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Belonging with a Belief and Leading with a Purpose

Through the Lens of Christian Homosexual Leaders in the Church of Norway,
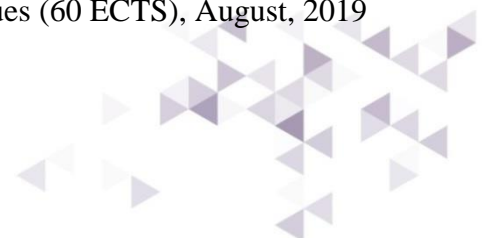
The Case of Oslo

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‘‘Not a focus on who you are but more on how we can be together’’
(Maria)

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Abstract

Western nations have their unique history about the arduous journey of achieving and institutionalizing the LGBT rights. In the presumed present context of dwindling religiosity and consolidating sexuality, this study moves upstream to explore the scope of realizing and ascertaining sexual identity within the religious periphery. The research undertakes the cases of LGBTs who have chosen to embrace Christianity as religious leaders in the Church of Norway. The contention of this research is to counter the perceived conflicting relation between religion and sexuality by exploring how religion and sexual identities can co-operate with each other.

This study incorporates the experiences and perceptions of lesbian and gay leaders in the Church of Norway and is limited to the Norwegian context. The major tool for analysis is the qualitative interviews is followed by in-depth follow-up interviews where necessary. The unique responses generated from each participant for open-ended questions enrich the findings making this study relatively diverse and inclusive. 'Social Identity Theory, Social Identity Theory of Leadership and Transformational Leadership Theory' are the employed theories in the study where the first theory plays a pivotal role in the scrutinization of the findings. With the aim to manifest the correlation between religion and sexual identity, the research is shaped to answer the research question: *how do Christian homosexual leaders experience and perceive the relation between their religious and sexual identities with the shift of time?*

The research evolves from the account of the challenges and improvements experienced by LGBTs, despite the institution being known as open towards sexual dissidents than other denominations in the country. The research subsequently addresses the means and approaches adopted by the leaders to counter the challenges and establish envisioned changes through their different enrolments. The role of leadership in the Church moves beyond the religious and sexual discourse to incorporate the agendas that concern the society at large.

The research concludes that the role of LGBT Church leadership is integral in reconciling the sexual and religious identities and also with all other social identities of an individual. The Church leadership works inclusively for different social identities by mitigating the intrusive conflicts that might arise due to incompatibility of identity differences.

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Clarifications Of The Terms And The Used Full Forms

- Church of Norway (*den norske kirke)* used to be known as 'the Norwegian State Church' (*Norske statskirke*) until after the State and 'the State Church' got separated. It is interchangeably used as 'majority Church' or just 'the Church' in some places in my work. In a very few places, it is denoted as 'The Norwegian Church' for instance, in some of the responses in the 'Findings' Chapter.

- 'Group belonging' and 'social identity' are interchangeably used as it is learned from the literature review.

- By using the three different words, 'overlapping,' 'crossed-identity' and 'conflicting,' I mean to convey the same meaning.

- 'Harmonious,' 'coexisting' and 'co-operative' are the words considered for meaning 'being in a sound relation'.

- LGBT: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders. This abbreviation is used interchangeably with lesbians, gays, homosexuals and sexual minorities. My thesis merely contains lesbians and gays' case.

- Bufdir: *Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirekorat,* full form translated as Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family affairs.

- KA: *Arbeidsgiverorganisasjon for kirkelig virksomheter,* it translates the employer organisation for ecclesiastical activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

No one should be excluded from our love, our compassion or our concern because of race or gender, faith or ethnicity – or because of their sexual orientation. Gay people, too, are made in my God's image. Hate has no place in the house of God.

– Desmond Tutu

Religion and sexuality often appear to be in a conflicting relationship in the public sphere. There have been numerous movements where LGBT minorities have fought for their rights for the inclusion in different parts of the world. On the other hand, there have also been strong religious oppositions against LGBT rights like same-sex marriage (Shipley, 2015, p.3). As this is the scenario, there have been numerous researches carried out to explore the relation between these two contradictory identities. What the recent literature has widely reported is the relation of Christian upbringing and sexual identity (Levy & Edmiston, 2014, p. 66). My study is the influence of some of the researches that have shown the conflicting relation between these two identities and the exploration is based on if it is always the case.

Various researches are being carried out based on sexuality whereas the academic study of the relationship between religion and sexuality is a relatively new discipline (Shipley, 2015, p. 5). One of the studies based on religion and sexuality has shown that the individuals in countries with political and economic stability are found to be more tolerant towards LGBT people than those countries who struggle in these areas (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009, p. 339). This finding in that research left me questioning how the religious people or the religion in such countries can be tolerant towards LGBT people which ultimately led me to focus on Norway which is an economically and a politically stabled country.

Over 75 nations while still having laws criminalizing homosexuality (Norwegian Ministry Children and Equality, 2017, p. 59), Norway seems to stand out from the crowd; the country is regarded as the most gay-friendly nation in the Nordic countries. It is considered as a country having the best protection against LGBT discrimination where the tolerance is quite high (Anderson, 2017). The country has a long history in the revolution of various LGBT rights. The decriminalization of homosexuality occurred in 1972 followed by the introduction of registered same sex-partnership. The new marriage law was introduced in 2009 where same sex couples could get the same rights as the heterosexual couples in all aspects besides the church wedding (Hollekim, et al., 2012). However, the church wedding right of LGBT people was not pending for long which came into practice in 2017 after the majority Church

(Church of Norway) opened the door for this minority group (Morgan, 2017). The Church also authorises the ordination of homosexuals (The Local, 2017).

As the Church of Norway already supports the LGBT leadership and the same-sex wedding in the Church, my greater concern was to figure out how religion and sexuality can coexist in terms of LGBT leadership within the Church. The assumption is often made that to be religious is to stand against same-sex relations and sexual diversity (Shipley, 2015, p. 4). Despite this assumption, the intriguing aspect was that there have been some LGBT people choosing to be religious and in some cases, they also choose to be religious leaders within the majority Church in Norway.

As I was curious to base my study associating with sexual and religious identities, giving a different approach was crucial for me. Therefore, bringing the leadership role of LGBT people in and evaluating the relation between these two identities in a different perspective is my effort to contribute some possible knowledge to researches based on religion and sexuality.

1.1. Context

As this is a case study done in one particular religion and in one particular denomination within one targeted group, the study took place within the periphery of the Church of Norway in Oslo. The reason behind selecting the Lutheran denomination is that it has historical domination in the nation until in the present days; according to Statistics of Norway in 2018, 70 percent of the population in Norway belong to this Church (Tuhus & Haraldsrud, 2019). The acceptance of same-sex wedding and allowing LGBT Church leadership by the Church made me curious to study the leadership realm modifying the initial plan of engaging other denominations. Attending some services in the Church of Norway in Oslo, observing the Oslo Pride parade and having some connection with different people are the background resources that shaped and directed me to choose this area of research.

1.2. Personal Motivation

There are four major motivational factors that led me to choose this field of study for my master thesis. First, while seeing people pouring out in the Oslo street when I was very new in Norway where I knew nothing about pride celebration. It surprised me to see such a huge crowd poured out with colors, music, dance, and joy. Eventually, I came to know that was the

effect of an open society where people can be so supportive of such minority groups and share the joy together. This eye witness made me confident on what I had read about the country; how Norway is the best country for the LGBT people. This was my first awakening about Norway as a staunch supporter of such minority groups in the society.

The second was a case of my colleague at work which I would rather narrate as it was the main factor that directed me to choose this study. She had shared the personal story in detail. When we were at work, she hit the very high note of singing while there was the music in the background then I had asked her if she had trained for such a beautiful voice. She said that she sang in the church choir when she was young. I was curious if she was still singing in the church choir but she said she was not and all of a sudden her smile disappeared from her face and she wore very sad expression while she uttered, ''you know, it was in the church and I am different.'' She had introduced herself as a lesbian. I had a deep thought that if religion shuts its door for such minority groups in society. It was my personal interest to uncover the fact about how homosexuals are treated in the church, in a secular country where LGBT people do not have to go through as much suppression and persecution as in other countries.

Third, I was highly concerned after reading the case of the first couple in Norway who tied the knot in the Church right after the Church of Norway announced the same-sex wedding in 2017. The couple had waited for 36 years for this opportunity (The Local, 2017). This case made me think that there might have been so many ups and downs with LGBT groups while waiting for the Church to accept the same sex wedding and I was inspired to study more about the religious LGBT people's case. After knowing, the LGBT Church leadership during the first two interviews, the area of my study even got narrowed which did not merely enroll LGBT Christians but more specifically, the LGBT Church leaders.

The fourth is that I had read several facts behind the suicide cases of Lesbians and Gays, and how rejection leads them to experience mental disturbances. Personally, I always wondered how it is to be Lesbians and Gays so, therefore, this thesis aims to answer my academic queries along with my personal curiosities.

1.3. Research Questions

This research is based on my curiosity on LGBT leaders of the Church of Norway.

The main research question is: how do Christian homosexual leaders experience and perceive the relation between their religious and sexual identities with the shift of time?

I have further sub-questions in order to understand the main research question which will be addressed in this paper, they are as follows:

1. How can religious and sexual identities evolve and coexist among individuals?
2. What is the role of leadership in the compatibility of religious and sexual identities?

The final sub-question is constructed after getting some extra information from the first interview. I wanted to explore further how they were/are engaged as leaders. Therefore, this last question helps me explore in this regard:

3. How can transformational leadership facilitate group inclusion?

1.4. Outline Of The Thesis

This thesis has eight parts in total. The very first Chapter, 'Introduction', elucidates the context of this research. It will give an idea of what my topic is based on and where my finding is heading.

The second is, 'Background' Chapter where I have elaborated the information in order to show the relevancy of the study and for the better comprehension of the thesis. This part is a construction as a base for my thesis.

The third Chapter, 'Theoretical Framework' consists of three different theories, 'Social Identity Theory', 'Social Identity Theory of Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership Theory'. These three theories will be used in the analysing of my findings and my discussion. The theoretical correlation between the three theories will be shown in the entire thesis. In a way, this Chapter is a lens that I use for a better understanding of my paper.

In the fourth Chapter, 'Methodology', I will highlight what are the methods I have adopted while carrying this research. My limitations and my strength for this work can be figured out through this chapter.

The fifth Chapter is a piece of very brief information about the Church of Norway where I saw the significance and the relevancy of the information as my participants are the leaders in this Church.

The sixth Chapter consists of the 'Findings' which is the presentation of my core exploration in this research with the help of my participants. The Chapter will illuminate how the findings based on the theories I have chosen.

'Discussion' is the second last Chapter that will elucidate my core findings in light of the literature. How the findings refute the theories and in what ways they support the findings is construed here. Some insights are also produced while evaluating the whole work. The last part consists of limitations of this study and future expansion and exploration opportunities.

Finally, the conclusion Chapter concludes the entire thesis with an overview.

2. BACKGROUND

As this thesis deals with sexuality and religion, it is crucial to emphasize the development of Christianity and the introduction of LGBT rights in Norway. The first section is about the religious history in Norway encompasses the development of Christianity; turning from Catholicism into Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity. The development of other denominations like Pentecostalism through Pietism are interpreted here in order to identify the present scenario of the Church of Norway. The second part elucidates on the LGBT rights in Norway followed by the section part, engagement of the Norwegian government in boosting up the LGBT rights. The fourth content includes the present scenario of LGBT people in Norway. Finally, the fifth sub-Chapter highlights on the LGBT rights in the Church of Norway.

2.1. Religion In Norway From The Past To The Present Days

The first generation of Christianity started from 9th century basically after realizing the Christian faith of life after death; the punishment in hell and reward in heaven that gave the end to Norse religion where people worshipped multiple Gods like Odin and Thur (Nedkvitne, 2009, p. 43). A monotheistic religion (Christianity) flourished by the mid-11th century in Denmark and most of Norway replacing the old Norse religion (Williams, 2011). The kings of Norway played a significant role in Christianization where political interests were an undeniable part of their endeavor, along with the spiritual interests. The death of king Olav Haraldsson at the Battle of Stiklestad (North of Nidaros, now Trondheim) in 1030 became a significant factor for uniting the nation into the Christian faith. His death came to be seen as decisive in turning Norsemen away from their old beliefs despite his harsh methods of conversion (Church of Norway, 2015).

By the end of the 12th century, the Christian church was firmly established in Norway like in the other Nordic countries. Catholicism has been the dominating denomination for six hundred years (900-1537) before Evangelical Lutheran dominated the country (Church of Norway, 2015).

2.1.1. The Church Of Norway (Lutheran Reformation)

For a thousand years, the Church of Norway has represented the main expression of religious belief in Norway. Since the 16th century, it has belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran branch of the Christian church and has been a state church since then until 2012 (Church of Norway, 2015). After the King Christian III of Denmark-Norway converted into the religion, following many of the North German princes, the Reformation came to Norway. He established the Evangelical-Lutheran faith as the official religion of Norway and Denmark in 1537. The Convents and the monasteries were dissolved and apart from a few cases of violence, the change was adopted peacefully. The new transition had a focus on a simpler liturgy with the Christian message in the vernacular whereas the customs of Roman Catholic origin was banned along with religious symbols and the ways of thinking. The Constitution of 1814 in the country confirmed that the Norwegian state would retain "the Evangelical Lutheran religion" as ''the official state religion'' (Church of Norway, 2015). The state interfered very little in church matters and it supported the church officials financially. In the 1970s, the opposition of the secular group took place when Norway's economy elevated and the church benefitted (Fraser, 2012).

2.1.2. Development Of Pietism And Pentecostalism And Their Impacts

Pietism - the individually oriented Lutheran revival movement which emerged in Germany around 1670 - had a huge impact on Norwegian church life from the early 18th century on . Through the Pietist-inspired Evangelical revival movements of the 19th century, the movement reached the country in the 1730s, faded around 1750 and gained a more permanent space. The first phase of Pietism occurred in 1736 when Bishop, Erik Pontoppidan's explanations of Christian faith were published and the state school system was established as they were all for the central instrument of Christian education. Pietism developed in other parts of Northern Europe in parallel to the secularization of the society which is taken as the result of Enlightenment and democratization (Church of Norway, 2015).

The second phase of Norwegian Pietism remarks one of the main initiators, Hans Nielsen Hauge who was a late 18th century farmer's son that claimed that everyone had the right to preach the Gospel whereas the clergy was considered to be too lukewarm in their attitude. The

period was taken as a democratic protest against the ruling class which also included the clergy. Through the effort of Hauge, the present pattern of autonomous Church organisations for domestic and foreign mission grew. They are recognized as a representation of strong inspiration to personal commitment in faith and service in the church and the society since the 1850s (Church of Norway, 2015). Pietism spread to the lower strata of society and gave rise to new, emotional forms of Christian devotion in the nineteenth century. The idea of a universal priesthood of all believers was emphasized by this form of Pietism and put it into practice by arranging religious meetings at home (i.e., in locations other than church buildings), where the Bible study and prayer took place. As a consequence, authoroties regarded Pietism as a threat to the existing religious order where the State Church clergy started to lose control of religion (Moberg & Skjoldli, 2018, pp. 28-29). A law had been introduced in 1741 in order to stop this development to ban unauthorized preaching - the Conventicle Act (*Konventikkelplakaten*). In the kingdom of Denmark- Norway, the meetings related without the presence of a state church priest were illegal. However, the religious ideas associated with Pietism did not collapse. Instead, they re-emerged and gave rise to popular forms of devotion at the turn of the nineteenth century (Moberg & Skjoldli, 2018, p. 29).

The Dissension Act (Dissenterloven) was passed in 1845, which allowed "free" (i.e., non-state) churches to get established in Norway. The people above the age of 25 (age of majority) were allowed to abandon the state church and take up membership in free Christian congregations by the law, which made religious individualism a legal principle. This was a significant step towards dimolishing the state monopoly on religion (Moberg & Skjoldli, 2018, p. 29).

2.1.3. The Third Wave Pentecostals

Pentecostalism was introduced in Norway during the time of historical context and religious landscape. Norway's national independence from Swedish was the feature of a historical breakthrough in the country during this period. There were no attempts made to strengthen church attendance such as by modernizing church services or liturgical language. Church representatives as parents and responsible citizens rather tried to appeal to people's sense of decency and duty (Klaveness quoted in Moberg & Skjoldli, 2018, pp. 40-41). Within the

existent contextual pattern of alternative Christianity, Pentecostalism squarely placed itself (Moberg & Skjoldli, 2018, p.41).

Thomas Ball Barratt was a single most agent behind the new movement who had travelled to the United States in 1906 (the year of Pentecostal revival in the States) and brought the way of prayer and preaching in which charisma, a ''spiritual gift'', speaking in tongue were promoted. This was taken not just as a sign of divine presence, but as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Moberg & Skjoldli, 2018, p.41).

> The emotional impact of such an experience—receiving the Holy Spirit—was central to the spread of Pentecostalism. These experiences often occurred at mass meetings, and dramatic manifestations of faith became emblematic of the Pentecostal brand of American revivalism. Such gatherings became increasingly important in all sections of civil society from the 1880s onwards, as Norway developed into a democratic country in the modern sense of the word (Moberg & Skjoldli, 2018, p. 40).

The denomination was interpreted as the revival soon to be realized which made its arrival a welcome event. The success of Pentecostalism is interpreted to be connected with the historical circumstances in the country where mass gatherings were crucial in all sections of civil society; mass meetings like political gatherings for voting rights, teetotaller rallies, debates on languages and dialects, etc. made the ban on mass gatherings and public preaching. This was the period when Norway was developing into a democratic country (Moberg & Skjoldli, 2018, p. 40).

2.1.4. The Separation Of The State And The Church

The Norwegian Parliament passed a constitutional amendment that allowed the Church of Norway with increased autonomy on 21 May 2012. There is no longer reference to an "official religion of the State" in the new wording of the Constitution. According to Article 2 in the Constitution in the present, Norway's values are based on its Christian and humanist heritage (Church of Norway, 2015). This caused the historical relation between the state and the Lutheran Church to weaken. New Church law was developed after the constitutional amendment. In parallel, the formal link between the public school system and the Church has been weakened. The Church of Norway has therefore intensified its efforts in Christian

Education. Recent decades have also seen reforms in liturgical practices (Church of Norway, 2015).

Norway no longer has its official religion; this happened when the state declared to be a non-religious nation in 2017. The national constitution reworded to change the Evangelical Lutheran Church from ''the state's public religion'' to ''Norway's national church'' and the public announcement occurred on 1st January in 2017. This means that the Church would get the funding from the public but the public would no longer appoint the clergy (Winston, 2017). The then requirement for at least half of all government ministers to be members of the Church is also been scrapped, and even the Minister of Church Affairs no longer needs to belong to the Church (Bensch, 2012). When the Open People's Church (*Åpen Folkekirke*) won a huge victory in its fight to allow homosexuals to be married within the church, the issue came to a head during the Church election (The Local, 2016).

2.1.5. Present Status Of Religion In Norway

Secularism has been on the rise in Western Europe since the 1960s which resulted in the strict laws against the public display of religions and much church attendees are claimed to be declining (Winston, 2017). Norway is also one of the secular countries in Europe where this has happened.

There has been significant evidence in the Norwegian society where the withdrawal of the church membership witnesses the current scenario of the religious status of people in Norway. This is taken from an instance of 2015 which became the record year where more than 11 thousands of Norwegian State Church members dropped out from the Church membership (NRK, 2015). According to a poll conducted by a newspaper in earlier of 2017, Norway is regarded as one of the least theistic nations in Europe where 39 percent of Norwegians are claimed to be atheists or agnostics (Winston, 2017). This record has been all- time record in the country where 4,000 Norwegians were asked whether they believed in God, the one saying ''no'' outnumbered the one saying ''yes'' which gave the 39, percent, and in which 37 percent said ''yes'' and the rest, 27 percent mentioned ''did not know'' (Staufenberg, 2016). However, on the other hand, ''Norway also has its own "Bible belt," along its southwest coast, where much of the base of the country's two Christian democratic parties is

based'' (Winston, 2017). As the country is secular, there is room for all types of religions; there is religious freedom, and most of the world's religions are represented here although the majority of the population are registered Lutheran Christians (Groth et al., 2019).

2.2. The LGBT Rights In Norway

According to the 'Rainbow Europe' report in 2017, Norway is highlighted to be the second best nation in Europe for the third gender analyzed by the study (Barrett, 2017). The protection and the rights granted for the group is extra-ordinary; it scored 78 percent standing on the second position following Malta with 88 percent. It was reported as Norway's score increment from the previous year's report (2016) by 13 points. There is some fluctuation regarding the 'Rainbow Europe' report of 2019 which will be further interpreted in the sub-Chapter, 2.5.

2.2.1. Historical Establishment Of LGBT Rights In Norway

Unlike the general history of LGBT people in different countries, LGBT people in Norway too had faced some oppression, discrimination, and difficulties. A thousand year old runic inscription read about Åle (characterised as a third gender person) that characterizes the person as 'ragr'- meaning in the Old Norse word used for a man taking the role of a woman. The other party with Åle's relation is taken as a dominant, the one who gets away with it and keeps the honour whereas Åle, the passive party, was taken to be 'should be ashamed'. Being characterized as a 'ragr' was extremely shameful in the culture of honour in the old Norse culture. On the other hand, with the coming of Christianity in Norway, sex between two men became illegal by law. In accordance with Christian V's law of 1687, based on Judeo-Christian Mosaic Law, sodomy is punished by burning among other things. During the Second World War, people who have identified themselves as queer did not save the documents concerning their orientation that could have sent them to concentration camps. Norway criminalized the act until 1972 and diagnosed it as an illness until 1982 (Bergstrøm, 2015).

However, the history turned reversed after 1981 in the country.

