

Anti Pornography Bill and Indonesian Identity

Since the stepping down of Soeharto in May 1998, Indonesia has enjoyed much more freedom of speech and expression. This freedom has also been experienced by women and women's organisations, most of which were repressed and forced to operate secretly during Soeharto's rule. Women's literature and films have undergone rapid growth, while female authors and directors have gained unprecedented fame and recognition. In literature, sexuality has recently been discussed by female authors and articles about feminism and female sexuality have been published in several Indonesian newspapers.

In spite of the recent political reforms in Indonesia, which have brought more openness as well as opportunity for women's voices to be heard, the government has recently attempted to restrict certain kinds of artistic expression, especially in relation to sexuality. One example is the draft anti pornography bill.

Indeed, because of globalisation, the flow of information reaches people all over the world much faster and in greater concentration than before. This also includes pornographic information and pictures. The easy access to pornography, which includes child pornography and bestiality, has worried several parties in Indonesia, and this has been related to the corruption of Indonesian national identity, as globalisation has often been related to westernisation. For this reason, the government, pushed by several radical Moslem organisations, has felt the need to issue a draft anti pornography bill.

This draft, which is called the bill against "pornografi dan pornoaksi" [pornography and pornographic action], consists of 11 chapters and 93 sections. It defines pornography as "substansi dalam media atau alat komunikasi yang dibuat untuk menyampaikan gagasan-gagasan yang mengeksploitasi seksual, kecabulan, dan/atau erotika" [materials in the mass media which are created to deliver ideas which exploit sexuality, pornography and/or eroticism].

Pornographic action is “perbuatan mengeksploitasi seksual, kecabulan, dan/atau erotika di muka umum” [action which exploits sexuality, pornography or eroticism in public]. One of the sections, chapter 2 section 7, mentions that kissing on the lips in public will be prohibited.

Several Indonesian critics and feminists strongly disagree with this draft because they consider that it could be used to limit of expressions and identity, especially those of females, and that the draft does not differentiate between eroticism and pornography. Indeed, although it has not been implemented nationally, many women have been targeted because of this draft: for instance, the singer Inul Daratista was ordered to leave Jakarta by several parties because of her dancing which is considered too erotic. In Tangerang (West Java), a town which has implemented tough rules on pornography and sexual mores, several women have also been harassed by the police because they were wearing clothes that were considered to be too revealing. One incident involved a woman who was arrested because the police thought that she was a prostitute trying to get customers in the street, but she was actually a waitress who had finished her work late and was waiting for public transportation (*Gatra* no. 19, 20 March 2006).

The draft anti-pornography bill is thus intended to construct or reconstruct people, especially women, in such a way that their representation matches the government ideology of the so-called “national identity”. However, my research had discovered that in relation to this draft anti pornography bill, national identity has been constructed not only internally (by the local Indonesian factors) but also externally (by the so-called Western media). Wittingly or unwittingly, several media from the so-called Western countries also insinuate a similar image to that which the Indonesian government tries to promote.

In this paper, I compare and contrast how the Indonesian government and the so called Western media project Indonesian culture and/or identity, and then discuss how some feminists and critics in Indonesia have tried to provide counter-arguments to these modes of representation. I will first of all discuss how

sexuality has been constructed by governments in Indonesia, beginning with the New Order period.

Sexuality and National Identity

Sexuality has often been subject to the construction of national ideology by the Indonesian government. An obvious sexual construction by the state can be discovered during the New Order era (1967 – 1998). The beginning of this era was marked by the eradication of millions of left wing sympathisers as well as the stigmatisation of left-wing ideologies, and this was also equated to the victory of Pancasila. Pancasila, which consists of five fundamental Principles, is considered to be a form of guidance for the nation and its unity. As Weatherbee states, Pancasila provides “culturally neutral guidelines for behavior in a plural society” (Weatherbee, 1985: 188)¹.

