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Effects of age, sexual orientation and relationship status of Irish  
individuals on the level of Homo-negativity.

**By Jakub Robert Rutkowski**

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**1<sup>st</sup> April 2016**

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*You gave me your time, the most thoughtful gift of all. – Dan Zadra.*

Thank you,

*Jacob Robert Rutkowski*

# Abstract

Homosexuality has been a controversial subject for Irish legal system and spiritual aspect of everyday life. Taking into account the role of Church and the movement of Catholic nationalism, a number of hypotheses have been outlined in goal to measure the level of prejudice on homosexual individuals. Looking at a recent study carried out by UNESCO (2012) and the introduction of Marriage Equality (2015) study has been designed to measure the personal level of homo-negativity. This study contained 110 participants, 97 males and 12 females. Age of participants ranged from 18 to 72 years of age. An online survey has been designed and presented to individuals present on social media websites. Three levels of homo-negativity have been measured; Score of Gay-negativity, Lesbian-negativity and Total negativity score by Modern Homonegativity scale (MHS-G; Morrison & Morrison, 2002) The main findings of this study shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between age and level of homo-negativity expressed, straight people show higher level of homo-negativity than gay people and relationship status have no effect on level of homo-negativity.

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**Keywords: Homo-negativity, Ireland, Marriage Equality, Civil Partnership, Gay, Lesbian**



# Introduction

Homosexuality in the Republic of Ireland has faced many shifts and changes since early 1900's. Ireland has been exposed to criticism of homosexuality by law and public beliefs such as religion and social norms. It is important to note many important dates that have not only, in the Republic of Ireland, change the view and understanding of same-sex relationships, but also worldwide.

The very first action that had ever begun the change in the treatment of homosexual individuals across medical treatment and understanding of the phenomena have occurred in 1973, American psychiatric association removed homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). History of homosexuality shows that not only in the Republic of Ireland a lot have been done to recognise rights of the gay majority and as a result of that, change public opinion and views towards homosexuals and marriage itself. In 2000, Netherlands were the first country to recognise marriage equality and 13 years later, another 15 countries were supporting gay marriage (Itabrahay & Zhu, 2013; Masci, Sciupac & Lipka, 2013)

In 2013, half of LGBT participants who took part in a study carried out by Pillinger & Fagan (2013) reported being victimised of discrimination and homophobia in last five years, at the time of the biggest movement in recognition of Gay rights.

Before 1973, homosexuality was seen as psychological disorder, pathological factor that needed to be diagnosed and treated (Melton, 1989) in fact, a treatment have been searched for in goal to cure of homosexuality (Foucault, 1978) one of the most famous treatment of homosexual males mostly performed in the United States of America was the aversion therapy (O'Farell, Cutter, Choquette, Floyd & Beyong, 1992) Which in modern days

have become a shameful part of health service's past, in fact, modern psychology uses Gay affirmative psychotherapy, also accepted and guided by American Psychological Association (APA) as aversion therapy was. The goal of Gay affirmative psychotherapy is to understand and accept one's sexuality, it's a clinical factor that publicly states that homosexuality, as well as bisexuality, is a normal, healthy sexual orientation.

### Defying Homo-negativity

Homo-negativity refers to homo-negative attitudes towards individuals who are known or perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. (Morrison & Morrison, 2012) Homo-negativity can also be described as homophobia. The exact and scientific explanation of homo-negativity is still under discussion and argument of many researchers (Baumeister, 2001)

It's believed that homophobia is a source for suggesting personal pathology. (Irish Council for Civil Liberties, 1990) Surprisingly, defying marriage equality is perceived as a form of homo-negativity and called a form of discrimination by 61 % people or one in six of citizens of Republic of Ireland. (It's NO Joke: Civil Marriage Rights for Lesbians and Gay Men in Ireland, 2015)

## Literature review

In Ireland, since early 1900's, homosexuality was commonly associated with a sense of anti 'Irishness', strongly conflicting with Irish nationalist views, and been treated as something 'foreigner' (Conrad, 2001) According to Ryan (2010), not only homosexuality has been shocking and resulting wit criticism. It has been outlined that same-sex relationships were as shocking as single parenting homes, leading to criticism of the lack of morality by both, homosexual individual and single, as well as teen mothers.

Not everyone held negative views about homosexual individuals, Dr. Charles Weinberg (1972) stated that not homosexuals are mentally ill, only those, who show any degree of homophobia, are not to be called mentally healthy, strongly outlying the importance for acceptance of same-sex relations in society.(Weinberg, 1972) In past, Same-sex relations have been explained as acts against nature, even after the year 1973, it was still believed that homosexuality occurred as a result of mental illness or hormonal imbalance (Irish Council for Civil Liberties, 1990) although no evidence have been found to support this statement (Boyer, 1981)

Even though Church had its own views about homosexuality, not everyone related to it, shared its views, as Ralph Gallagher a redemptorist priest who was also a lecturer stated in *Furrow* magazine (1979) that there are thousands of gay people living in Ireland, some of them are even living in marriages across several environments, are not to be treated as risk for children and that in his mind, homosexuals were naturally gay, in other words, they were born gay. (Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland, Ferriter, 2009). There is a lot of research carried out in the field of homosexuality although little is related to Irish setting in a time of the toughest situation of homosexual individuals in the Republic of

Ireland. It has been believed that those four factors outlined in this study will have an impact on a modern citizen in perception and attitude towards homosexual and transgender people. This study is strongly concerned with the change of public perception that has been created through spiritual values, health service available, education from the very young age, and legal situation in the Republic of Ireland in past years.

