods such as writing, nominating himself as an Indonesian human rights commissioner, and conducting safe sex education for LGBTs. It's important to note that most Indonesian authorities

were Muslims, and religious principles form an essential basis of Indonesian society. Oetomo's hope was incompatible with Indonesian values.

METHOD

The writer carried out this project based on a qualitative research method. Begun with collecting both primary and secondary sources, including magazines, articles, video, and books. Most magazines used in this writing are *GAYA Hidup Ceria* written from 1978 to the 1990s. One of those magazines published in July 1986, for instance, provides information about the positive response of some Indonesian lesbians to join the organisation. It also said that the organisation still had to struggle to gain emancipation for any sexual orientations in Indonesia. They found that prejudices, discrimination, and the people who do not accept LGBT's community are the challenges for the LGBT existence in society. The other primary source, like *Memberi Suara Pada yang Bisu* (Giving a Voice for the Voiceless), provided information about Dede Oetomo's journey and thoughts to find out his own identity as a gay man from childhood to becoming a (in)famous LGBT activist in Indonesia (Oetomo, 2001).

The example of secondary sources used in this research is Bennet and Davies's work *Sex and Sexualities in Contemporary Indonesia* (2015). The source shows how the human rights in many Southeast Asian countries, like Indonesia, cannot be equated with other Western countries. Indonesia adopted human rights combined with the rule of their religions and tradition. Therefore, out of heterosexual orientations like LGBT will face many challenges. With the availability of those abundant sources, it is not hard to find valid information about Oetomo and his organisation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Childhood And Boyhood (1953–1977)

Oetomo's childhood is one of important aspects to be described in this paper because a child development decides an individual characteristic in the future: what and how he will be. His childhood story will answer our curiosity of why he became a gay activist and how he had a big motivation to pass same-sex marriage in Indonesia. The account of his personal life was obtained from a reliable source authored by Oetomo, *Memberi Suara Pada Yang Bisu*, in which Oetomo provides information about his childhood. Oetomo, who had the Chinese name Oen Tiong Hauw, was born in 1953 to Betty Juniati (Oei Kim Nio) and Judo Oetomo (Oen

Kwie Tjwan) (Oetomo, 2001). He was born from Chinese descendants and became a minority among Indonesian society. The year of Oetomo's childhood was when the Soekarno regime demanded a higher tax for Chinese entrepreneurs and social jealousy emerged from Native Indonesians because most Indonesian Chinese were successful in their business.

The story of Oetomo's life and his family seems interesting. He was such a lucky boy who got enough affection from his parents. As the first child in a wealthy family, it is not surprising that his parents indulged him by allowing him to watch kids' films from around the world. Although there was no specific information whether he gained his gayness from watching TV, Oetomo loved to see the leading figure of *Tarzan*'s body posture. If we look at the way in which his parents looked after Oetomo, the freedom to choose his decision might cause him to be gay in the future. This factor is unique since most accounts of gays' motivation is influenced by a broken-home family and sexual violence. We can see the example of those factors in the life story of the CAMP (Campaign Against Moral Persecution) activist, James Rivera. He experienced sexual abuse by his father when he was young. The bad memory and the sexual assault then led him to be a homosexual worker at the age of eight. The feeling of being a long-term homosexual led Rivera to be a gay activist, which was proven by his involvement in the CAMP and the Australian Union of Students (AUS). These organisations gave him a way to meet homosexual partners and a place to open up about his identity as a gay person (Reynolds, 2007). Another example is what happened to Joe Randolph Ackerley, a writer from Britain who was raised up in broken home family (Ackerley, 1968). Besides, Ackerley experienced homosexual violence when he became the World War I prisoner in Germany because of his involvement to battle with them. As he had not been happy for most of his life, he found another type of happiness by engaging in homosexuality.

