

NEGOTIATING ISLAMIC HEGEMONY: A CASE STUDY OF MUSLIM LGBT IN EAST JAVA, INDONESIA

Agung Wijianto^{1*}; Farah Kholida Wahid²

¹Master Program Literary and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Airlangga University
Jl. Airlangga No. 4 - 6, Airlangga, Kec. Gubeng, Kota SBY, Jawa Timur 60115, Indonesia
²Master of Economic Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Brawijaya University
Jl. Veteran, Ketawanggede, Kec. Lowokwaru, Kota Malang, Jawa Timur 65145, Indonesia
¹agung.wijianto-2018@fib.unair.ac.id; ²farahkholida@student.ub.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The research set out to investigate how Islamic hegemonic processes disseminate in society. It also tried to examine how LGBT individuals negotiate the tension and navigate their behaviors of being Muslim and LGBT. In Indonesia, being a Muslim and LGBT was viewed as irreconcilable by the general public. Despite that, some people identified as both Muslim and LGBT. This posed a tension that needed to be addressed. The research distributed online forms across several social media to find willing participants. The online forms yielded seven different responses from people who identified as Muslims and LGBT, three of whom were willing to participate in follow-up interviews. The willing participants were then personally interviewed in informal settings using Zoom video calls due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were semi-structured, and they were carried out over the course of four weeks. The research drew on concepts such as cultural hegemony and ideological state apparatuses as conceptual frameworks to guide the research and the interviews. The findings suggest that family and education are the two most influential hegemonic instruments in instilling Islamic hegemonic values in the participants. The research also finds that the respondents perform unique distinct negotiation strategies according to their personal beliefs and values on social and spiritual levels.

Keywords: Islamic hegemony, Ideological State Apparatuses, negotiate, East Java

INTRODUCTION

In the past 20 years or so, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community has experienced oppression in Indonesia due to the Islamic values permeating the socio-cultural context in Indonesia. Islamic values view heteronormative sexuality, i.e., sexual relations between a man and a woman, as the only desirable option to be the correct way of conduct. Thus, the majority of Indonesians view the LGBT people who do not fall adhere to heteronormativity as transgressions against an acceptable way of life. The research explores several cases of being LGBT and Muslim in East Java, Indonesia, and tries to illuminate the problems

of living as Muslim LGBT in the midst of dominant Islamic ideology.

LGBT discourse has been an immense controversy in the global world for the past few years. Studies demonstrate the interconnection of LGBT discourse with other discourses such as identity, liberalism, human rights, legal rights, and politics (Waites, 2019). Altman and Symons also have pointed out that acknowledgment of LGBT rights has become a contentious arena with significant polarization (MacCartney, 2018). The polarization of these sides has its core on the ethical and practical concerns in society. However, since the Reformation era, from 1998 until now, Indonesia has had its own issues pertaining to the LGBT movement.

The issues with LGBT in Indonesia are closely related to the equality of rights, homophobia, cultural clash, mental health, identity, and religious values (Astuti & Kurniati, 2018; Hayati, 2019; Mansur, 2017; Novita, 2021; Pratama, Fahmi, & Fadli, 2018; Ridwan & Wu, 2018; Thajib, 2021; Wieringa, 2019; Wilkinson et al., 2017; Yulius, Tang, & Offord, 2018; Yustikaningrum, 2018). The LGBT community is pursuing the legal rights of same-sex marriage, stating that the rights to be wedded are integral rights of citizenship. However, the others on the conservative side argue that LGBT is a 'disease' and adopt the position of absolute rejection towards LGBT. Others have also argued that LGBT people are prone to mental illness, although it can be traced to discriminatory behaviors from others. A psychiatrist even expresses that LGBT is a mental illness and can be contagious (Saleh & Arif, 2017). These discriminatory behaviors and views toward the LGBT have increased in recent years, and thus the LGBT identity has become a volatile thing to live with because they face many persecutions.