> In 1981, Norway became the first country in the world to enact a law to prevent discrimination against LGBT people in the area of employment and services. The act of Registered Partnership was introduced in 1993, it

became the second country after Denmark to this. After almost two decades of the first step in same sex relation, Norway legalized the marriage of same-sex couples in Marriage act of 2009. There is also a recently established same sex relationship; an approval from the Church of Norway (Norway's Lutheran church) to allow the same-sex couples in the church (Akin, 2017).

This gives a clear understanding of how open the society has become from quite a long time ago in the history and there are continuous changes that are being experienced by the society regarding this issue.

2.3. The Norwegian Government's Action Plan For LGBT People

The Norwegian Government presented Norway's ''second action plan'' in 2016 which is for the period 2017-2020 (Norwegian Ministry Children and Equality, 2017, p. 63). The research has shown that there is still a need to strengthen LGBT rights and the quality of life of the LGBT people in the country. In order to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, the Government's action plan is currently acting as a goal. Changing attitudes and combating hate crimes against this group is what the action plan is used for. The plan has three focus areas which are viewed to ensure that LGBT people experience the society as safe and inclusive. Those three focus areas are ''safe social environments and public spaces, equal access to public services and better quality of life for particularly vulnerable group'' (Norwegian Ministry Children and Equality, 2017, p.17). In November 2015, an input meeting was held where politicians from various ministries met with organisations, researchers and other experts to discuss challenges and possible measures. Both organisations working with LGBT people's rights and the most relevant ministries have participated in the plan (Norwegian Ministry Children and Equality, 2017, p.17). There are eight inter-ministerial coordinating groups (Nuland, 2014, p.9). Each of the eight ministries are responsible for their activities and the results such as ''research and data collection, awareness raising activities towards groups of professionals, reviews of public services, review of school curricula for children/youth and strengthening of NGOs- especially those working for young LGBTs and for LGBT-persons with immigrant background'' (Nuland, 2014, p.10).

A society characterized by openness, tolerance, and inclusion were the goals of the action plan from 2009-2012 which ought to apply to sexual orientation and to the various forms of sexual expression (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 3). The meaning of

the action plan was to put an end to the discrimination met by LGBT persons in different phases of life and on different arenas and LGBT people should experience zero-tolerance for smears, threats, exclusion, violence and other forms of discrimination in all aspects (Nuland, 2014, p.6).

2.3.1. The Anti-Discrimination Legislation

The action plan from 2017 to 2020 states that the Anti-Discrimination Act on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, requires public authorities to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote equality regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Public authorities are obliged both as a service provider and as an employer to address equality and diversity considerations (Norwegian Ministry Children and Equality, 2017, p. 43). A Government Commission on Anti-discrimination Legislation is appointed in order to incorporate protection against discrimination in the Norwegian Constitution. The act prepares a proposal for strengthened and more comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 7). The Government appoints a commission to prepare a proposal for more cohesive anti-discrimination legislation. The Commission consists of researchers and experts on discrimination, human rights, labour law, etc. A reference group has been appointed including representatives of different bases for discrimination in order to ensure that relevant parties are involved in the process. The representative organisations on the commission are Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH), the Norwegian Association of Trans Persons (NTP) and the National Organisation for Persons Diagnosed as Transsexual (LFTS) (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 10).

Discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, age, etc. are prohibited by law in Norway. The office of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, in its practice, has assumed that protection against discrimination of trans persons must be inferred from the protection against gender discrimination provided in the Gender Equality Act.

> This practice moreover in agreement with the European Court of Human Rights' interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights regarding non-discrimination and the European Court of Justice's interpretation of the EU Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women, this practice adheres (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 10).

Not only on the ground of working and housing, LGBT groups are subjected to the rights but to all types of non-discriminatory acts such as education, the health service, bars, restaurants and night clubs and the property market (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 10).

2.3.2. Norway In An International Community-Combating For LGBT Rights

''Norway speaks out when others are silent'' (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012, p. 5). While many countries still have major challenges related to LGBT persons' basic rights and living conditions, Norway has had a clear international commitment to improving the rights and living conditions of this minority group (Norwegian Ministry Children and Equality, 2017, p. 17). The country is making active efforts to place LGBT issues on the international agenda through cooperation with various countries and through various international organisations and networks. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has developed a guide for the measures on LGBT rights as a tool for Norway's diplomatic missions. The priority for the human rights efforts in foreign and developmental policy includes sexual orientation and gender identity. As Norway is an active supporter of the development of norms for protection and promotion of LGBT rights, it has played an active role in bringing together various international players dealing with sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (Norwegian Ministry Children and Equality, 2017, p. 59).

The role of Norway in fighting for LGBT rights has a direct impact on many LGBT lives in major parts of the world (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012, p. 7). Norway should, therefore, assume a special responsibility where the rights of sexual minorities are controversial. However, as the LGBT case is controversial and sensitive in many countries, Norway is obliged to consider the local context while taking action in order to achieve the best possible result (in long term basis) for the target group (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012, p. 5). The Norwegian government has developed policy related to combating against all forms of discrimination and condemnation on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This development policy is also based on raising the awareness of authorities of partner countries in order to protect and promote the rights of this very minority group in the society. The Government intends to support financially in the sectors that work for the

rights and better life situations for this group like organisations and other forces in civil society (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 44).

Furthermore, Norway supports the Yogyakarta principles that address a range of human rights and considers how they should be applied with all people despite their sexual expression and sexual orientation (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 45). There are five obligations according to the UN Commissioner for Human Rights which a state needs to ensure the overall rights of LGBT people (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 5). Therefore, Norway as a staunch defender of LGBT rights (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 2), ensures the rights of this minority group by following the obligations below:

1. Protecting LGBT people from hate crimes.
2. Preventing torture and other cruelties against these people like inhuman or degrading behaviors or punishments.
3. Revocation of laws that criminalize homosexuality and prohibit all laws that are against sexual conduct between consenting adults of the same sex.
4. Prohibiting of discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation and gender identity.
5. Safeguarding their freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009, p. 5).

2.4. The LGBT Status In Norway

Norway has moved from a ban on homosexuality to a marriage law that treats heterosexual and homosexual couples equally in less than 40 years (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012, p. 5). The majority of the Norwegian population accept LGBT people (The local, 2014). Many LGBT people have a good life today (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 3). As the Norwegian Lutheran Church also accepts the gay leadership and the same-sex wedding in the Church (mentioned in Chapter 1), one has all the possible rights as other members of the Church and like other citizens in the country. The country is not merely the best place for Norwegian LGBT people alone, this minority group from other nations move here in order to be accepted and included (Visit Norway, 2017). One can

understand the present scenario of LGBT people in Norway by reflecting on the following points:

2.4.1. Oslo Pride, Norway's Largest LGBT Festival

When same-sex marriage was illegal, Oslo Pride started in 1982 in Norway. The festival was originally called "Gay Days" and was renamed "Oslo Pride" in 2014. Since same-sex marriage became legal in Norway in 2009, the festival has escalated in both attendance and popularity. Oslo Pride is considered the year's biggest celebration in Oslo after the 17th of May parade (Norwegian national day). With nine jam-packed days with around 200 events all around the city highlighted with the big parade and closing party afterward. Thousands of people participate in the parade; several thousand come to watch it (Christopoulou, 2018).

The parade takes places in several cities every year organized by the local LGBT community. However, the biggest celebration of them all occurs in Oslo in June. The celebration is marked with concerts, exhibitions, shows, films, parties and debates. Pride festival is celebrated specially to mark three different areas. First, giving the platform to those voices which are not usually heard. Secondly, visibility in the sense that a presence in the city helps the population to get used to people with other identities and sexual orientations and thirdly, Oslo pride seeks to create a place for people who do not feel included in daily life. The celebration invites different and private institutions to join hands; it is taken as a political demonstration for equality, inclusion and diversity where businesses, organisations and others are encouraged to take a stand and call attention to it. It is stated that the work environment is best when it is diverse and when everyone feels accepted. To show that diversity is welcome in every aspect of Norwegian life, even the Norwegian military has started to participate (Visit Norway, 2017).

2.4.2. Some Active Organisations For LGBT Rights In Norway

The Norwegian State budget is allocated for the scheme Grants for organisations and activities which contribute to better living conditions and quality of life among LGBT people. The Ministry of Children and Equality has established guidelines for the scheme managed by Bufdir where Bufdir receives applications and allocates the funds accordingly. The scheme receives many promising applications annually regarding the proposals related to projects and

initiatives for the improvement of living conditions of LGBT people (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2017, p. 29).

2.4.2.1. The LGBT Knowledge Centre

The LGBT Knowledge Centre was launched as part of the implementation of the Government's first action plan in 2011. It works closely with Government officials, scientists and advocacy groups providing and making the relevant knowledge on issues regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (Bufdir, 2015). In other words, it is a governmental centre for LGBT policy in order to promote equal rights and non-discriminatory actions for LGBT people by intitiating research and mainstreaming the LGBT focus in the public spaces (Nuland, n.d, p.14). The organisation's main objective is to provide new knowledge through the dissemination of research and research findings, capacity-building based on evidence and update the Norwegian Government by providing the new knowledge regarding the situation of LGBT people (Nuland, n.d, p.14). The ultimate goal is to improve the living conditions and quality of life of LGBT people (Bufdir, 2015).

2.4.2.2. FRI - the Norwegian Organization for Sexual and Gender Diversity

FRI is Norway's largest LGBT organisation. The function of this organisation is to work for equality and against all forms of discrimination against this minority group, both in Norway and in the rest of the world. The county and local teams work throughout the country to ensure LGBT to have safe meeting spaces and someone to talk to if they need to. Pink Competency is organised by FRI that provides information and guidance in public agencies and private companies on sexual and gender diversity (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2017, p. 30).

2.4.2.3. Queer Youth Norway (*Skeiv Ungdom*)

Queer Youth Norway is the youth organization of FRI which works for young people under 30 years. Across the country, it functions to ensure equal and legal rights along with creating social services for the target group. This organization has a school project called Restart in Norway which consists of courses on norms associated with gender and sexuality, aimed at students in secondary schools (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2017, p. 30). The organisation has taken equivalent initiative on health and care services in order to

develop and test the suicide prevention course for the sexual minorities in collaboration with Regional Resource Centre on Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 39)

2.4.2.4. Queer World

Queer World is religiously and politically independent organisation (Hasmi, n.d). It works to promote the rights and living conditions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender, intersex and queer persons with a migrant background. For people who challenge norms with their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, the organization creates safe meeting spaces and venues of support. It emphasizes to challenge attitudes and carries out outreach information activities (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2017, p. 30). It organises social events, provides opportunities for people to share their experiences and to be themselves (Hasmi, n.d).

2.4.2.5. FTPN -The Norwegian Association of Transgenders

FTPN is an organisation for transgender persons who wish to be or to behave in a gender expression other than the one assigned to them at birth. The organisation assists these people in having safe social frameworks while coming into contact with peers. It functions actively within the political arena to improve the living conditions and quality of life of transgender persons throughout the country (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2017, p. 30). The purpose of the organisation is to provide support and increase the acceptance and recognition for Norwegian transgenders (Hasmi, n.d).

2.4.2.6. HBRS - Harry Benjamin Resource Centre

HBRS is a patient and user organisation focused on women and men who seek, have or have had a diagnosis of transsexualism, but also for their families. It is a nationwide patient and user organisation for gender reassignment surgery patients at the National Hospital (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2017, p. 30).

2.4.2.7. Gay and Lesbian Health Norway

Gay and Lesbian Health Norway (*Helseutvalget*) is an organisation that carries out peer based health promotion and prevention efforts aiming for women having sex with women (WSW)

and men having sex with men (MSM) (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2017, p. 30). This is an important organisation which contributes to health promotion and disease prevention among LGBT people by combating HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. Moreover, in recent years, the organisation has expanded its scope in substance abuse and mental health. The organisation is an important knowledge provider to the services and the authorities relating to developmental aspects in the health of the LGBT group (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 40).

2.5. The LGBT Rights In The Church Of Norway

According to the statement of Church of Norway, the Church is there for everyone throughout life; birth and baptism, death and burial, upbringing, faith education and confirmation, marriage and family, crises and accidents. The Church relies on general life experiences in society and provides room for the sacred, faith and doubt, hope and wonder, silence and commitment. The church is a diverse community of different age groups, cultures, gender and opinions both in Norway and internationally (Åpen folkekirke, 2019).

The LGBT rights in the Church like same-sex marriage and LGBT leadership in the Church are granted in the present context. In 2015, according to the result of the Church election for the same-sex wedding in the Church, eight of eleven diocesan councils were made ready in which 61 of the 116 Church delegates voted for the case. In Oslo, the participation for the church election doubled from 8.3 percent in 2011 to 16.3 percent in 2015 (Tessem & Aale, 2015). The Church turned out to be open and inclusive for all types of people in the society when a massive majority of the Church members voted for same-sex marriage in the Church. The choice was about the direction the church should go (Moxnes, 2015). History was made when the first gay couple wedded in Church of Norway for the first time in 2017 right after the church synod voted to approve the new liturgy, or service, allowing the same-sex couples to get married in the Church (The Local, 2017). On the other hand, the active gay leadership in the Church of Norway was allowed from 2000. Then, the minister of Church Affairs in the country had approved the appointment of the first gay priest (The Irish Times, 2000). This way, the Church of Norway has become very inclusive regarding the gay rights within the Church. Therefore, the relation between the LGBT Christians and the Church can be understood to be.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this Chapter, I have employed three different theories, 'Social Identity Theory', 'Social Identity Theory of Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership Theory' which are employed in presenting the findings (Chapter 6) and are also intended to use critically in the discussion section (Chapter 7). Prior to the selection of the last two theories for this study, the questions were formulated in structured and semi- structured forms with the help of very first theory, 'Social Identity Theory'. Analyzing the feedback of my respondents based on semi-structured questions in the interview session guided me to include the second and the third theories. The last part of this Chapter explains the purpose of selecting these particular theories. This chapter shows the relevance between the research questions and the theories.

3.1. Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory shows how sexual and religious identity evolve and coexist over time. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 extensively relies upon the theoretical insights on Social Identity. In the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of Social Identity Theory was pioneered by Henri Tajfel along with John Turner and the application of the theory got widely popular ever since (Abrams & Hogg, 1990, p. 2).

Tajfel (1972) defines Social Identity Theory as an individual's belonging to social groups is based on the knowledge that he/she belongs to a certain group together with some emotional and value significance. Moreover, Turner (1982) clarifies on meaning of social group by stating that it is 'two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves or, which is nearly the same thing, perceive themselves to be members of the same social category' (Hogg & Abrams,1998, p. 7).

We have many social identities or social groups at a time and the situation determines which is salient at a given moment (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 372). Individuals define themselves in terms of social identity like gender, religion and sex and they take on the characteristics of that particular social group (Hepburn, 2002, p. 33).

Social identity and group belongingness are inextricably linked in the sense that one's conception or definition of who one is (one's identity) is largely composed of self-

descriptions in terms of the defining characteristics of social groups to which one belongs (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 7).

In other words, social identity is self-conception as a group member (Hogg & Abrams, 1998, p. 2) which is regarded as a core factor of SIT (Abrams & Hogg 1990, p. 2). SIT is primarily defined as ''that part of an individual's self- concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership''(Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). That is to say, in social identity process, members of a group come to internalize group membership to their self-concepts and evaluate themselves and others from the view of their membership in specific groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). The group members have a tendency to favour the in-group over out-group in evaluations and behaviour (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 13)

Hepburn (2002) states that when some group identities become salient in certain settings, we see or label in terms of this group category and this process changes our and other people's views about us (Hepburn, 2002, pp. 33-34).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) see a number of implications related to the psychological changes that occur when social identities become salient:

> 1. Firstly, our self-esteem begins to get caught up in the fate of the group. If we can't see our own groups in a positive way, then we can't see ourselves in a positive way.
> 2. We become depersonalized. This means that we stereotype ourselves: our self-perceptions are dominated by the collection of ideas and images of what it means to be, say, a woman. This in turn affects how we think it is appropriate to behave in particular circumstances.
> 3. Another 'psychological' change is that members of out-groups have less influence on us: we pay less attention to their points of view. (Hepburn 2002, p. 34).

A group provides positive social identity to its members. According to Tajfel, belonging to a social group has three dimensions :

> 1.''the cognitive dimension,'' which covers the simple recognition of belonging to a group;
> 2.''the evaluative dimension,'' which covers the negative or positive connotations of belonging;
>
> 3.''the emotional dimension,'' which refers to the attitudes that members hold toward insiders and outsiders (Tajfel, quoted in Lau, 2011,p.26).

There are three process of this theory, Social categorisation, Social Identification and Social Co mparison (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 372) that are undertaken in order to show the

relation between sexual and religious identities of the participants.The sub-headings, 3.1.1.1, 'Cross Categorisation' and 3.1.2.1., 'Social Mobility' are considered from the theory for supplementing the findings and critically analysing the context of overlapping identities.

3.1.1. Social Categorisation

Self-categorization is the process that transforms individuals into groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 19). Individuals can also categorise into more than one group at a time (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 13). Just as we categorize objects, experiences and other people, we also categorize ourselves. Through this process, first, one can perceive being identical to the group they belong and he/she can have a relevant group category. Secondly, it ''generates stereotypic of the category-congruent behaviour on dimensions''. To be precise, this process of SIT causes self-perception and self-definition to become more in terms of the individual's representation of the defining characteristics of the group, or the group prototype (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 19). This process is conceived as cognitive tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action. However, it does not merely systematize the social world but also provides a system of orientation for self-reference creating and defining the individual's place in society (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, pp. 15- 16).

Hogg and Abrams (1988) suggested that we must look at the cognitive consequences of the involvement of self.

> There is an outcome of an accentuation of similarities between self and other in-groupers and differences between self and out-groupers, that is self-stereotyping in this process of self-categorization (Hogg & Abrams,1988, p.19).

The group members share some common characteristics once they belong to a group which distinguishes them from the other groups. This process produces stereotypic perceptions, that is the perception or judgement of all members of a social category or group (Hogg &Abrams, 1988, p. 19). On the basis of their similarities and differences to self, the members in a particular group tend to classify others. They perceive constantly other members in the same category as self (ingroup members) or as members of a different category to self (outgroup members) (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 19).

The Social categorisation process not merely systematises the social world but leads to create and define individual's place in society which is regarded as social identification in social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16).

3.1.1.1. Cross Categorisation

According to James Alock and Sadava (2014), cross-categorisation occurs when the dilemma occurs when someone who shares the same group as we do (in-group member) can also belong to the other groups (like out-group member). They state that when one lives in a multicultural society, it is obvious that cross-categorisation occurs. When one has many identities like a male Dutch student at a Scottish university who plays football for the university team). Alock and Sadava (2014) also mention that the reaction of other people is considerable when they see the double identity people alike them. An advantage of cross-categorisation is that it may help to break down the stereotypes. However, there can be also a downside: people with double categorisations have double 'in-group' and double 'out-group' which is the risk of facing the 'double dose of rejection.' Nevertheless, social cross-categorisation is said to decrease social differentiation (Alock & Sadava, 2014, p. 366).

3.1.2. Social Identification

The Identification process is relational and comparative to a very large extent as it defines an individual as similar to or different from, as 'better' or 'worse' than, members of other groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1986, p. 16). In the large- scale social categories the individuals are concerned in defining themselves and are defined by other members as members of the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 15). Hogg and Abrams (1988) have shown how a group installs itself in the mind of individuals to affect their behaviour (Lau, 2011, p. 25). Tajfel and Turner (1979) explain that this process occurs once the group members identify with the group they want to belong and subsequently, develop an emotional significance that their self- esteem will dependent on it (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, pp. 15-16).

The group provides norms for its members which are the beliefs and conducts (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 59). After individuals identify with their group, they are likely to behave according to the group norms (David, 2015) that define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for the group members. (Brown, 1988) states, that ''norms construe the world of

morality and determine appropriate behaviour in circumstances by bringing order and predictability to the new and ambiguous environment'' (Lau, 2011, p. 26). In-group identity is maintained and enhanced by norms of the groups (Lau, 2011, p. 27) as SIT views ''norms'' as a vital aspect of group identity (Lau, 2011, p .27). When a person is in a group, sometimes, it depends upon different situations whether to stick with one or more social identities (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 372).

3.1.2.1. Social Mobility

Social identities are regarded as quite complex and fluid, they change as people gain new roles or leave behind old ones (Giddens & Sutton, 2017, p. 305). Tajfel and Turner (1986) illuminate on the reason behind individual's mobility and I intend to only highlight the principle of 'individual mobility' here mentioning why it occurs, in order to scrutinise the collected data.

'Individual mobility' means that individuals may try to leave or dissociate themselves from their erstwhile group in order to achieve an upward social mobility, from lower to higher status group. It is one of the reactions to negative or threatened social identity. It implies the disidentification with the initial group in order achieve personal rather than a group solution.

(Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 19).This idea is based on the third theoretical principle which is,

> when social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will strive either to leave their existing group and join some more positively distinct group and/ or to make their existing group more positively distinct (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16).

This notion is completely based on an individual's 'status' which is regarded as the outcome of the intergroup comparison. Based on the group evaluative dimension, low subjective status does not contribute to intergroup comparison directly. Hence, the lower group's status, the lower is the contribution it can make to positive social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986, p. 19). However, the individuals are perceived to find it impossible or extremely difficult in moving from their initial group to another group especially when there is overlapped group boundaries. This would arouse the perception on ''betraying'' his/her own group by moving to the opposing group. ''Although this does happen on occasion, sanctions for such a move are, on the whole, powerful, and the value systems'' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 10).

