

Traditional Values Versus Inclusivity: A Semiotic Analysis of LGBT Narratives in Islamic Media Portals in Indonesia, Malaysia and America

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Abstract: *Media serves as a powerful tool in shaping public opinion and perspectives, particularly through Islamic organization-based media portals that play a crucial role in influencing perceptions of the LGBT community. This study examines the construction of LGBT narratives in the media portals NU Online, Ummah Today, and CAIR, utilizing the social semiotic method developed by M.A.K. Halliday and drawing on the theories of Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp to explain the role of media construction. A total of 48 units of analysis were conducted, comprising 29 publications from NU Online in 2016, 9 publications from Ummah Today in 2022, and 10 publications from CAIR in 2016. The findings indicate that Ummah Today and NU Online tend to reinforce traditional values by rejecting issues such as LGBT, whereas CAIR adopts a more inclusive approach, especially in times of crisis, aiming to dispel Islamophobia and promote human rights for minority groups. This research reveals how media practices shape identities and social meanings across various cultural contexts and highlights significant social, cultural, and political implications of language in maintaining or challenging existing power structures and social norms.*

Key Word: LGBT, Stigma, Social Construction, Discourse Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing societal perceptions, particularly concerning controversial issues such as LGBT rights. In recent decades, significant shifts have occurred in the activities and political discussions that reflect public perceptions of the LGBT community (Lockhart, 2023). This change has been influenced by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

established in 1948, which emphasizes the freedom and equality of every individual (Madrigal-Borloz, 2021). While some countries have recognized and legalized LGBT rights, stigma and rejection persist from both society and the media (Pasaribu, 2021). The role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing societal perceptions has undergone substantial transformation in recent years. With the emergence of social media platforms and

digital news, access to information and discussions about various issues, including controversial topics, has become increasingly available to a wide audience. As stated by Carey and Adam (2008) in his book "Communication as Culture" , communication is not merely the transmission of information but also a ritual that builds and maintains social reality. In this context, journalism functions as a tool for society to understand the world and themselves.

According to Zelizer (1992), media possesses the power to shape collective memory and create social representations through the news and narratives it conveys. Zelizer highlights how media can direct public attention to certain issues while ignoring others, affecting the collective understanding of society. Therefore, media not only transmits information but also serves as an agent that shapes social reality. Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp in "The Mediated Construction of Reality" (2017) emphasize that media not only delivers information but also plays an active role in shaping social reality through complex mediation practices. They assert that media serves as a vital tool in social construction, where meanings are formed and exchanged within society. Couldry and Hepp (2017) underline the importance of understanding the dynamics of power in the mediation process, where media actors significantly influence how social issues are framed and

perceived by the public. This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of LGBT issues, where media framing can affect societal attitudes.

Countries that reject LGBT rights are motivated by various perspectives on society and religion, as seen in Indonesia and Malaysia (Khoir, 2020). Couldry and Hepp (2017, p. 17) argue that individuals are structurally influenced by the environments in which they develop. In countries with a Muslim majority, LGBT individuals are often viewed as a community that deviates from moral standards (Bahar, 2020; Yulius et al., 2018). In several local regulations in Indonesia, LGBT individuals are categorized as criminals due to perceived immoral actions (Dhamayanti, 2022), aligning with Couldry and Hepp's (2017) argument that individual development is based on the roles of the environment and the values held, as well as Couldry and Hepp's (2017) latest ideas on social construction and the influence of media on believed values.

This shift in perspective is often accompanied by resistance and social conflict (McKenna & Chughtai, 2020). Media frequently serves as an arena for these conflicts, shaping narratives that support or oppose LGBT rights. Media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, thereby influencing societal perceptions of LGBT issues. Groups holding traditional views on sexuality and

gender often conflict with LGBT rights movements. In this context, media is essential in shaping public opinion regarding LGBT issues (Guo & Hu, 2023). Media can set agendas based on the ideologies it promotes through its writings (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Media outlets supporting LGBT rights play a key role in eliminating stigma, raising awareness, and advocating for LGBT rights (Cao et al., 2022).

However, there are also media outlets that reject LGBT rights based on religious, moral, and traditional reasons (Wijaya, 2022). This rejection is often framed within long-standing cultural narratives that resist change, illustrating how media can perpetuate traditional norms. Thus, media is instrumental in facilitating either understanding or rejection of the LGBT community within society. Some media outlets may also uphold traditional definitions of gender and gender roles, viewing diverse gender identities as disruptions or threats to existing social structures. Therefore, media outlets that oppose LGBT rights tend to promote views that contradict the rights and recognition of LGBT identities, leading to conflicts within society regarding these issues (Hurd et al., 2020). This highlights the dual role of media in facilitating inclusivity and reinforcing exclusion.

Although numerous studies have examined the relationship between media

and LGBT rights, there remains a gap in research focusing on Islamic-based media through a social semiotic lens. This study brings a fresh perspective by analyzing how Islamic media uses language and semiotics to construct narratives around LGBT issues and shape public perceptions of the LGBT community. In the socio-cultural context of Indonesia and other Muslim-majority countries, where LGBT rights are still often seen as taboo and closely linked to religious discourse, this research is particularly relevant. The findings aim to foster dialogue and offer deeper insights into the dual role of media—as both a potential agent of change and a tool that reinforces the existing social and political status quo.

This research aims to analyze the narrative construction of LGBT issues within media portals based on Islamic organizations, specifically Nu.Online, Ummah Today, and CAIR, utilizing M.A.K. Halliday's social semiotics approach. The study hopes to provide a better understanding of social construction concerning LGBT issues in Islamic media contexts and uncover the associated social, cultural, and political implications.