We might not refer to both Rivera's and Ackerley's backgrounds to generalise the motivations of all gays. Oetomo had a family who cared about, but still gave him the freedom to choose his own way. We can see the latter in his *Memberi Suara pada yang Bisu (1978)*; even for a little thing, such as watching TV, his parents had guided Oetomo toward the good programmes that would not influence their son in a bad way. However, Oetomo chose to defy his parents' wish by kept noticing the men's physical appearances on TV (Aldrich and Wotherspoon, 2001). This explanation shows us that being a homosexual not only caused by a family background, but also how a person chose his decision.

Janice Selekmán, borrowing from Erik Erikson's development theory, explained that all children experience a stage when they imagine their sexual matters that leads them to ask about their personality and who they are. If the children are indicated for homosexuality, they will feel differently from others, whether they ask about sexual orientation or behaviour. Those questions are the initial stages of people 'thinking about homosexuality', but an individual is not categorised as LGBT until he enters two other stages: 'acting like a homosexual (such as, look for the information about it)' and, the last, 'being a homosexual (attract emotionally and physically, coming out, and have a relation to the same gender)' (Selekmán, 2007). From those theories, we can see where Oetomo's position is. He is entering the first step of 'thinking about homosexuality' because he had been thinking of some attractive men, but he had not decided to be a gay until he joined the LGBT community in New York. There was also Oetomo's effort to create a stigma that he was growing up to be a homosexual.

A feeling of curiosity about 'being different' often leads someone to find any information to resolve the problem. In this case, Dede Oetomo came to realise his homosexual identity from a magazine that was subscribed by his father. There was a strange term that was rarely known by an underaged child, that is, 'homosexual'. He then found similarities between himself and the characteristics of a homosexual described in the article, such as being interested in the same sex and having some recurring dreams about men (Oetomo, *Coming Out*, 2003). Thus, the media had a role in influencing Oetomo's subconscious mind and convinced him that he had already entered the second stage of homosexuality.

Dede Oetomo's homosexual motivation, which is explained above can be categorised as a unique story because it is rare to find a gay biography that describes a smooth background, such as having a complete family, living in a middle-class home, and gaining enough affection. It has been explained above that most gays have a tragic story in the past. The sad and horrific experiences mostly paved the way the gays to choose their sexual orientation.

A New Personality: Journey to Struggle (1978–1984)

Dede Oetomo's life in the United States is the discussion of this part because this period marked several of Oetomo's journeys and challenges as a former gay activist in Indonesia. The first journey started in 1978 when he continued his doctoral degree in the Cornell university, the United States. At that time, the gay liberation movement was becoming a hot issue in America. The US supported Oetomo to explore the

experience and knowledge about homosexuality. To know more about homosexuality, Oetomo looked for the information about it in the library prior to joining the gay community.

However, living in a friendly gay environment did not make the process of looking for homosexual identity run smoothly. As he explained in his book, he still had a dilemma to ensure his sexual orientation. He took the time to look for the similarity between gays and himself by reading several books on homosexuality in the library. As many books explained homosexuality is not an illness, Oetomo became confident about his homosexual tendency. By having such knowledge, Oetomo once again explained to his family that he was really gay (Oetomo, 2001). Oetomo's uncertainty about his identity might come from Indonesian judgement about homosexuality, as in the past, Oetomo struggled to ignore his homosexual tendencies.

Oetomo's confidence in his identity brought him into the LGBT community on his campus in early 1980. He found many students who had experienced the same thing and were organising activities with the gay community, such as sharing ideas and discussions, hanging out, and partying. Because of this experience, Oetomo was brave enough to tell his identity to other family members who could accept him the way he was. He assured his relatives that, based on all of the knowledge and information he had gained, homosexuality is normal and not an abnormality (Oetomo, 2001). This was the second journey that motivated Oetomo to persuade all Indonesian homosexuals to join into one community.

