



**UNIVERSITY  
OF ICELAND**

**MA thesis  
in History**

**The Faroe Islands and the Amendment of the Hate  
Crime Statute §266b**

A History of the Faroese LGBT+ community, homophobia and  
religion, from the 1980's to the mid 2000's

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Graduation June 2023

**FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

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This thesis satisfies 30 credits towards an MA  
in History in the Faculty of Philosophy, History and Archaeology,  
School of Humanities, University of Iceland

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## Ágrip

Í þessari ritgerð er farið yfir sögu LGBT+ réttinda í Færeyjum og móta LGBT+ réttinda og trúarbragða í pólitískri umræðu.

Ég hef skoðað dagblöð, heimildarmyndir, umræður á þingi, lagatillögur og fræðirit til að skilja framgang LGBT+ réttinda í Færeyjum og rökin með og á móti þeim. Ég hef notað hinsegin kenningar sem útskýra hvernig stjórnámálamenn myndu lýsa LGBT+ fólki, með sérstaka athygli á „erlendum löstum“ rökunum, þar sem hinsegin Færeyingar myndu flytja til útlanda og vera ekki sýnilegir í samfélaginu.

Til að leggja mat á þessa grein hef ég einbeitt mér að 266b „hatursglæpafrumvarpinu“ og innsetningu orðanna „kynhneigð“, sem fyrst var kynnt á færeyska þinginu árið 1988 en ekki samþykkt fyrr en 2006. Með þennan ramma í huga, Ég hef gert grein fyrir atburðum og umræðum frá 1987 og fram að samþykktinni 2006, og skoðað helstu augnablik hinsegin aðgerða í Færeyjum, ásamt því að greina umræður með og á móti LGBT+ fólki á færeyska þinginu.

Ritgerðinni lýkur síðan með því að rökstyðja hvernig hatursglæpafrumvarpið §266b væri fyrsti jákvæði LGBT+ rétturinn, sem samþykktur var með hinsegin fólk í huga, og myndi síðan leiða til aukinnar sýnileika og réttinda.

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the history of LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands, and the intersection of LGBT+ rights and religion in political discussions.

I have looked into newspapers, documentaries, parliamentary discussions, law proposals and academic publications to understand the progress of LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands and the arguments for and against them. I have used queer theories that explain how politicians would describe LGBT+ people, with special attention to the “foreign vice” argument, as queer Faroese people would move abroad and not be visible in society.

To evaluate this paper, I have focused on the §266b “hate crime bill” and the inclusion of the words “sexual orientation”, which was first introduced to the Faroese parliament in 1988 but not passed until 2006. With this framework in mind, I have detailed the events and discussions from 1987 up until the approval in 2006, and looked into the pivotal moments of queer activism in the Faroe Islands, while also analyzing the debates for and against LGBT+ people in the Faroese parliament.

The thesis then concludes with arguing how the §266b hate crime bill was the first positive LGBT+ right, that was passed with queer people in mind, and would then lead to increased visibility and rights.

## **Acknowledgements**

I dedicate this master's thesis to my vivacious Ragga amma. An avid lover of history, I fulfill her dream of completing a degree in history in her honor. I miss you so much. I want to thank my family, partner and friends for being patient with me (eg elski tykkum øll!), my student union for tolerating me getting stressed by working on my thesis at a board meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia, and my supervisor for giving me an exorbitant amount of last-minute, helpful comments that took my thesis to the next level.

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## 1. Introduction

The Faroe Islands has had a contentious history with LGBT+ people. Even questioning such things was not something that Faroe Islanders did back in the day. There is also the cliché, that the Faroe Islands would export their social problems to Denmark, whether it be people with mental health issues, abortions, or just people who did not want to live there anymore because of the life there. This included individuals who are sexual minorities. All of these things have now, to varying degrees, been subjects of discussions, whether it being public or political, and especially from the Christian point of view.

With sexual orientation getting increasingly more attention from the 1980's and onwards, it would only be natural that discussions about LGBT+ people and their orientations would start to take place. The juxtaposition of more postmodern view of not-straight people living in an isolated, Christian and heteronormative archipelago, as opposed to the neighboring Nordic countries having more attractive legislation and attitudes towards them, is notable, since the Faroe Islands is a Nordic outlier when it came to LGBT+ rights - at least when they started to discuss this. Regardless, this thesis will focus on the original point of contention, when it came to LGBT+ rights: the §266b hate speech statute, and the struggle to include the wording “sexual orientation” to this very paragraph. Given that it was introduced to the Faroese parliament in late 1987, but not successfully passed until 2006, just goes to show that the legislative fight for better rights took relatively a long time. Contextualized with how queer people were perceived at the time, why they would leave the islands, and the eventual progress to “sexual orientation” being the first step into better rights for them.

### 1.2 Field of Study and Aims of Master's Thesis

The title of this master's thesis is “the Faroe Islands and the Amendment of the Hate Crime Statute §266b”.

The subject that this paper will focus on, is the subject of the political discussions of sexuality in the Løgting (Parliament of the Faroe Islands), specifically the question of amending the hate crime state of the time (§266b) to include “sexual orientation” as a minority group protected from hate speech. I will also investigate the discussions from court documents, newspapers and interviews with certain important actors of the time.

The latter will be conducted in a form of oral history. I will then contextualize the situation in the Faroe Islands with other Nordic countries; specifically Denmark, Greenland and Iceland. The parliamentary discussions will provide the skeleton of this thesis, where it will be filled with the discussions of sexuality in the media, the fight and emotion for increased visibility and respect of Faroese sexual minorities at the time, and the role of homophobia and religion in the Faroe Islands as well.

The research question is as follows: “*Why was the issue of expanding LGBT+ rights so polarizing for Faroese politicians?*” This question allows me to research the different reasons as to why politicians were either hesitant, or outright against the idea of acknowledging LGBT+ Faroese Islanders, in particular homosexual people, as equals in Faroese society. The question of Christianity within the Faroese society arises as well, as does the question between nationality and nationalism, which can be intertwined. I will also be looking into whether or not ‘foreign vices’ getting legalized in neighboring countries had an effect in the debate of the rights of LGBT+ people in the Faroe Islands. The ‘foreign vice’ argument, portraying LGBT+ people as being influenced by foreign decadence which could, in their mind, be part of spoiling the true heterosexual national citizen or the ‘established family system’. I will be looking into primary sources to specify how this language was used by politicians and society, and to what extent this took place. Secondary sources will also be used to contextualize the political climate at the Løgting. The sources range from news articles from the web, to newspaper articles about queer people in the Faroe Islands, campaigning to the Løgting for better rights.

The thesis is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter will focus on LGBT+ history and rights in the Faroe Islands prior to the introduction of the §266b amendment. I will begin with a small explanation on how LGBT rights were in Denmark and the Faroe Islands at the time, and to explain how these laws were usually passed in the Folketing (Danish parliament), and then automatically put in place in the Faroe Islands, due to their municipal “amt” status pre-1946. Homosexuality became legalized in Denmark in 1933, automatically legalizing it in the Faroe Islands and Greenland as well. This became section 225, where the age of consent between

homosexual people was 18, notably different for heterosexual people's age of consent, which was 15.

The second chapter will focus on the end 1987, which is when the royal decree of including "sexual orientation" was introduced to the Faroese parliament, right after the addition of "sexual orientation" being codified in the Danish hate crime law, and subsequently introduced to the Løgting. The eventual political discussion and homophobia that ensued due to this bill will also be discussed, and why it ended up failing the first time.

The third chapter will then go to the 1990's, and how the discussions of homosexuality did pop up here and there, mentions of HIV/AIDS in Faroese media at the time, the occasional mention of both homosexuality and HIV/AIDS in newspapers or documentaries at the time, to approximately the mid 2000's with with LGBT+ organizations forming in the Faroe Islands and their work, which would lead up to the first Faroe Pride in 2005, seemingly the catalyst of the reintroduction of the hate speech amendment to the Faroese parliament. This chapter is specifically written in a way, where discussions on §266b were not nearly as present, though it is still important to include this, because of the developments that would lead up to the bill getting reintroduced in 2005.

The fourth chapter will focus on the vote in December of 2005, the political discussions surrounding and the eventual rejection of the bill at that time as well, while also looking into arguments that several of these politicians used to justify their opinions at the time. I will be analyzing this with methods that I have described in the next subchapter, to really understand how and why these politicians voted the way that they did.

The fifth chapter will look into the attack on Rasmus Rasmussen in 2006, which led to the reintroduction of the bill to the Faroese parliament again, as Rasmus was unable to charge an assailant on hate speech on the grounds of "sexual orientation" not being included in the hate crime paragraph. I will also describe why certain politicians ended up flipping their vote in favor of the amendment, which ended up being pivotal to the acceptance of the bill, and what this meant for Faroese society as a whole.

The last chapter is the conclusion, where I will conclude this thesis. I will be summing up the trajectory of the hate speech bill throughout the years, and eventually contextualize this with LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands today.

### 1.2.1 Method

In this paper I will explore the different ways the discourse surrounding LGBT+ people was affected by the debate on the §266b, during the 18 years the statute was in legal limbo. I will be using the aforementioned research question: “*Why was the issue of expanding LGBT+ rights so polarizing for Faroese politicians?*” In order for me to answer this question, I will be looking into newspapers, documentaries and parliamentary documents from the 18 year time period from 1988 to 2006. These documents are useful primary sources that reflect the thoughts and opinions of Faroese people and politicians in the time period and add context to the analysis that I will be using throughout the chapters. I will then analyze the sources with regard to the politics of the participants as well as the emotions that evoke and employ for various purposes.

I will try to set personal and political biases aside for this paper, and write it using source criticism. I will be looking into the inherent value of the documents that I have found, who authored it, contextualize when and where it was published, with validity, reliability and relevance being taken into account as well. The only issue with this source criticism is that I am Faroese myself, and the inevitability of talking to other Faroese people that I or my relatives know beforehand, is also something for me to keep in mind, though I was still a child when the law was passed in 2006. This personal reflexivity is important for me to acknowledge, since I will be writing about topics and people that are (somewhat) closely related to me, while also being aware of the fact that I will (self)question, identify and interrogate my positions, values and practices during my writing process, which is continuous and never really final.<sup>1</sup> This is based on the chapter in *Thematic Analysis* by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, in which the chapter will help me with personal reflexivity throughout this paper.

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<sup>1</sup> Braun and Clarke, *Thematic Analysis*, 13-15

The paper is set up in chronological order, with a prelude contextualizing LGBT rights and developments in the Danish Kingdom, but starting from the mid-1980's to the eventual implementation of §266b in 2006. The way the arguments for nationalism and how the emotions eventually changed for LGBT+ people in the Faroe Islands is something I will be putting a lot of emphasis on throughout the paper. The sources, mostly being primary sources, will give the paper the ability to at least partially shed light on the discussions at the time, with some secondary sources chronicling the events while also giving further context.

I will use terminology such as 'LGBT+' and 'queer people' somewhat interchangeably, wherever most appropriate. The discussions of the §266b amendment focuses a lot on homosexual people, a lot of the time on gay men and to a lesser extent on lesbians, which will be noted throughout the paper. To make the wording more specific, I will refer to gay men and lesbians, when specifically stated, as to not conflate all queer people with two queer subgroups. I will still emphasize how this affected queer people of all kinds, direction and indirectly, even if they were not mentioned.

I would also like to mention that this paper will be written to be compatible with queer history, as it is something that is relevant to the contents of this paper. I will also be using the original names of the Faroese political parties (ie. *Tjóðveldisflokkurin*, which changed to *Tjóðveldi*, after §266b got passed in the *Løgting*) for historical accuracy. Queer history records the history of LGBT+ people and cultures around the world, which includes the people of the Faroe Islands. Recording such history can often prove to be difficult, due to the suppression and secrecy that these people had (and still have) to endure around the world. Though in recent decades queer history has been pursued and interwoven into mainstream historical narratives. This thesis will combine the description of queer narratives in the Faroe Islands with the political history of the Faroe Islands at the time as well.

### **1.2.2 Theoretical Background**

A lot of people feel threatened by homosexuality. Homophobia can occur because of several reasons, where a central fear of homosexuality is that homosexual people cannot be placed in the heteronormative roles that society expects from people. From the day that we get born we get categorized after heterosexual categories - if we belong

to the feminine or masculine genders. That is why the “uncertainty” that homosexuality causes in a heterosexual society is a result of when people cannot easily categorize people as heterosexual men or women.<sup>2</sup> This uncertainty is perpetuated when people’s world view gets messed with, when they have grown up in a heteronormative society.

