UNIVERSITETET I AGDER

HATE SPEECH AGAINST RELIGIOUS QUEER WOMEN.

Socio-democratic influences on civic
participation in [Oslo] Norway.

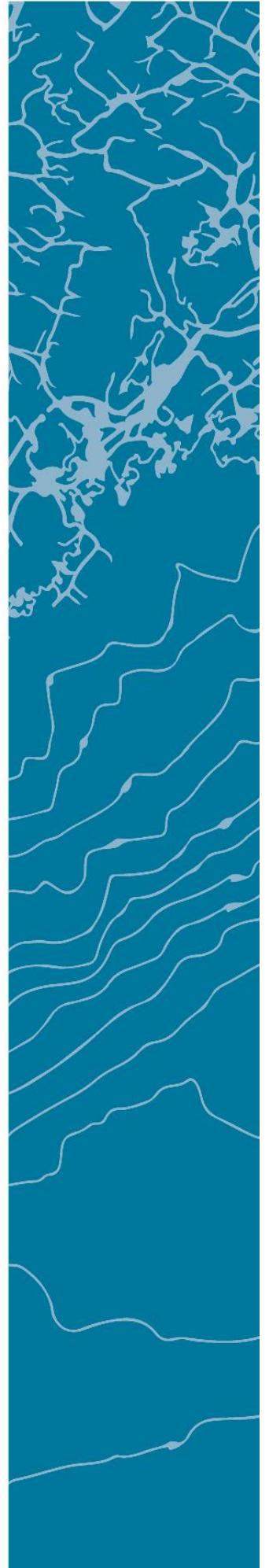Candidate: Marianne Karlsen Sønsteby

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Abstract

In this thesis, the topic of hate speech and its implication on queer religious women was studied. The thesis explored the socio-political and democratic issues of hate speech, and ensued to answer the overall research question,

- How is hate speech towards religious queer women influencing their civic participation in society?
- How is democracy affected if minority perspectives are left out of the equation?

Evaluating the issue of discriminatory prejudice against religious queer women, the impact of empowering a minority group provides a more diverse understanding of identity and the positive effect on the society as a whole (Escobar, 1992; 1995; Cornwall, 2003; Smith, 1990). Thus, interviewing employees of organisations working directly and indirectly with queer religious women, the perspectives and understanding from a minority perception underlined the thesis. The thesis actively utilized previous work by governmental funded reports (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019; The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, 2018; Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm, 2018) on the topic, to show a broader understanding of the issue.

The socio-democratic consequences of hate speech have proven to be systematic discrimination, as it can be seen as a way of social control over minorities. The impressions of the organisations' perspectives show the importance of emphasising on the structures that implicate on the hate speech against religious queer women and the democratic repercussions of hate speech. Therefore, the chosen theories show how religious queer women are influenced by these structures, social values and norms, heteronormal and patriarchal constructions within the socio-democratic and socio-political spheres.

As society has become more fluid and flexible in terms of communication, social media platforms have become a significant part of our lives. Thus, social media has enabled a new form of finding acceptance as well as it has made it easier to spread hate speech. The thesis concludes that it is necessary for more research on the impact and scope of hate speech as well as the consequences.

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Acronyms

BUFDIR -	The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet)
LGBT+ -	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/ Transsexual +. The +plus include asexual, intersex, queer, and questioning (The Norwegian Organisation for Sexual and Gender Diversity, n.d).

Abbreviations

Cis/ Cisgender	Cis and Cisgender refers to when gender identity is the same as the assigned sex at birth. Also, defined as the opposite of transgender/ transsexual.
Heteronormal/ Heteronormality	How society and policies underline the assumption that heterosexual people are the norm in terms of binary gender and sex.
Islamophobic	Hateful attitudes or prejudice towards Muslims and Islam.
Minority identities	Identification as a minority in society. I.e. black, Muslim or LGBT+, or a combination of these.
Transphobic	Hateful attitudes or prejudice towards transgender or transsexual people.
Queer	Used as an umbrella term for LGBT+ people.

1. Introduction

Norway is one of the most egalitarian countries, yet there are several issues connected to the debate climate that is *seemingly* creating a divide in diversity in society (Gundersen & Kunst, 2019; Fangen & Vaage, 2018). Thus, *us versus them*[1] characteristics seem to have evolved to turn into a factor of hate speech towards minorities. Hate speech does not only affect the personal lives of those targeted by it, but it also affects democracy if not dealt with properly.

The chosen research area, Oslo, and the Norwegian perspective on hate speech against minorities have shaped the outline and understanding throughout the thesis. This master thesis will explore how hate speech is affecting minorities and democracy by addressing the issues with public debates and discussions, and how freedom of speech is [mis]understood. Highlights from governmental reports on the consequences of hate speech and current trends on social media, make the topic of understanding the effects interesting. Recent debates and influences from international movements have shown the systematic issues in Norwegian society, i.e. black lives matter movement (Mahbubani, 5th June 2020). The insight of racial and social movements is an essential part of understanding the lives of women of colour, religious women, and queer women.

This thesis will focus on how organisations that work with sexual and religious minorities operate and works towards awareness on how it is like to be a minority in a heteronormal and primary white population. Thereof, the thesis explores religious queer women's perspective on being targeted by hate speech through five organisations that work on this issue at executive and local levels. Furthermore, investigate how hate speech is affecting the overall development of democracy and the sense of belonging in the community as a minority. By emphasising on women defining themselves as religious and queer, the hate speech is dual. There are specific groups that hate religious people, and there are religious groups that hate gays.

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[1] Said, Edward (1978). *Orientalism.* Pantheon Books.

The thesis aims to answers the research questions

- How is hate speech towards religious queer women influencing their civic participation in society?
- How is democracy affected if minority perspectives are left out of the equation?

This thesis decided to look at women and their sexuality with the concern of how society and the religious communities play a part in their lives. Viewing religiousness both as Christian and Muslim, the thesis hopes to show the systematic patriarchal issues that shape the Norwegian society. It is, therefore, essential to study how it is for religious queer women in modern society, and what the effects of hate speech do to this group. Furthermore, due to the persistence of hate speech towards especially Muslims in Norway, and globally, the voices of queer Muslims women were essential to bring forward and analyse the complexity of the situation evolving (Eggebø, Stubberud, Karlstrøm, 2018; The Equality and discrimination Ombud, 2018; Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019).

1.1.   Purpose of the thesis

Discrimination and hate speech have a massive impact on local and national development where it occurs, as it could hinder or enable the civic participation of the groups targeted by hateful comments and remarks (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019; Wahlström & Törnberg, 2019). Therefore, it is an essential and complex topic that underlines the sustainable development goals number 3^2 and 5^3. Although hate speech affects the lives of the victim of it, there is little research on how hate speech can be seen as social control over minorities. Furthermore, this stresses the importance of highlighting the minority perspective and how they believe society hinders or enables their civic participation. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to explore and explain how hate speech is influencing the participation of the target group—furthermore, the democratic structure when minority voices are left out of the debate.

How is social media involved in the spread and visibility of hate speech? What is the organisations perspective on the implications of hate speech? These are questions I asked

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[2] Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (United Nations, 2015, p. 16).

[3] Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (United Nations, 2015, p. 18).

myself to create an understanding of the impacts of hate speech. With my queer intersectional viewpoint, how I understand the implications of hate speech is different than, for instance, a heterosexual white male perspective. This also reflects the choice of theories, methodology and how the findings are presented.

The purpose of the thesis is not explicit to why hate speech happens, but rather the effects it has on society and democracy. The aim is to bring forward the minorities' perspectives and to create an understanding of the complexity of the organisation's experiences. By conducting a multiple-case study with an intersectional feminist approach as the method, provide a structured way to analyse and explain the impact of hate speech (Yin, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989). Therefore, creating systematic categories by themes and experiences create a logical meaning of the theoretical and empirical data. The term intersectional feminist defines a way of looking through a

> "lens which you can see power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQ problem there. Many times, that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things" (Colombia Law School, June 8th, 2017).

The law and regulation are there to protect minorities. Still, there is seemingly a lack of the impact of anti-gay and (anti)-religious discrimination on national, local, and individual levels in the society (see Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad 2019). Therefore, the thesis will focus on this by fronting the voices of religious queer women through conducting semi-structured and focus group-based qualitative interviews (Blaikie, 2010; Bryman, 2016). Most studies about a hate crime or discrimination based on identity were conducted through surveys and observation (see Meyer, 2008; Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad 2019; Antjoule, 2016; Herek et al., 1999; Herek, 1989). However, to understand how *the 'hate'-based discrimination is affecting the participation of the victims [and predators] in society*, semi-structured and in-depth qualitative conducted in order to study the phenomena. This will also make it transparent to the overall picture of the situation, and the impact of discrimination will have on the local and national participation/engagement of policymaking.

Emphasis on the different implications of hateful discrimination has on society and, ultimately, local development, the intersectional perspective on gender, race/ethnicity, and socio-political factors provide an understanding of why it is crucial to study this in the field of development studies. Often, there is the assumption that only men in the developing countries are savages

and brainwashed by religious thoughts, yet this is very much still present in all states, no matter the level of development. By addressing the general assumption of sexuality, ethnicity and gender roles, this thesis will show how the societal values and principles, and the political sphere are affecting sexual and religious minorities in participation and engagement in society (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Cornwall, 2003; Escobar, 1992; 1995).

My positionality is essential. I am an intersectional feminist and queer cis female, who is politically active in left and green parties. It was essential to visualise this, so the participants knew my personal and academic stand. This shaped the outline and the choice of theories, methodology and the discussion. What I want to contribute with this thesis is to illustrate how political rhetoric can be harmful towards sexual and religious minorities, and that this will have an impact on democracy and society.

2. Background

Hate speech and discrimination against minorities is affecting the socio-political structures in society and challenge democracy on several levels (Eggebø, Nadim & Karlstrøm, 2018; Fladmoe, Nadim, Birkvad, 2019). If politicians advocate any form of hate speech towards one or several groups in the community, the results will create tensions in society (see World Bank, 2014). The friction has strengthened the hatred towards the groups that have been targeted by it (Bremmer, 2018; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018; Wahlström & Törnberg, 2019). Hate speech challenges democratic structures in society and, ultimately, the process of development not only in Norway but worldwide. The consequences of hate speech could change the local development of democratic processes of, for instance, integration and the diversity in the society. Thus, by emphasising on how anti-gay and anti-religious discrimination is influencing the community, the level of engagement and participation in decision-making processes will be altered based on the experience of hateful discrimination (see Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019).

Events[4] from various organisations underlined the socio-political imagery of the situation of hate speech. These illustrate the historical and political circumstances of which partisan movements have influenced changes in society. Thus, the volume and amount of hate speech can create social movements in the form of protest of the effects of it, and as a homage from those that believe they are only using their freedom of speech. This underlines a sort of division within society, that is influenced by governmental policies as well as a single party's political rhetoric's. This can be seen in Norway, and globally, mainly due to the impact of globalisation of information flows (Castells, 2015).

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[4] Right to be gay by Arkivet freds- og menneskerettighetssenter, Vest-Agder Red Cross, FN-sambandet, and Flykning forteller (26th of September 2019); Flykning forteller Nålen makt (28th of September, 2019);
Minotenk breakfast meeting on sexual health (minority perspective) (21st of January 2020); Minotenk-lunch on Islam and expression climate (20th of November 2019); Minotenk meeting about violence and rhetoric (12th February 2020); Minotenk-lunch on if the alt-right movement have become mainstream (13th of February 2020);
Queer in Bolsonaros Brazil by FRI and Latin-America groups in Norway (6th of November 2019);
The safety conference 2020 on extremism by Oslo Forsvarsforening (11th of January 2020);
Ytringsfrihetskommisjonen (free expression commission) by Litteraturhuset with Mina Adampour, Bjørn Stærk (25th of January 2020), Trygve Svensson and Cora Alexa Døving (8th of February 2020).

Hate speech and hateful discrimination towards minorities is not a new phenomenon. Nevertheless, in recent years, mainly due to social media, how we communicate and spread information has evolved and is determined by algorithms, designed to give you information assumed you like based on your interests (Amnesty International, 2018). Though the internet is an essential factor in the rise of hate speech in the last ten to twenty years, the roots go centuries back. The historical roots of prejudice towards specific groupings have an immense impact on how we can explain why there is still racism and anti-gay movements active today. However, there was generally a decrease in these movements during the 2000s. However, there has been a rise in these movements globally in the last decade (DeCook, 2018; Fangen & Vaage, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010). From Trump in North America to Duterte in the Philippines, to Putin in Russia, to Museveni in Uganda, and Rouhani in Iran. It seems if right-wing ideology control national politics somewhere, it creates volume that the alt-right movement needs to survive and to spread their propaganda about gays, Muslims, and Jews online via memes[5] (DeCook, 2018).

The internet can be seen as a vessel for new ways of communication throughout the 2000s and has become a significant part of everyday life (Lindgren, 2017). In the social media platforms, the notion of the extremist wave of religion-, and race-based hatred has been in the focus of hate speech that has targeted minorities (Wahlström & Törnberg, 2019). However, the hate speech aimed at sexual- and religious minorities seem to be neglected by the media attention. Although, recently, the Black Lives Matter movement has reached the international ground (Mahbubani, June 5th, 2020). This is fundamentally important as the first [gay] pride was created by black transwomen and cis-gendered gay men (Driskill, 2019). The roots of oppression and systematic injustice are a crucial part of understanding the consequences of hate speech. Therefore, this thesis aims to facilitate an understanding of the political and social influences that impact on hate speech against religious queer women by incorporating the broader aspect of societal and political structures in the community. It is essential to understand that hate speech can come from anyone, no matter what the motive is.

As society is influenced by norms and principles based on traditions and global influences, an *us versus them* relation is seemingly becoming more visible. Thus, to distinguish identities and cultures, in a broader sense, people tend to characterise based on appearances, which is standard practice as part of understanding people and their interests (Roy, 2002). However, the categorising can also create absolute normality of portraying people based on prejudice, which

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[5] Memes are "an idea, behaviour, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.[5]).

subsequently can discriminate against people that are different from themselves and their lifestyle of choice (Mečiar, 2014).

Moreover, Roy (2002) underline that "people cross the line into *us versus them* thinking when they use attacks on the other as a way to strengthen the self" Roy, 2002, p. 6). Thus, underlining the need to see *us versus them* as the patterns that characterise it, i.e. absolutism- "viewing only two sides of an issue" (Roy, 2002, p.7)-, stereotyping- "oversimplified category based on ignorance" (ibid, 2002, p. 9)-, scapegoating- "unfairly place blame for a problem onto another person or group" (ibid, 2002, p. 13)-, and dehumanisation- "strip 'them' of any connection they might possibly have to 'us'" (ibid, 2002, p. 17). These categorising patterns influence the creation of prejudice towards minority groups, which can lead to hate speech and discrimination.

In the aftermath of the black lives matter demonstrations, members of the Progress Party have used their social media platforms to state that Norway is not a racist country by saying it is a conspiration theory[6] and that it is the left-wing extremist conceptions[7] emphasis. These statements show the importance of political rhetoric as an influencing factor to prejudice against exposed[8] minorities in our society. When prejudice gets its own life, and it becomes discourses of this, the boundaries between the need to create categories and using these actively with a purpose to cause harm could create a connection to hate crime. The Oslo police district published a report (Hansen, 2019) on hate crimes based on a statistic from 2015 to 2018. This report showed how many hate crimes were registered based on ethnicity, LGBT, religion, disability, and anti- Semitism. The police stated that

> "in the LGBT-cases where religion was a contributing factor, the victim explains that they have been a subject of the criminal offence by someone that did not stand that the victim was both Muslim and gay" (Hansen, 2019, p. 9 [my translation]).

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[6] Vartdal, R. & Trædal, T. (13th of June 2020). *Helgheims Konspirasjon.* URL: https://khrono.no/helgheims-konspirasjon/495831

[7] Viken, O. & Sveen, E. H. (8th of June 2020). *Amundsen kritiserte demonstrantene i Facebook-innlegg.* URL: https://www.nrk.no/tromsogfinnmark/amundsen-kritiserte-demonstrantene-i-facebook-innlegg-1.15044148

[8] Referring to minorities that are often the target of hate speech, i.e. Muslims, immigrants and non-heteronormal people.

Table 1-4 below shows that there is a small percentage of reported hate crimes, and the police state that there are a lot of unrecorded cases, but the number of recorded cases increased in 2018 from the previous years.

> "We have reasons to assume that the collected increase of registered cases to a certain point can be explained with the own police efforts. This is on the basis that even more of the reporting is established by the police when the hate crime happened, but also due to that, we in Oslo have our own hate crime group that investigates these cases" (ibid, p. 9 [my translation]).

This hate crime unit has, based on the volunteer organisations feedback, build trust to people that usually would not contact police on this kind of matter.

Table 1. The registered hate crimes in Oslo police district 2018, divided after basis, compared with 2017, 2016 and 2015. Absolute numbers and per cent.

Basis	2018	2017	2016	2015	Percent 2018	percent 2017	percent 2016	percent 2015
LBGT	47	46	41	33	20 %	23 %	23 %	23 %
Ethnicity	136	104	108	70	57 %	52 %	62 %	49 %
Anti-Semitism	8				3 %			
Religion	40	43	24	40	17 %	22 %	14 %	28 %
Disability	7	5	2	0	3 %	3 %	1 %	0 %
Total	238	198	175	143	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
(Hansen, 2019, p. 7)								

Table 2. The registered hate crimes in Oslo police district 2018, divided after the primary basis and those that are combined with another base. Absolute numbers.

Main basis	combined with another basis	amount in 2018
Anti- Semitism		
	Ethnicity	1
Ethnicity		
	LGBT	1
	Religion	20
LGBT		
	Ethnicity	5
	Religion	8
Disability		
	Ethnicity	1
Religion		
	Ethnicity	15
Total		52

(Hansen, 2019, p. 9)

Table 3. The number of registered hate crimes in Oslo police district 2018 in the category religion, with under-categories, compared with 2017, 2016 and 2015. Absolute numbers.

Under-categories	Amount in 2018	Amount in 2017	Amount in 2016	Amount in 2015
Islam	37	33	19	32
Islam, different directions		3	2	3
Apostate from Islam	3	1		
Christianity		5	2	4
Other/ religion generally		1	1	1
Total religion	40	43	24	40

(Hansen, 2019, p. 12)

Table 4. Amount of registered hate crime in Oslo police district in 2018 in the category of LGBT, with under-categories, compared with 2017, 2016 and 2015. Absolute numbers.

Under-categories LGBT	Amount in 2018	Amount in 2017	Amount in 2016	Amount in 2015
Gay	21	25	33	25
Gay ethnicity / religion	14	7		
Lesbian	7	7	3	4
Bisexual			1	
Gender expression/ gender identity	5	6	4	4
Total Sexual orientation	47	46	41	33

(Hansen, 2019, p. 13)

These tables show that even though, the amount of reported crimes is low in general, it provides a picture of the situation of hate crime, which, to an extent, underlines the amount of hate speech. The reports do not show the real picture of the victims of hate speech and hate crimes as there are a lot of unreported cases from, for instance, people with immigrant background (Hansen, 2019).

The governmental action plan against hate speech (2016-2020) was formed to strengthen democratic values in a society where everyone has room to express themselves (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2015). As freedom of speech is highly valued in our community, the action plan would, in theory, map and implement concrete measures to prevent hate speech and to ensure that those targeted by it get the help they need. The goals and efforts put in to bring awareness of the consequences of hate speech are directed to several areas, such as schools and education. The government wants a social debate where no one is excluded based on hate speech, to make sure our democracy function. As such, dialogue between the Government, NGOs and research institutions, and various social actors would contribute to combating hate speech on different levels in society (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2015).

Research from several countries in Europe, including Norway, has shown that the more minority identities one has, the more likely are one of becoming a victim of hate speech (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad 2019; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018). This is one of the reasons why I choose religious queer women as the scope of the thesis. Women are treated as a minority in society even though they make up half of the population

globally (Hacker, 1951, p. 62). Hacker (1951) writings may seem as it is not relevant in this century, but now as then, women are still perceived as a minority in terms of equal rights and the right of bodily integrity. Furthermore, having two more identity characteristics, queer and religious, will show how difficult it is living in a modern society that is primarily heteronormal.

Hate speech against sexual and religious minorities occurs everywhere. Still, in recent years due to internet culture, memes, and fake news, it flourished and resurrected specific movements, such as the alt-right movement. Displaying evidence from a western country, the aim of the thesis is that the results can be applied for any society and country where minorities are experiencing and suffering from prejudice.

2.1. Structure of the thesis

The main chapters consist of the literature review and the theoretical foundation, methodology, discussion, and analysis, and finally, conclusion. Firstly, the theory and literature are presented. The theories created the framework that further will be analysed in the discussion section. After the research and theoretical foundation is underlined, the methodology is presented. Here, I will show what kind of methods and strategies that were used to provide the best possible understanding of how to answer the research questions. Further, the methodological challenges and limitations and ethical considerations of the research are illustrated. Here, with the base of trustworthiness and the sensitivity of the topic.

The next section presents the collected primary data and the secondary data used to understand hate speech and its effects. As the topic is rather complicated, this section will be divided in a twofold way looking into (1) how do the minority organisation experiences hate speech and how does it affect their work and everyday life, (2) political, democratic, and societal implication of hate speech. This will provide a systematic understanding of hate speech and its impact on individuals, society, and the political environment. Presenting the primary findings as a multiple-case study made it easier to discuss and analyse social phenomena. After the primary and secondary data is introduced, these will then be reviewed and analysed with the theoretical bases presented earlier. Finally, the concluding remarks will be presented.

3. Literature review and the theoretical foundation

The following section will present the theoretical foundation and discussion of the created picture of hate speech and its effect on public participation amongst queer religious females. First, the chosen theories will be presented. The theoretical foundation will create a background of the situation of hate speech, which will be discussed in chapter 7 and 8. This is to show the importance of this topic in the present and for future purposes. Secondly, the literature review illustrates how complex the topic is and gives credit to previous work on the subject, as this has been researched over thirty years globally.

When it comes to relevant theoretical literature for the research, there are various writings on the experience of hate speech, regulations and laws that have been implemented, and the socio-political factors leading to discrimination, and the effects of discrimination. The historical perspective is essential, not only for the hatred itself but also for seeing that this kind of hate has been normalised in the 'global' society (Fridlund & Sallamma, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010; Herkman, 2017; Kolås, 2017; Lupu, 2015; Ravndal, 2018; Wodak, 2015; Yilmaz, 2012).

There are multiple ways of defining whom the predator and the victim of discrimination are based on how one defines hate speech. For instance, several scholars (Harel and Parchomovsky, 1999; Mason 2014a, 2014b) argues that the 'normal' predator is of the dominant group, and the victims are of the weaker groupings, which would lead to an increase in the marginalisation of minorities. However, as Høy-Petersen and Fangen (2018) argued, there is a three-folded way of showing hate crimes as something anyone can experience. These are based on a person's identity, minorities can act hateful towards minorities, and sameness before the law (Høy-Petersen & Fangen, 2018, p. 252). Therefore, the topic of hate speech is a complex issue that can be explained based on what perspective one holds. In this thesis, the minority perspective will be in the centre of the understanding of hate speech as a means for social control over minorities.

Herek (1989) lay the foundation of the history of anti-gay hate crimes in the US. Herek (1989), as a psychologist, explains how the hate crimes against gays are creating victimisation of gay people, which leads to underreporting of crime. Further, Herek (1989) and Kimmel (2008) discusses how the fragile masculinity of young males and the urge to feel like a 'man', is one of many driving forces behind the hate crimes against gay people. This point of looking at hate crimes and hate speech brings an essential understanding of sexual gender and the traditional

gender roles in both a global and a regional spectre. How we understand hate crime and hate speech and the implication of it, needs to be based on the socio-cultural, socio-political as well as the socio-economic situation of the research area (Herek, 1989; Fladmoe & Nadim in Midtbøen et al. (eds), 2017).

By focusing on the structures behind the hate crime and hate speech, Herek (1989, pp. 950-951), addressed how the AIDS epidemic and the anti-gay victimisation had led to the increase of hate crime of gay people. Structures are, as I understood, in this sense, described by Herek (1989) as the socio-political reasons to why the hate crime and hate speech happened. Further, the anti-gay religious movement was also seen as a contributor to anti-gay hate crimes. These movements are seen in the bible belt of Norway[9] (Nordbø, 2009). Nordbø (2009) addresses how conservative Christianity was influencing his identity as a gay man by showing homosexuality as a sin that needed to be repelled. Often people with a dual identity, tend to live a double life when combining these identities are not accepted by the community, or in some cases by the law (Herek, 1989; Hamdi et al., 2018).

Melendez (2006) and Pitt (2009) address the clashes of religion and non-heteronormative sexuality in different contexts. This is seemingly not an isolated case. Politics have massive impacts on how people perceive each other. Meaning that particular political rhetoric and prejudice or attitudes towards minorities create sort of a normalising of negative talk about their identity characteristics. This normalising of hate speech generates the assumption of how people of the target group, here, religious queer women, act and create false information about them online to scare them to silence (Amnesty International, 2018; Duguay et al. 2020). I will return to this issue later in chapter 6 and 7 when I discuss and analyse my findings.