All of his experiences in the United States seemed to be enough to gather Oetomo's courage for the establishment of a new gay organisation in Indonesia. Although Oetomo was still in New York in 1982, he was motivated to embrace all gays and lesbians who felt different and lived in his homeland dominated by heterosexuals. During the semester break, he came back to Indonesia and established an organisation called Lambda Indonesia with the other three Indonesian gays: Channy, Yongky, and Donny Danardono (Ceria, 1982). In this organisation, members involved in the community could openly share their experience and encourage each other to be more confident in society. In fact, no lesbians joined the organisation until 1983 as they might not have been ready yet to show up in society. At the time of its establishment, Lambda Indonesia had around 200 members throughout Indonesia (Ceria, 1982). Lambda Indonesia hoped not only to unite all LGBTs in Indonesia but also to boost LGBTs' creativity in conveying their aspirations through writings.

To intensify the progress of Lambda Indonesia, Dede Oetomo used *G: Gaya Hidup Ceria* (translated

Happy Lifestyle) magazine published by Lambda Indonesia until 1984, which means the publications of writings began just around three years after the start of the organisation. The founder, Dede Oetomo, gained the inspiration of what he learned from the gay liberation movement and community in New York, using writings for criticising people and the government on issues related to homosexuality.

The evidence of Oetomo's struggle through writings can be seen in his *G: Gaya Hidup Ceria* magazine where he arranged a section of the magazine to discuss homology and homosexuality in Indonesia. The latter is available in the second edition of the *G* magazine, which explained the inequality happening in Indonesia between heterosexuals and homosexuals. While describing the Indonesian response to homosexuality in the 1980s, Oetomo expressed his disappointment about society's attitude to categorise homosexuals as 'different' and 'abnormal.' Here, he also motivated all gays living in Indonesia to continue struggling to be valuable people by reaching some achievements so society would accept them. Because of his role in publishing the first Indonesian magazine on homosexuality, 'G' magazine, it gained the label of the best new magazine in 1982 based on the gay and lesbian international organisation version.

As discussion and writing about homosexuality became one of the organisation's aims, Oetomo did some research on homosexuality in Indonesia during his involvement in Lambda Indonesia. One of them was about Indonesian people's opinion about *homo* (homosexual), *gay*, and *banci* (transvestite). Most Indonesians believe that all of the terms are the same, for example they will call gay as *banci*. According to Oetomo, based on a general understanding, *homo* refers to people who love the same gender, such as a man loves a man, a woman is attracted to a woman; the term *gay* is used for people who are attracted to the same gender and commonly look for a mate with the same sexual tendency (he is also a gay). In Indonesia, gays do not wear a feminine style, while *banci* is for transvestites who wear feminine clothes and use makeup, and their postures (almost) resemble that of women. The term could also refer to the men who act in a feminine behaviour (Oetomo, 2001).

Besides focusing on writing, Dede Oetomo and the other founders of Lambda Indonesia provided counselling for Indonesian gays and lesbians through the Gay Counselling Service (GCS) under the Australian gay organisation, CAMP. The limitations in accessing the facility made it hard for the Indonesian gays to set up consultations (Ceria, 1982). However, the connection between the Indonesian and the Australian gays indicates Oetomo's effort to invite all Indonesian homosexuals to undertake safe

sex and address all of the gays' dilemmas relating to feelings of guilt and discrimination in family and society. Such an effort shows that Oetomo's success in gaining an international recognition leading to the high probability of homosexual equality in Indonesia. Oetomo's struggle to represent all Indonesian LGBTs led to another success that encouraged some lesbians to respond to 'G' writings in 1983. When *Sarinah* magazine in 1983 reported the development of Lambda Indonesia, many Indonesian lesbians were drawn to give their opinions about homosexuality by sending the organisation letters (Ceria, *Masuknya Lesbian*, 1983). This progress marked another step forward in Oetomo's struggle to accommodate all gays and lesbians to gain equality in one organisation. Dede Oetomo used his writing as a non-confrontative way to protest against the discrimination of homosexuality in Indonesia via Lambda Indonesia. According to Oetomo, historically, Indonesian society had accepted homosexuals, so most Indonesian people were tolerant of LGBTs. The criminalisation of homosexuality rarely happened on the condition that homosexuals did not disturb the social orderliness, such as having sex in public places (Oetomo, 2001). Therefore, the less confrontational approach of the homosexual movement was the most appropriate method in Indonesia.