Politicians are an example of persons, who are in a position that gives them the right to speak with authority. This means that their statements are perceived as valid knowledge - at least by their voters. Politicians’ elitist positions give them the power to affect what is right and what is wrong. Consequently, their statements have big influences on prejudices that might bloom in society.<sup>3</sup> It is rare though, that prejudiced talk is obviously spoken of in parliamentary debates because of expanded norms and laws against discrimination and for political correctness. Instead of publicly telling everyone of their prejudices, politicians would rather use strategies that would hide their true opinions, in order to seem reasonable and just and to minimize the chance of being accused of racism or homophobia.<sup>4</sup>

In this thesis I will be using queer theory to analyze political debates of this paper. One of the books that I will utilize, is Judith Butler’s *Excitable Speech: a politics of the performative*, which emphasizes that the conservative conflation of free speech and speech acts are not constructionist. This is in the sense of how free speech does not necessarily imply a specific, sovereign subject, but more general concepts. Butler mentions many examples throughout her book about this, in particular policies against homosexuals in the military. The opening chapter, “On Linguistic Vulnerability”, she deconstructs the dichotomy between the body and the speech. Butler argues that this symbiotic relationship with the body and the speech creates the effect called “the social speaking subject”. Verbal threats then become bodily threats, indirectly at least: “the body is the blindspot of speech, that which acts in excess of what is said, but which also acts in excess of what is said.”<sup>5</sup> The emphasis on the role of weaponizing religion to be against people, who do not 100% align with their beliefs, which is what a lot of Faroese politicians did at the time, will be continuously mentioned in this thesis. Religion can often be weaponized through speech acts, in a way to dehumanize people of different

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<sup>2</sup> Smith, *Homophobia: Why Bring It Up?*, 100

<sup>3</sup> van Dijk, “Political Discourse and Racism”, 33

<sup>4</sup> van Dijk, “Political Discourse and Racism”, 36

<sup>5</sup> Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 11

sexualities. The role of stochastic terrorism by these politicians perpetuated how LGBT+ Faroese Islanders dealt with living in an unwelcoming society, where religion, specifically Lutheran Christianity and the Bible, were weaponized to attack, demonize, and eventually drive them out of the country.

This deconstruction of the body and speech relation can also help to understand the feelings of LGBT+ people in this period, as homophobic pejoratives, such as “kynsvillingur”, Faroese for “sex-errors”, were commonly used throughout this period (and still are, to some extent). This helps a lot, since finding primary sources featuring openly LGBT+ people speaking up against this is unfortunately scarce (besides egodocuments), and can therefore help to contextualize for the reader how the discussion of §266b became not only a verbal, but also a bodily attack to them, which became harder to acknowledge during the mass emigration from the Faroe Islands in the mid-90’s.

Another example of queer theory book that I will utilize in this paper is *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* by Sara Ahmed. Her book focuses on how looking into everyday, lived emotions can and are part of a larger material and discursive structure of the nation-state. In a specific sense, Ahmed looks into how emotions work, and produce, in the current formation of capitalist countries. The creation of the “other” in these nation-states is noted by “working through signs and on bodies to materialize the surfaces and boundaries that are lived as worlds.”<sup>6</sup> Ahmed’s chapter on hate crime is also particularly relevant, where she writes about the connection between the language of hate and the surfacing of bodies, while examining the politics of hate crime. “Hate crimes typically are defined when the crime is committed *because of* an individual’s group identity (defined in terms of race, religion, sexuality)”.<sup>7</sup> Ahmed writes about what is at stake when the *perception* of a group is in the body of the individual. When Ahmed writes about how “Violence against others may be one way in which the other’s identity is fixed or sealed; the other is *forced* to embody a particular identity by and for the perpetrator of the crime, and that force involved harm or injury”<sup>8</sup> It is most certainly applicable to the attack on Rasmus Rasmussen, a known gay Faroese musician, in 2006.

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<sup>6</sup> Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 191

<sup>7</sup> Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 55

<sup>8</sup> Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 55

Therefore her theories would benefit the analysis of the content of this paper, and will help the reader understand better.

It is also important to note the usage of “the other” in the discourse of homosexuality in the Faroe Islands. For people who do not fall under the category of “normal” they might often experience exclusion and repression. They will consequently be seen as “the other” in society. “The others” are different and the solution to “the others” is to keep them repressed, so that their mere existence does not result in radical changes in society. Homosexual people and other sexual identities are often seen as “the other”. This construction is a result of how sex and gender is organized in systems of power that praises certain individuals and activities, while others get suppressed and punished. When talking about the construction of “the other”, then you could distinguish between the internal other and the external other. The internal other is a part of people’s subconsciousness, whereas the external other are all of those, who are more or less different from oneself. The external other is a part of our identity construction process.<sup>9</sup> For many people, they need “the other” to know who they are themselves. Generally we need opposites to understand the world, which in this case would be heterosexuality only has meaning, as long as we know the opposite is homosexuality. Even though this difference is necessary to create meaning, there are still risks that occur, since these binary oppositions are rarely neutral. There is almost always the case of where one side of the opposition is in the hegemony above the other.<sup>10</sup> The man is stronger than the woman, heterosexuality is the norm, whereas homosexuality is not, etc. The function in constructing “the other”, other than getting a better understanding of oneself, is that it helps individuals defend and perpetuate their value systems - if they have an opposite, a threat, that the value system shall be protected from.<sup>11</sup> Heteronationalism will also be discussed, where I will be quoting the article by Latoya Lazarus on the connection between bashing homosexuality and nation building.

Some other books I will look at include *Odd Couples* and *Criminally Queer*, both edited by Jens Rydström and the latter including Kati Mustola. I will specifically look into Chapter 5 of *Criminally Queer* by Rydström which concerns the Faroe Islands and

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<sup>9</sup> Riggins, *The Language and Politics of Exclusion*, 3-4

<sup>10</sup> Hall, *Representation*, 235

<sup>11</sup> Riggins, *The Language and Politics of Exclusion*, 10



Greenland. These books will be good for me and the reader to understand the coherent history of criminal law and homosexuality throughout the Nordics, including the Faroe Islands, which will be very helpful to increase my understanding of LGBT+ rights throughout the Nordics, which is a very helpful tool to contextualize the Faroe Islands with the rest of the Nordics. I will also be investigating pro-LGBT Christian priests or sects, and see if they were active in fighting for queer people in the Faroe Islands.

*Criminally Queer* specifically has a comprehensive overview of the rights and prosecutions of LGBT+ people in the Faroe Islands from the 19th to the 20th centuries.

I will also use the book, *Løgtingið 150*, edited by Erling Isholm, which chronicles the stories of the Faroese parliament, Løgtingið, from its creation up until 2002. This includes much of the “era” of this paper, which will help contextualize the general political discussions surrounding the §266b matter, but also to see the outright consequences of the matter, whether or not coalitions broke or remained, due to being in favor or against this. I will also be looking for other books in this series, so as to have several perspectives in the discussions surrounding Faroese politics.

### **1.2.3 Sources**

#### ***1.2.3.1 Newspaper articles***

In this paper I will primarily use primary, first hand sources. The paper will mainly consist of articles from newspapers, where I will be using the webpage, *tidarrit.fo*, which is an online database of a variety of Faroese newspapers, dating back from the 19th century to today. Newspapers, such as the social-democratic Sosialurin to the more conservative Føringurin, is for me to not only get a some variety of political perspectives, but also to showcase how the homo/queerphobia was present in these newspapers, regardless of political association at the time. Aiming to find texts that discussed, or merely mentioned, homosexuality, I searched for the most common Faroese words or Danish loanwords that specifically referred to same-sex sexuality or intercourse: *kynsvillingur*, variations of *homosexuellur*, *sodomma*, *samkynd*, *bøssi*, and *lesbisk*. This, with any possible inflectional endings or suffixes. The uncertainty of definitive vocabulary defining same-sex activity, where I have to shift between Faroese

and Danish terms, left me with the impression that there was trouble defining it in the Faroe Islands.

The newspapers in question will range from 1988 to 2006, which will then be analyzed in a chronological manner. The references used throughout this paper will be based on qualitative sources, where I put an emphasis on newspapers that have been digitized on tidarrit.fo. The timeline of these newspapers will be from 1988 to 2006, and I will be using them to contextualize the societal discussions that were happening within the Faroe Islands at the time, and look into how the discussions evolved in this time. Most of the findings indicate that it was rarely discussed at all up until the 1980's, with some specific important actors being occasionally mentioned prior to then.

#### ***1.2.3.2 Parliamentary Discussions***

I will also be using and referring to discussions in the Faroese Parliament, the *Løgting*. Unfortunately, the debates in parliament are not transcribed, but when writing about the votes in 2005 and 2006 I do have access to the audio files of these debates, where I have listened to and chosen the parts that I deemed most relevant to my analysis. The fact that the debates are not transcribed has made the analysis a little problematic, insofar that it is easier to interpret and contextualize written materials over audio recordings. Though the audio recordings do have the added benefit of hearing the tone and mood of each individual member of parliament, which has given me a better understanding of their opinions at the time - more so than what solely using written materials would have done.

The fact that I will be translating works from Faroese and Danish into English myself is something that I do not deem to be problematic, and Faroese and Danish are my native and second languages, respectively.

#### ***1.2.3.3 Secondary Sources***

The other references, secondary sources, that I will be using are books and materials generally contextualizing the Faroese political climate of the time, with the books of Jens Rydström for explaining the Faroese Queer legislative context at the time, and the book, *Løgtingið 150*, edited by Erling Isholm, will be used to contextualize the

general political climate of the Faroe Islands from the late 80's to the early 2000's. Another book that I will use, is *Føroyar í andgletti* by Jógvan Arge, which has a few chapters focusing on the political discussions of the §266b bill and the sex discrimination act in the late 80's. Interestingly, Jógvan Arge does not go into detail about Faroese sexual minorities that would be affected by this bill, nor does he even mention that the bill was about them. Rather, he compiles interviews that he did with select politicians at the time, but seemingly does not add more context to those interviews in question, which is something that I want to rectify. This is also a part of Faroese historical writing, where some of it beats around the bush and seemingly does not go into specifics about certain topics, which is a product of the Faroe Islands 'exporting' their problems to Denmark while not resolving them themselves. The historical writing is no exception of this, and I find it interesting that Jógvan does not contextualize how the §266b bill and the sex discrimination act would respectively affect sexual minorities and women in the Faroe Islands.

One thing that I will note throughout this thesis is to not take quotes out of context, and make sure that the original intent is still there, even when I am quoting an individual. I have been going through the material several times to make sure that the quotes will not be taken out of context. This needs to be stressed, even though I am a historian.

Most of the references will be used to support the writing of this paper, where I will be able to better understand and contextualize a part of Faroese LGBT+ history, which has not had the necessary research available to fully comprehend. The references will help me, and the reader, to better understand how subtleties of the discussions at the time, while also understanding how dominating the homophobic discussions were at the time.

### 1.3 Aims and Motivation

The motivation of this paper is to highlight a part of history and historiography that has not been much written about by Faroese historians. It is to hopefully establish a growing trend in the Faroe Islands, where academics are researching subjects and persons that have historically been ignored or marginalized. An example would be the role of

women in society or people with disabilities, whose stories have not been much explored compared to other stories. With the Faroe Islands being in rapid development, especially in regards to LGBT+ rights, I feel like it is important for the islands to have this type of history being written and to highlight how Christianity and LGBT+ rights have been pitted against each other since the late 80's and still is to this day. Therefore, by writing an accessible master thesis for the general public to read, I hope to, at the very least, to give the reader added context to historical motions in regards to LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands. It can also be useful for the documents and sources that I have collected and researched, which can give the reader an idea of how sexuality was discussed in the Faroe Islands back in the day to around modern times, and how this change exactly happened. The intersection of the political discussion and religion is also notable, since the Faroese society happened to bring their beliefs and the Bible up as well, which is also something that I wanted to research.

## 2. Introductory Overview of the Faroe Islands and LGBT+ Rights in the Faroe Islands pre-1987

The Faroe Islands are an archipelago in the North Atlantic, 300 kilometers northwest from the Shetland Islands, 400 kilometers from Iceland and 1400 kilometers away from Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, and have a population of 54,000 people at the time of writing this. The Faroe Islands are an autonomous part of the Kingdom of Denmark. The autonomy in practice means that everything that has to do with the daily life of Faroese people, ie. Social and health issues, education and professional politics, are regulated and administered by the Faroese legislative power and authorities (and the Faroe Islands are as such not part of the European Union). On the contrary to this, monetary issues, foreign affairs and the military are under the issue of Danish authorities. Criminal laws are under Denmark as well, though would later be changed so that criminal laws passed in Denmark would not automatically be applicable to the Faroe Islands. Before laws that have passed the Danish parliament, the Folketing, they have to pass the Faroese parliament as well, the Løgting.

The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland were all part of the Kingdom of Norway, later Denmark-Norway, up until Denmark's secession of Norway to Sweden in 1814 under the Treaty of Kiel, due to their alliance with Napoleonic France. Because of this, the Faroese judicial system has been a part of the Danish judiciary. Ever since then, the Faroe Islands and Greenland have been under the Danish crown with their increasing rights, such as the "home rules" in 1948 and 1979 respectively, though Kristján X annulled an independence referendum in the Faroe Islands in 1946. Where Iceland differs is that the country was granted its own constitution in 1874, its own "home rule" in 1904, full independence in 1918, though becoming the Kingdom of Iceland, with Kristján X being the same king in the Kingdom of Denmark. This personal union was abolished in 1944, under the Second World War, in which an independence referendum granted the country its independence. Though all in all, before the Faroe Islands and Greenland were granted their respective "home rules" most legislation was under the responsibility of the Danish Parliament, the Folketing, where laws were passed, and

subsequently applied to the Faroe Islands and Greenland, which were relegated as “amts”, ie. Danish counties, including laws pertaining to LGBT+ people.

The Løgting had in the time period of 1988 to 2008 32 members of parliament, with 33 being the norm after the elections of 2008. Parties usually fall under the left-right paradigm, while also having the independentists versus the unionists, ie. separating from or continuing the union with Denmark. In addition to these classic dimensions of conflict, there are also other divisions that move across party lines. An example of this is the country versus the city, where politicians at the time of 1988 and in 2004 outside of the capital point out the importance of decentralization. This is in contrast to politicians from Tórshavn, who typically do not see this as an issue. Therefore, it is often seen that the politicians from outside Tórshavn choose to cooperate across party lines in order to strengthen important relationships in their constituencies. This can include values and morals, which can also be agreed upon throughout party lines. Whether or not to include the words “sexual orientation” in a hate crime paragraph is usually a good indicator of where each individual politician stands on the value conflict in the Løgting.

