

Power and Knowledge: Analysis of LGBTIQ Discourse in Sociology of Religion Based on Queer Theory

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ABSTRACT

This article intends to analyze the LGBTIQ discourse in sociology of religion based on queer theory. The conceptual framework in conceptualizing research results refers to the terminology of Michael Foucault's thoughts regarding the practice of discourse and power, and the queer theory approach. This research was conducted using a qualitative research method based on a critical discourse analysis approach. The critical discourse analysis approach is used in order to gain scientific knowledge and understanding regarding the reproduction of LGBTIQ discourse influenced by socio-religious values as part of sociology of religion studies. The findings of this study are that the power and knowledge gained from the terminology of Michael Foucault determined the paradox of discourse. Especially when it is associated with a socio-religious scientific background, it also creates contradictions that affect the socio-religious practices of the community in accepting the existence of LGBTIQ as an individual and community identity. However, as a sociology of religion researcher, we can use or integrate queer theory to produce inclusive knowledge because of the data collected based on LGBTIQ experiences, So that the scientific study in sociology of religion related to LGBTIQ research is more valid and reliable and does not tend to discriminate against their existence as part of humanity.

Keywords: discourse; sociology of religion; queer theory.

INTRODUCTION

LGBTIQ is the acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Transgender/Transsexual, Intersex, and Queer. Previously, I would like to explain the terminology of LGBTIQ before we discuss further studies. Lesbian, gay, and Bisexual are terms to refer to same-sex orientations. Particularly, Lesbian is a term used for Women who have a sexual orientation towards other women. On the other side, Gay is a term used for men who have a sexual orientation towards other Men, and also Bisexual is a term for Women or Men who have a sexual orientation for both (Beasley, 2005; Jagose, 1996). However, in general discussions about LGBTIQ in Indonesia still use the terminology of homosexuality to describe erotica, attraction, or sexual orientation toward someone of the same sex. Furthermore, the term transgender refers to those whose gender identity differs from what their physical characteristics at birth would indicate. For more detailed categories or terminology, we could define transwomen as those who identify their gender as women but their physical characteristics at birth as men. Conversely, the term transmen refers to people with physical characteristics at birth that are women but who define themselves as men. And then, People who identify as transsexual typically have undergone one or more operations to change the sex of their bodies, or they intend to. When a person's reproductive or sexual organs do not conform to the binary idea of female or male, they are categorized as intersex. Intersex has a connection to biological diversity. Disorder of sex development, or DSD, is a term that is occasionally used (Beasley, 2005; Spencer, 1995; Wieringa, 2015). On the other hand, the term queer is still debatable, but we can describe it as the result of particular cultural and theoretical forces that have increasingly shaped discussion of issues relating to gay and lesbian identity (Jagose, 1996).

The complexity of definitions and terminology for LGBTIQ people because of their sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expression or sex identification has produced scientific debate included in sociology of religion research. Especially when the study of LGBTIQ people revealed many contradictions because of their complexity, flexibility, and caring regarding their diverse worldviews amid social-religious norms and values (Halafoff et al., 2020). Besides that, scientific debates produced by LGBTIQ research open various opportunities to enrich scientific studies. Moreover, the diversity of gender and sexuality is a social fact that cannot be denied, even though it still receives negation from people who exalt heteronormative.

Research on LGBTIQ varies according to the social context of society, including the influence of social and religious values. In European countries, the United States, and Australia, research on LGBTIQ tends to examine the rights of LGBTIQ groups due to the success of LGBTIQ liberation movements and Socio-religious values do not play an important role in determining acceptance of the LGBTIQ community (Beasley, 2005). On the other side, Rasmussen et al. explored the research in Australia related to LGBTIQ that required a more comprehensive methodological approach to capture their relationship and also affiliation as part of subversive identities at the intersection of religion and gender-sexuality studies

(Rasmussen et al., 2020). In addition, the LGBTIQ's worldview about the meaning of the socio-religious values tend to bring them in unstable condition because of their subversive identities. This condition challenge the scholar and/or researcher to put their values more flexible and inclusive approach to analyze the LGBTIQ issues.