The fundamental values of Indonesia as a religious country make the LGBT movement hard to live with. Indonesia, while not entirely theocratic, was built upon the fundamental principles of *Pancasila* (literally five fundamental principles), in which the first principle states the fundamental belief of the state in a monotheistic God. Therefore, religion is one of the primary aspects of national identity, and the embodiment of these religious values disapproves of LGBT unforgivingly. Because of this account, Boellstorff (2016) regards Indonesia as a nation that embraces 'state straightism', an ideology that promotes heteronormative sexual and romantic relationships. As Islam is the largest religion in Indonesia, Islamic ethos are thought to be the synonym of Indonesian values, and these values regard heteronormativity as the only acceptable option.

Islam, as the most dominant religious ideology in Indonesia, is considered the biggest opposition to the pursuit of the equality of rights of LGBT in the political realm in Indonesia. In the Reformation era, the ideological rise of Islam in politics mostly happened under former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Under his reign in 2005, Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Ulema Council) issued a fatwa condemning liberalism, pluralism, and secularism (Bourchier, 2019). In turn, the fatwa allows some Muslims to persecute the 'deviants' and receive little consequence on their ends. There have been many instances in which public events of LGBT, such as the Q! film festival and the International Lesbian and Gay Association's Asia (ILGA Asia) Conference in 2010, were silenced and shut down by groups of religion followers, stating that LGBT is an abomination and morally destructive (Wijaya, 2020). The conservative Muslims were the harshest perpetrators of these attacks by shutting the discussions with violence. Along with the political realm, the power of Islam ideology also promulgates the cultural landscape of the people.

Indonesia has grown to be more conservative since then. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, the two biggest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, have become more conservative since the mid-2000s (Brown, 2019). The conservatives regard the LGBT as the western liberal values and perceive them as a hostile entity and label LGBT as a moral crisis (Davies, 2018). Furthermore, the conservatives consider Islamic values as moral and virtue guardians of the national identity and view the LGBT as subversive efforts to undermine the religious and national values of the Indonesians (Wijaya, 2020). NU, previously regarded as a moderate Islamic organization, also shares the view of condemning LGBT (Muttaqin, 2017). NU chairman has stated that NU would not accept LGBT people and that their sexual orientation is contrary to human nature (Sundaryani, 2016b). On the other hand, LGBT activists try to challenge these views by stating that first and foremost, regardless of their gender and sexual preferences, human rights should be upheld (Brill/Nijhoff, 2009).

In Indonesia, conservative Islamic values are highly pervasive in almost all cultural aspects of society, from institutions such as families to art and literature. LGBT people are bombarded with a dominant ideology that inherently condemns their existence. For example, in 2016, KPI banned TV and radio programs that would supposedly endorse LGBT (Sundaryani, 2016a). This signifies oppression towards the LGBT that makes them unable to celebrate their identity. These two identities seem irreconcilable, and it is impossible to publicly state that a person is a pious Muslim and LGBT. Despite this fact, many LGBT people in Indonesia identify themselves as Muslims (Khoir, 2020; Triantoro & Ardiansyah, 2018). However, they also have to regulate their behavior, so they do not face persecution, judgment, or even violence. For example, LGBT people in Indonesia have to mask themselves as straight people by marrying the opposite sex (Wijaya, 2020).

The attack on ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) Asia also shows that East Java Muslims vehemently reject LGBT values. This might suggest that even though people in East Java practice more moderate Islam, *Islam Nusantara* (Mukodi, 2020), Muslims are still severely reluctant to accept LGBT values. According to Michael and Kleden (2018), this view is also reflected by an official of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of East Java, who has stated that LGBT is incompatible with Indonesia's values.

Having Islam as their religious identity and being LGBT as a personal identity presents a conflict of values. The hegemonic practices that they live through and experience throughout their life state that being LGBT is an offense to religious laws. On the other hand, they cannot just abandon their personal identity. To resolve this conflict, LGBT people have to negotiate and mediate these two values. It is not obvious how they maneuver to negotiate with things

that are technically opposite to their personal identity. However, they certainly need to strategize to orient and navigate themselves in a society heavily saturated with Islamic ideology. It is worth scrutinizing these problems through the lens of hegemony.