## 2.1 The Penal Code and Criminal Law of the Faroe Islands

### 2.1.1 Penal Code

An example of the Danish Penal Code being immediately applicable to the Faroe Islands is when from 1866 to 1933 it included a total ban on “intercourse against nature”, though this was rarely if ever enforced on the Faroe Islands. Only twice did the prosecution press charges for the violation of §177, intercourse against nature, but both these cases were in the end judged as §185, gross indecency. Though between the years of 1887 and 1928, there were three male teachers prosecuted with sexual abuse of their male pupils. One of these cases, which happened in 1913, where a male teacher allegedly sexually assaulted a male pupil, the discussions on whether or not the teacher was “sexually abnormal” were in place, and he proclaimed that he had never harbored “abnormal” sexual feelings until he met his students, though he was ultimately deemed

to be “normal.”<sup>12</sup> Another case of a 38 year old sailor of the ship *Ofelia*, where he has sexual relations with two male deckhands, 16 and 18 years of age respective, and ended up getting prosecuted of the gross indicency paragraph in §185. He explained to the court that “lacking the one he had begun desiring the other” though that having sex with men is “just as good as doing it with women”. The case also ultimately ended up not utilizing medical examinations to check that the two deckhands had anal intercourse with the sailor.<sup>13</sup> Both of these cases are examples of how the vocabulary and the medical discourse were limited and not dominant, respectively, and that the hesitation with all actors involved is notable as well.

The process of updating the Penal Code in the Faroe Islands is also somewhat haphazard. Usually, the Danish High Commissioner (Ríkisumboðsmaðurin, Denmark’s representation in the Løgting) regularly brings amendments to the Danish Penal Code for consideration for the Faroese parliament to vote on, though this is not always the case. The Løgting did a complete revision of the Faroese Penal Code in 1966, and applied almost all of the amendments to the Danish Penal Code, with a few exceptions, where the Danish government would then have to accept this through a royal decree. This is where the “Ugly Law” was introduced, which criminalized the purchase of sexual services from persons of the same sex under the age of 21. This law was in place in Denmark from 1961 to 1965, but was ultimately removed due to making homosexual men victims of blackmailing. The Løgting introduced and abolished this law on the same day on the 1st of April, 1966.<sup>14</sup> This is thus an example of the weird and strenuous position that the Løgting was at the time: implementing Danish laws, while not being fully independent and considerate of Faroese societal relations at the time. The introduction and abolition of the “Ugly Law” in the Faroe Islands is perhaps also indicative of the Løgting’s priorities, where they would rather focus on other legislative issues, over male prostitution, which was hardly seen in the Faroe Islands at the time (to our knowledge).

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<sup>12</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 147-148

<sup>13</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 149

<sup>14</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 150

## 2.1.2 Criminal Law

The legalization of homosexuality in Denmark, which was legalized in 1933, which was then automatically legalized in the Faroe Islands and Greenland, though without the input of these countries, when it came to discussions surrounding the legalization of this. This is different to Iceland, due to it being independent from the Danish Parliament, was able to discuss the legalization of homosexuality on their own terms at the Icelandic Parliament, the Althing, which was then legalized in 1940. The right to “transition” was passed 19-0 in the Løgting, and became legal on the 14th of March, 1967 in the Faroe Islands, though only through sterilization and castration. It should also be noted that the legalization made no specific reference to *changing genders* per se, rather focusing on the right to castration and sterilization and the mental health of the individual wanting to perform this on themselves.<sup>15</sup> Notably, this law came in place through a royal decree from Denmark, which was also the case with the hate crime paragraph in 1988. The Faroese Court is located in Tórshavn, the capital of the Faroe Islands, is the court of first instance, where the Eastern High Court in Copenhagen, Denmark, serves as the appellate court. This means that there is no court of appeal in the Faroe Islands themselves. During World War II, the Faroes were blocked from all communications with Denmark, which caused the Faroese Court to deal with appeals itself with a new judge. After the war, the court of appeal reverted back to the Eastern High Court in Denmark.<sup>16</sup>

From 1948 and on, amendments to the Danish Criminal law were no longer automatically valid in the Faroe Islands, and it was subsequently up to the Løgting to decide whether or not to put them in force. This then started the divergence between the Danish and Faroese Criminal laws.<sup>17</sup> Depending on how the Danish law was constructed, the laws could have been put into force with a simple vote through the Løgting, or the Løgting would have to request that the Danish Government issue a so

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<https://logir.fo/Lov/234-af-03-06-1967-om-sterilisation-og-kastration-som-sat-i-kraft-ved-kongelig-anordning>

<sup>16</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 147

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<https://web.archive.org/web/20140517151304/http://www.homoglobiini.fi/2007/02/27/a-letter-from-faroe-islands/?lang=fi>



called “royal decree”, which would then put the law in question in force on the islands.<sup>18</sup> There is generally not that big of a divergence between the Faroe Islands and Denmark, whenever these laws get introduced and subsequently implemented. The will of the two countries’ legislation not diverging too much is there for some politicians, but for certain moral issues, the Løgting decides to demonstrate its independence from Denmark. This is evident in moral issues such as abortion, which in the Faroe Islands is based on a law from 1956, and more restrictive than the law in Denmark today. This is also reflected in LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands, where the parliament often refused to introduce any laws in favor of them.

## 2.2 Age of Consent

Age of consent between heterosexual and homosexual people was not equal in this time period, even though homosexuality became legalized. This is because the age of consent for heterosexual people is 15, whereas it was 18 for homosexual people. Section 225 in the new penal law, pertaining to homosexuality and the age of consent, stated that the sexual crimes mentioned in the previous sections were also punishable between persons of the same sex. The second subsection (§225.2) is where the age limit of 18 for homosexual intercourse is introduced. The punishment for same-sex sexual activities was set at six years at the time, much lower for the heterosexual counterpart of this law, which was sixteen years.<sup>19</sup> 28 were accused and prosecuted for having sex with minors, between the years of 1933 to 1985. This was due to the differences between the ages in the law. Notably, 21 of them happened between the years of 1979 and 1985, while zero women were ever prosecuted of same-sex relations in the Faroe Islands.<sup>20</sup> It is to be assumed that there was a conflation of pedophilia and homosexuality in these prosecutions, as the age limit of 18 for homosexuality, meant that if you had sexual relations with someone of the same gender at age 17, they would still be prosecuted the same if they did it with someone younger than 15. The age of consent law itself was ultimately lowered to be equal in 1976 in Denmark, but not until 1988 in the Faroe Islands. (Incidentally the same year that the contentious §266 hate crime bill was voted

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<sup>18</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 150

<sup>19</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 150

<sup>20</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 26, 150

against in the Løgting.) Notably, there were Swedish gay rights activists who asked the Danish National Association of Gays and Lesbians about any cases of anti-homosexual legislation in the Faroe Islands in 1983. The association answered them, by saying that there were no legislative differences between homosexual people in the Faroes and Denmark,<sup>21</sup> though this was obviously wrong, and is perhaps indicative of their knowledge of the situation in the Faroe Islands. The association did eventually ask the Faroese Police about homosexuality the Faroese Penal Code, given their uncertainty.

The lowering of the age of consent in 1988, was put in force when a package of amendments to the Penal Code was put in force, which was announced by the High Commissioner, Arne Juul Arnskov, in *Dimmalætting*.<sup>22</sup> When this package of law amendments was prepared, the High Commissioner reasoned with the Løgting that the amendments and seven related laws had not been enforced in the Faroe Islands: “The reason is in many cases that a request to put the laws and decrees in force has not been made to Faroese authorities, or that they have not answered such requests. In two cases the Faroese authorities have replied that there is no wish to put the law in question in force.”<sup>23</sup> As the Løgting does not publish its minutes from its meetings, it is therefore impossible for us to know what exactly was discussed regarding this, and if the question of homosexuality was raised at all. When the age of consent was finally equalized between heterosexual and homosexual people, it was publicized by the High Commissioner in *Dimmalætting*, and would eventually be enforced from the 7th of April 1988.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.3 Literature and Culture

Looking into some traditional literature pre-1987 in the Faroe Islands does give a glimpse of what people thought of same-sex attraction at the time. While homosexuality was marginalized in a legal sense during the period of 1987, there is still some evidence of literature and culture that contain some form of same-sex attraction, specifically between two men. Literature on queer people is scant prior to 1987 though, with the

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<sup>21</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 151

<sup>22</sup> *Dimmalætting*, 10th of March 1988, 9

<sup>23</sup> Løgtingstíðindi 1985, 361, translated to English in *Criminally Queer*, 151

<sup>24</sup> *Dimmalætting*, 10th of March 1988, 9

outlier being the *kvæði* (Faroese folk ballad), or more specifically a *táttur* (satirical, humorous ballad) called *Ánaniastáttur*, where the last few verses end with the main character, Ánaniastáttur, and Símun end up with some same-sex attraction to each other, with Símun proclaiming that kissing Ánaniastáttur is just as sweet as kissing a girl. The *Ánaniastáttur* goes on to mention, how anyone who would have witnessed this, would have found this to be humorous,<sup>25</sup> suggesting that the author did not mean to make it romantic, but not specifically sinful either. While this *kvæði* was written sometime between the 17th and 18th centuries by an unknown author, it was ultimately seen as a humorous situation between two men, rather than an early romantic example of same-sex attraction. Reviewers also seemed to not even bother analyzing or mentioning the last verses of *Ánaniastáttur*, with a reviewer seemingly being the first one to acknowledge and analyze the homoerotic nature of the last few verses.<sup>26</sup> This *táttur* is perhaps a glimpse into how same-sex attraction was viewed in a very specific time period. Even when the author notes how humorous this encounter between Ánaniastáttur and Símun could be, there is still this emphasis on how long they kissed and how inseparable they were, which could in modern days be interpreted as more of an adorable encounter - even if Símun seemingly has a wife and kids in the previous verses.

Visible queer people were virtually non-existent in this time period before the 1980's, with one exception: Rólant Samuelsen. He was an actor, a hairdresser, an assistant nurse, a Christian, and openly gay. While being open about his sexuality in Tórshavn, he noted how closeted men would approach him at night, not knowing whom to talk to while living with their wives and children. He would also go on the radio to talk about being homosexual, and of a friend, who committed suicide, because his family completely rejected him. He would talk about how gay people exist and that it is not something that you can change.<sup>27</sup> While he lived in the Faroe Islands for an extended amount of time, working as a hairdresser and known as “Salong Rólant” as a result, he did eventually move to Denmark to be with his partner, Benny, and presumably because of the country's progressive LGBT+ rights, which began in the late

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<sup>25</sup> [https://kvaedi.skeyk.com/?page\\_id=13](https://kvaedi.skeyk.com/?page_id=13)

<sup>26</sup> Sigurðardóttir, “Frá Ánaniasti til Brahamdellarnar”, 09:00-10:15

<sup>27</sup> Av hinum slagnum - útleigdin, 18:45-19:35

1980's.<sup>28</sup> Besides Rólant, there were not many out Faroese people living in the Faroe Islands, either due to stigma or to lack of knowledge in regards to sexual orientation. Nevertheless, moving to Denmark, especially after the legalization of same-sex unions in 1989, was something that was taken advantage of by gay Faroese people, including Rólant. The legalization of transitioning, though through the means of “castration and sterilization”, was legalized in the Faroe Islands in 1967 and military service for LGBT+ people became legalized in Denmark in 1978, which automatically took place in the Faroe Islands and Greenland as well, since the military is Denmark's responsibility over the autonomous countries. Neither one seemingly caused much controversy on the archipelago, though where the sex change paragraph never explicitly stating that you can change gender through “castration and sterilization”, and the latter being outside of the jurisdiction of the Løgting and the Faroe Islands anyway, it never seemed to be much of an issue to discuss queer people at all in the Faroese society. This, to me, seems like an important factor in the discussion of LGBT+ people in the Faroe Islands, as visibility and public debate on queer people was almost non-existent, until the advent of the HIV epidemic in the 1980's, the first case which happened in the Faroe Islands was in 1986.<sup>29</sup> With the advent of the AIDS pandemic reaching the Faroe Islands and more progressive legislation for homosexual people in Denmark, specifically including “sexual orientation” in their hate speech paragraph, it would almost seem inevitable that the same issue would eventually reach the archipelago.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.lgbt.fo/f%C3%B8roysk-lgbt-s%C3%B8ga>, Oygjgjaíðindi, 15th of May 1992, 10

<sup>29</sup> Landslæknin, *Heilsulýsing fyri Føroyar 2020*, 43

## 2.4 Introduction of the Amendment in 1987

The hate crime statute was first introduced to Denmark in 1939, as a protective measure for Danish Jews against hate speech, specifically to counter the brewing anti-Semitism in Denmark inspired by Nazi Germany's policies and actions.<sup>30</sup> This consequently became legal in the Faroe Islands as well, due to amendments to the Danish Criminal Law being applicable to them as well at the time. The paragraph was listed as §266b in the Danish Criminal Law, and was specifically made to counter hate speech or hate crimes. As this statute was in place in 1939, queer Danes became more visible, especially after the formation of the National Association of Gay Men and Lesbians in 1948. They specifically worked with the Folketing, the Danish Parliament, on the revision of the §266b, which was eventually passed in parliament in 1987, though as seen in the previous chapter, they knew little about the situation in the Faroe Islands.<sup>31</sup>