Herek (1989) raised good arguments about how the socio-political situation was making it difficult for the LGBT+ community to report and get the help they needed when experiencing hate crimes. He addressed how the societal structures in the US were challenging for gays. With such a strong strand of religion in the constitution, the persecution of gays could almost be morally justified based on religious belief. The oppression is still a concern of today's society as well; people of colour are not reporting hate crimes as much as whites are (see Meyer, 2010).

As most of the described examples of hate speech and discrimination are based on white men's experiences, there is a need to assess the intersectional and female perspective. Asifa Siraj

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[9] Geographical area from South of to the North-West in Norway. Called the Bible-belt due to the conservative Christian communities (Natt & Dag, 25th October 2016.)

(2015) looked at how Muslim lesbians are often "forced to confront religious dogma, which advocates the punishment of non-heterosexuals leading them to repress and deny their sexuality" (Siraj, 2015, p. 185). Nevertheless, this article explores how women's religious identity and how the dispute between sexuality and religion created experiences of alienation and ostracism from the Muslim community. As the focus lies with an understanding of the complexity and layered aspects of queer Muslim women's identity, this article provides an essential and comprehensive understanding of the topic of hate speech targeting minorities (Siraj, 2015).

When it comes to the literature from Norway and Oslo, there has been an emphasis in recent years on how minorities have experienced hatred online, yet not so much on how the *increased* right-wing politics has implicated the hatred towards minorities. With the current government, there has seemingly been a decrease in rights of women's choice over their own body, and people with different ethnic backgrounds, to name a few (see Fangen and Vaage, 2018; Regjeringen, 2019a). With statements from politicians that advocate what that might be understood as some kind of hatred towards specific groupings, i.e., refugees and women, the social values and principles of Norway are also seemingly changing (Kolås, 2017; Gudbrandsen, 2010; Ravndal, 2018). Correspondingly, since the beginning of the 2000s [and again in 2010s], the wave of far-right politics has had its implication in the global political atmosphere (Fangen & Vaage, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010; Ravndal, 2018).

With global leaders that promote hate crimes against minorities and the social media platforms that seemingly makes these attitudes more visible, it is easy to see that this will have an impact on how people think and converse with one another. Thus, since the refugee 'crisis' in 2014, there has been an attitudinal change in the political environment in Europe; the more extreme right-wing politics was 'resurrected' (Bangstad, 2014; Fangen & Vaage, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010; Herkman, 2017; Fridlund, Malkki and Sallamaa, 2018; Ravndal, 2018).

Hate speech is connected to freedom of expression and attitudes in society, and thereof, political perspective is an essential emphasis. Addressing the issues of the political strand, party polarisation and right-wing [populist] politics, Lupu (2015), Trædal (2018), and Yılmaz (2012) shows how the attitude in the political sphere has been changing over a while. The debate regarding the refugee 'crisis' implicated the attitudinal change in the socio-political area, which is one way to describe the wave of right-wing and populist politics at a global level. Thus, the right-wing and populist politicians used the fear of immigration as a tool against terrorism by

creating an imaginary perceptive of refugees and other minorities (see Yılmaz, 2012; Ball, 2016; Wodak, 2015; Owen, 2019).

Lupu (2015) argued that the increased polarisation of parties in the US would make individuals more likely to be partisan and notice the change in the political atmosphere. Thus, it might create and increased the divide between the political parties, which ultimately would make it more transparent for individuals to choose a political party to vote for (Owen, 2019). The polarisation has created a split of interest; one side emphasises on the emergence of climate change, while the other hand on the opposite arguing that other factors are essential (i.e., cut in taxes that would have provided with non-oil revenue) (The royal ministry of finance, 28th of September 2018).

Through social media platforms, there is much circulation of fake news that makes it difficult for the general citizens to know what is true or not. Here in Norway, there are online newspapers that change the angle of non-bias news into news that promote anti-immigration attitudes. These, Human Rights Service, Document.no and Resett amongst others[10], are changing the perception of what is *legitimate* news and what is not (Trædal, 2018). Throughout Trump's presidential campaign and until today, fake news and propaganda-oriented news is eminent in every social media platform. This is seemingly one of the reasons behind the misinformation about refugees, vaccines, religion, sexuality (Ibid).

The ministry of Equality and Anti-Discrimination (2018) and the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality (2015), Friberg & Bjørnset (2019), Minotenk (2019), and Ipsos (2019) investigated the development of hate speech. These reports on hate speech and discrimination seem to have started after the 22nd of July terror attacks of where an anti-globalist and an alt-right individual attacked those he believed was a betrayer of the western nationalism (Kolås, 2017). The reports generated and created a map of how the minorities and the rest of the population's living standards are and to record events that occur, such as discrimination based on sexual orientation, race, religion, and gender expression (The ministry of Equality and Anti-Discrimination, 2018; The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2015).

Due to the immense implication, the terrorist attacks had; these reports seemingly push forward a governmental action plan against hate speech for 2016-2020. This action plan is a well-written strategy that has, in theory, and somewhat online, worked perfectly, in my opinion. Still, it

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[10] Nyhetsspeilet, Eavisa, Ekte Nyheter, 24avisen, Norges-avisen, Din avis og Frie ord (Trædal, 2018).

seems that the government did not put in enough resources for it to be implemented effectively on bring awareness forward and prevent hate speech on social media and in the public debate. With only one police station in Oslo that specialises in hate crime and discrimination online and in 'real' life, it seems that it is only the worst of the worst that is reported and convicted. The action plan added examples of convictions, such as

> "A man born in 1957 was given 18 days suspended sentence and a fine of NOK 15,000 for violating the peace and for spitting at and directing hate speech at a Muslim woman. According to the indictment, the man stated that 'all Muslims should be slaughtered' and 'I hate all Muslims'" (Oslo District Court, 17th of March 2015 in Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2015, p. 32).

This statement and action have clear anti-Muslim intentions, and it is, unfortunately, a ton of these that to some extent, can create a volume of hate speech towards minorities that could obstruct their participation in, for instance, social media debates (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019).

Reports on living standard of minorities and the general population have since the 1990s, and the beginning of 2000s been generated. Hegna & Moseng (1999) Anderssen & Slåtten (2008), Anderssen & Malterud (2013), Elgvin & Grønningsæter (2014), Government Equalities Office (2018), Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018), The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) and Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) have examined the community's attitudes towards LGBT people. Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad's report (2019) on experiences from sexual and religious minorities showed that the impact of hate speech made the victims feel unsafe. Further, it made them more cautious when expressing themselves, e.g., online and in daily conversation (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019). The report focuses on the online debate as to the platform where most hateful expression is shared, and it is not clear if it might exist in the 'real world' without the safe space behind the computer. This report also concluded that some LGBT people that experience hate speech felt the need to mobilising and increased engagement (Ibid, 2019, p. 8).

This report shows the current situation where participation of religious queer women online on social media platforms is either under threat or creating increased engagement (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019). Thereof, the report by Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) and The Equality and discrimination Ombud (2018), and Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) will be presented more detailed in chapter 5.6.

The topic can be understood in various ways. Therefore, a two-folded perspective to understand how hate speech influence on civic participation and democracy, will be emphasised. Firstly, the terminology employed will be presented. Then, social, democratic, and political understanding of the participation sexual and ethnic minorities is illustrated.

3.1. Defining terminology

As this thesis will go into the complex phenomena of hate speech and its consequences, there is a need to define the different terminology used to describe the democratic, political, and social implications this has on religious queer women's' public participation. Terms such as queer and minority within a minority are used to describe the target groups identity. Queer refers to an umbrella term of LGBT+ people and is more inclusive and open. Minority within a minority refers to when someone has more than one minority characteristic, i.e. religious and queer. The minority within a minority also implies that one has more than one community one belongs to.

3.1.1. Hate speech and hateful discrimination and freedom of speech

When it comes to hate speech, there is no universal agreed understanding of it, as it is defined and practised differently around the world. Therefore, it is hard to regulate what hate speech is and where the line of legal and illegal expressions should be drawn. An illegal expression or hate speech is defined as language that is unwanted in the public debate, such as racist and homophobic words, as well as in the criminal law (Midtbøen, Steen-Johnsen & Thorbjørnsrud, (ed), 2017). Legal expressions are then languages that are not directly aimed to harm anyone but might still conceive as harmful but within the guidelines of the penal code (Midtbøen, Steen-Johnsen & Thorbjørnsrud (ed), 2017). This vague distinction causes many issues when it comes to a practical understanding of hate speech.

Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) stated that hate speech is typically defined by two criteria, the tone or style of the statement and the reason for the comment. The mood or style refers to that the assertion has a discriminatory, harassing, threatening, or hateful tone. The explanation relates to that the statement is directed to a group or individual's affiliation to a group (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019, p. 12). The reason or foundation for the hateful statement is essential. For it to be a hate speech, it needs to direct against certain forms of group identities. Hate speech

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can then be statements that are directed to spread or create hate towards certain groups. Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) stated that hate speech is different from cyberbullying, harassment, and threats. Even though this thesis focuses on how communication and rhetoric influence the overall participation of religious queer women, the daily conversation is just as meaningful as it creates a normalisation of specific talk about minorities. Furthermore, the two criteria stated by Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) are as equally important.

In Norway, the terminology of hate speech and discrimination can be interpreted differently based on different understandings and perspectives of the situation where it is used. This causes challenges when analysing the various aspects of organisations, the governmental organs, and finally, the law and practice. In criminal law, the paragraph on hateful discrimination §185 divides different ways of what counts as a felony.

> "By discriminatory or hateful expression that is meant to intimidate or insult someone, or promote hate, stalking or contempt based on their
>
> (a) Colour of their skin, nationality, or ethnical origin,
>
> (b) Religion or spirituality,
>
> (c) Sexual orientation, or
>
> (d) Disability."

(The Penal code (criminal code), add on 7th of March 2008, altered 19th of June 2009, §185 hatefulle ytringer [my translation]).

What that is not protected under the penal code, is discrimination towards gender expression, which includes trans persons, intersex persons, and also general discrimination based on one's gender. Following in the lines of Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) description of hate speech, there is no universal understanding of what hate speech is. The criminal code only states what the ground for illegal or hateful discrimination is, but it is not as easy to interpret the practice of the law when it comes to what people express online.

The equality and anti-discrimination Act were created to

> "promote equality and prevent discrimination based on gender, pregnancy, leave in connection with childbirth or adoption, care responsibilities, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age or other significant characteristics of a person" (The Equality and anti-discrimination Act, 2019, section 1, p. 2).

The Act goes beyond the criminal code focuses on improving the positions of primarily women and minorities, and support to tackle the "barriers created by society and prevent new ones for being created" (ibid, 2019, section, 2, p. 2). The Act also includes the prohibition against discrimination where the same characteristics of people's identities noted above or a combination of these, with direct and indirect differential treatment. Immediate treatment means that the "treatment of a person that is worse than then treatment that is, has been or would have been afforded to other persons in a corresponding situation" based on the characteristics noted (Equality and anti-discrimination Act, section, 7, p. 3).

Simply put, it means direct discrimination based on attributes of someone's identity or appearance, such as calling someone degrading names directed to cause harm. The indirect treatment relates to the "apparently neutral provision, condition, practice, act or omission that results on persons being put in a worse position than others" on the same basis of discrimination, as mention earlier (Ibid, section 8, p. 3). This means, for instance, one is less desirable for a job position or for renting a place because of the characteristics of one's identity. The divide between direct and indirect seems to be relevant in understanding how particular expression online is interpreted. This will be discussed in chapter 6 and 7.

3.1.2. Democracy, participation, and freedom of speech

The definition of democracy is rather vague, and it varies from country to country. For instance, the Merriam-Webster (n.d.[3]) dictionary defines it as a) "government by the people" and b) "absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinction or privileges". Nevertheless, these only define the structures of democracy. In the Norwegian Constitution in section A, article 2, it states, "Our values will remain our Christian and humanist heritage. This Constitution shall ensure democracy, a state based on the rule of law and human rights" (The Constitution Kingdom of Norway, LOV-1814-05-17). In section C, article 49 states,

> "The people exercise the legislative power through the Storting. The members of the Storting are elected through free and secret elections. The inhabitants have the right to govern local affairs through local democratically elected bodies. Specific provisions regarding the local democratically elected level shall be laid down by law" (The Constitution Kingdom of Norway, LOV-1814-05-17).

This understanding of democracy and practice of law is an essential part of understanding the democratic implication of hate speech, and how the government emphasises the mapping of it.

As a democracy, participation is a broad concept that can be described differently based on how one sees it to its purpose. For instance, when it comes to participation in society, civic and political participation are used to describe the engagement in community and thereof, the ones presented here. Engagement involves, according to Barett and Zani (2015, p. 4), "participatory behaviours which are directed towards either the polity (in the case of political engagement) or a community (in the case of civic engagement)". When it comes to political participation, it is divided into conventional and non-conventional forms. The conventional or regular form involves the electoral processes, such as voting. The non-conventional way requires involvement outside of the elections, such as protesting in political demonstrations. In turn, civic participation is described by Barett and Zani (2015, p. 4) as

> "activity which focuses either on helping others within a community, working on behalf of a community, solving a community problem or participating in the life of a community more generally".

The latter description of civic participation and the non-conventional political participation will be used in this thesis. This will be further looked at in chapter 3.2.2.

Freedom of speech is an essential part of understanding hate speech. Norway values free speech as it is a necessity of a democratic society. Freedom of speech is defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.[4]) as "the legal right to express one's opinions freely", and by Amnesty International (2020) "Freedom of speech is the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, by any means". As these definitions show, there are several ways of describing what free speech is based on what perspective one employs. This thesis underlines Amnesty International's (2020) perspective of free speech as it covers the socio-democratic factors.

3.2. Theories generated to understand the structures of hate speech

I chose the theories of queer feminism (Aydemir, 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2012), intersectionality (McCall, 2005) and participatory development (Cornwall, 2003; Chambers, 1994a; 1994b) to provide with a broader perspective of the impact of anti-gay discriminatory

prejudice from political rhetoric have on the participation of religious queer women's civic participation.

Intersectional theory and queer feminist theory provide an understanding of how gender, ethnicity, and other identifying features are affected by the overall socio-democratic and socio-political structures in society (Aydemir, 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2012). These structures are often seen as a hinder for minorities in terms of access to health care and equality. Thus, the underlying structures are essential to understand to grasp the implication on local development of anti-gay prejudice in society in terms of participation of sexual minorities. Butler (1988; 1990) and Spargo's (1999) perspective of Foucault, showed how the socio-political and socio-cultural structures in a society shaped the perception of gender and sexuality.

As part of the understanding of hate speech and discrimination against [religious] LGBT+ people, the term hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Smith, 1990) and intersectionality play an essential part. To understand the hatred behind the actions, we need to know the history of patriarchal structures in societies, both on global and local levels. Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) investigated how the term hegemonic masculinity has affected societal structures connected to gender and how this was used in gay liberation as part of oppression by and of men. "The idea of a hierarchy of masculinity grew directly out of homosexual men's experience with violence and prejudice from straight men" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 831). This can mean the structural change of the traditional gender roles was shifting. Furthermore, a social protest movement to make the policymakers realise the male-dominated and male bias politics, was needed. Either way, the importance of addressing the power relations opened the opportunity for more intersectionality and diversity perspective in the policy-making process and society as a whole (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Smith, 1990).

3.2.1. Intersectional and feminist theory

The perception of gender roles is ultimately affecting how sexual minorities are being presented in society. Whereas the feminism advocated for more binary equality, the queer feminism emphasised as a theory that is filling the gaps between the binary and the non-binary scales of gender (Sedgwick, 1998; McLaughlin et al. 2012). Thus, combining the queer and feminist

theory, we get a wider overlook of how the patriarchal structures are impacting the perception of sexual minorities in society (see Shields, 2008).

Rubin's (1975) and Butler's (1990) perspective on queer feminism is based on how we show the sexed body and sexuality of women. Rubin (1975) created a thread of the sex-gender system and the patriarchal society as a dominant system that restricts the socio-cultural aspect of women's life. Butler (1990, p. 10) underline Rubin's (1975) ideas and highlight that if gender is considered in cultural settings, then gender cannot follow from sex in one way. This means that within the sex/gender distinction approach, there is a discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed gender. Further, the construction of binary cultural gender has become a

> "free-floating artifice, with the consequence, that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one" (Butler, 1990, p. 10).

This approach shows that identity and gender together can be a way to express oneself based on how one feels, not necessarily on how one look or how one was born. Combining the understanding from Butler and Rubin, we can see that the description of cultural gender varies based on how one's perspective on social-, political-, and economic structures concerning power structures. Butler (1990) and Haukanes (2001) addresses critique towards how the western construction of gender roles has shaped women into subjects of men's legal control and, following Foucault, how sexuality is at the base of the creation of gender. Adopting Rubin's (1975) and Butler's (1990) approach, the expression of identity is very much connected to sexuality and how one feels connected to oneself and society as a whole. The feminist, post-feminist and queer feminist approaches address an essential aspect of how gender roles are presented in community, and how patriarchal structures is a hinder for female and male development (Butler, 1988; 1990).

Smith's (1990) and Rosaldo's (1980) perspective present an understanding of the underlying structures that affect how women are active actors in society. Both take as a starting-point experience-based knowledge as a ground for their understanding of feminism. Smith (1999) focuses on how to understand daily life participation of women as social actors, and what structures that implicate on their engagement. Rosaldo (1980) evaluated the sociologist and anthropologist assumption of womanhood and reading the anthropological record lead her to conclude

> "that human cultural and social forms have always been male-dominated. By this, I mean not that men rule the right or even that men rule at all and certainly not that women everywhere are passive victims of a world that men define. Rather, I would point out to a collection of related facts which seem to argue that in all known human groups […] the vast majority of opportunities for public influence and prestige, the ability to forge a relationship, determine enmities, speak up in public, use or forswear the use of force are all recognised as men's privilege and right" (Rosaldo, 1980 p. 349).

This understanding is essential to how the political and gender structures in society are affecting the civic and political participation of women.

The feminist theories have according to Butler (1988, p. 522), sought to understand how systemic structures are reproduced through individual acts and practices and how an analysis of a personal situation is "clarified through situating the issues in a broader and shared cultural context". Thus, the creation of personality, identity, and gender are generated based on perception and assumptions of how someone feels that they belong to specific groupings or sub-society. Smith's (1999) goal seemed to be the creation of alternative feminist sociology that focused on how the social world is ingrained in the social life where women are its subjects.

The mutual understandings of sexuality, understanding of women's social life and patriarchal structures, and femininity (Rubin, 1975; Butler, 1988; 1990; Rosaldo, 1980; Smith, 1990; 1999), has shown that these perspectives need to acknowledge intersectionality. The intersectional feminism recognises how the patriarchal structures control social life. Furthermore, the socio-cultural and socio-political structures within a pronominally white and heteronormal society are influencing people's lives (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality theory, in terms of religion and sexuality, provides the understanding and implication of hateful discrimination have on society and development (McLaughlin et al.,.2012; McCall, 2005; Warner, 1999). This brings awareness to the interconnectedness of culture, ethnicity, gender, and other socio-cultural and socio-political factors in society. Particular political anti-immigrant parties and ideology regularly evaluate the danger of anything 'new' into the community, i.e. culture and language (Wodak, 2015; Gudbrandsen, 2010; Kolås, 2017; Owen, 2019). Furthermore, the intersectional feminism provides light on this discourse in terms of how it influences the hateful discrimination against religious queer women.

The intersectional theory is described by Crenshaw (1989) as looking at the multiple characteristics of, i.e., a queer Muslim woman, as various grounds for discrimination. The feminist movement looked at how women are suppressed in a patriarchal society, and the black

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liberation movement mainly focused on how the white patriarchal society silenced black men. As none of these movements looked at the combined issues of race, ethnicity, gender or religion, Crenshaw employed an intersectional point of view to

> "highlight how social movements organisation and advocacy around violence against women elided the vulnerabilities of women of colour, particularly those from immigrant and socially disadvantaged communities" (Carbado et al., 2013, p. 304).

Meaning that the socio-political and socio-economic circumstances of people's identity or individuality are fundamental as to how we understand why some groups are more likely to experience hate speech than others. Combining the perspectives from Butler (1988; 1990), Rubin (1975), Smith (1990;1999), Rosaldo (1980), and Crenshaw (1989) shows that the subject of understanding women and their sexuality is necessary to be intersectional. Thus, understanding their actions as part of how society perceives them and not only a rebellion against the social and political structures.

As the intersectional perception is essential to understand the hatred towards religious queer women, the effect hate speech has on their civic and political engagement is another factor that is important to understand. Chambers (1983; 1994a; 1994b) work on participation created a paradigm shift in the development field by showing development in the light of indigenous and local knowledge. Though criticised, it started a global wave of demonstrating progress in terms of what was best for the community or aid receiving countries that would not be seen as a neo-colonialization.

3.2.2. Participation as practice-based theory

Participation is argued to be an empowerment-oriented and practice-based indicator within the development scheme. Thus, it was created to categorise people based on class, gender, and ethnicity, and tried to get an understanding of their part in the community. Though participation itself is not a theory, it has been used in humanitarian and development aid since the 1990s. As a student of development studies, the practice-based theories that Chambers (1994a; 1994b), Cornwall (2003) Freire (1972), Kesby (2005) Escobar (1992;1995) underlined, created an understanding of the importance of participation in decision-making processes. Therefore, this understanding will be an essential part of understanding women's civic participation.

Cornwall (2003) describes the modes of participation, based on Gaventa & Valderrama (2001) and White (1996), as to how the implication for involvement and the participant is in the development process. These modes of participation describe how the participants are active in the development process. What that defines a development process, in this case, is whether the participators are becoming more or less engaged in the public debate if they are exposed to hate speech. Further, the social, political, and democratic implications of hate speech will provide an overall understanding of the effects it. Cornwall (2003, p. 1325) showed participation as something the established development practitioners created to get the voice for those that had a "stake a voice and a choice", but the reality showed a different picture; factors such as gendered power structures hinder women from participating in decision-making processes.

Smith (1999) argued that social activities could interpret the social phenomena of understanding women's experiences in daily life. Social activities are here based on the everyday life of women, which is necessary to comprehend their political and civic engagement. It is necessary to grasp the political and social factors that inflict on women's activities. Showing how we feel we belong in a society and community has a substantial impact on how we are as social actors. How we define culture will consider then impact on how we understand their experiences as social actors. There are different ways of examining society based on how one understanding of it, for instance, as a discourse or as a living system. Bunge (1979) stated that the community could be described as three main conceptions of what nature is

> "society is a collection of individuals, and every property of it is a resultant or aggregation of properties of its members"; (ii) "society is a transcending its membership […] endowed with properties that cannot be traced back to either property of its members or the interactions among the latter"; and (iii) "society is a system of interrelated individuals, i.e., a system, and while some of its properties are aggregations of properties of its components, others derive from the relationships among the latter" (Bunge, 1979, p. 13-14).

The latter one, society as a system, is the most used concept of understanding community. However, Bunge (1979, p. 14) argues that civilisation is s system of the social relation between and among individuals. Chambers (1994a; 1994b) and Smith (1990) advocated that the empowerment of the participators was emphasised by pointing out the power relationship between the upper and lower classes. In this case, this can be used to understand the power relations in society that often is seen as a hinder for women's participation, which means the patriarchal and heteronormal norms in society. As history has shown, the women's movement and the gender challenges within the universities and other institutions have created the need to

develop a theory based on how the social is understood. Smith (1999) argued that the radical critique of the experiences of women that was integrated into the women's movement did not cover the experience for all women. It lacked an intersectional and diverse inquiry of understanding women's experiences affected by political, economic, and social factors in society. This perspective is an essential part of understanding the intersectional experiences of religious queer women in a white and heteronormal society.

Chambers (1994a; 1994b) and Smith (1999) perspective on empowerment and understanding of the daily life of participants will, in a broader sense, see the political impacts of participation. As Smith (1999) focuses on the faulty within the sociological understanding of women's experiences as social actors, and thus, created a practice-theory based on this. Chambers (1994a; 1994b) sees participation as a means of empowerment of where it "enables people to present, share, analyse and augment their knowledge as the start of the process" (Williams, 2004, p. 559). This means that the participation of individuals within communities, big and/ or small, is determined by the social structures of society, as norms and democratic values. Norms and democratic values differ based on country to country. In Norway, we value our freedom of speech and show in general respect for each living and participation in political or civic engagement (Regjeringen, 2019b). The term community can also be diffuse. Thereof, it is here used as the particular geographical area, i.e. the people living in the Norwegian society, and as a social or cultural group, i.e. religious group and sexual orientation group (Barett & Zani, 2015, p. 4).

Even though Norway is eminent for its development model overseas, the practice-based and community-based development on the mainland is influenced by the political change of rhetoric concerning the flow of immigrants, which is also affecting other minorities in society (see Fangen and Vaage, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010). This illustrates that the political atmosphere at a global scale is implicating the local politics through the information flow of global issues, i.e. the refugee crisis. Therefore, the discrimination against religious queer women and the participatory effects of discrimination will have either make the target group more active in politics or feel the intimidation too much, so they are afraid to participate (see Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019).