The first principle of Pancasila, which is also considered to be the most important, is the belief in God, which requires that Indonesians adhere to one of the five religions legitimised by the Soeharto government. In addition to adherence to religious values, sexual constraints were emphasised. Indeed, the characterisation of the left wing women who joined *Gerwani* as sexually aggressive, wild and promiscuous served to link the stigmatisation of communist people with issues relating to sexual behaviour.

Another factor that determined the ideological construction of sexuality during the New Order, was the comparison made between the apparently monogamous Soeharto and the previously polygamous President Soekarno. Soeharto called himself “bapak” (father), thereby emphasising family values and the sexual purity of the nation (although it has been said that he also had an affair with a famous singer), while the previous President Soekarno called himself “bung” (brother), and was quite open about his sexual appetite and desire for

¹ Donald E. Weatherbee. “Indonesia in 1984: Pancasila, Politics, and Power”. *Asian Survey* vol. XXV, no. 2, February 1985, pp. 187-197.

more than one woman. Moreover, Soeharto's position as a *bapak* (father), someone who is wise and elderly, is different from Soekarno, a brother, who often emphasised his youth and physical charms.

The ratification of a law called PP10/1983, which made it very hard for civil servants to obtain divorce or remarriage, is another example of the imposition of sexual restraint during this period. However, sexual restraints were often aimed at women than men as Suzanne Brenner states that sexual desires and self discipline during the New Order were emphasised for men, but even more so for women (Brenner, 1998)². The ideal of the Indonesian woman who could restrain her sexual expression was highly promoted (Tiwon 1996: 64-65), and women were also expected to perform as "boundary markers" of Indonesian culture, identity and decency (Blackburn 1999: 190).

However, the publication of Ayu Utami's *Saman* in 1998 seems to have been a turning point in the expression of female sexual identity in Indonesia. *Saman* describes women's sexuality openly, which caused some controversy. After *Saman*, several Indonesian women authors such as Dewi Lestari, Fira Basuki, Clara Ng, Djenar Maesa Ayu and Herlinatiens have been published. Most of them, like Ayu Utami, describe sex much more boldly than previous Indonesian authors.

Nonetheless, this openness seems to be accompanied by some forms of government restriction. The current Indonesian government, for instance, has made some attempts to restore what are said to be traditional Indonesian moral values. On 17 December 2004, for instance, one of the Indonesian ministers stated that the President felt uncomfortable, concerned, and worried about the programmes on television which showed the female navel. This, according to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, was not in accord with religious and social norms, and the Indonesian national identity (*Kompas*, 20 December 2004). Alleging that the public display of the female navel is akin to pornography, the

² Suzanne Brenner; *The Domestication of Desire: Women, Wealth, and Modernity in Java*; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

present government echoes the New Order regime, which burdened women with the responsibility of guarding sexuality. This statement was then repeated on Mother's Day (22 December 2004) by the President, which signifies the effort of the state and Indonesian patriarchal society to maintain its control over the female body and its modes of representation.

Such a speech seems to be reminiscent of Soeharto's habit of emphasising the role played by women in relation to the maintenance of national identity. The narrative of national identity is often associated with the continuity of certain customs or habits. Indeed, the term "tradition", which seems to be the magic word used by several parties as well as the government in restricting Indonesian women's sexuality, means reference or adherence to history or an inherited past.

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's government has also supported the draft anti-pornography bill which regulates how people, particularly women, should wear clothes and cover their bodies. Together with the flow of information available especially on the internet, several parties have felt a sense of disorientation and a corresponding need to reinforce certain boundaries and values. Sexual openness in Indonesia has been perceived with suspicion by several parties as well as the government. As Linda Rae Bennett argues: "In state rhetoric *seks bebas* [free sex] is condemned on the grounds that it is representative of non-Muslim and non-Indonesian values" (Bennett, 2005; 40)³. As Anthony Smith states:

The revolution of modernization has brought very considerable fragmentation, but also new modes of communication and integration based on the new electronic technologies of information and dissemination. In this unprecedented situation, nations and nationalisms are necessary, if unpalatable, instruments for controlling the destructive effects of massive social change; they provide the only large-scale and powerful

³ Linda Rae Bennett; *Women, Islam and Modernity: Single Women, Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Contemporary Indonesia*; London and New York: Routledge, 2005.

communities and belief-systems that can secure a minimum of social cohesion, order and meaning in a disruptive and alienating world (Smith, 1995: 4)⁴.