### The role of church

Ireland is perceived as a very religious country. The role of the church has been very influential in lives of Irish citizens. Church held a number of views about various aspects of the personal life of its people. The subject of individual's sexuality has been treated as a form of taboo by both, the church and community. Being gay or lesbian in Ireland has been described as sin in catholic theology (Breen, 1993, p.170). John McNeill states in his book *The Church and the Homosexual: Fourth Edition* (1993) that a number of actions were taken by the church in order to deal with the problem of homosexuality, one of them was to discriminate gay and lesbian people as much as possible.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, any aspect of sexual context was highly in control and modernisation of Catholic Church (Inglis, 1998, 17). Due to control of church, any deviation from the norm, which at the time was commonly accepted as relationship between man and woman, has been treated as sinful and highly reprobated (Inglis, 1998, 24.) However, Irish constitution has never defined marriage as a relationship between man and woman, it has always been stated that marriage is always defined as a relationship between two people, even in most controversial times showing that the church had more power than legal requirements and descriptions.

Homosexuality was very shocking subject in the Republic of Ireland, books with any aspect of homosexual relationships or suggestions were banned (Ryan, 2010). Public view was strict, in beliefs of people, even usage of term homosexuality was perceived as sin as mentioning it could be viewed as a promotion to bad. (Conrad, 2001) The views of church were highly correlated with political views, as result of that catholic nationalism has been created, according to it, 'Irish girl could not have any kind of interest in another, lovely Irish woman' (Enright, 2005) Before final decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland, It has been believed and highly highlighted by nationalists and the church, that decriminalisation of homosexuality would result in disturbance of Irish morality and public health, and because of that, decriminalisation did not take place up until 1993. (Conrad, 2001)

Inglis (2007) suggests that Irish individuals were in past deeply devoted to the Catholic Church. Because of that, people had believed in the role and importance of the Church and were willing to live according to its rules. Today, however, Irish individuals seem to be more materialistic and emotionally 'detached' with the Church and Catholic values (Clyne, 2012). Current times have resulted in religious declines due to modernisation (Hirshle, 2010) brought by recent years. Research carried out by Clyne (2012) shows that public view of church and power once held in Ireland, are possible to be re-established, however, a change need to be made as views of the church are seen to be 'too old'.

It also suggests that modernisation has introduced to people new ways in which they could see the world, leading to stronger beliefs in the legal system than spiritual values. People who are very religious tend to show less tolerance towards individuals who seems to be 'different' from the public.(Kelly, 2001; Stevens, Caron & Pratt, 2003)

## The role of law

So, being gay or lesbian had evolved in Ireland from sin to mental illness and then to crime. Document defining homosexuality and law in Ireland at the year 1976-1977, which was shortly after first movement introduced by American psychologists, states that:

*‘Any male, who is in intimate relation, publicly or privately, with another male, shall be brought to court and be imprisoned.’*

According to the same document, homosexuality was perceived as the same form of crime such as stealing or personal assault showing no respect to sexual orientation and still treating it as a deviation and undesirable behaviour just like any form of crime. (Homosexuality and Law: The Irish situation, 1976-1977)

Surprisingly, not every aspect of homosexuality was treated in the same way at the time. Some individuals have been protected or their actions were seen in a different way. Oscar Wilde is presumed to be a gay icon of Ireland (Small, 2013) Research carried out by Small (2013) undertaking the book by Walshee (2010) looking at Oscar’s influence in the culture of Ireland with shocking factor held by him – sexual orientation that was against every norm held by society. Wilde’s actions were also seen as ‘sexual crime’ and ‘sinful’ although in a time of the most rigorous intervention of church in political and personal values, Wilde’s sexual orientation was treated differently and according to Small (2013) with tolerance from newspapers, giving some sort of special treatment for him.

Before 1993, cases of discrimination of homosexuality have been hidden from the public, therefore, were no examples of court trials against homophobia wherein other

European countries such as Britain, public trials were common. (Irish Council for Civil Liberties, 1990).

According to Ryan (2010), men from the time of their birth were expected to behave and function in stereotypical, masculine way. Being gay resulted in disturbance of this stereotype and man's behaviour was seen as 'incorrect' and 'different' from the rest of the men. Mostly Straight men are perceived as very masculine, showing little to no feminine behaviour that gay men are strongly associated with.

In 1990, Irish Council for Civil Liberties, released a document strongly outlying legal views and potential punishment for those who were caught in same-sex sexual or romantic actions, paradoxically it also states that 'gay and lesbians are fighting for basic, human rights' for acceptance of their sexual orientation and lifestyle, without any negative consequences of their actions.

According to Irish Council for Civil Liberties (1990), prejudices towards homosexual individuals are rooted to the incorrect fulfilment of stereotypes which links to research carried out by Ryan (2010) prejudice towards homosexuality can possibly be created because it's seen as something negative just through the behaviour of gay and lesbian people who are acting in a way that makes them differ from the rest. Children are exposed to gender roles and expectation to fulfil them from the very young age by both family and society, they are thought to act and dress in a role assigned to its gender in all aspect of life such as school, play and social interactions, any deviation from the normal and healthy fulfilment of the stereotype and gender role, results with punishment and prejudice held by people around.

