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LGBTQ Muslims Promotion through Internet: Practices of Intersectionality

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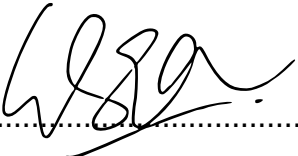
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MA Programme Euroculture
Declaration

I, Annissa Maulani hereby declare that this thesis, entitled "LGBTQ Muslims Promotion through Internet: Practices of Intersectionality", submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

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Abstract:

The relation between Muslim community and LGBTQ people in the West is very complex. Some supporting groups are set in order to provide shelter for the LGBTQ Muslims population. The main goal of this research is to explore the LGBTQ Muslim groups' online platforms utilized in narrating their intersecting identities and as a platform to combat discrimination towards minority groups. In order to analyze the data, this research adapts intersectionality as the methodological approach. The finding of this research demonstrates that both groups have successfully engaged with the concept of intersectionality by showing many aspects of dual identity.

Keywords: *LGBTQ, Muslims, Europe, intersectionality, internet*

For Parents, Sisters,
and Best Friends

He released the two seas, meeting [side by side];
Between them is a barrier [so] neither of them transgresses.
So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
From both of them emerge pearl and coral.
So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

QS 55:19-23

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Chapter 1

"Juan Carlos, that you are gay does not matter. God made you like that and he loves you like that and I do not care. The Pope wants you like that, you have to be happy with who you are."

Pope Francis in conversation with Juan Carlos Cruz

Introduction

Discourses on Muslims, who are classified as the biggest minority group in most of Western countries, are still the prominent debates, especially in Europe. Their physical return to modern European territories along with their religion has continuously raised the tensions. As what Huntington argues that religion has become one of the most distinguishing factors of human civilization, people from different civilizations who have different views on the relations between God and human are creating the most prolonged and the most violent conflicts.[1] It creates friction within the European society with their understanding that Islam is considered as the raising 'other,' the exogenous phenomenon, and also as the contradiction towards Western and modern values. This argument has positioned Islam as an ideology that does not fit with the established European framework.[2] In addition to that, this problematic issue receives great supports from prominent European politicians who put up the Islamic faith and culture as the obstacles to achieve their political goals.

A big question that receives most Western attention is: could and would Islam be compatible in European modern and secular societies? Despite the debates on incompatibility, after their settlements, the European Muslim communities have encountered massive transformation which highlights the forms of their social life organizations and released its boundary with traditional authority and created an individualization of religion. This transformation is leading towards the Muslims integration into European values. Within the normative dimension, the divorcement of Islamic norms in the Western Muslim societies has gradually started to occur.[3]

Goes along with such background, Muslim presence in Europe is often linked with the issues on sexual democracy. One of the ongoing discourses resulted from this transformation is the formation of LGBTQ Muslims organizations in some of the Western countries. The

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1 Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72(3):22-49. page 25
2 Bracke, Sarah and Nadia Fadil (2008) "Islam and Secular Modernity under Western Eyes: A Genealogy of a Constitutive Relationship." Working Papers 2008/05. European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico de Fiesole, Italy: 7
3 Tibi, Bassam. *Political Islam, World Politics and Europe: Democratic Peace and Euro-Islam Versus Global Jihad.* London: Routledge, 2008. Page: 157

collaboration of two conflicting identities is an interesting example to be scrutinized. In Europe, sexual democracy has become a prominent discourse to prove that Europe is "the avatar of both freedom and modernity"[4] although, homosexuality once became public disasters.

Travel back to European long history during the peak of religion power, the practices of homosexuality had gone through long repression and was decriminalized.[5] Through time, negative and violent attitudes have shifted away into acceptances and tolerances. The modern European tolerance has often been associated with modernization and a "post-materialist cultural shift toward individualism and self-expression, as well as a move away from religious authority toward secularism."[6] This shifting interpretation occurs even within the same religious tradition. Thus, it has created some disputes over cultural integration of the European Muslim immigrants.[7]

The European Muslims, who are mostly immigrants, tend to reject the presence of LGBTQ Muslims compared to the native European population.[8] Since the most common argument about Islam points out that homosexuality is completely forbidden, this leads to an understanding that Islam is homophobic and intolerant towards the homosexuals. By valuing Islam, some European LGBTQ Muslims are attempting to seek for acceptances and supports. Rather than reconciling with the greater Muslim groups by facilitating discussion and debate, European LGBTQ Muslims tend to choose secular institutions, Christian churches, or entertainment venues to find for the acknowledgment.[9] The feeling of being marginalized, absence of space[10], and lack of support from the Muslim community has pushed them forward to form a unity that is based on their similar problems that can prevent from the destructions caused by those two-conflicting identities, such as anxiety, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, shame, guilt, and fear. Under the same narration and expectation towards the society, the LGBTQ people then form groups.[11] The urgent need to establish a common group and build homosexual

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4   Butler, Judith. 2008. "Sexual Politics, Torture, and Secular Time." *The British Journal of Sociology* 59 (1): 1–23.
    doi:10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00176.x.: 2
5   Röder Antje. 2015. "Immigrants' Attitudes Toward Homosexuality: Socialization, Religion, and Acculturation in
    European Host Societies." *International Migration Review* 49 (4): 1042–70. doi:10.1111/imre.12113. Page 1045
6   Antje. 2015. Page 1045
7   ibid.
8   Antje. 2015. Page 1043
9   Kugle, 2013. Page 29
10 Kugle, Scott Alan. 2013. *Living Out Islam : Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims*. New York: NYU Press,
    2013. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCO*host* (accessed April 11, 2018). Page 29
11 The deprivation theory shows reason of the establishment of some social movements. Sen, Anindya, and O. Avci. "Why
    Social Movements Occur: Theories of Social Movements." *Journal of Knowledge Economy and Knowledge
    Management* 11, no. 1 (2016): 125-130. Page 126

networking within the Islamic communities[12] as well as finding comfort and support from the accepting groups have helped them to create their own shelters.

Under such background, this research will make contributions for homosexuality and Islam in Europe debate, especially the boundaries within the supporting LGBTQ Muslim groups. Their struggle and effort in spreading comfort and support for broader LGBTQ Muslim members are important to be analyzed in order to see how they strengthen their bond under the similar religious and cultural background. Through their online platforms which have helped in disseminating motivational narrations, the conflicting identifications emerged within themselves (between religiosity and sexuality) might be reduced. Therefore, besides the sharing of similar background, they foresee the need to tighten the friendship among the members in order to assist each individual which can allow the reconciliation of "conflicting parts of their lives through fundamentally shifting their interpretation and understanding of Islam."[13] Nearly in all of EU member states, the supporting groups function really well due to the fact that European societies tend to be looser towards the existence of homosexuals compared to majority Muslim population or Islamic countries.

Contextualizing the research

This paper presents discussion on the two European LGBT Muslim groups namely *Maruf* and *Naz and Matt Foundation*'s approaches in offering support to the meta-minority people, who are the European LGBTQ Muslims, through the online sources and easy access platform.[14] The main aim of this research is to examine their strategies in narrating the intersecting identities between being LGBTQ and Muslim.[15] Few researches have been done earlier, however the specific focus on the supporting groups is still limited. By filling this intellectual gap, this research is expected to make contribution for the queer and Islam in the West studies.

This qualitative study content-analyze the strategies used on their official websites, social network sites, and interview sites. The exploration of these interactive platforms becomes an interesting part of this research, as it relates to the way these groups utilize the concept of intersectionality in constructing their publicly published articles. Intersectionality theory will

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12 Yorukoglu, I. "Marketing Diversity: Homonormativity and the Queer Turkish Organizations in Berlin." *Islam and Homosexuality*2 (2010). 426-8

13 Shah, Shanon. (2018). *The Making of a Gay Muslim: Religion, Sexuality and Identity in Malaysia and Britain*. 10.1007/978-3-319-63130-1. Page 63-70

14 The introduction and explanation of these two groups will be presented in the following sub-chapters.

15 In order to carry out the research, it is important to make clear the used terminology in this study. The scope of this study is to focus on all the non-heterosexuals, however, and will not go beyond of this limitation to define the problematics of the terminology. In this regards, I will mostly employ the globally used term for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender and Queer) and homosexual interchangeably to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexuals, and trans* people.

advance the research about others who experience multiple forms of oppression in the society.[16] In this case, internet holds important function as a platform for online discussions and self-study materials as well as to display arts that could support the movement of the group.[17] The findings are analyzed by utilizing the established concepts of intersectionality that helps to explore better understanding of the intersecting sexuality and religion; how they are constructed, their standpoint, and the assumption of equality.[18]

In order to scrutinize the situation that involves homosexual Muslims in Europe, it is necessary to understand the relation of the variety of dimensions between the Western context and the minority status within the group. Exploring homosexuals in the European countries will be closely linked to the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Muslim population in both countries makes the five percent of population in average. Several well-known homosexual Muslim groups also reside in both countries. Meanwhile, the two main cases taken for this study are the leading organizations in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands for LGBTQ people who at the same time happen to embrace their identity as Muslims. Therefore, both Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation are worth to be scrutinized.

The formation of both organizations cannot be separated from the involvement of the national government and its secular societies who are permissive to homosexuality. Although, the peaceful coexistence between the European Muslims and homosexuals is still an ongoing process.[19] Rational behind the selection of both organizations are due to the fact that they mainly relate to and tackle the issues of Islam as the faith and culture from most of their members. Maruf's nature is also unique and relatively different with Naz and Matt Foundation. Their members mostly share similar cultural background, as non-native and Muslim. Their goal does not only towards homophobia, but also Islamophobia and discrimination based on ethnicity and gender. Naz and Matt Foundation is a supporting group which does not exclusively shelter Muslim homosexuals, but this foundation also entails their members to fight against homophobia based on religion and cultural perspectives. Moreover, the foundation was established after a special moment that closely linked to discrimination from the Muslim family. Ever since, Naz and Matt Foundation orients their goal to eliminate homophobia.

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16 McCall, Leslie. 2005. "The complexity of intersectionality." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30:1771-1800.
17 Stein, L. (2009). "Social movement web use in theory and practice: A content analysis of US movement websites." *New Media & Society*, 11 (5), 749–771. Page 754
18 Rahman, Momin. 2010. "Queer as Intersectionality: Theorizing Gay Muslim Identities." *Sociology* 44 (5): 944–61. Page 948-9
19 Hoppe, James (2011) "Nongovernmental Organizations and Muslim Queer Communities in the Netherlands," *Macalester International*: Vol. 27, Article 13. Available at: http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/macintl/vol27/iss1/13 Page 120

This research opens the discussion with a thorough exploration of each component, which is the Muslim and LGBTQ in European contexts. Through the history of Muslim presence and LGBTQ formation within the society, the first chapter demonstrates a brief understanding of both communities prior to elaborating their intersecting identities in the study. The second chapter shows methodology and research questions that guide the study. Concept of intersectionality is introduced in the third chapter. It summaries the essential concept of how intersectionality can deal with the analysis of LGBTQ Muslims in the West, the dual-identity appearances on their internet accounts to be precise. The next chapter performs as an analysis section, in which all the findings are reported. The data are retrieved from Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation internet sources which are collaborated with the concept of intersectionality. And finally, the last chapter summarizes the essential points of this study as well as further recommendation that can be beneficial for LGBTQ studies and Islam and the West studies.