Since women are often considered as the authentic body or representation of national identity or tradition, regulating women's body is thus seen by the government as a mode of defining what is and what is not Indonesia. Several radical Islamic organisations have also been campaigning for the implementation of the bill as soon as possible. The President of *Perhimpunan Keluarga Besar Pelajar Islam Indonesia*, Hussein Umar, for instance, met the vice President Jusuf Kalla in his Palace on 8 March 2006 to request the prioritisation of the anti-pornography law in Indonesia.

On 21 May 2006, several radical Moslem organisations also marched to the Parliament building, to peacefully demonstrate for the implementation of the draft anti-pornography bill. They argue that their nation has been threatened by the West, and that pornography is a new form of Western capitalism as well as an invasion of Indonesia, because with pornography, the West can sell its products and ideologies more effectively. Such sentiments confirm the idea of "us" and "them": of our national identity as opposed to or as distinctive from theirs. According to this point of view, national identity thus has a fixed, homogenous and exclusive characteristic.

But the construction of an "us" versus "them" situation in relation to the issues concerning the draft anti-pornography bill does not only come from the Indonesian government or some radical Moslem organisations in Indonesia. The secular mass media from the so-called Western countries has also shaped the construction of Indonesian culture or identity, through their portrayals of Indonesia as different and even alien from their culture(s) especially in relation to Indonesians' alleged repression of sexuality.

⁴ Anthony D. Smith. *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. Polity Press, 1995.

Newspaper articles in the so-called Western Countries.

Several Western news articles addressing the draft anti-pornography Bill concentrate on the sections that mention the banning of kissing, and this often emphasises the difference between Indonesian and Western cultures. *Reuters* for instances states in the headline of one of its articles: “Lip lock could mean lock up in Indonesia: Public kissing could bring 5 years in jail under new bill” (*Reuters*; 8 March 2004). The article then begins as follows: “Members of parliament in the world’s most populous Muslim country have proposed an anti-pornography bill that includes a ban on kissing on the mouth in public” (*Reuters*; 8 March 2004). It then quotes a statement by the head of a parliamentary committee drafting the bill: “I think there must be some restrictions on such acts because it is against our traditions of decency,” said Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi (*Reuters*; 8 March 2004).

Although the content does explain that this is only part of a draft bill, the headline somehow separates the ban of kissing from this draft. In addition, by quoting Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi’s statement, the article gives an impression that the draft is created merely for the sake of defending Indonesian traditions.

As such, this article emphasises the exclusiveness of Indonesian culture or identity. Several concerns behind the creation of this draft that are also shared by the so-called Western countries – such as trafficking of women and child pornography – are not mentioned. The article concludes: “Public displays of affection are frowned upon by many, though prostitution is rampant in many parts of the archipelago”. This conclusion thus confirms the notion that the ban on kissing is part of an Indonesian tradition of repressing public displays of affection, while at the same time failing to solve the problem of prostitution. However, notwithstanding the inappropriateness of the bill in its present form, this ban on kissing is in fact only part of a larger bill which has been drafted in order to prevent the spread of pornography and prostitution in Indonesia.

Another news article appearing in Canada states: "Indonesia bans public kissing: report" (*Associated Press* and *CTV Canada*; 9 March 2004). Although the report later explains that this is just a draft bill which is an on-going subject of debate in Indonesia, such a headline could create the impression that public kissing has already been banned there. The article also cites Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi's statements concerning the importance of this draft in promoting morality and ethics in Indonesia. Interestingly, it refers to Aisyah as a "he" although Aisyah is a woman. Thus, not only has kissing taken central stage; the news has also been distorted by some articles.