Nick Couldry emphasizes the role of media as a key player in defining the public sphere, influencing political participation, and shaping collective identity. In his book "The Mediated Construction of Reality" (Couldry & Hepp, 2017), he explains that media functions not merely as a medium for

delivering information but as an active mediator in shaping social reality. This active mediation is particularly evident in discussions surrounding LGBT issues, where media representation can significantly influence societal attitudes. Media has the capacity to create new collectivities by bridging diverse perspectives, shaping public opinion (Cho et al., 2024), directing social discourse (Siapera, 2023), and addressing the challenges posed by digital media (Twenge et al., 2020).

Couldry and Hepp (2017) adds a new dimension to social construction theory by emphasizing how media plays a central role in modern life. In this context, media is not merely a mediating tool but an agent with significant influence in shaping worldviews, group identities, and political participation. In the realm of LGBT rights, media serves as a platform for diverse voices and experiences, contributing to the collective identity of marginalized groups. Modern media connects individuals separated by geography into larger, distributed communities. For instance, in the case of the LGBT shooting in Orlando, perspectives from various academics and public figures outside Florida can contribute to national discussions about the event. This illustrates how media facilitates the sharing of experiences and fosters solidarity among LGBT communities across different locations. Media allows

these voices to be heard and participate in the collective construction of social reality faced by society.

By mediating diverse viewpoints and information, media helps shape collective identities based on shared meanings that provide the foundation for collective actions and orientations. According to Couldry and Hepp (2017), media is the space where all forms of communication occur, with the accompanying complexities, making media "The Mediation of Everything" (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Therefore, Couldry and Hepp (2017) expands our understanding of social construction by emphasizing that media plays an undeniable role in shaping the public sphere, influencing political participation, and forming collective identities. This is highly relevant in the context of LGBT rights, where media representation can alter public perception and contribute to social change. This indicates that in an increasingly interconnected modern world, media is the primary agent that helps us understand and navigate our social realities.

Halliday's method, which combines functional linguistics with social semiotics concepts, plays a critical role in our understanding of how language contributes to the formation of social and cultural meanings. Halliday believes that linguistics is fundamentally a form of action, particularly as a form of political action. In

the context of LGBT narratives, the language used in media representations can empower or marginalize communities, highlighting the crucial role of media in shaping societal perceptions and realities surrounding LGBT issues.

METHODS

Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive and representative analysis. This approach focuses on the description and analysis of data related to social phenomena, events, social activities, as well as the views and attitudes of individuals and groups. Qualitative research explores social phenomena by defining traditions in social science related to human observation in its context and interactions with its surroundings. This approach also emphasizes human observation and detailed contexts, in order to represent social constructions, cultural contexts, and uncertainties in the dynamics of qualitative research.

Unit of Analysis

The research is a news text published on the Islamic media portals Nu.Online, Ummah Today, and CAIR. The study uses three concept analysis by MAK Halliday (1975), namely discourse field to analyze the positioning of LGBT in the news, discourse engagement to identify contributions from individuals or groups in the writing, and discourse means to

understand how the systematic of the writing is written (Matta, 2024).

The researcher used keywords "LGBT", "Gay", "Mak Nyah", "Homophobic", "Homophobia", "Bisexual", and "Lesbian" to search for news or publications related to the research. The study categorizes reporting periods based on pre-controversial, peak controversial, and post-controversial periods. This selection makes it easier for researchers to focus on the peak controversial issue of LGBT in each region. Nu.Online in 2016, Ummah Today in 2022, and CAIR in 2016.

In Indonesia, the issue of LGBT was widely discussed in 2016 related to the dissolution of the Waria Shakti School in Yogyakarta which triggered demonstrations from both sides. In Malaysia, the issue of LGBT is still globally debated, especially related to Sections 377B and 377A in the Penal Code. Meanwhile, in America, the issue of LGBT continues to evolve, especially related to the history of LGBT and the development of Islamic organizations, as well as reactions to the increasingly massive LGBT community. Overall, there are 29 publications on Nu.Online, 9 publications on Ummah Today, and 10 publications on CAIR that are the focus of this study.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique in this research uses the Halliday (1975) approach consisting of three research processes, namely Field of Discourse, Tenor of Discourse, and Mode of Discourse. This method helps analyze the relationship between language and social context and is used to describe social constructions in the context of Islam-related media and LGBT. The Discourse Field refers to the situation or condition of LGBT discussion on Islamic media portals. What is discussed in the writing as a whole, such as "LGBT rejection statement" or "Call for Demonstration Action".

Discourse Tenor refers to the people or sources who take positions in the writing and the relationship between their roles in the context of Islamic media, for example in the writing the source is the head of a Muslim community, and how the source establishes relations with the media, looking at the position of the participants in Halliday's social semiotic analysis.

Mode of Discourse refers to how language is used to achieve a particular goal, such as persuading, explaining, or educating, in the context of media related to Islam and LGBT. For example, in the NU Online article, there are several publications that are "lectures" and some that "discuss Islamic law", this affects how the text is positioned, and what is actually intended to be expressed in the text.

Halliday's MAK method allows researchers to take steps to identify the context of the social construction situation in the language of each news item, not on one portal as a whole, but on one news text as a whole. The main focus of researchers is on the construction of LGBT identity and image in news texts, where the use of language plays a major role.

