Strategies for Maintaining Lesbian Partnership: Padang City, West Sumatera

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Abstract—This research investigates the status of lesbian couples in Padang City, Indonesia, an Islamic city where the government tries aggressively to eradicate any lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) community or activity. Moreover, the people of Padang also reject lesbians’ very existence, thus making them hide their homosexual identity. Consequently, these women find it difficult to meet the partner they need for the fulfillment of their orientation with the same sex. This condition led to various strategies to maintain long-term relationships. The approach in this research was a qualitative case study. Resources were selected by purposive sampling and numbered six. Data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews. Data validity was ensured by triangulation. The data analysis technique was interactive analysis, as proposed by Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Findings indicate that the strategy of maintaining spouses among lesbians in Padang City are: (1) maintaining a partner with violence, (a) physical violence, (b) mental violence; (2) maintaining a partner with non-violence, (a) sustaining a partner with material goods, (b) sustaining a partner with sexual fulfillment, (c) sustaining a partner by exposing affection on social media.

Keywords—lesbian, maintain couple, strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

As homo-social beings, humans certainly cannot live alone and will never be separated from the need for their kind. Too, in the discussion of human life, sexual orientation will always be an important topic. Very generally, human sexuality divides into three types: homosexuality or sexual attraction toward the same sex, heterosexuality or attraction to the opposite sex, and bisexuality or attraction to both the same and opposite sexes (Dermanto, 2010).

Homosexuals are often grouped as LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) and categorized as sexually deviant, as if they were diseased. Indeed, many people are worried and threatened by same-sex relations. In particular, for this study, lesbians are considered to have violated not only religious tenets, but also social norms in a society that still regards lesbianism as taboo. This is a long-standing, widely known problem in Indonesia, where even the Indonesian anthropologist B.J. Gayatri (1996) stated that lesbianism in Indonesia is often related to feminism. Both lesbianism and feminism are considered to transgress women’s proper roles. The two are conflated, perhaps because of the myth of Gerwani lesbian members reputed to have murdered several army generals in 1965 (Webster, 2004). Therefore, lesbianism has become a serious concern in nearly all circles of society, from social organizations to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to religious leaders—all searching for ways to reduce and prevent the growth of same-sex relationships (Setya, 2013).

As a crucial part of human existence, sexuality is often bifurcated as positive or negative, that is, as purely pleasurable at one extreme and purely procreational at the other (Bullough, 1976). At the same time, we cannot deny that various sexual deviancies exist in society. Therefore, questions of sexuality are substantial issues in anthropological, political, sociological, and psychological fields (Ventriglioia, Kalrab, & Blugrac, 2018).

In the study of social problems, lesbianism can be categorized as deviant behavior. According to the deviant behavior perspective, social problems occur because human behavior deviates from various social rules, social values, and norms for what is acceptable in society. As with many social issues, society has been unable to accept the concept, practice, and very existence of lesbianism. During Indonesia’s ‘New Order’ period (1966–1998), the stigma attached to same-sex relationships was enhanced by emphasis on gender differences, the normalized family, religious norms, and the concept of an ideal role for women (Marching, 2008). Likewise, in the reform era, more control efforts were made, even to the point of supervision (Blackwood, 2007). Thus, various factions have rejected female homosexuality.

Lesbianism is still rejected by the general public because being attracted to the same sex is thought to be unnatural and violates social norms and religion tenets (Setya, 2013). Indeed, in Indonesia, lesbianism is generally considered contrary to religious tenets, especially with Islam as the majority religion (Marching, 2008). However, Islam does not
support suppression of sexual urges; rather, it suggests that sexual relations should occur only in heterosexual marriages (Nurish, 2011).

Various kinds of lesbian activities occur not only because of male violence toward women, but because of certain social or even peer pressures. Some women want to try dating another woman because their lesbian friends have life partners, live together, and have a sexual relationship without fear of pregnancy or arrest. Sex is not only physiological, but also a cultural and social phenomenon (Cuesta, 2014). Therefore, within social norms, sex is seldom discussed solely for its own sake or for its pleasure; instead, it must always be associated with marital and family life (Nurish, 2011).