Another example is an article in *The Washington Post* entitled "Where to Lock Lips" by Bridget Bentz Sizer. This article discusses the cultures and habits of public kissing in the United States of America as well as Europe. However, it is the very last sentence which draws the reader's attention to how differently public kissing could be perceived in another culture, as the writer warns the reader: "Remember that not all cultures welcome public kissing. While Europeans tend to be more demonstrative than Americans, legislation proposed in Indonesia in 2005 threatened to punish public smoochers with 10 years in prison."

The author begins by stating that Europeans are still more demonstrative than Americans when it comes to public kissing. This implies that while Americans enjoy kissing in public, Europeans may have embraced this practice to a greater extent. However, contrasting this with the threat to public kissers in Indonesia, the author stresses how alien the Indonesian culture is in comparison with that of the Europeans and Americans.

Not only does her statement imply the great contrast between the culture of kissing in Indonesia compared with that in Europe and America, it is also misleading as the anti-pornography bill was proposed in 1999 in its original form, and an instruction from the People's Consultative Assembly to draft the bill was passed in 2001. It has not been made a law until now because of the high level of debate and protest in Indonesia. Stating that the draft was proposed in 2005 without acknowledging the difficulties with which this draft has been confronted,

not to mention the controversy that it has created, constitutes a failure to represent the plurality of opinion in Indonesia. Moreover, the punishment for the public “smoochers” is not a maximum of 10 but 5 years – half than what is written in the article.

Another article in a British newspaper *The Telegraph* entitled “Indonesia to ban kissing in public”, warns the British travellers: “Travellers caught kissing in public in Indonesia could face five years in jail” (Telegraph, 13 March 2004). The article concludes: “While the Foreign Office still advises against non-essential travel to Indonesia, following the bombings in Bali and Jakarta, many British independent travellers have started to return there”. Opening with a possible threat faced by the British travellers because of the possible kissing ban, the article reminds them of the warning by the Foreign Office against non-essential travel to Indonesia because of the bombings which were considered by many to be an attack against the West, as well as a symbol of anti-Westernisation in Indonesia. By re-warning the British travellers, the article insinuates an interpretation that the ban on kissing is merely an expression of anti-Western ideology in Indonesia. Such news plays a part in constructing what is “us” and what is “them”, and how great the differences are between us and them.

Similarly, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published an article entitled “Indonesia Reportedly Mulls Kissing Ban” on 5 February 2005. The article states:

Call it a kissing crackdown. Indonesia's government is considering a law banning unwed couples from pecking in public — and harshly penalizing those who do, *The Jakarta Post* reported Saturday. The campaign against kissing is part of a proposal of sweeping reforms to laws adopted by the country's Dutch colonial rulers in the late 19th century.

Kissing again becomes the centre of attention, this time in relation to the alteration of laws originally implemented by the Dutch colonial government in

the late 19th Century. As the ban on kissing has become a subject of ridicule by the mainstream mass media in the West, seeing this ban as part of a process of law reform without explaining what kind of reform it is, or what the Dutch law originally was, implies the inability of Indonesians not only to govern themselves but also to be progressive.

Indeed, as Xing Li argues, while Western civilisation is often related to modernism, secularism and reform, Islam has often been portrayed as religious, anti-modern and even irrational (Xing Li; 2002, 1)⁵. Being westernised is often equated with being modern. As some news outlets keep reminding the reader, Indonesia is the biggest Moslem country in the world, thereby suggesting a link between Islam, irrationality and opposition to modernity.