Young girls are at a disadvantage as punishment of the differences from the gender role can result with further sexism as the expectation of the stereotype may have a further effect on various aspects of life. Women are in disadvantage to be criticized more often.

The Early feminist movement has been seen as wrong and immediate conflict between feminists, Catholic Church and legal system, aroused.

A research carried out by Conrad (2001) shows that terms such as 'tolerance' or 'justice' were strongly correlated with traditional nationalist views and as a result of that, a conflict between same-sex relationships, social norms and acceptance aroused.

As far as in 1998, Employment Equality Act has been introduced to protect from discrimination based on sexual orientation in goal to protect the gay and lesbian individual from injustice. It was the first act introduced to give the homosexual employees right to be free about their sexuality.

It is important to outline that in past 23 years, since Ireland had decriminalised homosexual acts in June 1993, many has been done to recognise gay relationships as equal to heterosexual and a number of laws have been introduced. It is important to outline the role of current Professor of Law at Trinity College Dublin, Mary McAleese, who have been involved in the movement of gay rights, and have been one of the most important figures in decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993, and been a president of Republic of Ireland in 2011.

2011 it's another important date in the history of homosexuality. In that year, civil partnership law have been introduced under Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010, in which, homosexual relationships has been legally recognised as relationship between two people (as mentioned before, Irish constitution have had stated that many years before), unfortunately, the law did not give the same rights as marriage, leading to the wrong sensation about gay and lesbian individuals who felt different because they did not face the same treatment in society and law as heterosexual people did.



The introduction of civil partnership law has shown a change in public attitude towards homosexual people.

At the beginning, the idea of registering a relationship had been perceived as huge achievement in case of homosexuality in Ireland and movement towards total equality, however, as time went on, denied the right of adoption associated with civil partnership law, had resulted in negative sensation by those who were inability to get the relationship registered. Notion of discrimination occurred and many have described the law as failure (Marriage Equality, 2008) yet again, homosexual individuals have felt 'alienated' (Hill: 2003, 104)

To investigate and seek for public opinion about same-sex marriage, a number of referendums have been carried out in recent years. In 2007, 56% of Irish individuals were in support of same-sex marriage, where in early 2015, 76%. This result shows that public attitude has changed, a greater number of people have voted to give the same rights to everybody regardless of its sexual orientation.

22 May 2015 is believed to be the most important date in the history of not only homosexuals but Irish Citizens in general. Ireland has proved to be the modern country, once again showing that the traditionally Catholic country has moved on, looking at other possibilities, listening to its people and being pro-familiar in terms that could not be accepted even 20 years ago. Results of referendums also suggest that the notion of homosexuality being anti-Irish (Conrad, 2001) disappears and that people are ready for change and movement from old, traditional past and norms.

## Education

The role of education is influential in every aspect of personal and social life especially in the development of empathy and prejudice. According to previous research, homosexuality in Ireland was 'read' in schools as innate, personal characteristic after 1973, However research across Irish teachers and students shows, that it wasn't the case, homosexuality was perceived as deviation from the norm and characteristic that was under control of an individual (O'Higgins-Norman 2008)

Recent research on Irish individuals shows, that Ireland had become more liberal in terms of homosexuality in recent years as in comparison with other, European countries (Breen & Reynolds, 2011) however, a study has been carried out to investigate if negative emotions are still present within Irish society towards homosexual individuals. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (FRA, 2013) carried out a survey in which, 47 % of participants have reported of experiencing some sort of discrimination or harassment based on their sexual orientation in past year. Similar survey, across transgender people, showed higher level of being discriminated due to their metamorphosis and sexual orientation (Mayock et al, 2009)

Research carried out in the Republic of Ireland (Mayock et al, 2009) shows that gay and lesbian individuals are still facing discrimination and negative emotions across several settings such as health system, education or employment (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2016)

Research carried out by O'Higgins-Norman suggests, that no presence of homosexuality in education can lead to negative stereotypes in future as a school teach how to be good citizens. Survey carried out by UNESCO in 2012 shows that 56% of students have reported some degree of being victimised by homophobic actions, 34 % reported inappropriate comments from their teachers and school staff (Mayock, 2009) A study carried out by Department of Education in Northern Ireland shows that students who are facing discrimination based on their sexual orientation are 19% more likely to have lower educational achievements and 10% are at risk of leaving school prematurely (Carolan & Redmond, 2003) Research carried out by Meynock (2009) suggests that there is a clear link between bullying and suicidal predisposition by Gay and Lesbian in Ireland.

The role of homophobia has been looked at in terms of prevention as educating people about it. Findings of research carried out by Layte, McGee, Quail, Rundle, Cousins, Donnelly & Conroy (2006) shows that people, in general, are supporting sexual education at school although those, who are describing themselves as religious, show much less support for sexual health education in general but are particularly strict about education of homosexuality and same-sex relationships.

## Health service

Surprisingly, not only teenagers can suffer from discrimination and prejudice due to homosexuality, adults are also at a risk of facing negative comments and lack of professionalism from individuals such as mental health professionals. Hayes and Erik's (2000) conducted a study of highly trained psychologists; their findings showed that licenced psychologists were less likely to work with self-identified HIV-positive gay males.

It has been believed that HIV and AIDS were the diseases of gay people. The social notion about gay individuals being associated with HIV has been used even by Church to promote anti-gay politics (Cameron, 1988; Dannemeyer, 1989).