Having considered Islam as the dominant ideology in East Java Indonesia and how powerful it is in the socio-cultural context, it is quite reasonable to state that Islam is one of the most potent hegemony in Indonesia. Antonio Gramsci defines the concept of cultural hegemony as a societal power based on the consent given by the populace to the dominant group (Flynn, 2021; Garlitz & Zompetti, 2021; Gupta, 2019).

It is essential to note that the power here does not mean forceful domination but rather a form of ideological domination. However, ideological domination can only happen if there is an accompanying role of force (Hesketh, 2019). Furthermore, hegemony is a complex structure composed of economy, culture, politics, and the relations between those things (Donoghue, 2018). Hegemony is not a rigid entity that stays the same over a period of time. On the contrary, it invites an ideological contestation, and hegemony can be preserved by generating and propagating legitimization. Althusser (2006) expands these notions from Gramsci by explaining different mechanisms to preserve the hegemony.

Althusser's (2006) ideas of repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses are conceivably useful in explaining how the hegemony of Islam is preserved and maintained in Indonesia. He explains that while repressive state apparatuses, such as police, function mainly by force and are controlled by the state, ideological state apparatuses function mainly by consent through ideological means (Al-Aghberi, 2018). There are several Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA); they are family ISA, educational ISA (public and private schools), legal ISA, cultural ISA (literature, arts), media ISA (TV, radio, newspaper), religious ISA (system of churches or mosques), and political ISA. Similar to Gramsci's notion of the dynamics of hegemony, ISAs are places of continual ideological struggle. In ISAs, negotiation and counter-hegemony can manifest as a response to the hegemony (Margulies, 2018).

Being Muslim and LGBT poses a difficult conundrum that has to be addressed. By drawing concepts about hegemony and ideological state apparatuses, the research sets out to investigate the Islamic hegemonic processes, i.e., the dissemination of Islamic values as the dominant and legitimate values – experienced by individuals. The research also tries to find out how individuals negotiate the tension between the hegemony and being Muslim LGBT in East Java. The research tries to find several individuals who identify as Muslim and LGBT. Upon finding those individuals, the researchers try to interview to learn about their experience regarding the hegemonic processes and the negotiations they do to manage the tension between being Muslim and LGBT.

METHODS

The sensitivity of the issues and the antipathy towards the LGBT community in Indonesia propels the researchers to apply a qualitative research methods. Due to limited resources of both time and funding, the researchers choose to make an online form asking for the participation of people who identify themselves as LGBT and Muslim, live in East Java, and are willing to be questioned about LGBT issues, regardless of their age or social status. The researchers then proceed to spread the form across various social media. This method yields seven different responses; three of them are willing to participate in an in-depth follow-up interview; the other four decline to be interviewed further after it is clarified to them that the purpose of these interviews is academic research. The follow-up interviews are done in online video calls using Zoom since the researchers want to minimize the risk factor of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The interviews are done in semi-structured interviews over the course of four weeks in total, starting from 19th December 2020 to 9th January 2021. The method of semi-structured interviews is employed to illustrate the respondents' experience more clearly. Several basic questions are prepared beforehand, including how old they are, their occupations, how they identify themselves, whether they have come out, and several non-personal questions related to the issues of LGBT in Indonesia, such as homophobia in Indonesia and the legalities of same-sex marriage. The researchers then develop more sensitive questions based on their responses and ask them to elaborate more on those questions. Guided by the theoretical framework about hegemony and ISAs, the researchers gradually direct the attention to find the hegemonic processes that the respondents have experienced and how they negotiate the tension of being Islam and LGBT. To ensure the validity of the data, the results and the analysis are then reported back to the respondents. The respondents are then asked whether their statements are misrepresented or manipulated in the analysis; none of them state that this is the case. It must be pointed out, however, that all the respondents are registered under a pseudonym to protect their safety and privacy due to the sensitive nature of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section expands and elaborates on the three respondents' experiences regarding their LGBT identity and how they behave in society. It is divided into two parts. Firstly, this section illustrates the hegemonic processes they have undergone throughout their lives. Secondly, it expounds on how the respondents negotiate with the hegemony on a social and spiritual level.