Another article from a website called *Exploding Cigar*, which specialises in unusual or weird news items, is entitled: "Indonesian mulls ban on public kissing". The article is accompanied by a picture of Auguste Rodin's kissing statue. A very famous French art work, based on Dante's doomed lovers Paulo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini, is thus reinterpreted in relation to Indonesia's possible prohibition of public kissing. In Dante's story, Francesca is married to Gianciotto, but then falls in love with his younger brother Paulo. When Francesca's affair is discovered by her husband, he kills both of them. Because of their lust, both Paulo and Francesca are condemned in hell by being attached forever back to back and by being tormented by eternal winds. The inability to resist passion and lust is considered a felony in Dante's play. Rodin's statue, however, transforms Paulo's and Francesca's lust into a form of beauty and even celebration. The couple are depicted nude, as enjoying their kissing, and with their lust on display. Becoming one of the most well-known kissing statues in the history of Western art, this statue symbolically criticises the repression of sexual desire. Putting the picture of this statue beside the article about the draft anti-

⁵ Xing Li; "Dichotomies and Paradoxes: The West and Islam"; *Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations* Vol. 16 Issue 4, October 2002; pp. 401-18.

pornography bill may thus insinuate the idea that such tragic cases may again transpire in Indonesia, as Islamic countries are often compared with Europe in the Middle Ages, once again emphasising the backwardness of Indonesia.

The subject of public kissing in Indonesia nevertheless seems to draw attention not only in relation to the draft anti-pornography bill. An article in *The New York Times* by Jane Perlez, is an example of this. The article discusses an Indonesian teenage film, *Ada Apa dengan Cinta [What's Wrong with Love]*, one of the most popular teenage films in Indonesia at the time. Perlez writes: "An attractive 16-year-old Indonesian girl and her handsome boyfriend kissing on screen in the Indonesian-made movie 'What's With Love?' helped create the box office sensation of the year in this predominantly Muslim country". The kissing scene and the status of Indonesia as a "predominantly Muslim country" are put side by side in order to emphasise the apparent contradiction inherent in public displays of desire within an Islamic culture. Her article also begins by emphasising the kissing scene in the movie: "It was the kiss. Lips to lips. Not a deep Hollywood smooch, but not a light brush either" (Perlez, 11 June 2002). However, this film did not enjoy the box office sensation alluded to by Perlez. As Uli Kozok states: "There was no box office sensation, no protests, simply nothing. The 'box office sensation' was the NYT's own invention. It had to be a sensation. They are Muslims!"

Moreover, Perlez also writes that this film has "some of the fresh look of American television advertising". She continues: "American icons are everywhere in the film. The school cafeteria serves burgers and fries; a Coca-Cola machine seems to appear in every other scene". Sensational indeed, but the school cafeteria does not serve burgers and fries but *Bakso* (meat balls). A coca-cola machine did appear in the film but only in two or three scenes, not in every other scene as described by Perlez.

Emphasising the kissing scene as well as the clear influence of American culture in the film, the article seems to relate the kissing scene with what is considered as American identity: burger and Coca-cola. In other words, this film shows kissing scene like that because of the American influence which can

clearly be seen everywhere. On the other hand, such kissing seems foreign to what is considered to be Indonesia, so that it has to cause a box office sensation in Perlez's article.

In this case, the Indonesian government as well as several Western news or reports suggest a similar idea: Indonesian identity is exclusive and distinctive from the Europeans and/or the Americans, or the West. The national image of Indonesia as implied by both parties is thus that of the sexually restrained, whereas sexual freedom is that of Western values. National Identity implied by both confirms the uniqueness and recognition of similarities among members of the nation, and even at times exaggerate these in order to emphasise the differences of other cultural characteristics. If the Indonesian government uses this idea to control if not to force the people to maintain the Indonesian tradition, several Western mass media use this idea to ridicule and even sometimes to imply inferiority of Indonesian culture.

The Opinions of Indonesian Feminists and critics.

Several newspapers in Indonesia such as *Kompas*, *Tempo*, *Jawa Pos*, *The Jakarta Post* and *Suara Pembaruan*, however, have published articles by several Indonesian feminists or critics which challenge and/or oppose the draft. On 11 March 2006, for instance, *The Jakarta Post* published an article which states the big factions in Indonesia disagree with the draft and want this draft to be altered. On 20 April 2006, *Jurnal Perempuan Online* also publishes an article entitled "Gus Dur, Tokoh Islam dan Pekerja Seni Tolak RUU APP" [Gus Dur, Islamic figures and Artists refuse the draft anti pornography bill]. The article also states that this draft is caused by the teaching of Taliban Islam, but not the peaceful Islam which means that this draft is a reflection of Islam as such.