The occurrence of mobility is based on a general assumption of flexible and permeable society that an individual lives in and in case of dissatisfaction, for any reason, he/she can change the suitable group through any means. It also happens when an individual ''passes'' into or i s '' accepted'' by, the next higher group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 9). However, in contrast to 'individual mobility', in other cases, the group members may seek positive identity by making some changes within their group without group's social position through three ways. First, choosing of a new dimension to compare in-group with out-group, Second, changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group, so that comparisons which were previously negative are now perceived as positive''. The the third, 'changing the out-group (avoiding the high status out-group) with which the in-group is compared (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 20).

3.1.3. Social Comparison

Social identity Theory involves Festinger's (1954) notion of social comparison where he asserts that social comparison happens when we are making comparisons between ourselves and others (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 20). SIT emphasizes on the connection of social comparison with knowledge about ourselves and confidence in our perception about ourselves, other people and the world around us:

> One's confidence in the truth of one's views is provided by the establishment of consensus—agreement between people. Through social comparison we learn about ourselves and obtain confidence in the veracity and utility of our beliefs. That is, we are motivated to make social comparisons in order to be confident about our perceptions of ourselves, other people and the world in general. (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 20)

Individuals regard themselves and their group (in-group) better and positive than the other groups (out-groups); the perceptions rooted in one consensus are conceived as better and more correct than other perceptions rooted in the other consensuses. It is said that process accomplishes a relatively positive self-evaluation that endows the individual's sense of well-being, enhanced self-worth and self-esteem.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) present at least three classes of variables that should influence intergroup differentiation in concrete social situations. First, as it is not enough that the others define individuals as group members, they must have internalised (subjectively) their group membership as an aspect of their self- concept. Second, the situations must be such as to

allow for intergroup comparisons in order to enable the selection and evaluation of relevant relational attributes as Tajfel (1959) elaborates that ''not all between- group differences have evaluative significance'' and the comparison varies from group to group. Third, proximity and situational salience determine out-group comparability and pressure toward in-group distinctiveness should increase as a function of this comparability and in the many social situations, comparability reaches much further than generally perceived ''similarity'' between groups(Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16).

3.2. Social Identity Theory of Leadership

The objective of selecting Social Identity Theory of Leadership is to analyze the findings. The theoretical insights are used for elucidating the idea of 'Prototypicality and Influence' and 'Social Attraction' and demarcating the 'Attribution and information processing.' The primary purpose of this theory is to analyse the role of leadership in shaping the compatibility between religious and sexual identities (overlapping identities) of the participants. It is used as an adjunct to the Social Identity Theory and is employed in Chapter 6.

The Social Identity Theory of Leadership was originally developed by Michael Hogg in 2001. The further development of this theory was done by Michael Hogg himself and Daan Van Knippenberg in 2003 in order to enhance the analysis on identity focused leadership. This leadership theory is based on Social Identity Theory and Self- Categorisation theory (Hogg, 2010, p. 801). Hogg (2005) defines this leadership based on SIT as ''a relational term- it identifies a relationship in which some people are able to persuade others to adopt new values, attitudes and goals, and to exert effort on behalf of those values, attitudes and goals'' (Hogg, 2005, p. 53).

Social Identity processes help the leaders to be more effective in their leadership when they are perc eived to be a good fit with the group's norms and identity (Hogg, 2010, p. 802). On the other hand, members are more likely to follow their respective leaders whom they consider most able to construct a group identity that is acceptable to them (Hogg, 2010, p. 802). According to Hogg (2012),

Research confirms that enhanced identification is associated with greater conformity to norms and stronger ingroup favouritism and with fairer treatment of fellow ingroup members and more pronounced promotion of the group's goals and welfare. (Hogg , 2010, p. 803).

3.2.1. Prototypicality And Influence

'Prototypicality' is defined as 'typical' individual in a group where the prototypical member is said to represent the feelings, attitudes and behaviours of other people in the group (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 366). ''As group membership becomes more salient, and members identify more strongly with the group, prototypicality becomes an increasingly influential basis for leadership perceptions'' (Hogg, 2001, p. 189).

According to Hogg (2005), the most prototypical leaders' ideas are more readily and widely accepted than ideas suggested by others as he or she exercises influences over others is the confirmation for his or her leadership style (Hogg, 2005, p. 59). Those leaders whose norms and identity match with the group while their effective leadership turns them as influential leaders. The effective leadership results in the followers (group members) to consider the leaders as prototypical properties of the group. Those attributes of a leader are what the followers believe to define their group and differentiate it from the other groups (Hogg, 2010, p. 802). The prototype will remain unchanged if the context remaines unchanged where the same individual group member will occupy the most prototypical position. The stronger and more entrenched is the appearance that shows he or she has actively exercised influence over others due to the occupation of the most prototypical position for a long time. Whereas in the new group, it is perceived to occupy an embryonic leadership role as this role differentiates leader and followers (Hogg, 2001, p. 189). When the followers (group members) find the prototypical leaders trustworthy, this allows the leaders paradoxically diverge from group norms and be less conformist and more innovative and transformational than non-prototypical and less prototypical leaders (Hogg, 2010, p. 803). The prototypical leaders can adopt many strategies in order to manage and shape their group's identity (Hogg, 2010, p. 803).

It is regarded as the basis of perception and evaluation of self and other members who see and respond the subtle differences about the prototypicality of fellow members and who is most prototype is also what matters (Haslam, et al., in Hogg, 2001, p. 189). People who occupy the most prototypical position are perceived to best embody the behaviours to which other less prototypical members are conforming (Hogg, 2005, p. 58). Ross (1977) argues that within the

group, the most prototypical member appearing to exercise influence over less prototypical members is a perception of differential influence within the group (Hogg, 2005, p. 58). The same individual may occupy the most prototypical enduring position under the conditions of a long period contextual stability and so appear to have influence over the group over a long period of time (Hogg, 2005, p. 58). The prototypical members may appear highly ''to have influence due to their relative prototypicality, and may actively exercise influence and gain compliance as a consequence of consensual social attraction'' (Hogg, 2001, p.190). The more the members are prototypical, the more there is a chance of them disliking the less prototypical members (Hogg, 2010, p. 802).

3.2.2. Social Attraction

When a person is the most prototypical with an ability to actively inspire people in a new or an established group, he or she is taken as a socially attractive person. According to Berscheid and Reis (1998), if a person likes someone who he or she finds to agree, comply with requests, suggestions and others (Hogg, 2001 p. 189). In other words, the prototypical leaders in a new group, an established or unestablished can influence because they are socially attractive and hence, they comply with suggestions and recommendations he or she makes (Hogg, 2005, p. 59)

Tyler (1997) and Tyler and Lynd (1992) state how 'social attraction' can be bolstered:

Social attraction may also be strengthened by the behavior of highly prototypical members. More prototypical members tend to identify more strongly, and thus display more pronounced group behaviors; they will be more normative, show greater ingroup loyalty and ethnocentrism, and generally behave in a more group serving manner. These behaviors further confirm prototypicality and thus enhance social attraction (Hogg, 2005, p. 59).

A socially attractive leader is not merely the one who acts ''one of us'' by showing favouritism and intragroup fairness but also he or she is endowed with legitimacy (Hogg, 2005, p. 59).

3.3. Transformational Leadership Theory

James MacGregor Burns (1978) conceptualized leadership as transformational (James Mac Grgor Burns, quoted in Bass & Riggio, 2007, p. 3). The recent leadership study movement began at the end of the 1970s and 1980s which concerned the leaders who have the

transformational potential of changing situations and others (Gomes, 2014 p. 7). By studying the emotional and motivational processes, this movement proposes that leaders are more able to transform the needs, values, preferences, and aspirations of followers from self-interests to collective interests (House, quoted in Gomes, p. 7). The concept of transformational leadership was first discussed by Downton (1973) and then the concept of the term was introduced by political scientist, James McGregor Burns (1978) in his Pulitzer-Prize-winning book on leadership (Gomes, 2014, p. 14). Bass (1985) coined the term transformational leadership, describing the leaders as ''change agents that elicit and transform followers' beliefs, attitudes and motivations (Cavazotte et al., 2013 p. 492).

The transformational leadership can be defined as ''the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes, beliefs, and values of followers to a point where the goals of an organization and the vision of the leader are internalized and followers achieve performances beyond expectations'' (Bass & Yukl, quoted in Gomes, 2014, p. 14). This leadership is '' easy to understand, implement, and get followers to be one-voice and vocal throughout the organisation. It is is considered to be more apparent as it is ''more realistic than some of the other leadership forms''. Therefore, this leadership has risen to a phenomenon that is worth understanding, learning, and using in organisations around the world'' (Ghasabeh & Provitera 2017, p. 6).

One of the major characteristics of transformational leaders is that they have a vision that provides direction and meaning to their followers (Conger & Kotter, quoted in Gomes, 2014). The vision might involve a specific mission and detailed goals or may be as vague as a dream. In either case, it should be a source of self-esteem for followers and reflect an interesting future for the group or organization (Carlson et al., quoted in Gomes, p. 17). These leaders develop an emotional relationship with their followers by providing them with a vision and increasing the consciousness and belief in higher goals which is above their own interests (Cavazotte et al., 2013 p. 492). The leaders aspire to elevate the followers' higher-order needs meaning that leaders and followers raise each other's motivations and senses of purpose. This implies that the aims and aspirations of both parts congeal into one, being established common goals in which they can identify themselves (Bryman, quoted in Gomes, p. 14). In order to accomplish a higher degree of effectiveness and change implementation, follower's attitudes and values can be enhanced (Ghasabeh, & Provitera, 2017, p. 5).

Idealised influence, individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation are the four dimensions of Transformation Leadership (Ghasabeh & Provitera 2017, p. 5). The transformational leaders behave in ways to achieve superior results by adopting one or more of the four core components of transformational leadership described here (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 5). Those four dimensions of transformational leadership are explained in points below:

3.3.1. Idealized Influence

Transformational leaders behave as role models for their followers as they are admired, respected, and trusted. The extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination are the qualities which the followers commend in them. Thus, there are two aspects to idealized influence: the attributed behaviours and the elements by followers and the other associates. The idealized influence behavior is that the leader is seen to emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission. A sample item from the idealized influence attributed factor is that the leader reassures followers that obstacles will be overcome. Moreover, leaders who are willing to take risks are consistent rather than arbitrary when they have a great deal of idealized influence (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 6).

The perceptions are driven by specific behaviours of the leader that reflect his/her values and beliefs. It is this emotional component of leadership that drives followers to forgo their own comfort in favour of the collective interest, that is, in the search for a greater good'' (Cavazotte et al., 2013, p. 493). Transformational leaders behave in ways that allow them to serve as role models for their followers. The leaders are admired, respected, and trusted. Followers identify with the leaders and want to emulate them; leaders are endowed by their followers as having extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination. (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 6). The followers also recognize extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination in the leader Gomes, 2014, p. 15).

3.3.2. Inspirational Motivation

Bass and Avolio (1977) posit that Transformational leaders behave to motivate and inspire people around them to challenge their follower's works. They further elaborate about the

inspirational motivation where team spirit is aroused, enthusiasm and optimism are displayed. They create clearly communicated expectations that followers want to meet and also demonstrate the commitment to goals and the shared vision, hence, such leaders get followers involved in envisioning attractive future states (Bass & Avolio, in Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 6).

This dimension refers to the leader's behaviours aimed at inspiring and motivating followers to attain ambitious and challenging goals, or even apparently unattainable ones (Cavazotte et al., 2013, p. 493). ''The leader provides meaning and challenge that motivates and inspires the followers' work. In this case, the leader promotes team spirit, enthusiasm, and optimism in their followers. The leader involves them in a positive vision of the future and communicates high expectations that followers want to achieve'' (Gomes, 2014, p.15). In this process, leaders and followers raise one another's levels of morality and motivation (Carlson & Perrewe, in Gomes, 2014, p. 14), and leaders achieve followers' best efforts by inspiring them to identify with a vision that surpasses their own immediate self-interests. (Bryman, in Gomes, p. 14).

3.3.3. Intellectual Stimulation

Transformational leaders are regarded as to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways to stimulate their followers' efforts. Creativity is encouraged. In case of an individual members' mistake, there is no public criticism. The followers, who are included in the process of addressing problems and finding solutions solicitate ideas and creative problem solutions. Followers' ideas are not criticized although they differ from the leaders' ideas, rather they are encouraged to try new approaches. The leader gets others to look at problems from many different angles (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 7).

The way a leader questions the status quo and appeals to the intelligence of followers to prompt them to question their own ideas is referred to intellectual stimulation. This also involves motivating innovative and creative decision-making (Cavazotte et al., 2013, p. 493). The transformational leaders stimulate innovation and creativity in followers in intellectual stimulation (Avolio & Bass, quoted in Tauber, 2012, p. 10).

3.3.4 Individual Consideration

Transformational leaders pay special attention by acting as a coach or a mentor to each individual follower's needs for achievement and growth. When new learning opportunities are created along with a supportive climate, individualized consideration is practiced. The needs and desires of an individual are recognized. A two-way exchange in communication is encouraged and the listening is effective. A means of development of the followers is done through delegation of the tasks and it is monitored to see if the followers need additional direction or support. The leader spends time teaching and coaching. (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 7).

> Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by addressing to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization''(Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3).

Individual consideration implies to the socio-emotional support given by leaders to their followers by responding to their particular needs, ultimately working to promote their development and empowerment (Cavazotte et al., 2013, p. 493).

3.4. Operationalisation Of Theories

This additional sub-Chapter aims to elucidate why I chose the theories and how I am going to operationalise them in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

I constructed my preliminary research questions based on 'Social Identity Theory' before the interview. During the course of the interview with my first participant, Louise (pseudonym), the responses generated in 'open- ended' questions were related to LGBT church leadership. This added information led me to construct more questions based on 'Social Identity Theory of Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership Theory' for further interviews. The intention was to figure out if the LGBT church leaders are engaged in harmonising sexual and religious identity, if yes then how?

'The Social Identity Theory' is used in both analysing the data (in Chapter 5) and the discussion (Chapter 6) whereas 'Social Identity Theory of Leadership' and ' Transformational leadership' are employed to assist the 'Social Identity. The part of Social Identity Theory of

Leadership is also 'charisma' (not intended to mention here) which plays an important role in transformational leadership (Hogg, 2010, p.803). Bass (1997) argues that transformational leadership can be found in all parts of the globe and in all forms of organizations. Furthermore, transformational leadership should be a more effective form of leadership globally because the transformational leader is consistent with people's prototypes of an ideal leader (Bass, quoted in Gomes, 2014, p.16). The connection of the word ''prototypes'' relates with one of the elements of '' Social Identity Theory of Leadership' (see 3.2.1). Hence, the connection of 'Transformational Leadership Theory' to 'Social Identity Theory of Leadership' and the latter with 'Social Identity Theory' is the reason for the choice of these theories in this paper.

4. METHODOLOGY

A research methodology can be generally understood to be a process in a reserach in which a researcher adopts various techniques and tools from the very beginning of the research project til the very end. It encompasses the possible queries like what the reseacher wants to find out and what tools he/she chooses in order to trace out the findings and make the work valid, reliable and relevant. The other queries like where the study could be conducted, what date, and how it can be conducted are also involved in this process.

A research method can involve a specific instrument such as a self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview schedule, or participant observation whereby researcher listens to and watches others (Bryman, 2012, p. 46). It is also regarded as a philosophical stance of a worldview that underlies and informs a style of research (Sapsford, 2006, p. 175). On the other hand, Brinkman (2013) pointed out research methodology section in a research as a platform where a researcher clarifies how he/she has used overall research strategy and why, what designs or techniques are employed and giving the reason why he/she has rejected the other methods or strategies (Brinkman, 2013, pp. 90-91). Being considerate to this idea, I will answer how I am approaching my research, why I chose the specific methods and what other methods I could have chosen but why I chose not to do that.

4.1. Literature Review

After deciding a topic for the study, one needs to know about reviewing the literature which means to figure out what is already known about the topic. What concepts and theories have been applied for that, what research method has been applied to the topic, who are the main contributors to the topic and if there are any controversies and inconsistencies about the findings (Bryman, 2012, p.8). While going through this procedure, one needs to take good notes on the details of the material one reads and one needs to go through the library sources carefully (Bryman, 2012, p. 98).

After I chose my topic, I still needed to make sure if it was relevant for what I wanted to explore. Therefore I worked on different resources to assure that I had the flexibility of changing the choice of words on the topic, as it turned out that the flexibility of the content was rather rigid, which finally directed me to study what I wanted to. I collected the

information I needed through different mediums; my institution's library, ordered books from other institutions, got help from my different national and international friends for the access of research materials, whereas I was open to different types of resource materials like booklets, brochures, different journals, articles, news, etc. I had thoroughly taken the notes of what I had studied and had made different files to save those under different headings. This part was very crucial for me, therefore, I had spent much time on this. I would rather divide the procedure of how I gathered the materials into two categories for better clarity; for the 'Theoretical Framework' and for the other parts of the paper. I had prioritised only on the most authentic published online or physical books for the 'Theoretical Framework'. After this process, I came to the conclusion to consider three theories (see Chapter 3) where 'Social Identity Theory of Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership Theory' are merely used for the background for the further investigation rather than using 'Analysis' (Bryman, 2012, p. 27). I considered this approach after figuring out that qualitative research does not generate theory, but also theory is often used at the very least as a background to qualitative investigations (Bryman, 2012, p. 27).

4.2. Qualitative Research

Qualitative research first involves studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions where the exploration of people's lives occurs in the natural setting (not a laboratory) through social interactions. Secondly, qualitative research enables us to study the views and the perspectives of the participants where capturing the perspectives may be a major purpose of this research. Thirdly, qualitative research encompasses contextual conditions; the social, institutional, and environmental conditions within people's lives take place and can possibly strongly influence all human events (Yin, 2011, p. 8). ''The allure of qualitative research is that it enables you to conduct in-depth studies about a broad array of topics, including your favourites, in plain and everyday terms. Moreover, qualitative research offers greater latitude in selecting topics of interest because other research methods are likely to be constrained. (Yin, 2011, p. 6).

My study demanded me to study the experiences and the perceptions of LGBT church leaders within a flexible environment where the exploration about their past and their thoughts shaped my whole paper. There is not any other research strategy besides this one that suits my

topic the best. This study includes both inductive and deductive strategies where (Bryman, 2012, p. 27) stated inductive strategy in a research develops a theory out of interview data whereas deductive strategy demonstrates the process whereby hypotheses are deduced from existing theory and these then guide the process of data collection so that they can be tested.

4.3. Case Study

The most common use of the term 'case' associates the case study with a location, such as a community or organization where the generation of an intensive and detailed examination of the setting occurs through observation and unstructured interviewing (Bryman, 2012, p. 48). Yin (2009) has preferred to call 'case study' an exemplifying case, because notions of representativeness and typicality can sometimes lead to confusion. With this kind of case, 'the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or common place situation' Yin (2009, p. 48).

I chose 'case study' for my research in order to focus in an area which relates to what Yin expressed in the latter case, a study in a 'common situation.' I have chosen the participants who have experiences from a common place as well as from a common situation. The former represents the Church of Norway and the latter means 'LGBT Christian leaders.' This was a detailed process of getting information from participants through in depth interviews.

4.4. Case Selection

I decided to choose Norway as my study area, the initial dilemma was whether to choose the Pentecostal or Lutheran denomination to study. I had visited some churches, some conferences where I was observing which denomination I could decide to choose for the study. I talked a lot about my topic to many different people and also to church leaders who found the topic to be very interesting. However, I finally decided to stick to take the case of the Lutheran Church after figuring out that I wanted to focus on the leadership of LGBT people not merely taking the LGBT church members as my participants. Therefore, all participants are currently from the Norwegian Lutheran denomination. The study of the relation of sexual and religious identities of homosexuals in the Church of Norway became my focus. I have selected my informants based on the demand of my study.

4.4.1. Selection Of Informants / Sampling

Selection of the informants is based on a specific person or a specific group of people that represent the wider population or in other words, 'sampling'(Bryman, 2012, 186), which is considered to be a small and targeted portion of the whole population. Therefore, I have not considered all the LGBT leaders that work in the Church of Norway for this study, it is just a specific group within the LGBT group, the lesbian and gay leaders and the theology students who are confident in becoming the priests in the future and also they have/are engaged in church leadership some ways. This way, I wanted to convey that the selection of my participants are based on LGBT church leadership.

The choice of sampling is based on non-probability sampling in this study as it includes two types under its category, convenience and snowball sampling; a convenience sample is one that is simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility (Bryman, 2012, p. 202). About the snowball sampling, Bryman (1999) has stated that the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these people to contact the other participants sampling (Bryman, quoted in Bryman, 2012, p. 202). I had access to my participants through different people I had contact with and on the other hand, some of the participants helped me get others as my participants.

I had considered four participants where three were lesbians and one was gay. I thought of being considerate in equalising the number according to gender but unluckily the situation did not allow. However, the majority were lesbians would? not impact my study, particularly not on the area I wanted to focus on. It depends on a number of considerations, and there is no one definitive answer to the size of the sample (Brymann, 2012, p. 197). Therefore, I chose to stick with this sort of selection.

4.5. Informants' Interview

How I conducted the interview is explained in this part; how I used my research devices and research materials, how the participants were interviewed and the things that occurred in the interview time is mentioned here.

Different interviews took place in different places. I chose to use a recorder provided by my institution. The beginning of the interview was an informal introduction followed by some of the participants (if they had not done through email) reading the information document and signing the consent letter. The recording began after this. The recording device was kept eye on during the device as it was very crucial for the transcription because very few 'hand notes' was intended to take. I was noting down the information specially in the first two interviews with Louise (pseudonym) whereas the device was reliable so, I stopped taking the note in the other interviews with her and also with the other participants. However, 'mental note' was considered simultaneously as it could be a risk in highly depending upon the recording device alone. 'Mental notes' are regarded as useful particularly when it is inappropriate to be seen taking notes (Bryman, 2012, p. 450). Therefore, the mental note was the reason that I was finding it inappropriate in the situation, it would be a lot of distraction, as they spoke really fast, it would not be possible to jot down everything. On the other hand, it would not be a smooth flow in the conversation as I had a high intention to make it the most natural talk possible which is one of the advantages in a qualitative interview in order to trace the better information.