In Indonesia context, the research topic related to LGBTIQ become one of the special issues in gender and sexuality studies address specifically by involving social-religious values or norms. So that, the discourse of LGBTIQ related to socio-religious values is unstable and contradictory. The research about LGBTIQ people in Indonesia dominated the objective of facing discrimination and intimidation based on religious values, especially as a product of colonialism when Christianity and the West imported their values into some regions of Indonesia (Tumanan, 2020). And also, the debate about normality label and "the straight" traits for put the LGBTIQ people as a deviance (Boellstorff, 2016). Social and religious values have important roles in arranging or deciding the social acceptance of LGBTIQ existence. Therefore, this article intends to analyze LGBTIQ discourse in sociology of religion studies based on queer theory. For more detailed explanation, I would like to start the analysis from the dynamic of discourse through the terminology of power and knowledge from Michael Foucault, and it will emphasize with the complexity of LGBTIQ discourse in the sociology of religion studies. Then, this study will broaden the analysis related to LGBTIQ discourse with the integration queer theory in sociology of religion.

METHOD

This study aims to analyze LGBTIQ discourse in sociology of religion studies. So, the research process was carried out using a mechanism that refers to qualitative research methods with a critical discourse analysis approach. In general, the critical discourse analysis approach is used to reveal the meaning or content of news in various print and electronic media texts, advertisements, or films (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). However, this research focuses on the reproduction of published discourses in studies by scientists regarding research about LGBTIQ and the sociology of religion in Indonesian context. The data collected was collected from Google Scholar and Semantic Scholar, and the data findings are limited to research conducted between 2013 and 2023. This research use literature reviews approach based on scientific publication from socio-religious scholars and researchers who study LGBTIQ issues.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The discourse of LGBTIQ diversity is linked to power because the intellectual knowledge related to LGBTIQ issues has the power to drive social acceptance towards the knowledge about LGBTIQ and conceive of their existence as part of humanity. Thus, it can be said that sociology of religion scholars that oversee them have the power to shape discourse based on research findings. In addition, the critical discourse analysis approach supports this study's finding that

the theoretical approach or position of the researcher in determining the subject and object of research was influenced by the objectives of the research. The results from this research tend to analyze the stigmas and examine the resistance carried out by LGBTIQ groups in socio-religious practices.

This study will align with post-structuralism theories of power discourse from Michael Foucault and will emphasize queer theory from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick about the epistemology of the closet. The power in this study is not defined as centralized from a superior people to control inferior people, so the power is not embedded institution or structure. According to Foucault, power is spread, coming from everywhere, in the sense that it is divided into micro forces (Foucault, 2008). And then, Sedgwick analogizes LGBTIQ identity (including culture) to “the closet”. Sedgwick takes issue with the binary opposition between homosexuality and heterosexuality which relates to the recognition of identities. For Sedgwick binarism between heterosexuals and homosexuals organizes people's experiences and knowledge of morals, especially forms of self-knowledge and self-disclosure (Sedgwick, 2008). In this research, the queer terminology based on “The Closet” explores the form of resistance from LGBTIQ youth through engagement in social-religious practices.

LGBTIQ, Power, and Knowledge: A Dynamic of Discourse

The sexuality discourse based on Foucault tends to debate sex, which is highly taboo and must be censored. This condition describes the form of prohibition or discipline of the sexual body. This has implications for the Victorian government's success in institutionalizing sexual relations committed by LGBTIQ people as a form of sexual deviance. So, it can be interpreted that various discourses about sex are modified only for heterosexual monogamy by legalizing it in marriage institutions; on the other hand, it obscures the existence of LGBTIQ and other sexual relations (Foucault, 2008).

Foucault criticizes *scientia sexualis* in western civilization, which intends to reach the truth about sex by using a power-knowledge system that suppresses the desire for sexuality with various scientific knowledge and church dominance, which has implications for the rite of confession, which was very popular at that time. Foucault strongly criticized the Christian style of confession, which made sex the most popular topic and was a rite of discourse whose utterances were used as a form of liberation from sin (Foucault, 2008).

In various scientific discourses on LGBTIQ practices, both the production and reproduction processes of discourse cannot be separated from the existence of relations of power and knowledge. Foucault said that to analyze knowledge about sex (including discourse analysis on LGBTIQ), not in the context of oppression from power, but productive power, The concept of discourse power is understood as a variety of power relations that are immanent in their formation and organization. Various relationships that can support each other but can take the form of a contradiction, and the establishment of a strategy where the relationship of

power has an impact It emphasizes that power relations are unequal, constantly producing power situations, local, and unstable (Foucault, 2008; Haryatmoko, 2016).

Following Foucault's thought, power is not seen as centralized by the superior party controlling the inferior party, or as being at the central point of an institution or structure. However, for Foucault, power is spread, coming from everywhere, in the sense that it is divided into micro-forces (or micro-environments) (Foucault, 2008; Jagose, 1996). Thus, the concept of power is not only meant to examine the power of a state, institution, or structure in a standardized context and is different from the concepts normally encountered in Marxian thought. But it can also refer to micro-self-power or to the desire, belief, and opportunity of actors in building social relations, as associated with discourse practice (Allan, 2013; Beasley, 2005; Filax et al., 2004).