After the inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the hate crime statute in Denmark on the 3rd of June, 1987, the royal decree had the ability to introduce this revision to the Faroese Parliament, namely the Løgting. The Danish law did explicitly state that it was not valid in the Faroe Islands nor in Greenland, but could, upon request, be fully or partially enforced, that the "special Faroese conditions require"<sup>32</sup>. This last sentence was specifically applicable to the Løgting, which meant that the bill had to be introduced by someone in parliament, for it to be enforced. Eventually, the High Commissioner of the Faroe Islands asked the Løgting on the 16th of October 1987, if they wanted to make any changes to the law and then introduce the hate crime statute to the Løgting without any changes. Which is exactly what happened on December 10th, 1987, when Vilhelm Johannesen, part of the Social Democratic party and the Minister of Industry and Labor at the time, introduced the revision to parliament. The law itself, specifying that you should not be bullied or pester people due to their "sexual orientation", was initially introduced to little fanfare and hid behind the sentence of "§266b. Anyone who, publicly or with the intention of dissemination in a wider context, makes a statement or

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<sup>30</sup> Institut for menneskerettigheder, "Forbudet mod racistiske ytringer", 1

<sup>31</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 151

<sup>32</sup> retsinformation.dk, "Lov om ændring af borgerlig straffelov og lov om forbud mod forskelsbehandling på grund af race m.v.", <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/1987/357>

other kind of message in which a group of persons is threatened, mocked or degraded on the grounds of their race, etc.”. The same day, the sex discrimination act was introduced to parliament, in accordance with United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 1, that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, the royal decree revision was approved by all of the government ministers at the time, in order to be voted upon in parliament.<sup>34</sup> This including Rev. Niels Pauli Danielsen, part of the Kristiligi Fólkaflokkurin, Føroya Framburðs- og Fiskivinnuflokkur (KFFF; the Christian People’s Party, Progress and Fisheries Party<sup>35</sup>), who was a priest and the Minister of Social and Municipal Affairs in 1988, who had a significant role in this paragraph later on. The sex discrimination bill ended up being rejected to a 15-0 vote.

As soon as Niels Pauli Danielsen knew what the paragraph was about, more specifically that the “etc.” included “sexual orientation”, he decided to fight against this bill, specifically because it gave more rights to sexual minorities. This is despite the fact that he voted for it to be introduced to the parliament, and is perhaps indicative of how attentive he was when it got approved. Niels deemed this to be “immoral” by legitimizing homosexual people (despite it being legal there already). Incidentally, he was present at the initial introduction of the royal decree, but seemingly did not notice the “sexual orientation” revision of the bill at the time.

The majority coalition at the time was between Javnaðarflokkurin (the Equality Party), Tjóðveldisflokkurin (the Republic Party), Sjálvstýrisflokkurin (the Independence Party), and KFFFF. This coalition was constructed with parties across the left-right wing spectrum at the time, with Atli Dam of Javnaðarflokkurin being the prime minister at the time. The coalition formed in 1984, where KFFFF was specifically a Christian conservative party, being especially socially conservative at the time. Javnaðarflokkurin, being a social democratic party, Tjóðveldisflokkurin, a democratic socialist and independentist party, and Sjálvstýrisflokkurin, a liberal and autonomous party, were not necessarily dedicated to specifically “Christian values” as KFFFF was, though still part

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<sup>33</sup> United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”

<sup>34</sup> Løgtingstíðindi 1987, 232-233

<sup>35</sup> Shortened to KFFFF

of a broadly Christian society in the Faroe Islands. The support of the KFFFF was necessary for the coalition government, which proved to be dysfunctional and frail.

The amendment of the bill in *italics*, translated by me from Danish to English, goes as follows: “§266b. Anyone who, publicly or with the intention of dissemination in a wider context, makes a statement or other kind of message in which a group of persons is threatened, mocked or degraded on the grounds of their race, skin color, national or ethnic origin, faith *or sexual orientation*, is punished with a fine, bond or imprisonment for up to 2 years.”<sup>36</sup> The phrase, “or sexual orientation” was the main point of contention here, with Niels Pauli Danielsen and Tordur Niclasen, in parliament for KFFFF, being the main actors against this bill and seemingly threatening the coalition between the them, Javnaðarflokkurin, Tjóðveldisflokkurin and Sjálvstýrisflokkurin.

Tordur Niclasen, member of parliament for KFFFF, talked about how the hate crime bill and the sex discrimination act were the two main examples of why the coalition between KFFFF and the other parties broke. He mentioned how these two examples had to be removed as royal decrees by Vilhelm Johannesen, and that this was an “imperative demand” by the party. Tordur mentioned, how the sex discrimination act was against the coalition cooperation document, signed by representatives of the government parties, and consequently KFFFF decided to leave the coalition.<sup>37</sup> Where Tordur compares the §266b statute revision and the sex discrimination bill and is evidently against both of these, this is perhaps indicative of his party’s resistance to more “progressive” bills, while also using Christianity as a way to speak up against this. This is further corroborated by another interview with Tordur, where he insinuated that Atli Dam, Prime Minister in 1988 and part of Javnaðarflokkurin, essentially wanted to “support immorality over the working class” and how Atli wants to go against the Bible and “the traditions, that have built the Faroe Islands for centuries”, insinuating that said traditions being built from Christianity. He then points to ‘Landsforening for bøsser og lesbiske’<sup>38</sup>, the Danish National Organization for LGBT+ peoples, and suggests that the “standards” being put forward by the national organization in Denmark, go against the Christian standards on the Faroe Islands. He also questioned the ethics of an out

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<sup>36</sup> Sosialurin, 26th of March, 1988, 1

<sup>37</sup> Arge, *Føroyar í andgletti*, 104-105

<sup>38</sup> ‘National Organization for Gay Men and Lesbians’, old name for LGBT Denmark

homosexual man hypothetically becoming a principal of a school, and how that could negatively influence children.<sup>39</sup>

The brouhaha resulted of this particular §266b statute, along with the sex discrimination bill, was because of a Christian backlash not only from the KFFFF, as it was ultimately almost universally voted against or abstained upon in 1988. Karin Kjølbro, Tjóðveldisflokkurinn, being the only one who voted for it, noted how Faroese people had not even discussed the topic of homosexuality before this exact vote. She notes in an interview from 2005 the pressure that she felt from all other politicians. Tjóðveldisflokkurinn wanted to prioritize their political credibility and wanted to display some kind of united front in the parliament. The party was therefore ill-prepared to jeopardize the coalition because of a LGBT+ rights issue. Though Karin decided not to vote against her conscience.<sup>40</sup> Karin, being one of two first women ever voted into the Løgting, and who worked as a social worker, had encountered gay people while working in Denmark, which to her gave her a better understanding of them, compared to Faroe Islanders who perhaps did not know an out gay person.<sup>41</sup> The conflation between homosexuality and pedophilia was prevalent, according to Karin, and this exasperated the social conservatism present in the Faroe Islands at the time. She further explains that she was not the only one who supported homosexuality and more specifically the §266b statute, but she was seemingly the only one who dared to vote for it. She stated that politicians fought against gay people specifically because they did not want to “legitimize them”, though this discrimination went against Karin’s Christian sensibilities, which is in contrast to the Christian arguments that Tordur Niclasen and the KFFFF party used.<sup>42</sup> This is further reiterated in her letter to the editor in Sosialurin, where she notes how due processes are in order when statutes are being handled in the Rules Committee, and even notes that the majority of pedophilia charges have been committed by heterosexual men, countering Tordur’s claim on the contrary.<sup>43</sup> Karin was also the only member of parliament who went to have a speech before the vote of this

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<sup>39</sup> Dimmalætting, 26th of March, 1988, 4

<sup>40</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 153-154

<sup>41</sup> Av hinum slagnum - útleingin, 45:20-46:50

<sup>42</sup> Munk, *Annika skifti kyn*

<sup>43</sup> Sosialurin, 29th of March 1988, 6



bill, seemingly only discussing racism and the importance of not discriminating against minorities.<sup>44</sup>

Ultimately, the majority coalition between Javnaðarflokkurin, Tjóðveldisflokkurin, KFFFF and Sjálvstýrisflokkurin was threatened because of the divisive nature of the bill. The vote resulted in 17 votes against, and only one vote for, which was cast by Karin Kjølbro. Notably, there were fourteen abstentions, which is perhaps indicative how (un)willing the members of parliaments wanted to discuss the matter. The immediate result of this vote caused the KFFFF to leave the coalition, though with certain negotiations with Adolf Hansen of the Frámsóknarflokkurin (the Progress Party), the coalition was able to remain in power up until general elections in the Faroe Islands on November 17th, 1988.<sup>45</sup>

## 2.5 Letters and Public Discussions about §266b in 1988

An article seemingly condemning Karin Kjølbro for voting for the §266b amendment was written right after the vote. The article stated that she was the only one who voted for the “shameful case” and then proceeded to use the pejorative “kynsvillingur” as a way to demean homosexual people, as if they needed protection.<sup>46</sup> This small article is an example of how speech was made to attack not only a minority by dehumanizing them to their sexuality, but to also shame Karin for voting for what she believed to be right. With speech like this, it could make civil discussions quite difficult between the people who were for or against the article.

There were other discussions taking place, with several letters to the editors of various Faroese newspapers discussing in favor or against homosexuality. One letter from *Dimmalætting*, which was the biggest newspaper at the time, while also being center-right and part of Sambandsflokkurin, the pro-unionist party of the Faroe Islands. This letter, which would put the word “orientation” in quotation marks, while also mentioning the need to pray for the few Faroese people who have this “unnatural ‘orientation’”. The emphasis on “Danish conditions” with the possibility of a homosexual man being able to become a priest in Denmark, while also noting how this could affect children, and how AIDS affected specific subgroups of people. The author

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<sup>44</sup> Dimmalætting, 26th of March, 4

<sup>45</sup> Arge, *Føroyar í andgletti*, 98-99

<sup>46</sup> Dimmalætting, 5th of May 1988, 9

also criticized Tordur Niclasen for not rejecting the bill immediately, and that this bill is against Christian sensibilities in the Faroe Islands.<sup>47</sup> This letter in particular highlights several opinions espoused by the KFFFF, while also criticizing the party for its inaction as well. Notably, the difference between Denmark and Faroe Islands is also not lost on the author, as the emphasis on the differences in Christian values in these countries is emphasized, while also noting that such things must not happen on the islands, is a pretty clear example of the foreign vice conception of homosexuality. With this, the foreign decadence of Denmark is not something that should be platformed on the Faroe Islands. Instead, the few Faroe Islanders affected by this should, according to the author, get help and prayers. The acknowledgement of anything that goes against the Christian values of the Faroe Islands, should not be accepted, nor tolerated.

Other letters to the editors were featured in *Dagblaðið* (the Daily Paper), where the editor of the paper at the time was Óli Breckman, who was also part of the conservative *Fólkaflokkurin*.<sup>48</sup> Notably, one letter from an author (where the paper posted a picture of the author, but seemingly forgot to credit him) accused Vilhelm Johannesen of “legitimizing homosexuality” by introducing this bill to the *Løgting*. Essentially the letter boils down to saying that the bill does not need revision, because sexual minorities are already protected by the law, even though it is not explicitly mentioned as such by the law. The author also quotes the original law in Denmark, and quotes it with the “This law is not legally binding to the Faroe Islands, but can be legalized if the special Faroese conditions allow it”. He then says that the special Faroese conditions do not allow this, since the country is built on Christian ethics. Notably, he uses the homophobic pejorative “*kynsvillingur*” continuously throughout the letter, seemingly to undermine homosexual people of their sexuality.<sup>49</sup> With letters like these, it seemingly paints a picture of intolerance towards sexual minorities in the Faroe Islands, with several references to natural, Faroese-Christian values, contrasted with unnatural, Danish-Secular values, and how these were ultimately incompatible. Notably additional examples of the foreign vice theory. Using pejoratives and undermining the sexuality of sexual minorities through the usage of religion is noted in these two letters. Notably,

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<sup>47</sup> *Dimmalætting*, 12th of March 1988, 8

<sup>48</sup> *Dagblaðið*, 30. March 1988, 2

<sup>49</sup> *Dagblaðið*, 30. March 1988, 6

there were other letters to the editor that refuted and went against what these authors wrote.