A research carried out on American health service professional's shows that even across health service; homosexuals were highly associated with HIV and were mostly blamed for it. A research carried out by Herek (1997) shows that prejudice was common across health service professionals towards gay and lesbian patients as well as notion that those homosexuals with HIV, deserved to be sick (Herek, 1997; Hereck and Glunt, 1993)

After a long history of discrimination and unfairness, a historical change occurred. The majority of Irish citizens have voted to give the same rights to everyone. Moninne Griffith, Co-Director of Marriage equality stated that this movement was a building of social justice. (Marriage Equality, 2015)

LGBT parents who were using health services for themselves and their children had stated that most of the service received by them were more positive than negative. (Pillinger & Fagan, 2013) It is important to note that some individuals have reported negative attitudes from health service professionals such as hospital staff just due the sexual orientation.

## Aims and objectives

Taking into account the past views towards homosexuality and many changes that have come across Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Ireland, especially after 1973 when mental health drift has occurred on the subject of homosexuality, removal from the list of mental disorders and the notion of homosexuality being ‘foreigner’ (Conrad, 2001). This study aims to measure level of homo-negativity across Irish population after passing of marriage equality bill where at stage when gay and straight people are having the same rights in terms of marriage and adoption of children and yet, presence of self-described discrimination by homosexual and transgender people across several environments such as education (UNESCO, 2012).

Current study takes into account age of participant, keeping in mind that participant could have been faced to change in law, attitudes or norms towards homosexual individuals during its lifetime, sexual orientation of the participant, in which problem of homophobia or prejudice is highly correlated with participant and his/hers own past and social interaction as well as matching, relationship status of the subject, to investigate if potential level of homo-negativity will result with being single and lack of romantic relationship with another individual. Taking into account that many types of research suggest that level of homo-negativity have been present since early 1900’s, due to the influence of religion, laws and acts as well as the role of education and health service practices, many have been done to recognise rights of the majority of same-sex relationships.

The main goal of this study is to fill some gaps created by previous research, taking into account past and recent studies measuring the level of homophobia, homophobic behaviour across several environments as well as positive movement in recognising of gay rights.

This study introduced a number of hypotheses, the first hypothesis is that age of participant will be positively correlated with the level of homo-negativity expressed, its hypothesised that those past actions taken by law and church had an effect on those being raised at this time so, it has been believed that older participants will show higher level of homosexual prejudice. This hypothesis is driven by previous research where homosexuality have been associated with less tolerant views as the participant of the study got older (Kelly, 2001)

The second hypothesis of this research is that there will be no differences in the level of homo-negativity expression between gay and straight individuals, taking into account research carried out by O'Higgins Norman (2008) and the presence of homophobic experiences in Irish education settings. It has been believed that past education will have the effect on participant's view towards same-sex relations. Due to being raised in the same environment and facing the same education by both, straight and gay participants.

The last hypothesis is that relationship status will be correlated with the lower level of homo-negativity. People who are single will have a higher level of prejudice expressed.

**Hypothesis 1.** Age will be positively correlated with the level of homo-negativity expressed by Irish individuals.

**Hypothesis 2.** There will be no correlation between gay and straight individuals in the level of homo-negativity expressed.

**Hypothesis 3.** Being in a relationship or being married will be negatively correlated with the level of homo-negativity expressed.

## Methods

### Participants

Participants for this study contained one hundred and ten internet users (males  $n=97$ , females  $n=12$  and other  $n=1$ ) participants were either heterosexual ( $n=12$ ) homosexual ( $n=98$ ) and could be single ( $n=68$ ) in a relationship ( $n=46$ ) ranging in age from 18 to 72 years old. ( $M=35.84$ ,  $SD=13.42$ )

Participants were selected from social media portal and dating website. Information has been presented in public groups on social networking service 'Facebook' and 'Gayromeo' social network for gay, bisexual and transgendered men. Participants volunteered to participate by opening a link provided to the actual study provided the information presented.

Current research uses non-probability snowball sampling technique as the entire sample was unknown, participants were seeking for more participants, posts presented on social media portals were liked and shared by individuals so other people (outside the group the post was originally published) could see it and had a chance to participate. As time went on, a number of 'likes' represented the number of people involved, and a number of people outside of the group grew.

## Design

This research involves Quantitative between groups' correlation research design to compare age, sexual orientation and relationship status on the level of homo-negativity. The variables for this study are:

Hypothesis 1:	DV: Level of Homo-negativity	IV: age
Hypothesis 2:	DV: Level of Homo-negativity	IV: gender
Hypothesis 3:	DV: Level of Homo-negativity	IV: relationship status

## Materials

Participants were asked to fill in two questionnaires in the form of the electrical survey presented online, in relation to Gay and Lesbian individuals and their rights in modern Ireland. Subjects were also required to fill in five demographic questions such as their nationality where participant could pick an option 'Irish' or 'other' and type the answer, gender; three options were presented, 'male', 'female' and 'other', age; participant had to



type the answer to that question, sexual orientation; three choices were available, 'straight', 'gay', or 'bisexual' and the last question was about relationship status with five possible choices; 'single', 'in relationship', 'married', 'civil partnership' and 'other'. This survey was linked to Irish setting with questions such as e.g., 'In today's tough economic times, Irish' tax money shouldn't be used to support gay men's / lesbian women's organisations' (MHS-G; Morrison & Morrison, 2002)