Through Foucault's thought, power is redefined in a different form. As explained by Kenneth Allan (2013), Foucault argues that the practice of power is used in a variety of ways and takes the form of discourses about what is possible and what is not possible. Where the various discourses are understood and expressed in relations between individuals or among scholars. Discourse can refer to various specific ways of speaking and behavior in response to a particular socio-religious issue. For Foucault, discourse must be intended as elements of reason that can play in various strategies with different and unstable tactical functions.

Furthermore, power in the formation of scientific discourse has goals and objectives that are the result of the choices or decisions of individual subjects by the scholars. Where in power there is resistance that is present everywhere, it complements the dialectics of power, which is distributed unequally. This also has an impact on the process of discourse on LGBTIQ in sociology of religion and scientific discourse. This illustrates a possibility that can occur in the paradoxical practice of LGBTIQ discourse.

LGBTIQ Discourse and Its Complexity in Sociology of Religion Studies

The majority of socio-religious values tend to negate the presence of LGBTIQ people, making it impossible for them to interact socially and develop relationships based on their sexual orientation or gender expression. Due to the dominance and superiority of heterosexual discourse, there is rigidity when examining the range of sexual and gender identities that are employed in social and religious rituals. Absolute religious teachings deny LGBTIQ people the freedom to engage in activities that reflect their sexual orientation and gender identity. The religious argument that LGBTIQ people are sinners who break God's law and should repent in order to uphold religious principles appropriately.

The complexity of LGBTIQ when their sexual orientation and sexual body against the creation of God and far from religious values (Boellstorff, 2016; Koeswinarno & Mustolehudin, 2017). Socio-religious values emphasize sexual

relations that are permissible for partners of different sexes. Also, the process of creation is carried out by two types of gender, namely women and men. Although research on LGBTIQ in Indonesia has been carried out by scientists for quite some time, The dominant discourse on morality triggers differences in binaryism for LGBTIQ people, who are considered immoral, while heterosexual groups as sexual subjects are moral. This understanding continues to be contested in religious discourse, which identifies the sexuality and gender of LGBTIQ groups as a form of deviance. Thus, LGBTIQ's sex identification and gender identity tend to be considered as a form of deviation and immoral among Christian young community (Wijaya Mulya, 2018).

Some of the research describes the harassment, violence, or persecution of the LGBTIQ community in Indonesia. For example, Polymenopoulou's analyze the danger of legal sanctions against same-sex partnerships has returned. Homophobia has been increasingly detected across the nation, despite the notable advancements that have been made in recent years, such as the Yogyakarta Principles in 2007 and the organization of the Jakarta Q-Film Festival. Due to local laws (*perdas*), both prostitution and homosexuality are criminalized in the (Islamized) region of Aceh, and incidents like the raid on a gay sauna in Jakarta in late 2017 that led to multiple prosecution (Polymenopoulou, 2018). Similar with Ridwan and Wu examine structural violence and rights abuses still be perceived by LGBTIQ community (Ridwan & Wu, 2018). Beside those problems of LGBTIQ, Thajib's (2018) research would like to analyze the persistent connections between safe spaces and violence risks in the daily lives of Indonesian Muslim queers as they automatically and relationally engage in reparatory gestures towards the harmful aspects of society.

Specifically, the contradiction of socio-religious values tends to problematize transgender people (*waria/wadam*) when they enter public spaces or participate in social and religious practices. Even though, the transgender community's physical negotiations in light of their religious sensitivity and need for membership The desire to reimagine membership in Indonesian (Muslim) culture is shown by the *waria*'s spiritually based feelings toward their bodies and sense of gender on the one hand and the indications of increased attention to the embodied expression of religion among the *waria* on the other. Despite being the main source of worries on both a personal and societal level, religious sensitivity has given the *waria* crucial frameworks that have improved their own relative acceptance of their embodied subjectivity (Toomistu, 2022).

Based on the various research results above, it shows that scientific discourse on LGBTIQ in the sociology of religion sphere continues to be studied in a variety of different ways. This study shows that the problems faced by LGBTIQ in the socio-religious context are very complex, but they are of interest to contemporary sociology of religion researchers, included in Indonesia. The complexity of studying LGBTIQ people occurs because people's evaluation, acceptance, and rejection are heavily influenced by religious values. Thus, researchers are always challenged to produce socio-religious research on LGBTIQ

with valid and reliable data. So that sociology of religion research related to LGBTIQ issues can be useful to construct progressive knowledge among scientific debates in sociology of religion frameworks.