Focus Research

This study focuses on the analysis of narrative construction about LGBT in Islamic media portals run by community organizations, namely NU Online, Ummah Today, and CAIR. Using the mediated reality construction approach by Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp (2017) and M.A.K. Halliday's (1992) social semiotics, this study explores how texts and semiotic signs shape the meaning and representation of LGBT through word choice, sentence structure, and the use of metaphors.

This study only analyzes verbal text (written text) and will not include analysis of images, videos, or other non-verbal elements in news articles (Multimodality). The focus will be entirely on the written language used in the news text, to identify the context of the situation, to distinguish the construction of the text of the three media.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Human Nature and the Illusion of Indonesian Nationalism

Social life does not just exist. As humans, social life will always be constructed. In this case, the research is based on the perspective of social constructivism proposed by Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). This basic premise will be used to examine how the construction of LGBT is represented on the NU Online page. As noted in Chapter II, the main mission of the NU Online news portal is to disseminate and confirm the teachings of Islam Ahlussunah Wal Jamaah to the Indonesian society and to inform about the programs and policies of PBNU as the public relations representative for the organization, whether affiliated or not.

The Ahlussunah Wal Jamaah referred to on the NU Online portal is a group that bases its Islamic teachings on Faith, Islam, and Ihsan, which then gives rise to the basic knowledge of faith, fiqh, and suluk as guidelines for practice. In terms of social issues, Aswaja also believes that although life needs to be guided by revelation, reality itself is relative in enforcing its guidance. In other words, social problems are dynamic. The role of revelation in this case is to affirm guidelines for behavior in response to the reality based on revelation. The relativity of reality and the guidance of revelation as a standard, one of which also

questions contemporary issues such as LGBT as a gender equality issue.

The LGBT case gained notoriety in May 2015. The initial commotion of this issue was caused by the counseling group Support Group and Resource Center On Sexuality Studies (SGRC) from University of Indonesia (UI). This group is a community initiated by several UI students. Firmansyah, one of the members of the community interviewed by CNN, explained that this group is not a group of LGBT activists. The community was initially established based on cases of vulnerable teenagers prone to suicide due to family rejection due to their different sexual orientation that tends towards LGBT. Furthermore, Firmansyah emphasized that this community has an affiliation with Melela.org, a website from Malaysia built as a platform to share stories and learn about what is considered "sexual deviation". In other words, the main goal of this community is to focus on psychological research.

After this issue became a widely discussed topic, various responses emerged from various institutions. One of those who strongly responded was Muhammad Natsir, Minister of Research and Higher Education in the period 2014-2019. Through an interview with Detik.com, Natsir stated that "LGBT is not in line with the values and morals of the Indonesian nation. I prohibit it. Indonesia's values are to preserve

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morality". For Natsir, LGBT should not be present in universities as it contradicts the moral values of the Indonesian nation. Natsir did not stop at press conferences, but he also immediately contacted UI Rector Muhammad Anis.

Based on Natsir's confirmation to Anis as the UI Rector, he received information that the SGRC community is not a legal part of UI. The legal status referred to is a community that has the same status as Student Organizations and / or Student Activity Units. Furthermore, Muhammad Anis also added that the logo displayed on SGRC's pamphlet is not authorized. Furthermore, the UI Rector added that SGRC should immediately remove the UI logo from all their activities.

This response also received a response from the Nahdlatul Ulama through a statement made in the NU Online News Portal. In this case, reporters from NU Online asked for an opinion from the Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Scholars Association (ISNU) Mahfud MD. In line with Natsir's opinion, Mahfud MD also believes that LGBT is not in line with the values believed by the Indonesian nation. Mahfud MD emphasized that, essentially, the 1945 Constitution, based on the values of divinity, is contradictory if it supports LGBT. In a quote featured on the NU Online website, indirectly citing Mahfud MD, they rejected the occurrence of LGBT at UI.

In light of the above issues, the description of the analysis found by researchers within the framework of the representation of LGBT on the NU Online News Portal has a specific purpose. In the construction of Halliday's method, news as a text form fraught with discursive conflicts is a political action of Nahdlatul Ulama. Halliday observed this as a sociological event, in the sense that the actors involved in the conflict of news dissemination are NU Online who aim to offer political actions through sociosemantic Halliday (Halliday, 1975). This action takes the form of discourse, which will be explained in the following paragraphs. Based on the trilogy of discursive struggle contexts laid out by Halliday, the trilogy consists of the discursive field, discursive means, and discursive engagement (Halliday, 1975).

In other news items, NU Online often refers to "fitrah" or the origin of humans as "pure". Another example of the activities carried out by SGRC as supporting amoral communities, clearly aims to be viewed carefully through the discourse conveyed by the speakers, most of whom have NU values, the discourse participants are taken from within NU, whether in news writing or articles, even though there are quotes from the presence of Dede Oetomo as the founder of GAYa Nusantara, the participants are not directly interviewed, meaning that NU Online writers tend to take speakers from the side of NU, although showing a bit of

covering both sides of journalistic ethics. Halliday, besides using the three discourse medium tools, also emphasizes that discourse is always tied to social and cultural situational contexts (Halliday & Hasan, 1992). The social and cultural contexts referred to are paradigms used by the NU Online Portal in selecting speakers. For instance, explaining why NU Online predominantly includes statements from internal sources. While in the published article, there are no quotes from speakers who explain fully from the other side.

Discursive engagement, stakeholders of NU such as Mahfud MD or Gus Ishom in the article in question are presented as representations of Nahdlatul Ulama. In Halliday's perspective, text as a sociosemantic process, based on this article (Halliday, 1975), the researcher found that the tendency of this news coverage leads to one NU perspective on groups that prioritize religious values. The narratives formed by media outlets like NU Online can reflect and reinforce the existing social and religious norms. When media texts use language that discredits or embraces, it is an effort to construct social reality according to that ideological perspective. Media portals such as NU Online operate within the institutional framework determined by the values and principles of Nahdlatul Ulama. This institutional context influences how issues such as LGBT are reported and discussed.