4.5.1. Qualitative Interviews

The interviewees were asked by using two types of questions; semi-structured, the one I had prepared before coming to the interview. The other was that they were given the flexibility to narrate their stories continuously by the help of 'open-ended and 'unstructured' questions. The questions that aroused right on the spot according to the context of the talk or for the sake of additional information. This was the most enjoyed part during my research period, I got the additional and unexpected information, and a chance to build the questions upon the semi-structured questions which gave a very meaningful contribution to the data. As my initial plan was just to include LGBT Christians in the Church of Norway, but during the first part of the interview with Louise, due to unstructured questions, I gained some information about the LGBT Church leadership that led me to include LGBT Church leaders as my participants which expanded the horizon of my paper. This way, one can get some surprises through qualitative interviews that can add extra information or give a better direction for the research.

I was considering the other methods in between but as the collected data from the interview was simultaneous being analysed and my research area and I was mere confident on my interview skills, I depended full on the interview method. I want to connect this decision with what Silverman (2014) has said regarding why one can only choose interview method as ''everything depends upon your research topic; methods in themselves have no intrinsic value'' (Silverman, 2014, p. 170). On the other hand, when there was need of extra information, it was the follow up interviews that I used as a tool rather than others as it was more relevant to use interviews in multiple follow up series. In other words, depth interviews were my strongest tool for this paper. However, I would rather say the selection of this method was both my strength and weakness.

4.5.2. Rapport Building

Personally, I am a very open, smiling, respectful and positive person. These elements have played a substantial role in building a rapport with my interviewees. As building a good relation with my interviewees was a very crucial part of the interview process for me, I was able to be myself, relaxed and natural, while I met for the interviews. Focusing this part means to convey the meaning that I intended to study much more about the individual cases through an open and a natural setting without any judgement or bias. I could say that this part of my research method is a great success that helped me find the direction I intended to head towards and more than that, the new and the surprising information I got through these relations is the result of my findings. Therefore, I am satisfied that I could count on this part in the most prudent way during my resrach.

4.6. Interview Guide

The researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply. Questions may not follow the exact way outlined in the schedule. Questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees (Bryman, 2012, p. 471).

Working to structure the interview guide was based on the first theory I had chosen, 'Social identity'. I was conscious about the development of my interview guide asking my questions

so that they could be 'researchable', rather than being abstract which would hinder the research (Bryman, 2012, p. 90). The semi-structured questions were constructed before the interview took place. It is taken as purposeful in the interview where ''obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee takes place in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena." (Kvale & Brinkmann, quoted in Brinkmann, 2013, p. 21). On the other hand, I used the unstructured questions that arouse from the semi-structured interviews during the interview. The choice of unstructured interviews is based on what Brinkmann (2013) said, the interviewer has a greater saying in focusing the conversation on issues that he or she deems important in relation to the research project. I wanted to gather the most relevant data through good report building and active listening as 'the unstructured' or 'open-ended' interview is the most common tool in qualitative research that has flexibility, enhances report building and active listening (Silverman, 2014, p. 166). Therefore, I chose to adopt follow-up interviews with some participants which is flexibility of qualitative research where I had gathered the additional important information.

I knew none of my interviewees before I had started with my data collection. The very first was Louise(pseudonym). To get the information I needed, I built a good report to dig out information, the information was not merely the focus, but also that it took place in the most natural way (as a person I am also relaxed and enthusiatic). I am very happy to recall that only because of the good interview skill I tried adopting, I gained the best information I needed. The gestures, the intonations, and the emotions were expressed freely from both parties throughout the interview. Personally, I was emotionally enrolled in the interview specially during relevant scenarios as qualitative interviews allows this flexibility but as a researcher, I knew my boundary to not let my data to be influenced by my expressions.

4.7. Informed Consent and Confidentiality

Before I went out in the field for the data collection, I had to wait for the respond from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) from where I needed permission for the interviews. I had to upload the required documents like interview guides, consent forms, and my institution's guideline. After I was approved from the NSD, I sent my consent and information letter for the study, some of my participants received these via email whereas others signed on the same date, before the interview took place. Some time was granted to go

through the information paper and then they agreed on the consent paper granted by NSD. All this procedure was done for the sake of maintaining the confidentiality of the participants.

The participants had the right to get access to the provided information. They had the opportunity for the correction or the omission of the information during and after the interview. Due to this consent, I had deleted some portion from one of the interviewees for the sake of maintaining confidentiality. However, the deletion did not have negative effect on my paper as the deleted portion was supported by other interviewees' information that was based on the same scenario.

4.8. Transcription

This process is about writing down the data material from the recorded device. There are different ways of transcription, where Bryman (2012) argues voice recognition software may make transcription unnecessary when a digital recording is made of spoken field notes whereas the transcription machine with a foot-operated stop-start mechanism will make the task of transcription somewhat easier. However, he further elaborated that the important thing to consider is that one must allow sufficient time for the transcription and be realistic about how many interviews he/she is going to be able to transcribe in the time available (Bryman 2012, p. 448).

I borrowed the 'Olympus' system (foot operated mechanism like Bryman mentioned) and this made the work much easier for me. The IT department of my institution installed the system, and I was fortunate to have this access because it made my work convenient and effective. The interviews were of different lengths, so, I had tried transcribing them right after the interviews took place and the transcribed documents were stored in 'VeraCrypt'. I had sent the transcription back to all my informants as I wanted to follow the guideline of NSD and above all, for the sake of stopping the possible problems that connect to misunderstanding and also, it was the recorded version I was working with. I needed some corrections, my particpants had the right to edit and delete parts of the interview. The participants' names were pseudonyms while transcribing (were very careful with this part) and the participants agreed on the use of the pseudonyms just to ensure that they consented with those changed names.

4.9. Coding

Coding demands ''reviewing transcripts and/or field notes and giving labels (names) to component parts that seem to be of potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social worlds of those being studied (Bryman, 2012, p. 568). We (you, or you and your supervisor) study our early data and begin to separate, sort, and synthesize them through qualitative coding. Coding relates to practicalities like highlighting the words, sentences or paragraph and then picking out single 'key words' or a few words, phrases or sentences that better sum up (Silverman, 2014, pp. 119-120).

After the complete transcription of the collected data, and after getting the feedback on the transcription sent to the participants to edit or omit, first, I printed the transcribed document. Secondly, the transcription was scrutinised and the words, phrases and the sentences were highlighted with different colours based on similar meanings or those based on similar questions in the interview. Thirdly, the highlighted parts with similar colours (with similar meanings) were re-written categorising in different groups naming with some phrases. It was evaluated whether more information was required; I needed in some cases in order to better understand the data as the data was giving a new and unexpected direction. Finally, I compared the whole coded data whether it was fitting in the theory I had built my question upon, SIT.

4.10. Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable. The term is commonly used in relation to whether the measures in the social sciences are devised for the different concepts (Bryman, 2012, p. 46). As my study is based on previous findings in social sciences, some of my findings in this paper are new and unexpected, therefore, in this sense, the findings are reasonable based on the previous researches. The future research being carried out in the field of Christian LGBT leadership in Norway or anywhere else, this paper can be also seen as a platform for the new and additional work in this area.

On the other hand, about the replicable of this research, I have used the recording and the transcribing method which give more authenticity of the information without any interference

or misunderstanding and when I was in doubt of the words, I had asked the paticipants for the clarity while transcribing. Therefore, I assure that the reliability of my paper is strong.

4.11. Validity

Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (Brymann, 2012, p. 47). They propose trustworthiness as a criterion of how good a qualitative study is (Brymann, 2012, p. 49). Values reflect either the personal beliefs or the feelings of a researcher. On the face of it, we would expect that social scientists should be value free and objective in their research. After all, one might want to argue that research that simply reflected the personal biases of its practitioners could not be considered valid and scientific because it was bound up with the subjectivities of its practitioners (Bryman, 2012, p. 39).

The validity of my paper is answered in two ways; first, during the entire journey of this paper, I was highly concerned whether my research question and sub-research questions were reasonable and were answered in the most relevant way in my paper. Therefore, in order to assure this, I had chronologically organised the sub-chapters in the chapters such as 'Theoretical Framework', 'Findings' and the 'Discussion' based on my research questions. This effort was to affirm that the resarch questions and my findings have the valid relation which ultimately is a strong asset for having my whole research valid in the research realm.

   Secondly, while carrying the interview and while working on the other processes where I had tried my best not to let my personal feelings and perceptions influence the work of my paper. One example for this is, after I had transcribed the recorded data, I chose to distribute the transcribed version of the interview so that there would not be any mishearing and misleading things in this paper. The transcriptions were returned with some edited versions from the participants, and they mentioned some dilemmas which were clarified later.

4.12. Ethical Considerations

The Ethical guidelines and the Ethics Committee are there to protect research participants, but they are also involved in protecting institutions so that researchers will be deterred from behaving in ethically unacceptable ways that might rebound on institutions. Such behaviour

could cause problems for institutions if ethically inappropriate behaviour gave rise to legal action against them or to adverse publicity. However, ethics committees and their guidelines are there to help and protect researchers too, so that they are less likely to conduct research that could damage their reputations (Bryman, 2012, p. 134).

I followed the guidelines of the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) where I had agreed to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and protect from the possible harms, risks and discomforts. It was challenging, it was a sensitive case I was studying, I had to provide extra assurances to NSD which took them a bit longer time than I had expected. I was double and triple checking with the participants for the sake of respecting their information and if they were finding any discomfort with it, then I adopted some other ways to deal with the issues for their sake. It was a challenge while sticking to ethics, and it was a risk of losing data. In such case, I got some recommendations from my supervisor that helped me persist on the thought of respecting their confidentiality and also not losing the information.

On the other hand, I stored the recording device in the safest place where the information would not leak and also where the device would not be damaged anyhow. In addition, I saved the recorded file into the system calle 'VeraCrypt' that was uploaded by my institution, where I had a very secure system of saving the files without any information leakage through a strong password. This system was recommended and fixed by the IT department of [name of institution] to safeguard and maintain confidentiality. In order not to misunderstand the data from different interviewees, the file names were used with the help of pseudonyms that are used in this paper. I also had received some guidelines for the data storage from the IT department, therefore, I always was highly concerned to follow such guidelines for the sake of privacy, confidentiality. This way, ethical consideration is also a focal point whereas I was striving for exploring something new in this study.

Besides all the other above considerations in this paper, I have tried to stick with the rules of my institution regarding the format of writing such as the choice of font size, font style, number of words, space, etc. as Bryman (2012) writes about. It is crucial that the researcher is bound to follow guidelines of the institution such as font size of the paper, number of words and the format of references (Bryman, 2012, p. 80).

5. A BRIEF OVERVIEW ON THE CHURCH OF NORWAY AND ITS DIOCESAN STRUCTURE IN OSLO

Through this Chapter, brief information on the composition of the Church of Norway and the duties of the leaders in the Church can be obtained. In the first section, there is brief information regarding the Church and some major organs of the Church. The second sub-Chapter in this section illuminates the diocese structure of the Church of Norway in Oslo followed by the elucidation of the structure in general. The last part includes the informants' guide with the pseudonyms, this part is adjusted in this section in order to give a better overview regarding the informants in the 'Findings' Chapter.

5.1. A General Overview Of The Church

There are 3.7 million members and 1200 churches across the country (Den Noske Kirke, 2019). The Church Act, Act of June 1996 on the Church of Norway came into force on 1 January 1997. The act among other things, regulates the Church's composition, membership of the Church and the administration of Church buildings (Elstad, 2018). The Church membership applies to a child from one of the parents having the Church membership through baptism and regarding the adults, one needs to possess a resident permit or have a Citizenship card in order to obtain the Church membership. Anyone who is over the age of fifteen can either enter or leave the Church (Lovdata, 2016, § 3). Each member of the Church has a right to take part in the ecclesiastical voting. He/she needs to reside in a particular region who has reached the age of 15 (Lovdata, 2016, § 4).

Because the State and the Church parted on 1st January 2017, the appointment of the Church leaders by the King is no longer prevalent in the present. The authority and the decision of the Church are rather in itself (Elstad, 2018). There are some organs of the Church whose roles are substantial in order to allow the smooth functioning within the Church of Norway. Those organs function heirarchically however, in cooperation with each other (Lovdata, 2016). I have considered in briefing only the three most important ones among others so that it could provide a clearer picture of the Church leadership. First, the Synod; it is the supreme representative body of the Church of Norway. The Synod (*kirkemøtet*) consists of the members of the diocese councils and one member elected according to more detailed rules

laid down by the Synod. This is ordinarily convened to meet once a year. The Synod will have its attention addressed to matters of common ecclesiastical character or to anything that can be done to awaken and nurture the Christian life in the congregations. Hence, this promotes cooperation within the Church. The Synod also protects and promotes Sami church life and safeguards the Norwegian Church's international and ecumenical tasks (Lovdata, 2016, § 24). Secondly, the Board (*nemnd*); according to the regulation of the Church of Norway in the Church's law (*kirkeloven*) (2016), a special separate board or the committee is appointed by the Synod where the committee is entrusted to make decisions. More detailed rules for the committee's action is taken on its own. However, the board cannot reverse the decisions made by the organs of the parish (Lovdata, 2016, § 27). Third, the Church Council (*kirkerådet*); the Church Council consists of a number of members with Deputy members elected by the Synod and a bishop with Deputy elected by the bishopric. This council prepares the matters to be dealt with by the Synod and implements its decisions. The function of the Church Council is to lead the Church's work at the national level. It is responsible for ensuring that the financial administration and the financial management of the funds that it has at its disposal are justifiable. The Synod determines detailed rules for the election of Church Council and for the Church Council's activities. (Lovdata, 2016, § 25).

5.2. The Structure Of Oslo Diocese

As my study is based in the Oslo area, my participants represent the Church of Norway in Oslo. I have presented the Diocese structure of the Church in Oslo in the diagram. Additionally, I have highlighted the composition and the function of the organs of the Diocese of the Church of Norway in general.

The Diocese of Oslo consists of over 840 000 people. The Diocese has three organs; the Ecclesiastical Councils, the Deaneries and the Parish. There are three geographical Ecclesiastical Councils whereas 53 parishes in this region (Den Norske Kirke, 2019). The diagram below is based on the information of the Diocese of Oslo for better clarity on the leadership structure in the Church of Norway in Oslo.

Oslo Diocese (*Oslo Bispedømme*)

3 Ecclesiatical Councils (*Kirkelig Fellesråd*)

Oslo

Asker

Bærum

7 Deaneries (*Prostier*)

Dom Deanery

Eastern Aker

Western Aker

Deaf and field Deaneries

Southern Aker

Asker and Bærum

Northern Aker

53 Parish *(Sokn)*
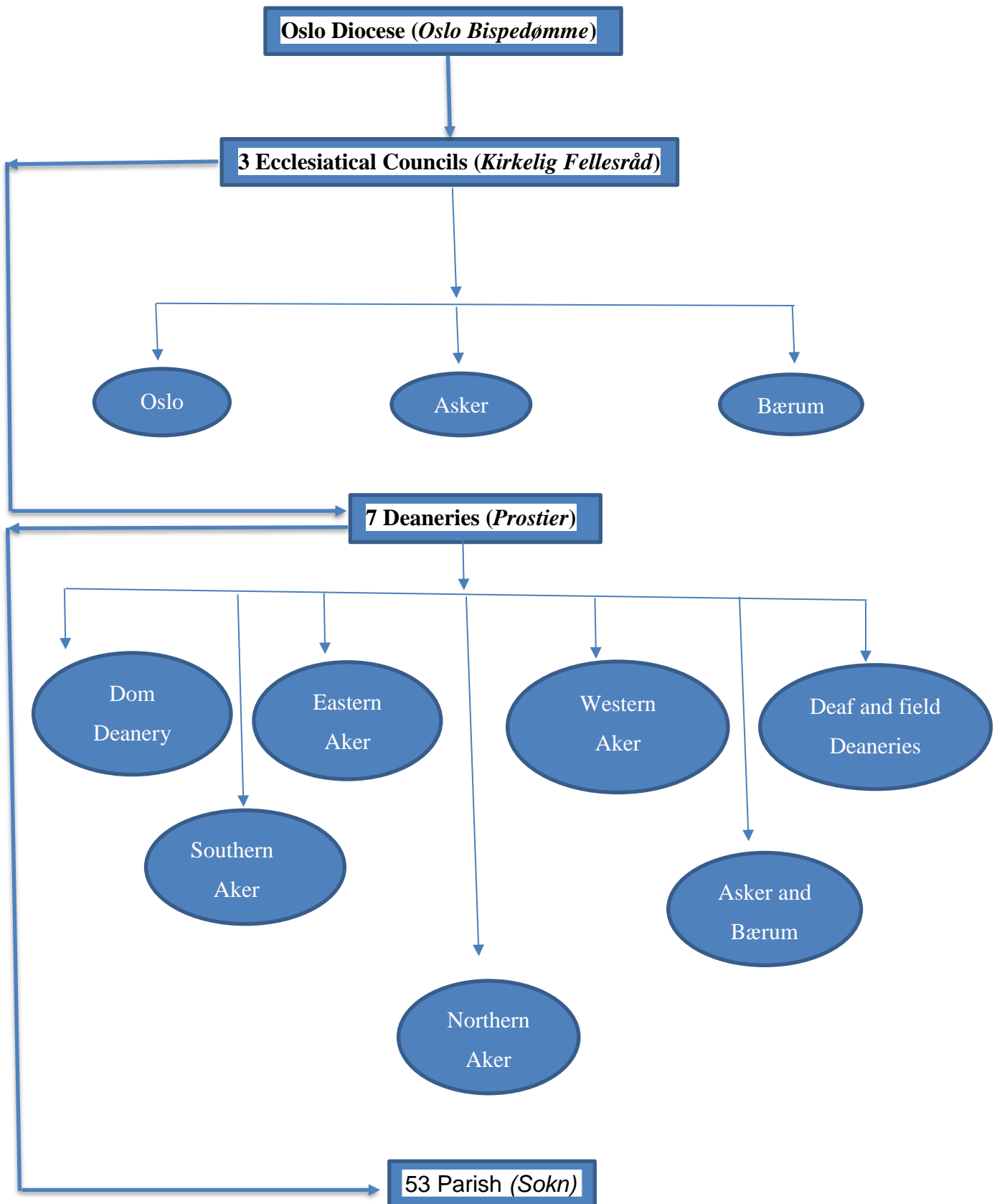
[*The diagram is created with the information presented in the website of Church of Norway (2019)*].

5.2.1. Diocesan Council *(Bispedømmeråd)*

There are eleven dioceses (bispedømmer) in Norway (Church of Norway, 2019). The Diocesan Council is lead by a Bishop, a priest elected by the priests in the diocese. There are also Sami representatives in the council. A representative from the deaf churches in Oslo diocese council also forms this council (Lovdata, 2016, § 23).

The priest and the members are elected for four years. The Church meeting *(kirkemøtetet)* gives more detailed rules on the election, including rules on the number of deputies and rules that specify who is entitled to vote and to be eligible. The Diocesan Council is to have attention focused on everything that can be done to awaken and nurture Christian life in the congregations, and promote the co-operation between the individual Ward Councils *(menightesråd)* and other local working groups within the diocese. It carries out the tasks that are at all times imposed by the Church Council or Synod. The detailed rules on the forming of the Diocese's activities are given by the Synod (Lovdata, 2016, § 23).

5.2.2. Ecclesiastical Council *(Kirkelig Fellesråd)*

The Ecclesiastical Council is composed of two Ward Council members from each Church Council in the municipality, elected by the individual Ward Council, a representative elected by the municipality, and a dean *(prost)* or other priest appointed by the Bishop. If there are five or more parishes in the municipality, only one Ward Council member is elected from each Ward Council. The representatives are elected together with an equivalent number of representatives for 4 years (Lovdata, 2016, § 12).

The function of this organ is to attend for administrative and financial tasks on behalf of the parishes, prepare goals and plans for the church activities in the municipality, promote cooperation between the Ward Councils and safeguard the interests of the parishes in relation to the municipality. It is responsible for the various tasks such as construction, operation and maintenance of churches, burial sites, and creation and closure of positions that are paid over the Ecclesiastical Council's budget (Lovdata, 2016, § 14). The Ecclesiastical Council manages income and wealth associated with the Church and the Church funds (translated-Lovdata, 2016, § 14). The management of the churches belongs to the Ecclesiastical Council unless otherwise is decided by the ministry (Lovdata, 2016, § 18).

5.2.3. Deaneries (*Prostier*) and the Deans (*Proster*)

In this section, the responsbilities of the deans are more emphasized in order to provide a glimpse of how one of the leaders in the leadership position in the Church of Norway functions.

The Deanery is composed of multiple parishes (Den Noske Kirke, 2019). It consists of a dean who is committed to the goals and the strategies of the Church of Norway. The dean is a member of the Deanery Council and is also a member of the Ecclesiastical Council (Lovdata, 2016, § 6). For the promotion of the goals and the strategies of the Church of Norway and the diocesan concerns, the dean shall support measures that promote these goals and the strategies (Lovdata, 2016, § 2). He/she leads the priestly services in the deanery and assists the Bishop in his/her duties (Lovdata, 2016, § 1). Contributing to a good working environment in collaboration with ecclesiastical councils and committees is the responsibility of the dean in the deanery. The dean shall also contribute to a spiritual fellowship within the ecclesiastical work team of the deanery and assist staff and ecclesiastical bodies with professional guidance and support (Lovdata, 2016, § 3). He/she shall ensure necessary coordination between the clergy services and the activities of the Ecclesiastical Councils. When he/she is appointed by the Bishop, he/she can also be authorised to participate in the meetings of the Ecclesiastical Councils but without voting rights (Lovdata, 2016, § 6). Having the Bishop as his/her superior, the dean safeguards the employers' right to govern the priests in the deanery. The dean is the immediate superior of the parish priests and the deanery priests where he/she distributes the duties among the deanery priests (Lovdata, 2016, § 4).