Muslim in Europe

Groups of Muslim presented long before the nowadays Europe. Their participation in forming Europe and the European civilization was intense and active. *Islamo-Christian civilization* was the evidence that proofed Muslim's active participation in forming the European Civilization. Some remarkable Islamic phenomenon in pre-modern European times signified the presence of the 'Islam of Europe' rather than the 'Islam and Europe.'[20] The big wave of Muslim populations had resided in majorly Christian Southern Europe for centuries as well as in Eastern Europe which was occupied by Muslim population during the fourteenth century.[21] The process of borrowing and learning from each other (such as philosophy, theology, mathematics, medicine, music, and cuisine) during the pre-modern times happened when the Arabs seized Athens and Rome. The greater influence occurred after the loss of the Arabs in European territories, in which later, the European defined their civilization as 'the renaissance of Greece and Rome' and reject the Arab's contribution to their foundations and well-being. Later, this has become the beginning of the racist myth-making that is still relevant today.[22] During the modern European time, the problematic image of Muslims is drawing more public attention. They were and are still becoming the highlight of most of contemporary issues and getting more suspicious. In addition to that, most of the Western Muslim community identities are also

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20 Hellyer, H. A. *Muslims of Europe: The 'Other' Europeans*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1r22hk Page 3,

21 Thériault Barbara, and Frank Peter. 2005. "Introduction: Islam and the Dynamics of European National Identities." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 13 (3): 261–66. Page 261

22 Hellyer, 2009. Page 103

attributed to the label as the dangerous 'other.'[23] Moreover, during the early 20th century, the Islamic faith was also equally judged as communism, a complex matter that was threatening European democracy.[24]

The physical return of numbers of Muslim as immigrant labors in present Europe has invited a greater wave of Muslim immigrants in European land.[25] The beginning of modern European Muslims migrants began to enter European land mainly in the early 1900s. Most of them were from the North African colonies and Turkey who were demanded to fill in the gap of the laboring market in Europe during such period. Their existence has given easier ways for larger migrants to reside in European lands. They brought their families and created new generations of European Muslims and mostly were associated with inconveniences and criminality for other communities. If we were to take the Netherlands as the example, we might see that Muslim immigrant communities had minimum social interaction with the other immigrant communities.[26]

The shifting perceptions of modern Islam in the West greatly were transpired during the 9/11 on the World Trade Center. The othering in European referred to dissimilarity in race and culture, different spoken language, and possess different beliefs, while all of those aspects lead to the discrimination towards Muslim. Although, historically, Jews in Germany were being exposed to the same issues. Other than that, in contemporary Europe, the existence of extremist radical Muslim groups has worsened Muslim position in Europe. In practice, the Europeans have acknowledged Muslim presences in their neighborhood.[27] Suitability of their presence in secular European contexts also raised critical questions, ever since the exposure of Rushdie affairs in 1989. Muslim protest towards Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* stimulated the explosion of extremist resentment.

Those two historical events, at least, have already paved the way for European Muslims to encounter conflicting situations, such as anti-Muslim rhetoric, Islamophobia, and suspicion from the European societies. In a nutshell, those constraints have fueled the backlash against Muslim and their community. Islamophobia has provided a them-vs-us division, which later became the motivation for the far-right end political spectrum and radical Islamist minority

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23 Hellyer, 2009. Page 3
24 Hellyer, 2009. Page 1-2
25 Barbara and Peter. 2005 page 261
26 Hoppe, 2011. Page 120
27 Hellyer, 2009. Page 6

groups who aim to use such rhetoric as a strategic means "to promote their aggressively exclusivist, (and) divisive agendas."[28]

Similar to other immigrants who are supposed to pass the same process, massive transformation also hits the European Muslim communities. From this backdrop, a concept was later developed by Bassam Tibi, a German based Islamic scholar, who formulates *Euro-Islam*. In his book, *Political Islam, World Politics and Europe: Democratic Peace and Euro-Islam versus Global Jihad*, he combines the European values with Islamic ideologies into a new identity. "The Muslims of today need to revive this tradition in their heritage to open their minds, thus insuring a better future against the claims of totalitarian political Islam."[29] Euro-Islam is basically the very same religion of Islam but has been culturally adjusted to the civic culture of modernity. Although the transformation to Euro-Islam would not allow a complete assimilation of Muslims, it would help to adopt "the form of civil society to an enlightened and open-minded Islamic community that is compatible with European civic culture."[30]

One of the ongoing debates that is resulted from this transformation is the formation of Queer Muslims organization in some of western countries. However, the common background about homosexuality in Islam is that homosexuality is completely forbidden. This creates an understanding that Islam is the most homophobic and intolerant towards the homosexuals. Demands from European society towards Muslim population is to be able to adapt themselves to make assimilation with the existing local values. In the Netherlands, for instance, strongly articulated demands from the rightist politicians is to call the Muslim minority to secularize themselves so that they will be able to involve in promoting and protecting the human rights. In this case, rights of women and homosexuals have turned out to be the criterion to accept the ability for integration into European citizenship since before it has always been the fault line which divides those whose loyalty is to the European values or Islam.[31]

Homosexuality in Europe

Although the majority of contemporary Europe have accepted homosexuality, this achievement has gone through a tiring history. Rejection towards homosexual by Catholic churches, with the belief that "homosexual acts led to divine retribution, not only rebellions and revolutions but

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28 Peucker, Mario, and Rauf Ceylan, eds. 2017. *Muslim Community Organizations in the West: History, Developments and Future Perspectives*. Islam in Der Gesellschaft. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer VS. doi:10.1007/978-3-658-13889-9. page 4
29 Tibi, 2008. Page: 157
30 Al Sayyad, Nezar, and Manuel Castells. *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam: Politics, Culture, and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization*. Transnational Perspectives. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002 Page: 37-8
31 Kugle, 2013. Page 119

natural catastrophes such as the destruction of the city of Lot because some of its inhabitants had practiced this unnatural vice."[32] According to Foucault in his book, *The History of Sexuality* (1978), development of 'homosexuality' as a concept started during the 1800s when it was majorly still considered as a condemned sexual practice.

A major development happened in the following centuries under some scientific evidence by doctors and psychiatrists.[33] The term homosexual was first coined by Kertbeny in the 1860s in his anonymous pamphlet to call for legal emancipation of homosexuals.[34] Meanwhile, the European first homosexuality movement was initiated by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, the first homosexual activist who was against the extension of Prussian Paragraph 175[35] in Southern Germany. Furthermore, a couple of decades later, Magnus Hirschfeld established the first homosexual organization *Wissenschaftlichhumanitäre Komitee* (Scientific Humanitarian Committee) in Berlin. The aim of this organization was to promote the decriminalization of same-sex relations in Germany. The more significant improvement occurred before the Second World War or after the merge of similar organizations flourished in some Western European countries. They collectively were targeting to decriminalize homosexuality, such as in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. After the war, a couple of social movements was founded in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and the United Kingdom.[36]

The next level of activism started in the 1960s and 1970s when the gay liberation groups initiated homophile movements. They marked the first gay pride marches and rainbow flag, a multicolored flag that becomes the symbol of LGBTQ community. It was then followed by the lesbian movement who had increased in numbers and was mobilized to also form organizations. Came after, the trans* right groups saw the need to develop during the 1990s in some European

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32 Yorukoglu, 2010. Page 426-8
33 Foucault in his book explained the development of sexuality in Western society which was began in the seventeenth century. Then, development of sexuality discourse was supported by the introduction to capitalism a hundred years later, when the freedom of expression began to emerge. Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality*. Penguin Books. London: Penguin. page 4-6
34 Karl-Maria Kerbeny was a Hungarian journalist. The term homosexuality was driven from the Greek *homo* and Latin *sexus*. Other than term homosexual, he also coined monosexual, heterosexual, and heterogen. Takács, Judit. 2004. "The Double Life of Kertbeny" in Hekma, Gert *Present and Past of Radical Sexual Politicss, ed*. Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam. Page 29 https://www.academia.edu/4483129/The_Double_Life_of_Kertbeny_2004_
35 Prussian Paragraph 175 was a German Criminal Code which criminalized same-sex intercourse. This paragraph was effective from the 1870's to 1994. Paragraph 175 penalized "any form of 'criminal indecency' between men," personal conduct of "public morality" and aroused "sexual desires in oneself or strangers." Snyder, David Raub. 2007. *Sex Crimes Under the Wehrmacht*. Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press. Page 103-10; Gregory Woods. 2016. *Homintern: How Gay Culture Liberated the Modern World*. New Haven: Yale University Press https://books.google.nl/books?id=R547DwAAQBAJ&pg=PT280&lpg=PT280&dq=disgraceful+paragraph+kurt+tucholsky&source=bl&ots=2PPKeMokk9&sig=ynU1j3nUrIkLjMeXzfxtxNstjg0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwje8Pav0ZnbAhWFF8AKHSIEAG4Q6AEIKTAA#v=onepage&q=disgraceful%20paragraph%20kurt%20tucholsky&f=false
36 Phillip M. Ayoub and & David Paternotte (eds). 2014. *LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe. A Rainbow Europe?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. page 8-10

countries. The accumulation of the whole movements enabled Europe to be the region that nurtured LGBTQ transnational activism.

The establishment of European LGBTQ international networking group was initiated during the 1950s, marked by the Dutch *Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum* (COC) who founded international committee for Sexual Equality (ICSE).[37] One of the first transnational LGBTQ organizations who managed to shelter European Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer, and, Intersex people are ILGA[38] founded in 1978. ILGA is an LGBT group that resonances European as a set of values and normative commitments which are employed as strategies to gain rights as well as to echo strong voices across the continent. In addition to that, Europe is formed as its ground for "normative framework that constitutes LGBT actors' interests and strategies, and in turn these actors (re)create European structures and institutions by linking them to LGBT rights." The European LGBT activists under ILGA-Europe have set up numbers of European LGBT groups such as European Pride Organizers Association, the Network European LGBT Families Associations, the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups or *RainbowRose*, and the European network of socialist parties' LGBT caucuses. These organizations across the region share their similar vision and mission which are based on 'Europe' by defining it as a "set of values and a socio-political community linked to universal human rights."[39]

European Muslims and LGBT Muslims

The dominant religions arguments are opposing the same-sex desires or practices. In Islam, the discussions about sexuality have been in a long interrogation for over the centuries and demanded more work to answer the question of sexuality in Islamic law and society.[40] Despite of the fact that there is tendency on the perspective changes towards homosexuality, the large Muslim population are still considering same-sex activities as a sinful and moral problem.[41]

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37 Ayoub and Paternotte, 2014 page 8-10
38 Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) is a European based homosexual's associations established in August 1978, in Coventry, the United Kingdom. During the annual conference of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, representatives from Australia, Britain, Denmark, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Scotland and the United States, altogether agreed on the establishment of this global association, although ILGA is predominantly European. In 1996, a European umbrella of ILGA was established as a separated regional group of ILGA and an indipendent legal entity. "About Us." *The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association | ILGA*. Accessed June 13, 2018. https://ilga.org/about-us; "What Is ILGA-Europe." *French Government Launches Action Plan to Fight Hate against LGBT People | ILGA-Europe*. Accessed June 13, 2018. https://www.ilga-europe.org/who-we-are/what-ilga-europe.
39 Ayoub and Paternotte, 2014 page 8-10
40 Roshan das Nair and Sonya Thomas. 2012. "Religion" in Angelides, Marios C, Catherine Butler, and Roshan das Nair (eds). 2012. *Intersectionality, Sexuality and Psychological Therapies: Working with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Diversity*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell. Page 91-3
41 Roshan das Nair and Sonya Thomas. 2012. Page 93

That what have caused rejection and discrimination towards this meta-minority group. The lack of acceptance of non-heterosexuality within Muslim communities have enforced the formulation of a coalition to militate against the rejection and oppression. The refusal of LGBTQ existences is mainly due to the hegemonic status of heterosexuality in Muslim communities and cultural grounds. All sexual activities that violate heterosexual norms are considered as sexual deviation, violation of nature, deviation of procreation, and revolt against God, particularly under the story of Prophet Lot.[42]

The nourished notion of being a homosexual means part of being a Western. As mentioned by Shannahan that "homosexuality is positioned as secular by default," or in contemporary Britain it is also positioned as Christian.[43] Therefore, the incompatibility of both topics is becoming a more interesting topic in Europe. The LGBTQ Muslims are stimulated in demanding their recognition and becoming more vocal in seeking for equal rights. Manual about the attitudes towards homosexuality, as defined by Al-Haqq Kuggle, do not present in Islamic scriptures. However, it is emphasized in the later texts in which mentions that the Islamic belief that homosexual relationship is criminality. So to speak, the condemnation of homosexuality does not come from the Qur'an but merely from the Muslim themselves.[44]