*Modern Homonegativity Scale* (MHS-G; Morrison & Morrison, 2002) was used in goal to measure homo-negativity (e.g., negative attitudes and prejudice ) of both, homo and heterosexual participants toward Gay men and Lesbian women, based on symbolic/abstract concepts (e.g., Gay men/ Lesbian women still need to protest for equal rights ) Participants were asked to answer 12 questions by selecting their answers from 5 items Likert scale, 1- 'strongly disagree', 2 - 'disagree', 3- 'don't know', 4 - 'agree' and 5 - 'strongly agree'. Questions number 3, 6 and 9 were decided. Attitudes towards gay men were measured separately by MHN-G (Appendix 1) and lesbian women by using of MHN-L (Appendix 2). For both scales, total scores can range from 12 to 60. Previous research showed scale score reliability and validity (Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Morrison, Kenny, & Harrington, 2005; Satcher & Leggett, 2006, 2007.)

### **Apparatus:**

The main apparatus used in this study contained electrical systems and private computers (PC). One of the electronic systems used were Google documents software (the file storage and synchronisation service created by Google) has been used in goal to create the survey. The usage of online resources have been very important in running out this survey as not the only survey have been placed online, participants have been gathered through online resources as well.

SPSS statistical analysis software (version 2.2) has been used in goal to analyse findings.

### **Procedure:**

A research proposal has been sending to Supervisor and ethic committee of National College of Ireland. Permission for running the study has been granted. It was important to seek for any potential harm that could occur on participants in regards to the topic investigated. After consideration of any possible harm, research could begin.

Participants were exposed to information presented online on social groups in one of the social networking service portal named 'Facebook' and social network for gay, bisexual and transgender men called 'Gayromeo'. A brief note has explained that study is being carried out and participants are being searched for and selected in goal to run the study. Subjects were aware that survey is voluntary and optional. Every person who wanted to take a part of the study had been informed in the advertisement about the right to be anonymous, and that every subject could leave the study at any stage without informing a researcher about a change of the mind. Participants could go to the study directly by going through the link provided. A questionnaire has then been opened in front of the participant through Google documents surveys.

Top of the page of the survey informed participants that the aim of the research was to measure honest, personal opinion about gay rights movement in the Republic of Ireland. Next information presented was a brief note from the researcher with the name of the researcher and contact email to the researcher in the case of any questions or doubts.

First, participants were presented with the information that all questions need to be filled in goal for the survey to be completed. Reminded of that was present with every

question as a form of a little red star. At the beginning, participants had to answer five demographic questions, in first, participants had to choose their gender from ‘male’, ‘female’ or ‘other’ from the options provided. Option ‘other’ contained a blank space in which they could write down the answer.

The second question was about the sexual orientation of participant and again, a participant could choose from options provided – ‘straight’, ‘gay’ or ‘bisexual’.

The third demographic question was the age of the subject. Participant had to type the answer.

The fourth demographic question was about the relationship status of the participant. The participant could choose the response from options provided; ‘single’, ‘in relationship’, ‘married’, ‘in civil partnership’ and ‘other’. It was important for this study to select Irish individuals so participants had to answer a question about their nationality in which they could choose already presented an option with ‘Irish’ or blank space with ‘other’ and type the answer.

In second part of the study, 12 questions were presented (MHN-G, *appendix 1*) in which level of prejudice towards gay men was measured through questions measuring abstract concepts (e.g., ‘Many gay men (Lesbian women, MHN-L) use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges’) Third part of the study involved 12 questions measuring prejudice toward lesbian women (MHN-L, *appendix 2*)

After answering all the questions required (red colour star next to every question presented reminded to the participant that question presented was necessary to be answered before successful submission of answers) participant had to select ‘next’ on the bottom of the page in goal to submit the responses. After submitting the responses, information has been

presented to thank participant for time and a brief explanation of the nature of the study, revealing that the main aspect of personal opinion measured was the level of homo-negativity.

An approximate 6 minutes were spent by each participant in goal to answer all the questions provided and successful submission of the study.

Every response has been saved and generated output could be downloaded by a researcher at any location with every response outlined.

### **Ethical Consideration**

In goal to prevent any potential ethical issues with the research, proposal of the study has been submitted to college's ethical committee for consideration. After approval of the research proposal, the final version has been created. After creation of the final version of the study presented online, the researcher has included a note with every link to the study stating that participant has the right to be anonymous, no names of contact details were needed in the goal of successful participation. Participants were also informed that participation can be cancelled at any given time. There was no pressure on participants at any stage of the study. On the end of the study, after the results were submitted by the participant, each subject was presented with the information stating the real purpose of the study defining the homo-negativity being measured. In the case of any questions about the survey or results, an email address, name of the programme and college has been provided in goal for easy and effective communication between participants and researcher.

## Results

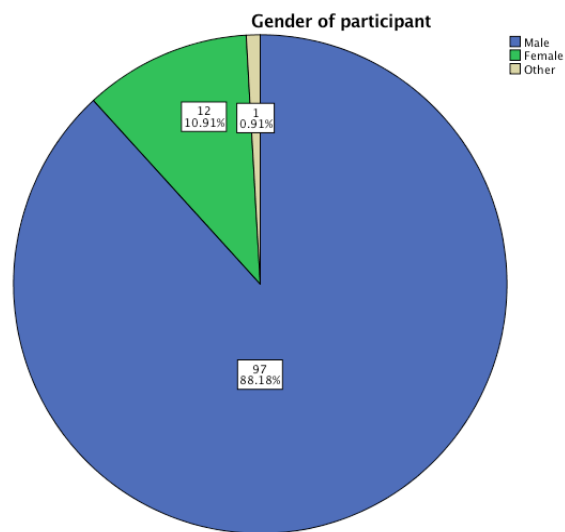
Data has been collected and recorded carefully, afterwards every response had been transferred into SPSS (version 2.2) where data could be decoded were necessary (Questions 3, 6 and 9 from MHS-G and questions 3, 6, 9 from MHS-L) and analysed. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviation scores were obtained in goal to represent characteristics of each variable.