Living In a Muslim Majority Country as A Gay Activist (1984- 2016)

The United States might build Oetomo's personality to be a brilliant gay activist in Indonesia, but Indonesian society highly unlikely accepted passing same-sex marriage regulation. The situation was not surprising since in 1974 the Soeharto reign passed the regulation of marriage. It was explained that marriage is a sacred engagement between a man and a woman which clearly emphasised a must of a heterosexual relationship in Indonesia (Santoso, 2016). There is evidence based on Oetomo's account that shows society's response in the year that Dede Oetomo returned to Indonesia in 1984. It is explained that he experienced discrimination in getting a job because he was infamous in his coming out and Lambda Indonesia. Being gay was uncommon in Indonesia because it was against all Indonesian religions' principles. As an explanation in Bennet and Davies (2015) shows, most Indonesian people were tolerant to a *waria* (transgender) because people ignored a transgender's sexuality. They never thought that a *waria* needed to have sex with a man, so many would welcome a *waria* around them, but they would reject those who had come out as gay (Davies,

2015). However, there is another possibility that the main problem of society's refusal was Oetomo's progressive aims to accommodate homosexuals in an organisation. The gay movement that demanded to pass the same-sex marriage considered deviating both Indonesian tradition and religious principles.

However, being minority and different had made Oetomo's struggle to be more progressive against all people's refusals, including the rejections of getting jobs, discrimination at workplaces, and revealing to be a gay in society. It was proven when Oetomo continued the aim of Lambda Indonesia to not only eliminate homophobia and discrimination of homosexuality but also to achieve the emancipation of homosexuality, including for same-sex marriage. In 1987, Dede Oetomo and his gay and lesbian friends continued the struggle of Lambda Indonesia for the establishment of *Kelompok Kerja Lesbian dan Gay Nusantara* (KKLGN, Indonesian Lesbian and Gay Association, well-known as GAYa NUSANTARA) and its magazine called GAYa NUSANTARA. An account written on the GAYa NUSANTARA website explained that on August 1, 1987, LGBTs in Pasuruan and Surabaya founded GAYa NUSANTARA to continue the gay movement of Lambda Indonesia. Compared to Lambda Indonesia, that just aimed to gain awareness in Indonesian society, GAYa NUSANTARA has a primary goal to gain equality in identity, sexual status as a symbol of diversity in a multicultural country like Indonesia, and to abolish the sanction of gay marriage.

From the visions and missions above, Oetomo and his friends have a big dream to gain equality in all aspects, especially the equality of marriage in Indonesia. However, Oetomo realised that literature was not enough when sharing information on homosexuality, so seminars within and outside of Indonesia were regularly conducted. Such discussions about safe sex had been noticed by Oetomo since GAYa NUSANTARA was established in 1987. Based on the first edition of the magazine, Dede Oetomo held the first gay seminar in October 1987 in Airlangga University, where Oetomo devoted himself to be a lecturer.

Whether Oetomo could successfully reach all the aims of his organisation or not, we could look back to the history of homosexuality in Indonesia. Although there is no record of the acceptance of homosexual marriage, Oetomo believed that transvestites and transgenders (*waria*) had existed since the Indonesian archipelago was under Dutch colonisation. In the 1960s, *waria* were known as 'wadam' (from *hawa* and *adam*, or woman and man). Although *waria* rarely married, some of them could have a relationship with a heterosexual for a long time.