A feminist and the founder of *Jurnal Perempuan* (Women's journal) Gadis Arivia, also organised a publication of huge advertisements in several Indonesian newspapers which state: We refuse the draft anti pornography bill. For this purpose, she needed Rp.168 millions (about 14,000 Euros) and asked the public

to donate money. The suggested donation is a minimum of Rp 60.000 (about 3,5 Euros), an amount which is not small for most Indonesians. The response was excellent: more than 3,000 people were willing to donate their money for this project, several of whom gave much more than 3,5 Euros. The ads were published in four newspapers: *The Jakarta Post*, *Kompas*, *Jawa Pos* and *Koran Tempo*.

Reactions from several Indonesian feminists, academics, critics as well as artists who have opposed the draft anti pornography bill indicate that this draft is betrayal against Indonesian identity which is plural, hybrid and rich. A controversial article by Goenawan Mohammad for instance, entitles: "RUU Porno: Arab atau Indonesia?" (The pornographic bill: Saudi Arabia or Indonesia) argues that excessive fear of and antipathy against "pornography" is imported from the Wahabi school of thought which is originated from the Saudi Arabia and which will threaten Indonesian plurality.

Mariana Amiruddin also argues: "Pornografi tidak semata dari Barat, arsitektur Candi Borobudur misalnya, jelas sama sekali bukan buatan Barat". What she means by pornography here is what is considered as pornography by the anti pornography bill, as the relics found in the Borobudur temple are sensual and erotic. In other words, Amiruddin demonstrates that sexuality is not merely the monopoly of the West, but expressions of sexuality can be found in the long Indonesian history. Women's sexuality is not western feminism but a way of tracing back our culture. Julia Suryakusuma notes that Indonesians are originally "raunchy" and that "Indonesia has its own indigenous of pre- and extra marital sex" (Kusuma, 59).

Nursyahbani Katjasungkana and Gadis Arivia state that the draft anti pornography bill is: "bertentangan dengan prinsip keanekaragaman atau bhinneka tunggal ika" (against the multicultural principle of bhinneka tunggal ika). Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is the motto of Indonesia, which means Unity in Diversity. In other words, Indonesians respect various and different cultures in their country. They argue that they oppose pornography and exploitation of women, however the existence of the anti pornography bill does not solve these problems

and even threatens respect for multiculturalism in Indonesia. Several feminists as well as critics also remind people of certain cultures which daily clothes will be considered far too revealing by this draft, such as the Balinese and the Papuans. Papuan men and women do not wear any breast covering; most of them only wear very tiny material which covers their genitals. Most Balinese women also did not wear breast covering and until now, many of these women still retain this tradition.

The above arguments in this case imply that the draft anti pornography bill is not part of Indonesian culture and identity. In this stream of argument, to oppose anti pornographic bill is not to oppose Indonesian cultural identity but to be loyal to it. Indeed, identity is often hybrid and the discourse of political pressure cannot be taken for granted to be the main identification for a certain region.

My article published in *Kompas* on 2 August 2004 which discusses the draft also mentions the instability of norms as well sexual moralities in different regions at different times. For instance, when the Europeans entered Southeast Asia in the 17th and 18th Centuries, one of the strangest things they noticed was the sexual permissiveness of the Southeast Asians. Divorce was very high and sex before marriage was common in most parts of the archipelago.