There are other several duties of the deans such as ensuring that the priests in the Deanery Council administer the Word and the sacrament so that Christian faith and Christian life are promoted in the congregations. Holding ordained services, performing ecclesiastical acts, participating in the conduct of baptism, confirmation trainings, are the duties they perform among other responsibilites. Moreover, they also practise counselling and visit sick in the parishes besides preaching and other church building works (Lovdata, 2016, § 5).

5.2.4. The Parish Council *(Soknet)*

According to section 17, there should be a Church in every parish (Lovdata, 2016, § 17). There is a Parish Council in each parish. In municipalities with several parishes, there should also be an Ecclesiastical Council. The Parish council makes decisions and acts on behalf of the parish when it is not stipulated in or pursuant to a law that the authority is added to the Ecclesiastical Council or the other body. In municipalities with only one parish, the Parish Council exercises the functions that otherwise lie to the Ecclesiastical Council. In cases of doubt, the Ministry decides which body that makes the decision and acts on behalf of the Parish Council (Lovdata, 2016, § 5).

   The churches are the property of the parish unless otherwise follows from a separate legal basis. The parishes in a municipality can own churches in common. The Parish Church or chapel is approved by the King or the Ministry, or which can be a church from ancient times (Lovdata, 2016, § 17).

5.3. Informants' Guide

This section is an overview of information of the informants which includes psedonyms, their gender, religious identity and their professional engagement that resemble how they are related to the Church leadership. The participants' sexuality, religious identity, and their professional engagement are required in this study. Therefore, this was included in the 'information letter' for the consent and the participants had agreed on this. This part also contains the date and the number of times the informants were interviewed. This information guide is viewed as an important section for the clarity of the 'Findings' Chapter.

Informants' Guide

Pseudonym: Louise

Sexual Identity: Lesbian

Religious identity: Lutheran Christian

Enrolment/ Profession: Theology Student

Date of Interview Consent: 11.08.2018

The Different Lengths of Interview: 3 times (6h 30 mins)

Pseudonym: Maria

Sexual Identity: Lesbian

Religious identity: Lutheran Christian

Enrolment/ Profession: Theology Student

Date of Interview Consent: 13.02.2019

The Different Lengths of Interview: 2 times (2h 29 mins)

Pseudonym: Irina

Sexual Identity: Lesbian

Religious identity: Lutheran Christian

Enrolment/ Profession: Church Leader

Date of Interview Consent: 27.02.2019

The Different Lengths of Interview: 2 times (1h 24 mins)

Pseudonym: Chris

Sexual Identity: Gay

Religious identity: Lutheran Christian

Enrolment/ Profession: Church Leader

Date of Interview Consent: 15.02.2019

The Different Lengths of Interview: 1 time (1 h 40 mins)

6. FINDINGS

As this study is about exploring how sexual and religious identities may coexist, this is done through the study of experiences and perceptions of lesbian and gay leaders in the Church of Norway in Norway, this Chapter deals with the presentation of the collected data (findings) in the light of the theoretical framework (Chapter 3). This Chapter is further divided into three sub-Chapters to figure out how religion and sexuality can coexist in terms of LGBT leadership in the Church of Norway. The main question, how do Christian homosexual leaders experience and perceive the relation between their religious and sexual identities with the shift of time?' will be addressed through three sub-questions in each section:

1. How can religious and sexual identities evolve and coexist among individuals?
2. What is the role of leadership in the compatibility of religious and sexual identities?
3. How can transformational leadership facilitate group inclusion?

Three different theories from Chapter 3 are used in order to systematise and categorise the collected data materials; Chapter 6.1. presents the data which addresses the first question and is analysed through 'Social Identity Theory'. In Chapter 6.2, the analysed data addresses the second question in terms of 'Social identity Theory of Leadership'. The last Chapter 6.3 is based on the collected data which is studied through 'Transformational Leadership Theory'. And, every theme and sub-theme consist of two parts, data presentation and data analysation through theoretical perspectives, Chapter 3.

The direct and indirect quotes from the participants are presented through the use of pseudonyms. Therefore, this very part of this research is a crucial focus for gathering and presenting the most possible reliable and valid information. Simultaneously, this part is also a focus for maintaining the research ethics (Chapter 4, 'Methodology' has clarification on it).

6.1. Evolution And Coexistence Of Sexual And Religious Identity

How sexual and religious identity develops over time and how they can coexist is organised through three elements of Social Identity Theory; 'Social Categorisation', 'Social identification' and 'Social comparison' (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 372).

6.1.1. Sexual And Religious Categorisation

It is discovered how my participants initially categorised themselves into a sexual and religious group. The below three sub-headings present three things; first, the occurrence of categorisation after an individual finds the need and the reason to belong in a certain group (sexual category) despite some challenges. Second, support and acceptance of the sexual identity from the group members and the leaders are the outcome of belonging to one more group, a religious one. Third, both positive and the negative feedback towards the religious group (Church) of the participants reveal the experiences and the perceptions regarding their group in the present context.

6.1.1.1. Finding Of Self Into Non-Heterosexual Category (As Lesbians And Gays)

I wanted to explore how my participants began to recognise or consider themselves as a lesbian or a gay for the first time and if there were any difficulties faced. So, I have organised the data below based on the reason for becoming a lesbian and the experiences regarding the rejections and acceptances faced from family members.

The first case is of **Maria**, she is a lesbian currently studying theology and has experiences regarding the Church leadership. She explored her sexual identity as a lesbian at the age of thirteen or fourteen, during the time she was involved in a teen choir. She stated that none of her friends were gay or lesbian as it was not regarded as a ''normal thing'' back then. So, she kept to herself as she thought it was strange and thought that she was thinking temporarily. After a month of knowing, she was fully confident that she was a lesbian. She witnessed a particular incident which became a turning point for her as:

> I met this girl and then I was 18, four years later, and I fell in love with her and then I understood what it was…Then I wrote to her and told her and it didn't work out. She was great but she didn't handle it so well. It was a kind of shock for her (Maria).

The first family member **Maria** mentioned about her coming out was to her mother. Before she left for eight hours of her work, she sent a text to her mother on the phone. The reaction of her mother made her a bit angry when she got "more than a normal reaction". She thinks that her mother was thinking over her issue of coming out as a lesbian for a long time. It was

about an hour left for Maria's work and she was a ''little bit'' afraid of what her mother's reaction would be and she recalled her moment this way,

> I exactly don't remember but something like —— hi mom, I think I am gay and the answer was, ''ok, do you want to eat pizza tonight or lasagne?'' and I was a bit angry because it was like I was asking her, ''can I borrow some money?'' It was like ''ok what do you want to eat?'' [Laughs] I think I was like more concerned, overthinking a lot and this was happening inside my head for four years. So, I think I was buried under this feeling for a long time but it was really ok (Maria).

Maria's father supports gays and he drives a truck in every pride parade for the last eight years. Even though he was a bit concerned about people in the beginning that if they would think if he was gay. However, he actually is not concerned about what others say. Her grandmother (mother's mother) knew about her sexuality whereas her other grand-mother (father's mother) passed away without knowing her new identity. There was quite a difficulty in sharing with her as Maria mentioned that she was conservative to some extent.

The second case is of **Irina** who has experience as a leader in one of the Church of Norway. Her case of categorizing herself in the category of lesbian is not based on a particular incident like Maria but she mentioned:

> I had never been interested in having a boyfriend or the whole love thing. I was more interested in sports, horses. I didn't have posters of people I was attracted to at all when I was young (Irina).

What Irina stated as a sporty person and not being into romantic relation with a boy can be interpreted as she had no interests like other girls. It was specially after Irina's high school, she felt that she was mature enough to think about what kind of people she was attracted to. She found out that she was attracted to women in her early 20s and took much time of becoming comfortable with that thought. She concluded that it was ok to be a lesbian, a Christian, and a pastor at the same time.

She mentioned that there was not at all a problem with Irina's family as she comes from a very ''liberal family'' where her coming out as a lesbian was being accepted without any problem.

Chris had a bit different process where he mentioned that he did not recall a particular episode of same sex attraction. He mentioned that his process of coming out as a gay was

more than same sex attraction when I asked him if he started figuring it out through any same-sex attraction incidents like the other participants. He mentioned that he was fearful of not belonging and also it was an existential question.

> To me it's always about being different that I didn't really belong anywhere and also the feeling of lying everyone …………… on a small island middle of nowhere in early ……. but it was more of this a fear of
> never belonging, never being able to speak the truth about who I was (Chris).

He also related his sexual identity exploration to sexual awakening. He mentioned that he could not keep it secret any more. He said,

> It was about self- realisation and self- acknowledgement within myself and coping with it, accepting it and living with it (Chris).

Like Irina, all the family members of **Chris** supported him for his coming out as gay.

Louise found out herself as a lesbian when she was only looking at girls when she was studying in the seventh grade. I had asked her to understand what made her come out to be a lesbian:

> My question : How did you know that you a were lesbian for the first time?

> Louise: I always looked at girls in my class. It began when I was in seventh grade.

She comes from a family who attends Pentecostal church quite actively. She mentioned that her mother did not expect her coming out as a lesbian. In a way, the family members were shocked. She confided that her brother who is a very active member of her past church still does not talk to her. She has not yet mentioned to her grandmother because of her old age and her beliefs.

Looking back to Chapter 3.1.1., the above are the instances that relate to how Tajfel and Turner (1986) and Hogg and Abrams (1988) have elucidated about 'Social Categorisation' as the first process of SIT, Social Categorisation where an individual begins to figure out about their belonging in a group. It is process in which an individual shifts from his/her 'self' into a 'group'(Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 19). The participants had transformed themselves from a single individual into a particular group (sexual category) (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 19). Social Categorisation results 'self-perception' and 'self-definition'; the individuals are

identical to the group they categorise with (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 19). The findings state that my participants have one more category they have categorised into, a religious category.

6.1.1.2. The Beginning Of Religious Belief

The start of Christian faith in all the participants happened during the different situations and scenarios according to different interviews. After figuring out how they categorised themselves in the LGBT group, I was wanted to explore further on how they chose the religious path for embracing this identity as their other identity. In addition, I wanted to find out how they perceive the relation between these two identities.

Maria was thirteen years old when she got a confirmation invitation letter and as all her classmates were participating, she decided to get confirmation as well from the Church of Norway. She clarifies that she was not into religion initially but she wanted to figure out whether sh e wanted to belong. She mentioned that gradually, she started feeling church as her ''second home''. This way she mentioned her feelings towards the Church she started her religious journey with,

> I could be myself. I felt like I grew up there. So, I just found myself there (Maria).

She elaborated on her first ever belonging and the development of belonging to the church also in relation to the church accepting her thoughts and her freedom to be herself. The clarity on Christian belief and embracing the religion occured when she was around sixteen or seventeen.

> I came there and met some really nice people and they told me that it was ok to not know if I believed in God. I think that was the answer I wanted then I could use the time I needed to find out if I believed in God. It was sometimes I was like I didn't believe but when I was thinking [that], it felt wrong. It's like if you are in a relationship and you say to yourself, ''maybe I should break up'' but then you feel that's the wrong thing to do…… (Maria).

Such experiences of Maria helped her to be a Christian and she further expressed,

> So, then I was thinking that it may be that it's a bigger here. I should just stay here and find out more about God, Jesus and myself and I don't think I had this like opening my eyes and then I saw God. I think it was just like God was always there but I didn't notice and suddenly I noticed God was there. It was too much feelings [.] the religion, the God and myself and who I was in a bigger picture (Maria).

Irina mentions that it was quite late she fully was enrolled into Christianity. It started when she was in a Christian boarding high school because she wanted to start a subject with horsemanship (6.1.1. already contains the information) and the school had that. Since it was a Christian school, there was a subject called 'Christian religion study'. She was more influenced to read the theological books when she was around seventeen or eighteen in high school because of the influence of the school. She also mentioned how she was a bit known with the church in her early life and there is an incident that made her atheist, she said,

> I was baptised as an infant, and during my childhood, my mother took me to church on Christmas eve but I became atheist when my grandmother died. I started at a Christian High school and there, I decided to become Christian. (Irina)

There was a different environment for **Louise** in comparison to the rest of the participants. She grew up in a Pentecostal church in her hometown which she regarded as a conservative denomination when it comes to accepting gay or non- heterosexual people in the church. As her family members were active in the church services and activities, she grew up to be Christian in that church. However, her personal religious categorisation began when she was in her high school like Irina,

> I come from a religious family. It's hard to say an exact time, but it was during my second year in my high school, I think. What inspired me? Other Christians that showed a lot of love to other people and talked much about our loving God…(Louise)

After she moved to Oslo, she changed her church thinking her initial church would not accept her sexual identity so she changed the church whereas she continued to believe in the same God she had found to follow in the old church. It was a change of denomination for her but not her faith.

Like Irina's family, **Chris'** family attended the Church only during the special ceremonies like baptisms and weddings. Personally, he started attending the Church when he was sixteen after a local Church asked him if he wanted to be a part of youth work in the Church. This way, he grew up in the Church. He mentioned that his faith grew along with the responsibility he got from the Church.

Participants' belonging to sexual and religious categories at a time relates to individuals' belonging to more than one group at a time (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 13). The participants

found the place in the church where it is stated that categorisation also creates individuals' place in society, (Tajfel and Turner, 1986, p. 16). Louise instance of perceiving the Pentecostal church as conservative relates to ''out-grouping'' (Hogg and Abrams, 1988, p. 19). Her case of leaving her initial church (from Pentecostal) and moving towards the Church of Norway made me more curious why an individual is inclined to the other groups? The reason behind is scrutinized in the 'Discussion' Chapter.

6.1.2. Belonging In The Church Of Norway

According to the participants' experiences, the Church of Norway has accepted its double identity. The Church leaders had a vital role where they were able to identify themselves as lesbians and as gays at the same time. First part shows how the Church accepted them and the second encompasses if these two identities can exist together even in different and difficult situations.

6.1.2.1. Mobility Towards Norwegian Lutheran Church; Spot Where Sexual Identity Is Compatible With Religious Identity?

Maria had straight support from the church she belonged (Church of Norway) whereas she was not expecting such support from a priest. So, she perceived it would be a bit of difficult situation where she had just come out and at the same time she had to engage herself in a committee of the Church where she represented the youths. She was afraid that what if they would have a debate on gay marriage: she thought that it was a big step for bringing up the issue as the matter of discussion (the same-sex wedding was not accepted then). When she was doubting about the matter, she decided to see her priest and mention who she was.

> So, then I called my priest ⸺ ah, he is really a good guy and I told him that I needed to talk to him then he was like ''ok, we can meet tomorrow''. I never had told him that I needed to talk to him. He was actually nervous as well because he was thinking that it may be I was going to leave the church or somebody had died, the worst case scenario, you know………..().............. Ok, I am listening [her priest]. I could see in his face that he was really nervous and I told him, "I think I am gay. Yes, I am going to the council meeting and if there are debates about stuff that ⸺ like gay marriage and something like that. I don't know what to do''. And he was like ⸺ just staring at me and like ''was that all? You could have told me that on my phone'' (Maria).

Maria got support from her priest even though he later mentioned during that conversation that he did not support same-sex wedding but supported gays. He mentioned to her that in his

belief, according to the Bible, marriage is for man and woman but he did also think that God created all and they deserve to be loved and respect and have the same ''capability to sit in the council like a straight person''. She thought that he took her ''really good'' and mentioned strongly that he would support her no matter what would happen. She claimed that he kept his promise by supporting her in different situations.

With **Chris'**s story, he also got support from his church (Church of Norway) like Maria. He mentioned that he was prepared to be kicked out of the Church but nothing like that really happened. He said,

> God's bless kind of and I remember that ⸺ kind of everything was such a chaos for me those weeks even though it was like a good chaos because there was no rejection. I remember that I felt that I had to control all the relations that I was part of and I remember that church was the first part so that I could check (×××) like they were the first one so actually said it right out loud [.] that this was ok then they were backing me if I ever needed them. They could be there (Chris).

He mentioned that he would leave the Church if he did not get the support from his Church. He mentioned that he would say,

> If you don't want me, I don't want you (Chris).

However, he mentioned that he would not stop believing in God as he said that faith is harder to leave.

In contrast to the rest of the interviewees, **Louise'**s case is different. It is already mentioned earlier that she attended a Pentecostal church in her hometown. There was no particular church member she went and mentioned that she had come out as a lesbian. She simply thought for sure there would be no acceptance as she was sensing the rejection from her family members as they too attended this church. So, she stopped attending the church from her hometown. After she moved out of her place to Oslo in order to pursue her further studies. I asked her what made her stop attending her initial church and she replied,

> I saw a lesbian priest in the church. I was thinking to attend after that (Louise)

Such instances above state that how the participants after figuring out to belong into the Church of Norway and also the support they got from their Church leaders. This connects to how the individuals define and how others in the group help them emotionally get attached to

the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 15). The sexual and religious identity of the participants overlap and how they coexist depend upon different situations yet they equally matter.

6.1.2.2. Equal Preference Of The Two Identities

I was concerned if one identity could be more important than the other for the participants. This was in order to highlight the relation between these two categories. So, the participants have responded that additionally shows their overlapping identity struggle they faced in the past.

   Chris said that he has super fun at work and he doesn't walk around remembering he is a gay priest and he mentioned that he cannot show anything that proves his overlapping identities like ''tattooing on his forehead'' whereas, in the situations like singing hymns, one does not need to know who is. However, he prefers to be known as a gay priest as a part of his identity (both religious and sexual identity coexist for him),

> but it's quite hard to leave [laughs] all my experiences behind because there's still a part of me and they shaped into who I was and they are still affecting me in ways……………. I am not built in a way that I can leave my childhood behind or my teen years behind. All these years of shaping my identity. It has made me who I am and it kind of sticks with me for the rest of my life. So, that's why I am saying that I am always going to be a gay priest in my own ways but probably it's just a priest in the other people's eyes (Chris).

His sexual and religious identities coexist as he further mentioned,

> My involvement with the church and my involvement with LGBTQ people, they are intertwined (Chris).

   Irina stated that both the identities matter her equally and go hand in hand. There are some challenges like she has to be very careful and conscious of preaching and preparing.

> I always have to think about what I am saying and about what I am preaching and I cannot be totally free…… I want to stay truth to myself and to my belief and to my theology but it's not — cannot do that all the time. I have to think a lot though like during service, during teaching the kids, the youths or when I am meeting people in the church (Irina).

However, she is more open and comfortable to say that she is a lesbian priest because of her past experiences. She assured that being a Christian and a lesbian for her is not sinful. Therefore, these two identities can go hand in hand for her.

Louise sometimes did not want to be open with her Christian identity with her lesbian or gay friends. It is because she is scared of being rejected but now, she has no problem now as she elaborated the reason why,

> Sometimes, I didn't really want to say I was a Christian because they didn't want to accept me for who I was and they didn't want to have anything to do with me anymore. Right now, I have no problems but earlier —— because lesbian. It is ok! (Louise).

Maria used to get scared of being rejected by her gay friends but strongly accepts that she will hold her Christian identity together with her sexual identity in the future.

> When I am telling gay people that I am a Christian, it's not a warm welcome and I was afraid that it would not be a warm welcome but when I started, it was nobody cared in a way I thought they would care. ……I am going to be a priest but I am always going to be myself, I am a lesbian. So, then I am going to be a lesbian priest because the whole thing is that I cannot have two personalities. I just —— I am one person. I am going to combine them when I start working though it might be hard in the start (Maria).

In different situations, seeing significance and insignificance of expression of sexual identity in the church shows that it depends upon the different situations whether to stick with one or more identities (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 372). The religious and sexual group belonging of my participants demonstrates how 'group belonging can be multiple' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 13). A person identifies himself or herself in a particular group they belong to, for instance, Louise calls herself a lesbian Christian. Going back to her story, she changed her denomination within Christianity in order to retain her identity as a Christian after comming up as a homosexual and being rejected from her previous church. Her assertion that she feels happy in belonging to the Church of Norway and, "it is ok to be a lesbian and a Christian at the same time'' helps to infer that group belonging can be an important aspect of one's life. We can relate her case to how one's positive perception towards self depends on how one's group takes him/her positively which is the result of the importance of group one finds to belong in (Tajfel & Turner, quoted in Hepburn 2002, p. 34).

6.1.3. Positive VS Negative Comparison

The data presents two contradictory notions; how the partcipants are positive towards the changes that have occured in regards to Chistian LGBT rights in the Church. At the same time, they also express that there are more changes that are yet to take place.

Irina did not have difficulties in being accepted as a lesbian in the Church she grew up (Church of Norway) but she relates how the other denominations, reject the LGBT people even though they grow up there and how the Church Of Norway takes the step to support those denied people. She expressed,

> Norwegian church [Church of Norway] officially is stepping forward that it's important that other denominations also accept LGBT people. We have to talk even louder against discrimination that is happening in other denominations, other churches in Norway because we are the majority church and we have a strong voice. We cannot just stand on the side line and accept what's happening. I have friends that have been thrown out from the congregation because they have been coming out as a gay or a lesbian and been refused to be a leader or a preacher in their denomination. Many of them have been there for many years, may be they have grown up in that denomination. So ⸺ it's pissing me off [sighs] that they are experiencing this and I think it's so important that the Norwegian church [Church of Norway] is stepping forward saying this is not ok, this is not the Word of God. Of course, we need to have a good relation with other denominations in Norway but something we cannot accept for example if they discriminate gay and lesbian people (Irina).