Couldry and Hepp (2017) also emphasize the importance of social actors in mediating reality. In the context of NU Online, religious leaders and experts involved in discussing religious matters act as key actors in influencing how the issue of LGBT is handled and communicated. Media practices adopted by NU Online such as news writing and interviews contribute to the formation of social reality. For example, the use of the term "returning to fitrah" is an attempt to affirm certain religious norms.

By using the thoughts of Couldry and Hepp (2017), language analysis can identify how terms like "discredited" and "embraced" are used to shape a particular narrative about LGBT. Additionally, examining how the ideology of Islam, as the dominant norm, influences the construction of reality in these texts. This also helps understand how reporting in NU Online reflects and reinforces the religious ideology embraced by Nahdlatul Ulama.

Overall, the thoughts of Couldry and Hepp (2017) allow us to see how NU Online not only conveys information but also creates and maintains a specific social reality according to the principles and values of Islam and nationalism, that humans consist of males and females, and rejects the concept of SOGIESC.

Hierarchy and Social Role of NU Online

Publications

In the articles published by NU Online, there is a clear social hierarchy between the ulama and the general public. The ulama are placed at the top of this hierarchy as moral and spiritual authorities who have the authority to set social norms and values. The general public, especially NU members, are positioned as recipients of guidance and direction from the ulama. The ulama are portrayed as guardians of religious morality and truth, while the LGBT community is often represented as a group that deviates from the norms set by religion, especially in Indonesia. This social relationship shows the existence of a strong power relationship where the ulama have full authority to direct and judge the behavior of society.

In the context of the hierarchy and social roles related to NU's views on LGBT, it is important to understand how the various levels of this organization contribute to shaping and articulating their attitudes. PBNU, as the highest authority in Nahdlatul Ulama, often determines the direction of official views on social issues. PBNU's official stance that considers LGBT campaign activities as a violation of the law shows their role in shaping policy and providing moral guidance to NU members and the general public.

At a more local level, such as PCNU Subang or PWNU Sumbar, there is a more

focused response to the specific LGBT situation in their area (Article 7). For example, PCNU Subang observed that LGBT has become an organized movement, while PWNU Sumbar responded to LGBT and the Gafatar group. This shows that despite the general uniformity of views from PBNU, PCNU branches have the space to adjust their responses according to the local context and the problems faced.

The role of NU figures, such as kiai or PCNU leaders, is also very influential in influencing public opinion and mobilizing opinions in the NU community. For example, the statement from Kiai Said (Article 11) who appealed to parents to protect their children from the influence of LGBT shows their social role in educating and guiding Muslims, as well as in protecting traditional values in society.

In addition, NU is also active in various forums and meetings at the national or international level, such as the Syuriyah-Tanfidziyah Meeting of PBNU which discussed various agendas including LGBT issues (Article 25). This participation confirms NU's role as a major player in determining the direction of social and religious policy in Indonesia, as well as in influencing the public agenda and government policy on sensitive issues such as LGBT.

The hierarchy and social roles within Nahdlatul Ulama play a key role in shaping views and responses to LGBT in Indonesia.

From the PBNU that sets the official view to the PCNU branches that respond specifically to local contexts, as well as the active role of NU figures in educating and influencing the community, all of this illustrates the complexity and diversity in how NU understands and responds to controversial issues in society.

Malaysian Culture and Humanistic Values

Ummah Today is a media outlet that primarily focuses on news. While its main product is news, its institutional form is not that of a Professional Journalist like other media organizations. For example, on its main page, Ummah Today doesn't include any media guidelines, journalistic code of ethics, or cyber media guidelines. This is different from NU Online and the general media landscape in Indonesia, which have cyber media guidelines and journalistic code of ethics displayed on their news portals. However, in the parent organization MAPIM of Ummah Today, there is a column titled "Notice of Personal Data Protection" that broadly covers personal data and data policies related to MAPIM (MAPIM, 2024). Based on the researcher's observations, in the case of Ummah Today, it seems clear why Ummah Today does not follow the business media company guidelines. On their website, at the bottom right corner of the page, they mention that this media outlet is affiliated with a Non-Government Organization (NGO) known as

Majlis Perundingan Pertubuhan Islam Malaysia (MAPIM).

MAPIM was established in 2012. Based on the information on their website, this NGO was initially created to respond to humanitarian activities based on Islamic values, particularly in responding to conflicts concerning Muslim communities in occupied territories like Palestine. The humanitarian activities they engage in, as documented, include providing assistance to areas affected by disasters, fundraising efforts, and empowering local communities. It is evident that the mission of this NGO, focused on the well-being of the ummah, has led to cross-border collaborations in building infrastructure. For example, in Syria, the NGO has constructed an airport to facilitate aid distribution. While on the other hand, this NGO also advocates for unity through mutual assistance among nations.

Ummah Today, affiliated with MAPIM, primarily covers the activities of MAPIM. Additionally, Ummah Today reports extensively on various Islamic communities in different countries. Unlike NU Online, which addresses ummah issues from a Sharia law perspective, Ummah Today dedicates very little coverage to Sharia law matters. This emphasis is highlighted to differentiate Ummah Today. The reporting related to LGBT issues, as part of the Sharia and Ummah matters, receives significant coverage in Ummah

Today. Meanwhile, NU Online extensively discusses ummah issues in relation to Sharia law from the beginning, MAPIM aims to be a collective voice for Islamic organizations in Malaysia, particularly advocating for Palestine and Gaza.