Religion obviously owns strong support in shaping individual and societal attitudes. That has strong impact on the outcome of tolerance towards the outer community. Those who support and belong to certain group of religions would display less tolerance towards the homosexual compared to those who are from the outside of the religious boundary or loosely affiliated with religious group. In regards to that, Muslims appear to be against homosexuality. Take a look at homophobia within Islamic culture. Through the Western point of view, Islam constitutes as the most homophobic religion and shows great gender discrimination. The troubling relationship between Muslim and homosexuals seems problematic enough, thus it appears that Muslim is demanded to consolidate with the contemporary Western identity, according to Zanghellini.[45]

Highlighting post 9/11 environment, homosexual Muslims have to navigate three interrelated dimension which are 'religious identity', 'ethno-cultural identity' and 'color identity.' Besides that, they need to put bigger effort to make balance and renegotiate the beliefs between God, family, and community, as well as within the predominantly white and non-

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42 Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip, 2005. "Religion and the Politics of Spirituality/Sexuality: Reflections on Researching British Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Christians and Muslims." *Fieldwork in Religion* 1 (3): 271–289. Page 104
43 Shannahan, D.S. 2010. "Some queer questions from a Muslim faith perspective." *Sexualities*, 13(6), 671–684 as adapted from Roshan das Nair and Sonya Thomas. 2012. Page 93
44 Antje, 2015. Page 1045-6
45 Antje, 2015. Page 1045-6

Muslim gay surroundings.[46] Moreover, after the 9/11 attack, Muslim needs to pass dozens of challenges, not to mention the suspicions towards themselves. Homosexual European Muslims also need to establish their own boundary and community as well as join into the 'religious individualism,' explained by Yip as "a religiosity that prioritizes the authority of the self over that of the institution." The individualization is built upon the "religious and sociocultural roles and obligations" that link to their background as immigrant and ethnic minority.[47] Intricate position of Homosexual Muslims in the West cannot be put apart from the stereotypes of Muslim and Islam which often encounter the "unbearable pressure to assimilate into their host societies." The impact from this stereotypical judgement also goes to the member of homosexual Muslims in the West who are hesitant where to put themselves. Broader impact is that numbers of homosexual Muslims attempt negotiate with the situation (between their religiosity and sexual identities).[48]

Several preceding researches on Muslim tolerance towards the homosexuals have been done to measure the level of acceptance homosexuals in the West. In Europe itself, the Islamic culture is perceived as more conservatives than Catholicism and Protestantism. They also have conservative attitudes about sexual morality compared to Catholicism and that makes Muslim communities appear to be more disapproving than the other religious groups.[49] The struggle to create a peaceful coexistence between Muslims and homosexuals has been the main issue in most of the Western world.[50]

Maruf Foundation

In the Netherlands, discourse about Islam often demonstrates the failure of Muslim integration into Dutch society and the feeling of being a threat towards the Dutch national identity.[51] Dutch multiculturalism itself was shaped through a long and exhausting process. The old conservative Dutch during the 1970s had to face a radical and rapid change of sexual revolution which tolerated sex outside of marriage, pornography, and homosexuality. As a result, Dutch society transformed into the most tolerant European in terms of homosexuality.[52] The necessity to combat Islamophobia in the Netherlands, Maruf as an alternative network and group is

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46 Shah, 2018. Page 63-70
47 Yip, 2005. Page 278
48 Shah, 2018. Page 63-70
49 Adamczyk, Amy, and Cassady Pitt. 2009. "Shaping Attitudes About Homosexuality: The Role of Religion and Cultural Context." *Social Science Research* 38:338–51. Page 339
50 Hoppe, 2011. Page 121
51 Shah, 2018. Page 70
52 Gunnink, A. S. 2012. "A Minority within a Minority: Identity Perceptions of Dutch Homosexual Muslims." Diss., *University of Utrecht*. Accessed through https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/1874/253412/Thesis final version PDF.pdf Page 4-5

committed to providing a better position for the LGBT Muslims. In his interview, Dino Suhonic, the founder of Maruf, expressed his concern on the promotion of Eurocentrism in the gay rights and the accusation that Muslims are the reason of the increase of homophobia in the Netherlands, especially by the right-wing extremists. In that respect, the homosexuals with migrant and Islamic faith background would suffer the multidimensional discrimination, Islamophobia, and homophobia.[53]

To support Dutch homosexual Muslims, Maruf plays an important role for the LGBTQ Muslims in the Netherlands. Founded in 2012, they exclusively focus on Muslim populations and dedicate to provide a better position for homosexual Muslims in the Netherlands and, ambitiously, around the world. Maruf targets at the broader variation of discrimination, not only focusing on homophobia, but also Islamophobia as well as discrimination based on gender identity and ethnicity. Rather than to create segregation between the homosexual Muslims and Islam, Maruf raises consciousness to allow reconciliation between their faith and sexuality. This foundation also functions as a safer place provider for the queer Muslims.[54] The history of the group establishment starts when 20 queer Muslims initiated "to gather and discuss the position of being queer in a Muslim community and being Muslim in a Dutch society, and in the end, being a queer Muslim—that intersectional identity—in the whole world."[55] Maruf with their incredibly packed agendas in line with their goals envisions to create a transformation of the society that allows inter-connectedness and inclusivity of different faiths and beliefs around gender and sexual diversity.[56] Therefore, Maruf has successfully organized numbers of both national and international conferences, lectures, workshops and empowerment programs were organized.[57] Two global wide organizations were also founded, namely the Global Queer Muslim Network and European Queer Muslim Network.[58]

Other than activities and projects, Maruf services are also available on the internet, that deal with issues related to LGBTQ Muslims in the Netherlands and around the world. Through their internet platforms, Maruf tries to educate their members and wider audiences related to their need and rights as an LGBTQ person as well as about the rising LGBTQ related issues

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53 Bo Hanna, "Queer moslims zijn in Nederland nog een verborgen groep" *Vice*, December 22, 2016. Accessed through https://www.vice.com/nl/article/kbw59a/queer-moslims-zijn-in-nederland-nog-een-verborgen-groep
54 "About" *Maruf,* Accessed through http://www.maruf.eu/overmaruf.html
55 Choi, Christine, 2015. "Between the Cracks of Contemporary Dutch Discourse: Being an LGBTQ Muslim in the Netherlands" *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. Paper 2243. http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2243 page 20
56 "Benefit of the members," *Global Queer Muslims,* Accessed through http://globalqueermuslims.net/members/
57 Maruf official website, accessed through http://www.maruf.eu/overmaruf.html
58 Bo Hanna, 2016.

around the world. They also aim at spreading the campaign and support for the members, in order to abolish discrimination towards non-heterosexual persons.

Naz and Matt Foundation

Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, the presence of Homosexual Muslims does not translate as a peculiar phenomenon. Although the idea that Islam is hostile towards homosexuality has been understood in many Western countries, in Britain, the first 'Muslim Drag Queens' documentary was aired on Britain's Channel 4 in August 2015. The purpose of the show is to investigate the way gay Muslims in Britain publicly reconcile their sexuality together with their cultural identity and religious tradition.[59] It demonstrates that the visibility of Muslim LGBTQ members has gradually been acknowledged in the British media. In addition to their presence in public spaces, the Muslim homosexuals have come out and exposed themselves to gay pride marches.[60] As one of the highlights in this study, Naz and Matt Foundation, a London based LGBTQ Muslim group, was established in 2014. Although Naz and Matt Foundation does not exclusively limit their membership only for Muslim people and accepts member from other religions, they function as a collective catering for the British LGBTQ Muslims who are facing the issues of homophobia, especially from the religious reasoning. Stated in their tagline *"Our mission is to never to let religion, any religion, come in the way of the unconditional love between parents and their children."*

Naz and Matt Foundation is committed to raise the awareness about religiously motivated homophobia and to eradicate the prejudices and discrimination resulted from religious beliefs.[61] In addition to that, the foundation received a remarkable acknowledgment from The Association of British Muslims (AoBM[62]) in 2015.[63] It implies the higher level of acceptance from the Muslim sides towards the homosexual compared to other European countries. Matthew Ogston established Naz and Matt Foundation after his fiancé's, Dr Nazim Mahmood, death after being confronted by his religious South Asian family. The lack of acceptance from

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59 Shah, 2018. Page 68-9
60 "Dissident Sexualities: Muslim and Gay in the UK," *Muslim WakeUp! Inc*., December 29, 2004 Accessed through https://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/world/united_kingdom/uknews081.htm
61 "What is the purpose of the Naz and Matt Foundation?" *Naz and Matt Foundation*. Accessed through https://www.nazandmattfoundation.org/about/
62 AoBM is a progressive and inclusive Muslim group in the UK that functions as representative for British Muslim population. They embrace everyone equally regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and sexual orientation and work to create a diversity environment as well as encourage people to believe that one's religion is not the exclusive source of truth. "about" *AoBM.org*. Accessed through http://aobm.org/about/
63 Matt, "The association of British Muslims announce their support for Naz and Matt foundation," *Naz and Matt Foundation*, April 29, 2015. Accessed through https://www.nazandmattfoundation.org/association-of-british-muslims-announces-support-for-naz-and-matt-foundation/

Naz's family forced him to undergo a mental treatment and wanted him to get rid of the 'sinful embarrassing disease.' Matt believed that this similar situation did not only happen in Naz's family, but also in many Muslim homosexuals' families. Seeing this danger has led him to establish a network that shades the victim of homophobia on the basis of religious beliefs.[64]

As active as Maruf, Naz and Matt Foundation runs several social meet-ups and counseling on regular basis. Issues related to discrimination and intolerances are raised in their events, as well as the enlightenment for parents who have LGBTQ children has also become their common topic. Moreover, they actively update the articles and posts on social media platforms in order to assure and motivate their readers that safe place for LGBTQ Muslims exists. The Foundation endorses the other organizations that may help to illuminate and guide their members to seek for safe and facilitate the need for LGBTQ members.

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[64] "What is the purpose of the Naz and Matt Foundation?"*Naz and Matt Foundation*. Accessed through
    https://www.nazandmattfoundation.org/about/

Chapter 2

Research Design

In order to carry out this qualitative research, the second chapter covers methodological selections made for this thesis. In the beginning part, this chapter covers research questions that escort the study. The research questions mainly refer to the work of both groups on their internet platforms, to seek their ways in promoting and campaigning equal position within communities, particularly Western Muslim communities. Finally, the last part of this chapter explains the methods of analysis and shows the application of content analysis within the research.

Research Questions

From the abovementioned background in the earlier chapter, I pose the main research question that guides this research: *How do non-heterosexual Muslim groups utilize their official websites to express their intersecting identities?* The multiply-marginalized group is placed at the center of the study and investigated by tackling the concept of intersectionality as the methodological framework. The other two sub-questions are formulated to help in finding the answers to the central question of this research, as follows:

1. *How are religious and sexual voices used by the groups to promote their visibility?*
2. *How do their internet entries support the work against multi-layered discrimination?*

For the purpose of this study, research questions orient on Maruf's and Naz and Matt Foundation's online platforms which regularly discuss issues pertaining to Islam and homosexuality. Internet is one of the most accessible sources of information that allows people around the world to connect and absorb unlimited information. That includes wider Muslim communities who are less tolerance towards non-heterosexual people. The openness of their identities perhaps is the evidence of a fruitful combination among the Western values. Although, only a few of researches have scrutinized content analysis of LGBTQ Muslim official websites and other online platforms, in fact, the presented discussions posted on their world-wide websites contain uniqueness of describing the dual identity that demonstrates their presences in the society.

The first sub-question will be answered by allowing the discussion on the roles of the influencing groups in articulating their existences. The combination of Islamic and homosexual perspectives is exposed in some of their arguments on their both official websites and Facebook accounts, such as how Muslim should interpret Islamic scriptures so it can be applied in modern environment. Big numbers of LGBTQ Muslim population in the West are facing rejection from their religious group. That way, through the supporting groups, the goal to campaign for their

visibility can be accomplished. To this end, all data are retrieved from their public access internet accounts that relate to the Islamic and sexual discourses.