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3.2.3. <u>Identity and individuality; religious identity in pluralistic societies</u>

The process of finding one's identity and individuality is an essential part of how we evolve as social beings. Within the sociologist understanding of religion, the three Bs (believing, behaving, and belonging) are central in the social aspects of religion in modern societies (Loveland, M.T. in Yamane (ed), 2016). Behaving and belonging is a crucial part of the creation of identity and individuality as it refers to the community or communities of where one can find acceptance of their personality and beliefs (ibid, 2016). As most of the new understanding of individualism and society is ontological, Bunge (1979) and Smith (1999) argue that community is combined with human activities and the living experiences of the events. In a broader sense, this means that ongoing practices of individuals everyday life is shaped by the influences of others. Moreover, resulting in the creation of individuality based on finding differences or similarities of others (Roy, 2002; Said, 1978).

Sanders (2002) investigated how people are affected by plural societies in terms of engagement and ethnic boundaries. Ethnic boundaries are, according to Sanders (2002, p. 327), "patterns of social interaction that give rise to, and subsequently reinforce, in-group member's self-identification and outsiders' confirmation of group distinctions". These boundaries can be regarded as the creation of *us versus them* division. An *us versus them* divide based on how we find our individuality and where we belong in society. In terms of creating a place to belong, the deviance of people's identity has both positive and negative implications on society. The negative impacts are that it creates a legitimate reason to assimilate or discriminate against those that are different from others. However, the positive is that people find their individuality by not being as everyone else, which can be empowering for groups seen as misfits or outcasts (Bunge, 1979).

Ruether (2005), and Mečiar (2014) studied the religious individuality of people and the forces of globalisation in plural societies. The focus on ethnicity, the religiousness of both Christianity and Islam affiliation, and social capital will be the main factors presented as it creates a wholesome picture of individuality in a plural society. The term plural society refers to a multi-cultural society where several different ethnical groupings all live and participate together in the community (Mečiar, 2014). Ruether (2005) investigated the openness of religious identity as a Christian in a pluralistic world. Further, she studied the power imbalance within the conversion or inward change that the Church provided with to "recognition of our wrongdoing

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to others and our own humanity, and empowers us to change" (Ruether, 2005, p. 39). Concerning openness and identity as queer, the conversion can have adverse effects on accepting one's character, which can result in that one wants to change that part of their identity. Ruether (2005, p. 39) defines conversion as

> "relinquishing power and privilege and reconstructing one's relation to others so that the means of life can be more justly shared […] always happen in [a] social context, not as isolated individuals without any relation to society".

In a broader term, this is to guide the community towards a more balanced and loving relationship with others, which is an essential part of how religion has influenced society and individuality. When it comes to the social identity of immigrants, Mečiar (2014), investigated the interconnections between the concepts and adaption strategies of the formation of identity. Social identities defined as to how we "classify individuals by referring them to collectives" as it is part of how we categorise and identify people based on appearance or affiliation of groups (Mečiar, 2014, p. 74).

The definition of what that is to be an immigrant differs, according to Mečiar (2014). Further, this is based on acculturation and adoption of it, which means that the identity as an immigrant is based on the heritage culture and integration of the host community. This understanding shows the twofold reality of immigrants and their shaping of individuality in a pluralistic society. One being that immigrants that have one or several minority characteristics shape their feeling of belonging in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. The other part is how the host community welcomes a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society where all identities are embraced and valued (Mečiar, 2014).

As Ruether (2005) highlighted the Christian religiousness, Toğuşlu, Sezgin & Leman (eds) (2014) underline the Islamic religiousness among Muslims in Europe, and state,

> "A sense of Islamic individuality appears which loses its traditional links and patterns and can be described as a transnational Islam which transgresses borders. In this process of individual choice of Muslims in Europe, Islam becomes one of the markers and aspects of the Muslim identity". (Toğuşlu, Sezgin & Leman (eds), 2014, p. 24).

This emphasises the essential part of how Muslim identities are changing, similar to Christian identities.

4. Methodology

Social science tries to develop an understanding of the social actors and to find "the connection between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how it should be examined" (Bryman, 2016, p. 17). This chapter describes the decisions of selecting methods of collecting data, the ontological and epistemological assumptions, and the strategic choices that have guided the analytical approaches of this thesis. The thesis approach is qualitative, and the decision to choose this approach will be offered with a distinction from the quantitative approach.

To develop an understanding of what the societal, cultural, and political effects of hate speech can be, content analysis will be conducted. To further comprehend how the subject of hate speech function to divide and silence certain groups in society, the joint queer feminist perspective will be helpful. The thesis aims to answer the overall problem questions

- How is hate speech towards religious queer women affecting their civic participation in society?
- How is democracy affected if minority perspectives are left out of the equation?

The sensitiveness of the thesis affected the overall decision on methodology. To get a broader and more in-depth picture of how hate speech is indirectly affecting society (on a more general sense) and directly affecting the individual's targeted by it, a qualitative approach was conducted.

To be able to conduct the research, there was a need to incorporate the guidelines from Norwegian centre for research data (NSD) and National Research Ethics Committee (NESH) on research ethics and weave this into the research strategy. Following the instructions of Blaikie (2010) and Bryman (2016), the thesis outlined an inductive and abductive research strategy. I wanted to understand the social world of the participants by creating a theory-based structure to describe and comprehend how hate speech is affecting the everyday life of religious queer women. Therefore, a qualitative study was the best way to try to understand the social world.

As the scope of the topic is broad, and with such complexity, I had several dispositions of what the research should look like. Still, the ethical guidelines from The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (2014; 2016) created a challenge to complete the thesis as initially

planned. The dispositions included to talk to people that had exposed it, and then look at the structures that were causing a divide in society as a way of understanding the volume of hate speech. The first idea was to look at the topic on three levels, as shown in figure 1. Due to the sensitivity in the chosen topic, it was hard to get permission from the NSD to interview individuals with a tape recorder.
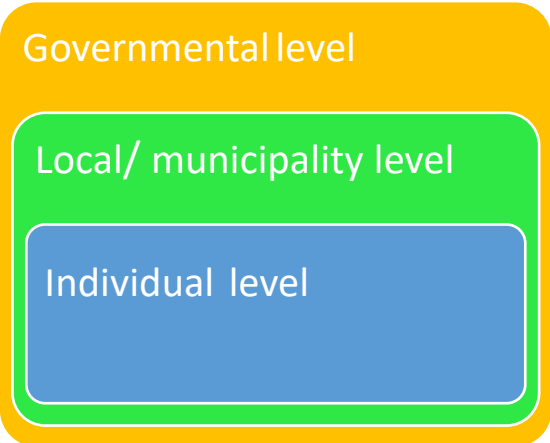
Figure 1. First layout. Levels of understanding the phenomena.

Figure 2. Second layout. Levels of understanding the phenomena.

This was also because the university did not have access to a data program that would secure the collected data in a private server. Thereof, with help from my supervisor and senior advisor, I needed to reconsider how I could proceed without altering the topic too much and chose to look at organisations and governmental action plans and strategies on hate speech. Figure 2 shows the finalised structure.

The focus on organisational and governmental/executive levels did not exclude the individual aspect of the thesis, but it was incorporated onto the perspective from the organisations' perceptions and experiences. To understand how the hatred towards minorities is *built*, it seemed that I needed to show the thematic issues on two or three levels; governmental and local [and individual]—the executive-level displays the overall structures of regulations and law and the national policy-making process. The local level shows the policymaking, the process of how local human rights organisations work, and experience hate speech and discrimination. The individual level shows how the laws and regulations work in practice. For each of these levels, the secondary data created the foundation of how the collection of the primary data will be

achieved. To see how the polarised politics affected hate speech or anti-gay prejudice, and the processes implication of it, there was a need to conduct a qualitative approach of inquiry (Bryman 2016; Blaikie, 2010).

4.1. Ontological and epistemological assumptions

Ontological and epistemological approaches are the assumption "made about the nature of social reality and the ways in which we can come to know that reality" (Blaikie, 2010, p. 9). The ontological and epistemological assumption of the thesis consists of how the social world and its participants are constructed, and whether the knowledge of the social world is genuine or not (Blaikie, 2010, p. 92). Thus, as the research strategy is abductive, the ontological position of the constructionist and epistemological assumption of interpretivist, provide an overall understanding of how hate speech is affecting the everyday life of the target group. Applying the ontological position of constructionist, the knowledge about the social world is the outcome of the interaction, and not something separate from it (Bryman, 2016, p. 375).

One way of understanding women's action is to examine the social environment in how society sees women as social actors. Addressing the power relations and the political imbalance, feminist and queer perspective mainly influenced by Butler (1988;1990), Rubin (1975), Smith (1990; 1999), and Rosaldo (1980) has an essential part of the ontological position of the thesis. These dedicated women expressed critical aspects of how women are social actors in a male-dominant society, and how sexuality and gender are not determined by femininity and masculinity. As written in chapter 3.2.1., the researcher's perspective on feminism and sexed gender will be part of the perspective on ontological perception following in this thesis, as they are participants in a social world.

The epistemological assumption as interpretivist implies that "the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Ibid, p. 375). Bryman (2016, p. 26) stated that the interpretivism was created to understand the social life and the "differences between people and the objects of the natural science and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social actions". Interpretivism is concerned with understanding social behaviour. So, the changes in society and politics affect how people act and debate in society, and this circulates back to the societal structures and politics; it becomes an infinite process (Blaikie, 2010).

As interactions construct the social world, this assumption was present throughout the thesis and altered the perspective of the thesis both in the theoretical foundation and what kind of questions I should ask. Thus, the findings and perspective from the organisations' reflections were fundamentally important to assess the research.

4.2.   Methods; a qualitative approach

As the aim of the thesis is to study the effects of how hate speech is influencing the civic and political participation of religious queer women as well as the societal and democratic development in Norway, a qualitative approach provides an in-depth and broader view form the organisations' perspectives. The thesis proposes to accentuate and add to the recent work on hate speech in Norway by Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019), The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018), and Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018).

What differs from a qualitative and a quantitative model is the way data and theory are generated. In a qualitative method, the social actor's point of view is emphasised, and the focus lies to describe the social processes of the study. Furthermore, the approach is more flexible in a qualitative model, and it also generates concepts and theories (Blaikie, 2010, p. 215). The quantitative model focuses on calculating ideas and focuses on the causality of the research. Furthermore, it looks at statistical causal and generalisation with a focus on the individuals (Ibid, p. 215). As the qualitative method is concerned with understanding the social processes of social phenomena, it can generate an insider perspective of the actor's culture and worldview.

The quantitative approach, on the other hand, may not even have contact with the participants of the thesis. As the research strategy of this thesis is a combination of inductive and abductive strategies (Blaikie, 2010) and focusing on the processes of social life, the qualitative methods of generating primary data would thereof create an understanding of hate speech. However, as the thesis also uses secondary quantitative data, the process of collecting data is mixed. The primary information is qualitative, and the secondary data is quantitative in its collection.

While outlining the proposal for the thesis strategy and structure, how to present the primary and secondary data was not locked. Thus, it became clear after deciding the thesis to be a qualitative one and proceeding with the qualitative interviews that multi-case research seemed to be the best way to present and analyse the empirical data. As Blaikie (2010) and Bryman (2016) stated, the process of finding empirical data and theories are not a horizontal or a vertical

operation, and for me, this refers to be the same in finding the best methodological way to process and present the collected theoretical and empirical findings. The challenge of not having a closed and fixed strategy of analysing the data gives time and room to make changes in the thesis while writing it. This is a challenge that makes it difficult during the process of transcribing, analysing, and drafting the thesis.

4.2.1. Interview as a method

Interviews can be defined as a technique that involves "conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspective on a particular idea, program, or situation" (Boyce & Neale, 2006, p. 3). As the thesis is primary data qualitative, as Bryman (2016, p. 201) outlines in key concepts 9.2., there are different types of interviews. A structured interview where the aim is for all the interviewees to be asked the same questions (Bryman, 2016, p. 198). Semi-structures interviews refer to when there are a set of subjects in a general form of the interview guide. Still, the sequence of the questions might be asked in a different order than initially outlined. An unstructured interview is when the researcher only has the topics or issue outline of what that will be asked (Bryman, 2016, p. 201).

This thesis followed in the lines of a semi-structured interview. Using semi-structured interviews would provide some flexibility in generating data and make the conversations more fluid. As stated above, the outline of the research model was not fixed when first decided the topic and research area. In chapter 4.9, I will display the process of interviewing.

4.2.2. Research design: a multiple-case study

As the aim of the thesis is to understand what the effects of hate speech is, a multiple- case study would create a systematic and analytical interpretation of the social phenomena. According to Yin (2014), a case study is used to "contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organisation, social, political and related phenomena" (p. 4) and "investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context" (p. 16). This approach describes the aim of the thesis exceedingly well. The case study, according to Yin (2014), Blaikie (2010) and Bryman (2016), varies of purposes based on if it is exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory research; it is to create a theory or instigate change. Thus, there are several

ways to use a case study as a method or as a strategy, based on the inquiry of how the research questions or research statements are formulated. In this thesis, the *how* questions are used, which means that according to Yin (2014, p. 10), the research questions are explanatory as it "deal with operational links needing to be traced overtimes, rather than mere frequencies of incidence".

As there are several ways to use the case study as strategy, Yin (2014) argued that one must define the case or unit of analysis, which in this thesis, is the organisations and their experiences of hate speech. Thereof, a collective multiple-case study where the units of analysis will consist of five organisations will be presented, and then discussed and analysed within the socio- and democratic processes of where hate speech influence the societal structures. Yin (2014) stated that in a case study, especially multiple-case, researchers use replications approach rather than sampling. Here, the use of literal or theoretical replications based on if the cases are similar or different is presented below.

4.2.3. Replication logic

According to Yin (2014), a case study should follow a replication than a sample logic. Replication logic underlined in a multiple-case study is selected to "either (a) predicts a similar results (a literal replication) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (a theoretical replication)" (Yin, 2014, p. 57).

Yin underlines that a few cases, between 4 and 6, could have two different patterns of theoretical replications. This thesis followed a logical replication but influenced by literal replication as there were some differences between the units of analysis. Where, "the logic underlying these replications also would reflect some theoretical interest, not just a prediction that two cases should simply be similar or different" (ibid, p. 57). Yin (2014) via COSMOS Corporation, outlined the replication approach to multiple-case studies, and this was pursued to some degree. The figure is detailed below.

Figure 3. Multiple-case study Procedure

Define and Design		
Develop theory	Select cases	Designing data collection protocol

Prepare, collect, and Analysis		
Conduct 1st case study	Conduct 2nd case study	Conduct remaining case studies

Write individual case report for each cases
Analyse and Conclude

Draw cross-case conclusion > modify theory > develop policy implications > Write cross-case analysis
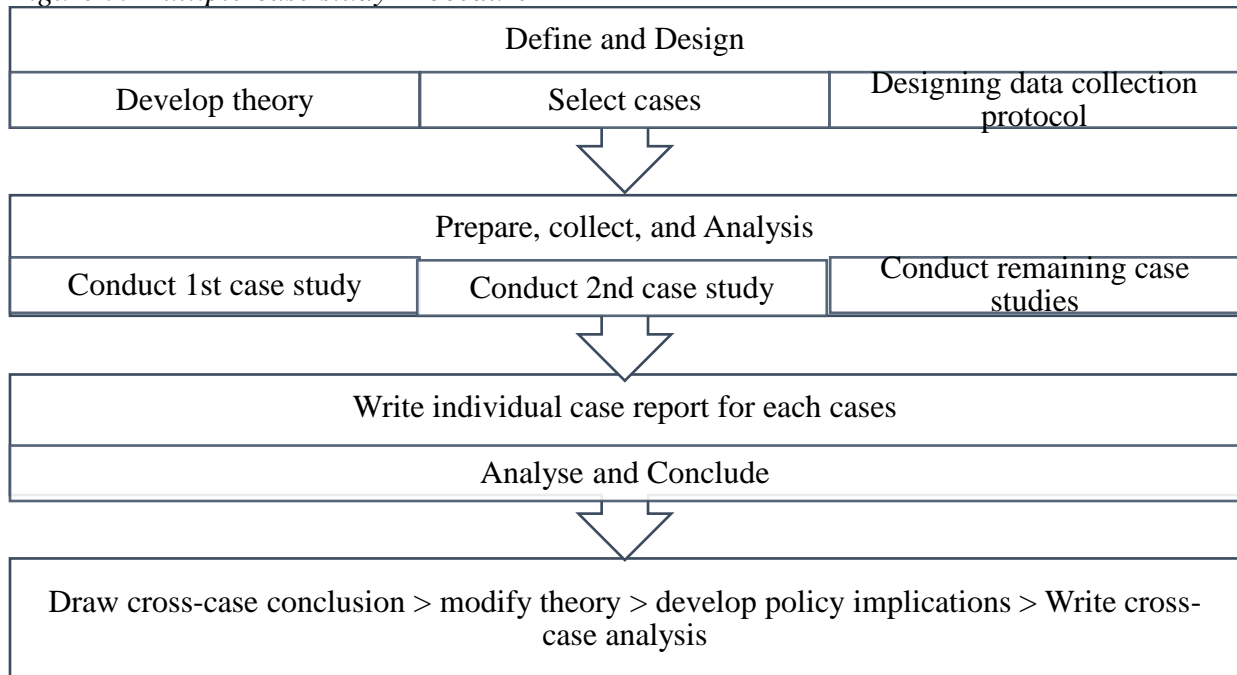
(Source: COSMOS cooperation via Yin, 2014, p. 60)

This figure shows the process within the multiple-case study procedure. This thesis highlights these steps while conducting the interviews and analysing the primary data. Secondary data was used as well; these were incorporated as a multiple-case of its own- but presented as a single case. This because these reports are secondary findings to supply the phenomena of hate speech and makes it easier for the reader is presented as a distinction from the primary findings.

The organisations selected for units of analysis were selected via online searching on social media platforms. As I wanted to get the broader picture of social phenomena, I searched for queer organisations, human rights organisations, and the combination of these. As a result, I found several organisations and contacted them via email and phone. Of these, five organisations agreed to participate. The template used to inform the participants, and the questioned asked, are located the appendix.

With the usage of replication approach, the way of verifying the validity of the qualitative data is a bit different. Yin (2014) and Bryman (2016) argued that the reliability of the information is to sustain the sequence of evidence. In this case, trustworthiness, authenticity, and reflexivity are more critical as they refer to how the researcher acts and pursue the data collection and analysis.

4.3. Trustworthiness, authenticity, and reflexivity

As the thesis has a qualitative strategy, the trustworthiness of the study is essential to assess. According to Bryman (2016), the criteria for trustworthiness; 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, 4) confirmability. Credibility is, according to Bryman (2016), where the researcher often checks with those they study as to if they got the right understanding of what the participators stated. This is referred to as respondent validation. Transferability is related to as what Geertz (1973) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) state as thick description, which implies that "rich accounts of the details of a culture" (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). Thick description creates a database for others to make a judgement about the transferability of the findings.

Dependability parallels to the reliability and implies that the "researcher should adopt an auditing approach" (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). "This ensures that the complete records are kept of all phases of the researcher process […] in an accessible manner" (Ibid, p. 384). Confirmability is referred to as ensuring that the researcher acted with good faith. That the researchers have not permitted personal values to alter the conduction of the research, the findings were originating from it.

Authenticity also has different criteria as trustworthiness has, but referrers to the issues concerning the political impacts. These criteria are "1) fairness, 2) ontological authenticity, 3) educative authenticity, 4) catalytic authenticity, and 5) tactical authenticity" (Lincoln & Guba, 2005, p. 180) Fairness referrers to if the researcher has presented the viewpoint of the social settings. Thus, according to Lincoln & Guba (2005, p. 180), fairness is referred to be "a quality of balance, which means that the stakeholders' opinions, perspectives, claims, concerns, and voices should be apparent in the text". The absence of stakeholder's voice is what Lincoln & Guba (2005) suggests, is a type of bias. This bias is not referred to as concerns of objectivity, but a

> "deliberate attempt to prevent marginalisation, to act affirmatively with respect to inclusion […] and to ensure that all voices in the inquiry effort had a chance to be represented […] and to have their stories treated fairly and with balance" (Lincoln & Guba, 2005, p. 180).

Ontological authenticity referrers to as the research help to provide an improved understanding of the social environment. Meaning that it was created to increase the awareness by participants and by those in contact for a social or organisational intention (Lincoln & Guba, 2005, p.180).

This goes for educative authenticity as well. Educative authenticity is if the research tries to create an improved perception of others in the social setting. Catalytic authenticity is whether the study has functioned as an incentive for engagement to change the social circumstances. Finally, the tactical authenticity referrers to the researchers have created empowerment to make essential steps for action (Bryman, 2016, p. 386).

Reflexivity refers to "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher" (Lincoln & Guba, 2005, p. 183). It forces us to think about our research problem and the participants engaged in the process, as well as the representation of our flexible self, which means that researchers' needs to look at the personal and academic self-reflection in the study they are conducting. Reflexivity concerns with how we cross-examine how our binaries, ambiguities, paradoxes from our personal lives are affecting the study. Bryman (2016) stated that the concept of reflexivity has several meanings within social science. The ethnomethodology's referred to it as language and actions in a social world where it is used more than just an indicator of a broader phenomenon. Another meaning of the term is, according to Bryman (2016, key concepts 17.6, p. 388),

> "carries the connotation that social researchers should be reflective about the implications of their methods, values, biases, and decisions for the knowledge of the social world they generate".

This definition follows in a similar line of Lincoln & Guba (2005) described above. This shows that reflexivity is a self-reflecting method of where the researcher needs to be aware of their personal biases. I interpret reflexivity as where researchers must make sure their privilege is checked and make sure that the participants are fairly presented. Bryman further states that "knowledge from a reflexive position is always a reflection of a researcher's location in time and social space" where "sensibility to the researchers' cultural, political, and social context" matter (Bryman (2016, key concept 17.6, p. 388). This underlines that the researchers' stand is essential for the selecting of subjective and objective within the social phenomena of time and space.

4.4. Active secondary data

The idea for my thesis sprung from Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) on experience with hate speech among LGBT+ people, other minorities, and the general population. Nevertheless, people with an immigrant background are under-representative in the population survey and too small respondence within the organisation survey leading to these being left out. Therefore, I chose to combine two other reports to see the more significant impact of hate speech as we live in a multi-cultural country.

The descriptions from Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) and The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) explore similar problem statements as Flamoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019), but with a different foundation. Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) report emphasised on the living conditions of LGBT+ people with an immigrant background as the sample. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) report focused on the commentary section of Norwegian news station pages on Facebook to see if hate speech had any implications on the users and their participation in the public debate on Facebook.

The reports applied different methods to collect primary data and analyse the primary data. Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) used surveys on experiences with hate speech among LGBT+ people and the general population. The questionnaires used are one population survey with a new sample of LGBT+ people, and one organisation survey among members of chosen organisations that represent the different minority groups (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019, p. 18). The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) used a content analysis of a moderated commentary section on the Facebook pages of NRK and TV2, two news channels in Norway. The survey conducted was to see the amount and character of hate speech in the comment section, and how the Norwegian debate on Facebook can look like. Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data via online surveys and qualitative interviews with queer migrants in Norway.

4.5. Research limitations

As the thesis is about religious queer women's participation and the effect of hate speech, there are a few theoretical and practical limitations that need to be addressed. Here, some factors have affected the outcome of the study will be offered. Firstly, the interview guides could have been more transparent written and not as leading as they possibly were. As the thesis approach is directed towards how the researchers perceived the phenomena, this could have implications on the questions asked.

Secondly, by using existing secondary data with the primary data collected, this made it challenging to decide on the overall method to present and analyse the data. The reports use different methods of inquiry, which itself made it difficult to combine the secondary data into the understanding of the primary data collected. However, by choosing a multi-case study with content analysis, the primary and secondary data underlined each other and presented a comprehensive picture of the social phenomena of hate speech. Finally, chosen theories create a somewhat biased opinion of how a cisgender queer woman sees the implications of hate speech towards religious queer women. However, selecting theories that underline women's' participation and the implication of socio-political and socio-democratic factors have on religious individuality and the community.

The methodological limitations refer to the selection of methods of inquiry, theories, participants and general issues with multiple-case studies, addressed by Yin (2014). As the main method of presenting the primary findings is via a multi-case study, there are a few limitations to the sampling logic. Yin (2014, p. 59) stated that

> "case studies are not the best method for assessing the prevalence of phenomena […] a case study has to cover both the phenomena of interest and its context, yielding a large number of cases- too large to allow more than a superficial examination of any given case".

Selection of methodology was modified due to the findings of the organisations' perspectives, furthermore, on how to answer the research statements. By asserting a multiple case-study, the presentation of the findings became transparent and presented the organisations perspective on hate speech. By altering the method of inquiry, the reliability and reflexivity of the thesis were secured.

4.5.1. Anonymity and its challenges

As the topic is of such sensitivity, the organisations were anonymised and just fronted the organisations' viewpoint of the concerned issue. To make the anonymisation easier, I coded the transcriptions of the interviews into themes.