Kári Petersen, part of Javnaðarflokkurin and husband to future Prime Minister Marita Petersen, wrote a letter to the editor denying that his party is “unchristian”. He accuses KFFFF of intentionally seeding doubt in the Faroese population, bid for votes for the upcoming election, and for mixing a religious dogma into a civil law, which according to Kári, is characteristic of “Islamic countries, but is completely unknown in Christian countries.”<sup>50</sup> The letter itself denounces accusations of not being in line with the Bible, in contrast to what the previous two letters and the KFFFF in general was saying. With Javnaðarflokkurin being a social democratic party, and being affiliated with the Danish Sosialdemokratiet, presumably wanted to be in line with their social democratic agenda, while also being aware of the opinions of the Faroese population. Kári emphasizes the fact that the bill is about persecution or victimizing minorities, and that they simply want to explicitly include sexual orientation in §266b, while at the same time saying that it does not go against Christian principles. In a direct response to this letter by conservative politician Jógvan á Lakjuni of Fólkaflokkurin, he quotes ‘Landsforening for bøsser og lesbiske’ and notes how their suggestion to the law was to eradicate Judeo-Christian values in Denmark, which would then also be applicable to the values of the Faroe Islands. And to make the “unnatural natural”. The letter continues with a tangent on how a Sex Discrimination could hypothetically cause more homosexuality, puts homosexual “tendencies” in quotation marks, and basically says that specifically sexual minorities should not be legally protected from hate speech, while also using whataboutism to refer to other minorities that should be prioritized in this law.<sup>51</sup>

Another example of a letter to the editor more positive towards homosexual people, is where the author believes that the Bible has been misused in order to espouse hateful rhetoric towards a minority group, which goes against her Christian values. The question of how some Faroese Christians seem to neglect the “love thy neighbor” part of the Bible and instead focusing on stripping minorities of their rights and discussing it should be completely out of question. This does not make sense to the author, since she

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<sup>50</sup> Sosialurin, 26. March 1988, 7

<sup>51</sup> Dagblaðið, 30. March 1988, 14

is of the belief that all human beings should be treated equally and with dignity. Notably, she also criticizes Adolf Hansen for apparent monetary corruption, and questions how he can espouse his rhetoric towards minorities, when he himself has not been completely truthful in regards to certain financial thievery he allegedly has committed.<sup>52</sup> Notably, Adolf Hansen used to be part of the KFFFF party, but ended up leaving due to disagreements within the party while the coalition formed in 1984 and ended up in Framsóknarflokkurin afterwards.<sup>53</sup>

## 2.6 Discussion

Ultimately, the political discussions regarding the hate crime bill and sexual orientation boiled down to: firstly that homosexuality is against the Bible; secondly that it is unnatural; thirdly that you cannot introduce the same kind of bill from Denmark to the Faroe Islands (ie. Faroese exceptionalism); fourthly that the AIDS epidemic is bad and mostly a result of homosexual sex; and lastly that you should think of the children. The way that politicians of the KFFFF party, specifically Tordur Niclasen and Niels Pauli Danielsen, and Adolf Hansen of Framsóknarflokkurin, used Christianity to justify their opposition to sexual orientation, is evident while reading their rhetoric. Some people, such as Karin Kjølbro, noted how her specific Christian beliefs did not equate to discriminating against specific minority groups, though this sentiment was not echoed by the other members of parliament in the 17-1 vote against the bill, with 14 members of parliament abstaining. Notably, the discussions were tinged with the Christian beliefs on either side, while not necessarily considering the human rights issue of protecting a minority from potential hate speech. Contextualizing this with the sex discrimination bill, which was also rejected, it is easy to see how members of parliament and the Faroese population at large were seemingly not for change, whether it being for LGBT+ people's or women's rights.

The usage of pejorative terms, such as “kynsvillingur” or sodomites, are examples of verbal threats or degradations. The lack of visible LGBT+ people in the Faroe Islands also meant that it was easier for politicians to frame them as a foreign, Danish vice, not meant to infiltrate the Christian society's values of the Faroe Islands. This is especially

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<sup>52</sup> Sosialurin, 29. October, 1988, 9

<sup>53</sup> Arge, *Føroyar í andgletti*, 101-102

exemplified with out, queer people, such as Rólant Samuelson, moving from the Faroe Islands to abroad, mostly in Denmark. This “exile”, so to speak, is further exacerbated by the fact that Denmark’s relatively progressive policies towards sexual minorities at the time, made it easier for these same queer people to move out of the islands to a country not only more welcoming to them, but also with not the same volume of stochastic violence disguised as Christian virtue signaling, as experienced in the Faroe Islands at the time. This sort of heteronationalism, where heterosexuality is seen as the normal sexuality, with heterosexism and patriarchy being imperatives in certain politicians’ ideologies.<sup>54</sup>

Considering all of this, it is easy to see how the vote was rejected, though this also proves to be the first time that the Faroe Islands gets to discuss LGBT+ people and legislation for them on a national level. The stigma towards people with HIV and AIDS was still an issue after the vote; later the same year in 1988, a school in Fuglafjørður in Eysturoy, decided to reject a presentation from a homosexual man with HIV. This was due to the fact that he could potentially show children that it is normal to be gay. This was later modified so that parts of the presentation could be used, though also emphasizing “Christian customs”. Interestingly, discussions about condoms and contraceptives were not allowed either, since “kids could figure out how to use them anyway”.<sup>55</sup> Though the silver lining to this brouhaha in Fuglafjørður, according to Karin Kjølbro, is that at least the discussions continued to some extent.<sup>56</sup> Bizarrely, the age of consent laws got equalized between the sexual orientations in 1988<sup>57</sup>, with seemingly no discussions surrounding this. Even though this anti-homosexual legislation ended in 1988 with the equalization of age of consent, the taboo of homosexuality was still clearly evident before and after then. Though the omission of the wording “sexual orientation” perhaps meant that such a detail would not have been noticed by actors of KFFFF. But there would still be a lot of developments to be made, even with a new coalition arriving in November of 1988.

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<sup>54</sup> Lazarus, “Heteronationalism, human rights, and the nation-state”, 13

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.lgbt.fo/f%C3%B8roysk-lgbt-s%C3%B8ga>

<sup>56</sup> Kjølbro, “Pláss fyri okkum øllum: Snøklar um sexualitet”, 4

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.lgbt.fo/f%C3%B8roysk-lgbt-s%C3%B8ga>

### 3. Discussions on homosexuality from the 1990's to mid-2000's

Given the controversy and the vast rejection of the §266b bill, showing support for it even afterwards could prove to be controversial. This chapter will mostly focus upon the general discussions and developments of LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands, contextualized with other developments in the Nordic countries. The Løgting and the subsequent governments and coalitions in it failed to enact positive legislation, which would then slowly be enacted in the neighboring Nordic countries. This caused people to fight not only the hate crime bill, but also for registered partnership, which was starting to become a reality in the other Nordic countries. Iceland started to implement similar anti-discrimination laws like in Denmark, but also legalizing the recognition of same-sex unions - all in 1996. Norway had already legalized anti-discrimination laws back in 1981, and legalized same-sex unions in 1993. Sweden legalized the anti-discrimination laws in 1987, and legalized registered partnership in 1995. Finland legalized anti-discrimination bills in 1995, and recognized same-sex unions in 2002. Greenland legalized unions between same-sex couples in 1996, though interestingly did not legalize the anti-discrimination/hate speech bill towards sexual minorities until 2010. Regardless, it was becoming evident that the Faroe Islands would start to fall behind on the recognition of same-sex unions, anti-discrimination bills, and LGBT+ peoples in general. KFFFF, the party that was staunchly against LGBT+ rights, and more specifically anything to do with homosexuality, would gradually be replaced by their successor, Miðflokkurin, which was formed in 1992, and would espouse similar talking points to their predecessor.

#### 3.1 Bogi Davidsen

When Rólant Samuelson passed away in 1992, Bogi Davidsen wrote a eulogy which was published in several newspapers at the time. Bogi was also gay, and was a good friend of Rólant's. Given that Rólant was a revolutionary, in a sense that he was the first

openly gay Faroese man in a modern sense, Bogi noted how he was “ein varði” (a cairn), and had the suggestion that “we Faroese should give him a memorial, which in the future could show both Faroe Islanders and foreigners that he was, and still is, a cairn.”<sup>58</sup> The comparison between Róland and a cairn is intentional on Bogi’s part, since the bundle of rocks, that are meant to guide the way through the most on trails without a path, is quite characteristic for hiking in the foggy Faroe Islands. Regardless, Róland’s death and the writing of his eulogy marked the introduction of more neutral Faroese terms to queer people: *samkynd* for homosexual, *tvíkynd* for bisexual, and *hinkynd* for heterosexual, all of which were used by Bogi in the eulogy. This eventually turned out to be Bogi’s beginning to fight for improved LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands. He would go on to hold a speech in *Føroyahúsið*, the Faroese House in Copenhagen, talking about the missing rights of gay people in the Faroe Islands. The speech was published in Faroese newspapers, and eventually the National Broadcaster of the Faroe Islands aired a documentary about living as a gay Faroese man with his partner in Copenhagen in 1994<sup>59</sup>, and in a discussion about the rights of gays and lesbians in 1995.<sup>60</sup> He would debate a minister of the Faroese government at the time, Kristian Magnussen, who stated that he would vote for registered partnership, but would not lead the effort to propose a bill on it. This is probably also indicative of how controversial the subject was at the time, though also a glimpse into how the Faroese people were not unified in their resistance towards homosexuality. Bogi would go on to advocate for civil unions in the latter program, especially due to the legalization of this in Denmark in 1989. He specifically hoped for the introduction of registered partnership in the Faroe Islands, though this did not happen. His patience for the missing rights in the Faroe Islands at the time, stemmed from the fact that he deemed the islands to need to progress to the same developments that had happened in the other Nordic countries as well.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Oygjglatíðindi, 15. mai 1992, 10

<sup>59</sup> Kringvarp Føroya, *Úr myrkrinum*

<sup>60</sup> Kringvarp Føroya, *Kjak*

<sup>61</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 156-157

### 3.2 HIV & AIDS in the Faroe Islands

While the discussions on §266b seemingly subsided a bit in the Faroe Islands, the discussions around LGBT+ persons, specifically homosexual men, continued. With the prevalence of HIV and AIDS at its peak in the early 1990's. Sjóntvark Føroya, the national broadcaster of the Faroe Islands, would start to televise a documentary of people contracting AIDS - *Verjuleysur: Hanus Guttesen* in 1991. This documentary showed the life of Hanus after he was infected with HIV, which later developed into AIDS. He would also be describing the stigmas of the disease in the Faroe Islands and why Faroese people in Denmark, who were infected too, would refuse to even tell their families back home of their condition. The documentary ended with him passing away in 1991. The documentary was a mostly neutral representation of how life was, while being diagnosed with HIV and AIDS, though Hanus did also mention how he got the virus from a homosexual hookup while being inebriated on vacation and had been celibate after that encounter. A doctor at the National Hospital of Denmark would also go on to explain, how there were Faroese AIDS patients, who were seemingly more afraid of telling their families that they had AIDS (because then they would most likely have to come out), which would add a mental toll on them, in addition to being infected.<sup>62</sup>

The media would also note how poorly informed of HIV and AIDS Faroese people were at the time. Doctors would concede that there should be increased efforts to inform the public of this by broadcasting public service announcements about this.<sup>63</sup> One could wonder as to why Faore Islands would have been so uninformed of this illness at the time, though with the stigmatization of not only male homosexuality, but also people sharing needles, injecting drugs and having sexual relations with people from “Haiti and African countries especially around the equator”<sup>64</sup> could be a part of this. The taboo-ification of these subjects could prove it difficult for people to not associate HIV and AIDS with certain subgroups of people (ie. drug users or homosexual men), and then consequently not acknowledge the disease themselves.

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<sup>62</sup> Av hinum slagnum - útleðgin, 38:55-39:28

<sup>63</sup> Sosialurin, 5th of July 1990, 1

<sup>64</sup> 14. September, 8th of May 1987, 4



The media depiction was a part of framing LGBT+ people, specifically queer men, in a negative light in the Faroe Islands, which could also explain the lack of action in the 1990's when it came to better LGBT+ legislation on the islands.

### 3.3 Perception of Queer People in the Faroe Islands at the Time

In 1992, the Great Garlic Girls, a Norwegian drag collective, had a performance in Tórshavn. According to them, the performance went as planned, though the audience were seemingly unaware that they were drag queens. When they finished the number, they allegedly went into a car chase with local Faroese men, who were seemingly offended at the fact that they were drag queens. My conversation with them indicated that they were more scared of this, than when they got bomb threats and shot at during their stay in Lebanon a few years earlier.<sup>65</sup> Regardless, this car chase after some Norwegian drag queens in Tórshavn is at least indicative of the intolerance of public displays of LGBTQ+ persons and performances at the time.

Gay people were also discussed in the context of the church and how to “handle” them. In one article, the headline goes: “Faroese Priests Agree: Absolute no to marry homosexual couples” coupled with a drawing of a priest blessing two men, shaped like penises and scrotums. The article goes on to explain why these priests believe that homosexual couples should not marry nor be blessed by priests.<sup>66</sup> This article in particular is interesting because it is a clear objectification of gay men to reduce them to their genitalia, while also



<sup>65</sup> Interview with Great Garlic Girls

<sup>66</sup> Højgaard, “Kortaneí at gífta samkynd pør”, 4

putting them in a position to be blessed by a (more normal looking) priest. The objectified gay men juxtaposed to a Christian priest blessing them could in some sense be interpreted as Christians having the ability to be humanized and in a way of hegemonic beings, whereas the gay men are reduced to their genitalia and would therefore need blessings to even be considered to be human. Given that homophobic slurs, such as “kynsvillingur” were the norm in this time period, and based on research, where slurs can lead to dehumanization and physical distancing of gay men<sup>67</sup>, where this article is a manifestation of that. Homophobic epithets have the consequence of manifesting itself to real life, where gay men in the Faroe Islands would get objectified into their genitals, and consequently dehumanized. Gay women were not necessarily as visible at the time, which could also be an example of lesbian erasure.

### 3.4 Signature Collecting

Brynhild Thomsen, a Faroese student studying journalism in Copenhagen, started in 2002 to collect signatures to a public announcement in the Faroe Islands, with the demand that the law of registered partnership should be introduced.<sup>68</sup> The arguments used, included mentioning that “all of the other Nordic countries have accepted such a law [registered partnership], and in every Western country are there developments in bettering the conditions of different minorities - for example the homosexuals.”<sup>69</sup> This public announcement ended up mentioning the toll that gay people had, whether or not they either moved abroad or stayed in the Faroe Islands. The argument that Brynhild uses, mentions how the Faroe Islands are supposed to be a civilized, democratic society, with humanistic values. Around 300 Faroese people ended up signing the public announcement with it being published on *Sosialurin* and *Dimmalætting* and on a chat forum for gay Faroese diaspora, called *gjeikari.dk*. Though later, a counter public announcement by a member of parliament in the Løgting ended up collecting 2000 signatures against such a partnership law.<sup>70</sup> So with this signature collecting, there was evidently a majority of people, comfortable speaking about LGBT+ rights, against

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<sup>67</sup> Fasoli, et.al, “Not just words: Exposure to homophobic epithets...”