To respond the second sub-question, this study will scrutinize each of the internet accounts which plays role as the community communication that appears as support providers. By studying minority groups will remain incomplete if there is no discussion about discriminations and oppressions that they encounter. Therefore, the objective of this sub-question is to present the strategy utilized by both groups in reducing the possibility of growing negative attitudes. In particular, being a Muslim and a homosexual might attract multi-layered discriminations. By analyzing the influential group will benefit the study as they also frequently utilize their internet platform which is one of the most visible access points that feature numbers of information pertaining their issues and intersecting identifications as well as to enable mobilization of their participants.

Method

Material

The qualitative data sources to answer the research questions will be retrieved from Maruf (http://www.maruf.eu/) and Naz and Matt Foundation (http://www.nazandmattfoundation.org) official world-wide web-sites and official Facebook accounts.[65] The Naz and Matt Foundation website involves majorly English contents and does not focus only in Islam as the spiritual belief but also towards the cultural background. Likewise, Maruf website also contains frequent published updates on their activities related to Islam and homosexuality. Their websites contain legal publications, reports, press releases, speeches of the members, interviews, events, as well as weblogs. The time period depends on the account establishment date, so that we can see the overall discourses. Since online sources can be very complex and broad, data is narrowed only into the entries operated in English and referencing services for the non-heterosexual Muslims, sexual information and marginalized identity, as well as discriminations and persuasive discussions. There is also no recruitment for subscription to access the threads posted online.

Analysis

This research employs qualitative content analysis as the main method. Qualitative content analysis examines the subjective interpretation of strategic language in text data. It is a research method that focuses on "the characteristic of language as communication with attention to the

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65 Maruf official Facebook fan-page can be accessed through https://www.facebook.com/StichtingMaruf/ and Naz and Matt Foundation official Facebook fan-page through https://www.facebook.com/nazandmattfoundation/.

content or contextual meaning of the text" and aims at creating identification of overarching themes and patterns in textual forms. Content analysis is used to explore a variety type of data, which can be verbal, print, or electronic form.[66] According to Hsieh and Shannon, there are three analytical approaches that can be attached in doing qualitative content analysis research, such as 1) conventional content analysis, 2) direct content analysis, and 3) summative content analysis. To carry out this research, conventional content approach will be applied and will enable the researcher to develop categories from the data coding without having boundaries to theoretical perspectives.[67]

The qualitative content analysis will also benefit the application of intersectionality, which is considered as an applicable approach for this research. Intersectionality, according to Prins, is developed into two different understandings. In the US, the approach "foregrounds the impact of system or structure upon the formation of identities," while by the British scholars, the application of intersectionality merely orients at the dynamic and relational aspect of social identity.[68] In this respect, intersectionality is holding the assumption that it can also be understood as "an alternative to 'additive' or 'multiplicative' claims" towards the multiply-marginalized groups who suffer from multiply jeopardy.[69] In regard to the LGBTQ Muslim people, this concept will direct us to understand the position of identity within the constructed social hierarchies. It also shows the standpoint of oppression since it understands the authoritative knowledge claims as well as the equality as a universal outcome.[70]

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66 Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis." *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277–1288. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687. Page 1278

67 Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005) Page 1279

68 Prins, Baukje. 2006. "Narrative Accounts of Origins: A Blind Spot in the Intersectional Approach?" *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (3): 277–290. Page 279

69 Found in Prins, Baukje. 2006. Page 279, adapted from Beal, Francis (1970) 'Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female', pp. 90–100 in *Toni Code (ed.) The Black Woman*. York: Mentor.

70 Rahman, 2010. Page 948-9

Chapter 3

Literature Review

The objective of this chapter is to clear up each of the central concepts before carrying out to the further step. This literature review comprises three parts: LGBTQ as the center to this research, internet that allows the groups to sound their voices, and intersectionality as the concept to understand the two identities. The terminology of LGBTQ as the central to this research is further elaborated in order to minimize the obscurity of the abbreviation, since the topic has been developed and receiving many attentions. There follows a part that develops how internet can be useful for minority group such as Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation. And last, this chapter shows the intersectionality concept as a framework tool to understand religious and sexual identities of this study.

LGBTQ

The topic of LGBTQ community has become more salient over the last decade. They appear as minority group and have gained many acknowledgments in many countries. But, the LGBTQ people are vulnerable and not apart from experiencing oppression. Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, emphasizes:

> "The status of the LGBT community is a good litmus test for the status of human rights in society more broadly, precisely because it is such a vulnerable minority—similar to the proverbial canary in the coal mine. Where the rights of LGBT people are undermined, you can be sure that the rights of other minorities and critical members of civil society will soon also be in jeopardy."[71]

As the central to this research, it is important to define the term LGBTQ, before I begin the wider observation. Often incorrect understanding about the term LGBTQ leads to the abbreviation that represents all kind of sexual orientations that are contrasting to the heterosexuality. In fact, much international concern focuses on the term that only stands for 'lesbian,' 'gay,' 'bisexual,' and 'transgender.'[72] In addition to that, the letter Q stands for word

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71 Koen Slootmaeckers, Heleen Touquet, and Peter Vermeersch, eds. 2016. *The EU Enlargement and Gay Politics: The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Rights, Activism and Prejudice*. Gender and Politics Series. London: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/978-1-137-48093-4. Page 1

72 The full assemble of the abbreviation is extended to LGBTTIQQ2SA which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, 2-spirited, and Allies. Manuela Lavinas Picq and Markus Thiel, eds. 2015. *Sexualities in World Politics: How LGBTQ Claims Shape International Relations*. Interventions. London England: Routledge. Page 5

'queer' or 'questioning' identities which makes the term LGBTQ is not only representing sexual orientation, but also identities.[73]

The development of literature on LGB identities has transpired since the late 1970's.[74] The usage of the terms then leads to the essential meaning of LGBTQ. In theory, LGBTQ does not come from a fundamentally one group with similar narrations and experiences. However, they come from two separated contexts.[75] The first part encompasses people with minority sexuality which is assumed as a prominent element in LGB people's lives, considering that same-sex relationships involve two persons of the same sex.[76] Meanwhile, the trans people are not perceived as the sexual orientation. In fact, trans+ is a gender identity that contrasts with the non-transgender or 'cisgender.' Lastly, the Queers has a broader concept, that includes all individuals who are marginalized in gender and sexuality.[77]

The Internet on Fostering LGBTQ Muslim Groups Online Narration

Since the focus of this study is to go through the groups' online platforms, it is important to understand the interventions of internet in representing social groups such as Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation. Internet, as a cyberspace which has been considered as a modern powerful tool that progresses human interaction, functions in twofold. First, it allows the information dissemination, formal networking, and action coordination as well as helps to build collective identity among its participants of the movement.[78] The principal function of internet has allowed world-wide information mobilization and helps the establishment of "highly-informed and autonomous communities that coalesce around local lifestyle choices, global political demands, and everything in between."[79] Second, internet also plays role as the organizer for worldwide network of solidarity groups which might form an international public opinion movement to prevent the large-scale repression.[80] In this manner, internet constitutes as a platform which enables the coordination of "real-world events and actions, petition political

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73 Teich, N. M. (2018). *Anti-transgender bullying in high school: Outcomes in adulthood and policy perspectives* (Order No. 10789919). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I. (2043948791). Retrieved from http://server.proxy-ub.rug.nl/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/docview/2043948791?accountid=11219 page 4

74 Dirks, Doris Andrea, "Transgender People on University Campuses: A Policy Discourse Analysis" (2011). Dissertations. Paper 398. Page 30

75 Roshan das Nair and Sonya Thomas. 2012. Page 53

76 Roshan das Nair and Sonya Thomas. 2012. Page 46

77 Bruce E. Drushel and Kathleen M. German. 2009. *Queer Identities*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. EBSCOhost. Page 2-3

78 Joyce Y. M. Nip (2004) "The Queer Sisters and its Electronic Bulletin Board," *Information, Communication & Society*, 7:1, 23-49, DOI: 10.1080/1369118042000208889 Page 24

79 Quoted from Rheingold, H. (2002), *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution,* Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing. adapted in Kahn, R. and D. Kellner (n.d.) 'Internet Subcultures and Political Activism', Accessed through http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/oppositionalinternet.htm

80 Joyce Y. M. Nip (2004) page 24

representatives, disseminate action alerts and campaign materials and engage in virtual civil disobedience."[81] Furthermore, internet has brought people from variety of classes together without the exception of minority groups. It supports group organizations to display ideas, arts, variety of creative expressions, as well as market their group fundraising and other related activities to sustain the purpose of the group.[82]

One of the great advantages of online platform is the easy access of information which in fact has brought connectivity. In this respect, minority groups with multiple identities have already utilized internet to educate and spread out their voices. To link with the LGBTQ Muslim in the West, here lies a question: how does internet allow LGBTQ Muslim to express their intersectionality? Formulation of this question is based on the consideration that to publicly reveal their sexual identities might impact their religious identity. Islam is associated with a homophobic culture or belief and reluctant towards the penetration of progressive values. Thus, it often causes numbers of the homosexual members to bring harm and other dreadful impacts to themselves, or in some cases to environment. The use of internet in this respect can support the minority group actions in reducing and redeeming the self-conflicts. With relatively easy access and having undoubtedly massive amount of information have encouraged individuals with similar background and narration to post online their life stories. Its simple use attracts member of LGBTQs in accessing those narrations and helps them to also share their own stories by utilizing expressive resources on the internet.[83] As expressed by Fisal Alam, the founder of the *Al-Fatiha* organization, who expresses his thought that "internet can help make a dent in the orthodox community's refusal to acknowledge the existence of gay Muslims."[84] Both groups in this research use their online platforms for their self-expression which include some personal narratives. Their online platforms do not only serve as a space to inspire and interaction, they found that internet has fueled their activities targeting the world-wide participants and readers to support their movement and acknowledgment.[85]

Vegh (cited in Summer Harlow) through his work points out activities performed by social groups are mainly about raising the awareness and mobilization through three means, as follows:

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81 Stein. 2009. page 753
82 Stein. 2009. page 755
83 Alexander, Jonathan. 2002. "Introduction to the Special Issue: Queer Webs: Representations of LGBT People and Communities on the World Wide Web." *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies: Formerly: Journal of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Identity*7 (2-3): 77–84. doi:10.1023/A:1015821431188. Page 79
84 Found in Wheeler, D. (2002). "Islam, Community, and the Internet: New possibilities in the digital age." *Interface: The Journal of Education, Community and Values* 2(2). Available http://bcis.pacificu.edu/journal/2002/02/islam.php page 15
85 Wojcieszak, Magdalena. 2009. "Carrying Online Participation Offline; Mobilization by Radical Online Groups and Politically Dissimilar Offline Ties." *Journal of Communication* 59 (3): 564–86; summer harlow page 226

"… a) calling for offline action via email or a Website; b) calling for online action for something typically done offline, such as sending emails to Congress members instead of letters; and c) calling for online action that is possible only via the internet, such as a computer spam campaign."[86]

The interconnectedness of both online and offline spaces in raising awareness and to mobilize their participants might also be utilized by the LGBTQ Muslim groups such as Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation. Their online agenda might give birth to an offline social revolution by confronting encouragements and rational reasons under the support of global values.

In addition to observation on official websites, this research also undergoes social media pages' observation since it is a relatively new phenomenon that will help to address current concerns about promotion.[87] In this case, Facebook will be the best example as it is reachable and can be more attractive than other social media. There are many features that Facebook can accommodate, such as charity and events. These two functions are often used by the social groups in order to boost the potential offered by social media. This research concentrates on the content of Facebook walls that contains actual messages the groups are providing to represent its effort in sounding their goals. Facebook also facilitates the connections that might not be possible between individuals. Statistic wise, some scholars found out that the younger demographic that characterizes the principle users of social media.[88]

As an effort to widen their existence and seek for social acceptance, the employment of online technology offers stronger impact compared by doing offline activities. We will later see the well functioned official websites and Facebook pages from Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation which have shed a light for global communication tool through wide-spreading their identities as both non-heterosexual and Muslim. The freedom in expressing their values can invite members to support the agenda of both groups.