Table 5. Coding	
Transcript coded themes	Anonymity coding
1. [Experience] hate speech	a. Organisation (A- E)
2. [Impact on] participation	b. Removing information that makes them recognisable.
3. Internet and social media platforms	c. Changing the language used
4. Minority perspective	d. Presenting a fair representation based on what the organisations stated
5. Democracy and politics	e. My interpretation of how hate speech is affecting them

These categories of topics are interlinked but differ based on the different aspects presented. As I had to translate the interviews from Norwegian to English, it made it easier to make the transcripts anonymised and changing the language. Also, the interpretation of what the organisation expressed is provided as part of the discussion of the findings. This enables the researcher to show the insider perspective of the organisations. Furthermore, to front their expressions and with an outsider's viewpoint.

4.6. Researcher's role and positionality

As this thesis uses several methods of inquiry, such as multi-case study and content analysis, there are a few factors that need to be detailed as it affects the positionality of the researcher's role. The researcher's position has an essential function to understand and analyse the culture and social life of the interviewee. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the values as a researcher as well as notify their role as a researcher while conducting the research (Sanjari et al., 2014).

It has been necessary to consider that my positionality as a queer ciswoman has definitively affected the execution of the project. As a researcher, I could have unconscionably ignored or put more weight on some results than others. Thus, by following the coding, introduced in chapter 4.5.1., the organisations were presented with the same topics. This secured that they were presented with the same themes.

In the information letter and the email sent to the participants, I enclosed my positionality and the purpose of the thesis. Furthermore, the collected primary findings were disclaimed only to be used in the thesis. This secured the trust of the participants, and that they could speak freely about the organisations' experiences.

4.7.   Ethical considerations

There are several ethical challenges with qualitative studies that raise dilemmas such as "respect for privacy, the establishment of honest and open interaction, and avoiding misrepresentation" (Warusznski (ed), 2002, p. 152). As the chosen thesis topic is sensitive, more ethical challenges are occurring when the Norwegian laws and regulations on research have strict rules on personal data collection.

Before I could start collecting the primary data, I had to get permission from the Norwegian centre for research data (NSD) to conduct such a sensitive project within the juridical guidelines. Therefore, collecting and processing confidential data was one of the most significant methodological challenges where there was a need to find creative solutions for working within the guidelines and laws set by NSD and the Norwegian government. As the necessary empirical data was sensitive since it characterises personal identity as female religious queers, securing these data was the primary concern that followed throughout the research. This included that the interviews were only to be the organisation's perspective of the situation and using their perspective of how participation is hindered or not. Furthermore, the processing of the sensitive data was transcribed on a computer borrowed by the university that had no internet connection and only Office programmes.

Sanjari et al. (2014), Blaikie (2010), Bryman (2016), and The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (2014; 2016) underlined the importance of not doing harm. This was

especially important because of the sensibility of the subject, and that I could cause harm to the participants if personal data were presented.

The research got approved by the NSD based on the personal data law on openness, justice, and lawfulness, as the participants get the necessary information and content for the research. Limits of the purpose, if personal information is collected it will only be used for this purpose only; minimizing of data, the only data collected is relevant and necessary for the research's mission; and finally, limits on storing the data. The information letter, in the appendix, provided with what the data would be used for and declared that it would be easy to remove the data if the participants wanted to. As soon as the primary data was transcribed, I deleted the recordings and sensitive personal data. This was because the interviews consisted of protected personal data, i.e. queer, religiousness, political stance and ethnic identity characteristics.

4.8. Establishing contacts

Selecting organisations to interview started with the online searching on the topic and then finding what organisations working with the subject from different social and political stands. From there, I decided on two organisations fronting the queer religious perspective, two organisations working on the topic of hate speech on an executive level, and one queer organisation that is well established. I also got one group interview with people that use their blog to spread information about modern Christianity and what it was like to be part of conservative Christian congregations. This was, unfortunately, not included in the study as I altered the research method during the process of collecting primary data.

There was one organisation discovered later in the process of finding participants that could strengthen the minority perspective. Still, due to the information received from the organisations and with the current events of the global pandemic, there was no time or need to continue to contact them.

4.9. Conducting the interviews, writing, and analysing

Assessing my position on why I wanted to research the subject helped to gain the trust of the organisations interviewed. Also, that the chosen organisations beforehand known helped too. I could see that the topic had an immense implication on how the interviewee expressed their

emotions and talked about experiences someone in their organisation had faced. Therefore, I tried to alter the questions within the same theme, based on how they reacted and responded to the different subjects.

When writing and analysing the collected empirical data, the method of content analysis was the right way of making sense of the social and political factors in the data. As content analysis have rather vague guidelines to follow, it is up to the researcher to find the best method of inquiry that fits the research. In this case, academic data and empirical data are seen as an intertwined part to understand hate speech and the consequences of it (Bryman, 2016).

The qualitative interviews with three organisation that works directly with queer religious individuals, and two interviews with organisations that work on the topic on an executive level, underlined some of the information in the theoretical foundation. Also, added experiences that were not explained in the previous work of mapping the situation. The interviews provided with the knowledge presented an in-depth perspective that the combination of the reports highlighted. The interviews were conducted in Oslo. This provided with a multi-cultural and diverse perspective of the topic and its implication on the increased polarisation within the communities. Further, this would provide an understanding that the issue is not locked to Oslo or Norway due to globalisation and the internet with social media and other media platforms.

The interviews were recorded with a portable voice recorder only used for this purpose. The voice recorder had own inputs where headsets and earplugs could be asserted, also meaning that it was not put into the computer where the sensitive data was transcribed. This was necessary to secure the personal data that was recorded, though I disclaimed that it would only be from the organisational perspective and experiences that would be transcribed. As the topic is of sensibility, coding was employed, presented in chapter 4.5.1. The coding of the transcript was necessary to secure the anonymity of the organisations, as the received information is sensitive and needed secure, according to the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (2014; 2016), the research ethics.

Choosing the perspective of the thesis required the content and scope to be downsized. Moreover, due to the factors affecting hate speech, the discussion and analysis underline the socio-political and socio-democratic, of which the organisations and the reports indicated.

5. Cases and Findings

This chapter will present the organisations that were studied in the thesis. The presentations are based on qualitative interviews conducted and the organisations' webpages. Five humanitarian- and LGBT+ organisation employees were interviewed and will be presented separately. As these organisations work differently on the same subject, the structure of the sections will be divided into how the organisations work, their perspective, and motivation for continuing to work and make minority perspectives visible. These organisation work with topics that affect and is affected by social and political issues in society. How they are concerned will be presented as external influencing factors presented at the end [of each presentation]. These descriptions and perspectives of the cases will be discussed and analysed the next chapter 6.

5.1. Organisation A

5.1.1. <u>Background and how they work</u>

Organisation A presents themselves as an organisation where their vision and purpose are that

> queer bodies are being used by anti-Muslim voices; we need to take a stand [against them] since they want to be our spokesperson [all the time] […] visualize the LGBTQ movement, which is not always on anti-racism. Thereof makes us visual in the public eye and remind people of anti-racism.

On their webpage, they state that they are a non-governmental organisation that promotes an inclusive and safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans people, or other non-heteronormative with a Muslim background in Norway. Further, they work actively to offer safe spaces for freedom of speech, tolerance, inclusion, belonging, and friendship. Thus, via collaboration with several cultural organisations, they have several projects that contribute to creating spaces, such as social gatherings and a feministic queer mosque

Organisation A stated that hate speech could be defined as a national problem where:

> all kinds of classical oppression issues vi need to be prioritised, violence against women, violence by partner, homophobia, and racism. If one solves these issues, everyone is benefited by it. By having a government or powerful institution that chose to prioritize these issues, will make big changes; big societal changes that are necessary.

5.1.2. Minority Perspective and motivation

Fronting the anti-racist and feminist approach, Organisation A supports the wholesome battle against discrimination and other forms of suppression and seeks to create a safe environment for its members. Further, their experiences as a minority within a minority is seemingly creating a more significant understanding of what it is like to be discriminated from two or more sides based on their identity. When asked about how being a minority within a minority is affecting their work, they stated.

> We experience this a lot since we need to take the fights in every room we are in, and it's very exhausting. There was also a report on queer people with an immigrant background, where they feel more discriminated based on racism than queerness. The queer identity gets discriminated as any other queer, but that we cannot get into the labour and housing market is because we have immigrant names that are perceived as Muslim names. This discrimination affects us more; to not be able to be financially dependent and make your own money, and this is something we know too well. On most of us, one cannot see that we are queer, but everyone recognizes that we are immigrants. As long as the identity is visible, you get decimated. We can choose not to view our queer identity, but most of us are rather out there in society, so 'everyone' knows [that we are queer].

This experience of discrimination does not only affect how they work; it affects their personal life as it becomes a public matter in the debate forums or social media platforms. Meaning that their identity as Muslim or immigrant (or both) is used against them when they express themselves in debates or on social media posts. As I have understood, their motivation to organise and create this safe space is because of how the social and pollical environment has changed and that there was a need to have a more inclusive LGBT+ organisation.

5.1.3. External influences and experience of hate speech; consequences

As any organisations that work with human rights issues, Organisation A's effort and agency are affected by external factors that change the political environment as the social environment. These factors can be, for instance, politics that create a picture of immigrants or prejudice hate towards queer people. As seen used in the past, fake news and propaganda are also a massive

external factor that both motivates and hinders their work. Hate speech is something they experience a lot, as they state.

> The racists think that we promote identity politics and individualism, and we get a lot of hate speech from them. Recently, one in our community got debated in a Facebook group, saying that she was disgusting and brought shame over Muslims. This is something we need to handle; we need to ask the person (the victim of hate speech) how are you, what is going on, is this something we need to report to the police? Do we need to report it to Facebook? And that the whole community supports the person affected by hate speech. This is something we experience a lot. The racist is so weak in their argumentation that it is only their community that takes them seriously, and without them, it will not work [to spread the hatred further]. It has a psychological strain on us, as there is someone that is being used, no matter what.

Attitudes and prejudice in society influence how they can create a safe environment for their members. There is an issue with certain beliefs in Norway, and organisation A's perspective on this is embraced below in the quotation. As they work on changing attitudes and prejudice in society, they stated when asked if the opinions have changed. It seemed that it was much more complicated than just hatred from one side.

> The thing is that the homophobe Muslims and the Islamophobic racist feeds of each other in debates, which makes both sides more conservative, as they have to defend their faith and that there should be different views on freedom of speech and homophobia. So, they have several conversations where we are not included. It has become better as we have the anti-racist profile, and we have started to discuss with the religious [communities] without the racists, and this has worked very well. We talk about freedom of religious belief, obviously, but what do we do with those that are attacking us? We have a common problem, and it has made it easier that they trust us as anti-racist. And this would not be amongst the queers without the queer movement generally, that there are no 'bridge builders'; one just does not trust each other. People have a prejudice against each other, and they do not see the common discrimination against minorities.

As the organisation A stated, they can work with religious communities and have a dialogue about diversity and religious belief. Nevertheless, as prejudice and individual attitudes from others in society affect their identity as queer Muslims, it will, in the broader sense, have

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implications on the socio-political environment of expression in society. Thus, social media and the public debate has shown to create an ambiguity of expression and a way to reach out to communities.

> The visibility that we have definitely created more engagement, and we have got more people into our community, mainly women and trans people that have reached out. This is quite unique because this is the group that is the most vulnerable at the moment. So, pursuing with the anti-racist and feministic profile make sure that those that have less chance to debate on specific platforms, reach us. Then, we see how social media has progressed; it is much visible. It easy to find out who hates who, which is extremely scary.

> It is such a polarising social climate, and it is hard for us to navigate through this. We just want the freedom to assemble and have social gathering; without that, we are pulled in every direction. It is not possible to only assemble, because the point of the gathering is always attacked, and further, we have to push away the bullies -which makes it very difficult for us to work.

Also, as measures to hate speech is something the government have in recent years had an emphasis organisation A underlined the need for more awareness and own statistics.

> It is very hard because when it comes to hate speech, there is a lot of non-documented statistics and no real number of how many that has been affected by it. It demands when I talk to my people, a process where one goes to the police station. The hatred is so normalized that one does not think that one can do anything about it, but that is how it is. I feel that those that go to the police are those that are more privileged by how the societal structure is. I think we need to create our own statistic on how discrimination affects us and have a further dialogue with the police station that is the only station that handles this- which is good.

The freedom of speech debate has been something that the organisations expressed concerns. From a queer Muslim perspective, they shared how the debate often is shown as the law on free expression is most sacred.

> Freedom of speech debates are so dangerous, because of which law is most sacred? We have other laws; we have laws against hate, laws against discrimination, against suppression, and violence. These persons [who thinks that they have the freedom of speech to mean anything they like] are sitting there in their little bobble with these thoughts and experiments on ideology, which is not even close to the societal reality.

> It is the kind of elitism in this, and they debate in their bobble and expect us to approve it. We think this is unfair because the laws need to be viewed together [the way they were made]. One cannot separate one law and praise it higher than the others. We are so tired of that debate; we wish that would take suppression and hate towards social groups, and others, equally seriously. If the holiest law is to be able to express hate speech against minorities, then we have a problem in society that we need to change the normative.

This experience that organisation A state, is present a broader picture of hate speech towards religious queer women. The organisation stated how political parties are seemingly creating a normalisation of certain attitudes.

> Our time is not now, as we have had the Progress Party (FRP) in government, and they are still crucial for the current government. Trump cannot exist without Erdogan; it is their time now. The Progress Party cannot become big if they are the only one in the whole world that is racist as others like them have normalised it and it their time now. So, we have to create a strategy that will change it to become our time, and then we need to collaborate. Organisation A has talked to the Muslim organisations and that we are making a strategy and be part of the mainstream LGBT movement and the trans movement; everyone is attacked, and we have to collaborate.

5.2. Organisation B

5.2.1. Background and how they work

Organisation B is an organisation that fronts a unity between that of being Christian and queer. From their webpage, they state that many people struggle to accept their sexual identity or gender identity, especially when one is or have been part of Christian congregations. That sense of inner conflict is one the reasons why this organisation was created and to say to those that are struggling that they are good enough just the way they are. Like organisation A, organisation B was organised to create a safe environment and advocate that it is possible to live as queer and Christian. Organisation B advocates and inform that, even though the society and the Church have come a long way of accepting queer rights [due to work by Open church group], but to get the same acceptance within the Pentecostal and charismatic churches will take some time.

5.2.2. Minority Perspective and motivation

Organisation B's motivation to found the organisation lays on the lines of the consensus that it is not possible to be both gay and Christian. Being a minority within a minority is something that drives them to advocate for a more diverse practice of Christianity. Similar to Organisation A, they also have the experience of being a minority within a minority.

> The problem with queer Christians is that they come out when they are on average, 35-40 years old, and many have severe mental issues after [coming out]. They are too sick to take part in a debate and discussion because they have been suppressed in so many years, and people do not know anything about this. We are a minority within a minority, and that [religious] minority think we have the society on our side, and that is why we are a danger to them. If we are backed too much by society because the community is like 'what, are queer Christians suppressed?' yes, we are.

> 'It is probably not that bad,' and if we are backed by society, the minority that is bigger than us gets mad. So, we do not know how to balance the discussion, as we have to balance it nicely; we cannot get too much support from the society, because then the areas where we are trying to discuss will not be addressed and they [the Christians] do not want to talk to us. They become 'you have the society on your side, and now you are bashing us,' and then, it becomes a 'persecution scheme' again. Then, we cannot talk too much and have discussions; it is a very thin line.

Organisation B stated in an interview since the society has become more modernised, the traditional values in religion has changed with the community, and the smaller Christian sects, such as the Pentecostal Church, have stick to their traditional values and practices. The Pentecostal Church shares an understanding of Christianity that makes it very difficult for the members of the congregation to be different in terms of more 'modern' identities.

Further, the congregation, according to them, sees themselves as the minority in society and uses this perspective when arguing about specific things they had to give in on, such as divorce. Broadcasting themselves as the minority also undermines those that they are suppressing with their point of view on how the members should live their lives. Being Christian and queer are often seen as contradictory factors in the heteronormal society as the Bible, has some verses that condemn homosexuality. Nevertheless, these verses are mainly, if not only, towards men. Men have, in many years, controlled the role of women in history, which is also why both

Organisation B have a feministic perspective while working on issues connected to sexuality and religion.

On the topic of belonging and finding acceptance, organisation B shared that it is necessary to find a community that welcomes you as you are; otherwise, things become complicated.

> Most of us get sick when and during the process where they decide to come out. No matter where you turn, you never find acceptance, and that is what that is important while one is young. If one looks at young queer girls and boys, and you never get that 'I like you, but not what you stand for,' just like it is a choice. Which does not make sense either? Many things do not make sense, and I think it hard to explain these things. Mental health is a problem that we need to get professional help to our members as they are expanding. We have very few people that can be completely open with their history and talk about personal experiences, face to face.

This sense of belonging is an essential part of growing up and finding oneself. Being queer and practising Christianity, this might be hard in terms of finding acceptance and embracing how you are when you always heard that it is a sin to be who you are and that you should live alone. Further, the minority within a minority perspective also provides an understanding of their belonging in the religious community as the general community.

> It is a big problem as you feel that you never fit in, and then it's that you are a practising homosexual in these environments, and then you cannot be an active member of the congregation; you cannot greet and welcome members in the church. They have different tasks and services as, for instance, the gatekeeper that greet and welcome people to the church service, but we that have a same-sex partner are not allowed even to do this. So, when you are practising homosexuality, you are stamped out the church and have to sit in back [of the church]. This is the attitude we are met with. If we live in celibacy in society, as the congregation wants us to, you can never win.

As most congregations want queer people, that are active in the congregation, to choose the religion or their sexuality, it becomes an internal dilemma for many. As organisation B pointed out, it is hard to make a choice when love is something most people experience, and it should be celebrated not hated.

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It depends on what kind of person you are if one that bears it; it's so many that don't stand religion as it the only thing that holds on to [the strict belief that hinders people] […] it's about whom you fall in love with. However, it has such a big thing, all in all, and you are not welcome in the congregation when you have found a partner. What is the point? Then people do not want to be a part of the religion, which we support. You rather wish to live. We live in a post-modern society, indeed, and you feel this on the faith. Christianity becomes diffuse, and those that follow the bible 100 % is called a sect. You can almost say that the Pentecostal church is a sect by the way they do and talk about things and missionaries on.

5.2.3. External influences and experiences of hate speech; consequences

The external factors that influence Organisation B seem to be that the Norwegian Church has a liberal stance on human rights, but the more closed congregations do not. Moreover, they want to bring awareness of how it is possible to be Christian and practice homosexuality. The political and social environment have impacts on how they can advocate and inform without being met with prejudice and hateful comments or discrimination. When it comes to hate speech, they stated.

> It is kind of standard that it is a deviation. I feel like your sexual orientation is damage from your childhood. But then it depends on the background you have, what you read of newspapers and not just reading Christian papers, which many people are grown up with [reading].

Social media and the consequences of hate speech are two concerns that have a massive implication on the civic and political participation of religious queer women. They stated how complicated the situation is in terms of having concrete measures to hate speech. Also, how the collaboration with queer religious organisations are creating a space for religious queers where they belong and feel safe.

> Knowledge is the only thing that could make a change, and attitude change is key. If one looks at culture and history, certain opinions have been illegal, so it has slowly been making progress towards an attitude change, even though people do not care about this and express what they like. We like to believe that if congregations or other groupings adopt religion get certain demands that they, for instance, need to have a

visit from us, where we talk about queer history, one or two times a year. That they need to have this, or they cannot use certain words and terms when expressing their opinion and theology- or theology affect the freedom of religion, so that does not work. But some guidelines on terms and words, to promote an attitude change, as that is the key. Finding out what one can do it on a positive way where people actually takes in what the law says and that is not put under the rug and ignored, and that, we don't know how to do [neither does the government].

This experience presented by organisation B underlines the importance of belonging and acceptance, which implicates on their participation in the community.

5.3. Organisation C

5.3.1. <u>Background and how they work</u>

Organisation C advocate political and socially for those that are in the LGBT+ spectre to live openly without the fear of being discriminated, harassed, or socially outcasted. They collaborate with different actors and organisations to promote their work. Organisation C has been a clear voice for the LGBT+ movement. They pushed through many decisive political battles such as removing homosexuality as a diagnose in 1982 to the discrimination law that protects LGBT+ under the penal code in 2014. Via a set of action plans, they advocate for making sure the municipalities and regions follow specific strategies to strengthen the knowledge on gender diversity and the rights within sexuality and gender identity/ gender expression. The action plan created for Oslo, for the period of 2015-2017, expressed that everyone should live their lives freely based on equality and mutual respect. Further, though this, the discrimination of lesbian, homosexual and bisexual people became a permanent part of OXLO, Oslo Extra Large, work in 2013.

They work on several different areas to front non-discriminatory perspective on a local, regional, and global levels in society. When it comes to hate crimes, organisation C advocate for that, it should be seen as a societal issue and that there should be concrete measures on all areas where it is necessary. As they are an organisation that works with all the spectres of that goes under LGBT+ umbrella, and societal and political factors in society, religion and having a belief can be challenging. Organisation C states that it is necessary to respect religion unless it is used to dehumanise people via, for instance, conversion therapy.

So, then research is very important for that then, and the more you research about it, the more scientists who talk to it […] that will help bring up those perspectives. Also, there must be a lot to say about individuals even now that we are helping people. The documentary series that Hegeseth made about conversion therapy was important, it set the agenda and it made people start talking about it and you got some faces on people talking about their experiences with it.

Our reality is like that and all the ideas that everyone who is out of the question has that you have to choose, or that there should be such a life where you, first become a Christian, and then you become gay. You stop being Christian or religious in any way then, that the narrative there is in a way become a little erased, and that you get voices that say that's not how I'm as queer and as Muslim, as I've always been before.

5.3.2. Minority Perspective and motivation

Being an organisation that fronts diversity in the form of gender expression and sexuality, their motivation or political purpose is to fight against discrimination and for equality. Being part of a global justice movement that works toward equality and non-discrimination, the declaration of human rights is grounded in their work. Fighting the perspective on norms, gender, and sexuality, they offer an intersectional position where everyone is included and fights social injustice based on discrimination of identity.

On the topic of public debates and hate speech, they stated that there should be more coherency in terms of how politicians use rhetoric to front a specific ideology. They also underline that the climate of expression has changed to be more open for a critic when people are expressing hateful comments.

Clearly. And you have to talk more about what racism is, that in itself then, or what is homophobia or transphobia. And it is kind of problematic that those voices often can't stand it because of people in the majority position, define it. On that with having rules on what politicians get to say, I have a hard time envisioning that. It is also a problem that one, it also contributes to polarization, and I also believe that many politicians also play very clearly on.

One thing is Norway, but if you look towards the rest of Europe and the world in a way, that you push it out in a way, you also get and drag it so far that the opposite side [...] "we're going to help them where they are because they shouldn't come to Norway

because it's problematic also a relationship with a multicultural society." It can be taken on so many things. While the answer often is, "that's racist," people disagree on the one hand, and it also contributes to the polarization. Furthermore, if you were to make rules for it, I think it would have added more to polarization almost then. Or it would have been an exciting proposition to bring up because one could, then had one had a debate on what is really racism. But if the right voices had been heard in that debate, I am not sure.

Freedom of speech debate has created tension in terms of how free expression and illegal expression is defined. This debate has both shown how a democratic discussion should be and how easy it is to discriminate against someone without being punished by law.

> There are a lot of things that are different with the freedom of speech climate now, and we may have had a period during the 2000s that have been good, but one should not go very far back until much more racist things were in place to print in the newspapers, so that's somehow […] and the rhetoric that today is being knocked down on in fact, and where there will be a debate about that rhetoric, it would have slipped through in 2005. It's sort of not so, it's that it's counter-speech, that more people are proven that 'this is problematic what you say'. I think it's a positive thing that it's counter-belief. That's almost the main difference, that before there was a lot less abutment and now it is.

5.3.3. External influences and experiences of hate speech; consequences

Organisation C is part of a global movement that advocates for more knowledge about sexual identity and gender expression. The external factors that impact their work as advocates are determined by how they influence society as a whole. They have been an organisation since the 1950s, and some external influences are the substantial battles on gender norms and de-crimination of homosexuality. Today, the changes in society, the political sphere, and the online social media platforms have implications on how they can inform and advocate for equality.

With social media platforms, the way of communicating has made it easier to connect with people like oneself. Still, it has also created a space where it is seemingly easy to spread hate and discriminatory comments. Organisation C stated on the topic of hate speech and religion and the changes in it.

[…] it has become one of those that the pendulum has swung. So, that now there has been so much consensus in the big society and that we have seen a change on which I would say has been enormous only in the last ten years. That how much room it is too queer, how much we were present in the media […] There has been a paradigm shift almost in how you look at gender and sexuality, especially sexuality. Moreover, I'm thinking [...] also, it has become such a back-clash from some religious communities that are more conservative and have been there all the way, but so now (from my point of view) appears more frantic in their protest. You notice that in daily things […] And it is almost everything comes from Dagen, our country, Norway today [Norge i dag], the newspapers [...] there is somehow extreme concerning gender and sexuality, but as Aftenposten writes, the less about it. So, there is an entirely different absolute focus on it, in some conservative Christian communities.

This perspective will be further looked at in the discussion as an essential part of understanding the intersectional hate.

We would think, at least for people who are queer and Christian, then perhaps it may also, in many ways, come as a threat of violence. And violence in great importance than, for it is a restriction of people's freedom, the limitation of people for the law to do as ultimately can be experienced violently at least.