Love relationships among lesbians are basically the same as heterosexual love, with several accompanying components. In his triangular theory of love, Sternberg (in Marasabessy, 2008) suggests that love has three components: first, intimacy of feeling in a relationship that increases closeness, attachment, and interrelation. Second, passion includes a deep desire to unite with the loved one, as an expression of desire and sexual need. Third, commitment and decision include devotion and loyalty in loving someone, maintaining that love, and determination to stay with the loved one for a lifetime.

In general, lesbian love is deeper and more intense than heterosexual love, despite a lack of reasonable sexual satisfaction. Lesbian love has also been found more powerful than homosexual love among men. Erotic elements and passions are generally far more intense than homosexual passions (Kartono, 1989).

Among same-sex enthusiasts, the level of lust is much higher than among heterosexuals. Homosexuals can try to persuade heterosexuals to try the homosexual lifestyle by being pleasant and caring. In other words, gradually, the heterosexual person comes to feel comfortable with homosexuality. Same-sex enthusiasts have recently experienced significant growth. In Indonesia, Yayasan Pelangi Kasih Nusantara/Rainbow Archipelago Love Nusantara (YPKN) survey results show 4000 to 5000 same-sex enthusiasts in Jakarta. Gaya Nusantara estimates that 260,000 of the six million inhabitants of East Java are homosexual, not including those in big cities. A gay Indonesian president, Dede Oetomo has lived with his life partner for 18 years and is a founder of the Gaya Nusantara Foundation, which estimates Indonesia’s gay population at approximately 1% (Nicofergioyono, 2013). As an organization, Gaya Nusantara’s vision is to realize a social order that accepts and values all human rights and welfare, including sexual and gender diversity, on the basis of volunteerism, democracy, nonviolence, independence, and transparency (Muthmainnah, 2016).

Two lesbian groups, Swara Srikanth and Sector 15 (formed within the Indonesian Women’s Coalition) have begun active work to make lesbian voices heard (Blackwood, 2007). Thus has the lesbian community been established in Indonesia in order to give voice to this minority group. Their mission is education and public awareness; to prepare and develop media through communicating, discussing, and networking; to provide optimal services for sexual well being, actualization, and freedom of expression; and to build networks, strengthen organizations, and work together with organizations that have similar goals (Muthmainnah, 2016).

A lesbian community in West Sumatra Province is also growing. Recently, the LGBT community openly demanded legality for its existence in the City of Bukittinggi. One group is the lesbian community in the city of Padang, the Keluarga Besar Belok Sumbar (KBBS) whose members come from such various regions as Padang City, Bukittinggi City, South Coast, Payakumbuh, Pariaman, and other areas in West Sumatra (Rahmadhani, 2016).

**TABLE I. NUMBER OF KBBS REGIONAL MEMBERSHIPS OF WEST SUMATERA PROVINCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>± 400 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>± 980 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2015–2016</td>
<td>1.230 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2017–2018</td>
<td>1.325 persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research results from Rahmadhani, 2016

According to Browne and Nash, (2009) the designation and occupation of urban spaces by non-normative sexual and gender groups such as gays and lesbians were reconceptualized as a form of violation and resistance in power relations. Lesbian communities present in urban areas, such as in the city of Padang, have formed a kind of resistance to prevailing norms. This is certainly fortified by non-normative gender groups. Part of the practical discussion about homosexuality, LGBT issues, and sexual identity aims to produce activist organizations that attract the attention of religious leaders and military institutions considered prejudiced against sexual minorities (Yarhouse, 2012).

Despite KBBS activities there, the city of Padang generally considers the lesbian phenomenon extremely taboo. Some of this is due to lack of knowledge about individual sexual differences, making the community intolerant of lesbians. In fact, Padang has a Minagkabau culture that is the strength of Islamic values, as in the saying: “Adat Basandi Syara’, Syara’ Basandi Kitabullah,” meaning custom based on religion, religion based on guidance of the Qur’an (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). In other words, the strong Islamic teachings and customs of the Minang people entirely reject the lesbian community, who are considered to have violated prevailing norms. Such an attitude causes lesbians in Padang to be very hesitant to let the community know who they really are. In general, they hide their identity when interacting with the community (Silvi, 2013). In contrast, the gay community (male homosexuals) does not face the same degree of social rejection (Cuesta, 2014), so the lesbian community seems doubly discriminated against by the mainstream community.

Lesbians’ relations with the surrounding environment are thus quite complicated, and they must be clever and discrete in dress and behavior, playing a normative female role. From researchers’ initial observations while being connected to a
resource person at Tunggul Hitam, changes in lesbians’ attitudes and behaviors are evident when they are among their friends and neighbors who know of their identities and relationships. They are more relaxed and not shy about showing intimacy with a partner because most lesbians are in intimate relationships (Gates, 2015). However, they perform distinctly different (normative) behaviors in public, behaving as if they have male partners. These circumstances certainly complicate lesbian lives and make it difficult to sustain relationships, leading to complications that might not otherwise occur.

As for the social life in Padang, lesbians are very hesitant to reveal themselves in the midst of public life. One problem among many is that Regional Regulation No. 9 of 2010 concerning Prevention, Elimination, and Suppression of Social Disease explicitly prohibits “homosexual and lesbian” relations; the regulation further prohibits people “offer[ing] themselves” for engagement in homosexual or lesbian relations with or without compensation (Muthmainnah, 2016). As Evelyn Blackwood (2007) states, Islamic prohibitions against homosexuality often cannot be separated from norms of society in Indonesia. Likewise for lesbians, who have a variety of repelling macmas. As a result, they are very careful about their actions and behaviors in public. Tom Boellstorff (1969) found that in Indonesia, lesbians often gathered with their neighbors and had a place they usually called “ngeber” (hang out) in shopping malls, discotheques, salons, houses, boarding houses, and other public places. Despite the half century since Boellstorff’s research, social life remains similar for lesbians in Padang. One ngeber in Padang is a KFC Jalan A. Yani, and another is a café located in Purus, Pantai Padang.

The description above suggests that lesbian couples are very careful in making various efforts to maintain their life partner relationships. This is quite interesting to study because every lesbian couple has certain strategies for maintaining their relationship. Because of the problems explained above, this study conducts further research focusing on strategies to maintain a partner among lesbians in Padang. Given Padang’s strict Islamic beliefs, its rejection of the very existence of lesbians, the city government’s rejection of the LGBT community’s existence, and taboos against violating social norms and gender roles, survival strategies of the lesbian community’s existence deserve our attention. The purpose of sociology is to explore human behavior, identity, views, and values (Millward, 2008), so perhaps this study can shine a scientific light on why and how lesbian life continues in the face of so much disapproval and antagonism.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach intended to construct understanding of the phenomenon under study—in this case subjects’ lived experience, including behavior, perception, motivation, and actions. Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in specific contextual settings, such as “real world settings [where] researchers do not attempt to manipulate interesting phenomena” (Patton, 2001, p. 39). Qualitative research aims to develop concepts that help us understand social phenomena in natural (not experimental) settings, emphasizing all participants’ meaning, experience, and views (Pope & Mays, 1995). Using various scientific methods, this study is mainly descriptive, with language expressing the special, natural context (Arifin, 2011). The qualitative approach is appropriate for obtaining in-depth information from socially marginalized life partners about how they maintain their relationships within a socially hostile environment.

Overall, the researcher gathered varied data through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Involved observations usually mean that a qualitative researcher works directly in natural social settings, observing, more or less “openly,” a variety of members in the group under study (Gubrium et al., 1992: 1577). Likewise, with in-depth interview techniques, researchers usually focus on extracting textures and a flow of respondents’ selected experiences through the interaction process between the researcher and the subject (Gubrium et al., 1992: 1577). Similarly, the main value of the documentation study lies in its potential to encourage researchers to create an open analytical event for public inspection. As usual, the final utility of each analytical approach depends on the investigator’s vigilance and skepticism (Constas, 1992).

Researchers chose Padang City as this study’s location because researchers could directly observe the research phenomenon there. Most research was conducted by the author at certain sites—a café in Pondok, Ulak Karang and, later, Veteran areas in Lubuk Buaya, Lubuk Begalung, and Tunggul Hitam, more specifically in a workplace and at a guesthouse at a residence.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this context, the non-normative couples are lesbian, who tend to be relatively more careful in looking after their partners, thus aiding maintenance of the relationship and its integrity. In the social environment of Padang, careful planning is necessary to realize their life goals.