Concerning LGBT issues, Ummah Today spotlights an application developed by the Malaysian Islamic Affairs Department, also known as the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim), entitled Hijrah. The application, according to Datuk Idris Ahmad, the Minister of Religion, is designed to encourage lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals among Muslims to revert to their natural state (p.1). In other words, Datuk Idris Ahmad believes that LGBT is a deviation from humanity's natural state.

Ummah Today, which is only 12 years old compared to larger NGOs in America and Indonesia, is a representation of a new media outlet reflecting the collection of faces of NGOs in Malaysia. Several NGOs work in collaboration and contribute to MAPIM's activities, including the Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), Pertubuhan Ikram Malaysia (IKRAM), Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM), Jama'at-E Islami Malaysia (JIM), Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Pegawai-Pegawai Masjid Malaysia (PKPMM), Persatuan Ulama Malaysia (PUM), Muslim Care Malaysia. These organizations align with Ummah Today and

MAPIM's focus on national issues, such as the situation in Palestine and Gaza, as portrayed on Ummah Today's homepage, reflecting the national colors of the Middle Eastern countries.

The language used by Ummah Today, such as "Songsang" in Malay, has broad meanings, ranging from physical to more figurative and moral aspects. Its use often reflects the values and norms of society. Therefore, contextual understanding and cultural sensitivity are crucial in analyzing and using this word. The platform of Ummah Today tends to criticize and reject films and books that may negatively impact Malaysian culture.

By employing the perspectives of Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp (2017), we can understand how Ummah Today not only conveys information but also shapes and maintains specific social realities in line with the cultural and religious values of Malaysia.

According to Couldry and Hepp, media play a significant role in constructing social realities (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). This means that Ummah Today does not only convey information but also influences how Malaysian society understands and interprets particular issues, including views on films and books deemed "songsang." The narratives constructed by Ummah Today reflect and reinforce social and religious norms in Malaysia. The use of terms like "songsang" indicates an effort to

construct social realities based on specific ideological perspectives that reject culturally damaging products.

Ummah Today operates within an institutional framework influenced by the cultural and religious values embraced by Malaysian society. This institutional context affects how issues, such as films and books, are reported and discussed. Couldry and Hepp (2017) emphasize the role of social actors in mediating reality. In the context of Ummah Today, religious and cultural figures who criticize films and books play a vital role in shaping how these issues are interpreted and communicated to the public. Ummah Today's media practices, such as news writing style and reviews, contribute to the construction of social realities. Critiques of films and books considered "songsang" exemplify how media efforts stress specific cultural and religious norms.

The perspectives of Couldry and Hepp (2017) help us understand that Ummah Today not only conveys information but actively participates in creating and sustaining social realities in line with the cultural and religious values of Malaysia. The use of terms such as "songsang" in criticizing films and books is part of an effort to uphold norms and values considered important by Malaysian society.

Hierarchy and Social Role of Ummah Today Publications

Analysis of the hierarchy and social roles related to issues raised in the context of the given title, such as the rejection of the book 'Gay Is Okay!' by MAPIM Malaysia and the ban on the screening of the film 'Lightyear' by several countries, illustrates the complex dynamics between cultural values, social norms, and power structures that exist in society.

First of all, it is important to understand that social hierarchies are often shaped by factors such as religion, culture, and politics. In the Malaysian context, religion plays a very dominant role in shaping society's views on sexual issues. The rejection of the book by MAPIM shows an attempt to maintain traditional values that consider non-heterosexual sexual orientation as something that deviates from religious and cultural norms. This action reflects the power of religious institutions in shaping the public narrative about sexuality, as well as the social pressures faced by individuals or groups who seek to express their identities outside of these norms.

On the other hand, the removal of the hijrah diri application from Google Play by JAKIM shows that religious institutions have the power to control access to information and support for the LGBT community. This action not only shows the enforcement of religious norms but also

reinforces the existing stigma against LGBT individuals. In this context, we can see how the power of religious institutions interacts with modern technology and media, creating a space where alternative narratives are difficult to emerge.

Furthermore, the Senegalese president's support for PSG's Muslim players in rejecting LGBT highlights the solidarity within religious communities that can influence responses to social change. It also reflects how religious identity can be integrated with the rise of nationalism and the affirmation of traditional cultural values. In many countries, rejection of LGBT is often linked to efforts to maintain a national identity that is perceived as being threatened by outside influences. In this case, individuals or groups who adopt progressive values can feel marginalized and oppressed by more dominant groups.

The ban on the film 'Lightyear' in 14 countries serves as a clear example of how social hierarchies can shape public policy that impacts freedom of expression. This decision reflects how social and cultural values often take precedence over an individual's right to express themselves. This shows the tension between dominant traditional values and new ideas that seek to promote diversity and inclusion. Finally, the statement that LGBT people need to be guided to return to nature reflects the view that there is a norm that must be followed, and that deviation from this norm is seen as

a problem that needs to be resolved. In this context, we can see how stigma against LGBT people can result from dominant narratives and how this affects individual identities and lives. The dissatisfaction that emerged among Malaysian viewers towards LGBT characters in the animated series Peppa Pig also reflects how media and entertainment can be an arena where social values and norms are transmitted, and how public reactions can reflect tensions that exist in society. Overall, these issues show that social hierarchies and the role of religious, cultural and media institutions are very influential in shaping society's views on sexual issues. In the face of ongoing social change, it is important for society to engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue to create a safer space for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity.