As social media have become a massive part of how we communicate, there has thereof become a need to moderate individual comment sections and content. This is difficult to address, but the change in social media platforms have made it harder to have control over what that is expressed and if it is within the law in Norway. Organisation C stated that it is hard to form an opinion on this as an organisation but agree that there has been a change in the way media have evolved during the last ten years. It is hard to find a coherent solution. On the topic of the political coalition on freedom of speech and online forums, the convictions on hate speech on social media are brought up.

So, I think it's a good thing to get it up in the highest court and get the verdict they got, but I also believe that this whole debate here is complicated because I think people think of freedom of speech as different things as well. Also, it is somehow about completely pure freedom of expression as one can express themselves without intervention from the state. It is not a challenge in Norway today, as I see it, but some

will say it too, those who want to express themselves racist then, who believe that with racism the paragraph that one has curtailed people's freedom of expression.

I think that the main challenge of free speech today is more than some very many people are frightened away from participating in the debate. That one allows very much coverage for people who speak down the minority group, which makes it very difficult for minority groups to each time have to answer back to those who call themselves critics and then criticize the entire existence of groups.

Ultimately that means criticizing the existence of individuals, and what does it mean? In a way, it's not something that can be criticized. And that makes it very difficult to go through that debate. It's hard to be the voice that should kind of talk about and justify its own existence [...] that the climate of expression in a way may need to be improved in several directions then.

Not only through the law but that we as a society must somehow move forward, and there I am partly positive because I believe that also do so. One faces more courage today, whether one comes with racist utterances or transphobic utterances or homophobic utterances. It is much harder because, in fact, there are people who say what you say here is problematic for them, and there were fewer actors who did it before. Some fewer people took it since then.

This underlines the difficulties with how social media platforms have become. Though it was created to communicate with everyone else using it freely, it has, over the last decade, become more rigorous and debates about absolute free expression.

5.4. Organisation D

5.4.1. Background and how they work

Organisation D is a human rights organisation that advocates for equality and against discrimination towards vulnerable groups in society. They stated how they work with questions on human rights and especially women, as victims of online hate speech.

> *[…]* specific focus on digital violence against women for several years. Furthermore, it comes from a freedom of speech perspective because we have seen in many countries, including Sweden, there has been some debate about it for several years,

that women are exposed to a lot of gender-related issues. That is, surveys done in Norway show that women and men are exposed to the same amount of hate speech. In contrast, men are exposed to hatred with what they say what they stand for, so gender is an essential element of hate against women. It is what is our entrance works a lot on gender discrimination and to see that this is not just a matter of abuse. This is also a question of freedom of expression, for one sees a pattern that women are withdrawing from the social debate […] So, this was our entrance, and then we mean that there are severe expression and form of freedom of speech. That is, it is free speech that, in reality, undermines freedom of speech while also being a democratic challenge if one is sorted out identity and not competence.

Their inputs to the overall debate or discourse on hate speech and its implications have shown to be massive as they work globally on the topic and advocate for the minority perspective of the social phenomena. The quotation above indicates how Organisation D works on hate speech at an executive level and an organisational level in freedom of speech perspective.

5.4.2. Minority Perspective and motivation

Organisation D focuses on human rights in the broader perspective since it is a global organisation, and women and vulnerable groups are their primary focus when it comes to hate speech and discrimination. As they front this human rights perspective, their knowledge about minorities and their struggles in small and big communities has a massive impact on how people trust them to advocate for the voices of the victims of hate speech and discrimination.

What we also see with women with certain forms of minority background is that they are attacked on both sides. That is, they are attacked from the ideal network environment because they are women and non-white or even have a religion, for example, Muslims, who are very prone to hatred. But they are also subject to much discomfort from their own - from the cultural community to which they are associated, as many believe that women should not be out there. Those who are Muslims should not comment on women's rights.

This shows how difficult the topic of discrimination and hate speech is on those that experience it and the community/communities they belong to. Further, they work on fronting the

intersectional discrimination, as considered in the quotation above, and primarily focusing on how minority women are more affected by hate speech online and in public debates. When it comes to religion and discrimination, it might be difficult for the victims to get the support and help from within the religious community if they are discriminated by them as well as in online communities, and this is something that concerns organisation D.

> The best remedy against hate online is not necessarily that one should scold the trolls, because that is part of the package that is what they want to provoke. Still, that one expresses solidarity and support for the which is attacked, and in this way undermines the whole joke of the Web whose hate causes it to hit is ironed out my attacks, then there is no reason to do so. But for that to happen, you have to be open yourself as a woman and have your environment, and if you have challenges with it, you really have no one to help you, and it is challenging to get the protection of someone. When someone yells at you when you are exposed to hatred, one of the most important things to fight against is hate.

This point is an essential part of the motivation they have to with the topic of hate speech and discrimination online.

5.4.3. External influences and experiences of hate speech; consequences

When it comes to external factors that influence organisation D's perspective on hate speech, political, and social implications on hate speech can alter the effect on democratic development. As they work on the topic form freedom of speech perspective, they do not mind that some groups or people attack them as an organisation on social media platforms. Still, if a member is attacked on their account, it is a different matter. The consequences of hate speech are not only an issue to those exposed by it, but also to the democratic stability and development of our society.

Organisation D stated that there are several concrete measures to hate speech, such as create more awareness on freedom of speech and create more initiatives on developing technologies that would make it safer for expression. They further argue that the penal code is an essential part of the measures to prevent hate speech.

> The most important thing is to create more awareness of this. The schools must get on the track, here not least the politicians must take responsibility for their own opinions, to simply show if our society is to function. The code is not fundamental, for you can

take everyone who commits abuse that you will not be able to, nor is the worst effect of digital violence often not hit. For one comes with a particularly powerful statement, but because you are exposed to it all the time.

While the law defines a vital standard, people in Norway trust the state and the system, they use the law as a standard on what is right and wrong, and then it is crucial to say that these things undermine our society, it is not Freedom of speech, there is abuse. But it is clear that this requires awareness work, but we also believe that we must also give those who give utterances a greater responsibility. It is clear that a web forum cannot blame the lack of capacity if they allow their platform to be used to expose people to discrimination and violence […] There are quite a few things you can do, but you have to prioritise it.

As the government's action plan on hate speech was well formulated, it did not exceed the expectation of implementation.

The Government has put forward an action plan against hateful utterances, which is really quite good, but there is a lack of implementation. They have not been willing to spend enough resources on it, both in the police who certainly do not have the support they need, but also in many other areas, and not least the development of skills. And then you simply have to do a lot more.

This demonstrates that securing a safe environment to express yourselves is an everlasting process that we need to front in every part of our society. This is not the only thing that organisation D focuses on within measures on social media platforms and the public debate.

We understand that the biggest, first, and foremost Facebook, they are now doing the job of controlling and moderating statements. It is very nice that they do, they should not allow abuse on their platform, but what is allowed or not allowed is a small group of Facebook employees who decide, and in the end, the boss has the final say. They have neither democratic nor the rule of law, and they moderate and define polls for 2.6 billion users. It is the Facebook boss, Mark Zuckerberg, himself. He has been saying 'we really need the authorities to come on the field and helps us with clear guidelines and regulations so that this is in fact democratically rooted and not me deciding what can or cannot be allowed'.

Organisation D perspective on online hatred seems to reflect the broader picture of the social phenomena that will be discussed in chapter 6.

5.5.   Organisation E

5.5.1.   Background and how they work

Organisation E works to fight injustice and discrimination and collaborate with various organisations and agencies to counterwork on the executive level. Thereof, they advocate creating an equal society where everyone has the same rights and opportunities. Further, they work towards preventing discrimination and helping those that have been discriminated. Their strategy on countering hate speech and hate crimes is to provide more knowledge and research to the police, educational system, the media industry, and advocating to make the politicians and public figures more responsible in stopping hate speech. Organisation E is part of the Norwegian Anti-discrimination Ombud Act, where the government fulfils an active voice in monitoring the human rights obligation. When it comes to mapping the hate speech, they collaborate with user organisations that are affected by hate speech. They also work with women's organisations even though the penal code does not cover gender on hate speech.

Their hate crime network, which they are responsible for coordinating, and consists of 17 user organisations and observatory from the department of justice, the department of culture and equality, BUFDIR, Kripos, and Oslo police district. Then they work together to find common challenges and then address these together, to, for instance, look at how the police work on hate crimes. So, they focus on pointing to the faults that they consider are necessary to conquer hate speech and hate crime effectively.

5.5.2.   Minority Perspective and motivation

As organisation E works on an executive level to provide the knowledge to hinder discrimination, their focus minorities and human rights are how they promote equality in various levels of society. They have a more neutral perspective on minorities than the other organisations. Furthermore, advocate for all those that have been discriminated against and targeted by hate speech. As organisation E generates reports as BUFDIR does, they employ an approach that shows the overall perspective from their user-organisations.

> One has to formulate a project and a survey that considers everything. Like our reports, we found much hate, and most of the hate was towards ethnic minorities and Muslims. While we found nothing on hatred towards Jews, people with disabilities,

and sexual minorities. But, we know it exists, but not on the pages we looked at. So, I think it is essential to have this in mind, and when one looks at these on the topic of hate online, one either delineates it consciously on the pages on look at. Or that one makes sure that one embrace this from a broad perspective as there exist hate towards all groups and different groups, this we know. It depends on where you look for it.

5.5.3. External influences and experiences of hate speech; consequences

As organisation E work on the topic with a different angle than the other organisations mentioned above, they create reports together with other user organisations and women's organisations. They are not directly affected by hate speech as an organisation. Nevertheless, they know how hate speech and discrimination is affecting the overall environment of expression if it is not taken seriously.

> But then, historically, we know that abuse usually does not begin only with violence. So, racist violence motivated, most often it is prehistory, with utterances and propaganda that are generalised and widely accepted and which [...] it is logical in a way one can conclude that one can see a context logically. Still, purely in terms of research, there is very little because it is so difficult actually to say anything specific about it. I think the police college had […] where they pointed out a connection how much you can rely on I do not know because it is just difficult to measure. But we know quite a lot of the research on the consequences of hateful expressions, and that polarisation is one of them quite clear.
>
> […] we also need more research on the consequences, but my assessment of what we need more research on is the scope. If one had looked at a non-edited discussion and other aspects, for example, the single politician's Facebook page or on particular groups either lured or more like a niche group. So, we know that it is filled with hatred against certain groups; for example, people with disabilities, we know to receive very much. But on the other hand, it's not like it doesn't exist, and I think there's something we really need is a much larger content analysis of various sites on the web.

This perspective that organisation E presents, reflects how the scope of hate speech can be limited in research conducted on the subject. Thus, they underline that the consequence of hate speech is natural to see, but not the amount of it. As part of underlining the consequences, organisation E argues that the government and its agencies need to work more efficiently on the scope and the amount of it.

[…] police play a key role both concerning hate crime and illegal hate speech to catch up, that's one. The second is the measures that are continually being done for it is not a measure that solves this magically, that is, it must enter the school we must educate society all the time, and so what I think all the time has such a significant effect is precise that we talked instead about how politicians speak.

I think they [politicians] can quickly be part of legitimizing quite extreme attitudes. Even if they did not reach extreme positions themselves or with necessarily illegal statements, I believe that such persistent stigmatization and condemnation of certain groups has a significant effect on debate climate.

This perception underlines what the reports in the next section, 5.6., highlights.

5.6. Active secondary data: Double minority and hate speech

Reading and analysing the report by Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) formed the outline for the thesis. As detailed in chapter 5.4., the report demonstrated the current situation of hate speech in Norway via statistics and quantitative surveys. Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) report demonstrated how attitudes and prejudice towards minorities are causing people to be careful when expressing their thoughts and opinions. This report is part of the annual reporting or mapping of experiences that minorities and the general population encounter of hate speech and discrimination in daily life. This section will underline the importance of the intersectional understanding of hate speech as a mutual understanding of the reports.

The report published by Fladmoe, Nadim, and Birkvad (2019) show the experiences of hate speech and to forward knowledge about this, especially towards LGBT+ people compared with the general population. This report used surveys conducted by the researchers as well as a similar survey on the members of the organisation FRI (The Norwegian Organisation for Sexual and Gender Diversity), Jewish organisations, and Sami organisation. The results of the report illustrate how "LGBT-people, to a much greater extent than the general population, have been subjected to derogatory comments, speech they perceive as hateful, and concrete threats" (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019, p. 9). Thus, showing how the impact of certain stereotypes and prejudice against groups based on their identity characteristic is creating a [negative] normality of how we speak about ethnic and sexual minorities.

1 in 4 LGBT+ people have experienced hate speech, according to Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019), this underlines why it is essential to research the connection between hate speech and the participation of minorities in public debates and on social media. Figure 4 shows the scale of some arenas where LGBT+-people and the rest of the population experience hate speech.

Figure 4. People exposed to what they experienced as hate speech on different arenas. LGBT-people and the rest of the population. Per cent.
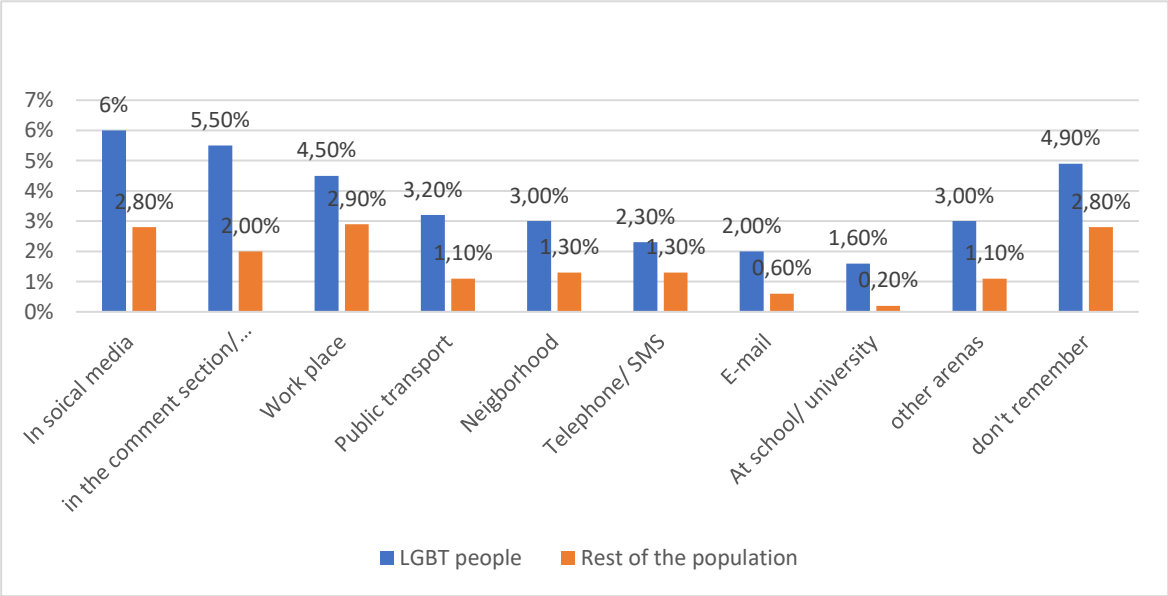
(Source: Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019, p. 35)

This figure shows the amount of hate speech received on different arenas, and we see that social media and workplace are where LGBT people get most hate. Thus, the reports also highlighted the annual amount of hate speech, of where

> "43 % of the LGBT persons and 14 % of the remaining population had experienced this kind [hate speech that repeats fictions about a group] expressions during the last year" (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019, [my translation]).

With the changes in the global political environment, the topic of hate speech would, to a certain point, observe the broader perspective on how globalisation has affected how we communicate.

As Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) did not include much of immigrant and Muslim voices and the impact of social media, and two other reports were included as secondary data. The report by Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) will be present the perspectives of queer immigrants. The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud (2018) report will highlight the impact of hate speech on social media on moderated news channels on Facebook.

In chapter 2, the reported hate crimes and hate speech was illustrated to show the amount of what the Oslo police details in their annual report. Here, the number of reported hate crimes and hate speech are low but with a similar percentage. This shows that the reported hate speech is approximately the same per cent of the reported hate crimes. Figure 4 pictured LGBT-people, and to show the intersectional hate speech, the findings from Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) is emphasised.

Table 6. discrimination based on gender or sexuality	
Negative attention surrounding sexual orientation or gender identity directed towards you	
Daily	< 5 %
Weekly	12 %
Monthly	15 %
rarely	36 %
Never	33 %
Negative attention surrounding sexual orientation or gender identity directed towards someone around you	
Daily	< 5 %
Weekly	6 %
Monthly	9 %
Rarely	33 %
Never	51 %
Source: Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm, 2018, p. 50	

Figure 5. Answering questions on their own and parents religious affiliation. Per Cent.
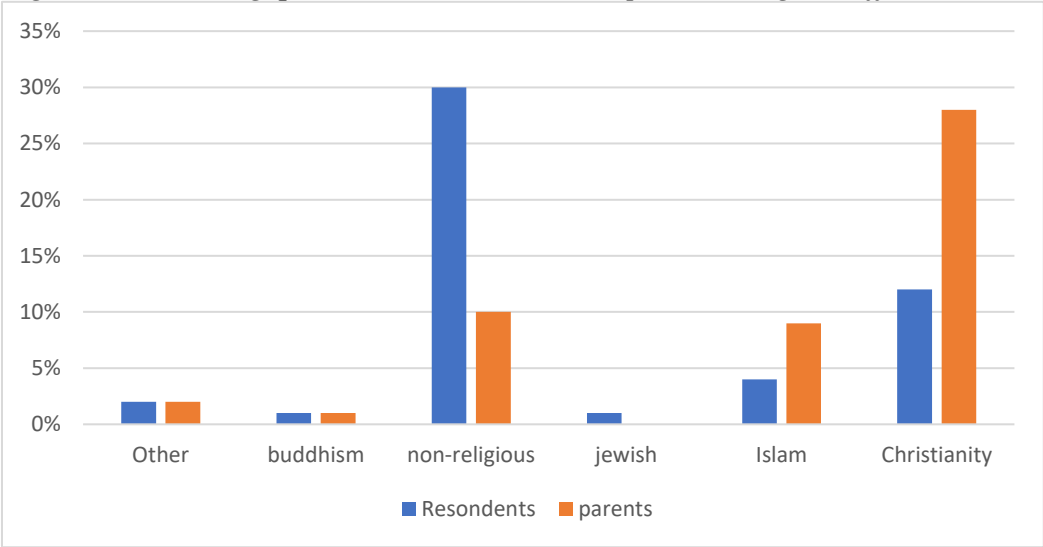
(Source: Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm, 2018, p.53)

Table 6 and figure 5 demonstrated together, show the experiences of hate speech of immigrants with different religious affiliations. Here, we see the combination of sexuality and religious affiliation provides with an intersectional perspective on the hatred experienced. The report on

queer migrants, by Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstøm (2018), in Norway perceived the intertwined discrimination based on discriminatory stereotypes such as 1) gender and sexual orientation, 2) migrant background, and 3) both described above. As for the queer migrants, the combination of their identity characteristic lays the ground for multiple discrimination. The report looks at the living standard of migrant queer in terms of how they perceive discrimination, their childhood and openness, social network and belonging, health, and immigration and integration.

The prejudice perceived main points showed that queer people with a migrant background are more vulnerable to discrimination and marginalisation of various kinds. Most of the discrimination affected them based on their migrant background and, seemingly, is not connected to being queer. This report also considered that some of the participants experienced racism within the queer community, which points to an essential fact that racism can exist anywhere- even within minority communities. This report provides a necessary understanding of the intersectional hate speech that affects queer religious women (Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm, 2018).

Fladmoe, Nadim, & Birkvad (2018) and Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) are not the only ones that have mapped hate speech and its consequences. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2015, p. 8) stated,

> "when it comes to hate speech against ethnic and religious minorities, the economic crisis and immigration to western countries are considered an important explanation of the extent of the phenomenon […] In Norway, we started talking seriously about hate speech and hate crime in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in 2011".

The stories from Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) and The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) observed how identity characteristics and social media plays an essential role in whom that are targeted by hate speech. Together, these reports reveal an intersectional perspective, and therefore, a crucial part of understanding hate speech in a multi-cultural society.

Further,

"individuals identifying with more than one minority characteristic (e.g., LGBT and immigrant background) are far more exposed to hate speech than people identifying with one minority characteristic, and this is especially the case for comments directed against protected grounds, gender, and gender identity/ gender expression" (ibid, p. 9).

This shows that the minority within a minority perspective is essential to understand to be able to see the intersectional discrimination and hate speech against religious queer women. The report also concluded with those that are more active online are often more exposed to hate speech, and that young persons are more exposed. Further, other minority groups than LGBT+ people perceived to be vulnerable to hate speech. These are people with minority religion and immigrant background. Furthermore, people with a visible disability; and people associated with an indigenous group or national minority (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019, p. 10).

As Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) illustrated, The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) report on hate speech online has shown that there are specific topics people do not want to discuss, i.e. immigration.

Figure 6. Hate speech divided from the news channel. Per cent.

Figure 6. Hate speech divided from the news channel. Per cent
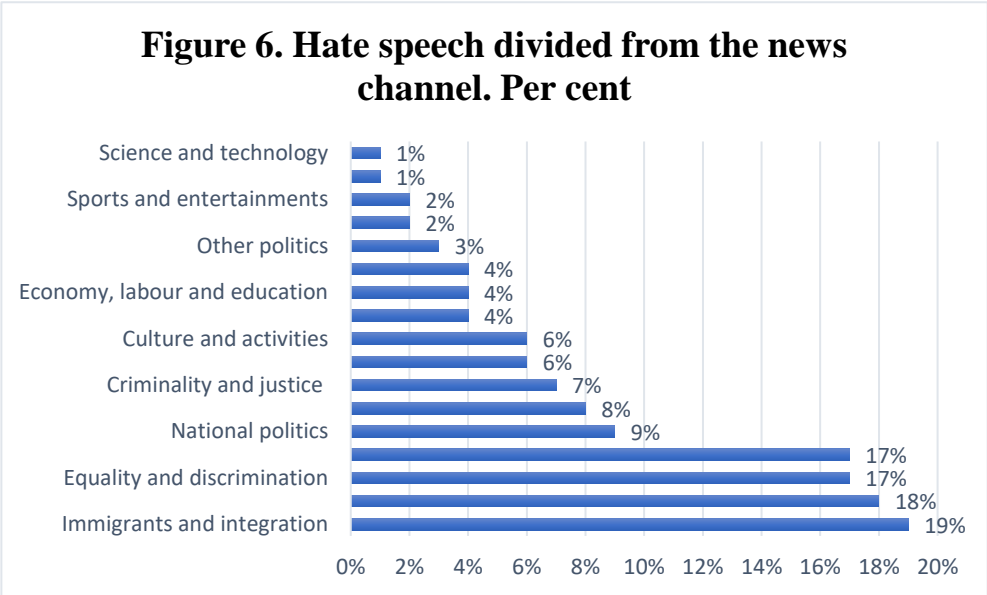
(Source: The Equality and Discrimination Ombud, 2018, p. 44. n=4002).

Figure 7. Hate speech towards religious affiliation. Per cent.

Figure 7. Hate speech towards religious affiliation. Per cent.
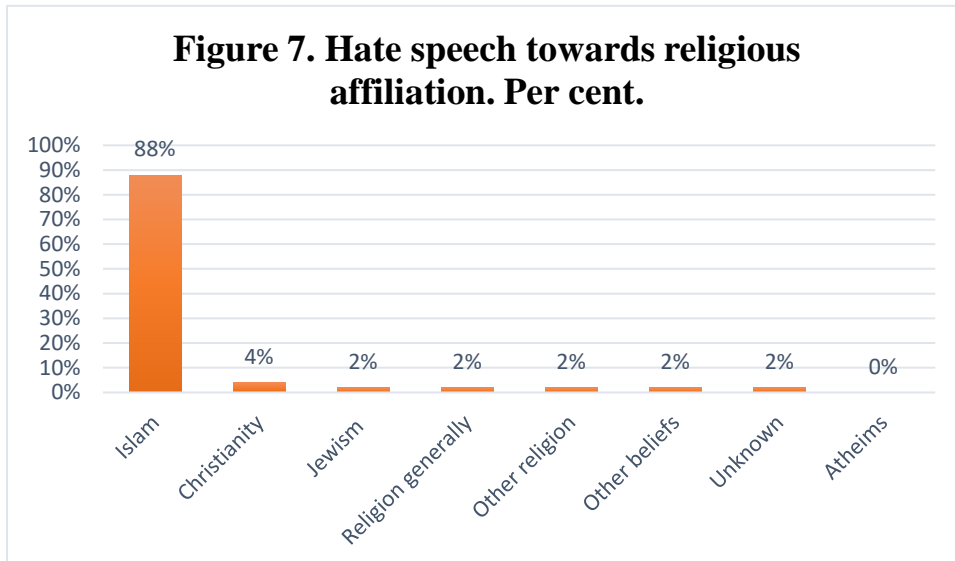
(Source: The Equality and Discrimination Ombud, 2018, p. 54. n=57)

Figure 8. Hate speech divided on reason. Per cent

Figure 8. Hate speech divided on reason. Per cent
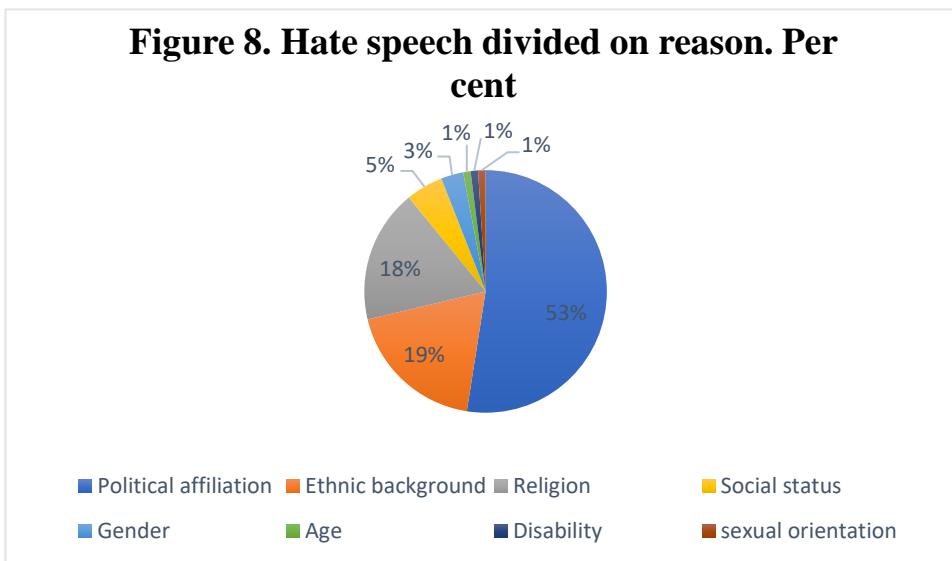
(Source: The Equality and Discrimination Ombud, 2018, p. 51. n=313).