Zay is a 26-year-old who lives and works in Surabaya. He identifies himself as an agender bisexual.

He was raised in a pretty devout Islamic family. Zay has said that although his family has a relatively moderate view on Islamic values, they lean slightly towards the conservative side. From a young age, his father, an *ustadz* (Islamic chaplain), and especially his sister had taught him strictly, imposing several restrictions on his behavior. He shares his experience of having his behaviors being constrained.

“My sister is 7 years older than me and when she was 13 or 14 years old, she began to practice fundamental Islam. She, then, imposed her values to me, from religious rituals to lifestyle and way of conduct in my daily lives. She prohibited me from having my shirt untucked because she said it will attract girls.” (Conversation with the researchers, December 20, 2020).

The mentioned account indicates that his family has introduced and instilled conservative Islam’s ideological values since he was young. He has said that Islamic teaching prohibits contact between different genders because it wants to protect them from sexual and worldly desires which naturally arise within a man and a woman. He further explains that he understands where his sister’s orders are coming from.

“Once, she also dumped my bracelet which was given by my best friend without asking me first. I was afraid to confront her because I didn’t like conflict. I took this as her way of telling me that men should not wear feminine accessory.” (Conversation with the researchers, January 9, 2021)

Zay admits in the interview that he has been a rather effeminate man since he was young. According to his understanding of Islam when he was young, men should be masculine; therefore, he considered what his sister did justifiably. This suggests that the hegemony has managed to influence and control ideas within his mind. These experiences of the family being a significant influence in implanting these values are also shared with another respondent, Viz.

Viz is a 32-year-old lesbian who lives in Malang. She is also raised in a pious family. Her parents are the key figures in teaching Islamic values. She also practices her faith devoutly, such as doing *shalat* (praying) diligently. However, she experiences the same pressure of conforming to the traditional gender roles of her family as Zay does. Being a tomboyish girl herself does not help her case. It makes her parents urge her more to act in accordance with Islamic values.

“My parents taught me things that I can do or cannot do from an Islamic perspective.... (For example) My mother tells me not to wear shorts when I go outside.... My mother always told me wear long sleeves clothing. She asked me to cover my body (*menutup aurat*) even though she doesn’t tell me to wear *hijab*.” (Conversation

with the researchers, 14 January 2021)

It is pretty common in Indonesia that female Muslims are implored to cover their *aurat* (body parts required by Islam to be covered) and wear a *hijab* (head veil). *Aurat*, for women, can be defined as all body parts except their palms and face. It is considered an impure and sinful act not to wear a *hijab* and cover their skin. Wearing a *hijab*, for Viz, means covering up the body and safeguarding the soul. She thinks the *hijab* is an important matter, and she is not ready to commit to wearing *hijab*. However, it is clear that she does not fully embrace the ideology. This is shown by how she disagrees with the notion taught to her that says, “all the women who wear *hijab* will go to heaven, and I will be condemned to hell.” (Conversation with the researchers, 14 January 2021)

These findings suggest that families are a huge contributor in instilling hegemonic values in a society. This is in concordance with what Althusser (2006) coins as an ‘interpellation’ and Ideology State Apparatus (ISA). He has stated that one of the functions of families, as an ISA, is to habituate ideologies into the subjects of a given society and is a place for ideological struggle (Althusser, 2006). When Zay was young, he interpellated one of the notions in Islamic ideology that men have to be masculine. Thus, he became subjected to the ideology. Viz, on the other hand, has some struggles embracing the ideology completely. Even though Viz agrees that covering *aurat* is good, she does not believe that not complying with it will lead to her condemnation. Even though their levels of subjection are different, it is clear that they are subjected to hegemony by their families. The hegemony entails following Islamic ideology and behaving according to it constitutes good behavior. On the other hand, not conforming to the ideology is marginalized and deemed bad behavior. Family is not the only influential ISA in the hegemony of Islam in Indonesia; educational ISA is also a prominent instrument in disseminating the ideology.