Candi Sukuh and Candi Ceto are some other examples that sexuality was celebrated in the past Archipelago. These two temples are full of sexual symbols such as lingga and Yoni or Penis and vagina. Borobudur temple is also full of sensual and erotic relics, some of which are taken from images of *Kamasutra*. Several critics have also noted that during the Dutch colonialism, people of the Indonesian archipelago were sexually permissive compared with the then Puritan Europeans. Terence Hull, for instance, states that Westerners who came to Southeast Asia in the 18th and 19th centuries considered sexual practices there to be very “loose”.⁶ Not only were people of the archipelago more tolerant to sexual laxity, they were also more accepting of gender ambiguities, as a Western

⁶ Terence Hull. Indonesian Fertility Behaviours before the Transition: Searching for Hints in the Historical Record (Canberra: Australian National University), p.4.

historian observed of gender and sexuality in Southeast Asia in the 1960s: “Basically, S.E. Asians are far more tolerant of personality deviation, abnormality and disorder than we are”.⁷

In some parts of Southeast Asia during the early period of European colonialism, women also used to have a high status which was not common in Europe during the same period. Anthony Reid for instance states that Javanese women in the early 19th Century were inclined to initiate divorce (Reid, 1988; 630)⁸. Reid continues that in a large part of Southeast Asia virginity at marriage was not considered important by either party, man or woman. Comparatively, Christian Europe was a very “chaste” society until the eighteenth Century (631).

Condemnation of sexual morality of Moslem people had also been done by many Europeans during their medieval confrontations. Because Islam used to tolerate and it is even recorded that some even encouraged attitude towards sexual practices of people of the same sex, several European writers condemned sexual morality of Moslem people and accused them of over-indulgence.⁹ This indicates that different cultures, morality and identities have been embraced by different nations, and have been used to compare as well as condemn other culture(s) or nation(s).

In some ways, the government and some feminists and critics mentioned above use a similar method: emphasis on Indonesian tradition. By emphasising that they are getting back to tradition and Indonesian identity, these feminists and critics mirror how the government and several parties emphasise the importance of national identity as well as tradition. However, while the government uses this to enforce sexual restrictions especially on women, the feminists and critics mentioned above use this method

CONCLUSION.

⁷ M.A. Jaspan. *Traditional Medical Theory in Southeast Asia*. University of Hull, 1969, pp.22-23.

⁸ Anthony Reid; “Female Roles in Pre-colonial Southeast Asia”. *Modern Asian Studies* 22, 3 (1988); pp. 629-45.

⁹ Norman Daniel; *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*; Rev. Ed. Oxford: One World, 1993.

The Indonesian government argues that the draft anti pornography bill in Indonesia has been proposed to prevent pornography and the rampant prostitution as well as to defend national culture, morality and identity. Several parties in Indonesia support the argument that Indonesian national identity is marked by its sexual decency and restraint, and which is under threat by globalisation and the West. Such views try to construct Indonesian plural cultures into a unique, exclusive and unified identity.

Nevertheless, this construction does not merely come internally, from several conservative parties and government in Indonesia, but also from mainstream newspaper articles outside of Indonesia. Several newspaper articles from the United States, USA and Canada, which discuss the draft anti pornography bill, for instance, insinuate a construction that Indonesian culture is separate if not alien from their culture. Both the Indonesian government as well as several newspapers from the so-called Western countries often induce the distinction between “us” and “them”, between one national identity with another.

In disagreeing with the draft anti pornography bill, Indonesian feminists and critics have tried to give an awareness of the plurality and hybridity of culture and the so-called national identity, as well as to argue that the opposition against this draft is not at all betrayal against Indonesian culture.

Using the Indonesian symbol *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), they remind the Indonesian society to respect different cultures and try to provide counter-arguments by not referring to the so-called-Western culture but to traditional Indonesian culture as well as Indonesian national principle. Rejecting the draft anti pornography bill, in this case, does not necessarily mean following the West, as sexual laxity exists not only in the so-called Western culture, but also in Indonesia.

The radical Moslem organisations and several mainstream Western media seem to feed each other.

However, with the rising of conservative groups insisting on the severe sexual decency of Indonesian identity as well as much news abroad which emphasises the distinction between Indonesia and the West in relation to their sexual mores, this really does not help.