Towards Inclusive LGBTIQ Research: Using Queer Theory in Sociology of Religion Research

Scholarly discourse on LGBTIQ in sociology of religion studies is increasingly open based on their experiences. Although direct data collection is still experiencing various obstacles, the majority of LGBTIQ people, such as people who are gay and/or lesbian-oriented, have not been open about their sexual identity, especially when it comes to religious matters (McNally & Grierson, 2014; Setyono, 2023). Therefore, the queer theory approach generates various perspectives related to LGBTIQ issues and is integrated into sociology of religion discourse. So that, this section will explain the discourse on LGBTIQ in the sociology of religion research based on queer theory. According to the descriptions of Ritzer and Smart, Queer theory is a body of thought that focuses on the analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and all other practices that bear the label of deviant sexuality in patriarchal asymmetrical power relations (Ritzer & Smart, 2012). Many scholars use queer theory to analyze the LGBTIQ discourse based on their experience because they want to offer some approaches and different perspectives to open up LGBTIQ's condition in real-world settings.

Based on one of the queer scholars, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, whose ideas are summarized in her book *The Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick takes issue with the upper limit of the binary opposite between homosexuality and heterosexuality, which he relates to the recognition of secret knowledge (analogy with "the closet"). For Sedgwick, heterosexual and homosexual binarism organize people's experience and knowledge of the world, especially forms of self-knowledge, self-disclosure, and self-disclosure (Sedgwick, 2008). Sedgwick's thinking is used as an image to understand the LGBTIQ experience. As an example, social religion scholars are trying to find a category to define homosexuality, or what Sedgwick describes as the desire for certain sexual knowledge. Where it influences sociology of religion scholars in determining identity and conducting relations with LGBTIQ groups. However, the sociology of religion studies are currently experiencing a contemporary crisis where the formation of social categories based on sexual identity is ambiguous, and LGBTIQ groups have the ability to show self-representation in certain situations. Therefore, Sedgwick's concept of queer theory can be used in socio-religious studies to understand various LGBTIQ discourse practices through their recognition and disclosure.

Furthermore, Gloria Filax and Debora Shogan (Filax et al., 2004) describe that there are four key concepts that still "overlap" in the queer theory approach, namely: First, queer theory is used in questioning identity categories based on assumptions for normalization, homogenization, naturalization, and totalization. Where the norms or standards of queer theory are meant to reveal all these arbitrary social categories. Second, questioning heteronormativity as the dominant form of

sexuality. Third, queer theory opens up the possibility of producing or notifying the existence of a different way of life and thinking in human relations as a new and different form of identity, community, and social relations. Fourth, most queer theory consists of three specific features, namely Foucauldian discourse analysis, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis.

The use of queer theory can be an offer so that sociology of religion research does not only examine LGBTIQ from the outside. However, we can take a humanist approach so that the LGBTIQ problem can be exposed more clearly. In addition, research data is not confined in a closet, meaning that LGBTIQ people reveal their true selves so that research data can become a real scientific foundation. However, sociology of religion research in reproducing discourse on LGBTIQ will continue as the socio-religious values dynamics in society continue to develop.

CONCLUSION

The discourse on LGBTIQ produced by sociology of religions research is influenced by the power possessed by scientists or scholars because they have a clear scientific discourse. This argument was formed based on Foucault's thinking that a series of discourses will continue to take place because power over knowledge will continue to exist and scientific studies will continue to conduct research related to the formation of LGBTIQ discourse in the scope of sociology of religion research. In addition, the scientific discourse on LGBTIQ related to socio-religious values is complex, because study on gender and minor sexuality, such as LGBTIQ, experience various contradictions. Especially, the research data shows the complexity of forming discourses based on the Indonesian context. However, researchers or scholars can use queer theory to produce more diverse sociology of religion studies that involve direct LGBTIQ experiences. This can increase the chance of obtaining valid data and conducting research based on actual data.

Therefore, the LGBTIQ discourse reproduced in sociology of religion research has contributed to educating the public and creating awareness of gender and sexual diversity. Researchers are challenged to continue working to produce research that supports social harmony and reduces the complexity caused by the overlapping discourses of ordinary people regarding LGBTIQ. And also, the knowledge production and scientific debate to study LGBTIQ issues in sociology of religion can influence the policy in social-religion institution to become inclusive space.

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