Apart from the family, Zay also learned about Islam in a *pengajian* (Islamic Studies Forum) when he was in high school. He joined this forum because his close friends urged him to. This *pengajian*, he says, did not resemble other studies forums. The participants were asked to engage in critical thinking. Zay says that he enjoys this method of learning Islam.

“This forum is really interesting because it has brainstorming session postulate statements like God does not exist or Islam is not a true religion in the first session. And then after a short break, in the second session, the speaker then clarifies that God does exist and Islam is the truest religion above others and explains the reasoning behind them. The reason they are doing this is because so that we don’t just follow Islam blindly... I do think that this is a good method.” (Conversation with the researchers, 9 January 2021)

In addition to promoting critical thinking, this forum also advocates that Islam is the most reasonable religion and that the Quran is the truest book apart from other religious books. It is fairly safe to say that the forum is doing hegemonic practices that put the values of Islam above any other religious values. These practices are common in Indonesia's Islamic *pengajian*; another participant in the research also goes through this experience.

Kevin is a 20-year-old student who lives in Malang and identifies himself as gay. He mostly learns Islam from formal school and Islamic *pengajian*. He explains that his family is not as influential in teaching Islam as his teachers because he is not close with his family, especially his father. His parents divorced when he was young, and Kevin stayed with his mother, separated from his father and brother. He says he mostly learns about Islam from Islamic *pengajian* (Islamic forum studies and Quran recitation) that he joins with his friends.

"I joined an Islamic *pengajian* with my friends.... They didn't ask me to but I feel the pressure of coming along because a lot of my friends were joining. Lessons about *zakat* (obligatory charity), helping each other, tolerance, not engaging in relationships with someone who is not your *mahram*.... They also taught me that Islam is the perfect religion." (Conversation with the researchers, 17 January 2021)

He explains that he does not feel that these teachings restrain him in any way. He truly believes that the rules and values will make him a better person. He lives most of his life adhering to these values. It can be inferred that Kevin has internalized these values. These set of values, or an ideology, have interpellated him, an individual, as a subject of the ideology. This experience is in concordance with what Weiss (2019) has said about how students internalize values taught in school. The subjection is also reflected in the experience about which he told. It happens when he tells his friend that he is gay.

"He judged me saying that I am wrong and sinful. He urged me to do more prayers and get closer to God. Without him saying it to my face, I already know that what I am doing (being gay) is wrong and I need to be closer to God." (Conversation with the researchers, 17 January 2021)

It is interesting to note that, in addition to his friend judging him, even Kevin himself deems his identity of being gay to be wrong and that he needs to correct it. This suggests that the ideology has successfully subjected him to conform to it, and he has embraced the subjection completely.

Althusser (2006) has stated that the dominant apparatuses in making sure that hegemonic control is maintained are family and education ISAs (Althusser,

2006). The findings have suggested that they are in concordance with Althusser's statement. All of the accounts expressed before have asserted that the hegemonic control over the respondents is achieved by family and education ISAs. Through these two ISAs, the hegemonic practices in which the ideology lives and thrives have transformed the three respondents into subjects of the ideology.

All other ISAs do not affect the respondents. For example, they do not really care for the booming Islamic novels in the 2000s. In addition to that, their values and beliefs of Islam are also not influenced by political actions or dynamics that have been happening in Indonesia. These hegemonic processes have managed to instill the hegemonic values into the respondents. The next section gives an explanation of how the three respondents negotiate their actions in the middle of Islamic hegemony in Indonesia.