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86 Summer Harlow. 2012. "Social Media and Social Movements: Facebook and an Online Guatemalan Justice Movement That Moved Offline." *New Media & Society* 14 (2): 225–43. doi:10.1177/1461444811410408. page 230

87 S. Thomas, A. Bestman, H. Pitt, E. Deans, M. Randle, M. Stoneham & M. Daube, 2015. "The marketing of wagering on social media: An analysis of promotional content on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook" *Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation*., (Victoria, Australia,)Page 44

88 Clark F. Greer Ph.D. & Douglas A. Ferguson Ph.D. 2011. "Using Twitter for Promotion and Branding: A Content Analysis of Local Television Twitter Sites," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 55:2, 198-214, DOI: 10.1080/08838151.2011.570824 page 201

Intersectionality as a Concept to Understand the Overlapping identities

Throughout its development, the concept of intersectionality has successfully been adapted to wider context in social researches, moreover, under the discussion of LGBT Muslims. Although in academic level, intersectionality as an analytical tool has yet to have a fixed consensus.[89] Nonetheless, there are numbers of attempts to develop the concept, thus it holds academic credibility as an analytical tool and capability to be applied to other common issues, specifically in regards to social justice.[90] The aforementioned explanation in previous chapter pertaining two different approaches of intersectionality application, the US and British, helps us to understand the position of intersectionality in this research. This research will mainly be guided by British approach which has been elaborated with a constructionist interpretation of intersectionality. The approach itself is built upon Gramsci's view of power of the struggles over hegemony and how to articulate their identity through any practice that establishes a relation among identity elements. It aims to "reveal the unilateral power of social representations, e.g. the detrimental symbolic and material consequences for those groups whose lives are situated at the crossroads of different identities."[91]

Intersectionality alone emerged from the black feminist critiques in response to the lack of discussion about race within feminist theorizing.[92] Kimberley Crenshaw coined the concept in 1989 and pointed out the fact that intersectionality in academic context has engaged the combination of identity which is structurally occluded and subordinated. In addition to that, the theory has widely expanded and adapted by numbers of researchers to describe the oppression and discrimination in most parts of the society. Intersectionality represents as a critical insight of power which sees the multiple grounds of identity in social aspect and how it is constructed. It is a way to analyze the sensibility and a way to contemplate the identity and its relationship to power.[93]

One of the prominent scholars that tackle issues of intersectionality between Islamic cultures and sexuality is Momin Rahman. In his work, he concludes that intersectional theory is a relevant analytical framework for three main reasons. First, it directs us to observe the position of certain identities within a matrix of domination and answers the question such as

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89 Bose, Christine E. 2012. "Intersectionality and Global Gender Inequality." *Gender and Society* 26, no. 1: 67-72. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23212241. page 68

90 Chun J.J, Lipsitz G, and Shin Y. 2013. "Intersectionality as a Social Movement Strategy: Asian Immigrant Women Advocates." *Signs* 38 (4): 917–40. doi:10.1086/669575. Page 924

91 Prins. 2006. Page 280

92 Taylor Y. 2009. "Complexities and Complications: Intersections of Class and Sexuality." *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 13 2): 189–203. doi:10.1080/10894160802695361. Page190

93 Bilić B., Kajinić S. 2016. "LGBT Activist Politics and Intersectionality in Croatia and Serbia: An Introduction." In: Bilić B., Kajinić S. (eds) *Intersectionality and LGBT Activist Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London page 9-12

"how are they constructed at the intersections of social hierarchies?" Second, it draws our attention to see the standpoint of the oppression due to the fact that the marginalized groups are often excluded from the authoritative claims. Lastly, intersectionality draws our assumption that "equality as a universal 'outcome' of political action and remedies."[94]

Crenshaw divides three different forms of intersectional research; 1) structural intersectional research allows to analyze equality issues as it refers to the way intersecting identity generates the actual experiences of oppression such as domestic violence or rape,[95] 2) Political intersectional research attempts to find out the intersectional construction in political discourses, and 3) Representational intersectionality addresses the inequality and suppression which are displayed in the matrixes of cultural representations of gendered and other identities.[96]

In this research, I employ the conflation of structural intersectional and representational intersectionality approaches. The combination of both forms means that the predominant focus of intersectional research will analyze two main elements that relate to the research questions.[97] The structural approach navigates the discussion of equality which enables us to see the dominant oppression towards the LGBTQ Muslim groups. The social oppression towards the group members might obscure their chances to come out and public visibility. Hence, by observing how they combine the two aspects of their identities can help us to analyze their effort to be in an equal position within the wider European community, including Muslim groups. Whereas, the representational approach will help us to go through the discussion about inequality and suppression encountered by LGBTQ Muslim group members. To this end, we can later relate how they manage their websites to widely spread the values[98] that can ease the rejection and social resentment towards the LGBTQ groups. Under the two choices of approach,

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94 Rahman, 2010. Page 948-9
95 Carastathis, Anna. 2014. "The Concept of Intersectionality in Feminist Theory." *Philosophy Compass* 9 (5): 304–14. doi:10.1111/phc3.12129. page 306-7
96 Keskitalo-Foley, Seija, and Naskali Päivi. 2017. "Intersectionality in Finnish Adult Education Research: Insights from the Journal Aikuiskasvatus 2010–2016." *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* 8 (2): 1–15. doi:10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela9103. page 15
97 The main research question is *how do non-heterosexual Muslim groups utilize their official websites to express their intersecting identities?* And two sub-questions are: 1) *How are religious and sexual voices used by the groups to promote their visibility?* And 2) *How do their internet entries support the work against multi-layered discrimination?*
98 I refer the values to equality and liberalism which are the two universal values and has been successfully nourished in the West. It means that an individual has a free choice to decide their sexual identity without being interrupted by their environment. Those two values can serve as an absolute requirement to accept sexual diversity. In this present era, their website can also be an appropriate tool to globalized those two values.

this research can also drive us to generate the narratives of diversity management and "mantra of liberal multiculturalism" in European societies.[99]

Going forward, the application of intersectionality as a conceptual tool enables us to foresee the way elements of identity interact as well as how they are routed through each other.[100] Therefore, it is important to have fundamental understanding of each variable and intersectionality will grant us a clear insight of a variety level of discrimination. Identifications that are intersecting in this research include, first, the LGBTQ people. Similar to other minority groups, the LGBTQ people rise in a vague and somewhat difficult position within the society. Nevertheless, throughout the number of efforts and activities, their existences in wider society are significantly being recognized. Their portrayal in global enterprises, for instance, also makes biggest impact. The world-wide entertainment industry, Hollywood, produces quite number of movies devoted to LGBTQ issues. However, the domination of only white and rich is overwhelmingly obvious. Furthermore, it is worsened by the development of notion nurtured in many European countries that LGBTQ members are only suitable for those who are physically appeared as European.[101] The second identity in the discussion is religion. As discussed earlier in this study, Islam constitutes as the belief system and culture. Understood as one of the homophobic and heterosexual dominant religions, Islam classifies all sexual activities other than heterosexuality as sinful. This becomes the basic of Muslim perception towards homosexuality. Therefore, becoming a gay and embracing Islam will not impress Muslim community, especially the orthodox groups, and can cause rejection as well as other negative attitudes. The additional identity that can also be included in the analysis is race. A big majority of European Muslims are having immigrant background or coming from Islamic country (or Muslim majority country). The intervention of Islamic background in racial aspect is an influential substance in measuring the repression of LGBTQ members. Although not all of the group members are coming from non-European blood. Some of them may also convert to Islam.

99 J.K. Puar, 2005. '"Queer Times, Queer Assemblages", What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?', *Social Text* 23(3–4 84–5): 121–39. page 128

100 Christopher McAllister, 2018. "Developing inclusive later life learning environments: insights from intersectional analysis of ageing and lesbian, gay, transgendered and bisexual identities," *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, Volume 9, Issue 1, 2018-04-06, Pages 45-60, ISSN 2000-7426 http://dx.doi.org/10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela9105

101 Taylor Y. 2011. "Intersectional Dialogues - a Politics of Possibility?" *Feminism and Psychology* 21 (2): 211–17. doi:10.1177/0959353510370180. Page 214 and Murat Aydemir, "Dutch Homonationalism and Intersectionality" in *The Postcolonial Low Countrie : Literature, Colonialism, and Multiculturalism*, by Elleke Boehmer, and Mul, Sarah De (ed.), Lexington Books, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, page 188

In short, to match the concept with issues related to non-heterosexuality contexts, intersectionality should focus on how to manage a minority status and the other multiple nature of identities as well as experiences of social inequality formed by categories of race, class, sexuality, and disability.[102] Therefore, this leads us to the search for an explorative view of the identity standpoints which are located at the site of intersection. Being a Muslim with immigrant background, ethnically different, and openly claiming their sexual identity serves as a real example of intersectionality. In addition to that, within the Islamic environment, European LGBT Muslims are often forcefully misrecognized as heterosexual, which is a form of discrimination. This has limited their chances to express their true identity and, oftentimes, one of the feasible choices they own is to leave Islam and tend to be agnostic or loose the relationship with the religion and community. Under the concept of intersectionality, we will see how the dynamics and relations of each social identity produce narratives.

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[102] Christopher McAllister, 2018. Page 47

Chapter 4

Finding and Analysis

In this chapter, I present data presentation and content analysis of the findings from both Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation official websites as well as their Facebook pages. Each of the sites is analyzed and interpreted in respect to what has been mentioned in the previous chapters about theoretical framework. The nature of this research is not to make an overall comparison among the sources, except to elaborate the whole data as an entity that can show the group functions. Both platforms are reviewed as it is linked one to another, so the connection between each site has already established.

Data Presentation

This part discusses how the internet platforms are effectively utilized in supporting the marginalized communities. Data for the study are obtained through a content analysis of official websites and Facebook pages of both Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation. All of those sites were reviewed since the day of their establishments. In collecting data from Maruf, there are in total 16 relevant English entries from their official website since 2015. While their first posted Facebook wall was reviewed from 2013. Meanwhile, for Naz and Matt Foundation, there are 93 English entries from its first website entries in 2014. Their Facebook wall is also reviewed from its first updated wall in 2014. Due to the enormous number of data from the sites and my language skill limitation, only English posts that are included in the data analysis. In order to link the content with the concept of intersectionality, the English data are deemed adequate to provide information. This review highlights a one way messaging that shares information. The main topics of their posted updates mostly focus on the group missions, programs, services, and relevant information that meet their readers' interest. The entries mostly appear by using text, however sometimes it also comes together with pictures or videos created by both groups. Oftentimes, it also appears with link attaching to other relevant information from other online sources such as online news, reports from other organizations, written interviews, video interviews and other relevant issues that connect to the group interests. In general, these are the highly-recommended information from the groups. While reading the whole posts on both sites, I pretend myself to be the member of LGBTQ Muslims, to find out how they can shelter the need and the concerns about life challenges as well as to feel the effect of being comforted and being motivated by the groups.

I, first, was looking into the official websites prior to collecting Facebook data. The first section that have gone to the observation was the introduction of both groups. In this part, they clearly mention the history of the group establishments, missions, objectives, as well as the fundamental standpoint. I then moved on to their collection of events. It provides information about their activities throughout the years as well as their commitment in achieving their goals. The third part of the observation was through its 'Contact us' section. This part does not only give the readers information about the group details, but also emergency numbers and other related groups that can provide help for the LGBTQ Muslims who are expecting for assistance. The last part was by extending the observation to the news section. In this part, an extensive variety of data are available mostly related to their views about one particular incident or news housed from other sources that contain groups activities.

On their Facebook accounts, I took note that there are 7,700 likes for Naz and Matt Foundation and 2,500 likes for Maruf group page. The likes mean the number of frequent participants that would receive every new notification or recent updates from both groups. Both groups are using nearly most of the features on Facebook, such as event invitation, charity sections, and other necessary supports. After collecting and reading the data, I notice that there are two categories that can help to classify the finding which is information sharing and group promotional.