However, she feels that the LGBT leadership and same-sex wedding in the Church has a long way to go.

Chris gave his opinion on how there are still things left to be done within the Church,

> Legally, law wise, almost everything is in place. it's not a lot of things missing but socially, relationally and practically, in congregation, there's a lot left to be done …………………There are still hills to climbers, battles to fighters, and struggles to overcomers (Chris).

According to **Maria**, Despite the fact of getting a chance of getting married in the church, the most of the priests in the Church Of Norway are not willing to marry same-sex couples. There are only very few priests who perform the ceremonies as Maria expressed,

> I have a friend now. She is also a priest. She is going to get married and she is the only one that marries same- sex couples where she lives. So, she has hired another priest from the city and marry because she is the only one to do it. She cannot marry herself, yes, I take her, yes, I do. Yeah, she cannot do that so ⸺ and I think that's sad. I think she wants to get married and she's legally right to do it and it's like I don't know, twenty other priests in the area and everybody saying no. I think the practice there should be gone. It's like two hours to get a new priest and to other priests, it's ten minutes' drive. Now, she has to drive two hours and that's sad. I think that practice should be gone.................()..................but I also understand why we have it this way, because we need to have compromise right now otherwise the churches will be empty. Most of the priests will stop working if they have to marry same-sex couples. (Maria).

The Church Of Norway is the majority Church in Norway (see Chapter 2, 'Background') The data from Irina presents the contrast between the Church Of Norway and the other denominations in the country. As the Church allows same-sex wedding and bestows some other LGBT rights within the Church, it is clear that the participants' leadership means to make more changes within the Church. A willing to have an LGBT leader in the higher position by my participants can be viewed through 'Social Identity Theory of Leadership' which states about 'prototypicality'. The 'prototypical' members are said to represent the feelings, attitudes and behaviours of other people in the group (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 366). The wishes of having leaders in the higher authority of the participants reveals that they want somebody who would represent their sexual identity and who is like them or 'one of them' (Hogg, 2005, p. 59).

6.2. The Role Of Leadership In The Compatibility Of Religious And Sexual Identities

This section first looks at it is the sexual identity of LGBT Church leaders compatible with their religious identities. First, the beginning of entering into the leadership that shows how the participants were motivated to choose this path, second, the challenges faced within the Church in their leadership due to the their sexual identity and third, the participants' expression on the need of more prototypical leaders in the Church.

6.2.1. Paths Towards Leadership

The findings state that the participants were supported and inspired from others and also because of their own interests and missions, they decided/have decided to be the leaders in the Church. This is presented into two ways; Chris and Maria's stories show how they were encouraged by others to be church leaders and Irina's and Louise's experiences on how they were motivated for the church leadership after seeing somebody as an inspirational factor.

The very first example of how leaders entered into church leadership can be studied through **Chris'** experiences; he expressed that it was many things he was actively engaged into. So, this was the time when people were curious if he should be studying theology and become a priest.

Ah, and it was the period that several people kind of, you know, started asking me whether I should study theology and be a priest and bla bla bla. At first, I was pretty sure I was never going to do it because it was a lot of discrimination in the synod back then whether LGBTQ people could be priest basically and it was my committee who was working in that case (Chris).

Chris' respond on what made him change his mind or why he chose to study theology is:

Probably a curiosity within myself and other people's questions and kind of encouragement and then also this feeling of wanted to be a part of church leadership (Chris)................When I look back on my experience of being so scared of, being shut out or rejected, becoming a priest, getting ordination, no one can actually stop me from doing anything [laughs], you know like they could, of course, stop me from doing anything but when it comes to right. I have all the rights that you can have in the church and no one can actually take that away from you. If I was not becoming a priest then someone could say, ''no, you cannot go there, you cannot do this, you should not do that.'' So, I think that was also kind of ⸺ you know, once again another struggle, right? Like I am overcoming that by taking the education and fighting it through (Chris)..............................()..becoming a priest, getting ordination, no one can actually stop me from doing anything [laughs], you know like they could, of course, stop me from doing anything but when it comes to right. I have all the rights that you can have in the church and no one can actually take that away from you. If I was not becoming a priest then someone could say, ''no, you cannot go there, you cannot do this, you should not do that.'' So, I think that was also kind of ⸺ you know, once again another struggle, right? Like I am overcoming that by taking the education and fighting it through (Chris).

Maria, she has already some experiences on being a part of leadership in the church though she is currently studying, therefore, her experiences are also considered. She started being a confirmation leader after she had her confirmation. At the same time, she came out as a lesbian; she was asked to represent her youth in the church council. It was supported she got from her priest which made her continue in the youth. She made it clear during the interview that she had no intention, in the beginning, to study theology and to look forward to being a priest like Chris.

I have been a leader for a confirmation group for like forever since I had confirmation. One of my friends, she is also a priest, she asked me, ''do you want to be a priest?'' and I said, ''no, I really don't''. She asked me like *five* years ⸺ ''so, you're sure you're not going to be a priest''. ''No, I am not going to be a priest'' (Maria).

What actually made Maria change her mind to study theology? She said,

Actually I was going to be *a nurse*. I wanted to work with people and I was thinking being a nurse means working with people and I can help them. When I was going to apply, I took nurse on the top and theology on the bottom, not because ⸺ it was not totally out and I was like may be, I can study theology but the day before the due date,

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sending on the list, I changed everything. I took the nurse on the bottom and theology on the top and thought – ok it looks better. I thought I can start theology and I will figure it out on the way. So, I want to be a priest today (Maria).

In addition, Maria elaborated the reason she chose to study theology and becoming a priest this way,

When you are a priest, you are helping people and you are working with people and that's what I want to do, working with people and helping people and now, I can do that with my faith as well. So, that's the main reason I chose theology but it took me *a long time* to see this (Maria).

Irina's story of not choosing theology straight at once is like that of Maria and Chris. When Maria joined the Christian high school, it was more of her focus on having a subject called 'horsemanship' as she was keen on it. Therefore, she joined a Christian school which had the subject of her interest where she encountered with a young pastor who was her teacher. She mentioned that she was inspired to see such a young woman being a pastor. This teacher was an 'influence' (Hogg, 2001, p. 189) for her (from her religious group). Therefore, she chose to be a pastor. She also added that normally the pastors are perceived to be old men. She started to study theology after her high school which was the time she came out as a lesbian and later she was ordained as a priest (the part of this story, her experience on the process will be highlighted in one of the topics below which come to be more relevant there).

Back then when I started, I was not sure of being a pastor because if you are talking about a pastor in the church you are thinking about an old man but being a woman and young, my that teacher was a role model for me to see myself as a pastor, I think I am still young [laughs] (Irina).

About **Louise**, as she has a bit different experience based on the church than the rests. She was a part of a Pentecostal church which she mentioned was conservative. However, she changed the church and started attending the Church Of Norway where she had observed a lesbian priest in the Church. She started studying theology after she came out as a lesbian. Louise was very clear why she chose to study theology, she told me in the interview,

I want to be a priest. I don't want any discrimination in the church. People will be included, more open. People should be allowed to express what they feel and what they think. I want people that are in the closet to come out (Louise).

Maria's and Chris' leadership in the Church despite their sexual identity is encouraged by other people and they were strengthened to choose the path of leadership. This can be

interpreted as that those people might have had 'trust' in them (Hogg, 2010, p. 803) and as Maria's and Chris' social attraction was bolstered by the most prototypical members ('in groupers' in the religious category) (Hogg, 2005, p. 59). On the other hand, Irina and Louise have some influence from the existing leaders in the Church of Norway; Irina from a young lady like her who was into religion and Louise from a lesbian like her. This instance connects to that leaders are 'one of us' when the members are influenced and attracted towards them (Hogg, 2001, pp. 189-189). The reasons why Chris and Louise chose to be leaders were also to have an authority and impartiality within the Church (their group). There are some challenges faced by the LGBT Church leaders along with the opportunities they have like belonging and being in the leadership in the Church.

6.2.2. Chances Yet Challenges

The different challenges faced by the participants as church leaders despite the opportunity of being a leader and working as a leader is mentioned below in three sub-themes, during hiring, during work and challenges faced from conservative group members (within the church). This shows how there are challenges within the group as well as outside the group because of the two overlapping identities.

6.2.2.1. During Recruitment

According to **Irina**, it was a difficult scenario from church members while becoming a priest. Similarly, when **Maria** was in the church council, it was once a debate among the members whether to hire a gay person who was talented in the area they were going to hire. What Maria experienced, in this case, was a difficulty though it was not her personal case of being hired but being in the committee for hiring someone who was a gay but fully talented. She shared that other people in the committee were arguing too much with her, which made her think that she did not get the same respect as the priest who was supporting her voice. She thinks that they knew that she was a lesbian and it created a problem.

> It came up a debate. Other people in the council were looking at me and asking, ''ok, what do you think? Should we hire him?'' Because they were going to hire a new person in the church and one of the commenters was like ''but he is a gay'' and I was like ''yeah, we should hire him because one, he is young, yeah, he is good in the piano. He has written so many songs himself and he is so good and talented so why should we not hire him?'' And then the priest just said, ''yes, she has a good point, why should we not hire him?''……….Because when I said it, they were just arguing with me and when the priest asked the same question right after me then they were like ''yeah

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you have a good point'' but not to me but to him. I didn't feel that I got the same respect. I never told them I was a gay but I think they all knew (Maria).

6.2.2.2. During The Work

While working as a priest or a leader in the Church Of Norway is still a challenge for the leader participants. They have experienced some challenges from their church members while they work as a leader. **Irina** has faced some challenges from some of her church members where she does not feel that she is fully taken as a leader, fully respected and having a full leadership authority because of the fact that she is still a young leader and also the fact that she is a lesbian.

> Some people fill the room with their personalities, you know. They call me a sweet girl, well, I am not a girl anymore, I am a pastor……………… In different ways, as a pastor, or a church leader, you inherit some authority and also you have to gain some authority to be a person ⸺ to be a leader. But when a person in the congregation or a colleague or someone else is saying to you ⸺ are expressing to you that they think your sexual identity to live it out is a sin. You kind of lose, they are taking some of the authority away from you and also saying that I haven't enough knowledge about religion ⸺ my own religion, about my own faith. Therefore, I shouldn't be a pastor, shouldn't be teaching people about God in the church. (Irina)

Irina and **Chris**, both got some letter where they felt a personal attack from the public when they worked in the leadership position.

> People are more open to say what they mean, either by writing me awful letters about I am going to burn in hell or coming to me in other places saying, ''you are a sinner, you shouldn't be a pastor, bla bla bla. I am kind of used to discussions because I know how to discuss, I know how to ⸺ what to say but when people are kind of attacking your personal or sexual identity, it was harder for me (Irina).

> It was a lot of discussions in the synod back then …whether LGBTQ people could be priest basically and it was my committee who was working in that case so, I mean I got a lot of letters, a lot of phone calls, a lot of texts, a lot of notes. Ah, just on my desks, that a lot of people wanted me to burn in hell or rotten away or just leave the church because I was no good enough, umm... this was a rejection of whole another level than I expected it (Chris).

6.2.2.3. Other Denominations

There were some experiences from some of the churches who do not accept gay people as members or leaders in the church according to my participants whom they have categorised as 'conservatives'. What they told during the interviews was that they sometimes have the

challenge to co-operate and work with them. The instance is taken form **Irina**, she becomes very careful while collaborating with other denominations as a leader.

> I am being very careful while meeting other denominations to work with like Orthodox and Catholics churches. They will not co-operate if I say that I am a lesbian pastor (Irina).

Because of Maria's support for hiring a new employee in the church relates to how the leaders are effective in their leadership through Social Identity processes as they are taken to be a good fit with the group's norms (Hogg & Levine, 2010, p. 802). However, this instance shows the conflict between the members' (within the group) notion towards whether to accept the gay employee. During recruitment and the work, there was no fair treatment, it was related to what norms have to match that enhance identification (Hogg & Levine, 2010, p. 803). This evolves a question, is the leader (as in group member) with overlapping identity has no chance in the enhancement of his or her identification in the group then? Irina's case of not getting accepted and respected as a leader by 'in-group' members shows that there is rejection within the Church that relates to the reaction of the more prototypical members over a less prototypical member (Hogg and Levine, 2010, p. 802). However, her expression of being conscious in hiding the sexual identity to 'out- siders' shows that there is also rejection in 'out-group'. The ''in-group'' and ''out-group'' relation because of the overlapping identities will be illuminated in Chapter 7.

6.2.3. A Need Of A Prototypical Support

This section is the experiences and the views of my participants on the solution for the challenges faced as LGBT church leaders in the Church. The desire for the typical representor in the higher post in the leadership. The reason for this is that the participants expressed that they need the superiors for changes and to get full support from them.

Irina, herself already being a leader, expressed how the Church Of Norway needs a gay Bishop in the first interview in the context of how more effect can happen on the change that has happened. Irina, herself being a lesbian leader, she desires for a gay or a lesbian Bishop, in the higher position than her.

> …………..but we are still waiting for a gay Bishop [laughs]. Even if a gay or a lesbian [.] really waiting for that to happen and I think it's a shame that it hasn't already happened (Irina).

For, **Maria**, it is about having someone there before she becomes a priest. As she is looking forward to starting her role as a priest, she knows that some people would go against her teaching or preaching then she needs some senior for the support or resolving out the aroused problems. She mentioned that she would not be able to continue in her role if she had not found the support from her superiors and she still desires such supporters,

> There are people I am going to say God's words to and if they don't get the trust and they don't trust in me because I am a gay. If I didn't tell them that I am a gay, how can I earn the trust from day one? So, I need to be honest from day one but I am not ready………….I need to know that I have somebody that can back me, I need to know that I have my superiors, they can be like ''ok, if something happens, you just call us and we can handle it together''. I need that as well. I need someone that —— I need to know that I am not alone. I think that's important to me…….
>
> I think I will feel more alone and then I am afraid that I might quit and start working somewhere else and I don't want to do that. If I start something, I want to follow it through. I want to do it and do it right and properly (Maria).

All my participants responded on preferring Church wedding than just wedding in the court. However, the challenge of not fully enjoying this right is expressed simultaneously. They gave their views which helps the reader to examine why a religious LGBT person prefers on getting married in the Church.

> I love the fact that I can marry in the church if I want to and to have same sex couples coming to the church and to bless them, it's a blessing itself. I love that. It's a huge deal, of course!.......... I am very happy that it came when it came. It's so long way to go (Chris)
>
> I think it's a bit important. I want to get married someday in the church because of my belief. I feel a strong connection to the Norwegian church and it will be a little different if I didn't get to marry in the church (Louise).
>
> I want to get married in the church because I want to do it with my partner in front of God and yes, God is also in court but it's like God's host, it's the house where you worship God and I think it's having a little bit bigger meaning because you have the Bible there. You have the word, you get the word of God, you get a blessing from the priest on behalf of God. I think that's also important for me in the marriage (Maria).

Hogg (2014) stating prototypical leaders' ability to adopt different strategies to manage and shape their group's identity (Hogg, 2010, p. 803) can be expected from prototypical leaders whereas it shows a preference for more prototypical leaders would be a solution for compatibility of sexual and religious identity within the church. This understanding can be supported with what Hogg (2005) mentioned that the most prototypical leaders' ideas are

more readily and widely accepted than ideas suggested by others as he or she exercises influences over others (Hogg, 2005, p. 59). The final chapter evolved from the further solution for compatibility of sexual and religious identity within the church; the prototypical leaders seen as trustworthy, necessarily do not have to follow the group norms as they are more innovative and transformational than non- prototypical and less prototypical leaders that (Hogg, 2010, p. 803).

6.3. Facilitation of Group Inclusion Through Transformational Leadership

This part presents how LGBT leaders in the Church of Norway are enrolled in 'motivating and bringing changes in the beliefs and attitudes' of Church members towards the LGBT people. Therefore, this part encompasses the analysing of the findings based on Transformational Leadership Theory as the transformational leaders are engaged in motivating bringing changes in beliefs, attitudes (Cavazotte et al., 2013 p. 492). There are four different sub- sections under this part; first, how the LGBT leaders are engaged in bringing more changes within and outside the Church. Second, this is the extension of first sub-section which demonstrates the ways the participants are enroled in helping others. The third sub-section is about what their view regarding the preference over having a separate church for LGBT people in Norway is. The fourth, how can there be unity within the church members who have a conflicting notion regarding LGBT church members, in other words, what could be the possible solution for making sexual and religious identity more compatible within the church.

6.3.1. Crafting Changes

As I had found from the interviews that the participant leaders are engaged in bringing and expecting the change, I wanted to know that how they were engaged in making the changes in the church members' and in their followers. Their feedback is mentioned respectively below.

Chris was asked how he is engaged in bringing changes and he responded as,

> It's just a different view on how to understand change………..I like to think that I am doing something that changes the world into a better place (Chris).

He was engaged in the church council during the high time of discussion on the same-sex wedding in the church where he decided to do the discussion on the matter without any interruption of media because he wanted people to speak out freely. According to his experience of being in the church council, it was easier in the formal position to work for the change, for example locating the needs for rights and speaking out the truth. He said that he changed a lot since he entered the Church politics. He prefers social medias like Facebook, Instagram, blogs, and YouTube which he thinks they provide him the position and they are used well, change can go far and reach wide.

> I probably moved from having this kind of church politics [.] power and having more about the individual voice that sometime may reach further out (Chris)

People have contacted him and it is those who do not dare to come out, do not dare to tell their parents or their friends, who do not know what to do with their lives and there are constantly people being afraid of being different. He also opined that change happens in co-operation with people.

> I want people to attend church. I want them to come to church. I want them to change the church from the bottom up. So, it's cool that we now have liturgy where same sex couples can get married in the church but I want the truth to be told in a local level . I want people to step up and be a part of their local communities and this way that I feel that I am in a much more in a position to change (Chris).

Maria had an active role in contributing on same- sex church wedding in the country as she mentioned that she was engaged in the Church Council where she was one of the beginners for raising a topic on having a debate on 'same- sex wedding'. She also gets a lot of queries from people on social media like Chris. She wants to be that someone she missed when she needed to talk to in her early days. She shared how she was engaged in helping some people in difficulties and confusions to come out who acknowledged her years after.

> I want to be the person I missed when I was needing someone to talk to. I am trying to be that person. I am trying to be open. If people ask me, I answer them……. some years later I have got texts like ⸺ hi, I just want to thank you for the talk four years ago. I am gay and I really appreciate that you were there for me and that means a lot to me. I actually can be the person I missed because I can be there for someone (Maria).

When Maria was walking in a parade, a person coming to her and asked if she wanted to help in teaching school kids about the LGBT issues, then she agreed to help. She worked with four high schools to spread the message through one of the organisations where she talked with the

students about respecting gay friends and spread the message that it is ok to be different and being gay is normal. She shared that it helps the children stop negating the word 'gay' and it stops bullying the young people who have come out. She argued the misuse of the term would keep that person in fear and probably that person will never come out.

For making some changes, **Irina** responded that she is engaged in Church youths and the children where she tries to aware youths and children on LGBT matter. On the other hand, she wants to bring more changes in the Church and in the community and she works for that thro ugh her writing, for instance, writing articles on the rights of Christian LGBT people like Church leadership and same-sex wedding. In some articles, she focuses writing on discrimination against LGBT people in the church. She also mentioned that she tries to aware and educate people through her preaching and teaching about LGBT issues in the church services.

The experiences and the perceptions based on Chris, Maria and Irina for adopting ways of bringing change resemble how the change can occur through leaders who are focused to motivate and change beliefs and attitudes of their followers (Cavazotte et al., 2013 p. 492). They have engaged themselves further in different ways in order to be some support for others (to their Church members and their followers).

6.3.2. Being There For Others

This heading includes all four elements of 'Transformational Leadership Theory' which try to show the participants are engaged in achieving the better results (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 5) which is presented through the use of four elements of the theory, however, the elements are not chronologically used.

'Being there for others' means how the leaders are there for helping out in different ways and at different levels as it is found out from my participants. It is their availability as leaders to help people under their leadership and also other people who basically tend to follow them or see them as a source of the solution. The following areas are mainly highlighted as findings where the LGBT leaders are engaged to reach out.

6.3.2.1. Being Inclusive And Providing Emotional Support

Irina mentioned that when it comes to supporting emotionally; it is not only about going to the church and doing her stuff. It is also being together with people like asking how people have been and engaging people in her preaching as well so that they can feel the preaching relates to their life stories and they can feel the love of God.

> People coming through the door of the church, they always have their history [.] their life history with them so, that means also through my preaching that it's important to always try to remember that they have their life experiences ……. I try to seek things from different point of view through my preaching. I show that Jesus is near to people having hard times (Irina).

As it is earlier mentioned that some LGBT people sought help from **Chris** and Maria via social media, they were engaged in supporting them emotionally and mentally against their confusions and fear. **Maria** wanting to be a person being there for others was her feedback during the conversation how much she was giving out herself in order to support emotionally in order to make a change in the future. This data relates to how leaders can give emotional support for their members in order to bring a change in a group (Cavazotte et al., 2013, p. 493).

6.3.2.2. Boosting Up Self-esteem And Self-confidence

Irina's idea on instilling self- esteem in people is a lot about showing respect, showing that they are listened to. It means that she is giving them a message that she is taking them seriously then they can be open to share their things with her and be themselves like she does that with people she works with in her church. This way, her thought is to support in their low self- esteem where the people can be open in sharing about their problems, their ideas, and their knowledge. On the other hand, in connection with the same example, she elaborated on how she instils self- confidence in people she works with, she gave a particular instance with youths; she emphasized on giving youths responsibilities in order to boost up their self-confidence. It was a bit confusing to me so, she further clarified how positive feedback can play a better role in up lifting their self-confidence.