In a given society, people are expected to conform to the norm and to be 'good' members of society; in other words, they are subjected to the dominant ideology (Althusser, 2006). However, some people will struggle to kowtow fully to the ideology due to various reasons. In this case, LGBT people in Indonesia are having a hard time due to condemnation from the dominant ideology, which calls them a transgression against the natural order of things and orders them to be punished by a penal law (Yanggo, 2018; Zaini, 2017). Therefore, they have to negotiate with the hegemony to address this tension. The levels on which they operate their negotiation may differ from one person to another, ranging from spiritual level to social level.

Conversations with Zay have yielded several examples of his negotiation to reconcile the tension between his identity and Islamic values. One of his negotiation strategies involves giving charity more than the obligatory *zakat* (mandatory donation of wealth).

"I do good things that are universally accepted. I pay my *zakat fitrah* (a flat fee due on Ramadan each year) and regular *zakat* every month. The obligatory amount of *zakat* is 2,5% of earnings, but I pay more than that, I give 10%." (Conversation with the researchers, 9 January 2021)

The reason that propels him to do this is also interesting to notice.

"So that I will still be accepted... I still wish in the afterlife God is Allah and I have tried to be in His grace even though I haven't been following His commands.... What I need is validation from others.... For example, if in the afterlife, God wants to banish me to hell, people that I have helped will testify that I have helped them before and said that I am a good person." (Conversation with the researchers, 9 January 2021)

His strategies encompass two different levels at the same time. Firstly, he operates on a social level on which he tries to make others see him as a good person and that his good deeds will make him be accepted for who he is. Secondly, on a spiritual level, it can be seen that he feels somewhat guilty about being gay and that his negotiation strategies are done in order to alleviate that guilt and achieve inner peace. It is interesting to note that while the guilt can be attributed to the hegemony, he has managed to negotiate tensions through an acceptance that his good deeds will ascertain his position as a good person, and his strategies are still fashioned within the Islamic hegemonic discourses.

In addition to the previous negotiations, Zay also performs a counter-hegemonic practice. He explains that even though he still believes in Allah, he does not do *shalat* as other regular Muslims do. He regards his way as a form of Sufism.

“I prioritize spiritual contact with God. So I will not do practices that I think will shackle my pure intent to pray. I will not do practices that have been prescribed. What I do is more of a serious conversation with God.” (Conversation with the researchers, 9 January 2021)

It seems apparent from the above account that what Zay does is a rejection of normal practices. In other words, Zay rejects the dominant hegemonic practices by doing his own practice, which he considers Sufism. As Lears (1985) has explained, the complexity of consent consists of resistance-resignation, and what Zay practices are precisely a mixture of resistance and resignation. He still resigns to the Islamic belief that Allah is the God; however, he resists the dominant hegemony by refusing to do practices of *shalat*.

Unlike Zay, Viz only maneuvers her strategies on a spiritual level. She explains that she regularly does optional *shalat* (*sunnah*) in addition to the mandatory *shalat* (5 times each day).

“I pray like usual and do some *sunnah* prayers and I do *sunnah* prayers as much as I can. I think it can help me to be forgiven (for being LGBT). We keep praying as much as we can because we don't know how our prayers are accepted.” (Conversation with the researchers, 7 January 2021)

Instead of doing rejection of *shalat* like Zay, Viz decides to negotiate within the hegemonic practices by doing more religious practices that it is required. It must be pointed out, however, that the hegemonic practices she has experienced are the mechanisms that make her feel the need to be forgiven in the first place. She elaborates more on why she does additional prayers.