1) Information Sharing

In this part, these groups have employed their websites and social media platforms as a place to wide spread their missions and goals. It includes knowledge sharing in order to disseminate variety of information such as Islamic teachings, individual stories, sexual health, current updates of incidents, or their opinion towards particular cases. Quite often, the articles and postings contain educative information compared to the other types of updates. This was explained by Jarvenpaa in his work that a great collaborative use of electronic media for information sharing forms the tendency that groups will "have a propensity to share information weigh more highly the social and personal good from sharing." The propensity to share affecting information is part of prosocial transformation behaviors which aim at "maintaining the well-being and integrity of others and the self."[103]

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103 Jarvenpaa, S.L, and D.S Staples. 2000. "The Use of Collaborative Electronic Media for Information Sharing: An Exploratory Study of Determinants." *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* 9 (2): 129–54. doi:10.1016/S0963-8687(00)00042-1. Page 135

Content summaries that comprise information sharing from both groups are shown in Table 1. The table differentiates two different contexts that occurred on the posted updates, namely religious and sexuality contexts. The two contexts show the main function of the groups which is to indoctrinate the readers about their understanding of Islam and homosexuality. From both platforms, we may see a different level of activity. In Maruf, they are less active on website since they are only providing short summaries of their activities with very minimum amount of analysis and opinion sharing that relate to religion and sexuality contexts. However, they seem more encouraging on their Facebook account in which they share more opinion and voices about both their identities. Meanwhile, Naz and Matt Foundation is active on both platforms but more informative and attractive in their Facebook walls.

Table 1
Descriptive overview of official website and Facebook account content summaries in relation to information sharing classification.

Content	Maruf	Naz and Matt Foundation
Official Website		
Religious Context	Religious interpretation on homosexuality: 1) Sharing information about different religious interpretations in regards to the punishment of gay and lesbian according to the sexual activities included in both sexual orientations	Religious interpretation on homosexuality: 1) Reiterating that the Quran does not say anything about transgender people; Pointing out that being Trans is more likely acceptable in both Sunni and Shia Islam; 2) Affirming the religious dogmas such as: love is at every religion's core and homosexuality is not a sin; 3) Affirming that the disagreement about homosexuality based on religious arguments ought to vanish. 4) Explaining the core beliefs and values of Islam which answers the hesitation about Islam and homosexuality because there is no stance to forbid homosexuality in the Quran. 5) Inviting to watch and read information housed from other sources related to Islam and homosexuality.
	Debate among Muslim scholars: 1) Homosexual are perceived differently between Muslim societies and scholars.	Debate among Muslim scholars: 1) Confirming that both religion and sexuality can coexist; 2) Sexual freedom in Islam is supported and prejudices towards homosexuality

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Content	Maruf	Naz and Matt Foundation
	2) Pointing the need for Muslim scholars to reinterpreting the Quran according to their modern condition.	by Muslim are resulted from the narrow interpretation of Islam. 3) Common Muslims often misinterpret the law about homosexuality in Islam.
Sexuality context	LGBTQ Norms: 1) Spreading the understanding that the West should not try to universalize Western norms concerning the LGBTQ community	LGBTQ Norms: 1) Pointing out that being gay is normal and it is a natural part of life. 2) Confirming that being a homosexual means that there is nothing wrong with the mental health, because it is the way they are born and it cannot be changed;
		The nature of homosexuality: 1) There is no option to turn themselves as homosexuals. 2) Being homosexual means following the nature.

Content	Maruf	Naz and Matt Foundation
	Facebook	
Religious Context	Narration of LGBTQ Muslim lives: 1) Narrating the struggle situation for many gay people in the Arab who try to balance their secret lives as homosexuals with their public lives 2) Supporting to come out as gay and Muslim through media so it is expected to cause visibility that will change hearts and minds. 3) Reporting that the Pakistani clerics allow the marriage of transgenders	Narration of LGBTQ Muslim lives: 1) Reporting the news about Islamic clerics who declare transgender marriages legal within Islam.
	Encouragement for deeper understanding: 1) The rhetoric about incompatibility of Islam and homosexuality, thus they are recommending to build an in-depth relationship with God. 2) Report on a workshop about Islam, sexual and gender diversity to a group of experts dealing with health issues	Encouragement for deeper understanding: 1) Describing the tendency that religion can evolve in equilibrium with society. 2) Enforcing the understanding that all religions must come together to end homophobia.
		Religion as a ground to spread equality: 1) Declaring and supporting that religion is a great thing for very many

Content	Maruf	Naz and Matt Foundation
	around Muslim Maroccan LGBT in the Netherlands.	people and it should spread love, not homophobia and rejection. 2) Encouraging to spread love and religion, as it brings respect to another human being, not hate;
Sexuality	Cure for homosexuality: 1) Informing that homosexuality is not an illness which later forces the LGBT people to commit suicide.	Cure for homosexuality: 1) Assuring that there is no treatment for homosexuality, as it is natural condition and they are born bringing their own sexual orientation.

2) Promotional

The second classification that is occurred within the data is promotional aspects. Table 2 displays the summaries of the official website and Facebook entries that relate to group promotional classification. I identify there are several elements that are grouped in within this category, such as events promotion, call for action, and fundraising. Events are classified in this category since it invites readers' and stakeholders' contributions to engage in their activities. Also, both groups have actively hosted events that support their missions which are to raise the awareness for LGBTQ Muslims lives. Call for action messages focus to inspire and motivate the local activists and individuals to perform and conduct on the basis of the values contained on their internet entries as well as to empower the readers to sign petition and to spread the messages. Meanwhile, the fundraising entries may come as invitations for material charitable contribution to support the groups and to fund the activities.

Table 2
Descriptive overview of official website and Facebook account content summaries in relation to group promotional classification.

Content	Maruf	Naz and Matt Foundation
Official Website		
Events:	1) Inviting their members to join for Ramadan workshop to give support and strength to queer Muslims who want to gain knowledge about Islam and Ramadan. 2) Informing to join the activities so they can be the candidates to close that gap	1) Inviting to the events that raise awareness with the local and national press about religious homophobia. 2) Supporting similar group events in order to educate the people from the Muslim faith to get married and conform to religious and family expectations. 3) Inviting to event that focuses on the protection of LGBTQI individual's health.

Content	Maruf	Naz and Matt Foundation
	between Islam and homosexuality.	
Call for Action	1) Inviting the activists and individual to raise the awareness that many LGBTQ people suffered for the rising oppression and higher numbers of punishments. 2) Urging LGBTQ Muslim activists across Europe to bridge the gap between homosexual and Muslim communities.	1) Imposing parents to accept their LGBT children since there is no cure for them. 2) Empowering individuals with LGBTQ and religious identities to be strong and encouraging parents to accept their children. 3) Affirming that religion should never stop the LGBTQ people from religious background to care for each other and calling all the readers to celebrate diversity.
Fundraising		1) Announcing the launch of a new charity with the purpose to immediately letting people know that two people of the same sex from different religious beliefs, is accepted.

Facebook		
Events:	1) Inviting members to join an event about a Dutch transwoman Muslim and relationship between LGBTI's and religion/spirituality. 2) Inviting members to join LGBTIQ march against Islamophobia and xenophobia.	1) Inviting people to come together to an event to stand against homophobia that comes from religion and culture.
Call for Action	1) Calling for parents and families with LGBTQ children to understand that it is a form of normal human behavior. Parents and family members should provide support and comfort for their children and accept them for what they are. 2) Supporting Muslim members that Islam is liberating to express all their identities including being LGBTQI+ and Muslim. 3) Inviting the readers to watch a documentary	1) Inviting LGBT Muslim to unite the LGBT and Muslim communities to campaign the sexuality of LGBT Muslims 2) Calling for the members to support the #LGBTMuslimSolidarity campaign 3) Encouraging members to promote the value, need for love and unification. 4) Inviting members to sign a petition in order to omit transphobia

Content	Maruf	Naz and Matt Foundation
	about the four coming out Gay Muslims who struggle to live their best and true lives. 4) Calling for members support fight against discriminating towards transgender persons which is unethical and against the values of Islam.	

Responses

As mentioned above, the data are descriptive in nature and the summarized key findings are formulated after a thorough reading of all the data entries. Both groups are optimizing their full potentials of internet platforms to build informative and interactive atmospheres. In addition to that, their online platforms are used as the community-building to gather the activists and individuals that share the same issues. The two data classifications are used as strategies to create and promote their identities. It includes information sharing and promotional behaviors which are developed to see the function of both platforms in expressing and articulating their intersecting identities.

Also, the two tables above attempt to map out how religious and sexual voices are utilized by both groups in order to promote their presence and stimulate the acceptances in the public spheres. We can clearly see that their internet entries are trying to decrease the multilayered discriminations that are encountered by the LGBTQ Muslim people. Another highlight of their internet platforms is by utilizing them not only as information sharing place, but they also provide interaction through all internet features that are available.

Finding

This part provides analysis and interpretation of the entries' nature on the sites. Data analysis is conducted by examining the two tables above. By using classifications and categorization of contents from the summarized key findings, the real utterances and text will be revealed to see if the data carry an intersectional aspect. If it has such quality, I include the quotation and allow the interpretation and link them with the above-mentioned concept of intersectionality. The combination of structural and representational intersectional research enables this study to see the equality issues and inequality or suppression that are displayed in the cultural

representations of gendered and other identities.[104] My discussion focuses on two parts, i.e. the religious and sexual voices which support the LGBTQ Muslims visibilities and groups support to fight for multiple discriminations. The first part shows the group efforts in allowing their visibility within the community through their internet entries. By gathering data that contain the combination of religious and sexual voices, I break down the analysis in two parts which are the homosexuality discourses exposures in Islamic discourses and the self-consciousness of intersectionality that is attributed in the internet entries. The second part demonstrates the groups support in combating oppression and discrimination. There are at least two sub-analyses that go under this part, group strategy to work against discrimination and invitation for the members to collaboratively work in fighting discrimination.

1. Religious and sexual voices to support for the visibility

The LGBTQ Muslims visibilities in Europe are still facing obstacles, especially within the Muslim communities and some small numbers within European conventional communities. A report on homophobia in the UK[105], for instance, shows that there are numbers of the LGBTQ people who encounter negative attitudes such as physical abuses, threats, and hate crimes. Meanwhile, Muslim communities are also facing the same issues, both in political level and within civil societies[106], even getting worse after the 9/11 that enables Islamophobia to attack Muslims in the West. In addition to that, the notion of being homosexuality is mostly related to white-dominant identity and understood that only suitable for European, while people of color and religious people tend to be excluded from this group. Therefore, having both identifications might add another layer of discrimination. In addition to that, being people of color can also cause another problem, since they are closely linked to being immigrants and Muslims. However, the main focus of this research is only attributed to religious and sexual identities, issues pertaining to race and ethnicity will be implicitly discussed. The intersecting identifications of the LGBTQ Muslims are causing numbers of oppression, such as rejection and discrimination from the internal groups especially from their religious family or Muslim communities. Meanwhile, from the external sides, there are threats they need to face, especially from the Western communities.

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104 Carastathis, 2014. Page 306-7 ; Keskitalo-Foley, 2017. Page 15

105 As per 2016, there are roughly 400,000 lesbian women, 800,000 gay men, 500,000 bisexual people, and 400,000 trans people who have been the target of homophobia. This report is written by Galop, a British organization that provides advice, support, reports, and research on the LGBTQ issues for over 30 years. Nick Antjoule, 2016 "The Hate Crime Report: Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in the UK," *Galop*. Accessed through https://www.galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/The-Hate-Crime-Report-2016.pdf

106 Enes Bayrakli and Farid Hafez (eds.). 2016. *European Islamophobia Report 2016*. Accessed through http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/UNITEDKINGDOM.pdf

In order to find out the way their functions in mediating the intersecting identities, this part investigates how the groups are interfusing homosexuality discourses within Islamic teachings as well as how they manage to support the intersectionality. The establishments of minority group focusing on sexuality and religiosity have helped the marginalized LGBTQ Muslims to foster themselves and find shelters. This analysis has drawn on the literature about intersectionality between two marginalized identities.

a. Homosexuality exposures in Islamic discourses

Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation, on their internet updates, have shown balance arguments about religion and sexuality. However, one of the most propelling and persuading phrases that help to promote both identities is the collaboration of the two side arguments into one convincing point of view. Although, it might have been attuned to Western values.