> When you give them responsibilities, of course, you give them a lot of good feedback. It could be a small thing they might have done but they have finished it. Say, ''that was really good'' or ''perfect'' (Irina).

Irina's bolstering of the self-esteem and confidence is her step in motivating people around her. Transformational leaders do motive their members and are creative in finding solutions (Cavazotte et al., 2013, p. 493).

6.3.2.3. Inspiring

This is a combined response from all the leaders that how they are engaged in different ways for inspiring people. They have done/ doing that through preaching, teaching, being self-example, showing people movies on role models and also, doing something creative together rather than just talking about things. Irina as a priest connects inspiration as showing the way to people to love each other and follow God.

> Actually, it's a good word inspire, like inspire people to show each other love, to follow Jesus to do things that God wants us to do. I use a lot of examples from movies, literature…… (Irina).

This instance relates to how the transformational leaders are inspirational for followers for a certain goal or a shared vision (Bass & Tauber, 2012, p. 10).

6.3.2.4. Addressing Individual Needs

It is found out that how these leaders have enrolled themselves in different ways in helping people, one of them is how they act through a different level for giving solutions to address individual needs. Irina's instance is taken to show this under this finding. For the sake of focusing on individuals' needs for example when some women have their babies sick or have any problem then they ask her to see Irina for the other day for their meeting. Irina mentioned that she has to take a day off from her day off in order to meet the individual need and help them out. On the other hand, she also mentioned the other way of addressing individual needs, for instance, taking a different (separate) day for confirmation if there is a youth with anxiety, that cannot be taken together in group confirmation. Her other Church work with the kids and the youths help them to understand the LGBT people in some ways as she witnessed through the interviews.

This connects with what Bass' and Riggio's (2006) have mentioned about how the followers are supported, mentored, and coached under the leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 5) where individual needs are addressed for the sake of the individual, the group, and for the larger organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3).

6.3.2.5. Instilling Positivity

It is found out that the participants as LGBT leaders are themselves positive and have been engaged in instilling positivity in different LGBT people before they come out as different non-heterosexual age groups. **Maria** is positive about everything that comes across according to what she said,

> I believe in the positive thing in everything. I try to be positive in everything. If the train doesn't go, ok. I cannot do anything about it. I am on the train, what can I do? I can start reading for my class because I have books. Yes, I missed the class but I had read something. So, positive in the negative (Maria).

When people who find it negative in turning out to be gay because of various reasons like being bullied which leads them in a very difficult situation to decide. In this case, my participants like Maria have engaged/engage themselves in saying that it is ok to be different as a lesbian or a gay or to have any other sexual identity. On the other hand, some of the participants mentioned how they are engaged in spreading about their understanding of the matter for example in making people think positive towards non- heterosexuals. They mentioned that all age group should think positive towards LGBT people, therefore, some of them are engaged in spreading message amid young people like in the schools just not to let them make use of or perceive the term, 'gay' in a negative way. Some of them are including the matter in their preaching to spread positivity amid adults or seniors.

The notion Maria gave here relates to leaders providing meaning, and displays ''enthusiasm and optimism'' to their folowers (Bass & Tauber, 2012, p. 10)

6.3.2.6. Being Challenging And Tough Leaders

It was the exploration of how some of my participants as leaders reckon on being a kind as well as a strict leader for achieving their goal as a leader. Irina as it was mentioned earlier how she was engaged in addressing individual's need and she connected her leadership attitude on her being also a challenging leader for the sake of making people stronger in things that they do not dare to do.

> It's important for me that people can feel home in the church …………… sometimes people have to be pushed to dare to do stuff. So, it's kind of balance there (Irina).

I have also found out how some interviewees like **Maria** got engaged in showing strong leadership despite some personal matter. Maria said that she had to be a professional leader when the very first girl she fell in love with got hurt in her leg. When she had mentioned about liking to this girl, the girl responded not talking, so, they did not talk to each other for like three or four months. Maria witnessed that she was a leader to this girl in a youth group, therefore, when she got hurt, she had to take care of her, so, she carried her and fixed her wound despite what happened between them or for Maria, what it could not happen. This way through this instance she revealed that she acted as a strong leader even though the situation was a pretty personal one for her. When it was asked to some of the interviewees about their future engagement as an LGBT leader, Maria's answer is taken from the part of her interview. She expressed on her future intention as a leader on resolving the case of finding a very few priests who are flexible in marrying the same-sex couples in the present which gives a lucid understanding of a strong personality in an LGBT leader.

> In the future, I want to make it like a slow transition, like we can quit that practice and we can just agree that everybody can get married [in the Church]. So, it's your job to do it. Just face it even if you don't like it. Everybody has something in their job that they really don't like but you do it because it's your job. …….. I want that we quit the practice….. I understand why it's this like this now and I respect that but I want it to be gone. You understand, what I mean? (Maria)

Irina thinks that sometimes, it is challenging to reach the goal through the procedure of listening to everybody and specially when people disagree. She mentioned that in that case, she and others need to be a tough leader to move forward even though people might not like it but one needs to do it.

The instance from Irina and Maria shows how challenging they are as leaders which is one of the characteristics of transformational leaders (Bass & Tauber, 2012, p. 10). How the participants were engaged as leaders that they possess the qualities or the elements of transformational leadership (see Chapter 3.2.1. & Chapter 3.2.2.). As they are figured out as transformational leaders, what vision or mission they actually possess?

6.3.3. NoTo One Particular Group

In order to achieve the higher goal, according to Avolio and Bass the leaders are engaged providing with better and different thoughts on solving the problems (Avolio & Bass, quoted

in Tauber, 2012, p. 10). I had pre-conception that they would say yes to a separate church for LGBT people in Norway for providing a better solution for the LGBT people. However, the participants had a mission but not having a separate church just meant for this particular goup. The participants perceptions helped me to understand their vision and their meaning of being in the leadership.

This section basically highlights if there are any mission that lies in the perception of the participants when it comes to if LGBT leadership in the Church is focused only on LGBT people. It was explored by asking them if they were looking forward to the separate LGBT church in the future as the question aroused after exploring their experiences on the challenges within the Church (as mentioned above in Chapter 6.2.3.). Chris, Louise and Maria expressed their thoughts and their views, they would not prefer that way as their further explanation assured that the LGBT leadership is not only for a particular group within the Church.

Chris mentioned that the Church of Norway is already there so, there is no need of other church and stated that if there is such preference, that would be more like dwelling in the past.

> No, no that would be more residing in the past. But to most people, being Lutheran, the part of the State Church in Norway— Oslo, in 2019, not a problem. We needed a space earlier because we couldn't go anywhere, right? But now, we basically can go anywhere (Chris).

And in connection to the same question, **Louise** responded that the separate church for LGBT people is like splitting into groups and there will be again discrimination if that is only for a particular group then she does not prefer.

> No, I want to work in an open church where everyone can go and not really, it's not that, my interest, one group of people. *No!* Because like all people and I feel that it's a little bit of discrimination to be other groups and I don't want a church that accepts discrimination and talking down on people (Louise).

Maria thinks that it would be the exclusion of some people whereas there should be unity among different people. Therefore, she reckoned that having separate church only for LGBT people is not a solution.

> I think the focus is on not to exclude — that everybody is included and everybody can feel that they can come.
> If you are a boy that likes boys or a girl that likes girls, if you are a bisexual or if you are a straight, it's ok to come. Not a focus on who you are but more on how we can be together (Maria).

6.3.4. Being One As A Group

Further reason on why the participants did not want the separate church is mentioned under this heading. Transformational leaders are that they have 'a collective sense of mission' and they assure that the obstacles will be overcome (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 6). This heading shows how my participants are engaged in a collective sense of mission and how they assure the obstacles will be overcome.

LGBT leadership is not all about LGBT people or only for LGBT people as the point above witnessed that. This point intends to focus on LGBT leaders' leadership that considers and welcomes all types of people in the Church of Norway (in their group). The finding reveals their thought on how they take varieties of church members as one group in their church, they prefer unity in diversity. There could be some members in the church who are against accepting the different people like LGBT people or LGBT leaders. However, this is what I have discovered through what those leaders mentioned:

Irina stated that she, as a leader in her church is a representative for all types of human beings that enter into the church and they can be together despite their difference.

> I am kind of representing diversity that every human being is a part of and that's —— it's very important, I think, to have pastors or church leaders to represent that diversity you can find in humanity because there are different people coming to church for worshipping God and be together as a community. And about —— people can come to the church and feel that they are home and they are not different from everybody else. That's why we need diversity I think.
>
> As a pastor or a priest, you represent very much, you represent the church towards the community or congregation but you are also a representative for people coming to the church even if they are women or young as I am, I think I am still young [laughs] and also gay people, gay people that are lesbians, gays or trans people. I am a pastor that represent so much, my role represents so much and my personality and also my sexual identity is a part of that (Irina).

On the other hand, **Chris** gave his opinion to people who take the Bible as a tool to question and justify their view towards homosexuals within the church. This feedback relates to uniting dispersed views of some church members who contradict on not accepting or being sceptic towards LGBT people and LGBT leaders within the church. His answer can be understood as he wants unity within the church without the conflict in belief and sexuality.

It's about the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and it's not a moral compass that we should be running around hitting each other in the head with explaining that sense that the Bible says this. Like then we should not be mixing milk or we should not be eating meat every Wednesday. It's not about the relationship between two men or two women; women actually did not have sexuality until 1970s or something. They were not mentioned anywhere…………..What makes people free and what makes people captured, that is a question we should be asking (Chris).

Maria means that being inclusive means being united as a group. For her, it creates harmony when people in the church can be included and can include each other. She wants to have a focus on the church where people are united and included.

I think that is the main goal, not to exclude, just include. That is a very important goal 'including'. Everybody is included…………I want to make people a safe place, but I also want to be including. So, I want to include people into the safe place and the people already are there, have to just accept it. I want to put people together. So, I am a little bit split, I like safe place and it's good and you have all the members of the church and that's very good thing but I want it to work together. That's the main thing (Maria).

Some new and unexpected findings from this Chapter are taken as the matter of expounding in the 'Discussion' Chapter that how the sexual and the religious identity of Christian LGBT people and LGBT leaders in the Church of Norway are negotiated.

''Summary of the Findings''
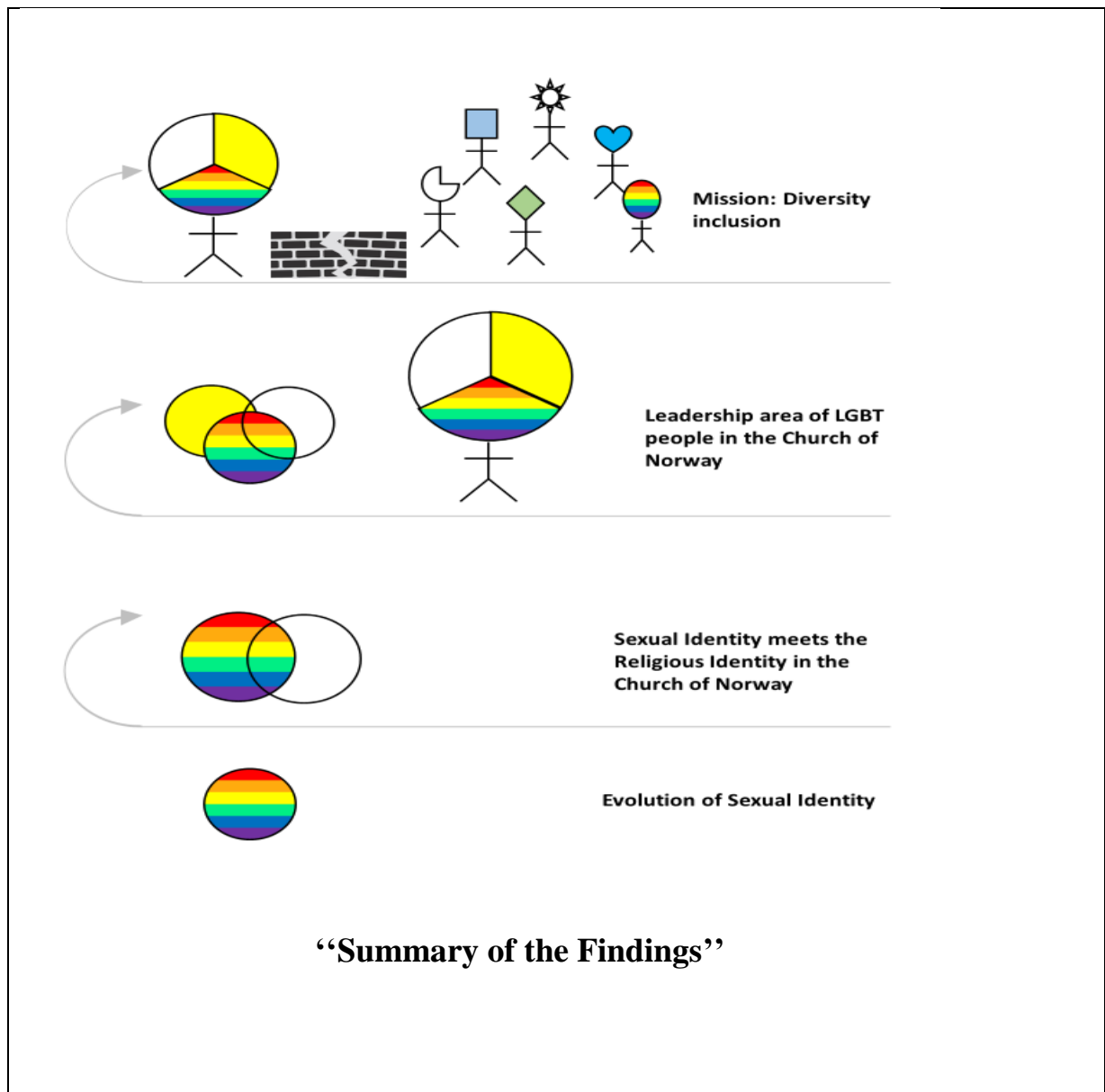
6. DISCUSSION

As the diagram above demonstrates the synopsis of Chapter 6, the section has emphasized on how religious and sexual identities evolve and coexist in different times and situations of LGBT people who struggle of getting fully accepted within the group (in the Church of Norway) they belong. When these two contradictory identities struggle to be compatible in the Church, the leadership aspect of LGBT people is found out to be an attempt to harmonise these two identities. However, the LGBT leadership in the Church is not merely the focus for

the compatibility of LGBT people's conflicting identities with the Church. Rather, it is about the inclusion of human diversity (different identities) so those identity contradictions might not produce discrimination, rejection and conflicts.

The Discussion Chapter is divided into three sub-sections: First, elucidation of key findings in light of theoretical insights offered by myriads of discourses on identity; second, correlation of the findings with extant researches on religion and sexuality in order to show the relevance of the study; and third, limitations of the research and scope for future study.

The first section of this chapter addresses the main research question through three drill questions as listed below:

'How do Christian homosexual leaders experience and perceive the relation between their religious and sexual identities with the shift of time?'

1. How can religious and sexual identities evolve and coexist among individuals?
2. What is the role of leadership in the compatibility of religious and sexual identities?
3. How can the transformational leadership facilitate group inclusion?

7.1. Elucidation Of Responses In The Light Of Selected Theories

This section elucidates four different topics in light of 'Social identity Theory' along with comparisions and contradistinctions between extant secondary sources. The first sub-section deals with how both religious and sexual identities are intrinsically entwined and how my participants equally value both identities as integral in constructing their individual subjectivity. The second sub-section explores the meaning of two overlapping identities and the third part accounts the means and approaches used by participants with overlapping identities to assert their self-esteem and self-worth. The final sub-section analyses the meaning and significance of LGBT leadership for mitigating the identity conflicts and consolidating the subjectivity of people.

7.1.1. Different Identities, Equal Salience

One may not need to remind oneself about the identities he/she possesses in every situation but my participants have expressed that they prefer to be known as Christians homosexuals or Christian homosexual leaders (see Chapter 6.1.2.2.). Moreover, the response like they want to be known to others by their sexual, religious or leadership identities all together equally is an additional matter of discussion and vouch for whether it supports or contradicts with SIT.

Being self aware of possessing both Christian and sexual identities of my participants in the Church of Norway is said to 'vary from situation to situation' (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 372). For instance, Chris and Irina mention how their sexual identity is not a focus to be treated along with their religious identity like while singing hymns and while co-operating with some 'conservative groups' in the Church. However, all the participants expressed that their sexual and religious identities equally matter as the participants like Irina who do not want to hide their sexual identity while preaching.They view their sexual and religious identities equally and interlinked.

> I am saying that I am always going to be a gay priest in my own ways but probably it's just a priest in the other people's eyes and the identities are intertwined (Chris).

'Social Identity Theory' claims that identity salience varies in different situations and which group to be seen more important than the rests depends upon the situation (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 372). However, it is not always the case according to my findings. It is clear from the findings that when group identities contradict or overlap within a group; the need of viewing the different identities are equally important in the same situation. Therefore, the situation does not always play role whether to see one identity more salient than the other, particularly when the sexual and religious identities are 'intertwined' as Chris expressed. In such case, it is necessary to rethink on how one can view his/her one identity more important than the other identity in different situations when the identities are not merely overlapped but 'intertwined'.

Reynolds and Pope (1991) expanded the study in the area of SIT by using several case studies where they drew attention to the importance of multiple identities through their discussion of multiple opressions. They created the Multidimensional Identity Model which consists of four possible ways of identity resolution for individuals having more than one oppressed group (Reynolds & Pope, quoted in Jones, & McEwen, 2000, p. 405). My

participants' two types of responses regarding how they perceive their sexual and religious identity in different situations correlate with what Reynold and Pope have mentioned in their study. According to them, some individuals identify with multiple aspects of self, but they choose only one at a time. On the other hand, some choose to do so with multiple aspects of self where they tend to choose consciouly and integrate them into their sense of self (Jones, & McEwen, 2000, p. 407). One might argue why some individuals choose to identify with multiple aspects of self then? This has to do with an establishment of harmonious relation among multiple identities. One of the studies based on reconceptualizing the model of multiple dimensions of Identitiy discovered that the participants' movement towards an internally generated identity allows individuals to perceive the relationships among multiple identity dimensions co-exist. It means their sexual orientation to be consistent with their religious beliefs, regardless of how others defined their religion; and they understood their sexual orientation and gender expression as consistent (Abes, et al., 2007, p.11). In line with this study, my study has similar findings where my participants have expressed their religious and sexual identities co-exist as they equally matter to them.

7.1.2. 'Double Dose of Rejection', Yet A Hope

The participants assert that they have gone through different challenges as an LGBT member within the Church as well as a Christian in their LGBT groups. Their sexual identity is sometimes hidden while they do not feel like expressing because of the feeling of being rejected or argued by other members in both groups. How can this type of group belonging be understood when the group members still possess the 'characteristics of group members' (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 19) and yet they face rejection?

Louise and Maria's responses show the existing conflicts in relation to these two identities when it comes to being in the Church as an LGBT Christian or being in LGBT group as a Christian LGBT. These groups tend to 'out-group' (Alock & Sadava, 2014, p. 366) my participants as they are seen to have the characteristics of 'opposing group' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 10). Louise and Maria recount that though within the Church group they are acknowledged as group members, they still face some instances of being 'out-group' within their own Church because of their different sexual identity to that of the other heterosexual members of the same Church. However, this is not only the case within their religious group

(in the Church), some of my participants mention the similar instances of also not fully being accepted by their LGBT friends.

> Sometimes, I didn't really want to say that I was a Christian because they [LGBT friends] didn't want to accept me for who I was and they didn't want to have anything to do with me. (Louise).

The participants faced some rejection from their gay friends but it was mostly in the beginning when they introduced as a Christian. This shows that they possess 'positive group belonging' (Tajfel, quoted in Lau, 2011, p. 26) in the present context. However, there is a question on the participants' 'self-esteem' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p.16) as the 'individuals are satisfied in an intergroup context by maximizing the difference between ingroup and outgroup' (Hogg, & Abrams, 1988, p. 21 Some members who have conflicting social identites like my participants are not fully considered 'in group' (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 20) by other members. Hence, while the social groups are perceived as reponsible for providing 'positive social identity' (Tajfel, quoted in Lau, 2011, p. 26), such categorization/division within the group can counter the 'self-esteem' and 'self-worth' (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 20) of the members.

In this connection, this kind of group, in 'cross- categorisation' (Alock & Sadava, 2014, p. 366) have a conflict in fully belonging because one does not have a chance of getting fully belonged and being fully positive towards one's own group. Positive belonging happens in the light of 'in-group' comparison with 'out-group' that further results individuals sense of 'well-being, enhanced self-worth and self-esteem'(Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 20). The participants have 'double in -group' and 'double out-group' (Alock & Sadava, 2014, p. 367) identities. Therefore, we can figure out the difficulty in 'social comparison' of this group that asserts to enhance one's self-esteem, self-worth and well-being. Tajfel (1959) states that 'not all groups have situations that allow intergroup comparisons' (Tajfel, quoted in Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p.16). Hence, one can question if 'cross-categorisation' or such overlapping identities could be the risk of one's well-being.

On the other hand, there is a benefit of having overlapping identities as Alcock and Sadava (2014) states that the 'cross-categorisation' helps in 'tearing apart stereotypes' within a group where one's own group members do not fully perceive this group as the part of their group (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 367). In the initial phase of group belonging, there is

interpersonal attractions (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 93). It means there is a liking between individuals who are members of the same group, in several different ways (Hogg et al. quoted in Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 93).