<sup>68</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 157

<sup>69</sup> Thomsen, “Yvirlýsing”, *gjeikari.dk*

<sup>70</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 157

them, than for them. Though with this public announcement, and with the chat room, it eventually culminated in the beginnings of increased visibility in the Faroe Islands. The aforementioned webpage, where gay Faroese people would talk about homosexuality on a personal basis, eventually ended up in a meeting in real life in the Faroe Islands, where they would end up creating the first official Faroese LGBT+ organization.<sup>71</sup>

### 3.5 Friðarbogin's Formation in 2003

The first official Faroese LGBT+ organization was established in 2003, when *Ælabogin* (the Rainbow) was formed. Another organization already had this name though, so it had to change to *Friðarbogin* (the Peace-Bow). Immediately after *Friðarbogin*'s formation, a few young men and women came out in the press, which revitalized the debate on the living conditions for LGBT+ peoples in the Faroe Islands. What became the eventual downfall of *Friðarbogin* was the fact that most members wanted to move to Denmark. This is probably a result of a more vibrant gay scene along with better rights for gay people in Denmark, though some decided to stay to continue the fight. Four years after *Friðarbogin*'s founding, only two members of the original steering committee remained: Sonja Jógvansdóttir and Tina Jakobsen.<sup>72</sup> *Friðarbogin* did have a web page, where they would organize events for queer people, inform about LGBT+ rights and counter superstitions, and share resources and LGBT+ history, all in Faroese for Faroe Islanders to read.<sup>73</sup> Sonja Jógvansdóttir would also appear on national television talking about her homosexuality and eventual struggle to realize this.<sup>74</sup> They would also organize a concert on the Faroese national holiday, Ólavsøka. The organization of *Friðarbogin* in the Faroe Islands also had a positive effect on the members, as they now had an organized group that they could rely upon and be heard in.<sup>75</sup> This gave *Friðarbogin* two functions: as a Faroese organization for LGBT+ persons, and also a social assembly for LGBT+ people to participate in. *Friðarbogin*'s mere existence is a big change to how it was previously, as there was no organized

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<sup>71</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 157-158

<sup>72</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 158

<sup>73</sup> fridarbogin.com, via archive.org

<https://web.archive.org/web/20091119061641/http://www.fridarbogin.com/index.html>

<sup>74</sup> "Cassiopeia - Kjak um samkynd"

<sup>75</sup> Mortensen, *Færing og homoseksuel*, 31-32

effort to organize queer people in the Faroe Islands, and they would be stuck wondering by themselves if they were queer or not. While an organized effort could risk a simplified and essentialistic view of queer people, it also gave them a platform, which they previously did not have.

### **3.5.1 ANSO, *Bogin* and the First Faroe Pride in 2005**

On November 21st 2004, ANSO (Association of Nordic LGBT Student Organizations) was formed. This association, which represented Nordic LGBT+ student organizations, aimed to improve the situation for LGBT+ students through the Nordic and Baltic regions along with Poland, to provide a platform for addressing LGBT+ student issues and enhance cooperation between LGBT+ student groups throughout the Nordic region. *Friðarbogin* was a founding member of ANSO, (even though they were not strictly a *student union* for Faroese LGBT+ students) along with *Bogin* (the Bow) which was a student union for Faroese LGBT+ students and youth, and they had Faroese representatives in the ANSO board.<sup>76</sup>

Manijeh Elsa Modi who was president of *Bogin* and vice-president of ANSO, was an important actor in the organization of the very first Faroe Pride event in the Faroe Islands. She, along with ANSO, were preparing for a “gay conference” at the Nordic House in the Faroe Islands in 2005. The minister of the interior and health, Hans Pauli Strøm, along with members of parliament Finnur Helmsdal (Tjóðveldisflokkurin) and John Johannessen (Javnaðarflokkurin; he would later come out as gay many years later<sup>77</sup>) were present at the conference and gave speeches. Here, they put forward proposals for the §266b paragraph, specifically to protect sexual minorities from potential hate speech. Given the fact that this exact bill would be voted upon a month later in August of 2005, it does seem like ANSO and *Bogin* hosted the conference to support LGBT+ positive legislation.<sup>78</sup> Annita á Fríðriksmørk of Tjóðveldisflokkurin was also present at the pride, and noticed how the presentations gave people knowledge

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<sup>76</sup> *Fjølur* 2005, 16-17

<sup>77</sup> Rasmussen, “- Tað var trupult at ásanna tað fyrri mær sjálvum”

<sup>78</sup> Sosialurin, “Nú líta vit fram - við takksemi”, 10-11

about LGBT+ peoples and their issues, which she would credit to giving politicians the vindication to fight for this in parliament.<sup>79</sup>

Right after the conference had concluded, the participants went on to do the first ever Pride March the same day. Sonja Jógvansdóttir and Tina Jakobsen of *Friðarbogin* led the march from the Nordic House throughout Tórshavn, with Manijeh present as well, and they eventually ended up outside of the *Løgting*. Seemingly there was fear that the amount of participants would be embarrassingly low, though there were around 200 people who joined, to their surprise. Notably, Sonja wore the Faroese national costume, for the specific reason to inscribe themselves in a national discourse, while also claiming their rights as Faroese citizens - a counter to the foreign vice that had been used before.<sup>80</sup> There were also queer Faroese people, who stated that they had never felt as much at home, since after the Faroe Pride: “It touched me so deeply, that there were so many people who showed up. Everyone welcomed us so well. It was simply so touching. I think for the first time, I felt 100% at home on the Faroe Islands.”<sup>81</sup>

The Pride itself caused a lot of public discourse in the Faroe Islands, with politicians chiming in as well. Gerhard Lognberg, also part of Javnaðarflokkurin with John Johannessen, said this on the 24th of August: “ I don’t have anything against these people, but I am against the sin that they bring into this country.”<sup>82</sup> This is a kind of positive self-presentation, but also a sort of camouflaged statement against homosexual people, since Gerhard shows how he does not have anything against “these people, but”, and then proceeds to make a negative statement towards them. This quote is indicative of how the discussion was at the time, with the fact that there were still prejudices present in the Faroe Islands.

### 3.6 Discussion

A lot of developments happened between the years of 1988 and 2005, with the media and the general Faroese public willing to discuss LGBT+ people, or specifically homosexuality and gay people. Most of this discussion was related to the negative

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<sup>79</sup> LGBT Føroyar, “Anita [sic] á Fríðriksmørk og Finnur Helmsdal, sáli eru ‘Ársins hinskynd 2011’ - Partur 2”, 05:00-06:34

<sup>80</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 157-158

<sup>81</sup> Quote in Mortensen, “Færing og homoseksuel”, 32

<sup>82</sup> Dimmalætting, 24. August 2005

portrayal of homosexuality in the Faroe Islands, with religion being used as the main argument against it.

The developments started to increase after the passing of Rólant Samuelsen in 1992, where Bogi Davidsen started to push for more dialogue on homosexuality on the Faroe Islands, though this proved to be difficult to do alone - especially since he did live in Denmark at the time as well. Nonetheless the fact that he was willing to star in a documentary about his life and also willing to participate in televised debates, proved to be the beginning of gay discourse in the Faroe Islands. At least more discussions were to be had than before the 1988 vote.

The discussion on homosexuality would be happening throughout the 1990's, in the context of the other Nordic countries and their progressive laws to homosexual people, to homosexual people in the context of Christianity and the church. Notably, the Faroe Islands experienced a financial crisis in the beginning of the 1990's, where young Faroese people would move out of the islands in droves, mostly to Denmark, because of the inability to find jobs at that point. The population shrank from 47.000 people in 1992 down to 43.000 in the middle of 1993.<sup>83</sup> Whether or not this had a big effect on LGBT+ rights and visibility in the Faroe Islands is hard to say; the younger generations, who were perhaps not as conservative as the older generations, moved out of the country, while the older generation stayed. This could also explain the little developments between 1988 to around the beginning of the 2000's, as the exodus of LGBT+ people (and thus the lesser chance of visibility) and the younger generations would lead to people staying behind on focusing on this exodus, rather than thinking about LGBT+ rights specifically.

The public announcement on a law for registered partnership in 2002, proved to be somewhat instrumental in making more Faroese people talk more about LGBT+ people. This, and the webpage *gjeikari.dk*, also ended up collecting queer Faroese people to eventually organize *Friðarbogin*. The organization of *Friðarbogin* and its daughter organization of *Bogin*, proved to be instrumental in bringing the conversation of queer people and specifically homosexuality, back to the Faroe Islands. Given that the concert of 2004, and the first Faroe Pride were organized because of them, then it is clear that

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<sup>83</sup> <https://hagstova.fo/fo/folk/folkatal/folkatal>

they have had an important impact insofar that this would lead to more conversation and better legislation to them. This also happened at a time when the population was increasing, as opposed to the decreasing in the 1990's. Such developments caused a lot of discussions in Faroese society and between Faroese politicians, who eventually would be reintroducing a certain bill that had been rejected 17 years prior.

## 4. Vote in November 2005

The majority coalition formed in 2004 to 2008 was between Sambandsflokkurin (the Union Party), Javnaðarflokkurin (the Equality Party), and Fólkaflokkurin (the People's Party). None of the parties had a unified opinion on LGBT+ rights at the time, though Fólkaflokkurin and Miðflokkurin (the Center Party) were more explicitly against these rights. The majority coalition went across the left-right wing spectrum, and ranged from social democrats, to liberal unionists and liberal-conservative separatists, with seemingly no unified position on social issues pertaining to LGBT+ people. Finnur Helmsdal and Annita á Fríðriksmørk, both part of Tjóðveldisflokkurin and the opposition, decided after the activities of the Pride March in August of 2005, to reintroduce the proposal of §266b, which was rejected in 1988, in November 2nd of 2005.

As Danish national law is applicable to the Faroe Islands, with the consent of the Løgting, then Annita and Finnur decided to introduce this bill as a “Danish national law recommendation”, which would be voted upon in the Løgting, and then sent to the Folketing to be voted upon again (and most likely be accepted, since the law was already legalized there). It could be interpreted that Finnur and Annita might have wanted to introduce the bill to “shake things up” in the Faroese Parliament, though judging from their bill, they do seem keen on mentioning the human rights that sexual minorities are entitled to. They also acknowledged that no Faroese party had an official policy for the rights of sexual minorities. The introductory bill mentions the 1988 vote and efforts that have been made in neighboring countries, such as in Denmark and Greenland. A United Nations bill was also mentioned, where it was stated that it should be punishable to bully and discriminate against people because of their sexual orientation. The efforts that Friðarbogin and Bogin made in the summer of 2005 with the LGBT+ conference and the Faroe Pride were also significant. They also emphasized the fact that the bill was not necessarily about giving a minority “more rights”, but to respect them as the taxpaying Faroese citizens that they are, and also rejecting the conflation of homosexuality and pedophilia, which several politicians did at the time.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Helmsdal & á Fríðriksmørk, “Løgtingsmál nr. 21/2005”, 1-3



The bill ended up being rejected, with 12 votes for, and 20 against on the 13th of December, 2005. The vote ended up looking like this:

For	Against
Tjóðveldisflokkurinn: Hogni Hoydal Annita á Fríðriksmørk Heidi Petersen Tórbjørn Jacobsen Finnur Helmsdal  Javnaðarflokkurinn: Andrias Petersen John Johannessen Kristian Magnusen Mamy Dahl Sørensen  Sambandsflokkurinn: Kaj Leo Johannessen Lisbeth Petersen  Fólkaflokkurinn: Poul Michelsen	Tjóðveldisflokkurinn: Hergeir Nielsen Karsten Hansen Páll á Reynatúgvu  Javnaðarflokkurinn: Henrik Old Sverre Midjord Gerhard Lognberg  Sambandsflokkurinn: Alfred Olsen Edmund Joensen Johan Dahl Marjus Dam Olav Enomoto  Fólkaflokkurinn: Anfinn Kalsberg Heðin Zachariasen Jógvan við Keldu Kjartan Joensen Óli Breckmann Jørgen Niclasen  Miðflokkurinn: Jenis av Rana Bill Justinusen  Sjálvstýrisflokkurinn: Kári P. Højgaard

As is indicated in the results, every party had a member that voted against the proposal, though every “big” party had at least a member voting for it. Generally speaking, the right-wing parties, such as Fólkaflokkurinn, Sambandsflokkurinn, Miðflokkurinn voted against it, but there were still a few who voted for it. Contrast this to the left-wing parties, as in Tjóðveldisflokkurinn and Javnaðarflokkurinn, where members of parliament generally voted for it, but there were also some detractors who

voted against it as well. This is still in large contrast to the vote in 1988, where it went from a single vote for the proposal, up to 12. It is perhaps also worth noting that all four women in the Løgting (Annita, Mamy, Heidi and Lisbeth) voted for the proposal. Notably, women in parliament were often instrumental in shaping societal attitudes towards homosexuals in a way which made them more positive than before.<sup>85</sup>

One of the most used arguments against the §266b proposal has been , that it would be against the word of the Bible, if such a law would be passed. This was clear in the public and parliamentary debates as well.

#### 4.1 Analyzing the Debates

Looking into why the proposal got rejected during the parliamentary debates, it is clear that there are a few subgroups according to their reasons for voting the way that they did. The reason as to why these MP's voted against this is not necessarily the same; some might have stronger or more moderate reasons to vote against the proposal. The members of parliament who **advocated for the proposal** are the first subgroup: they mean that sexual minorities should be protected by society, not only for their minority status, but society's sake as well. The second subgroup is the **moderate members of parliament, who were against it**. They believe that it is not necessary to give "special rights" to a group, because they simply believe that it is not allowed to discriminate against anyone in Faroese society. They fear that if you start to give special protections for one minority, then every other minority might want the same protection as well. The third subgroup are the **conservative members of parliament, who voted against it**. They fear that by putting "sexual orientation" in a hate crime paragraph, that they might also want to campaign for registered partnership and the ability to adopt children. They see this as the first step towards something that the Faroese society should not be headed towards. The fourth subgroup are the **religious members of parliament, who voted against the proposal**. They are against this, because certain books in the Bible speak against homosexuality. By legalizing rights to homosexual people, then you go against the will of God. They believe that an amendment to a hate crime paragraph would result in horrible consequences for the Faroese people. In a way, they weaponize

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<sup>85</sup> Ólafsdóttir, "Breytt afstaðar til samkynhneigðar"

their religion, in this case Christianity, to espouse speech that is meant to be negative towards a minority, and actively voting against this.

As evidenced in the debates, it is clear that religion filled the discussion between all politicians, and not only the members of parliament, who voted against it because of religious reasons. Looking back into the theories that I used in the beginning of this thesis, it is clear that several politicians utilize the technique of not declaring their opposition to a minority group, and would rather obfuscate their reasonings against them. Sara Ahmed's theory on emotions comes to mind here, where the creation of "the other", in this case sexual minorities, in the Faroe Islands by these politicians is noted by working through signs and on bodies in order to materialize boundaries in these worlds. Also the construction of how sex and gender is organized in systems of power that praises certain individuals (ie. Christians), while "the other" gets punished, is also applicable in this case. It is also evident that homosexual people are seen as some kind of foreign threat to these Faroese politicians with a sort of positive self-presentation and a negative "other"-presentation that they use.

#### **4.1.1 Positive Self-presentation**

Positive self-presentation is about presenting yourself in a positive light to the general public. Usually this means that you will compare yourself to someone else in a negative light as well. This quote from Egin Henriksen is an example of positive self-presentation: "I have always thought that the Faroese were a highly cultivated people. I will therefore excuse myself by saying that we shall implement Danish laws as to how we should conduct ourselves around our fellow human beings. This is something we, as cultivated people, can figure out ourselves."<sup>86</sup> While Egin did not vote upon the bill because he was in the Løgting as a substitute, he did spend time discussing the matter in the Løgting. This strategy is a case of how a positive image can be reflected onto a people, to make themselves look better, which is what Egin uses in the quote above. By making Faroe Islanders to be a "highly cultivated people", and that they do not discriminate towards anyone, while also being negative towards an "other", could result in more negative other-presentation. Another example of this is Alfred Olsen of

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<sup>86</sup> Løgtingið, "Løgtingssetan 2005 Mál: 21 Viðgerð 1", speech 25

the Sambandsflokkurin: “We are a Christian Nation and therefore we take care of everyone. That is the basis and therefore we do not need this [to include ‘sexual orientation in §266b]”.<sup>87</sup> By making the Faroe Islands into a utopia where no discrimination apparently happens, while also neglecting Faroese homosexuals' voices by not acknowledging that they need to be legally protected as a minority, for example when it comes to bullying. By ignoring this bullying and discrimination against homosexuals that takes place in the Faroe Islands, while also not mentioning that they have to move to Denmark to get these rights, make these politicians seem not want to acknowledge the bullying or homophobia that took place on the islands. While this might also be a consequence of homophobia not being taken as seriously as other bigoted discrimination, could also be a result of homosexuality becoming a political debate, as opposed to a private matter, ie. something that does not need to be judged by public discourse and should be private for the individuals involved.

#### **4.1.2 Negative “other”-presentation**

While MP's tended to portray the Faroe Islands in a positive light, the discussions on the amendment also contained strong “other” presentations. Using another quote from the same speech that Egin Henriksen had in parliament, he says this: “The real architects behind this [§266b] have a plan and one of the main purposes is to get societies ‘blue stamp’<sup>88</sup>, that abnormality and perversion are completely fine. This is what it's about.”<sup>89</sup> By putting LGBT+ people as “the other” in a negative light, then this becomes easier to make statements that target “the other” while also getting out scot free, that is borderline discrimination. This quote by Egin is an aggressive and conservative example of how homosexual people were portrayed in the Løgting, while not exactly sugarcoating anything. Another example is by Óli Breckmann of Fólkaflokkurin, who says: “The stiffened, the fruitless intercourse between two people, it is a denial of the Christian, original family. It is a denial of marriage as a frame for procreation, to bring children to the world. [...] Then let us put a stop to this here.”<sup>90</sup> The way that homosexuality is presented here is to put it in a hierarchy: heterosexuality

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<sup>87</sup> Sosialurin, 18th of November 2005

<sup>88</sup> Equivalent to “seal of approval”

<sup>89</sup> Løgtingið, “Løgtingssetan 2005 Mál: 21 Viðgerð 1”, speech 25

<sup>90</sup> Løgtingið, “Løgtingssetan 2005 Mál: 21 Viðgerð 1”, speech 40

being a natural thing and justified because of recreation and Christian marriage, whereas homosexuality is described as unnatural and perverse and as a way to deny the Christian marriage for the individuals. Even questioning heterosexuality's naturality and undermining its hegemony is not something being questioned at all among the people who voted against this, where perpetuating an essentialistic view of homosexuality is preferred by them. These stereotypical and negative portrayals of homosexuality adds to them being the "the other" in society, away from the "normal" ones.

Another example of the "foreign vice" is when Egin Henriksen notes how the Faroe Islands should not become "as bad" as the neighboring countries: "Just look at our neighboring countries to see what this might lead to. It is not always right to follow others. The modern humans should then always imitate that, what the others should have. We have to be careful as a society; what kind of values are we based on?"<sup>91</sup> It is not directly mentioned what exactly is happening in these neighboring countries. Egin does insinuate that they have lost meaningful traditions and have accepted untraditional values, which could be seen as obstructive to Faroese society. The threat of a vocal minority group, such as *Friðarbogin*, is also noted by Gerhard Lognberg: "When they came into notoriety in the month of August, they weren't exactly careful with vocalizing their opinions. They came in loudly and spoke their minds, which they do have a right to. And that's something you just have to accept, but to then help them with a law, that's not happening with my help."<sup>92</sup> Insinuating that these organizations such as *Friðarbogin* and *Bogin* are militant, is a result of a clash between two different discourses. This difference of opinion between what exactly is seen as acceptable speech, makes the demands from *Friðarbogin* and *Bogin* seem provocative by the religious no-voters. Moderate and conservative no-voters might be more inclined to be against them for different reasons, with the conservative no-voters keen on keeping things the same, while the moderate no-voters not seeing the nuance in changing legislation as it was.

### **4.1.3 Comments from Politicians in Favor**

Høgni Hoydal, leader of Tjóðveldisflokkurin since 2000, suggested that the reason for the rejection for the bill was because of the strong Christian influence of conservative

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<sup>91</sup> Løgtingið, "Løgtingssetan 2005 Mál: 21 Viðgerð 1", speech 25

<sup>92</sup> Løgtingið, "Løgtingssetan 2005 Mál: 21 Viðgerð 1", speech 29

Faroese voters and politicians living outside of Tórshavn, and presumed that the legislation would be blocked for a long time after this.<sup>93</sup> Høgni would also use examples of how the Faroe Islands were good at “exporting their problems”, including homosexuality, while also noting the importance of LGBT+ rights, as a means for the Faroese people to take responsibility for their own actions on the Faroe Islands. He also personally rejects the influence of religion in legislative decisions, when voting upon things in parliament.<sup>94</sup> Whether or not this strong Christian conservative lobby from outside of Tórshavn or because of colonial aversion against anything from Denmark was the main reason for the bill’s rejection is up for debate. It could also be argued that the resistance against homosexuality was a fear of a postmodern development, ie. questioning the modern examples set in society, which was seen in other countries around the Faroe Islands, where homosexuality became a poster child of this. A slim majority of the general public seemed against the anti discrimination paragraph as well: a Gallup survey indicated that 58% of the 521 people questioned thought that the paragraph should not be expanded to include “sexual orientation”.<sup>95</sup>

The president of *Friðarbogin* basically advised queer Faroese people to move abroad after the rejection: “In order to have a normal life I moved out of the Faroe Islands. The Faroe Islands are not a place for homosexuals, that’s why this is my advice for all homosexuals: move out of the Faroes!”<sup>96</sup> This showed how emotional the vote was for queer Faroese people especially, and perhaps further perpetuated the need to move abroad in order to live in a more accepting society. That being said, acknowledging that the debate can get ugly, until things eventually get better, is also something that they realized.<sup>97</sup>

Contrast to this, Christian fundamentalists would often call homosexual people disgusting and unnatural. Mogens Tilsted Christensen, the priest in Hvalvík at the time, mentioned in a letter to the editor that: “If a kindergarten or a school has homosexuals or pedophilic teachers to take care of the children, then they will be exposed to adverse

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<sup>93</sup> Rydström, *Criminally Queer*, 158-159

<sup>94</sup> dr.dk, “Kritik af Færøerne på Nordisk Råds møde”

<sup>95</sup> Mortensen, “Færing og homoseksuel”, 3

<sup>96</sup> Dam, “Í Føroyum er ikki verandi hjá samkyndum”

<sup>97</sup> Mortensen, “Færing og homoseksuel”, 32

effects instead of getting healthy and reasonable testimony of God and teachings about, that the sexual belongs in the marriage between a man and a woman.”<sup>98</sup> Given that the conflation between homosexual people and pedophiles continued with such statements from a priest, it would seem like gay Faroese people would have nowhere to go but abroad. It also seemed that positive legislation towards queer people in the Faroe Islands would not happen in the immediate future.

## 4.2 Discussion

While the vote failed, there is evidently more progress made, compared to the 1988 vote. With the four types of votes happening in the Faroese parliament (the ones **advocating for the case**, and the **moderate**, **conservative**, and **religious** members of parliament), it is clear that all of them discuss the matter of Christianity, when comparing whether or not giving more legal rights and protections to “sexual minorities”. The efforts of *Friðarbogin* and *Bogin* with their conference and Faroe Pride to then being one of the main catalysts for the introduction of this bill, must also be acknowledged, even though the rhetoric was still mostly against sexual minorities at the time. Given that there were members of parliament from every single party that voted against this bill, while at least one member of parliament of the “bigger parties” voted for, it just goes to show how polarizing discussions regarding LGBT+ people were at the time. Convincing either moderate, conservative or religious no-voters to vote yes seemed like an uphill battle, because of their preconceived notions of what LGBT+ people were. The rhetoric espoused by members of parliament, by representing themselves as positive, and sexual minorities as negative and “the other”, was very much prevalent in the *Løgting*. With sexual minorities being a form of “other”, and it being interpreted as a foreign vice that would not need more positive legislation in the Faroe Islands, it somehow also erased the presence of Faroese LGBT+ people, which could be further perpetuated by most of them moving to Denmark for better rights anyway. The pessimism of *Friðarbogin* after the vote is perhaps understandable after such efforts to promote themselves throughout Faroese society, and increased developments would also seem to be looking like an uphill battle. The conclusion of this vote did make it seem that it could take a long time before the Faroe Islands would get

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<sup>98</sup> Christensen, “Guds velsignelse og stadig fremgang for mennesker på Færøerne”

better LGBT+ rights, unless something big and drastic were to happen. An openly gay Faroese musician would then be attacked because of his sexuality, which would then revive the hate crime bill in the Faroese parliament once more.



## 5. Final Vote on December 2006 and Subsequent Actions

### 5.1 Rasmus Rasmussen

In September of 2006, a homophobic assault happened in Tórshavn. Rasmus Rasmussen, a guitarist in the Faroese band Makrel and openly gay man, was attacked outside of a bar because of his sexuality. This shocked the general Faroese public, which made his family stand up for him publicly, while he would write an article about it in *Dimmalætting* as well. The article, titled “The Bruises Tell You How it is to be Gay in the Faroe Islands” where Rasmus told the story of his attack for the Faroese public to read. He described how it was being attacked, getting stomped on his head, and how the bruises are indicative of how it is being gay in the Faroe Islands. While there were many men involved in the case, it started out with homophobic slurs and attacks towards Rasmus, to the point where he ended up pushing the chair of said man, which erupted into a fight. Rasmus was also beaten to the point where he could barely walk home



anymore. Rasmus goes on to address politicians, who would not touch upon this subject in the vote of 2005, and how legislation like this can affect people negatively. He mentioned how politicians, who rejected the §266b bill in 2005, did so because

homosexuals had it good in the Faroe Islands, though his attack was clearly indicative of something else.<sup>99</sup> While everyone involved was charged with assault, the man, who had hurled homophobic slurs at Rasmus, could not be charged with hate speech, since “sexual orientation” was not covered by the §266b paragraph.<sup>100</sup> Because Rasmus and his family ended up going public with this story, with them getting death threats sent their way.<sup>101</sup> This is an example of how speech acts can directly affect a minority, where it eventually becomes an act of bodily violence because of who you are. With speech acts being seen as not constructivist by conservatives, ie. not learnt through behavior, but are rather absolutist in their beliefs, which can perpetuate stereotypes towards certain groups. A minority can become more affected by speech acts because of this, which can eventually manifest itself into internal or external attacks on themselves, ie. hate speech or violence, respectively. This is something that happened to Rasmus, where he probably would not have ended up in this situation, if he were not harassed because of his sexuality. The verbal attack on Rasmus was also based on who he was, and that he stood up for himself, and then getting relentlessly physically attacked. If he were not a minority with such pejoratives and stereotypes shaping something he could not control, then the attack probably would not have happened.

## 5.2 Reintroduction of §266b to the Løgting for the Third Time

Finnur Helmsdal and Annita á Fríðriksmørk decided to reintroduce the defeated law proposal to the *Løgting* the 17th of October in 2006, because of this incident.<sup>102</sup> The difference between this proposal and the last one was clear: there was a tangible example of a hate crime committed on someone due to their sexuality, but the police were not able to charge the assailants on this. Another difference is the international coverage this case got, as this was widely publicized in Danish, Icelandic and general Nordic media. The Nordic Council got into the debate as well, when the Faroe Islands had formally requested to become full members of the council in 2003. When the

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<sup>99</sup> Lamhauge, “Merkini siga hvussu tað er at vera samkyndur í Føroyum”, 14-15

<sup>100</sup> “Av hinum slagnum - glíðibreytin”, 06:23-07:08

<sup>101</sup> “Av hinum slagnum - glíðibreytin”, 07:08-08:13

<sup>102</sup> Helmsdal & á Fríðriksmørk, “Uppskot til ríkislógartilmæli...”,

<https://logting.elektron.fo/logtingsmal/Logtingsmal06/VanligTingmal/020.06Revsilog-Samkynd.htm#G.%20Broytingaruppskot>

council was meeting in Copenhagen in November of 2006, several ministers of other Nordic countries criticized the Faroe Islands for not having introduced anything to protect sexual minorities from hate crime. The attack on Rasmus Rasmussen and the reintroduction of the §266b bill did garner international attention, with a specific example being in the Nordic Council. The Nordic Council, consisting of all the Nordic Countries, along with the autonomous countries of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland, is an official body for formal inter-parliamentary Nordic cooperation within these countries. In the Faroe Islands, there had been efforts to make the Faroe Islands into an independent member of the Nordic Council, as opposed to taking votes from Denmark. This effort turned into a greater discussion on LGBT+ rights, right around the time of the reintroduction of the §266b hate crime bill. Politicians, such as Line Barfod of Enhedslisten (the Red-Green Alliance) of Denmark, supported the independence of the Faroe Islands within the Nordic Council, but then egged the islands to treat minority groups, such as homosexual people, better and giving them more rights - like the case was in the other Nordic countries.<sup>103</sup> Mogens Jensen of the Danish Socialdemokratiet (Social Democrats) also noted that the Faroe Islands cannot expect autonomy within the Nordic Council, when “the nation is not even able to stand for equality for their own people, and do not respect the basic human rights”.<sup>104</sup>

The introductory document to the law proposal is mostly the same as it was in 2005, though with added context of the vote from last year and indirect mention of Rasmus Rasmussen’s attack. Finnur and Annita mentioned in the reintroduction of this bill that the past discussion predicated on the fact that people were not being discriminated against because of their sexuality in the Faroe Islands, but now with a clear-cut example of this not being the case, they obviously had something to show when this argument was used. The majority coalition had not changed from the year before; it consisted of Sambandsflokkurin, Javnaðarflokkurin and Fólkaflokkurin, though no party had decided on being unanimously for LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands, though with Miðflokkurin being staunchly anti-LGBT+.

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<sup>103</sup> information.dk, “Nordisk Råd kritiserer Færøerne”

<sup>104</sup> dr.dk, “Kritik af Færøerne på Nordisk Råds møde”

### 5.3 Final vote on December 15th, 2006

On December 15th in 2006, the vote went as follows: 17 votes for and 15 votes against the amended §266b amendment. The vote went as follows:

For	Against
Tjóðveldisflokkurinn Annita á Fríðriksmørk Finnur Helmsdal Heidi Petersen Hergeir Nielsen Høgni Hoydal Páll á Reynatúgvu Tórbjørn Jacobsen	Tjóðveldisflokkurinn Karsten Hansen
Javnaðarflokkurinn Andrea Petersen John Johannessen Kristian Magnussen Vilhelm Johannesen	Javnaðarflokkurinn Gerhard Lognberg Henrik Old Sverre Midjord
Sambandsflokkurinn Edmund Joensen Johan Dahl Kaj Leo Johannesen Lisbeth Petersen Olav Enomoto	Sambandsflokkurinn Alfred Olsen Marjus Dam
Fólkaflokkurinn Poul Michelsen	Fólkaflokkurinn Anfinn Kallsberg Heðin Zachariassen Jógvan við Keldu Kjartan Joensen Óli Breckmann
	Miðflokkurinn Jenis av Rana Bill Justinussen
	Sjálvstýrisflokkurinn Kári P. Højgaard

Notably, every party in parliament at the time voted against the proposal, but the majority still ended up being for the §266b proposal to include “sexual orientation”. It is perhaps interesting to look into the members of parliament, who voted against the proposal in 2005, but ended up flipping for the vote in 2006: Hergeir Nielsen, Johan Dahl, Olav Enomoto, Páll á Reynatúgvu and Edmund Joensen. Notably, they are all examples of moderate no-voters.

Páll á Reynatúgvu, who voted against the proposal 2005 but decided not to speak in parliament about it then, said in a speech regarding this bill, asking himself “what

would Jesus have done”. Páll mentioned that he got several answers, with two sides saying that Jesus would be for or against this. He also mentions the “fundamentalists on both sides”, referring to fundamentalists and humanists. Ultimately, he mentioned that he voted against this in 2005, but seemingly flipped as he justified (to himself?) that it was an incredibly small, legislative change that would not really hurt anyone. Though he also reiterated that he did not necessarily want this to be the beginning to more positive legislation to LGBT+ people (ie. registered partnership, adoption, marriage).<sup>105</sup> This approach is seemingly a more hands-off approach to justify his vote-flipping, though listening to his speech it is clear that he had changed his opinion to some extent. Hergeir only made a reply to Anfinn Kallsberg’s speech, noting the importance of recognizing what international courts have to say on the matter. But it is also an insightful example of how moderate no-voters would flip their votes after an example like the attack on Rasmus. Also worth noting is how after the vote, Karsten Hansen of *Tjóðveldisflokkurinn*, who evidently voted against his party, would leave the party for *Miðflokkurinn*, whose party leader, Jenis av Rana, welcomed him, due to Karsten having beliefs that were compatible with the party’s ideology.<sup>106</sup>

#### 5.4 Discussion

While the §266b bill got passed in 2006 after its introduction in 1987, the discussions do not necessarily reflect a huge difference, from the vote in 2005, or in 1987 for that matter. Annita and Finnur did not make significant changes to the bill, when reintroducing it to the parliament, though with updates from the last vote. The main points of interest when arguing, are homosexuality in regards to the Bible, and how the religious and conservative no-voters could not be for this, while the moderates, mostly of the Sambandsflokkurinn, decided to seemingly change their stance because of an actual, tangible homophobic attack. With an actual, Faroese example of an attack that got significant media coverage and eventual mental and physical turmoil of a notable Faroese musician, these moderate no-voters flipped to be for the §266b amendment. Páll á Reygnatúgvu, of *Tjóðveldisflokkurinn*, did seem to flip because of the attack, while also being hesitant on more positive LGBT+ legislation, such as registered

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<sup>105</sup> Løgtingið, “Løgtingssetan 2006 Mál: 21 Viðgerð 3”, speech 120

<sup>106</sup> “Av hinum slagnum - glíðibreytin”, 15:55-16:20

partnership, due to his spiritual beliefs. This is however an example of how the ANSO conference in the Faroe Islands, the Faroe Pride which was resulted because of this, the rejection of the vote in 2005, and the attack on Rasmus Rasmussen, all led up to more queer visibility in the Faroe Islands, which would eventually lead to their rights being talked about in the Løgting.

## 6. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have looked into the history of LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands, and taken special notice of the hate crime bill statute and the long fight of including the wording “sexual orientation” in the bill. At the time of this writing, there are still missing rights that need to be implemented in the Faroe Islands, including but not limited to: including “gender identity” in the hate crime bill, “third gender” rights, and employment and in the provision of goods and services. That being said, the 2006 vote on the hate crime bill was the beginning of increased positive LGBT+ legislation on the Faroe Islands, to the point where marriage equality was legalized in 2017 (though not in churches), and co-parenting and parental leave rights were ratified in 2021. What is notable about every single vote on LGBT+ rights in the Faroe Islands, is the crises that they cause, ever since the 1988 vote on §266b, to the co-parenting and parental leave vote in 2021. Evidently, LGBT+ people and their rights remain a controversial point of discussion in Faroese politics, where certain political parties still happen to focus on being religious no-voters and may or may not cause a majority coalition to break.

The thesis statement on this master’s thesis is: “*Why was the issue of expanding LGBT+ rights so polarizing for Faroese politicians?*” By looking into how religion played such a big role in each of the three votes in 1988, 2005 and 2006, it is perhaps obvious to state that it was because of Christianity. While this is true, it is also important to acknowledge the people behind the movement for better LGBT+ rights, and religious people, who were not against the inclusion of “sexual orientation” in hate crime statute, because of their religion. The question of sexuality did not really become a widespread topic up until 1988 in the Faroe Islands, though evidently there had been some discussions on same-sex attraction before. With politicians having to confront the issue at first hand in a parliamentary vote, it forced them to at least publicly vote for or against it. The KFFFF made it pretty clear that it went against their Christian beliefs, while Karin Kjølbro of Tjóðveldisflokkurin voted for it, though also because of her Christian beliefs. Evidently, while the vote was a landslide against the inclusion of “sexual orientation” (albeit with a fragile majority coalition being the main reason for

that result), there were still people and politicians who were too timid to publicly announce their support of sexual minorities on the Faroe Islands.

Developments after the 1988 vote were slow, especially compared to other Nordic countries. There were few important Faroese LGBT+ people fighting for their rights in the Faroe Islands, and the AIDS epidemic further stigmatized homosexual activity in the 1980's and 1990's. The important actors during this time period (and beyond), Rólant Samuelsen and Bogi Davidsen, who were visible and not afraid to fight for LGBT+ rights in a time where animosity towards them was high. Opposition towards queer people was still high, including politicians, where newspapers and media would objectify and dehumanize gay men to their genitals. Even simply blessing gay men in church was controversial, since priests argued that it went against the Bible. Though at the very least there were discussions happening. The exodus of gay Faroese people to (mostly) Denmark was still happening, especially due to the country's far more progressive LGBT+ rights.

This did all slowly change in the beginning of the 2000's, with more vocal support for LGBT+ rights and the formation of Friðarbogin and Bogin, who were imperative in organizing a conference on LGBT+ issues and did the very first Faroe Pride in 2005, with Tina Jacobsen, Manijeh Modi and Sonja Jógvansdóttir's effort especially. Sonja's speech outside of the parliament while wearing her national costume was also a rejection of the "foreign vice" arguments that were thrown at LGBT+ persons at the time, since it established that Faroese people could, in fact, be queer. All of this activism, in spite of the social conservative nature of the Faroe Islands at the time, especially with the religious-conservative politicians in the Faroese parliament.

The §266b bill was subsequently introduced by Finnur Helmsdal and Annita á Friðriksmørk. This opened up the discussions in the Faroese parliament, where it was evident that there were four types of voters: the ones for the proposal, and the ones against, due to their moderate, conservative or religious beliefs. It was also evident that homosexuality in the context of the Bible was being brought up a lot, especially by Miðflokkurin, with the rhetoric being that it was unnatural and against the family values of the Faroe Islands, and that homosexual people actually had it perfectly fine without a hate crime statute protecting them.. With the vote happening in December of 2005 and



ultimately being rejected 20-12, there were some conclusions that positive LGBT+ legislation would not be legalized for a long time.

The attack that happened on Rasmus Rasmussen the next year proved that gay people were not always safe in the Faroe Islands. Directly because of this attack in 2006, the bill got reintroduced for a third time by Finnur Helmsdal and Annita á Friðriksmørk, which would yet again prove to be an intense discussion, though with the more moderate no-voters flipping to voting yes. This is because the attack essentially proved that there was work that needed to be done, in order to make homosexual people actually feel safe on the archipelago. As a result of increased visibility, the “foreign vice” argument that would so often be used to describe, would be negated, in that there are Faroese LGBT+ people that exist, and deserve as much respect as any other human being living in the Faroe Islands.

Thinking of the polarizing discussions that took place in the Faroese parliament and how many politicians used religion and opinions on what is and is not natural, combined with the lack of visibility in Faroese society, would all be reasons to believe that this topic was as controversial as it was (and still is, at the time of this writing). Through activism and showing yourself in society, LGBT+ rights will then be discussed, which might lead to people changing their opinions and then better LGBT+ rights, which is what eventually happened in the Faroe Islands. Religion still plays a big part in Faroese society, though the changes in legislative laws, and increased visibility of queer Faroese people in and outside of the Faroe Islands, and one of the proportionally biggest Prides (given the population) in the world, is indicative of changes that have happened, when it comes to LGBT+ rights.

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