For instance, in 2015, Naz and Matt Foundation website posted a link that refer to an interview by Dr. Shabir Ally, a Canadian Imam, under the title *How is homosexuality discussed in the Quran?* Matt as the author of the entries points out:

> "The aim of the interview was to see how the Islamic community can promote an inclusive environment for all, while still staying true to their core beliefs and values. If you think that homosexuality is forbidden in the Quran, then I hope by watching this film you will find a new, more positive understanding about acceptance and love."

There, we can find how the Foundation is trying to educate the audiences about the relation of Islam and homosexuality in a more modern context. In addition to that, the affirmations from Islamic leaders have escalated the trust for the readers and may represent the acceptance of both ideologies. In his interview, Dr Ally mentions that:

> "… regardless of the specific interpretations of that Qur'anic verse, more generally Muslims are like anybody else, we are informed by all modern developments … We understand human nature a bit better than some of our predecessors did. Given that understanding and now add that to our general appreciation for Qur'anic core values such as being kind in our treatment of other human beings, understanding human beings as they are, appreciating people ... We need to create an inclusive environment in our community so that people of all shades can come in and feel at home. We want our worship spaces to be accessible, so that people can come in and comfortably worship God."

Under the interview on the need to elaborate homosexual understandings in Islamic arguments, this information-sharing type of internet update provides a proper combination of intersectional concept that points out equality. The usage of persuasive information about the need to update Qur'anic interpretation and the urge to adapt to modern development have given the impression that there is a chance for homosexuality to tuck in into the faith. There is a possibility to provide

opportunities for the acceptance of LGBT people without making alteration of the Quranic core values. It is an evidence of the embedded intersectional concept that has intense interconnectedness and gives a convincing understanding that we need to make effort in creating peaceful environment and providing equal opportunities.

In addition to that, the similar combination of both discourses also appears from an individual narration who self-proclaims as a gay and Muslim in Naz and Matt Foundation. The documentary about a marriage of two British-Middle Eastern men who happen to be Muslims described their multiple identities in a more elaborating way:

> "Islam has got a rich history around LGBT rights and LGBT Ideals and Islamic history is fascinating … There is no translation about same-sex desire and intimacy. So, there is no discussion about kind of homosexuality … People with a very misogynistic agenda wants to control people's body and people's lives. And in doing so, they have taken on this and twisted the story of the prophet Lot [which is always used for rejecting Homosexuality in Islam]"

This understanding about Islam attitudes towards the LGBTQ people has created another story. The statement is equipped with the historical facts that there are no discourses in Islam that directly point out homosexuality. This is one of the means to find for the acceptance within the Muslim community.

The Association of British Muslim (AoBM) has declared their acceptance towards the homosexuality. It serves as a good example to work on the visibility in Muslim community and help the campaign for the acceptance. On the occasion of Matthew Ogston's tribute, the founder of Naz and Matt Foundation, to commemorate the first year of his fiancé's death, he claimed that "AoBM also lends support to Naz & Matt Foundation as Matthew Ogston walks a 130 mile distance in the memory of Dr Nazim Mahmood to raise awareness about religiously-motivated homophobia." The statement continued:

> "In the spirit of Islamic doctrine of free will, a core principle at the heart of AoBM is that people should be allowed to fashion their lives freely. Everyone is responsible for own actions on the Day of Judgement. AoBM appreciates that some people may have reservations about certain ways of living; however we advocate strongly the view that such disagreement gives no right to any of us to act in homophobic manner. We urge all communities to initiate and support a dialogue from within to further a better understanding of the issues related to sexuality – both culturally and religiously."

As the representative of Muslim with inclusive and progressive values in the UK, AoBM can be a role model for wider Muslim community. The affirmative component in their support towards the groups and homosexuality may assist in transpiring the equality within the dominant oppression (the Islamic culture and faith). Besides the affirmation from Naz and Matt Foundation, Maruf has also put similar concern about discrimination by sounding the

homosexual stronger voice for the existence of the members. In addition to that, another evidence that suggests the collaboration of both identities occurs in Maruf's Facebook invitation:

> "Being LGBT and out—even in the world of Ellen and Neil Patrick Harris—is still very much an emotionally difficult thing for communities to accept. When you add to the mix a strict religious tradition, it can be next to impossible. *Gay Muslims lifts the curtain on four British gay and lesbian Muslims—only one of whom dares to reveal his identity—who struggle to live their best and true lives while retaining their religious and familial upbringing*. Watching this film, you will be moved … angry … and sad, but at the end, perhaps full of hope because things have to and will change. Don't they?"

To add another dimension of intersectionality, Naz and Matt Foundation has also suggested that people need to create balance of religion within society: "Religion is not set in stone. It can, and must, evolve in equilibrium with society if it is to support, not hinder, the positive progression of mankind." Additionally, Maruf reports the transgender marriage approval from Pakistani Islamic leaders: "Another great news: These Muslim religious leaders believe transgender people deserve the right to marry." The mentioned statements above proofed that the collaboration of both discourses within the internet entries is possible. By the approval from Islamic scholars and testimonies from the members, it has given an overarching view on how the relationship among, at least, two intersecting identities could coexist.

Having contributions in establishing the relationship between Islam and homosexuality can inspire the commitment of LGBTQ Muslim members and help to raise the awareness of issues that may affect their lives. Concerns about intersectionality are also raised by another scholar that the intersectional approaches "are fundamentally concerned with theorising and investigating how dynamics of power play out between groups."[107] The established statements about reinterpretation of Islamic scripts and the endorsements from the Islamic leaders on gay or trans marriage have demonstrated the how the small parts of dominant power permit the acknowledgement of both identities. It perhaps can challenge the wider Muslim community to open up their spaces for these metaminority people.

b. Organizational consciousness of Intersectionality

Within a couple of years after the establishment, Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation have gone through significant improvement. My observation suggests that the digital entries are becoming more compelling and attracting. The use of more strong arguments and interesting phrases that promote perceptions of intersectionality have also increased in numbers. In other

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107 Roshan das Nair and Sonya Thomas. 2012 page 17

words, their efforts in combining religion and sexuality have given a stronger voice in promoting their existences. One of the instances is on the occasion of the famous incident happened in Orlando. In line with the Orlando shooting Sunday night last 2016, a massacre at a gay night club in Orlando, Florida, by a Muslim man Omar Mateen which fueled intense phobia towards Muslims and homosexuals,[108] Maruf foundation took their time to honor the victims and condemn the incident:

> "The Maruf Foundation is deeply shocked and wants to express its condolences on the fifty individuals that died during the Orlando shooting Sunday night. Our first thoughts are with the bereaved and our prayers are with you. It saddens us to see that the identity of the attacker is already widening the gap between LGBTQI+ and Muslims. The Maruf Foundation tries time after time to close that gap by showing that within the Queer community there are also Muslim members. For our members, Islam can be liberating, it gives them tools to express all their identities. That includes being LGBTQI+ and Muslim. By attributing this act of hate to a religion, you are already excluding a part of the victims…"

Maruf mentions out their mission as to close the gap between LGBTQ people and Islam. This has, in fact, given a notion that there are individuals who are also having intersecting identity within the community, yet it has never aroused any problematic issues. This suggests that the coexistences among between religion and homosexual-identified members can happen. Same goes for Naz and Matt Foundation. On the same occasion in commemorating the victims of Orlando shooting, they posted:

> "At this time, everyone around the world should be outraged that the actions of one man filled with so much hate and homophobia can cause so much pain, grief and loss. So it's saddening today to hear of individuals, and even some parents, who believe the killer was sent here for a higher purpose, citing inaccurate facts about religion, and including their own misinterpretations & misguided thinking - using all of it as an excuse, a mask, justify their own close minded prejudice and bigotry. We must all come together to make a stand against this type of thinking. Religion is here to encourage love and respect to another human being, not hate."

Matthew Oggston, as the author for this posting, put his big concern that there is misconception in using religion as the base of homophobia. The encouragement to shorten the gap between religion and homosexuality occurs by using affection as the main argument.

However, embracing both identities are not always significant. In some cases, there are statements that point out the objections towards religion. Naz and Matt Foundation renounces the reconciliation of both identities, as he points out that:

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108 Dan Barry, Serge F. Kovaleski, Alan Blinder and Mujib Mashal, "Always Agitated. Always Mad': Omar Mateen, According to Those Who Knew Him," *The New York Times*, June 18, 2016 accessed through https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/19/us/omar-mateen-gunman-orlando-shooting.html

> "… if you were born into a religion, please be strong if you are a gay or lesbian. Because there were other people out there who like you, we want to support you. And parents, please if your son or daughter is gay or lesbian, just hold out your arms just give them a big hug and just tell them that you love them…"

His concern about religious family rejection towards LGBTQ children occurred after his fiancé took his life because of the rejection from his religious South Asian family. When he needs to talk about both identity, sometimes ethnicity as well, Naz and Matt Foundation has successfully demonstrated a wide gap among those identifications. The inability to explain intersectionality has somehow reduced the level of acceptance.

Additionaly, Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation have considered that the spreading misconception in heterosexual dominant groups. Naz and Matt Foundation frequently takes up the notion that that homosexuality is a disease, therefore a cure need to be given. In an interview about the Foundation recent event, Matt uttered that:

> "Within each religion, love is at its core. And through the love and the understanding that as a child, they're not a sin. *They can't be cured*. They're born this way and through conversation and dialogue, an open debate, *we can actually open the closed minds of individuals who don't believe that gay or lesbian people are normal*. We are normal. We're born this way, we can't have that and that's what we want to change."

Meanwhile, Maruf points out the equality for human beings, regardless the gender, sexuality, race, and religion, is fostered in Islam. In Maruf Messages, the monthly talk hosted by Maruf, the organization explains that:

> "Racism in the Islam is prohibited and Allah has created all of the humans equal. The notion of the radical equality from the Quranic perspective and Muslim traditions oblige Muslims around the world not to exclude and discriminate based on one's race(?)/ethnicity(?). However, lived experiences in Muslim majority countries, as well in Muslim diasporas around the world show that there are still a lot of prejudices and racism towards black Muslims; the matter of 'citizenship', cheap labor, modern-day slavery*, in holy places such as the mosque.**
> The second edition of Maruf Messages shall host a panel that will elaborate on such experiences. We will look at what the Islam says about racism and what are the realities we deal with."

The adaptation of intersectional approach can encourage both groups to talk about their views and standpoints within their cultural groups and to explore the views from external communities who have dissimilar opinion to the group norms.[109] By collaborating on homosexuality and religion understandings, both groups have supported the members to see the conflicts between the intersecting identities. In addition to that, from the entries that have been posted online, it seems to suggest that the representational approach of intersectionality has led

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to the explanation of inequality and suppression encountered by LGBTQ Muslim group members.

2. Support to fight for multiple discriminations

Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation as the European social groups have persistently worked against the multiple discriminations. Their contributions in providing the exhaustive insights of multi-identity are proofed by numbers of events collaborating with the LGBTQ Muslim activists as well as the individual members. Therefore, the online efforts have a mutual relationship with the offline endeavors. Not only through events, both groups are stimulating the readers and participants by sharing messages that relates to the groups' norms. Equality message, for instance, is one of the most articulated and discussed messages. Meanwhile, the messages for wider society about discrimination are also getting more attention. Through charity programs, both group can see the participant's and reader's enthusiasms in supporting their programs and missions.

This part shows how the groups have successfully attempted to include supporting efforts while disseminating information and promotional updates on the sites. Numbers of posts contain specific information that attempts to reduce discrimination. By advocating the LGBTQ members, sharing information related to sexuality discourses, and individual stories are included in their internet entries. Those are the groups' approaches in combating homophobia and Islamophobia so that the members and all LGBTQ Muslims can achieve an equal position within the society.

a. This is our task, collaboratively!

The intersectional approach allows us to understand the conflicting dimension of inequality that will help us to see the group standpoints of the oppressed environment. Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation have extended their work to provide motivation and support for the audiences and members of both groups. They intensively invest in some activities and events in order to explore the way to reduce conflicts among the intersecting identities. By utilizing their Facebook updates and website entries which enclose the core problem and religious teachings, both groups have given opportunities for wider audiences, not to mention the families, to collaboratively work against intolerances and discrimination among Muslim and LGBTQ people.