Reducing Negative Stigma towards Islam in the United States

The international reputation of CAIR is very important. As a manifestation of this reputation, Nihad Awad, the organization's national executive director, was listed among the 500 most influential Muslims in the world in the 2009 publication produced by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (Jordan) alongside Prince Alwaleed Bin from Georgetown University. The Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding Talal. In early 2010, Arabian Business Magazine ranked Awad

#39 on the "Arabian Business Power 100" list for 2010. When explaining why Awad made the list, the magazine said, "...CAIR's actions have forced many major media outlets to be more tolerant of Muslim culture."

This document is the result of a preliminary review of 1,999 media reports and CAIR press releases - all of which are press releases in the CAIR database - as well as 671 action alerts issued from 1994 to the end of 2008. Some materials from 2009 and 2010 are also included. This document is intended to give readers an overview of CAIR's actions and statements. It provides insights into the breadth and depth of the organization's work and its public position.

Unlike Malaysian and Indonesian media, CAIR, with a mission to remove negative stereotypes of American Society towards Islam, especially Islamophobia born after the 9/11 tragedy, makes issues in America more inclusive towards Islam. For example, findings from this study related to the shooting at the Orlando Club, an LGBTQ community in Florida. This shooting initially created a stigma against the terror caused by American Muslim groups. This was because of Islamic beliefs that strongly rejected LGBTQ activities.

Basim Elkarra, Director of CAIR, in a statement quoted by CAIR actually sympathized with the incident. Unlike NU Online and Ummah Today, which tend to

reject. Basim Elkarra, in the Orlando shooting incident, argued that if the cause was Islamophobia, CAIR was willing to help the interests of the Orlando Club in investigating the shooting. Furthermore, CAIR also declared that their institution is committed to creating a safe and peaceful community life.

In the researchers' findings regarding the CAIR case and the Orlando shooting, there are eight articles other than those written by Basim Elkarra, published by CAIR and originating from various institutions. These articles include contributions from campuses such as IOWA and government official agencies such as Karen Dabdoub, Director of Cincinnati for America-Islam Relations. These articles are almost similar because they highlight Muslim speakers expressing condolences for this shooting case. The researchers' findings indicate that these articles are in line with CAIR's goal to participate in eliminating Islamophobia stigma in the United States.

Using the thoughts of Couldry and Hepp in the book (2017), we can analyze how CAIR uses the media to shape certain social realities. In this context, CAIR not only conveys information but also shapes how American society views the Muslim community, especially in crisis situations like the shooting in Orlando.

The narrative formed by CAIR through these articles reflects efforts to

change negative perceptions about Muslims in the United States. By highlighting the sympathy and empathy of Muslim speakers, CAIR seeks to build a humane narrative that supports the integration of the Muslim community in American society. CAIR operates within an institutional framework focused on the relationship between the Muslim community and the broader American society. This institutional context influences how CAIR responds to critical issues such as Islamophobia, with the aim of eliminating stigma and strengthening understanding among communities.

Couldry and Hepp (2017) emphasize the importance of social actors in mediating reality. In this case, CAIR features various figures from academic institutions and government agencies that support positive narratives about American Muslims, acting as key players in helping shape public opinion. The media practices adopted by CAIR, such as article writing and selection of sources, contribute to the formation of desired social realities. Articles highlighting the sympathy from Muslim sources demonstrate CAIR's efforts to emphasize positive messages and reduce Islamophobia.

Borrowing from Couldry and Hepp's thoughts (2017), we can see that CAIR not only functions as an information provider but also as an active agent in shaping and maintaining a more inclusive and positive social reality about the Muslim community

in the United States. These articles are in line with CAIR's goal of eliminating Islamophobia stigma, showing active participation of Islamic America in responding to critical issues and building a more humanistic and inclusive narrative.

Hierarchy and Social Role of CAIR Publications

An analysis of hierarchies and social roles in the context of Muslim and interfaith leaders' responses to the Orlando nightclub shooting provides insight into the dynamics of the relationship between religious identity, the LGBT community, and broader social issues. The shooting, which targeted the LGBT community, not only created a wave of outrage and grief around the world, but also highlighted the complexity of interactions between often marginalized social groups, including the Muslim community.

First, it is important to note that the swift response of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) chapters demonstrates an awareness of the social responsibility that the Muslim community has in speaking out against violence and terrorism. By issuing public statements condemning this act of violence, the Muslim community sought to affirm that they are not mere bystanders, but also part of the solution in building a safer and more inclusive society. This action also reflects an effort to dismantle the negative stereotypes that are often attached to the

Muslim community, especially in the wake of violent incidents perpetrated by individuals claiming to represent their religion.

Furthermore, the collaboration between Muslim, LGBT, and interfaith leaders in responding to this tragedy reflects a recognition of the need for solidarity across groups. This collaboration demonstrates that despite differences in views and practices, these groups can come together to address common challenges, particularly in the context of upholding human rights and ending violence. In this regard, CAIR and other community leaders acted as bridges, facilitating dialogue between groups that are often isolated from one another.

CAIR's response also reflects the dynamics of social hierarchies in which groups with greater power or influence seek to give voice to those who are marginalized. By expressing condolences and support to the victims and their families, the Muslim community not only demonstrated empathy but also strengthened its position as an inclusive advocate for human rights. This action can be seen as a way to challenge narratives that often emphasize the tension between religion and sexual identity, emphasizing that violence has no place in a diverse society.