Figure 9. The character of the hate speech. Per cent.

Figure 9. The character of hate speech

Legend: Stigmatizing, derogatory, Offensive, harassing, threathning

Values shown: 44 %, 38 %, 10 %, 6 %, 2 %
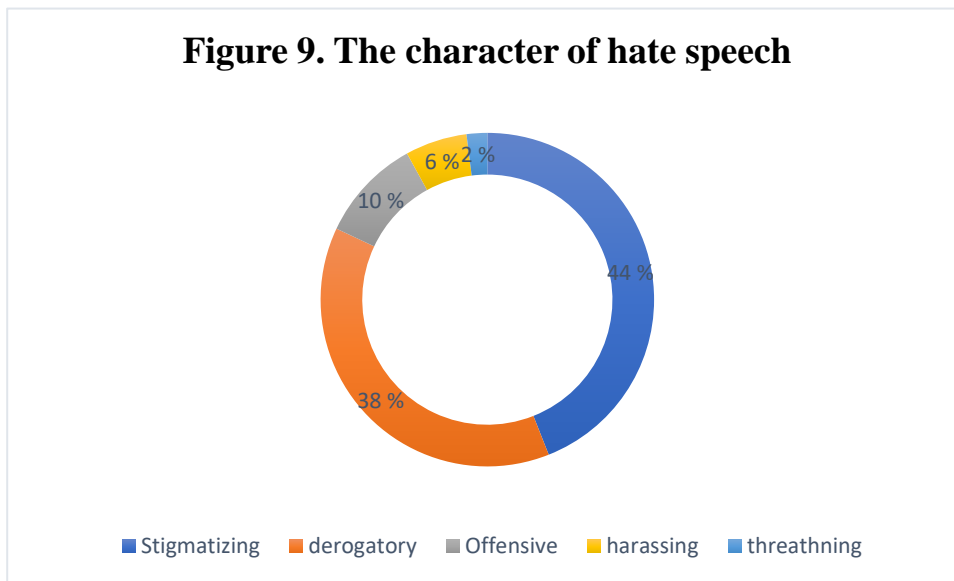
(Source: The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, 2018, p. 40. n=284)

Furthermore, the report shows that women act differently than men in online discussions, meaning that they chose to be more considerate of the effect of debating a particular topic than what men are. Figure, 6, 7, 8 and 9 shows the findings of topics people expressed most hate towards and the way the hate speech was expressed. This underlines that hate speech comes in many forms of expression, and it can be interpreted differently. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) expressed that the report, only scraped the surface of the total picture as it was in a moderated public space. In short, the report was to illustrate how social media platforms have created a space where everyone can express themselves freely and that in recent years it has become more of hate speech.

Combined, these reports show the contextual importance of researching the intersectional hate, of which religious queer women face in their daily life. The reports demonstrate the importance of amount and scope, together with the democratic and personal consequences of hate speech (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019; Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm, 2018; The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, 2018).

6. Discussion and analysing the complex picture of hate speech against religious queer women

In this chapter, the primary findings and the reports are discussed and analysed. To grasp the contextual and the complexity of how hate speech influence participation, the chapter will be divided into six thematic sub-chapters. These are the main traits the organisations explained, and the reports underlined. In the first sub-chapter, the experience of hate speech is discussed. Here, the organisations' experience and my interpretation of their experience is emphasized. The second sub-chapter, the freedom of speech debate is discussed as it has seemed to cause issues between different groups in society. In the third sub-chapter, the perspective of a minority within a minority underlined. My interpretation and understanding of the experience of being a minority within a minority from the organisations perspective and its challenges are emphasised. The reports from the active secondary data are here used to view the broader issue this has on local and national democracy.

The fourth sub-chapter, prejudice and political rhetoric are highlighted. Here, the organisations and my viewpoint are highlighted. The reports also stated about the influences of politics, so this will underline the organisations and my perspective. The fifth sub-chapter outline the consequences of hate speech. Furthermore, individual and democratic implications are highlighted. To underline the organisations' experiences in a broader sense, the reports provide the democratic views of the implications of hate speech. Finally, the sixth sub-chapter explores the influences social media has had on the civic and political participation in society.

The thesis aims to explore how hate speech is influencing the civic participation and the democratic consequences if perspectives are left out of the social debates. Therefore, by looking at the social and democratic consequences that influenced, and are affected by, hate speech and discrimination, the organisations' perspectives and the chosen theories are discussed and analysed.

Pursuing the ontological assumption of constructionist, the discussion is presented as my interpretation of the organisations' perspectives of the social world, and the effect of socio-political and democratic influences. Furthermore, the reflexivity plays an essential part in how I understand what the organisation indicated, and what perspective I believed they fronted. As I have the insider perspective because of my sexuality and my intersectional feminist

standpoint, the selected theories and organisations front the minority perception. This reflects the overall assumption and direction of the thesis.

6.1. The main traits of the organisations studied

The presentation of findings from the organisations and the active secondary data has shown that the influences of hate speech affect religious queer women's civic and political participation. As written in chapter 2 and 3, religious individuality and civic participation are crucial to assess to understand the intersectional hate speech. Cornwall (2003) and Smith (1999) highlighted the need to assess gender as a crucial part of the overall decision-making process. Thus, proving how important it is to assess the organisations' perspectives on participation and what structures that might hinder or enable this. Loveland (2016) and Mečiar (2014) emphasised the necessity of belonging, behaving, and believing for the society and its individuals, and understanding the social importance of plural identities. This underlines the overall perspectives of the organisations. The organisations expressed similar perspectives of hate speech, but with a different context.

The interviews with the organisations underlined the reports by Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019), Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) and The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018). They added a more descriptive explanation of the amount of hate speech. As the questions asked were semi-structured and broad, the employees of the organisations could freely explain the situation, which gave me a comprehensive insight into what hate speech impacts their work and society.

Before going into the characteristics expressed by the organisations and the reports, I must disclaim what I mean when I write intersectional hate. Intersectional hate is when hate speech or discrimination is by the basis of multiple protected bases by the criminal code and the §185. This is, for instance, a black Muslim woman, or a Christian queer woman.

6.1.1. Experience of hate speech; direct and indirect

Expressions from the organisations illustrated that the Norwegian society does not think that religious queers are discriminated in their community. Thus, many say that they are using the 'minority identity card' when they are targeted by hate speech. The experiences from the organisations underline the perspectives presented by Butler (1988; 1990), Smith (1999), Rubin (1975) as of how we understand women as social actors. The heteronormality and patriarchal structures influence on women's participation, as they, to a certain point, create the norms and values in the general society. Butler (1990) and Rubin (1975) focused on these structures that made it difficult for women to express themselves in terms of sexuality and cultural gender. Thus, their writings observe the difficulties of creating a voice in a predominantly male-biased society. This emphasises the struggles organisations expressed their members, employees, and generally what religious queer women experience.

These experiences are vital to understanding how women's participation is enabled or obstructed. Furthermore, societal structures influence both positive and negative on women's participation. The organisations, as the Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) report, underlined that participation in public debates is both hindered by hate speech as it also can make them more engaged. However, the organisation emphasised that the repeated experience of hate speech makes them less eager to participate in the public debate. This highlights the struggles women face in their daily life and reflects the viewpoint from the organisations on why it is so important to focus on women's participation.

As the report by Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) discussed, people that are in more than one minority group, are twice as likely to be experienced hate speech. Therefore, intersectionality perspective has shown to be necessary, as it underlines the structure of hate in between the lines of gender, ethnicity, race, age, culture, principles, and values in society (McLaughlin et al.,.2012; Aydemir, 2011; Warner, 1999; McCall, 2005; Owen, 2019). Organisation A and B explained that many feels attacked from two sides, from general society and the religious community. The religious communities that dislike queer individuals say that it is against their belief and, therefore, wants to cure queers of what they believe is a decease. From what I understood, this is a continuous circle that queers are stuck in, where religious freedom and individual freedom. This emphasises why it is of such importance to show religious queer women's experiences of discrimination within their religious community and in the general society.

Being black, brown, or Asian in a predominantly white society can be challenging. Adding other parts of identity characteristics, i.e. queer and Muslim, makes it harder to be accepted in society, especially if one goes against how society perceive one. Belonging of two (or more) minority groups makes it difficult to navigate and express the different identities without creating a clash between them. This underlined the creation of identity and individuality that Ruether (2005) and Mečiar (2014) and Toğuşlu, Sezgin & Leman (eds) (2014) emphasised. The harassment from these sides shows that the problem is much bigger than I first assumed. Also, my impression from organisation A and B, is that some queer people think one cannot be fully gay while practising religion due to some parts of, for example, the Bible or the Koran. Meaning that the queer community is not always inclusive as people have different religious and political affiliations.

As many religious queer women are attacked or harassed on multiple accounts based on their identity characteristics, their experience of hate speech is intersectional. My impression from organisation A's and B's perspective on being queer and Muslim, and Christian and queer, underline how it is like to be part of multiple communities and where parts of the communities are critical to their identity. These experiences are essential to grasp to understand how hate speech influence their participation.

Organisation A describes what it is like always to defend their existence in society, and this just shows how important it is to bring forward their voice in a community that believes that minorities are easily offended. Furthermore, it becomes a debate about the right to exist. This is something that is not debatable. Nevertheless, this kind of social control over what that standard norms in society are used against queer Muslims and queer Christians. Thus, it is the intersectional hate speech is affecting them most; being a minority within a minority is causing a clash with the societal expectations of how they should be and the religious expectations of how they should act. This is not how it should be in one of the equitable communities and countries where freedom of expression is cherished and highly valued.

The active secondary data showed that queer people experience (13 %) a lot more hate speech than the general of the population (4 %) and that immigrant characteristics are more targeted than the queer one (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019, p. 9-10; Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm, 2018, p. 5-8). Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) findings on intersectional discrimination of queer religious people are in the correlation of what the organisation A and B, to some extent, experienced.

Being outspoken and open on social media makes one more vulnerable to hate speech, according to the report from Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019). The impressions from organisations showed that the social phenomena of hate speech are affecting their ability to participate in public debates and on social media platforms freely. Their experiences of hate speech paint a picture that shows how minorities within minorities often struggle with personal attacks from individuals that spread false information and try to break them down. Organisation A seems to have experienced these kinds of hate speeches for a long time and know that it is essential to build up a support system around those that have been targeted by hate.

6.1.2. Minority within a minority

There is no doubt that hate speech affects the civic and political participation of anyone that is the target of it. However, it seems that minorities within minorities are struggling a lot more due to intersectional discrimination. This discrimination is based on their multiple minority characteristics. The report by Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) found out that minorities with multiple minority characteristics are more likely to experience discrimination, hate speech [and hate crimes] than others. Moreover, how internalised racism and xenophobia has impacted on how minorities are [un]welcomed and how diversity is embraced. This section will make sense of the interviews conducted and present them in a minority perspective on how religious queer women are affected by hate speech.

On the topic of a double minority perspective, which is an integral part of understanding the experiences, organisation A and B stated that this was something that affected their work. Their viewpoint of being discriminated more based on their identity as immigrants than being queer is also reflected in the results from Eggebø, Stubberud, and Karlstrøm (2018). The intersectional hate speech is affecting the queer Muslim women in more than one way. It can come from their family, their religious community, their queer community, and the general society. As organisation A message and impact show in how they organise and speak for individuals that need a community of where they feel safe as themselves. This is an essential part of how we function as social creatures, especially when one is attacked by being themselves from one or several communities they belong.

Organisation A express that they often need to justify their existence as queer Muslims, and the women are primarily targeted online and often debated about in discussions that are in the lines

of harassment. Some of them also received death threats and spread information about where they live, which they reported to the police mainly as they are leading figures in their community and have to make a statement that it is the right thing to do. As the experiences from organisations A and B painted a picture of the situation, organisation C and D stated that it is no doubt that minorities within minorities, especially queer Muslims, or queer immigrants, experience intersectional hatred. Thus, due to the wave of Muslim hatred arose with the refugee crisis and the anti-immigrant rhetoric in the global political environment.

Organisation B's perspective on how Christian queer females are showed in society shows just how ignorant society can be about women with a minority background. They, like organisation A, face challenges within their [own] congregation and cannot indeed be part of a particular Christian congregation if they chose to practice their sexuality. Further, the Christian queers also face challenges within Norwegian society, which often claims that they are not discriminated by their community. One would think that the Norwegian society would be more open for Christian queers due to that there is a long tradition of Christianity in Norway. Still, the situation is more complicated than that. Attitudes and prejudice towards minorities get more visible on platforms that allows and enables it. The same goes for if the society does not take formative action against hate speech towards marginalised groups. I will come back to this in chapter 6.1.5 and 7.

Both organisation A and B experience the intersectional hate where they are not fulfilling the expectation of the religious communities nor society. The sad part is that many within particular congregations have to choose to live out their sexuality or be an active member of the congregation. Furthermore, according to organisation B, people that have a non-heteronormality identity that is part of a [Christian] congregation usually do not 'come out' until they are in their thirties and forties. Furthermore, many have psychological constrains of not coming out sooner, that negatively influenced their civic participation. This shows that hate speech itself is not the only reason why religious queer women are not participating in debates and discussions. However, receiving hate speech additionally, makes it even harder to participate for those with mental health issues.

This highlights the importance of understanding women and especially queer religious women as social actors. Mostly, based on how their experiences of hate speech create a hinder of their political and civic participation. As Barett and Zani (2015) and Smith (1999) underlined, it is crucial to assess the social and political factors are affecting their participation, i.e. patriarchal

and heteronormal structures. These structures are also part of how religious queer women feel [dis]connected to their community and their identity.

The perception of not feeling that one belongs in the religious or social communities is an essential part of the understanding of religious identity with plural identity characteristics. One would think that the church would include everyone as they front at one should love thy neighbour and enemy. Organisation B stated that it is hard to explain the concept of religion as it is almost like brainwashing, where some parts are more sacred than others. In conservative congregations, the hell-theologies are persistence in describing what that is allowed and what that is not. Especially when it comes to social norms and religious values, this might give us some explanation as to why being queer and religious is clashing and causing a divide within the community. Having a religious faith and being queer is causing inner conflict, and within the society, it only matters if one is practising it. This internal fight can explain why so many chose to suppress either their religious belief or their sexuality. This shows one side of the issue of acceptance of identity within a community that is restricted to follow a set of rules on how one should live, no matter the cost of it.

Paralleling the information given by organisation A, the report from Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) and The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud (2018), organisation D underline that women with diverse identities often are more caucus when debating online and in the public sphere. Women of colour, religious women, and women with multiple identity characteristics, regularly feel they had less space to speak due to their identity characteristics, and that they were an easy target based on identity and their opinions. So, even if they are competent than others in certain debates, women receive more hate based on their status as women and other identity characteristics, i.e. Muslim. Further, these experiences show that social media debates and public debates have evolved to be more polarised when discussing specific topics, such as immigration and abortion. This will be further discussed in chapter 6.1.5 and 6.1.6.

6.1.3. Freedom of speech debate and its challenges

As most research on hate speech comes from a freedom of speech perspective, this sub-chapter will incorporate this with a feminist and intersectional perspective. Following the assumption that un-moderated freedom of speech-debates is causing more disputes amongst the different ethnical groups and is becoming more visible in social media platforms, can be the cause of the

polarisation as The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) emphasised. Furthermore, the polarization between different opinions also emphasises the organisations' experiences with dealing with hate speech.

Freedom of speech is an essential human right in Norway, and this creates a challenge if statements that might perceive as offensive or shocking. Nevertheless, as we live in a democratic society, and we must tolerate that we might get provoked or insulted since it is necessary to have open and free discussions. However, it seems many keeps forgetting that freedom of speech does not mean absolute freedom; one also has the responsibility of what one express. As outlined in chapter 6.1.2, organisation A, B and D stated how minorities, with more than one minority identity, experiences that the freedom of speech debate becomes a way to debate whether certain minorities exist or not. Also, the organisation D and the reports (The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, 2018; Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm, 2018; Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019) showed the gender, religion, ethnic identity, and sexual orientation are essential characteristics. Especially women and non-ethnic Norwegian's are affected by hate speech that targeted their identity.

According to organisation A, B and D, within specific discussions online, many that express hate speech towards sexual and religious minorities often use freedom of speech as an argument for their saying, and claim it is their right to have free expression. Because of this, there have been several debates on freedom of speech on platforms. Thought, it is essential to assess the issue of freedom of expression and hate speech, there is still a misunderstanding of the different terminology. The freedom of speech debate has real consequences on people's lives to the point that some experiences hate speech and hateful comments that they do not belong in Norway. This is an extreme thing to repletely receive every time someone opens a newspaper or look at online debate platforms.

The most heinous expressions seem, according to organisation C, to occur on social media platforms such as Facebook, and marginal newspapers such as conservative Christian newspaper, Dagens. Furthermore, for those who are not part of the environments where Dagens is their main newspaper, Dagens expression of speech might seem as marginal. However, for those that have grown up with it and are queer Christians, the newspaper's message hits differently. It is almost like one must choose to either be Christian or queer, which is problematic on so many levels. This is a perspective that both queer Christians and queer Muslims share; almost as these identity characteristics are counterparts, that one cannot truly live with multiple identities. The only thing that differs from how queer Christians and queer

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Muslims experience hate speech is that the hatred towards Muslims is much more spread and normalised in society. There are several reasons why this, but the main is that the community was built on Christian's values and principles, and these are very much still present, even though we live in a post-modern and secular society.

Organisation C, D and E expressed that the main challenge of free speech is more than that some people are frightened away from participating in the debate. That one allows much coverage for people who talk down the minority groups, which makes it exceedingly difficult for minority groups always to have to respond to the critics and stand up for their right to exist. This makes it hard to be the voice that kind of talk and justify their exitance. Thus, it is challenging if it needs to be regulated by law and by an action plan. The climate of expression needs to be approved not only by the law but through us as a society that moves forward. This, according to organisation C, is where they are partly positive as if we change together as a society, there will be more courage to fight when people come with racist, homophobic, or transphobic expressions. I will return to this perspective in chapter 7.1.

As Organisation A, B, C, and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) noted, the debate environment has become more polarised at least to some extent. The debate on freedom of speech and social media platforms has affected how we communicate with and about each other. The organisations argued that the limit for where freedom of speech goes to hate speech has changed. Meaning that the debate climate and civic participation have become tenser when discussing specific topics where some might feel offended or discriminated. For instance, if we look at how social media and the public debate has grown on a global scale, we see that there are both positive and negative aspects. The crucial point is that the room for more civic and political participation has been evolved where everyone can communicate with each other. However, when everyone can communicate with each other without regulation, the room for hate speech has become more prominent. This can cause a divide between *us versus them* as some choose not to participate in certain debates because of hate speech. Further, *us versus them* can also explain why it might seem that there has become more polarisation between the minorities and the majority. The topic of polarisation will be further discussed in the following sub-chapters.

From my understanding, the Norwegian society likes to think it is open for everyone, no matter their identity, which in most cases are real. However, there are still underlining of immigrants and non-heteronormality that is inbred in our mindset. We want to believe that we are making progress about specific issues, but in the bottom line, we are not doing it fast enough. When

freedom of speech is more sacred than human rights, it is a constitutional issue that both the government and society as a whole need to manage.

6.1.4. Prejudice and political rhetoric

The political and social implication on attitudes is something the organisations seems to agree. They express that political rhetoric that is anti-immigrant and anti-gay affect how specific talk is normalised in the daily conversation and on social media platforms. Such as organisation A and B, the organisation C fronts a perspective where diversity is advocated and fought for in political and social spheres in society. Organisation B's and C's perspective on the changes in the political and social environment seemed to be more optimistic in terms of how things have become much better in the last fifty and thirty years. There is a much bigger room to be queer, and according to organisation C, there has become a paradigm shift in how we perceive gender and sexuality. However, there has been a bit of a backlash in sexuality in religious communities. The more conservative religious communities have had an extreme focus on keeping the heteronormal norms, which are also something organisation B stated. This backlash, referred by organisation C, will be further explored in chapter 7.

The combined theories and the expressions from the organisations, hate speech create a polarised climate where free expression and civic participation have become tense. It seems the picture the reports underline fits the descriptions of the organisations expressed. Moreover, we have come a long way with 'normalising' homosexuality and queerness in society, and religion is much harder to normalise due to the historical factor of war propaganda and the indoctrination of the picture created on Muslims. This picture created goes for black and brown people as well. We see that most of the people attacking or spreading hateful comments are people with a particular attitude issue towards queer and religious people, more specifically queer Muslims. Organisation A stated that racist and homophobic people have joint forces and fight against them and that this is one of the tasks they must comprehend in their work for a safe environment and secure diversity in society. This is interesting. Viewing how two sides that *typically* are enemies come together to hate a frequent target, queer Muslims, shows just how some might go to the extent to 'save' their political and ideological beliefs, and where homosexuality is the threat that they need to change.

As ideology and politics have impacted the overall debate on how we talk about minorities, the effect of conservative religious leaders and nationalistic politics are seemingly becoming more visible. Furthermore, the impact of this has had on the public debate and in the understanding of hate speech. As it is interesting to see how particular rhetoric is affecting the debate environment, the link between conservative Christians and far-right attitude had seemingly been the most active actor in creating the normalisation of hatred towards queer religious women (Fangen & Vaage, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010; Meyer, 2008; 2010). Organisation C stated, on this, that it is a player we often forget, but we can also see that several people use the same rhetoric, which impacts in many different ways. In the case of conservative Christian and charismatic communities, it seems that the congregations hold on to the principles they feel connects them, which is the attitudes towards homosexuality as they have lost so many other causes that they stood for.

This shows that the picture of discrimination against queer Christians are more complex than one would think. Because it is in the bible, it seems it must be preached as any else part of the text. This is where the Norwegian church and smaller conservative and charismatic church community varies. According to the organisations', with the modernisation of society, most scripts have shown to be demeaning to specific groups and thereof, not preached in the Norwegian church as they front a negative picture of people's identity. Still, rhetoric is perceived as a restriction of people's freedom and right to live as themselves. Why some people talk negatively towards certain minority groups, can be explained as the [religious] majority that had the power of definition for many years. They have simply lost control due to the multi-cultural, secular, and more liberal in terms of gender and sexuality society (Høy-Petersen & Fangen, 2018; McLaughlin et al., 2012; Nordbø, 2009).

The politicising of character, or using identity characteristics as political means, has become something that most political parties use to get voters. Nevertheless, when political parties are using images of people they do not want in their country as filthy baboons or whatnot, they have crossed the line of what that is okay in a democratic state. Though the most conservative and backward parties in Norway are not directly using this kind of rhetoric, it is not far from it. The progress party has been known to use the term 'Islamisation of Norway' when directing the integration politics (Fangen & Vaage, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010). Organisation A's statement on why particular attitudes are more normalised pinpointed that the times we are in now are not their time.

Attitudes and prejudice are influenced by external or internal factors that implicate the judgment of people's characteristics. These factors are part of the social structures in the national identity. However, as our society has become more plural and multi-cultural, these factors contribute to the hate speech towards minorities, through *us versus them* characterising. The *us versus them* characteristic have become an essential part of how individuality is [re]generated. Roy (2002) underline how *us versus them* can cause a dehumanising and stereotyping practice of some groupings in society. As this practice resurrect or reinforce the prejudice towards ethnic minorities, it influences the amount of hate speech towards religious queer women. The organisations underline this *us versus them* characteristics as part of the broader picture of hate speech, and how it is impacted by local and global political rhetoric's. Recently, there have been demonstrations on systematic racism, that began in the U.S, globally (Mahbubani, 2020). These demonstrations show the broader perspective of how *us versus them* are causing a divide in society if it becomes normalised and institutionalised.

As defined in chapter 2 and 3, democracy is an essential part of Norway society, as it emphasises the values and principles in where everyone has equal rights (The Norwegian Constitution, LOV-1814-05-17). However, there are still values that may not be as democratic, in the broader sense of human rights, that are practised in the general society and conservative religious communities. According to the organisations, some parts of our society believe there is no racism or at least no systematic racism, and we undermine the experiences of those targeted by racist hate speech. This is not only a democratic issue; it is a political issue as political parties fronts a perception that is anti-immigration, which, to an extent, promote racism. As organisation A and D, stated, the alliances that front an alt-right movement in parts in Europe and the U.S, incorporates hatred towards groups such as queers, Romani people, black and brown people, Jews, and Muslims. These groups have nothing in common besides that they are minorities in society. Still, as I have understood, for the alt-right movement, they are enemies of their ideology as white Christian society (Wodak, 2015; Yilmaz, 2012). This is a movement that has got more ground for their expressions on social media, as trolling[11] and meme-culture has created a volume of it. Though this movement has little ground in the Norwegian context, the attitudes and prejudice they promote are visible in both moderated comment sections and un-moderated comment sections on social media platforms. I will return to this in chapter 6.1.6.

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[11] "to antagonize (others) online by deliberately posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or other disruptive content" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.[6]).

When it comes to the responsibility of statements, the organisations expressed that certain political rhetoric on integration and minorities are part of the creation of a polarised environment. Though it is a small percentage of politicians and public figures that express hatred towards minorities in Norway, it still creates a normalisation and a legitimising of how it is allowed to talk about people. Furthermore, there are political parties that try to support themselves in a population group with more extreme visions that are less in line with human rights. This is problematic and can also prevent a reasonable problem solving to an extent. There is no easy way to find a suitable solution if everyone has a position to defend, which often is the case. Finding a solution does not seems to be possible but creating action plans and universal guidelines on what hate speech is and what freedom of speech is, would to an extent, make it easier for platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

When it comes to the political importance of rhetoric, the tone and means are indicators used to define whether the statement is hateful or not. However, with current social cultures, i.e. memes and trolling, imagery and humour are utilised as a form of expression (Phillips, 2015). Therefore, there are several ways of understanding whether those who use imagery of, i.e. blackface, meant it as to be offensive, or if it was a humoristic way to humiliate those who regularly use blackface[12]. There is no easy way to make sure that people state what they publish on social media. However, when they are using certain words every time they write, we know that they are expressing prejudice towards the group that is offended by it. Therefore, the need for education is essential. Without the proper diverse education strategy, there will be no change in attitudes or prejudice. The organisation all agrees that there is a need for more political coherency when it comes to political rhetoric.

6.1.5. The consequence of hate speech

As the organisations and the reports argued, the consequences of hate speech are more than just personal implications; it affects the whole democratic structure when voices are left out. As attitudes and prejudice is part of the problem that is giving 'life' to hate speech, the

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[12] "Dark makeup worn (as by a performer in a minstrel show) in a caricature of the appearance of a black person" (Merriam- Webster, n.d.[1]). URL: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/blackface.

consequences of this can, to an extent, cause a polarisation where some voices are not included or heard in the public debate.

As the reports (2018; 2018; 2019) conclude that polarisation is the outcome of when minority perspectives are left out of the debates, the organisations provide why these voices are not participating. Organisation A highlighted the racist attacks that silence many of their members and volunteers. Organisation B underlined the psychological strains the inner conflict of having to choose their religious faith or finding love as the main reason why many chose not to participate in public discussions. Organisation C viewed how the changes of how our society is more generally open but faces political backlash on specific areas, and that this creates the polarised environment of expression. Organisation D underline women are withdrawing from the social debate due to the personal attack while participating. Organisation E highlighted how the hate speech towards minorities are part of the prehistorical expression and propaganda, which have created this polarised debate climate. The expressions from the organisations and the reports front a broader perspective on the consequences of hate speech, and this shows the complexity of the situation.

The intersectional hate creates an immense hatred that is spread from several communities: religious, queer, and the general population. The conservative Christian communities and Muslim communities might discriminate against the queer Christians and queer Muslims based on their traditional belief, where they believe it is a sin to cross the heteronormal expectations. The queer community might discriminate religious queers on the basis that they think that it is not possible to be part of religions that oppress queer people. The general population, referred here as the society, might not see the intersection of what religious queers experience and thereof, discriminate them based on lack of awareness. The perspective of never finding acceptance in communities have consequences on participation itself, and then the experience hate speech only amplify this feeling.

In the case of threats of violence, which hate speech often is, religious queer women are no longer protected if the hate is directed to that they should be raped. Hate is such a complicated topic, as it is about the identity of the people exposed to it. It requires competence to know how to create a safe space for those who have been targeted. This is an essential part of understanding how hate speech can implicate how civic participation habits change. The organisations advocate change on social media platforms, and it creates both possibilities and challenges as anyone can reach them.

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Social media is an essential factor as to how we understand the effect and challenges of hate speech. As the reports and organisation D and E stated, the government action plan was well-written, but the implementation lacked as there were not enough resources put in. Having a government that is not putting enough efforts to fight discrimination against minorities could create a more polarised society. Moreover, when some political parties are expressing specific attitudes towards minorities, it creates a normalisation of negative attitudes and prejudice.

As the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud's report (2018) highlight how this *us versus them* divide can cause a polarised society, my impression is that this divide has also created a normalisation of attitudes based on prejudice. No one is born racist or homophobic, it is learned through human relations and by political and social influences. These influences, as I see it, are certain political ideology that fronts a perspective where people are different based on their appearance. These influences are definitely affecting the intersectional hate towards minorities, both in Norway and internationally.

6.1.6. Social media

When it comes to social media and network communities, the organisations stated that it has both positive and negative effects in terms of how it has been enabled over the decade. The organisations all share the perspective that social media and fake news have had implications on how we communicate and on how they receive hate speech and discrimination. With the internet and social media, the world has become smaller in terms of communication (Lindgren, 2017). This has had both positive and negative effects on the functions of governments and societies. Internet platforms have enabled a new channel of spreading knowledge and created a new way of communicating that has had a massive effect on expressions and opinions coverage.

In recent years, almost all communication is on social media platforms where most of the expression is free. As most of the dialogue between people are online, the behavioural patterns can show how internet algorithm is part of the problem when it comes to hate speech and the spread of it. Algorithms are something organisation D expressed is created to make one stay longer on social media platforms. These algorithms also make one see more of one's interest, which, to some extent, can make one only receive information one wants to see. For instance, if one's YouTube or Facebook is filled with alt-right ideology, this will be the only content unless one search for other diverse topics or videos. With the algorithms on social media, it is clear that fake news and propaganda have flourished in the past decade (Campan et al. 2017).

There is no doubt that fake news and propaganda are affecting the hate speech towards minorities, and it hits differently than before.

Organisation A and B stated that the visibility of them on social media had created more engagement as both fronts the feministic approach. However, the organisations, A, B, and C, stated that social media also made it easier for people to attack them. This indicates just how immense the situation is and that there are always two sides to each story. What that is challenging with social media platforms where everything is fluid, one can state something without knowing what the recipients might interpret what one said. This can both make it harder to punish someone if they express something hateful, and it can cause a discussion where people ask what they meant. The latter is how social media was intended. Organisations, A, B, and C, indicated how social media impact on hate speech.

On the topic of the effect of social media, the organisations were on the same impression as the Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) report perceived. The report from Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) stated that those that are more active on social media platforms are more exposed to hate speech. Thereof, there are reasons to believe that social media can be an essential enabler of hate speech. However, there is ground in this understanding, but we can say that social media have made it easier to spread hate to an extent. The organisations indicated that they believe it is a good mixture of that there is not good enough visibility in social media in a positive way, and this it is obvious also in Norwegian society. This also underlines the need for more awareness of minority perspective on different societal issues, for instance, how some attitudes are normalising prejudice towards Muslims and black and brown people.

As social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have a massive number of users, there should also be possible to decide whether the shared post could be closed or open. Nevertheless, this is something Facebook says no to, according to organisation D, as the whole point with Facebook is that one should exchange and that it is fun to read what others post. As I understand Facebook's standpoint on freedom of speech, I can understand that they want the comment section to be open and the governments should have better laws and regulations to protect minorities that are often targeted by hate speech. However, this does not work in reality, as it is almost impossible to surveillance what people write on social media platforms without violating freedom of speech. Also, it requires resources that most countries do not have or will not use, such as it is in Norway. We have a well-written action plan on hate speech online, but not implemented as it should have.

However, what do you do when you, as a private person, receive a storm of hate based on something you posted that has been spread among several thousand people? Then, the situation is different, and there is nowhere to hide. Furthermore, if experiences several times, it causes a hinder to their further civic participation. According to organisation D, The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018), and Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019), there are several topics that people avoid and moderate their language when they discuss or debate online. These might be topics that could cause a discussion they do not want to take as they might get hateful comments. These might be topics that you feel are important to address in society but choose to not to, because it makes you an easy target by hate, mainly because of your identity characteristics. This is, for instance, what happened to Sumaya Jirde Ali.

On the topic of the political coalition on freedom of expression and social media, organisation C and D argued that it was a good thing to get the verdict in the case of targeting Sumaya Jirde Ali (Schwencke & Dahl, 31st of January 2020). However, the whole debate is difficult as the general public seems to have no universal understanding of freedom of speech or know how to write something demeaning without classifying it as hate speech. Nevertheless, organisation, D and E, stated that one way of tackling and handling hate speech on online platforms is to use what social media was created for, which is discussion. There should be some sort of moderation on social media platforms where there should be co-responsibility on those that create these pages or groups.

When it comes to how social media is contributing to the creation of a negative perception of Muslims and conservative Christians to some extent, the organisations suggested that the debate climate has become so rigorous in how we talk about religious minorities. It has come to the point where we cannot talk about how we interpreted Islam on a debate programme because it will not be a civilised conversation, and Muslims receive much hatred because of it. Hate they already receive on daily based by just existing. As social media platforms create a free space for 'everyone', it is meant to be used as a discussion forum. Nevertheless, from what we have seen in the past decade, it also enables a new way of expressing hate speech and hateful expressions via memes and underlying messages of illegal hate speech. Though, it is hard to judge statements online as they can be interpreted differently. However, some comments are so vile that they should not be allowed.

From my understanding of what the organisations expressed, of why some groupings convey more hateful comments than others, has a connection with [low] educational level, lower socio-economic and socio-cultural levels of the group. This is not necessarily their fault, but the

relation between education and socio-economic background has a significant factor in how one processes information and political rhetoric. Many find it easy to blame the newcomers (i.e., new citizens with a different culture, language, and religion) in society for systematic injustice, and the low education level also makes one more gullible to misinformation and fake news. The mainstream media and social media in the broader sense contributes to how particular opinions and expression of hate has been normalised, and thus, creating a polarisation within the different social classes and ethnical groupings, as stated in chapter 6.1.5.

7. Influences of hate speech on the socio-democratic sphere

This chapter will explore the external factors that have had repercussions on hate speech in the broader sense. How we understand hate speech and its impact varies based on how we show freedom of expression and democratic values in society. External factors implication on how we understand hate speech can, for instance, be from a legal perspective, a political perspective, a social perspective, or a socio-economic perspective. Nevertheless, in this chapter, I will look at the socio-democratic perspective to understand the structures of hate speech.

As chapter 2 and 3 outlined, the issue of hate speech is intersectional and present a complex description of the social phenomena. By applying the literature and the chosen theories from chapter 3 into the understanding from the organisations, this chapter aims to discuss the effects of hate speech to a much larger extent. My findings illustrate that there is a need for better strategies to secure diversity and to moderate the online sphere of social media. Although it is needless to say that the government needs to take more action on hate speech and discrimination against minorities, there must be specific guidelines making sure the online space is as secure as the public space is. The government action plan aimed to create awareness of the consequences of hate speech. Furthermore, to facilitate better for identifying and investigating hate speech so that more cases are brought before the courts (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2015, p. 17). The action plan was initially created as many were

> "reluctant to participate in public debates because they have been met with hateful, harassing, or abusive responses. As a result, the debates become poorer, with a subsequent loss for democracy" (Ibid, 2015, p. 5).

This indicates that the issue of hate speech has been a known problem that the government have had a focus on, but in later years how we communicate has changed due to social media. The organisations and the reports also underline this. Consequently, as we have seen in the previous

chapters, 5 and 6, the implication of hate speech is influencing the democratic development in society, and civic participation of religious queer women.

The following section will illustrate how queer feminist and intersectional feminist theories, religious individuality, and civic participation are underline the experiences of religious queer women and their engagement as social actors. Combined, these theories highlight the structures that enable or hinder women's participation as well as their spiritual connection with their religion. Furthermore, provide with a broader perspective on the socio-political and socio-democratic structures in which hate speech influence civic participation. First, the queer feminist and intersectional feminist theories are discussed to highlight the impact of patriarchal structures that affect women's participation. The organisations' viewpoint and the reports (2018; 2018; 2019) conclusions will be underlined as an essential part of understanding the experiences of victims of hate speech. Secondly, the religious individuality in plural and global world is emphasised to accentuate the encounter of the intersectional hate from different communities. Thirdly, my impression of what the organisations and the reports (2018; 2018; 2019) emphasised as the importance of studying the influences of hate speech on society, and ultimately, democracy, is emphasised.

As stated in chapter 3, the intersectional and feminist perspective on participation present a way to understand women as social actors in society. This highlights how hate speech is an extension of these structures, as it seems to maintain minorities and women under a form of social control. This corresponds with my empirical findings, where the organisations expressed that religious queer women are faced with multiple discrimination from different directions, which restrict their freedom of speech and existence.

These experiences have proven to be vital to the understanding of how women's participation is appreciated or hindered. In addition, these societal structures that have shown to alter women's participation and define one part of the issue of hate speech towards religious queer women. As religious queer women are a diverse group, their experiences of hate speech are not necessarily similar. As stated in chapter 6, organisation A stated that they experience more hatred based on their immigrant appearance and names, rather than their queerness. While as organisation B stated, many are so psychologically damaged that they do not have the strength to participate in any form of debate or discussion. This highlights the struggles women face in their daily life and how the external factors of politics impact on their civic participation. Furthermore, this reflects why it is so important to focus on women's participation and the

influences of societal structures, social norms and practices, and heteronormal constructions in society.

As the organisations' viewpoints are based on how hate speech affected their work and social life, the societal structures, that we live in, plays an integral part of understanding the implication of how hate speech is creating a democratic dilemma (Smith, 1990). The term hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Smith, 1990) is one way of looking at the patriarchal structures in society. These structures were used in the liberation of gender roles and oppression by the male bias (Ibid, 2005). These structures are still very much present, but more liberated in terms of what that is accepted to express sexuality and gender affiliation. As these structures often have been understood as a way where men have control over the social and political spheres within society, feminist writers and academics have used these to describe the importance of democratic participation. Rosaldo (1980) and Smith (1999) argued that one must understand the social world to know how it affects women's participation.

The organisations stated that parts of Norway are slightly racist and Islamophobic, which shows the importance of the intersectional feminist theory by Crenshaw (1989). As the organisations indicated that it is the double minority and the visible identity characteristics that were mostly discriminated, this demonstrates the complexity of intersectional hatred. Crenshaw (1989) and Carbado et al., (2013) observed how women of colour, particularly those from immigrant and socially disadvantaged communities, were ignored in social movements and utilised the intersectional viewpoint to emphasise this.

The broader perspective on the history of discrimination, and ultimately hate speech, is that it has been used in the way of controlling minorities based on otherness. Though, as Crenshaw (1989) and Smith (1999) argued, the historical foundation of how women act in society is part of the overall understanding of how societal and political structures affect the participation of minority groups. However, the underlying structures that hinder participation are crucial. In this case, the patriarchal structures, predominantly white and heteronormal population, are part of the normalisation of particular rhetoric towards religious queer women. These structures were mentioned by Butler (1988; 1990), Smith (1990;1999), Rosaldo (1980), and Crenshaw (1989) as the essence of understanding women's participation. This is in line with my findings, and these structures were also part of their explanation for why specific expression has become 'mainstream' by different actors. Thus, this underlines the importance of how hate speech is affecting the daily life and political participation of religious queer women.

Smith (1999), Mečiar (2014), Cornwall (2003), Barett & Zani (2015) highlighted the importance of female and minority perspectives and participation in decision-making processes, as it is crucial to assess the voices of the whole population. Furthermore, by enabling the perspectives of minorities and women, their experiences enrich the development of democracy and facilitate the policymakers to generate, for instance, laws and regulations to protect the citizens from discrimination or injustice. However, as written in previous chapters, when freedom of speech is gagged, and the majority has control of the definition of, i.e. what discrimination is, it creates a polarised social environment where personal attacks on identity characteristics are used as social control of opinions. This indicates the broader issue of the so-called identity politics that many alt-right ideologists advocate that minorities utilise in their work, according to my findings. This accentuates the importance of political and social movements.

Political and social movements happening in, for instance, in the U.S, have an implication on the politics occurring globally based on how social media, via, i.e., globalisation, has altered how information is spread. Not only have social media platforms made the information flow easier. Mainstream media, such as TV and newspapers, create news stories that appeal to the readers, often with clickbait's[13], in order to be able to compete in the already tight space of media. This may be one of the reasons why some newspaper agencies choose to change from the more descriptive neutral news towards news that fronts a specific political message as we have seen flourishing again. Though, the newspapers and TV have a more legitimate and impartial way of spreading the news with trustworthy information; there is no universal regulation for social media platforms. Fake news and conspiration theories have flourished differently from how it was used before (Campan et al., 2017). This has proven to cause a rise of prejudice because of the volume of it, as organisation D and E, and the Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) indicated.

As the normalisation of attitudes in society derives from what politicians and other front figures say or write in the public debate or on social media platforms, it is essential to comprehend this as part of the influences of hate speech. As stated in chapter 6, the organisations highlighted that certain rhetoric about minorities is causing a normalisation and a de-humanising effect of *us versus them*. Nevertheless, as the laws and regulation on hate speech can be interpreted differently based on the situation and means of hate speech. As seen in several countries in

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[13] "something (such as a headline) designed to make readers want to click on a hyperlink especially when the link leads to content of dubious value or interest" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.[2]).

Europe and the U.S, rhetoric is directed towards where they will get the vote for the future election (see Owen, 2018). This can, to some extent, make the political parties either more liberal or more conservative. Rhetoric from political parties and public figures has shown to affect how the voters, and the political environment and debate, has become more polarised (Fangen & Vaage, 2018; The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, 2018).

Where democracy is at risk of the polarisation is challenging to say. Nevertheless, how the debate is fronted now is creating a divide between people, where minorities are targeted based on their identity (Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad, 2019; The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, 2018; Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm, 2018). The organisations stated that the polarisation of political opinions and between minorities and the majority could cause a risk to the development of our democracy if the government does not take hate speech seriously. Thus, stressing the importance of a coherent strategy with the right amount of resources.

As the organisations and the reports (2018; 2018; 2019) specified, hate speech in the public debate and on social media platforms made those targeted by it more careful [to express themselves] and often had to defend their identity. Not only does this create an identity crisis, but it also causes a divide within the extensive society. If some voices are left out of the equation, then, in my opinion, we cannot state that we have a democratic country that embraces diversity. This is where the understanding of the effects of social and political movements have on democracy, and society is essential to assess. Social and political changes are here referred to as part of the information flow on social media platforms due to globalisation of infrastructures [that enabled it]. Due to globalisation and information flow on social media platforms, how we communicate and receive information has changed. Thus, on social media, there are no limits on where the information reaches, and thereof, it is a vital tool to create awareness and to spread false information worldwide (Lindgren, 2017).

As society and democracy are everlasting processes, political and civic participation is crucial for securing diversity and that every voice is heard. The laws and regulations create the foundation of legal and illegal expressions. As there is no universal definition of what hate speech is- only the criteria that underline makes it challenging to detect whether the expression is crossing the line to illegality. Also, as most of the communication is via social media platforms, it is difficult to know how to interpret the meaning of the statement. This is one of many challenges with how social media is affecting global society and democratic development.

This thesis has been concerned about how hate speech is changing the civic and political participation of religious queer women, their spiritual individuality and identity as queer seem to be clashing as what organisation A and B specified. Thereof, how we perceive religion and status as a non-heterosexual has, on the one side, created more boxes of characteristics of people based on their appearance, and on the other, tried to create a conflict of interest between these two. As Ruether (2005), Sanders (2002) and Mečiar (2014) fronted, the religious identity in a pluralistic world is creating an internal and external clash of individuality. Thus, the creation of identity has changed towards a continuous process based on seeing the character as fluid and intersectional. Meaning that status is generated based on the changes in society and what that identity creation is more vibrant and diverse than before.

As the organisations explained, their status as queer and religious often seemed to clash based on how the traditional values and practices in the general community. Even though most religions have changed alongside the societies, some have not. Those who have kept their traditional values from what the holy scripts advocated, fronts their message as a minority where the community wants to change them. Their experience of this exclusion is the same as the [practising] queers experience within these congregations. So, the situation is indeed complicated. What that is crucial to assess here is that both experiences are equally important. However, one cannot question or fix peoples' identity when they are not broken, merely different from each other. Both the religious communities and the queer communities use the *us versus them* characteristics as stereotyping and not seeing more than two sides of the situation. This is from what I have understood, one of the main reasons why both the broader general society and the smaller communities do not understand each other's experiences of discrimination and prejudice.

When society changes, usually old traditions are renewed, and this highlights why religion is not practised as before. However, the values and lessons are still present. Also, with these changes, the community becomes more multi-cultural with diverse ethnic and religious groupings. With this shift towards a pluralistic society, there are specific forces that try to hold on to their nationalistic individuality. As the organisations indicated, some parties and countries have promoted a nationalistic strategy to protect their culture and 'people' and not let in Muslims since they believe that Islam is incompatible with modern societies (Fangen & Vaage, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010). This is not only problematic based on racism, but it is also creating stigma and discrimination against an already threatened minority (Crenshaw, 1989; Fangen & Vaage, 2018). This is why it is vital to address the effects of global trends and the flow of

information through social media platforms and in the public debate. Meaning that social media trends and the flow of information, have repercussions on how movements are popularised globally and creating volume on certain topics, i.e. alt-right movement, and the black lives matter movement (Mahbubani, 2020; Wodak, 2015; Yilmaz, 2012).

With how social media platforms are often created based on one's interest, one only sees more of that and nothing else- unless one search for it. These algorithms are designed to make one stay on the website if possible, as my findings reasoned, and this is where it becomes a threat to democratic development. If one's Facebook or Twitter is full of racist or anti-Semitism or anti-Muslim posts, these perceptions are advocated into ones daily life.

When false information about, for instance, that Islam is a violent religion that fronts the killing of women or that homosexuals are taking over the world order, is spread from someone one trust, one start to believe that it is true- even though it is not. This is the effect fake news has on creating a false picture of a group with a religious affiliation or sexual orientation (Wodak, 2015; Yilmaz, 2012). The organisations expressed how conspiration theories have flourished on social media and actively used by politicians. Nevertheless, it seems that it has become visible on social media, mainly due to that people protest these attitudes more than before.

One can argue that social media is a threat to democracy, but it also enables the flow of free expression, which is an essential part of democracy. However, as expressed by the organisations, those targeted by hate speech believe that society and the government are not doing enough to secure a safe debate environment. Furthermore, hate speech is an issue that keeps replicating through history. As Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019), The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018) and Eggebø, Stubberud & Karlstrøm (2018) pointed out, the prehistorical events are an essential part of why hate speech and discrimination against easily exposed minority groups happens regularly. However, though these reports provide essential knowledge on the consequences, there is no use for them if the schools do not incorporate these into the educational system. Thus, to change how we talk about people in society, there is a need to have the difficult discussions on, i.e. racism and sexism and learn from each other. What we see is that the youth are recipient for this because of the current and previous protests.

From my findings, the awareness of the consequences of hate speech needs to be addressed in the early stages of education. However, as there is no universal understanding of what hate speech is, the interpretation may vary based on the knowledge of the law and practice on

preventing it. The explanation of the law, and how to implement and realise the law in practice, is a task that is not easy to do. However, it is necessary to underline that there are shortcomings in the penal code that complicate the issue of how women's experience of hate speech.

This emphasizes that women, and especially religious queer women, would be protected as multiple grounds for discrimination. However, the equality and discrimination act and the penal code, §185 and §186, are not coherent (The Penal Code, 2008). The criminal system emphasises that discrimination based on the colour of one's skin, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, and disability, creates the ground for punishment. Here, gender and gender expression are not included. As the Act and the criminal code do not protect women, and gender expression, to the same degree as sexual orientation, the effect of hate speech is experienced differently by women than men, according to the organisations. We have seen that hate speech has an impact on society and democratic development if minority voices are left out of the equation. Though women are not a minority themselves, it might as well seem like it when women are discriminated based on their gender (Hacker, 1951; organisation D). Then, being a religious and queer woman complicates discrimination towards them. If some part of society or internet groups can target women of colour, spiritual women, or queer women, and silence them, the outcome causes a large part of the population to not participate in debates. The consequences of this can create a polarised community where some voices are valued more than others. Belonging and inclusion is an essential part of understanding the results of hate speech. Further, the exclusion of religious queers is also an implication on life quality and the feeling of togetherness in the community (Pitt, 2009; Melendez, 2006).

The dual prejudice, expressed by the organisations that are causing distrust in society can be explained by several factors such as the herd-mentality and belonging, and the socio-political construction of society. The creation of *us versus them* relation is an essential part of how a community is built, but it can also create a divide in multi-cultural countries. Nevertheless, *us versus them* creation is a vital part of understanding the creation of individuality, which to an extent, implicate on the understanding of hate speech. The *us versus them* relations are affecting daily life, our political statements, and how we find where we belong in society have proven to be complicated. As most countries have multi-cultural societies, mainly due to globalisation and mass-migration, how we find out identity or our individuality might be created as organisation D stated.

The sense of belonging is an essential part of how we evolve and learn new knowledge. Having that in mind, *us versus them* relation can also create a divide based on those we do not want to

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be associated with. This can also be part of understanding how some small communities choose to hold on their religious traditions or why some decide to cause a rebel against those they believe should not exist. And then, maybe build their individuality based on how they perceive those they feel is destroying their worldview. This is something that we have seen in many centuries. Though it has become harder to express absolute hateful disrespect in public without facing the consequences of it, social media platforms have altered how we communicate. Now, one can spread their thoughts about anything on social media platforms without any care. Alternatively, at least, that is how it looks. The idea of social media as a platform of free expression was meant to be the peak of democracy, as Organisation D explained. However, without little or no moderation or universal guidelines on hate speech and discrimination online, how does one preserve democracy and human rights on these social media platforms? There are concerns about the effects of social media on the development of democracy.

Barett and Zani (2015) emphasised that engagement is not necessary behaviour, meaning that one can be affected by "political or civic matters without necessarily participating" (ibid, p. 4). In this case, it shows how the implication of hate speech might affect an individual's participation without directly exposed to it. The result of hate speech has a massive impact on democratic development and the creation of a safe environment where everyone can express freely within the universal guidelines of freedom of speech. The effects of hate speech are what the government and reports try to understand further. Thus, as it concerns to maintain our diversity in society as well as it can create polarisation, it is essential to focus on the socio-political factors of it. Meaning that hate speech against queer and religious women has a more elaborate explanation as to why it occurs. Several factors contribute to this, and we are not going to dwell on all of them. Still, the political rhetoric, global political influences, and the refugee crisis have affected the general populations' attitudes towards Muslims and queer people to an extent.

As freedom of speech is highly valued, one should be able to talk about *anything* without the misunderstanding that some might get offended by it. This is where the terminology on freedom of speech is not clear; the law state that hateful expressions against certain minority groups are punishable if they are violent [towards the target group], but in practice, it is not as easy. Thus, the boundary of what can be expressed online and in other public rooms is often pushed, so that underlined racist and homophobic expressions are acceptable and not showed as hate speech. This illustrates how complex it is. The governmental guidelines (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2015) should have been implemented with a police force online in every

police station, all over the country. The organisations also stressed the need for more awareness of the consequences of hate speech have on the individuals targeted by it and the socio-democratic development. By promoting the repercussions on early stages of the education scheme, organisation D and E stated that this would have positive effects on the overall understanding of hate speech. Organisation A, B and C, stressed this as well but also stated that this is an essential part the society needs to comprehend together.

As stated above, the feminist perspective on the participation of women and the social structures that hinders their contribution has a vital part in how we understand the consequences of hate speech. As we know, hate speech control the involvement of those exposed to it. In this case, it is not only the problem with hate speech itself that is causing the complexity of the issue. As the criminal code does not cover every ground for protection and the governmental action plan against hate speech has not been implemented well enough, there are still systematic problems that need to be fixed. An aspect that the [Norwegian] society is not fully aware, of or ignoring, is the issue of racism and internalised homophobia and interconnected gender issues. Though we are one of the most equalitarian countries in the world, there are several issues that we still need to tackle for the betterment of our democracy and embracing the diversity of our citizens.

7.1. Is it all bad? Progression and attitudinal change in society

The discussion above showed how hate speech is affecting civic participation and how external influences are how we express ourselves online and in the public debate. What the organisations expressed and what the reports displayed, have shown that society has had decades with positive changes, but that there are still several topics that are not focused on by the current government.

As seen so far, the reports (2018; 2018; 2019) and the empirical findings have shown that hate speech is a massive issue that needs to be addressed with a minority perspective. Though, as hate speech is a social and political issue that increases and decreases based on trends and uprising of attitudes, it is a process that the general society needs to prioritise. In order to create a societal change, the public itself must also contribute to creating an inclusive and safe environment. Thereof, if we use our social media platforms to embrace the diversity in our multi-cultural society and stand up against prejudice towards minorities, together, we could create more awareness.

As the organisations indicated, there is still a long way to go on some issues. However, as long as the government agencies and researchers continue to focus on the topic of hate speech and sexual and ethnic minorities, this can lead to changes, for instance, in judicial regelation such as law and practice. There is a constant need to make sure that we proceed forwards, in terms of human rights and democracy, and not backwards. As we have seen in recent years, there has been a global political change where the influx of refugees and immigrants has been used to create fear in the general public in order to win elections (Fangen & Vaage, 2018; Gudbrandsen, 2010). Furthermore, to some degree, this has generated a normalisation of degrading language.

The government agencies, human rights organisation, LGBT+ organisation and others that work on creating diversity in our society needs to proceed to advocate for a positive change. As social media platforms enable worldwide communication, everyone can help to bring awareness of social and political issues. Changes are happening within the penal code, such as the media responsibility act, that will make it easier to moderate and, to an extent, surveillance social media platforms in a much broader sense.

So, as seen in previous chapters, the influences of movements, i.e. Black lives matter and Floyd's murder (Mahbubani, 2020), and its connection to Pride show how important it is to address the issue of intersectional hate of where socio-democratic structures enable different treatment of citizens. The demonstrations aftermath showed how polarised the topic of racism, hate speech, and freedom of speech is. Many members of the Progress Party have shown their true colours. The fact that multiple members had to speak up that there was no racism and that it is all 'fake news' and propaganda makes me think that as long as they have not experienced it, it does not exist. Also, to be a non-racist party in a non-racist society, they sure articulate a lot on racism and its existence. Though we have certain attitudes and prejudice in Norway, there seems to become more visible through social media platforms. Such as the statements from the Progress Party, in my opinion, these would not have much ground if they were not spread online. Also, these statements are being discussed as part of the systematic issue rather than accepted as freedom of speech perspective. Thus, underlining the *us versus them* in our society.

As social media platforms make the world smaller in terms of communication, it is clear to see that opinions on certain topics generate a way of mobilising younger people. Social movement and social progress, through social media platforms, have helped to discover a place to belong and an acceptance for one's identity and individuality. My findings accentuate this importance of social media platforms and creating a safe environment for minorities within minorities. As more knowledge is available on social media platforms, younger people show more motivation

to look beyond the categories, such as *us versus them* provides. This has something to do with age and is also why most of those expressing hate speech are categorised as white men pushing fifty.

There is much more feedback from the general population on the usage of rhetoric in public debates or newspapers that it is not okay to state demeaning things against people's identity characteristics. Although there has been a global rise in particular rhetoric and nationalistic politics, this is a reminder that democracy is an everlasting process that we need to take seriously as the repercussion can be colossal.

8. Concluding remarks

In this thesis, the topic of hate speech and its influences on religious queer women has been studied. The empirical findings indicate that socio-democratic factors influence the civic participation of religious queer women in different ways. The organisations expressed that it is mentally and physically constraining having to define their identity as religious and queer to those that send them hateful remarks, and to their inner self. By actively using previous work on hate speech, the consequences of hate speech have on the socio-democratic development has proven to be a massive part of the individual experiences of those targeted by it.

Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019) underlined that the participation of those targeted by hate speech could both be hindered and more engaged. However, the organisations stated that the overall civic participation of people with more than one minority identity is hindered by repetitive hate speech.

The thesis aimed to answer the research questions

- *How is hate speech towards religious queer women affecting their civic participation in society?*
- *What is the effect on democracy if minority perspectives are left out of the equation?*

To answer the research questions, the findings and the secondary data was explored and analysed. Here, I discovered that hate speech influences religious queer women's civic participation as well as the democratic processes in society. The secondary data showed that

people with multiple minority identities, i.e. religious queer women, are more likely to be a target of hate speech, something that my findings also emphasized. Furthermore, immigrants and people with visible minority identities are more affected by racist remarks than their queerness.

The emphasis on women has shown that hatred against them are directly connected to their identity characteristics. When one has more than one identity characteristic, the hateful comments increases, thus, the consequences of hate speech influence the democratic structures, and it can make people careful when conversing on particular topics. This is also shown in the reports conducted by Fladmoe, Nadim & Birkvad (2019), The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2018), and the police (2019).

According to my findings, hate speech has a massive implication on the community as it affects the daily life of those targeted by it. Ultimately, it can create a polarised society where some voices are more visible than others based on how hate speech is targeting vulnerable minorities.

The perspective of dual prejudice as a minority within a minority points out the importance of having an intersectional perspective on hate speech. Thus, the notion that one cannot be fully gay while practising religion is one part of the problem that queer religious women face. Their experience considers just how immense the problem is, and that there is much needed to bring more awareness on this topic.

To fully comprehend the amount of how hate speech is affecting democracy and society, there is a need for more research. Moreover, there is a need for more resources into the police to comprehend the implications of hate speech, not just in Oslo. Furthermore, there is also a need for the public to take a stand with the minorities in society because this is something that affects everyone. As this thesis has a limited scope and perspective, broader research to grasp the interlinked and intersectional factors influencing the socio-democratic and socio-political spheres is essential.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The email to the organisations

Kjære, xx.

Mitt navn er Marianne Karlsen Sønsteby og er masterstudent ved Universitet i Agder. Jeg skal skrive om hvordan hatefulle ytringer påvirker skeive religiøse kvinners deltakelse i det sosiale og politiske samfunnet i Oslo. Derfor lurer jeg på om dere har lyst til å stille til intervju i slutten av januar og/eller februar 2020?

Litt om meg.   Jeg er en skeiv student ved UiA og studerer global utvikling og samfunnsplanlegging. Ettersom det er mangel på et ikke-heteronormativt perspektiv på kjønn og generelle globale utviklingsspørsmål, og et tilsynelatende voksende problem med hatkriminalitet globalt sett, følte jeg at dette må fokuseres mer på med et lokalt og globalt perspektiv og bestemte meg for å skrive om dette på masteroppgaven min.

Jeg ønsker å intervjue dere ettersom dere har mye kunnskap om dette og kan belyse tematikken mer med deres erfaringer og forståelser av minoriteter i dagens samfunn. Har dere mulighet til å stille til intervju?

Ettersom tematikken er av såpass sensitiv art, vil kun intervjuene med organisasjonsansatte- og medlemmer bli tatt opp med opptaker. Det vil ikke samles inn øvrig persondata. Intervjuene vil vare opptil 45 minutter og kan tilrettelegges ved deres behov, både i form av sted og form for intervju. Vedlagt finner dere mer informasjon om opplegget til masteroppgaven.

Jeg håper dere ønsker å delta og bidra til å belyse dette viktige temaet.

Ha en fortsatt fin dag.
Alt godt,
Marianne Karlsen Sønsteby

Appendix 2. Information letter

Are you interested in taking part in the research project; *"Hate speech towards religious queer females; the effects of polarisation and far-right rhetoric on civic engagement in [Oslo] Norway"*?

This research project is a master thesis about the participatory effects of hate speech towards the community of LGBT+ people that are religious. The overall assumption is that LGBT+ organisations and their members are affected by the executive shift of the perspective on minorities in society. This is what I want to investigate by interviewing those affected and observing this in Oslo.

With a more polarised world and the media platforms connecting everyone, fake news and anti-immigration and anti-gay politics are affectingly the global dynamics. As there has seemingly been a global shift in the political environment, I want to look into how this is affecting vulnerable groups in society in terms of participation in society and politics. In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The rationale for my master thesis is that I want to research how hate speech towards religious people that define themselves as LGBT+ is affecting the overall development for democracy, the political environment, and the implication for human rights on local and global levels. By addressing people defining themselves as religious and that are LGBT+, the hate speech is dual; there are specific groups that 'hate' religious people and there are religious groups that 'hate' gays. Are there any systematic issues that are the cause of the 'increasing' hate speech towards religious, sexual minorities?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How is hate speech towards religious queer women influencing their civic participation in society?
- How is democracy affected if minority perspectives are left out of the equation?

STUDY OBJECTIVES

[I am a feminist and queer cis female who is politicly active.] What I want to contribute with my research; view how political rhetoric is harmful towards sexual and religious minorities, and this will again have an implication on the democracy and economy at a whole. Accessing the issue of discriminatory prejudice towards sexual and religious minorities into the field of development, the impact of empowering a minority group will provide with a more diverse understanding of identity and the positive effect on economy and society at a whole.

Geography

The study area of where the research will be executed will mainly be in Oslo, where the diversity and density of religion and minorities are much higher than elsewhere in Norway.

The collected data will only be used in this Master thesis and deleted after the transcript. The needed data is; gender, age, sexual orientation, religious belief and ethnical background of the organisation employees and members.

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Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of Agder is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

The sample has been selected based on the target group, which is queer people that define themselves as females over the age of 18. Religious queer females with diverse ethnic background are especially focused on. If you are a queer religious female, I hope you would like to participate.

What does participation involve for you?

If you take part in the project, this will involve that you participate in personal and group interviews. It will take appro. 45 minutes. The interview includes questions about experiences of hate speech and the implication of this on engagement in society. Your answers will be recorded on tape. The information collected will be your gender, age, sexual orientation, religious belief, political stand and ethnic background. The interviews will be recorded, but if the participant does not want that, this will be considered.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you could withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

It will not affect your treatment at the hospital / your relationship with your school/teacher, place of work/employer.

Your privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your data confidentially and following data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

Those who will have access to the data is the student, Marianne k. Sønsteby, and the supervisor, Hege Wallevik at the University of Agder. I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data. The data will be stored on a research server and encrypted.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end in June 2020. The personal data will be deleted as soon as transcript and processed into writings. Everything will be anonymised and coded, so only I know who is who.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *the* University of Agder, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is following data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- University of Agder via Hege Wallevik, hege.wallevik@uia.no, tlf: +47 381 42 222
- Marianne Karlsen Sønsteby, markso18@uia.no,, tlf:+47 950 49 992
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader   Student (if applicable)
(Researcher/supervisor)

---------------Hege. B. Wallevik------------------------------------Marianne Karlsen Sønsteby------
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Consent form

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I have received and understood information about the project "Hate speech towards religious queer females; the effects of polarisation and far-right rhetoric on civic engagement in [Oslo] Norway" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

☐ to participate in a personal interview
☐ to participate in a group interview
☐ for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised
☐ for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June 2020.

(Signed by participant, date

Appendix 3. Interview guides

Semi-structured interviews, face-to-face. January, February and March 2020.

Executive perspectives on hate speech and its consequences

Ut ifra mange forskningsprosjekter om homofil og psykisk helse, vet vi at det er en stor psykologisk effekt av hatefulle ytringer og diskriminering. Vil du si at dette er også en faktor i hvordan skeive kvinner ytrer seg?	
Opplever dere at det er mange [blant medlemmer] som blir 'targeted' på grunn av hva de har skrevet eller hva de står for?	
Har politisk retorikk en påvirkning på utviklingen av hatefulle ytringer?	Hvis så, gjør dette at mange ofte føler at de ikke er velkommen i samfunnet?
Rapporten fra Bufdir (2019) viser til at folk med minoritetsbakgrunn blir oftere hetset på nett, spesielt de med dobbel	

minoritetsbakgrunn. Hva kan være grunnen til dette? Er dette noe dere kjenner til?	
Sosiale medier har gjort det lettere å oppdage og å spre hatefulle ytringer til et større publikum. Hva er dine tanker rundt sosiale medier som verktøy for hatprat?	Vil du si at det er en slags trussel mot demokratiet slikt det er brukt nå?
Fra et arrangement hos Minotenk om seksuell helse, kom tematikken om dobbelt liv, som innvandrer og for eks. homofil, og sosial kontroll opp som del av hvordan mange innvandrere opplever i daglige situasjoner. Er dette også noe som oppleves innen det skeive miljøet?	
Tror dere at kjernen til hatefulle ytringene kan være feilinformasjon eller for lite kunnskap om skeive religiøse?	
Hvordan påvirker politisk retorikk 'utfallet' av hvordan minoriteter med dobbel identitet oppfattes i samfunnet?	
Regjeringen og politiet har forskjellige handlingsplaner på hvordan hatefulle ytringer på nett skal 'håndteres'. Vil du si at de fungerer i praksis eller trengs det en oppgradering?	
Hvilke tiltak synes dere burde iverksettes for å sikre mangfold og minoriteter i samfunnet?	
Med alt som skjer i Europa og USA innenfor politikk og menneskerettigheter, vil du si at dette truer demokratiet her i Norge?	
Organisasjoner som Til helhet, presenterer et bilde av skeive som de er mental syke og trenger såkalt 'sjelesorg'-terapi [en slags psykologtime med religiøse ledere som ikke er psykolog]. Vil du si at slike organisasjoner og trossamfunn påvirker folks oppfattelse/ fordommer mot skeive?	Hvordan har dette påvirket den offentlige debatt slikt den har blitt i nyere tid?
Mange av de som sprer hat, lager en såkalt 'oss/dem' relasjon som grunn til å ytre hat mot visse grupper.	

Vil du si at den flokkdyr-mentaliteten kan være grunnen til at minoriteter oftest blir utsatt for hets?	
Vi ser også at politikers retorikk har mye å si på hvor grensen til hatytringer går. Vil du si at det burde være et strengere regelverk og lover for hva som er greit å ytre?	

Organisations working directly with religious queer women

Hva er deres visjon?	Hvordan bidrar dere til samfunnet?
Opplever dere som organisasjon mye hatprat og diskriminering i samfunnet generelt?	I så fall, påvirker dette deres arbeid positivt eller negativt?
Møter dere mange som trenger bistand/ hjelp pga. hatytringer og/eller diskriminering [pga. seksuell legning og religion]?	Hvordan oppleves diskrimineringen på kroppen (hvis det går an å sette ord på det)?
Har flere dere har vært i kontakt med følt at de ble mer eller mindre motivert til å være aktive i samfunnet?	
Hvordan påvirker hatprat og diskriminering samfunnsstrukturen?	Hvordan syns dere at staten skal kartlegge konsekvensene av høyreorientert retorikk og ytringer?
Sosial medier har åpenbart hatt en påvirkning på hvordan meninger ytres, og har gjort verden mindre ved at alle [med tilgang til internett] snakke med hverandre og dele diverse innlegg og informasjon. Kan sosiale medier bli sett på som et verktøy som har muliggjort hatprat?	
I en æra med 'fake news' og trolling, hvordan påvirker dette opplevelsen av hatprat? Kan en være sikker på at det folk skriver på nett er hatprat?	
Det har også blitt et 'rom' hvor en kan være anonym, har dette vært med på å muliggjøre hatprat på nett?	
Det finnes flere handlingsplaner som skal beskytte ytringsfriheten, religionsfriheten og kjønnsuttrykk, men det virker som at disse ikke fungerer i praksis. Hva tenker dere vil bidra positivt for å hindre hatefulle ytringer som minoriteter?	

Har dere noen spesifikke tiltak som vil fungere på korttids og langtids?	
Hvor tenker dere grensen går mellom ytringsfrihet og hatefulle ytringer?	Mange etniske nordmenn føler at folk med minoritetsbakgrunn ofte tar opp identitetskortet, er dette noe dere hører og opplever ofte?
Ytringsfrihet og ytringsansvar er to begreper som er sentral og viktig å forstå i sammenheng med hatprat. Hva er deres tanker rundt om ytringsansvar? Ligger det hos de som ytrer seg eller mottagere som føler seg truffet av ytringen?	
Hva er det reelle konsekvensene av hatefulle ytringer som er rettet mot minoriteter i Norge?	Det har skjedd flere hendelser som har påvirket den politiske stabiliteten globalt, men for Norge ble mye av den nasjonale politikken endret i 2015 når justis- og innvandringsministerposten ble endret mot det verre. Hvordan har dette endret hvordan folk snakker om minoriteter?
Har dette også endret hvordan andre skeive ser på skeive med religiøs tro eller annen etnisitet?	
Kan en se det som skjer i Norge i sammenheng med det som skjer rundt om i Europa og USA?	
Vi ser ofte at religionskritikk er 'gjemt' i muslimfiendtlighet, tror du dette kan være en pådriver for hatefulle ytringer mot skeive muslimer? I så fall, hva vil du si at konsekvensene av dette er?	
Vil du si at det er en spesifikk sosial gruppe som ytrer dette eller har det blitt 'spredd' til hverdagslige samtaler blant gjennomsnitt nordmenn?	

Ut ifra deres kunnskap, hvordan påvirker hatprat skeive religiøse kvinners deltagelse innen religiøse samfunn?	Hvordan påvirker hatprat deres deltagelse i det sosiale og politiske samfunnet?
Møter skeive religiøse utfordringer i hverdagen? Hvis så, hvilke?	Hvis ikke, vil du si at det er blitt et mer åpent samfunn som aksepterer at folk er forskjellige?
Har en etnisk minoritetsbakgrunn en påvirkning på hvordan hatpratet oppleves? Hvis så, kommer hatpratet innenfra det	Hvis ikke, vil du si at dette ikke har en påvirkning i det hele tatt?

religiøse samfunnet eller er det fra storsamfunnet?	
Kvinner opplever ofte å bli kontrollert av samfunnets normer og regler, hvilken påvirkning har dette på skeive religiøse kvinner?	Er dette med på å 'fremme' mer hatprat?
Opplever skeive kvinner mer hatprat enn skeive menn? Hvis så, kan du utdype dette? Hvis ikke, vil du si at dette har noe med forventingene av kjønn i samfunnet?	Eller har samfunnet blitt mer liberalt og ikke så dømmende?
Vil du si at mye av hatefulle ytringene kan være et resultat av sosial kontroll?	
Ut ifra de hellige skrifter, tradisjoner og verdier/moral, er det mange kristne miljøer som mener at det ikke går an å være skeiv og troende. Tenker dere at dette er med på å fremme hatprat mot skeive troende?	Eller ligger det mer bak?
Er det mange kristne skeive som føler at religionen krasjer med deres livstil og identitet? Hvis så, er dette en indre konflikt eller er dette noe de blir fortalt av andre troende?	Hvis ikke, vil det si at det mer åpenhet og kunnskap innen kristne miljøer? Eller vi du si at det er en annen faktor?
Hvordan er det innad det religiøse samfunnet?	Er det lite akseptabelt å være skeiv eller er det mindre fordommer?
Hvordan er det innad the skeive samfunnet? Er det lite akseptabelt å være religiøs eller er det mindre fordommer?	
De som ytrer hatprat mener som regel ikke å fornærme de som blir utsatt for hets, men verner om det de mener er verdifullt. Er dette noe dere er kjent med i sammenheng med andre religiøse samfunn?	
Rapporten fra Bufdir (2019) viser til at folk med minoritetsbakgrunn blir oftere hetset på nett, spesielt de med dobbel minoritetsbakgrunn. Hva kan være grunnen til dette?	Er dette noe dere ofte hører fra skeive kristne kvinner?
Hva er deres perspektiv på hvordan religion være en indikator for hetsen religiøse skeive opplever?	

Har politisk retorikk en påvirkning på utviklingen av hatefulle ytringer?	Hvis så, gjør dette at mange ofte føler at de ikke er velkommen i samfunnet?
Sosiale medier har gjort det lettere å oppdage og å spre hatefulle ytringer til et større publikum. Hva er dine tanker rundt sosiale medier som verktøy for hatprat? Vil du si at det er en slags trussel mot demokratiet slikt det er brukt nå?	
Fra et arrangement hos Minotenk om seksuell helse, kom tematikken om dobbelt liv, som innvandrer og for eks. homofil, og sosial kontroll opp som del av hvordan mange innvandrere opplever i daglige situasjoner. Er dette også noe som oppleves innen det skeive kristne miljøet?	
Tror dere at kjernen til hatefulle ytringene kan være feilinformasjon eller for lite kunnskap om skeive religiøse?	
Hva er deres tanker om hvilke tiltak staten har iverksatt mot hatprat og diskriminering?	Hvilke tiltak mener dere fungerer og hvilke burde bli stryket?
Hvor går grensen for ytringsfrihet? Burde det være strengere 'regler' for hva som er ytringsfrihet og hva som er hatprat? Eller vil dette hindre demokratisk utvikling av samfunnet?	
Vi ser ofte at religionskritikk er 'gjemt' i religionshat, hva er deres tanker om dette? Stemmer dette?	
Hvilke konsekvenser er det for de som opplever hatprat? Påvirker dette deres engasjement eller har en blitt så vant til det at det er bare 'støy' som en ignorerer?	
Hvilke konsekvenser kan hatytringer ha på samfunnsstrukturen?	
Opplever dere at etikk og normer kan skape en slags konflikt mellom religiøse medlemmer og skeive medlemmer?	