Relationships between variables have been established by usage of inferential statistics. At first, a test of normality has been performed with the goal of checking if the data is normally distributed. . The relationships between the age of participant and level of homo-negativity have been measured by spearman correlation due to not normally distributed data. The total levels of homo-negativity as well as the total score for gay-negativity and lesbian-negativity investigated by Mann-Whitney U test with the goal of finding the statistically significant difference in scores between gay and straight participants. Lastly, Mann-Whitney U test has been carried out with the goal of finding statistically significant difference in the level of homo-negativity between single participants and participants in relationships.

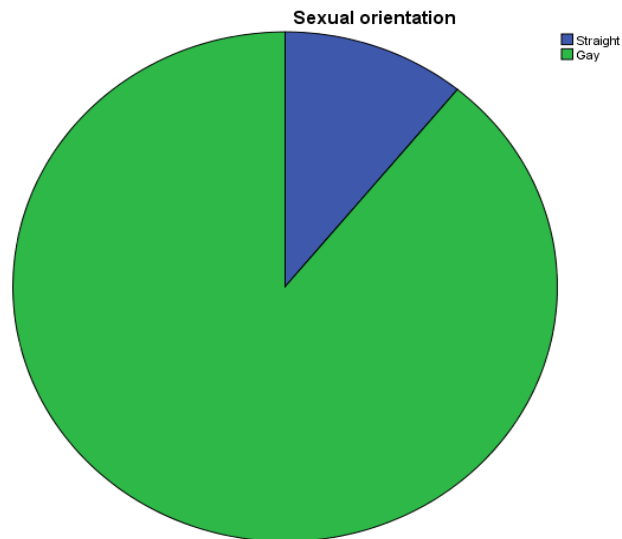
**Data Analysis:**

Sample of this study contained 110 participants, 10.9 % females ( $N=12$ ), 88.1 % males ( $N=105$ ) and 0.9% ( $N=1$ ) other.

The mean age score for participants was 35.84, ( $M=35.84$ ,  $SD=13.42$ ) ranging in score from 18 years of age to 72 years of age. The mean scores and percentages are presented in descriptive statistics *table 1*.



Graph representing males and females as well as ‘other’ gathered in the study. Colour blue is representing gay people, the colour green is representing straight people and yellow is representing ‘other’.



Graph representing sexual orientation of participants in the study. Colour green represent those participants who were gay when colour blue represents participants who were straight.

*Table 1. Descriptive statistics for Demographic questions:*

Variable	Number	percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	97	88.18%
Female	12	10.91%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Straight	12	10.9%
Gay	98	89.1%
<b>Relationship status</b>		
Single	68	59.6%
In relationship	46	40.4%
<b>Nationality</b>		
Irish	76	69.1%
Other	34	30.9%

Table 2. Descriptive statistic for scales

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age of participant	35.84	13.42
Total Score for Gay-negativity	29.01	17.65
Total Score for Lesbian-negativity	28.74	9.46
Total Score for Homo-negativity	57.81	17.65

Age of participant had a mean of 35.84 (M=35.84, S.D=13.42) Total score for gay-negativity had a mean of 29.01 (M=29.01, S.D=17.65), total score for lesbian-negativity was 28.74 (M=28.74, S.D=9.46) and Total score for homo-negativity was 57.81 (M=57.81, S.D=17.65)

#### Hypothesis 1.

To find out if there is a statistically significant relationship between age and the total level of homo-negativity, a spearman correlation analysis was carried out because the data was not normally distributed. The result of the analysis shows that the relationship between the two variables did not reach statistical significance ( $\rho = .011$ ,  $n = 118$ ,  $p = .911$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis will be accepted.

#### Hypothesis 2.

Mann-Whitney u tests were carried out to find out if there are statistically significant differences in scores of gay-negativity, lesbian-negativity and a total score of homo-negativity between straight and gay participants. The result of the analysis shows that the three variables differed statistically significantly across the two groups ( $p < .05$ ).



### *Total Gay*

The straight participants ( $Mdn = 36.50$ ) have a statistically significantly higher level of gay negativity than the gay participants ( $Mdn = 28.00$ ),  $u = 325.00$ ,  $z = -2.524$ ,  $p = .012$ .

### *Total Lesbian*

The straight participants ( $Mdn = 36.00$ ) also had a statistically significantly higher level of lesbian negativity than the gay participants ( $Mdn = 25.50$ ),  $u = 367.500$ ,  $z = -2.116$ ,  $p = .034$ .

### *Total score of Homo-negativity*

It was also found that overall level of homo-negativity was higher in the straight group ( $Mdn = 71$ ) compared to the gay group ( $Mdn = 55.00$ ),  $u = 339.500$ ,  $z = -2.384$ ,  $p = .017$

### Hypothesis 3.

To determine whether the total score for gay-negativity, total lesbian-negativity and total homo-negativity scores differed statistically significantly between single and taken participants, Mann-Whitney  $u$  tests were carried out. The result of the analysis shows that there was no statistically significant difference in homo-negativity between single and taken participants ( $p > .05$ ).