The statements and actions of the Muslim community in response to the shooting also reflect an awareness of the

importance of maintaining their reputation and image in the public eye. In the context of widespread Islamophobia, a swift and decisive response to acts of violence can help to assuage concerns among non-Muslims and demonstrate that the Muslim community is committed to building a safe society for all. Thus, social hierarchy in this context can be viewed in terms of how minority groups seek to strengthen their position in the larger society, while still supporting other marginalized groups.

Finally, the response to the Orlando shooting provides a clear example of how social hierarchy and community roles can interplay in the context of social change. Through collaboration and solidarity, Muslim communities and interfaith leaders can shape a new narrative that is more inclusive and just, one that recognizes the diversity and rights of every individual, regardless of their background. Thus, issues such as violence, discrimination, and human rights are not the responsibility of just one group, but are shared challenges that require the involvement and commitment of all levels of society.

Discussion

Mass media plays a significant role in shaping and influencing the social reality we face. The theory of social construction by Couldry and Hepp in *The Mediated Construction of Reality* (2017) emphasizes how media is not only a tool for conveying information, but also an arena where social

reality is formed, maintained, and transformed. In this context, a study of Ummah Today, NU Online, and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) shows how media can be used by religious and social organizations to direct public narratives and shape public perceptions.

Ummah Today and NU Online are two media platforms that focus on religious and community issues in Malaysia and Indonesia. Both media serve as channels to spread Islamic teachings and shape social realities that are in accordance with the religious values embraced by the majority of Muslims in both countries. Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp state that media provides the infrastructure for how collective understandings of reality are constructed and maintained. Through published articles, lectures, and Q&As, Ummah Today and NU Online influence the way people view religious and social issues, forming narratives that support traditional understandings of Islam.

Meanwhile, CAIR operates in a different context, namely the United States, where the issue of Islamophobia and stigma against Muslims is a major challenge. CAIR uses the media to counter negative stereotypes and promote positive images of American Muslims. By featuring figures from academic and government institutions who support inclusive and tolerant narratives, CAIR seeks to shape a social

reality that is more accepting and respectful of diversity. This is in line with Couldry and Hepp's thinking that the media plays a role in social transformation by including various voices in the construction of collective reality. The following is a table of one of CAIR's analyses Tittle "CAIR: Sacramento Muslims, LGBTQ and Interfaith Leaders to Respond to #Orlando Night Club Shooting"

Table 1. Analysis of one of the articles from CAIR

Category	Information	Situational Description
Field of discourse	News of the shooting at the Orlando club, and condolences	The discourse field highlights responses from various parties to the Orlando nightclub shooting, including Muslim, LGBTQ, and interfaith leaders in Sacramento. These responses demonstrate a discourse field that engages issues of violence, solidarity, and interfaith and

	intercommunity relations.	Mode of discourse	- alongside The Sacramento LGBT Community Center, will hold a press conference and rally" (par.1) - This mode indicates a concrete action that will be taken in response to the event that occurred. Statement of support: "We in Orlando, also offer our support and allyship to the LGBTQ community" (par.2) - This mode shows an attitude of solidarity and support for the LGBTQ community. Affirmation of values: "Such heinous attacks are antithetical to the ideals of civilized society" (par.6) - This mode shows a rejection of	Event announcement: "will hold a press conference and rally" (par.1) - This mode indicates a concrete action that will be taken in response to the event that occurred. Statement of support: "We in Orlando, also offer our support and allyship to the LGBTQ community" (par.2) - This mode shows an attitude of solidarity and support for the LGBTQ community. Affirmation of values: "Such heinous attacks are antithetical to the ideals of civilized society" (par.6) - This mode shows a rejection of
<p>Tenor of discourse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basim Elkarra (CAIR-SV Executive Director, Sacramento Valley Muslim leaders) - Darrell Steinberg (Mayor-elect) - Steve Hansen (Councilmember) - Carlos Marquez (LGBT Community Center Board President) 	<p>The tenor of discourse analysis highlights the interpersonal relationships between participants in the discourse. In this text, there are several key tenors, such as Darrell Steinberg, Steve Hansen, Carlos Marquez, and Basim Elkarra, who all demonstrate empathy, solidarity, and rejection of violence. They demonstrate openness and support for victims and affected communities, and emphasize the importance of intercommunity cooperation.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We also offer our support and allyship to the LGBTQ community" (par.2) - This mode shows an attitude of solidarity and support for the LGBTQ community. - Such heinous attacks are antithetical to the ideals of civilized society" (par.6) - This mode shows a rejection of 	

ideals of violence and an
civilized affirmation of
society the values that
(p.6) are upheld in a
civilized society.
Through the use
of these various
modes of
discourse, the
text attempts to
convey
important
messages
related to the
tragedy that
occurred and
shows an
attitude of
solidarity and
rejection of
violence. Some
examples of
modes of
discourse
include
announcements
of press
conferences
and rallies,
fundraising
through
crowdfunding
campaigns, and
official
statements from
related
organizations

and individuals.
All of this shows
an effort to
convey
messages
openly and
transparently,
and to mobilize
concrete
actions in
response to the
tragedy.

CAIR views Islamophobia as a form of discrimination that violates human rights. This religious-based discrimination can result in the violation of the basic rights of Muslim Americans, such as the right to live without fear, the right to work, and freedom of religion. By removing this stigma, CAIR seeks to ensure that all citizens, including Muslims, can enjoy these rights fully and without discrimination. This reflects the historical struggle for civil rights that whites and others have waged in the context of fighting for their basic rights in America.