After relating how some group members within a group reject the other group members within the same group, I want to take it around and focus on the connection about why some members and the leaders within the Church of my participants support and accept their sexual identity whereas the others in the same Church do not. For instance, if we see Maria's case, her church members give her flexible choice of adopting Christianity. She admittedly likes the way they act without coercion by giving her the freedom to believe and also, her Priest accepts and supports her lesbian identity. This example could be interpreted as how some members within a group become factors for holding members back as Maria and Chris strongly emphasise that without the support from their church members and the priests, they would not be able to join the Church and continue to belong there. This can be related to 'black sheep effect' study (Marques & Paez, 1994, pp. 37-68) which is a research based on how some members within a group can simultaneously show ingroup bias towards socially desirable group members and ingroup derogation to socially undesirable ones. In other words, some members within a group are treated as if they are 'out-group' members . The general idea of the 'black sheep effect' operates to preserve a positive social identity where one's social identity is threatened by one's 'in-group' members or one's own group. This study relates to my study by depicting how the support and the acceptance to my participants from their Church members and their priests worked to preserve their 'positive social identity' (Tajfel, quoted in Lau, 2011, p. 26). Even though their sexual identity is threatened by some other Church members and priests but due to the support and the acceptance by the others, they have not left the Church. Moreover, it is not just the support they got but also the need of belonging and having the same belief as the other Church members and their priests that played role in not letting them divert from the religion and from attending the Church. It could be interpreted as there are some group members or leaders (in the Church of Norway) who contribute to harmonizing the conflicting identities of LGBT Church members.

7.1.3. Reactions to Threatened Social Identity As Change Makers

This sub-Chapter is scrutinized on the basis of individuals' reaction towards 'threatened positive identity' (Tajfel & Turner's, 1986, p. 19). The two types of findings are extracted in order to highlight how and why one leaves one's initial group and chooses to belong somewhere in the other group and what makes others members from other groups to choose to stay in their initial group.

7.1.3.1. Mobility From Minority To Majority; The Reason Behind Leaving The 'Erstwhile Group'

Social identities are regarded as 'complex and fluid as people leave behind their old groups' (Giddens & Sutton, 2017, p. 305). This idea relates to Louise's case where her mobility occurred from her erstwhile church (Pentecostal) to the Church of Norway. This scenario can be studied through the relation of why one leaves one's own group according to Tajfel and Turner (1986). For continuing to retain 'positive identity', Louise, already belonged to a religious group before, the matter was only the change of the church but not getting distorted from the religion. Why one leaves one's initial group is when one is 'unsatisfied' with one's initial group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). The question is why she chose the Church of Norway and not other denominations? It can be interpreted through background Chapter (see Chapter 1.1) where the Church of Norway is regarded as the majority Church in relation to the other denominations. One moves from a minority group towards the majority, not because of the majority group's membership (Mullen et al, quoted in Brown and Gaertner, 2001, p. 315) but because of the arousal of the 'stronger social identity concerns' or in other words, due to having stronger motivation of having social identity or collective self (Brown & Gaertner, 2001, p. 315). The small groups relatively tend to have less security; however, it is argued that there is safety with regards to the group size or amid the minority groups in Europe which may not be applied everywhere (Brown & Gaertner, 2001, pp. 312-313). I agree with this argument as my background Chapter supports this argument (see Chapter 2.4) that Norway is a safe country for all types of groups. Nevertheless, leaving behind the minority church (Pentecostal) and moving towards the majority Church is related to her strong sense of religious continuity that required her to belong to the Church that accepted her sexuality, as she states:

I feel belonged here [in the Church of Norway]. I can be myself in this church. (Louise)

This finding also relates to the observation of Lau (2012) that there are circumstances in which people may lose their 'attachment to their social groups and their social identity' (Lau, 2011, p. 120). In Louise's case, she lost her attachment to her social group (her initial church) and social identity as Pentecostal Christian. However, she chose to maintain her Christian identity at least by belonging to a new group that embraces her sexuality.

7.1.3.2. The Group Adherence And The Enrolment In The 'In-Group' Change Through Leadership

As discussed above in Chapter 7.2, there are some cases where one faces rejection from one's own group. Nevertheless, this section focuses on how one is engaged in fighting back the struggles and bringing the change that is yet to be achieved undisputedly. The participants' expression as Church of Norway "long way to go" in the present in accepting LGBT church members in every aspect made me more curious if there are some challenges they still go through where the Church has allowed the LGBT leadership and the same-sex wedding in the Church (see Chapter 2.5).

The participants' engagement in the leadership assures the enhancement of their own positive social identity as well as that of other LGBT members. Their choice of the leadership path is related to the achievement of education and power (see Chapter 6.2.1.). This act can be associated to one of Tajfel and Turner's (1986) principles of mobility that elaborates how some individuals within groups react towards their threatened or negative identity by "changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group, so that comparisons which were previously negative are now perceived as positive" (Tajfel & Turner's, 1986, pp.19-20). It means that it is an action of doing something for the change within the group that helps the 'in-group' members to be positive towards their own group. In other words, the enrolment of my participants in bringing the changes within the Church of Norway has resulted LGBT Church leadership and the same-sex wedding in the Church. This way these areas which were previously unaccepted and perceived as negative in the Church are now accepted and perveived as positive. This occured through the change of 'values and norms' (see Chapter 3.1.2.) of the Church of Norway in terms of LGBT people's rights within this Church. Hence, this can be understood in the light of what Tajfel and Turner (1986) state about how some

people do not choose to leave the group rather they change the 'values' within their group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p.20). The leadership role thus contributes to the LGBT people's 'positive social identity' (Tajfel & Turner's, 1986, p. 19). The LGBT Church leadership is understood from the participants not merely to be a focus for the amelioration of LGBT people's rights in the Church but there is something more.

  ''Religion can be oppressive but it can also provide empowerment and resources to those who are involved'' (Furseth & Repstad, 2006, p. 193). The Church of Norway has become a social group that 'creates a space for the individuals' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). The people with religious and sexual identities can belong in this Church despite the contradicting identities they hold. The participants chose to be religious and religious leaders despite some struggles. The support they got from their Church leaders and some Church members became a significant way for them to choose Church leadership. It would not be possible if the Church of Norway was not open for LGBT rights in the Church. This scenario could be interpreted as religion being a supportive tool to reconcile with sexuality.

7.1.4. 'Prototypical' Leaders Transformed Into Diversity Representatives

The instances where the participants complain about having few same-sex wedding priests and their recollection of the strugles they faced due to the lack of LGBT religious leaders (see Chapter 6.1.3.) allow one to argue or assume that having an ingroup religious leader is the primary focus for the LGBT group. Nevertheless, the argument or the assumption can be refuted with two arguments drawn from the findings. First, Louise and Irina claim that anybody who is 'open' towards LGBT members in the Church regardless of his/her sexual orientation will be accepted as a leader. Rather than sexual orientation, they argue that they look for someone who can be there when they need them, to guide them and be there in the time of trouble and confusion (see chapter 6.2.3.). Second, going back to the assertion of Irina that the young pastor lady is not 'a young pastor lesbian' to her but just 'a young pastor' who acted as her inspiration to join the Theology and to embrace the path of leadership in the Church (see Chapter 6.2.1.). It can be interpreted as one might not necessarily need someone who has exactly the same identity as yours in order to belong in a group or in order to get motivated to belong in that group. When there is one particular identity overlapping with the

other person, this can work for them 'to construct their group identities that is in the favour of the group' (Hogg, 2010, p. 802). Therefore, from this instance we can assume that one does not need to be merely 'young lesbian', 'old lesbian', 'teacher lesbian' or 'priest lesbian', people have 'multiple social identities' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 13) where one identity might overlap with one person whereas the other identity with another person.

The view of my participants gives further insight on how these leaders are shifting from being 'prototypical' representives for a particular group (LGBT) to being the one that represents the entire human diversity. As a claim of diversity represenive of human society, my participants like Irina and Maria elaborated that how their leadership means representing the diversed identities. For instance, Irina asserted that she is a representative for all types of people entering into the Church (see Chapter 6.3.4.). As Alcock and Sadava (2014) have mentioned that overlapping identities have benefits of being a platform to 'bind the different people together', meaning when identities of people overlap, it might be perceived to be in a conflicting relation, for instance, the relation of religion and sexuality. However, such conflicting identities can also have some positive aspects as Alcock and Sadava (2014) further emphasized that they 'knit the society together' (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p. 367). Explicating the findings based on what Acock and Sadava (2014), I argue that the contradictory identities of my participants could be viewed as beneficial for the people and human society. While possessing overlapping identities, I further argue from the above clarification that people have multiple identities that overlap with others. When this is the case, one needs to be conscious and remind oneself that they should not think that they belong to one group or the other. When one can have multiple overlapping identities, I relate to what Maria has clearly stated,

> We are one group, we are all human beings and we cannot help who we love and that's ok. I think that's the main job to tell people that we are together and we are not this group or that group but we are just one group ⸺ having a community with all people, that's the goal because if everybody can just live together, then there is no war, then we have peace (Maria).

As LGBT Church leaders, my participants do not have focus merely for those who are alike them (merely for LGBT) or for one particular group or the other. Being leaders in the Church of Norway means that they have the responsibility of uniting people together.

7.2. Relating This Study With Previous Relevant Studies

It is intelligible that the Church of Norway plays a significant role in harmonising the sexual and the religious identities of my participants as it is open and supportive for LGBT rights (see Chapter 2.5.). This research is consistent with a research based on the relationships and conflicts between sexual and religious affiliation of homosexuals. The research claims that Metropolitan Community Church in London (MCC) acts as a tool to reconcile sexual and religious identities of homosexuals (Gulseth, 2003). My study also shows the relevancy to what Furseth & Repstad (2006) have stated, ''within more moderate or mainstream Christian groups there is often a tendency today to recognize homosexuals and other sexual minorities as persons needing God's grace and congregation's care at the same level as heterosexuals'' (Furseth & Repstad, 2006, p. 195). The Church of Norway as a majority Church in Norway has embraced homosexuals as members and as leaders in the Church. Another study shows that though not all religions in developed nations do not accept this minority group, it is found that the people in the nations with Catholic and Protestant majority have more approving attitudes towards LGBT regardless of the religion they personally belong (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009). In connection to this study, my study is consistent as my study is based on a Protestant denomination and in a context with majority support for LGBT rights (see Chapter 1.1 & 2.1.1). The context of my study can be justified basing on such researches that expound the correlation between the Christian majority nations and the attitude towards homosexuality. Nevertheless, it might not be always the scenario that every nation with Christian domination can accept the same-sex wedding or the church leadership like in Norway.

Besides Louise, the rest of the participants in my study witnessed that they had support from their close family members and their friends. The finding clearly reveals that all the participants are accepted and supported by the majority Church of Norway members and its priests which ultimately motivated my participants to choose the leadership area. A Norwegian nationwide research on beliefs about same-sex marriage and lesbian and gay parenthood mentions that the majority population in Norway supports LGBT rights like same-sex wedding and child adoption (Hollekim, et al., 2011). This research is associated with what three of my participants expressed regarding their family's support. Therefore, it would not be wrong to perceive why most of my participants had no rejection from their families when they first came out as homosexuals.

My study also shows that the participants faced double rejection by expositing their struggles as Christians to belong fully within their gay circles and as homosexuals within their Church (Church of Norway) (see Chapter 6.1.2.2). A study done by Norland Research Institute on the living conditions and quality of life of LGBT migrants in Norway has similar conclusion. It reports that the LGBT people from migrant background experience discrimination in white queer communities especially in the workplace and also in gay bars. The study argues that the reason for getting denied in a gay bar is the stereotypical understanding of Muslims/Arabs as essentially homophobic that subsequently make natives skeptical about the people of such communities comming out as homosexuals. The combined exclusion from the White queer communities and their own ethnic community is stated as painful (Eggebo, et. al., p. 3). One can ponder upon the reasons behind the rejections of people for identity differences or the matter of any other realm. Martha Nussbaum (2012) has related this as the result of our fear and the fear arouses from seeing a stranger or somebody different from ourselves. Why we fear strangers is because they look threatening to us. According to her, in order to overcome fear, one needs to develop 'inner eye' which means having respect and sympathy for others. She emphasizes that we should be willing to move out of the self and move to another world or put ourselves in others' shoes (Nussbaum, 2012, pp. 20-143). It is a question if everybody has the capability to put themselves in others' place.

As Michel Foucault has noted a close relation between religion and sexuality Based on Max Weber's (1979) examination on religion and sexuality, he states that originally the relation between sex and religion were very intimate whereas the tension between them began when the cultic chastity of the priest was introduced (Furseth & Repstad, 2006, p. 194). When we evaluate this shifting relation of the religion and the sexuality, it could be understood that the divorced relation between these identities long ago are in a progressive path of reconciliation in the present, especially in the context where the majority supports the diversity of sexual identities and also where the religious institution also corporates with the majority's attitude.

7.5. Limitations and Suggestions

The major limitation of the research is its sample size. Since the research is an overview of case study of four participants, the conclusion of the research is not generalizable in larger social and demographic context. The sampling is limited to Oslo due to my obligation to conduct research within commutable distance with the limited financial resource. However, to mitigate this limitation, I have chosen the participants belonging to different places of Norway with diverse geographical and social experiences from their hometown. Through the course of research as I engaged more rigorously with my participants, I have realized the integral role played geographical and social context in defining an individual's familial, societal and religious experiences. For instance, LGBT people coming from 'Bible belt' areas might have more experiences of rejection from society and also, from family and church like Louise's case than those coming from the other areas of Norway.

The research does not deal with different categories within the LGBT community. The research primarily deals with the experiences of lesbians and gays but does not address the Bisexuals, Transgenders and Queers. The major reason behind this exclusion is lack of such categorical diversity within the LGBT community of the Church of Norway. Besides, the limitations of time and resources are equally integral reasons.

The future research area could be done in the area of sexuality and religion within the churches which are taken as conservative denominations like Pentecostals based on Norwegian context or in any other economically and politically established countries. It is because the mainline Protestants and the Catholic churches are declining their members globally whereas the Pentecostals are increasing even though the denomination is found to have least accepting attitudes towards homosexuals (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009). This change within the denominations according to the change of time might be a good lens to view the specific picture of how the Pentecostals are able to get increasing numbers of members and if it is also in the case of homosexual members. The revival versus the downturn of Christian faith in terms of denominations could be also an another area of the study. One could learn the phenomena in a wider context as well as in a narrow basis like why the LGBT people still choose to be leaders in a church where the church attendees are dwindling?

8. CONCLUSION

Religious and sexual identities of LGBT people are viewed to be in a contradictory relations. However, I wanted to know if these identities can have common ground. Therefore, in this thesis, I have tried to understand the relation between the sexual and religious identities through LGBT church leadership in the Church of Norway. This study is based on qualitative research, where I have used in-depth interviews, using structured and unstructured questions. The following main research question is addressed in this study:

How do Christian homosexual leaders in the Church of Norway experience and perceive the relation between their religious and sexual identities with the shift of time?'

   My findings illustrate the experiences and the perceptions of LGBT church members and church leaders in the Church of Norway. Despite getting accepted by the Church, the participants have gone through some strugggles within the Church. On the other hand, they have encountered with other heterosexual leaders who have been their support and guide which ultimately have led them to choose leadership arena. The leadership of the LGBT people in the Church is also challenging in many ways where it is clear that their leadership does not only mean to focus on fighting for LGBT rights. The leaders have greater future agenda in addition; their claim of being in the leadership presents the human diversity and their leadership means to make the future Church reduce discrimination, rejection and criticism regarding any type of human identity creating harmony within the group.

   In summing up this work, I argue in two different aspects of how sexual and religious identities can be meaningful together. First, when there is an attempt to give equal values to both identities, there is coexistence and harmony between them. Through my analysis, I demonstrated that the participants who have found harmony between their religious and sexual identities and as leaders, not merely perceive these identities to coexist but are inextricable.

   Second, I assent to an argument that there are benefits of having overlapping identities like my participants. They contribute to tear apart stereotypes within one's own group and be a bridge between different groups as it is asserted to bind different groups together. It means the overlapping relation of sexual and religious identities of my participants could be understood

to tear apart the conventional beliefs existing among some members of their Church. It could be also taken that their overlapping identities bridge their Church with LGBT people or the vice verse which would create a harmony between these identities.

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Interview Guide

1.1 Questions to LGBT Theology students who are/were engaged as leaders in the Church of Norway

- How did you find yourself as a lesbian/ gay for the first time? Could you explain?

- How did your family members react for the first time when you came out as a lesbian/ gay?
- Are your parents religious?

- Is there any incident that you have had experienced discrimination or bullying

  regarding your sexual identity? (It could be anywhere, may be in your family, among

  friends or in your Church).

- How did you become Christian and how were you engaged in the Church in the beginning?

- Have you revealed your identity to your church ?
  a. If yes, what was the reaction of the church leaders for the first time?
  b. If not, what makes you conceal your identity?

- How comfortable are you in expressing who you are in the Church?

- Are you active in boosting up LGBT rights personally or in a group?
  a. What do you expect to achieve from that?

- Why did you choose to study Theology? What difference do you want to make in the future from your studies?

1.2. Questions to current Church Leaders

- What role do you think a church can play when members of the church go through discrimination and rejection?

- Have you ever engaged yourself in contributing to LGBT rights as a church Leader?
  - a. If yes, how?
  - b. If not, why?

- If yes, why is it important for you to get engaged in such acts in such a supportive society and the Church ?

- Do you think there should be a separate church for LGBT people? Why? Why not?

1.3. Follow-up Questions for both groups, more focused on leadership

- What do you think about the conservative groups?

- How do you feel to be a part of the Church of Norway?

    a. Do you feel completely belonged ?

    b. how much confidence do you have towards the Church protecting LGBT

    rights.

- Do you represent LGBT people in your leadership?
  - a. If yes, how? In not, why?

- Do you focus to inspire your church members?
  - a. If yes, how do you work to inspire your church members?

- Which identity is more important for you as a leader in a church, religious or sexual identity?

- How often do your ideas and suggestions get accepted by the church members?
  - a. How do you feel about that as a leader?

- Have you ever experienced any challenges from the church members? What were they?

- How often are you engaged or focused in bringing the change? (for LGBT people among the general church members)

- What kind of leader are you, do you call yourself, if an inspirational leader?
    a. if yes, could you give some examples of how you have inspired the members? (both LGBT and heterosexuals members in the Church)

- What is your vision about the future as a leader?

- How much challenging are you as a leader to achieve a targeted goal?

- Has there been any problem in the church?
    a. If yes, How have you resolved them?

- Do you engage yourself as a leader to address the individual needs of your followers or your church members?

- How do you instil self-confidence in others?

- How do you inspire other to look at the problem from a different angle?

2. Information Letter   (NSD Based Format)

Are you interested in taking part in the research project about

'how Christian homosexual leaders in the Church of Norway experience and perceive the relation between their religious and sexual identities with the shift of time?'

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to find out the religious and sexual relation through the experiences and the perception of Christian LGBT leaders or those who have engaged or will be engaged as leaders in the Church of Norway. In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The research focuses within one religious perspective which has a dominating history in Norway, Chritianity and within a majority Church (Church of Norway). The research aims to figure out how LGBT church leaders are engaged in the Church, what their leadership role is all about, how they perceive their work and much more through 'open-questions'.

The objectives/ research questions:

4. How can religious and sexual identities evolve and coexist among individuals?
5. What is the role of leadership in the compatibility of religious and sexual identities?
6. How can transformational leadership facilitate group inclusion?

This is a research project that fulfils the requirement of a master's level (master thesis) under the faculty of 'Religion, Society and Global Issues'. The accomplished thesis will be used in educational areas and research projects in the future.

Who is responsible for the research project?

MF-Vitenskapelig Høyskole (Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society) is the institution responsible for the project (the researcher is a student at this institution).

Why are you being asked to participate?

The topic itself demands LGBT people's leadership area within the Church of Norway. Therefore, this category of people are targeted for consideration as it is informed that you are/have engaged in the Church leadership.

The researcher has received the participant's contact information from ……………………………..

What does participation involve for you?

The participants will have face to face interviews. The researcher uses her own notebook and the sound recorder from the researcher's institution in order to record the interview. The direct information gathered from the interview from the participants is the main targeted source in the paper.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw. This will not at all affect your position, for example in your occupation or relation with any other people, the confidentiality will be assured even if you choose to withdraw later.

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

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

- The collected data is limited within the researcher student and her supervisor from the institution. As the supervisor is guiding through the whole thesis, it is important for the researcher student to expose the work to the supervisor in order to get the guidance for the work. It means personal or very sensitive information will not be leaked.

- Besides the two parties above, the data is restricted from the reach of other source or people. Your name and contact details will be replaced by single alphabets and numbers and the respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data. They will be encrypted and stored in the computer or in the safe personal drawer.

- Only the transcribed data will be used in the thesis, for example the thoughts, sayings, etc. will be directly and indirectly quoted for the sake of making the thesis closer to reliability. However, the name, age, and other sensitive personal information will not be published. Furthermore, your sexual identity and your occupation/position will be revealed along with the data as these are necessary in this research.

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

The project is scheduled to end 13th August 2019. The personal data will be deleted right after the accomplishment of the work. They will be deleted from the recorders at the end of the project.

Your rights

As long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with MF- Vitenskapelig Høyskole, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- MF- Vitenskapelig Høyskole via Lars Kåre Grimsby, by email:
  Lars.K.Grimsby@mf.no or by mobile: ………….
- The researcher student's contact , email: …………….. or
   by mobile: ……………………

  Our Data Protection Officer: Lars Moe

- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email:
  (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

………………………..   …….………………

 Researcher/student   Leader/ Supervisor

(…………..)   (Lars Kåre Grimsby)

3. Consent form (NSD Based Format)

I have received and understood information about the project, 'how Christian homosexual leaders in the Church of Norway experience and perceive the relation between their religious and sexual identities with the shift of time?' and have given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

☐ to participate in the interview

☐ for information about me to be published in a way that I can be recognised- not my name, address, age, and any sensitive information about me but I allow my sexual identity and occupation/position as these elements are regarded as important for the research.

☐ I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, 13th August.2019.

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Participant   Date