Nonetheless, we cannot conclude society's response only based on Oetomo's research because he ignored that in Islam, the religion embraced by most Indonesian Muslims, homosexuality is a great sin. The Qur'an explained that every human must be heterosexual, and God has created men and women to marry and have children. This is one of the government's rejections of homosexuality as the Indonesian's constitution is based on religious teaching.

Islam is an essence of Indonesian principle that becomes the reason of Indonesian officials rejecting same-sex marriage emancipation. They also saw homosexuality does not deserve of Indonesian culture and legislation. The meaning of Indonesian culture refers to Eastern culture or nations influenced by Islam. Muslim officials in the Indonesian government might have a different understanding of homosexuality in Islam from what Oetomo has examined. The former category believed that Islam clearly prohibits homosexuality, while Oetomo said that Islam gives the opportunity for homosexuality to flourish because of the boundary between man and woman. Oetomo's struggle to fight for homosexual emancipation was unlikely as the Indonesian legislation clearly rejected it.

The evidence of the authorities' rejection of homosexuality is in the Indonesian Constitution of Marriage No. 1 of 1974. The legislation defined marriage as a physical and conjugal bond between a man and a woman, a husband and a wife, to reach a hope of forming a happy and everlasting family (Indonesian Constitution Law of Marriage, 1974). The words 'a man' and 'a woman' above mean that the Indonesian law regulates a marriage only for heterosexuals, so there is no place for LGBTs to have same-sex marriage. However, Dede Oetomo, as an LGBT activist, still struggles for the LGBTs' emancipation in Indonesia. He believes that the legislation could be changed, although it takes time and many people will object to it, as the law is passed, sooner or later, Indonesian people will accept it.

Another rejection happened in 2015 when Muhammad Natsir, Minister of Higher Education, Research, and Technology, responded to homosexual marriage and spoke up in the media about LGBTs' moral degradation. Many television and mass media sources wrote about the issue of the government response to the LGBT community in Indonesia. To respond to the Indonesian officials' judgment on the LGBTs, Oetomo conducted two things: first, Oetomo got involved in writing a petition to revoke the minister's statement that discriminated against the harmony of relationships between most Indonesian heterosexuals and homosexuals. Such a method was successful, so several days after Muhammad

Natsir defamed Indonesian homosexuality, the minister revoked his statements and felt sorry about it. Secondly, Oetomo accepted an invitation to debate homosexuality with two representatives of the Indonesian government, including Neng Zubaidah from Indonesian Ulema Council and Sodik Mudjahid from the People's Representative Council on one of the Indonesian TV channels. The debate was an opportunity for Dede Oetomo to convey the LGBTs' hope of emancipation, but the government represented by the Islamic conservative figures attacked all Oetomo's statements based on the Indonesian regulation of marriage and the Qur'an, the Islamic holy book. Islamic figures explained that homosexual marriage contravenes Indonesian laws, norms, and traditions. When responding to such a statement, Oetomo and his friend Yuli (from Arus Pelangi, an Indonesian lesbian organisation) argued that the laws can be changed, and Indonesia has a regulation of human rights in which the government has to protect all people, including the LGBTs, from discrimination (Indonesian Constitution Law of Marriage, 1974). It will be hard for Oetomo to struggle against the government regulation because another challenge is the human rights regulations, which are complicated in Indonesia.

There was no exact rule written in human rights laws to protect the rights of LGBTs, so discrimination cannot be avoided in society and the workplace. Responding to the issue, Dede Oetomo argued that there are three kinds of discrimination against the LGBT community. First, physical violence, which means people physically attack people in the LGBT community, such as rape and assault committed by heterosexuals. Second, symbolic violence is another way in which LGBT people are discriminated against, such as bullying using offensive words like abnormal, immoral, etc. Third, structural violence conducted by an institution because the government's regulations forbid homosexual rights, especially same-sex marriage. In Indonesia, the main forms of discrimination toward the LGBTs are symbolic and structural violence. The LGBTs who have no community to join can be the victims of discrimination, as they are seen as different by most heterosexuals around them.