Islamophobia is often a catalyst for acts of violence and hate crimes against the Muslim community. History in the United States shows that various groups, including white immigrants such as the Irish and Italians, have experienced discrimination and violence based on prejudice. CAIR seeks to reduce incidents of violence by promoting public awareness, education, and

legal advocacy, reminiscent of similar efforts by minority groups in the past to combat discrimination and violence.

CAIR's efforts to remove the stigma of Islamophobia are not new in American history. They are part of a long legacy of struggles against discrimination and prejudice that have been experienced by various groups, including white communities. By using media to shape a more inclusive and just social reality, CAIR follows in the footsteps of the civil rights struggle in America, reminding us that the fight for justice and equality is an ongoing task that encompasses all communities. Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp emphasize that media plays a critical role in the construction of social reality, and CAIR uses media to transform negative narratives into more positive and inclusive stories, in line with the principles of social justice that have long been fought for in the United States.

The approach to controversial issues such as LGBT shows the differences in strategy between Ummah Today, NU Online, and CAIR. Ummah Today and NU Online tend to reject controversial issues such as LGBT. They maintain a conservative interpretation of religious values and adhere to traditional Islamic teachings. For example, articles on both platforms often emphasize the importance of morality and ethics in accordance with Islamic views, rejecting the normalization

of LGBT as a form of deviation from religious teachings.

Ummah Today's firmness in prohibiting LGBT has a strong continuity with the enforcement of applicable laws in Malaysia. This media serves as a tool to strengthen and disseminate religious and social norms, support sharia and civil laws that prohibit LGBT behavior, and support political actions aimed at maintaining traditional values. In this context, Ummah Today plays an important role in shaping public opinion and ensuring that society remains obedient to applicable laws and norms.

NU Online, as part of Nahdlatul Ulama, opposes LGBT based on applicable religious teachings and social norms. However, this attitude needs to be managed wisely considering Indonesia's pluralistic history and culture. The inconsistent law enforcement reflects the complexity of the situation in Indonesia, where traditional and modern values often clash.

In contrast, CAIR has shown greater inclusivity on controversial issues, including LGBT. In the case of the Orlando shooting, CAIR firmly supported the LGBT community and condemned all forms of violence. This approach reflects CAIR's efforts to confront the challenge of Islamophobia by showing that Muslim Americans are part of a broader and more inclusive society. In doing so, CAIR seeks to shape a more complex and tolerant

narrative, in line with Couldry and Hepp's principles of inclusive social reality construction.

The responses to crises and critical issues by the three media platforms also demonstrate the role of media in shaping public perception. CAIR uses media to respond to crises by featuring figures from academic institutions and government agencies who support positive narratives about Muslim Americans. In crisis situations such as terrorist attacks or Islamophobic incidents, CAIR seeks to shape public opinion by emphasizing solidarity, inclusivity, and support for the Muslim community. They use media to steer the narrative in a more positive direction and support social integration.

On the other hand, Ummah Today and NU Online focus more on upholding religious values in responding to critical issues. For example, in dealing with moral and social issues, these two platforms often emphasize the importance of returning to religious teachings as a solution to various problems. Responses to issues such as drugs, corruption, or other moral crises are often associated with calls to strengthen faith and increase piety. This approach shows how media is used to strengthen religious identity and shape social narratives that are in accordance with Islamic teachings.

This study shows how media plays a key role in shaping social realities across

geographical and cultural contexts. Ummah Today, NU Online, and CAIR each use media to influence perceptions and shape narratives that suit their purposes. Ummah Today and NU Online focus on spreading conservative religious values, while CAIR seeks to build a positive and inclusive image of American Muslims. Their approaches to controversial issues and crises also reflect different strategies in using media to shape public opinion.

Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp's thinking on the construction of social reality by media is particularly relevant in understanding the role of these three media platforms. Media not only conveys information but also shapes the way we understand the world and interact with others. Thus, this study underscores the importance of understanding the role of media in the construction of social reality and how media can be used to achieve various social, political, and religious goals.

This analysis is also in line with M.A.K. Halliday's situational concept, which emphasizes the importance of context in the use of language. Halliday's field, tenor, and mode of discourse help us understand how media is used to shape social narratives in different situations. The field of discourse covers the issues discussed, the tenor of discourse involves who participates and their relationships, while the mode of discourse covers how language is used in the media. These three

aspects help us analyze how Ummah Today, NU Online, and CAIR shape and influence social reality through the use of media.

CONCLUSION

The implications of this study have two important aspects. Theoretically, this study is expected to provide academic contributions to media studies, especially media portals based on Islamic organizations. This study reveals significant social, cultural, and political implications for understanding how language can be used to maintain or challenge power structures and social norms. In addition, this study provides a better understanding of the development of LGBT issues in the context of Islamic organizations in an increasingly connected world.

Practically, the results of this study can serve as an important reflection in designing communication strategies to deal with various social contexts, especially in sensitive issues such as LGBT. Understanding the meaning and importance of equal communication and not discriminating against certain groups can help create more humane interactions. This study also shows that different regions have different histories of meaning related to LGBT, which is a benchmark for being more open and avoiding acts of oppression or domination against fellow human beings.

Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of implementing appropriate laws and social ethics. Focusing on sensitive issues in various regions can trigger social conflict. Therefore, evaluations of each organization need to be directed at humanitarian issues, not at one egocentric ideology. This approach does not mean supporting the existence of LGBT, but emphasizes the need to treat them as human beings. Overall, this study strengthens our understanding of how the media plays a role in shaping social and communication realities, providing new insights into complex and sensitive issues in the context of diverse societies.

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