“I feel calmer after the *sunnah* prayers. After what I've done in my life, this is one of the ways that I continue to live my life.... For me, *sunnah*

prayer is a remedy.... It also helps to let go of my burden (of being LGBT).” (Conversation with the researchers, 7 January 2021)

The account clearly reflects that her negotiating methods are modeled within the Islam hegemony. It suggests that forgiveness and acceptance can only be accomplished by subjection to Islamic hegemonic practices. As Iftode (2021) explains, ‘mode of subjection’ can be helpful in creating strategies to create an individual's way mode of being; in Viz's case, her subjection to the ideology and creating strategies within the ideology has successfully resulted in her own unique ways of being and performing as an LGBT Muslim woman.

Similar to Viz's account, Kevin also plays his negotiation strategy within the domain of Islamic hegemony. He has expressed an interesting experience when he was in a same-sex relationship.

“When we were in the relationship, we strive to be closer to God. *Shalat*, good deeds,..., reading *Quran*. When in reality, what we did contradicted (with what Islam teaches us). This also leaves me wondering.... and confused.... (for example), after we had sex, I read Quran, did *mandi junub* (ritual of purifying bath), recite prayers to cleanse myself (of the sin).” (Conversation with the researchers, 8 January 2021)

It is noteworthy to see that Kevin himself is confused as to why he performs those cleansing and purifying rituals. It can be inferred that the hegemonic discourses of sin, purifying, and cleansing have shaped his understanding and way of thinking. Althusser (2006) has explained this as a subjection in which individuals recognize and accept themselves as a subject of an ideology. Furthermore, Kevin explains that doing those practices gives him serenity, albeit temporarily (conversation with the researchers, 11 January 2021). It suggests that even though Kevin thinks that he performs acts of indecency according to the hegemony, by performing acts declaring his subjection to the ideology, he can then reclaim his position in the hegemony.

CONCLUSIONS

Revisiting the first research question that the research has asked, it seems clear that the process of Islamic hegemony is mainly dominated by family and education. Through the respondents' accounts, it can be seen that the standards of good behaviors and values are determined by the Islamic hegemony. On the other hand, other behaviors and values outside that hegemony are marginalized and oppressed. The respondents seem to resign themselves to the dominant hegemonic values of Islam, and it frames their understanding of their position within the

framework of Islam. In simple words, the hegemony has succeeded in subjecting these individuals, i.e., the individuals have adopted their positions as the subordinate of the ideology. Family and educational ISAs are the main instruments that enable these subjections. These subjections, in turn, create tensions between the hegemony and the respondents since their identities of being LGBT are outside the domain of acceptable values.

The respondents employ different strategies to negotiate the tensions associated with their LGBT identity being positioned outside the dominant Islamic hegemony. The findings have revealed that the respondents create unique strategies for addressing the tension on the social and spiritual levels. Despite their unique distinct strategies, either by paying more *zakat*, doing *sunnah* prayers, or doing cleansing rituals in accordance with Islamic customs, the respondents desire a common aim to achieve inner peace and an acceptable mode of being within Islam regardless of their sexuality. The respondents try to reconcile the hegemony of Islam and their identities. Boellstorff (2005) has discovered that male homosexuals feel the need for their own interpretation to resolve their desire and religion. The research expands on what Boellstorff has found by finding that LGBT people also have this need for reconciliation instead of just male homosexuals. While situated in East Java, the research also has a strikingly similar result to research that found that the LGBTQ women community in North America has to challenge the hegemony and establish their own religious agency (Khan & Mulé, 2021)

Even though the research has done some work to illuminate the issue of hegemony and negotiation, the small pool of respondents is one shortcoming that needs to be addressed. Therefore, the researchers suggest that future research can expand it by finding more related individuals and elaborating more on the issues at hand. Perhaps, a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods can be employed to cater to a large number of individuals. The findings of the research will be helpful as a starting point for the next research as to what extent families and educations play a role as an instrument of hegemony and to elicit and categorize different strategies employed by LGBT people to negotiate their identity and the hegemony. In addition to that, by employing intersectionality approaches to understand the LGBT problems (Lai, 2021), future research will be tremendously helpful in understanding the experience, the problem of inequalities, and the oppression faced by the LGBT community in Indonesia.

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