The implementation of human rights in Indonesia is different to that of other countries. Baden Offord argues that some Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore consider the meaning of human rights based on what he calls "Asian values". This means that the definition of human rights proposed by many countries in the world is different from the Asian regulations that were adopted from Islamic values, national principles, and their ancestors' traditions (Offord, 2003). Indonesia,

for instance, adopted Pancasila as a principle, commanding all of Indonesian society to embrace the first principle of Pancasila: "Believe in God." This means that all Indonesians need to obey their religion. In the context of same-sex marriage, most Indonesian officials rejected it because all religions forbid homosexuality, so it is inappropriate in Indonesian values. Therefore, though Dede Oetomo was nominated to be a human rights commissioner in 2012, only one voice supported him regardless of his aims to gain equality for all groups of society.

Regardless of government rejection, Oetomo never stopped struggling for his dream to legalise homosexual marriage. He equated Indonesia to the United States that struggled for years to gain gay liberation. From this history, Dede Oetomo learned that homosexual liberation needs a process. Nevertheless, Oetomo just took minor examples of same sex marriage countries because few countries in the world had given the same-sex marriage license. Louise Spilsbury provided a fact that only 17 out of 195 countries in the world acknowledge the homosexual marriage, including: Netherland (2001), Belgium (2003), Massachusetts (2004), Canada (2005), Spain (2005), South Africa (2006), Connecticut (2008), Mexico City (2009), Norway (2009), Sweden (2009), Iowa, Vermont, Maine and District of Columbia (2009), Portugal (2010), Iceland (2010), Argentina (2010), New Hampshire (2010), and New York (2011). From those 17 countries and the American states, few allowed the right to adopt children for homosexuals, such as in Iceland, Netherland, and Mexico City. The problems happening in the majority of countries are not only about religious principles, but also a debate between the pros and cons in society. When the Spanish government passed same-sex marriage in 2005, for instance, many youths in that country joined a demonstration to refuse gay liberation for both marriage and adoptions.

The data showed above explains that the rejection of same-sex marriage happened in many countries in the world, either Asian or other parts of the world. Moreover, there is no majority Muslim country that has legalised gay marriage, which can be a reference to see the issue of homosexuality in Indonesia. Muslims in Indonesia, which account for approximately 87% (in the 1980s and 2010), contribute to the majority of voices that reject same-sex marriage (Ricklefs, 2008). The main reason for this is not only the individual's religion but the number of Muslims because the majority is the voiced aspiration. As Heru Susetyo said, "Muslims who disagree with homosexual marriage in Canada have no voice, except they are living in a majority Muslim country."

CONCLUSION

Indonesian history would never ignore the existence of the most prominent gay in Indonesia, Dede Oetomo who upheld the flag of emancipation using the GAYa Nusantara organisation upon homosexuality. There are a lot of reasons that led Oetomo to be a Chinese gay activist in modern Indonesia, such as having experience as a minority of a Chinese Indonesia, influenced by New York, and his readings about homosexuality. These backgrounds formed his personality to be a gay.

During his life, Oetomo was struggling to gain LGBT emancipation using writings, seminars, and programmes of HIV/Aids prevention. His efforts led to several achievements, including the establishment of the LGBT community called *Lambda Indonesia* in 1982, GAYa Nusantara in 1987, the release of *G: Gaya Hidup Ceria* magazine, and inspired the Indonesian lesbians to join the community.

Nevertheless, his efforts faced many challenges because Indonesia is a Muslim majority country. To legalise any policies and regulations, the Indonesian government often asked the Islamic conservative organisation's consideration. This situation simply concludes how hard Oetomo's struggle to achieve the homosexual liberation in Indonesia. Because a democratic country referred to the major voice, Oetomo's hope of same-sex marriage unlikely happened.

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