Both groups proclaim their main theme is to bridge the gap between Islam and homosexuality. The spaces created within their internet platforms have now become place to connect and share stories resulted from their situations.

In Maruf's introductory remark, they describe their activities as to connect, support, and strengthen:

> "… queer Muslims and their allies, and *give them a voice*, *visibility and the power to create more social acceptance in their communities*. We also raise awareness around sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Maruf strives to build societies that are free of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, religion/belief(s), ethnicity and race."

In regards to Naz and Matt Foundation, they are encompassing their activities by having a mission "… to never to let religion, any religion, come in the way of the unconditional love between parents and their children."

Their missions are proven through numbers of activities that serve as a platform for members to interact. Most of the activities are tackling issues about multi-identity and allow only LGBTQ Muslim members, but also the 'straight' individuals. The open spaces for all participants to make contact seem to suggest that the groups have tried to accommodate the knowledge sharing from both sides. Maruf regularly hosts the 'Maruf Messages' every month. Generally, it tackles the issue pertaining to discrimination, gender, and sexuality. In one of Maruf events posted on Facebook wall, they encourage the members to collectively learn about the insight between Islam and discrimination, in this case it also includes racism towards the LGBTQ People:

> "Post 9/11, most western nations have seen dramatic increases in bias motivated violence against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. Predicated on the long-lived vilification of Muslims by the media and the state, such violence is a reactionary reminder of Muslims' outsider status. Interestingly, little attention has been paid to the particular vulnerability of women, trans women and gender non-binaries/non-conforming to anti-Muslim hate crime. Last year we started this dialogue and it has to happen all over again."

Their agendas in raising the awareness of discrimination towards Muslim as well as toward the marginalized group are bringing the sphere of intersectionality. It has proven what are the double struggles that the intersecting identity members have to go through in combating discrimination towards their religion as well as sexual orientation or gender identity. It might impact the participants to learn about the feeling and give empathic for those who are experiencing a multi-layered discrimination.

Similar to Maruf, Naz and Matt Foundation conducts event on regular basis. One of the events tackling discrimination is Birmingham Pride 2018 – March with Naz and Matt Foundation:

> "March with us for Birmingham Pride 2018 to help us tackle religious and cultural homophobia, and to support the campaign to criminalise 'gay cure therapy' (a completely legal form of abuse). As we walk, we will also be remembering my darling Naz, and the countless other members of our community who are no longer here because of the beliefs of their families."

The invitation to join the march has given another insight of multi-layered discrimination. Having background from religious family might give particular difficulties. Rejection, verbal or physical abuses are influenced by homophobia from religious and cultural dogmas. As learned from Matthew Ogston's story when his fiancé took his life because of the hatred given by his religious family after coming out.

Other than school, both groups invite broader actors to work against discriminations towards LGBTQ and LGBTQ Muslims people. Discussed on their blog entries and Facebook walls that parents and schools need to get involved in providing recognition, supports, and encouragement to understand multiple discriminations that the LGBTQ people have to go through. By providing empowerment for the LGBTQ people and families, this is expected to provide an atmosphere of sharing similar experiences and provide interpersonal support among each member. The evidence in the following excerpt is to narrate the discriminations that happen within the religious groups:

> "We need change. We need attitudes to be more accepting. We need eyes and hearts to be opened and for unconditional love to be the norm *between parents and their children*, regardless of faith, no faith or religion."

Recommendation given by Matt in his interview with Asian Express for the family can serve as a support, since homophobia is not an individual problem. It involves community to combat such discrimination. The following queries regarding the confrontation towards the religious and cultural homophobia were also posted by Maruf in their Facebook wall, "Do you think Allah will rejoice when we spit on our LGBT Muslim brothers and sisters? Do you think it makes Allah happy to cause them pain?" The two conflicting identities involved in the entries are exposed to convey their mission in educating the public after what they have experienced.

The other evidence that combines the notion of being homosexual and religious stipulates the reader to understand the problematics condition occurred among the multi-identities individuals. Such understanding might intensify the support from both Muslim and LGBTQ Muslim groups. Maruf indicates in their Facebook update that:

"It is time to educate parents and families that being gay, lesbian, bisexual or a transgender is a form of normal human behaviour and marrying their LGBTQ children in a traditional way is not a way to cure them. People do not adopt these behaviours from others. Members of the LGBTQ population are subject to more bullying and harassment in the society than others. Parents and family members"

Maruf strongly believes that family and their LGBTQ children ought to collaborate and commit to propel the movement in order to escalate the relationship among religiosity and sexuality. Stronger effort to produce equal condition is targeted to be achieved, although it is a long way to go. In this end, Naz and Matt Foundation endorses the conception that the need for parents to not let any barrier towards their relationship with their LGBTQ children, because the very problem within religious community lies in the intermixed of religion and culture. "There's a very strong dislike towards homosexuality. Therefore, it's our goal to let no religion break the love between parents and gay children." Other campaign posts explicitly refer to the entanglement of children and parents to promote acceptance and LGBTQ presences, for example: "… an opportunity to take the message further into our communities to invite parents to open their hearts and minds to love unconditionally the children they gave birth to." The struggle for acceptance and acknowledgment allows the contents related to intersectionality to be more articulated, as the means to stand on the challenges and bridge the different identifications. The constructed story highlighting their oppression can illuminate the participants in understanding the problematics of intersecting.

Discussion

Comparing the tasks of both groups, I come up with the conclusion that Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation seem to have different roles in this context. Although, they are setting the similar goal, which is to help the vulnerable community (the LGBTQ Muslims or LGBTQ from religious backgrounds) from their discriminant environments. Maruf, whose the targeted audiences are mostly coming from an Islamic background or embracing Islamic beliefs, puts more opinions and arguments about the faith and religious discourses. The main goal is to become or provide the safe place for the marginalized LGBTQ Muslim people residing in the Netherlands and Europe. Numbers of their internet entries focus on the more issues aiming towards the faith and its possibility to be adjusted in Western dominant culture. Maruf is also especially concerned about the social and faith issues of LGBTQ Muslims at the global level, proofed by their trip summary to South Africa, Turkey, and other countries. In addition to that, Maruf focuses on conveying their arguments that orient to social issues of the marginalized

community such as Muslim, people of colour, and inclusively LGBTQ people. Thanks to the Dutch government for supporting the group. It is then what makes the group does not pay much attention on charitable events and more to discussions.

In comparison to Maruf, Naz and Matt Foundation accommodates the dialogue on intersecting identities such as religiosity, sexuality, and ethnic. They align their work with individual narration and experiences sharing. Naz and Matt Foundation is frequently hosting events and activities orienting towards the challenge, discrimination, and oppression that the LGBTQ people have to pass. Throughout their online entries, Naz and Matt Foundation appears to be more inviting and engaging, compared to Maruf, where Maruf has more debate and dialogue that allows transfer knowledge from the experts about particular topics. Naz and Matt Foundation does not exclusively narrow their target to the LGBTQ people, they also involve parents, schools, and the authorities to work together in providing a safer place for the LGBTQ children, especially those who are from a very strict religious background. It perhaps is inspired by the foundation history that was marked by the death of the founder's fiancé.

Throughout the reading and data collection from Maruf official website and Facebook as well as Naz and Matt Foundation's, a list of summarized key findings is formalized. I divide the entries into two categories which are information sharing and promotional entries. Information sharing groups number of entries that contains knowledge sharing and suggestive notions. Promotional entries include events promotion, call for action, and fundraising activities. It has empowered and attempted to control the readers through the messages and information. From the presented data, this study is proceeded by using content analysis to examine the entries on the sites. This method has allowed me to reach out to an extensive source of data.

Findings of this research show that through the internet usage, both groups seem active and intensive. A variety of weblog and Facebook features have involved while disseminating their voices. Intersectionality concept used on the internet entries can help them to broaden their groups' coverages. What are the impacts of their intersectionality discourses? First, the empowerment to disclose their identity publicly, by opening up their both intersecting identifications. By combining the Islamic teaching with their stances of being part of homosexual people, it has boosted the number of acceptance of LGBTQ Muslim people. Seen while Naz and Matt Foundation shares their updates on the numbers of individuals that share similar experiences have contacted the organization and explaining their cases, such as rejection from their religious family. Also, the improvement of participants within their activities year to year.

Second, this research has linked the intersectionality with the usage of internet in providing relevant information about LGBTQ identities among Muslim groups. As identified earlier in this research that there are numbers of individuals participating within the religious communities, who also come from various ethnicities, and have publicly declared themselves as homosexual. This study draws indication that there are ways to reduce the risks, challenges, and direct confrontations from the homophobic groups or environments. Most importantly, those can be achieved through events and activities that educate and share the understandings towards the members and wider audiences. Through their websites and Facebook updates, it can be a proper source of motivations and support that can assist people to encounter challenges and all problems for being Muslim, homosexual, and people of color.

Chapter 5

Concluding Remarks

Homosexuality is a notion nourished in Western societies and understood as only compatible for white people. Meanwhile, Islam strongly prohibits the Muslim to be homosexuals, as it might violent the human nature. However, there are growing numbers of people who are embracing both identities, especially in Europe, where the societies seem to support sexual democracy. Under the similar experiences and life stories, these vulnerable metaminority people have grouped up and built strong networking. Two of which are Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation who are the case studies observed in this research. Maruf alone is a Dutch LGBTQ Muslim group headquarter in Amsterdam. The main goal of Maruf is to combat discrimination towards Muslim and LGBTQ communities in the Dutch societies. While Naz and Matt Foundation's establishment was inspired by the death of Dr. Nazim Mahmood, a British gay man who took his life after being confronted by his religious family. The constraints for both identities to collaborate have provided challenges for people who embrace Islamic faith and claiming themselves as part of LGBTQ.

This research has one main research question *How do non-heterosexual Muslim groups utilize their official websites to express their intersecting identities?* To help with the finding, two other sub-questions are formulated 1) *How are religious and sexual voices used by the groups to promote their visibility?* and 2) *How do their internet entries support the work against multi-layered discrimination?* The main objective of this study is to observe Maruf's and Naz and Matt Foundation's strategies in narrating their intersecting identities; between religiosity and sexuality, through their online platform. Internet nowadays is an important modern tool that helps communication, regardless of the religion, sexuality, ethnicity, and race. This research is expected to make contribution for the queer and Islam in the West studies as only few researches have been done earlier, however the specific focus on the supporting groups is still limited.

The finding of this research demonstrates that both Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation have functioned their internet platforms to its full potential. It can be seen from their active entries in both official websites and Facebook accounts. They utilize their online platforms for two categories, information sharing posts and promotional posts. Information sharing activities include opinion, individual narration, link attaching to other relevant information from other online sources such as online news, reports from other organizations, written interviews, video interviews and other relevant issues that connect to the group interests. In this category, there are two prominent topics that are frequently discussed, sexuality and religion. However, it does

not rule out that the groups are also discussing other topics such as ethnicity, culture, and politics. Promotional posts encompass event invitation, call for action messages, and fundraising. From promotional posts, groups can create interactive platforms that may move the offline movement. Throughout this categorization, the relation among the intersecting identities can be understood better. In addition to that, the finding also shows that religiosity and sexuality discussion can be further elaborated in order to make suggestion for the wider participants about the attitudes toward homosexuality.

Campaigns done by Maruf and Naz and Matt Foundation are the excellent examples to find out how the LGBTQ Muslims in Europe can cope their intersecting identities. Further research on the LGBTQ Muslim internet accounts should be done by answering some lingering unanswered questions such as how they utilize Facebook accounts as an interactive platform, finding the demographic data of the members, and what the attractiveness of these groups is. In addition to that, further support for the queer studies or modern Islamic studies, a research project focusing on inequalities of this particular minority group can be done. Considering that similar groups are not only flourishing in the West, some groups from the East are also increasing in numbers, although some might have to keep their secrecy. I would suggest to utilized the existing data and make the comparison with the Eastern groups.

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