However, every lesbian couple has a distinct strategy for maintaining their inseparable relationship. The majority of lesbian couples love deeply, apart from rare relationships involving violence, as occurred in Solok, Tanah Garam Village, where a lesbian killed her partner (Singgalang Daily, 2016).

Researchers have explained previously that a person with a sexual disorder in a lesbian context can live by carrying out multiple personalities. At the same time, in their daily activities, they must hide their relationship within a society that refuses the existence of same-sex partners, but they also open themselves to other lesbians. They find it easier to find their partners when they have opened themselves to their peers, so that when they do have a partner, the strategy will be useful in maintaining their relationship’s integrity. From observations and interviews with resources, it was revealed that they found various ways to maintain their partners (Table 2).

Table 2 lists the variety of strategies lesbian couples use to maintain their relationships. Although in the table, the strategies are similar—for instance, material fulfillment, sexual intercourse, living together, exposing intimacy on social media—their performance varies from couple to couple. Therefore, the researcher discusses more deeply how these lesbian couples carry out strategies of maintaining their partners.
TABLE II. TYPES OF STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Strategy used</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>Action Theory, in which actors are viewed as hunters of certain goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Physical abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Slapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Grabbing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Kicking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scratching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Mental Violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Threats by spreading photos on social media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Threat of telling parents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Abusive language, scorn and profanity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nonviolence</td>
<td>Action Theory, in which actors have alternative methods, tools, and techniques to achieve goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Strategy to Maintaining a partner materially</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Living with a partner -Will to spend a lot of money for a couple. -Surprising the partner -Will to work making money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Maintaining a partner through sexual fulfillment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Living together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conducting intimate relationships like married couples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Maintaining a partner by exposing intimacy on social media.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write outpourings through Facebook accounts for their partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uploading photos of their affection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Talcott Parsons’ theory of action posits that an actor deals with a number of situational conditions that can limit his/her actions in achieving goals. Respondents AY and PM reported that seeking a new partner in Padang is quite difficult because of the small population. Not infrequently, a lesbian woman falls in love with a heterosexual woman and tries to influence her in various ways to engage in lesbianism. Such efforts require much patience.

As previous researchers have explained, same-sex couples’ love is profound. Thus, strong desire for and great fear of losing a partner causes struggle and obsession over maintaining relationships. Along with that goes frequent willingness to do as much as possible for the partner.

According to interviews and observations, lesbians use two strategies to maintain a partner, violent and nonviolent. Violent strategies can be further classified as psychological or physical. Mental, emotional, or psychological violence includes threatening, berating, and belittling, among others. Physical violence includes slapping, pulling hair, kicking, burning, and sometimes worse, violent, commonly referred to as persuasive. Persuasive strategies include gifting an abundance of material goods to partners, having fun and entertaining them, spending a lot of money on them, and having sexual relations. Showing off their intimacy on social media, giving way to their partners, and doing whatever partners ask are further actions aimed at prolonging the relationship.

In the following sections, the researcher explains lesbian couples’ strategy classifications, both violent and nonviolent, observed by researchers in the field.

A. Maintaining a Relationship with Violence

1) Physical Abuse

Violence sometimes occurs when partners in a relationship experience conflict, not only between heterosexual couples, but also between homosexual couples and often for the same reasons: personal differences, differences of opinion, high temperament, strong jealousy, uneven attachment between partners, and the leadership role, to name only a few.

Same-sex relationships resemble other partner relationships in that one partner is often more dominant than the other. In normative relationships, the male dominates, and the female is submissive. In lesbian relationships, the dominant partner is referred to as butchi, like a husband, and the submissive partner as femmy, like a wife. Butchi feels that she holds the power, so physical violence is no stranger to same-sex relationships, ranging from pulling hair and slapping to kicking and further violence, sometimes resulting in serious injury and the partner’s death. Too, violence arises for the same reasons in both homo- and heterosexual relationships—privilege stemming from power, righteousness (teaching her a lesson), jealousy, and fear of losing power and the relationship.

Respondent BB revealed that she did not like to be opposed by her partner, partly because of her own high temperament. With good intentions, she scolded her partner to remind her of her mistakes. BB said she was angry because DA was so dear to her, and she did not want DA to make mistakes. BB also felt that she herself was the head of household, and DA her wife. Thus, based on her knowledge...
of normative partnerships, BB felt she had the right to rebuke DA and to teach her right from wrong. However, BB also admitted that she wanted to use violence so that DA was reluctant to act and afraid of her.

Not only did BB and DA commit acts of violence in their relationship, but many other couples do also. AY stated that as butchi, she felt that she was right and felt the strongest before her femmy. Her intense jealousy made this butchi fear losing her partner; in a relationship of this type, physical violence frequently occurs.

If analysed by Talcott Parsons’s theory of action, BB and AY are hunters of fixed goals, that is, keeping their lesbian partners, through violence if necessary.

2) Mental Violence

Some violence is directed more to a partner’s mentality but remains a frequent strategy to keep a partner. Of the five lesbian couples researchers met, two experienced violence directed more to the partner’s mentality, that is, to create fear and to force rethinking about ending the relationship.

Both respondents BB and AY so fear losing their partners that they want to scare them. AY has threatened to disseminate personal photos of her partner, very intimate photos not for public consumption, in order to make her partner reflect on her relationship. Essentially, however, both BB and AY have used the same strategy to retain their partners; the only difference is that one violence is physical (BB) and the other mental (AY). Apart from that, from data obtained from the two resources, essentially the same strategy has been maintained in retaining their partners; the only difference is that BB resorts to physical and mental violence on her partner, while AY commits only non-physical violence on her partner. Fear of losing the other and a strong sense of ownership causes these women to maintain their partners through violence. Each butchi wishes to suppress her partner’s mentality, keeping her fearful of ending the relationship.

In the case of Parsons’s theory of action tells us that both BB and AY are hunting the same fixed goal—keeping a good partner. Evident from BB and AY’s long-standing (3-year) strategy is that their partners feel reluctant to end the relationships because they fear physical and mental threats of violence. On the other hand, BB and AY do not seem to care about their partners feeling forced into having a one-sided relationship in which they are objects of fear rather than love.

B. Maintaining a Partner with Non Violence

1) Strategy to Maintain a Partner with Material Goods

In both normative and non-normative contexts, each partner likely wishes for a harmonious relationship that is happy and long-lasting. Their desire to continue a relationship can be seen from how they treat their partners. Each partner wants to be happy and uses a variety of strategies to make that happen. Persuasive strategies are common among lesbian couples whom researchers have met; partners must often persuade and convince their partners to make the relationship last. Even the resource person, who turned out to be AY, confirms this.

In fact, AY trusts her partner PA to hold half of AY’s salary to manage their finances while living together. AY needs PA and shares finances to make her partner happy, and PA is happy with AY, who fulfills her needs. AY shares as a strategy in maintaining her relationship with her partner. When AY already feels confident of PA as her partner, then AY can trust to PA to regulate her financial strength.

Of the five lesbian couples that researchers observed, each has their own methods and strategies for maintaining their relationship. Maintaining a partner in a persuasive way frequently involves willingness to work for money to meet the needs of the partner, willingness to spend money to make the partner happy, for instance, with surprises or by celebrating an anniversary, and willingness to support the partner’s life. Often enough it involves exposing the relationship to other lesbians, begging the partner not to end the relationship when they are in conflict, and even willingness to let a partner hurt her.

2) Strategy to Maintain a Partner with Sexual Fulfillment

Three of the five lesbian couples assume that they are a couple as in a marriage. They live together, sleep together, and have an intimate relationship to meet their biological needs.

The respondent PM and her partner lived together as husband and wife. During the interview, PM stated that they commonly had sexual relations. After sexual intercourse, they felt more affectionate toward one another. Besides that, PM indulged her affection for her partner by kissing her on a social media account. They kissed to add spice to their relationship and keep it from the blandness of limitation to emotional love and understanding. Therefore, PM and partner feel that sexual relations are an important part of maintaining a partnership.

As another resource person, AY also explained that having sexual intercourse with her partner does not fulfill just her sexual needs, but maintains their partnership. After sexual intercourse, they feel happy with one another and increasingly loving. In turn, their relationship is always warm and harmonious, and sexual relations prevent boredom from creeping in. However, this intimate sexual relationship is not only a necessity for them, but can also be a nonviolent maintenance strategy: An intimate relationship not only releases sexual desire, but persuades the partner to reconcile after a conflict, whether violent or not.

Of the five lesbian couples, three paired informants have had sexual intercourse; in fact, these three couples share the rent of a house for various reasons. Additionally, PM reported that one parent of a lesbian allows her daughter to have a same-sex relationship on the conditions that she does not do drugs or become pregnant. That this relationship is known by the parents allows the couple more freedom to do what they want; parents who remain unbothered by the situation enable the daughter to enjoy and explore the world with her partner. Not infrequently, these parents treat her partner like any “normal” partner.

3) Maintaining a Partnership by Exposing Intimacy on Social Media

Anyone can use social media to individual intent and purpose, and social media offer many benefits for users, whether a place to find news, friends, or even a partner, or as a place to share stories. Certainly, this is true for all people, no matter their sexual orientation, and certainly, lesbians find friends, share stories, and find partners through social media. But especially, in such locations as Padang, social media has
become a necessity for sharing information and intimacy with peers because social media provide a meeting space out of the public eye. On social media, lesbians can tell their stories and share their happiness.

Not infrequently, however, lesbians use social media to maintain their partnerships. Social media can help many lesbian couples express their hearts to their partners when they cannot do so directly or, especially, when conflict occurs in their relationships. Like others, they use BBM Accounts, Whatsapp, Facebook, Online Community, and Instagram.

As a resource person, NA revealed that social media are frequently used as an intermediary for couples. As we know, many couples now reveal their feelings and write romantic words in their statuses to make their partners happy. At the same time, this makes their relationships more harmonious and, probably, long-lasting. However, expressing their hearts by writing romantic words for their partners on social media can also be a code. NA said that even though she did not use her partner’s name on a social media account, her partner would know and understand that NA’s posted status was a message for her.

As another resource, BL said that indulging intimacy and writing a status about her partner makes her proud and makes her partner happy. BL shared her Facebook account with researchers, and it showed that she very actively and often uploaded their photos and posted intimacy statuses. BL’s statement and researchers’ opinions were strengthened by their observation of her Facebook account.

PA and AY couples also showed off their affection on social media. Although AY pressured her partner mentally, AY also made her partner happy through her loving posts on Facebook. When the researcher interviewed AY, she had had a conflict with her partner PA. AY reported the conflict because of PA’s jealousy of AY’s ex-girlfriends. Besides that, many others had tried to get acquainted with AY. However, with her social media acumen, AY posted about her relationship with PA quite often, to avoid being disturbed by others when she already had a partner. Because AY feared losing PA, she used social media as a tool to inform others and, thus, avoid their interference in their relationship.

Interpreted according to Parsons’s theory of action, actors have alternative methods, tools, and techniques to achieve their goals, and these women make social media a tool to help them retain a partner. Researchers’ observations clarify that these five lesbian couples use similar strategies to achieve similar goals. They post affectionate photos on social media accounts, pour out their hearts in status posts, and express their pride in their partners. All of this builds positive, long-term relationships, and helps reduce conflict.

Yet another goal is to show others that a woman currently has a partner and aims to prevent her partner from being disturbed by another. Thus have social media become one tool helping couples keep their partners.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on study findings about maintaining lesbian partners in Padang, conclusions from results of research have two main aspects:

First is the strategy of defending a relationship with violence, which is also divided into two categories: 1. Physical violence in the form of pulling hair, slapping, kicking, burning, and sometimes worse. 2. Mental violence takes the form of threatening and frightening a partner by spreading very intimate photos on social media, in order to frighten the partner into thinking twice about attempting to end the relationship.

Second, the strategy of maintaining a partner with non-violence is divided into three classifications: 1. Material goods. Many couples are willing to spend a lot of money to make their partners happy. Indeed, it is a separate satisfaction to buy something for the partner and/or surprise her with it. 2. Fulfillment of sexual needs satisfies sexual urges, increases intimacy and affection, and helps maintain a stable relationship 3. Exposing intimacy on social media helps partners show their hearts to one another, shows pride in the partnership, and binds the couple together, at least partly by telling others they are in an exclusive relationship.

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