# Discussion

The case of homosexuality in Ireland has been both controversial and undesirable. Past research and documents defining rights across recent years have shown the change in which homosexual individuals are treated in terms of rights for being in fully recognised relationships and right for creating a fully functioning family in eyes of state chosen by citizens of the country themselves. Due to the change and still a present level of prejudice, this study had hypothesised three hypotheses in relation to the modern measure of the level of prejudice expressed by those who one year earlier went out and voted for marriage equality by which a conflict and sense of unfairness could end after many years.

At first, this study had looked at the age of participant and level of homo-negativity expressed. It has been believed that age will be positively correlated with the level of prejudice toward gay and lesbian individuals, as participant is getting older, higher level of homo-negativity will be presented, taking into account recent and past movements, towards recognition of rights for gay and lesbian individuals, and political drift that had occurred within last 23 years.

The main age score for participants in this study was 35 years of age ( $M=35.84$ ) Most of the participants have been exposed to public and legal views at same-sex relations before and after homosexuality was decriminalised in Ireland. According to O'Higgins Norman (2008) after 1973, when homosexuality has been removed from Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and 1993 when homosexuality in the Republic of Ireland have been de-criminalised, education system have described homosexual acts as innate although a notion of being gay or lesbian being a form of abnormality, against nature and under control of an individual have been still present. Public views toward homosexuality have been highly correlated to the views of the church.

Taking this into account, it has been hypothesised that age will be positively correlated with the level of homo-negativity expressed. Findings of this study show that the relationship between age and level of homo-negativity did not reach statistical significance and as a result of that, a null hypothesis needs to be accepted.

Past research suggests that homosexuality in Ireland have not only been criminalised by law and public views, it has also become undesirable and unwanted in society. People in Ireland have not only been against the same-sex relations by both, the law (Irish Council for Civil Liberties, 1990) but even those who were personally connected with the subject, tread the 'deviation' that have happened to them and even after the year 1973, a cure for homosexuality has been searched for (Melton, 1989).

Up until 1993, any homosexual acts were against the law and every individual involved in such an action could be imprisoned, after 1993, however, a movement in recognition of rights for gay and lesbian individuals have been made. Up from that moment, any homosexual acts were allowed, perhaps total recognition of same-sex relationships as the proper relationship between two people have not occurred up until 2011 with an introduction of Civil Partnership law. Another milestone have been reached in goal of giving the same rights to every citizen of Republic of Ireland, although the law have been shortly after introduction called as failure because in mind of people, yet again homosexuals have not been placed in the same position as heterosexual couples were, and civil partnership was not recognised as marriage, which resulted in negative sensation about homosexual family with denied possibility of adoption (Marriage Equality, 2008).

2015 brought the final recognition of homosexual relationships in terms of marriage and ability of creating a family by two people of the same sex, so after 23 years from de-criminalisation of homosexuality in the Republic of Ireland, homosexual relationships have

been recognised as the same relationships as heterosexual ones, and the same rights have been recognised for both, straight and gay couples.

Paradoxically, surveys across the country have showed that some degree of homo-negativity has still been present across several environments. UNESCO carried out a research in 2012 and 56 % of students participating in the study have reported being exposed to homophobic actions and study carried out by Mayock (2009) where 37% of students reported inappropriate comments from the teachers and school staff. Recent actions taken in the goal of recognising rights of gay people shows the change that have occurred in the legal system in the Republic of Ireland and that public opinion is changing based on a law introduced.

A research carried out by Clyne (2012) shows that modern people are being ‘detached’ with Catholic Church. Hirshe (2010) states that due to changes in law and modernization, people are moving away from traditional Church and its values.

Taking into account the modernisation and change in public attitude and still occurring homophobic actions, this study hypothesised that there will be no correlation in the total level of homo-negativity, the level of gay-negativity and lesbian-negativity between straight and gay participants of the study, due to still present homophobic episodes. Findings of this study show that straight participants, in fact, scored higher on the total level of homo-negativity, the level of gay-negativity and level of lesbian-negativity than gay participants. Those findings show that straight people are still expressing prejudice towards homosexual individuals.

The last hypothesis of this study was that there will be a negative correlation between participants in a relationship and single participants in the level of homo-negativity expressed, it means that it was hypothesised that single participants will score higher on level of homophobia where people in relationship or also referred as ‘taken’ will have lower level

of homophobia expressed. Findings show that there was no statistical significance between single and taken participants in the level of homo-negativity expressed so null hypothesis needs to be accepted in that case.

Due to a small number of females (N=12) and other (N=1) study has been performed only on males (N=97). Females were excluded from the study in goal to prevent the gender bias from occurring.

Findings of this study highly support existing literature showing that in fact level of prejudice is still present towards gay individuals. The main finding of this study outlines that straight individuals score higher on the level of homo-negativity for both, gay and lesbian individuals and generally in total. These findings could be used as a base for further research looking at the higher level of prejudice towards gay individuals in the Republic of Ireland at a time when marriage equality have been chosen by its individuals.

