

ICC Lecture Series

Is Global Governance Bad for East Asian Queers?

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Abstract: The rise of transnational systems and networks of governance and norms since the 1990s and the emergence of the so-called “global civil society” hold out promises of equity for LGBT advocates and marginal groups in East Asia as pride marches, lesbian and gay cultural events, and booming queer Internet communities corroborate the impression that queer Asia may be much more than a concept. Yet, there is a growing retrenchment in the same region as various states take up measures quite inhospitable to queer existence. Christian NGOs in particular are quite aggressively raising social discontent and mobilizing opposition against the growing visibility of gay lifestyles and the equity demands launched by queer activism. The present essay analyzes this new “reign of civility” and its construction of “child protection” as a universal imperative; it also demonstrates how developments in juridification are suturing up global governance, East Asia’s liberal states, and conservative NGOs into a new power bloc that fosters anti-queer and anti-sex climates in the region.