# Conclusion

An increasing number of research is focused on negative emotions towards homosexual individuals in the country where it was previously believed that same-sex relations were a sign of evil, described as sin and then transformed into a form of crime. Even though research outlines the cases in which gay and straight people differ in level of empathy perceived, legal system seems to show that change is being made and that homophobic actions are not occurring anymore. Taking into account that in 2015, a public referendum have been carried out across the country, and that in public opinion gay individuals deserve the same rights as heterosexual people do, it could be presumed that the beliefs about same-sex relations are not even close to those held in the past when high control of public morals was held by Catholic Church. Findings of this study show however that a level of dissonance exists as a legal movement does not match personal opinion about gay people.

It is important to note that marriage equality has been accepted at public law for every couple to become fully married. Even though Civil partnership law have been introduced in 2011, giving the same rights to gay couples as heterosexual couples held in e.g tax and welfare, public opinion had shown that homosexual people do in fact need to be fully recognised as those inability to get the relationship registered and have the same rights as supposes in the relationship.

Public opinion had decided to move further once again, it is important that the referendums were carried out on both, straight and gay citizens, showing that total level of homophobia is decreasing and that Ireland as a country is ready for total equality.

## Limitations

This study holds a number of limitations. At first, this study holds a small sample size; this study contained a higher number of males than females and a greater number of gay participants than straight. Even though hypothesis of this study has not been supported, this study shows support previous research carried out in the field where the level of homo-prejudice is present in recent years.

The study has been presented in an electronic form which can have an influence on the accuracy of the responses as the attention of the participant could be focused on other actions or objects. It is also important to acknowledge that participants may also be inaccurate in terms of age, leading to the studying of participants in other age than firstly needed. Another limitation of the study is a lack of longitude research in homo-negativity that would have shown a personal change in attitudes across time. Access to the study is also a problem of this research.

Due to an electronic form of this study, only those who had a connection to the internet were in the advantage of taking part in the study, which according to research, only 'digital natives' which are people born from 1981 to 2000 This study aims to get as many participants from generation 'X' (People born between 1961 and 1980) and generation 'Y' (born between 1941 and 1960) (McHale, Dotterer, & Kim, 2009; Vogl-Bauer, 2003; Wartella & Jennings, 2001)

The last limitation of the study is the cultural difference of many citizens of the Republic of Ireland. Due to various cultures and religions, traditional Irish views are changing, some

participants are in relationships with individuals from other countries and cultures which may lead to bias as a mixed culture can occur.

### Further research

More research needs to be carried out in the field of homo-negativity across different environments such as school or workplace settings in the Republic of Ireland looking at research carried out by UNESCO (2012) and FRA (2015) outlining the presence of homo-negativity in school setting, as well as those who are not in the ability of the usage of the internet such as older people who have faced more changes that have occurred in the Republic of Ireland. It is important to control further research on the religious status of participants to see if the role of the church is still associated with one's prejudice towards sexual majority with age.

Researchers who are interested in looking at the case of homo-negativity across Irish individuals should have equal sample size in terms of gender of participants. It is important to gather as many males and females as possible and then compare the findings across gender.

Further research should be carried out face-to-face or across a more reliable group of individuals although this is highly connected to ethical consideration and potential stress that can arise due to the presence of a researcher.

Further research should take into consideration a number of immigrants living in Ireland and cultural differences that have been brought up with them.

This study shows that levels of homo-negativity are still present in modern society. The findings of this study show that even the movement in recognition of rights for gay individuals, straight people are still discriminating homosexual individuals.



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## Appendix

### Appendix 1

#### Modern Homonegativity Scale – Gay Men

(MHS-G; Morrison & Morrison, 2002)

1. Many gay men use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges.
2. Gay men seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals, and ignore the ways in which they are the same.
3. Gay men do not have all the rights they need.\*
4. The notion of universities providing students with undergraduate degrees in Gay and Lesbian Studies is ridiculous.
5. Celebrations such as “Gay Pride Day” are ridiculous because they assume that an individual’s sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride.
6. Gay men still need to protest for equal rights.\*
7. Gay men should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people’s throats.
8. If gay men want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture.
9. Gay men who are “out of the closet” should be admired for their courage.\*

10. Gay men should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society, and simply get on with their lives.

11. In today's tough economic times, Canadians' tax dollars shouldn't be used to support gay men's organizations.

12. Gay men have become far too confrontational in their demand for equal rights.

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Note: \* represents items to be reverse scored. A 5-point Likert-type scale has typically been used with the MHS (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=do not know; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree)

## Appendix 2

### Modern Homonegativity Scale – Lesbian Women (MHS-L; Morrison & Morrison, 2002)

1. Many lesbians use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges.
2. Lesbians seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals, and ignore the ways in which they are the same.
3. Lesbians do not have all the rights they need.\*
4. The notion of universities providing students with undergraduate degrees in Gay and Lesbian Studies is ridiculous.
5. Celebrations such as "Gay Pride Day" are ridiculous because they assume that an individual's sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride.
6. Lesbians still need to protest for equal rights.\*
7. Lesbians should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people's throats.
8. If lesbians want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture.
9. Lesbians who are "out of the closet" should be admired for their courage.\*

10. Lesbians should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society, and simply get on with their lives.

11. In today's tough economic times, Canadians' tax dollars shouldn't be used to support lesbian's organizations.

12. Lesbians have become far too confrontational in their demand for equal rights.

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Note: \* represents items to be reverse scored. A 5-point Likert-type scale has typically been used with the MHS (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=do not know; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree)