A Post gay Ireland? Exploring the Legacy of the 'Yes Equality' Campaign for LGBT+ social movement leaders and Constituent members.

A Thesis Submitted by Nigel Connor B.A. (P.S.P), M.A

for the Degree of Master of Literature

Sociology Department

Faculty of Social Science

Maynooth University, Ireland

Date of Submission October 2017

Head of Department: Prof. Mary P. Corcoran

Research Supervisor: Dr. Pauline Cullen

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The success of the 2015 same-sex marriage campaign made Ireland the first country to extend marriage to same sex couples by popular vote. The discourse around the 'Yes Equality' (YE) campaign has been predominately positive, indicating an emerging Ireland of progressive social attitudes (Elkink et al 2016; McGarry 2016). This project explores the legacy of the YE campaign for the everyday lives of LGBT+ people, with a focus on those outside large urban centres, through an examination of activists' experiences of the YE campaign, their patterns of collective action and their assessments of what it is to be LGBT+ in contemporary Irish society.

To understand the depth and scope of social change as experienced by LGBT+ constituents, this research draws on assessments that posit the advent of a 'post gay era', understood as period of policy engineered decrease in homophobia and transphobia that functions to weaken ties to established LGBT+ spaces and institutions (Ghaziani 2014, Seidman 2002). Concepts from social movement analysis and examinations of LGBT+ organisations are also used to understand dynamics of inclusion, exclusion, collective identity and community in a sample of urban and rural LGBT+ groups.

To gather data to assess how 'post-gay' Ireland has become, focus groups where held in both rural and urban environments with grassroots activists. In tandem, elite interviews were conducted with leaders of LGBT+ movement and community groups and participant observation was conducted of a new LGBT+ group formed in a town in the Midlands. Drawing on this data this thesis explores local and national LGBT+ debates on the YE campaign and in its aftermath experiences of collective action and community building in urban and rural contexts. Findings suggest, that the YE campaign worked as a catalyst that continues to sustain elements of rural based mobilization, however, age, gender and sexual identity shape the nature and capacity of collective organisation on the local level. Overall, a campaign that privileged a narrow conceptualization of LGBT+ life had mixed outcomes for this heterogeneous community and in the context of waning resources and a gap between national, local, urban and rural experiences, claims of a 'post gay' era seem premature.

1. INTRODUCTION

When addressing LGBT+[1] people's concerns on her 23rd of June show 2017, radio presenter Mary Wilson noted "The country celebrated" (Wilson 2017: online) at the passing of the 2015 same sex marriage referendum. According to the presenter there were further celebrations when Leo Varadkar was elected as Ireland's first openly gay Taoiseach.[2] The panel included Colm O'Gorman, Director of Amnesty International and Jerry Buttimer, Fine Gael Senator who were both prominent campaigners for a 'yes' vote to widen marriage laws to include same sex couples. The third person on the panel was journalist and activist Kelly Early who had published a scathing indictment in news blog 'the Daily Edge', of the commercialization of Dublin Pride and the lack of working class voices in the LGBT+ movement (Earley 2017). Presenter Mary Wilson asked questions like "Do people still have to come out?" and "What does equality mean to you?" (Wilson 2017: online) and generally centred on the idea that equality for LGBT+ people had been achieved in having an openly gay Taoiseach and 'marriage equality'. The panel were able to offer numerous examples of how LGBT+ people in Ireland do not feel equal, citing; mental health issues; the lack of protections in the Catholic dominated education, health care and elderly care systems; the lack of certain voices such as working class, Trans or Bisexual in the LGBT+ movement and community groups and rural isolation. LGBT+ oppression internationally and the lack of same sex marriage in Northern Ireland were also cited. Varadkar was not considered a champion of LGBT+ people by O'Gorman who noted that the new Taoiseach:

> *is a Taoiseach that happens to be gay…Was it significant in this country that Leo Varadkar was elected Taoiseach as he is openly gay. I think it was significant that that didn't matter* (O'Gorman 2017).

The narrative that the passing of the 2015 marriage referendum is equal to 'equality' has some roots in the 'Yes Equality' campaign framing which, by virtue of the name of the campaign, equates a 'yes' vote for same sex marriage to 'equality'. Irish LGBT+ activists are now working on correcting the narrative to focus on other issues that still exist for LGBT+ people. However, as Wilson's questions above demonstrate, there is a narrative in both the media and more widely employed by the broader heterosexual population, that 'marriage

---

[1] LGBT+ is used purposefully with both the individuals this work tries to represent and those reading this work in mind. While the list of identities that exist outside of heterosexuality is equally profound and protracted there is still a possibility to exclude in setting out a defied acronym. The + at the end of LGBT is intentionally added to include those that do not feel part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender communities while also giving the reader a shortened acronym.

[2] Irish Prime minster

equality' translates to equality in all aspects of life for LGBT+ people. This introduction will first set out the main research aims of this project, second, provide an examination of LGBT+ acceptance in Ireland, thirdly it will outline the key findings of the research, and finally introduce the some of the key sociological concepts used here including community, movement, identity and rurality in relation to the sample of LGBT+ studied.

This thesis begins detailing the methodology of the data gathering process. There is then a historical account of the movement, drawn from academic, journalistic and activist sources. This chapter charts the movement's development from the early 2000's when the question of marriage became more prominent until 2017, this is supplemented by Appendix 1 which charts the earlier development of the movement. This is followed by a chapter exploring scholarship around LGBT+ activism and the experience of living an open LGBT+ life from the disciplines of sociology, geography and LGBT+ studies. Following on from the literature review there are four findings chapters that explore the data gathered through participant observation, elite interview and focus group data. These chapters detail the experiences of participants involvement in LGBT+ activism in Ireland, experiences of working in or with Irish LGBT+ SMO's within the movement and participants experiences of being LGBT+ in Ireland today and the impact of location on LGBT+ lives in Ireland. The final chapter discusses the findings of the data gathered.

1.1 RESEARCH AIMS

This project aims to understand the legacy of the 'Yes Equality' campaign for the everyday lives of LGBT+ people, with a specific focus on those outside large urban centres, through an examination of activists' experiences of the 'Yes Equality' campaign, their patterns of collective action and their assessments of what is to be LGBT+ in contemporary Irish society. The discourse around the YE campaign has been predominately positive, indicating an emerging Ireland of progressive social attitudes (Elkink et al 2016; McGarry 2016). This work aims to explore the lived reality of the referendum campaign for LGBT+ people in Ireland. With a backdrop of such positive commentary around the referendum win this work aims to explore the empirical basis for such claims and as such to be both reflective upon and critical of this discourse.

This research asks, what was the legacy of the YE campaign for Irish LGBT+ people? How did local level LGBT+ groups engage with the YE campaign? What assessments did rural based activists make of the campaign and its legacy for LGBT+ people particularly outside of large

urban areas? How are LGBT+ activists outside of large urban areas engaging with activism in the wake of the campaigns success? The methods used to collect data for this project included: Focus groups held in both rural and urban environments with grassroots activists, elite interviews conducted with leaders of LGBT+ movement and community groups and participant observation of a new LGBT+ group formed in a small town in the Midlands. The next section will explore the rational for including a plurality of voices in this research.

1.2 Exploring social movement success through a Plurality of Voices

Many social movement scholars look to substantive policy gains to measure success, (Gamson 1990; Goldstone 1980; Gurr 1980; Snyder and Kelly 1976). This project looks to the supposed beneficiaries of a successful social movement campaign and seeks their definitions and understandings of campaign outcomes in their own lives. A reliance on the subjective assessment of a movement outcome gives a deeper and more nuanced view of how movements impact on the lived experience of those they purport to represent. While this study does not claim to be a social movement analysis of the Irish LGBT+ movement, new social movement theory is applied in analysing success to illuminate some of the issues that remain pertinent to Irish LGBT+ people. The broader 'Yes Equality' campaign is in analytical and empirical terms a reference point for the research and the experiences of campaign participants are placed alongside the voices of movement leaders to give a more comprehensive view of Irish LGBT+ activism.

The participants of this research are those who are either on the fringes of the movement's organisational structure or who are at the core of it. The researcher is an active participant working in LGBT+ spaces and as such aims to provide a self-reflexive assessment in conjunction with participants to understand the post 'Yes Equality' moment. A key methodological concern of this research is representing a nuanced view of the Irish movement and community and a triangulation of data sources aims to represent this. By focusing on the experiences of minority groups within the Irish movement, such as rural dwelling, queer, trans and older voices this study looks at the broader implications of success for a broad range of constituents of a social movement campaign. To offer some context on being LGBT+ in Ireland, societal acceptance of LGBT+ people is examined further.

1.3 ACCEPTANCE AND LGBT+ PEOPLE IN IRELAND

While only small number[3] of projects measuring the LGBT+ population in Ireland exist, there has been some attempt to measure acceptance of LGBT+ people in an Irish context. The LGBTIreland Report (Higgins Et Al 2011) looked at the attitudes of the general population towards LGBT+ people in a nationally representative sample of the Irish public. It found that while there were high rates of acceptance of working, being friends with and having children taught by LGBT+ people, acceptance of same sex public displays of affection were low. Participants indicated discomfort with a male couple kissing (39%) and a female couple kissing (30%) compared to a heterosexual couple (17%) kissing in public. There were also large numbers of people who were confused about certain aspects of being LGBT+. For example 34% did not believe that one could know your sexual orientation at a young age, 25% of participants believed that being LGB is a choice, something that someone can be convinced to become (17%), and that learning about LGBT+ issues in school might make a young person think they are LGBT+ or that they want to experiment (27%). The delegitimizing of bisexuality is also evident with 19% of participants believing that bisexual people are just confused about their sexual orientation.

One worrying fact for the LGBT+ movement is the finding that one in three participants (32%) believed that equality has already been achieved for LGBT+ people and over half (57%) believed that being LGBT+ today is no longer really an issue. We can see from the LGBTIreland Report (Higgins et al 2017) that while there is some goodwill towards LGBT+ people in Ireland from the general public, there are still many misconceptions about being LGBT+. These misconceptions by the hetero majority in Ireland of the queer minority are underscored; by poor mental health for younger people (Higgins et al 2017, Mayock et al 2009) and for older LGBT+ people (McCann et al 2012); increased instances of bullying of LGBT+ young people at school (Norman and Galvin 2006, Minton et al 2008); experiencing difference in accessing health care (Duffy 2012) and the presence of violent attacks against LGBT+ people (Sarma 2004).

---

[3] An 2015 Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI 'Family Values' poll found that 4% of its respondents described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual. The authors noted that they felt the real figure could be much higher as 10% of participants chose not to answer the question (Irish Times 2015). The only measurement of LGBT+ identified people by the Irish Central Statists Office (CSO) is on the numbers of same sex marriages. The CSO released same sex marriage figures for 2016 and found that there were 1056 same sex couples married in 2016, with almost half taking place in Dublin (CSO 2017).

This project focuses in part on the work of the Irish LGBT+ movement. The Irish movement for the purposes of this study is a collection of national organisations and a collection of locally based LGBT+ groups which operate in a dual capacity as community groups and activism spaces. The makeup of the Irish movement means there is a degree of overlap between community development work and LGBT+ community building and activist work including lobbying, protesting and awareness raising. Due to this overlap the movement and the community are often used in conjunction to discuss Irish LGBT+ activist work in general

In this research, I draw on a range of concepts employed in research on social movements, specifically on the formation of collective identity and community as factors shaping collective action (Flesher Fominaya 2010, Melucci 1988, 1995, 1996 and Snow 1999); discussions of social movement success and resonance (Gamson 2013, Giugni 2013, Tarrow 1989, Haalsa 2009) and the role of identity in shaping campaigns within LGBT+ organizations and movements (Bernstein and Taylor 2013, Hull and Ortyl 2013, Cohen 1999, Stone 2009). The following section will look at some of these concepts including 'community', 'movement' and 'identity' and their application in this project.

1.4 COMMUNITY, MOVEMENT AND IDENTITY

This project explores an LGBT+ identity as a collective identity that draws individuals to community groups. Flesher Fominaya (2010) building on the work of Melucci (1988, 1995, 1996), Snow (1999) and Whittier (1995) sets out a definition that presents collective identity as a "nexus between individual feelings of belonging, commitment and identification, and group, network, movement, and solidarity [with] collective identities" (Flesher Fominaya 2010:401). Commentary by leaders of the 'Yes Equality' campaign gave strong indications that representations of LGBT+ identity would be kept to a minimum. The more abstract notions of fairness, equality and openness would be fore-grounded over expressions of LGBT+ identity (Healy, Sheehan and Whelan, 2016). This strategy was adopted by the leaders of the campaign in order to win the referendum and so this homogenised and sanitised expression of a LGBT+ identity was adopted to appeal to the heterosexual majority.

While this representation was difficult for some (particularly Trans and queer individuals) in this research I explore, using Flesher Fominaya's (2010) definition, how community members interpreted this collective identity as a product of a professional social movement campaign and by extension constructed their own forms of collective identification. I suggest many of the participants, felt only partially included in this external facing or *product form* of collective

identity. However, they participated in this version of collective identity as a means to an end (winning the referendum). In this analysis I contend that in engaging with *collective identity as a product,* activists did in fact increase their identification with each other and this in turn afforded them a sense of community. Flesher Fominaya's (2010) definition explores an elastic form of collective identity. "Actors do not necessarily have to be in complete agreement on ideologies, beliefs, interests or goals in order to come together and generate collective action, an assertion that counters more structural understandings of what brings and keeps movement actors together" (Flesher Fominaya 2010:395).

To understand the idea of community I refer to Anthony Cohen's (1985) work on defining the concept of community outside of structural terms. Cohen explores boundaries and how communities first define themselves through the creation of boundaries, "the consciousness of community is… encapsulated in perception of its boundaries, boundaries which are themselves largely constituted by people in interaction" (Cohen 1985:13). Cohen notes how boundaries can also enclose groups of people who are similar but maybe not the same (1985:14) which can be demonstrated in the bringing together of sexual and gender minorities under the banner of LGBT+. The LGBT+ community comprises of individuals that do not consider themselves either heterosexual or cis gender and has worked collectively to advance the rights of the whole community or members within the community over time. Within the banner of LGBT+ there are a myriad of other identities incorporating class position, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and geography, although this list is not exhaustive. For the intents and purposes of this project the community is defined as all non-heteronormative or cis gender individuals who consider themselves part of the LGBT+ community. The participants of this research are all involved in some way with an LGBT+ group or organisation and have self-identified as LGBT+ or at a minimum not heterosexual.

Participants in this research also operationalised their own sense of identity. In this sense no specific definition of LGBT+ identity was offered instead what the participants offer is explored to give a greater insight into how people interact and understand their LGBT+ community and movement. What is evident is that tensions exist between an externally produced and manufactured form of collective identity, and the forms of identity and community that sustain local LGBT+ people. However, over time participation in activism based on this 'official' sense of community has provided some basis for connections between LGBT+ people at the local level. Overall the YE campaign in Ireland, while not universally

accepted by the entire LGBT+ community, has deepened activist commitments to activism for some rural participants.

1.5 RURALITY

Another key concept that is pertinent to this project is that of rurality. There is a marked difference in how LGBT+ people in Ireland experience collective identity based on their location. Johansen and Nielsen (2010) present a definition of rurality that incorporates physical distance with community based interpretations of rurality. Distance between parishes (or whatever local terminology that exists for what constitutes the smallest local territorial unit) is used in judging the rurality of a community while also considering the distance from the metropolis of the municipality or region. This delimitation is helpful for this project as many of the participants of this project live in their rural 'parishes' while coming together to form communities or movement groups in the regional 'metropolis'. The local town for the participants of this study is a small or medium sized town. As Johansen and Nielsen (2010) have noted the rurality of a parish is relative to the distance that parish is from an urban centre. In an Irish context the small towns in question here are between 1 and 2 hour drive between the nearest city. So while people are meeting in towns to participate in activism they can still be considered rural as they are some distance from a large dense urban area where LGBT+ activism would be more common.

Rurality is not just a matter of physical space but also a dynamic social construct where "rural becomes a world of social, moral, and cultural values in which rural dwellers participate" (Cloke and Milbourne 1992: 360). Wright and Annes (2014) in exploring the work of Halfacree (1993) and Edensor (2001, 2006) explore how rurality is represented through discourse and how rural dwellers 'perform' their rurality. The performance of rurality is wrapped up in symbols, language, taste, cultural artefacts but is also allied with masculinity, heterosexuality and 'traditional values'. We can see rurality as both a fixed idea based on measurement of distance from urban areas but for this project it is more helpful to see rurality as a construct of how people view their lived experience and how this idea of rurality is both dynamic and experienced intersectionally.

The analysis from this project has illustrated a number of findings, key among those is the impact of the YE campaign for rurally based LGBT+ people. The YE campaign, experienced by rural LGBT+ people, as simultaneously empowering and disempowering, has supported important forms of community building and collective identity among LGBT+ people in

specifically in rural spaces. In particular, the 'Yes Equality' campaign worked as a catalyst that increased membership of some local groups, creating the context for a form of politicisation of older and younger LGBT+ people alike. However, for local LGBT+ people in rural areas, mobilizing for marriage equality also underscored their lack of resources and influence compared to the national and urban centred LGBT+ communities.

1.6 KEY FINDINGS

Data from this project points to uneven engagement of Irish LGBT+ social movement organisations (SMO's) with constituents and underlines the absence of a comprehensive national alliance of organisations. The disconnect between local organisations and the national movement could also be categorised in terms of a rural and urban divide. LGBT+ specific services and organisations are located in the major urban centres while rural dwellers are expected to travel. In this context however there are emerging pockets of vibrant LGBT+ community building, examples of which are examined here.

Specifically, rural LGBT+ groups expressed a sense of isolation and marginalisation from the broader LGBT+ movement. While being part of a successful campaign, such as 'Yes Equality' was empowering, it also left rural grassroots participants with a growing sense of work left undone and a realization that the onus was on them to complete it. The centralised nature of Irish LGBT+ movement organisations has also resulted in a lack of training, resources and support for LGBT+ groups outside of the capital.

Other findings from this project include:

- Campaigning on YE was more difficult in smaller towns and villages where activists received less support from the central campaign headquarters and conditional political support outside of the travelling political campaigns.
- YE activism at the local level has led to better local political support and connections between local activists but this has not extended into a comprehensive national network of activists and organisations.
- Local identity was an important element of rural Yes Equality campaigns. The connection to a local space sustained local activists and was also used as a way of claiming sameness with rural populations with strong county identifications e.g. the use of symbols of county teams or participation in local events such as the St. Patricks Day parade.
- Rural LGBT+ participants hold denser connections to their organizations, while urban participants held looser ties.

- Generational dynamics were evident in shaping LGBT+ people's ideas about their identity, activism, the campaign and the legacy of the latter for negotiating everyday life in a local and rural context. There was an element of sharing in rural groups between generations as there was a mix of both older and younger people. The sharing included the sharing of ideas around identity, expertise on campaigning and activism and sharing of the emotional burden of being LGBT+ in a rural environment.

The existence of poorly resourced LGBT+ groups in rural areas and the continuing reality of isolation for LGBT+ people seems to conflict with the celebration of marriage equality. Even at the national level and in the urban context, infrastructure to support LGBT+ people has diminished. The closure of GLEN (the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) in 2017, an organisation seen by many participants of this study as a lead organisation in the Irish LGBT+ movement and community, underscores the difficulties that LGBT+ organisations face in Ireland in the post YE moment. GLEN's CEO Aine Duggan had indicated previous to its closure (GCN 2017) that accessing funding for LGBT+ projects had become increasingly difficult as there was a sense among funders that LGBT+ issues did no longer merit funding in the wake of the introduction of same sex marriage. A perception among the greater population that LGBT+ people now have 'equality' (Higgins et al 2016) has also permeated funding institutions with participants testifying that access to funding and decision makers has become more tenuous.

I argue in this research that recent legal changes and wider societal acceptance Irish society has produced a semblance of post gay milieu for urban based middle class male LGBT+ people (Ghaziani 2014). However, outside of urban male middle class elites prejudices are still a lived reality for rural, lesbian, bisexual, disabled, and Trans individuals. For those who do not fit into this demographic these prejudices are still, to some degree, an aspect of their everyday lives. A form of secondary marginalisation (Cohen 1999) operates within the Irish LGBT+ movement and community that places LGBT+ people in rural areas outside of the myth of a post gay context.

1.7 CONTRIBUTION

This work aims to add to the study of movement outcomes and success through its examination of the impact of mobilization on the lived reality of activists. This research also contributes to the analysis of the 2015 marriage referendum (Elkink et al 2016; Murphy 2016) as well as research on the Irish LGBT+ movement (Hug 1999; Rose 1994; Ryan 2006a; Ryan

2006b). It is envisioned this research will add to the field of LGBT+ studies by including the voices of rural and marginalised LGBT+ people and exploring their lived experience.

Analysis of the dynamics of mobilisation and the lived reality of the LGBT+ community will produce important insights that may support strategic engagement on LGBT+ rights and public policy approaches to LGBT+ issues including HIV prevention, mental health, homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools and LGBT+ work based harassment. In considering the perceptions that LGBT+ people, in a broader spatial context, hold of the rights they have secured and its resonances both individually and as a community, this research will afford a deeper and more critical assessment of social change as experienced by LGBT+ people in Irish society. The following chapter outlines the methodologies used in the gathering of data for this project.

2. METHODOLOGY

This project aims to understand the legacy of the 'Yes Equality' campaign for the everyday lives of LGBT+ people. This examination is conducted using a qualitative methodology drawing on a triangulation of focus group interviews, elite interviews and participant observation. The understandings that activists assign to their interactions with each other and the larger movement and community deepen our understanding of how success in a movement is understood at all levels of that movement. The following section sets out the research design of this project, the rationale behind that design and the advantages and limitations it presents.

The broader ethos of this research concerns its impact for participants particularly for the members of the Irish LGBT+ community. Santos states that "knowledge production should be concerned with audiences beyond academia, investing in outreaching initiatives that disseminate research findings in an accessible language and engaging different types of social actors" (Santos 2012:14). The academy has a duty to its research participants and the findings of this study will be communicated in a way that is of benefit to both the participants and the broader LGBT+ community.

2.1 PURPOSE AND VALUES

The starting point for this research project comes from my own journey as a LGBT+ activist. I left Ireland in 2010, previous to this I had been active in various forms of community organizations but never LGBT+ groups. In the five years I spent away from Ireland I worked on projects in Greece and France around LGBT+ issues. These experiences gave me an insight into how LGBT+ movement organisational dynamics work from a grassroots perspective and this led me to engage with this topic in a more formalized manner through research.

2.2 GOALS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A core value of this research is to represent those who are not always given a voice in the broader discourse around the LGBT+ movement. The goals of this research project is to give a nuanced account of the YE campaign and life as an LGBT+ person in the wake of such a public and defining win for the movement. Movement success can be presented one dimensionally and often there is a lack of examination of the resonances of success for different levels of a movement. This project aims to explore how a substantial movement

success translates for both members and leaders of a movement. To that aim the following research questions are asked:

- What does this successful campaign mean for LGBT+ identity and forms of community?
- In what ways does the acquisition of formal rights affect the everyday lives of LGBT+ people?
- How is movement success understood by constituents of this movement?
- How have different groups within the broader LGBT+ community been included and or benefited from movement success?
- How have local activists experienced being in movement and how that movement has impacted on their lives.

At a macro level, I analyse the relationship between the movement and broader social change. Has Ireland entered a 'Post Gay era' where the winning of rights marks a measure of acceptance and success? This study has broader implications for an understanding of struggles for equality understood as important catalysts of social change in Ireland and for the redefinition of citizenship and identity politics (Ryan 2012; Connolly 1998; Ging 2016)

2.3 PARADIGM AND CRITICAL APPROACHES

In examining the research questions, I have adopted an interpretive epistemology to explore the meaning that LGBT+ people give to both their interactions with national movement organisations and to their everyday lives in the wake of the 'Yes Equality' campaign. The interpretive epistemology is based on the interpretation of interactions and the social meaning that people assign to their interactions (Nielsen 1990:7). Through applying Social Movement concepts and Queer Theory approaches, to the analysis of data gathered, I have analysed a selection of what I argue are broader dynamics and cleavages that characterise the movement and community.

As an activist I have worked in collaboration with many of the participants of this study in furthering their own work on tackling homophobia and Transphobia. Interpretive research is based on the building of relationships between the researcher and the research participants. Participants had input in the research through their interactions with me the researcher and will also be able to use the research to further their own work once this study is completed. As Hesse- Biber and Leavy (2006) demonstrate, I see myself as an active participant in the work of understanding the post 'Yes Equality' Irish LGBT+ community with the participants.

"The researcher is not assumed to be value "neutral and "objective" but rather an active participant, along with the research subjects, in building of descriptive, exploratory and explanatory knowledge" (Hesse-Biber and Levey 2006:15). The use of participant observation as a method of data gathering is intended to speak to this active approach to research, or as Agar (1986) notes "Ethnography is neither subjective nor objective. It is interpretive, mediating two worlds through a third" (1986:19). The ethnographical methodology of participant observation incorporates a strong commitment to reflexive data gathering on the part of the researcher to insure an accurate representation of the participants lived realities, this will be explored further.

The triangulation of focus group interviews, participant observation and elite interviews is chosen to represent the post "Yes Equality" moment for certain participants of the Irish LGBT+ community. Following an interpretive paradigm aims to represent the experiences of both constituent members and movement leaders of this movement and does not purport to be an overarching representation of the entire movement and all those therein. While this study is not representative of the entire LGBT+ community in Ireland there has been some effort to represent as many voices as can be achieved through selective sampling. The triangulation aims to give a balance and help the research avoid drawing inferences from non-representative processes (Sarantakos 2013: 113).

The discourse around the "Yes Equality" campaign has been predominately positive, indicating an emerging Ireland of progressive social attitudes (Elkink et al 2016; McGarry 2016). This work aims to explore the lived reality of this win for LGBT+ people in Ireland. With a backdrop of such positive commentary around the referendum win this work aims to be both reflective and critical of this discourse.

The application of a Queer Theory lens in the examination of data collected. "Research processes that draw on queer theory pay close attention to processes' of normalization including those that construct categories of race, class, able-bodiedness and age with the context of place, culture and time in researching experiences, discourses and identities related to the normalizing sexual order" (Filax, Sumara and Davis 2010:86). As 'Queer' is contentious and through its fluidity refuses to constrain itself, the use of a Queer theory approach encourages the researcher to analyse data at levels outside of everyday experience. The queering of what is normal reveals the arbitrariness of social categories (Shogam 1999) and I will extend this analysis to data collected to re-examine the cleavages I have encountered through ethnographic data collection. Through informing my research

through Queer Theory I aim to "illustrate the ways in which sex, sexualities and sexual identities are both influenced by and influence individual and/or collective experiences" (Filax, Sumara and Davis 2010:89). These approaches have fed into the formulation of research goals and questions which is explored further.

2.4 REFLEXIVITY

Strong ethnographical research relies on reflexivity and the thoughtful engagement of the researcher with both the data collection process and in the analysis of data. While reflexivity brings deeper understanding to both focus group and interview data, it is particularly salient in the context of this project with regard to the participant observation method of data collection and my status within the community being studied.

On carrying out ethnographical work Marcus (1998) notes that as ethnographers "we are always on the verge of activism" (1998: 122), in this project of course there is no distinction, I am both researcher and activist. While being so close to the experiences of the participants can be problematic it can also bring the researcher to conclusions they could potentially miss as outsiders to the activist process. As Frankham and MacRae note "through problematizing our interpretive processes, there is the potential for new thoughts to emerge that we can bring to bear on the research" (Frankham and MacRae 2010: 35). My position as a rurally based LGBT+ activist is reflected upon in conjunction with the subjective experiences of activists to build a picture of rural LGBT+ life. My own participation in a Midlands LGBT+ organisation has given me first-hand knowledge of the complexities of rural LGBT+ activism. Experiences I have had as an activist are similar to those of the participants in this study and through reflexivity I have learned to understand my own bias, values and perspectives and their impact on this research.

I believe it is important to acknowledge my position as an LGBT+ advocate, working to represent rural LGBT+ voices and as a researcher, exploring these LGBT+ voices. In speaking with participants of the study, I made them aware of my own status as both an activist and as someone who identifies as gay/Queer. This self-disclosure aims to encourage "authentic and intimate dialogue which [enables] both researcher and participants to reassess their own beliefs, preoccupations and attitudes" (Jenkins 2012: 374). A reflexive encounter gives scope to participants to speak more freely about issues that, with a heterosexual researcher, they maybe be hesitant to disclose as there may be a partial understanding of viewpoints, experiences or language.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) argue that the personal involvement of the researcher in the research material, and through critical analysis of interpretations reached by the researcher (by adopting a cognisance of the researcher's authority and position) can lead to qualitative research with richer data and analysis (2000: 2). I have analysed my own bias in relation to the data gathered and how to understand the experiences being communicated or observed with clarity. Through critical analysis and through constant reflective practice I have distanced myself when necessary and still have had the ability to bring a unique and intimate perspective of the Irish LGBT+ movement through my own activism with Mullingar Pride. There are ethical issues from being so close to the subject matter of research and this will be explored further.

2.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As LGBT+ people are identified as possibly 'vulnerable' by the Maynooth Social Ethics Research Committee, a number of considerations where taken into account when interviewing participants. Each participant was informed that they could refuse to participate at any time, even after the interview/focus group had started or even concluded. Participants were also informed that during an interview/focus-group, they could refuse to answer a particular question without having to withdraw from participating entirely.

The participant's real name is not used unless that participant has given explicit consent that their name can be used. Elite participants that work on a national platform, on LGBT+ issues, were the only participants use their real identifiers in the finished document, all other participants were anonymised automatically for example, all focus group members were automatically anonymised. While this means focus group participants are anonymous to those who read this study they are not anonymous to the other people in their community group as the three groups used as focus groups had formed previous to this study.

While Kaplowitz (2000) finds that focus groups do not tend towards the personal or sensitive topics the nature of the makeup of these groups and the groups previous relationships to each other prior to the focus group interview meant this was not always the case. While being LGBT+ is no longer the transgression it once was there was potential for participants who had experienced homophobia or transphobia in the past to become upset or stressed. To minimise any potential stress/distress of participants I focused the bulk of my in-depth interviews and focus-groups on people who are already publically engaging with LGBT+ organisations and on their experiences with those organisations. These individuals often

shared their own or others' experiences as part of their public outreach and activism to draw attention to the discrimination that LGBT+ people experience. I found that the participants had experience with dealing with sensitive topics, and with working with other professionals and researchers.

For some participants the experiences they had to recount were of difficult memories or of experiences in their lives that were troubling. These moments were predominately in focus group sessions. One positive aspect of using a focus group method of discussing these particular research questions was that the participants had already shared these difficult stories with their fellow activists in the process of being in movement. While I was prepared for eventualities where people may become upset I had not factored in the possibility that the other participants in the focus group could also form a source of comfort for upset participants. In my preparedness I had a list of organisations that could act as a support for each participant in case they felt they needed it. The following section looks more in-depth at the identifying of participants for this study.

2.6 SAMPLING: IDENTIFYING KEY ACTORS AND PARTICIPANT GROUPS

One of the first tasks in putting together a sample for participants, for both focus groups and elite interviews, was gaining a knowledge of the field. This study presented an opportunity to map the forms of organisation and community building among LGBT+ people in larger national and regional organisations as well as in smaller rural contexts. As well as the experiential data gathered from participants I was interested in establishing the relative capacity and influence of different groups and, as such, I conducted an organisational census and constructed a database of groups that self-identify as LGBT+. Using the database, I identified both the key actors in the field and the prevalence of locally based LGBT+ groups. This data base has in part acted as a sampling frame in identifying respondents.

Snowball sampling also played a key role in engaging with participants. From my own activism I have built a network of other LGBT+ activists. Leaning on my own networks I have come into contact with individuals who have become participants in this project or have connected me to participants.

The rationale for how the three focus groups where chosen was based on geography and to a lesser extent age and gender. The three where chosen to represent three different and distinct geographical locations while the also their make up's offered a varying degree of difference on gender and age lines.

Through the formulation of the movement 'census' and the activation of my own LGBT+ activist network a sample of individuals was drawn up. Both individuals and individuals who represented various groups were approached to take part in the study either as individuals or to encourage their group to participate in a focus group.

The recruitment of focus group members was done through purposeful snowball sampling. A non-randomised group of groups and individuals were targeted based on contacts I had made through my own activism work or through contacts made from interactions with participants. The ethos underpinning this work was one of an airing of a multiplicity of voices from within the LGBT+ community and so this methodological approach was pursued to give voice to contacts that have in the past been over looked in Irish research on the LGBT+ community. I will lay out how each individual/focus group were recruited in the following sections.

Individuals for elite interviewing were contacted directly or through a contact that was developed either through field work or through my own activism. Each recruitment procedure is detailed further in the corresponding sections on focus group and elite interview data collection.

2.7 METHODOLOGY OF DATA COLLECTION

In the following sections I will explore the three approaches I used in gather data for the project which include, as stated above, elite interviews, focus groups and participant observation. The recruitment process, the data collection process and any issues I encountered will be examined in the next sections.

2.7.1 FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were chosen to give a voice to activists working on LGBT+ issues in as naturalistic a setting as possible. While this data does not compare with data gathered through observation in the field the setting of having an already established group come together to discuss their experiences of LGBT+ activism does provide some elements of a natural setting. The people in the focus groups had all met previously, had all worked together on the "Yes Equality" campaign and all groups had mentioned that they did not have the opportunity to debrief or discuss that experience previous to the focus groups conducted for this project. For Morgan (1988) "If the great strength of participant observation, in comparison to focus groups, consists of more naturalistic observations, then its comparative weakness is the difficulty of locating and gaining access to settings in which a substantial set

of observations can be collected on the topic of interest" (1988: 16). The triangulation of elite interviewing, focus group data and participant observation in this project goes some way to alleviate this problem. This triangulation of data is also coupled with the unique make up of the focus groups which make the data collected richer and more informative.

All focus groups ran for about 2 hours and participants were not given any remuneration to participate. While participation was entirely voluntary the participants were very eager to participate, as noted above, they had not had the opportunity to discuss their experience of the referendum with other LGBT+ activists in any formalised way and saw this focus group as the opportunity to do that. All focus groups were audio recorded.

2.8 PROFILES OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

To offer context for the field work and data collection an overview of the work of the national organisations and LGBT+ groups is offered. Three groups participated in focus group interview while individuals representing six different LGBT+ organisations where interviewed. Finally throughout this project the researcher has participated in a LGBT+ group, based in the Midlands.

Data for this paper came from focus groups held in late 2016, facilitated by the researcher. One focus group was held in Castlebar Co. Mayo, with Equality Mayo directly after a vigil the group held for victims of the Orlando nightclub shooting. The vigil was held in the centre of the town while the focus group was held after in a hotel outside the town. The Longford focus group was held on a weekday evening, during one of the group's normal meeting times in the Longford town library. The third focus group was held in North Inner City Dublin on a weekday evening in a local pub. The following sections will give a brief profile of the focus groups.

The origins, strategies and engagement with 'Yes Equality' of Equality Mayo, Longford LGBT and the Dublin based LGBT+ canvass group will be set out here. This section will give the context of the groups origins, operations and interaction with 'Yes Equality' through exposition of the more important events in the development of the groups. The data for this section comes primarily from meetings conducted by the researcher with the committees and individuals from the groups prior to the focus groups interviews.

 For context there are no local branches of any national LGBT+ organisations in either Mayo or Longford. Both groups have mentioned they have had little to no engagement with

national organisations outside of the referendum context. The sense of urgency and purpose with which both groups work on their individual projects come from their sense of isolation. The understanding by group members that the onus is solely on them to create positive change for LGBT+ people in their localities is compounded by this feeling of remoteness from the national movement's key organisations. In the following sections I give a profile of both groups and then examine the preliminary findings. Groups will be profiled based on the preliminary meetings with their respective committees which will be followed by an examination of the preliminary findings of the focus group data from each group in Chapters 5,6 and 7.

2.8.1 EQUALITY MAYO

Equality Mayo is a reincarnation of another LGBT+ focused group 'TOST?' which was initiated by the South-West Mayo Development Company and Mayo County Council to create a community space for LGBT people in the county. 'TOST?' changed to Equality Mayo in 2015 prior to the marriage referendum, in which the group were highly active.

The original group, 'TOST?' (the Irish word for silence) was formed in 2014 when South-West Mayo Development Company (SWMDC), an EU financed community development initiative, approached Mayo County Council with a view to training local LGBT+ people around community organizing and community development. Through their own research SWMDC identified that there were no LGBT+ focused community spaces in the region. Through personal contacts the county council approached a number of individuals to participate in a training programme. The original group comprised of mainly ethnically white Irish cis-gendered women, between the ages of 40 and 60, who had experience of campaigning on LGBT issues previously but never in Mayo. The group were given training and support from the County Development Board and eventually moved into the Family Resource Centre on Linenhall Street, Castlebar, which they used as a base (Sarah Field Notes, Mayo Equality 2016).

'TOST?' worked on a mixture of visibility and community building projects which included; the lighting of a prominent bridge in Castlebar town in the rainbow colours for 'Social Inclusion Week'; the distribution of pride flags to local businesses; the hosting of debates on same sex marriage; social events for LGBT+ people in the town; talks on civil partnership and LGBT+ training for local businesses. The group received support from local business, local government representatives, some politicians representing the area at a national level and local mental health, family and youth organisations (Toner 2014).

Equality Mayo participated in various public events that had no specific gender or LGBT+ focus but were of cultural importance to the greater public of county Mayo. These events included the St. Patricks Day parade, the Mayo's Women's Mini Marathon and the "Pink Ribbon" bicycle race. The next focus group is also a rurally based group operating in Longford.

2.8.2 LONGFORD LGBT

Longford LGBT was founded by local LGBT+ people in the town in 2011. A public meeting held by North West Diversity brought the founding members together. North West Diversity was the regional part of 'LGBT Diversity', a project funded by Atlantic Philanthropies aimed at strengthening the LGBT+ sector in Ireland (Atlantic Philanthropies 2013). LGBT Diversity offered training to LGBT+ groups to build the capacity of these groups and connect them with existing services in organisations such as the HSE and local county councils. There were three full time workers in the project covering the North West, the Mid West and the South and the project lasted three years.

The group is currently made up of predominately ethnically white Irish cis-gender men aged between 40 and 60, who had little to no experience in activism, particularly LGBT+ activism, prior to joining the group. At certain points the group has had transgender members and ethnically non- Irish people of colour but these people were not present for the focus group discussion or any of the meetings I had with the group. As with Mayo Equality, a number of people in their 20's and 30's got involved in campaigning with the group during the marriage referendum. The group hold weekly meetings in the Longford town library and publish a weekly podcast of various LGBT+ and local issues.

Visibility within the local area is a large part of the work undertaken by Longford LGBT. The group have, since inception, participated in four St. Patricks Day parades in Longford and in the 2016 commemorative parade for the centenary of 1916. Longford LGBT have held flag raising ceremony's in conjunction with Longford County Council, where the LGBT+ Pride flag was flown in prominent public spaces. They have participated in local arts events, produce a weekly podcast and host their weekly meeting in the Longford town library. At one point the group had a number of trans members and so they ran information events around Trans issues. The group meet in a local library, the use of a space, which is public and still relatively private, gives the group the ability to be supportive of members away from incursions of people's privacy, sometimes connected to small town life. Likewise the ethos of the group to reach out to younger people, transgender people and ethnic minorities builds on the supportive nature of the group. Members see the group as both a safe space free from the

heteronormative pressures of rural life and a space to work on visibility and advocacy for LGBT+ people.

Longford LGBT members discussed their remoteness to LGBT+ services in relation to various national LGBT+ services. This disengagement from the broader LGBT+ community is a symptom of the marginalisation that rural dwellers feel.

2.8.3 DUBLIN FOCUS GROUP

The focus group interview with the members of a North Dublin based canvass group consisted of the lead members of the canvas group, all aged between 30 and 50 years old, three women and two men, all white and cis gender. The group members all lived on the North side of Dublin city and canvassed for YE in the areas they lived. The participants all indicated that they had been involved in activists work before, some being involved in university LGBT+ societies, some currently in work based LGBT+ networks and others participating in activism work as part of their employment in the community sector.

The group members had received training from YE in effective canvassing from locally based politicians and learned to map out areas and canvass these symmetrically. The participants received this training in the city centre based LGBT+ centre called the 'Outhouse', some participants also went to de briefing sessions in 'Outhouse' and received canvassing material from the centre. One participant, who was the canvass groups de facto leader, noted that she had large amounts of canvassing material (leaflets, badges etc.) and posters in her house in the run up to the referendum. The participants also noted how on numerous occasions they had large numbers of people who came to canvass with them and how at times the numbers were difficult to manage. This is all in contrast to the canvassing experience of both LGBT+ rural groups who had both low numbers for canvasses and low amounts of resources for canvassing.

2.8.4 RECRUITMENT

The three focus groups were put together in conjunction with key members of each group that were encountered through my activism work or through other participants in this study. The focus groups in both Longford and Dublin were initiated when I came into contact with key members of each group and discussed my research project. The geographical locations of both groups where important and once initial contact was made with gatekeepers a decision was made to peruse the focus group format with each group based on the geographical location of each group. The Mayo focus group was a suggestion from a

respondent who had worked on the 'Yes Equality' campaign and, like with the other two groups, a decision was made to proceed with a focus group interview once initial contact was made with gatekeepers from the group.

2.8.5 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND MODERATOR INVOLVEMENT

The focus groups were planned at times that suited the participants and were held in sites chosen by the groups – a hotel function room on a Saturday, a library meeting room on a weekday evening and a pub on a weekday evening. A schedule of questions was drawn up to reflect the themes of the project, these included questions on:

- The formation of the group
- The work of the group
- The experience of activism during the referendum campaign
- The interaction the groups have with national organisations
- Reflections on being LGBT+
- The future issues and challenges the group see for the LGBT+ community.

Following Templeton's (1976) advice on interview schedule formation I kept direct questions to a minimum to maximise group interaction and minimise the role of the moderator. This approach worked well and there was a lively discussion in all groups around the topics. The majority of my work as a moderator was to encourage quieter participants to engage and to draw out some of their insights of what was being discussed.

2.8.6 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Irish LGBT+ community is small and every effort has been made to protect their identities but participants have been informed that due to the nature of the community, while every effort has been made their identities could be discovered. A discussion was had with each focus group where I gave the group members the option to mask the name of their group for an added level of protection. For Equality Mayo and Longford LGBT+ while this measure was welcomed the group felt that their broader aims of visibility within their communities would be served better through including the group name. The Dublin Canvas group were happy to have the group's name included in the study as the group has disbanded, however I chose to give the group a broader name to give the participants increased confidentiality.

2.8.7 INTERVIEW PROCESS

At the outset of each interview I introduced myself to the participants and gave a brief description of the project. The participants where then given time to read over an

information sheet about the project and sign a consent form, which I talked the participants through. At this point I answered any questions about the project or about the consent form. Once the recording equipment was turned on I asked each participant to give an opening statement where they talked about themselves and their involvement with the group they were in. This normally led to a brief description of how the groups were established and formed the basis for the next round of questions which was about the formation of the group. I progressed through the topics and the leading questions and gave the participants as much space as possible to discuss the topics. In the Mayo focus group there was a twenty-minute break at the halfway point while the other two focus groups where done in a two-hour block. As stated previous the majority of my interventions where to ensure all voices where heard or to clarify a point. Once the focus groups were completed I stayed with the group for up to an hour discussing the project and answering any questions they had. I wrote up field notes the following day. At the end of each session before I left I thanked the participants and urged them to contact me if they had any queries around the project or their participation.

2.8.8 FOCUS GROUP MAKE UP

The three focus groups were set up due to their geographical location but also contained a mix of ages and genders. All focus group members were white and cis-gender. Three participants were UK citizens while the rest were Irish and all but one participant was resident in Ireland at the time of the recordings. The individual participants from each focus group consisted of the following:

Equality Mayo – All the participants but one, where female cis-gendered, the one male participant was in his 20's. The women ranged in age from early 20's to mid-50's with the majority of the women being over 45 years old. There were 8 participants in this focus group. Table 2.1 give the details of the pseudonym, age and gender identity of the Equality Mayo participants.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender
Rose	20-30	Cis Female
Margaret	50-60	Cis Female
Sarah	50-60	Cis Female
Paul	20-30	Cis Male
Karen	20-30	Cis Female
Emily	30-40	Cis Female
Pat	50-60	Cis Female
Bridie	50-60	Cis Female
Ann	50-60	Cis Female
Frances	50-60	Cis Female

Table 2.1 Equality Mayo Participants

Longford LGBT+ - All the participants were male cis-gendered with an age range from early 30's to early 60's. The majority of the participants were over the age of 45. There were 7 participants in this focus group. Table 2.2 gives a breakdown the characteristics of the Longford LGBT participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender
John	60-70	Cis Male
Mick	30-40	Cis Male
Paddy	20-30	Cis Male
Richard	50-60	Cis Male
Henry	50-60	Cis Male
James	40-50	Cis Male
Paraic	50-60	Cis Male

Table 2.2 Longford LGBT Participants

Dublin Canvas Group – This group contained three women and two men who were all cis-gendered. The age range of this group was 30's to late 40's. There were 5 participants in this focus group. Table 2.3 gives a breakdown of the participants of the Dublin Focus Group.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender
Michelle	40-50	Cis Female
Ciara	40-50	Cis Female
Síle	30-40	Cis Female
Tom	50-60	Cis Male
Patrick	50-60	Cis Male

Table 2.3 Dublin Focus Group Participants

2.8.9 LIMITATIONS

As mentioned above one of the major limitations of a focus group can be the unnatural setting it provides for participants, this was mitigated somewhat by the participants previous connections through their activism work. These focus groups are however limited in regard the people represented, there are no Transgender individuals, people from immigrant communities and very few participants between the ages of 18 and 25. Some of these limitations are mitigated through the elite interview process but it does mean there is a gap in knowledge that could be insightful to greater understand both of youth and Trans involvement in the movement.

2.9 ELITE INTERVIEWS

The participants who have contributed in the form of elite interviews were chosen to represent both the national organisations and those who are key activists in the community. There were 4 interviews with individuals who are or were involved in organisations with a national brief and one participant work with a brief to cover LGBT+ group in the West, North West and Midlands. For this study, the movement leaders refer to those who have an active role in the management, direction or daily work of a LGBT+ organization. I have identified a number of groups including GLEN, TENI and NLGBT+F where I have interviewed key individuals. To give context of the major LGBT+ organisations operating in Ireland around the time of data collection an overview of these groups follows, Table 2.4 offers a visual representation of these groups.

Organisation Name	Full Name	Year Founded	Current Status	Objective	Noteworthy inform
BeLonG To	BeLonG To	2003	Still operating	LGBT+ Youth Services	24 youth groups in op... in various locations
GCN	Gay Community News	1988	Still operating	Community Magazine	Published by the NXF ... with editorial indepen...
GLEN	Gay and Lesbian Equality Network	1988	Closed 2017	Changing social policy to reflect LGBT+ people	Main driver of civil pa... and key player in YE c...
LGBT Diversity	LGBT Diversity	2010	Closed 2013	Focused on building the capacity of local LGBT+ groups	Funded by Atlantic Ph...
LGBT Noise	LGBT Noise	2007	Last protest was in 2015, social media accounts are sporadically still in operation	Grass roots campaign mainly focused on marriage rights but included other LGBT+ causes.	Opposed civil partners...
Marriage Equality	Marriage Equality	2007	2015	Sole focus was to broaden marriage rights for same sex couples, co-founders of YE campaign.	Group grew from KAL ... Ran YE campaign with ... and the Irish Council f... Civil Liberties.
National LGBT Helpline	National LGBT Helpline	2010	Still operating	Helpline for LGBT+ people	Founded through ama... locally based helplines...

NXF (National LGBT Federation)	National LGBT Federation	1979	Still Operating	Publishes GCN, advocates on LGBT+ issues.	Oldest LGBT+ national organisation still in op
Shout Out	Shout Out	2013	Still Operating	Delivers anti homophobic and transphobic bullying workshops in 2nd level schools.	Entirely volunteer run
TENI	Trans Equality Network Ireland	2006	Still Operating	Support and advocacy for the Trans community	

Table 2.4 National Irish LGBT+ organisations that are referenced in this project.

2.9.1 IRISH LGBT+ MOVEMENT ORGANISATIONS

Taken from a movement census conducted in 2015 for this project the following will give an overview of key organisations in the Irish movement operating at the time of writing or who have just recently closed to give context of what services are being provided. A number of elite interviews were carried out with individuals from each organisation and this is indicated when applicable.

GLEN

GLEN (The Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) was founded in 1988 by with a view to change Irish public and social policy to be more LGBT+ inclusive (GLEN 2015). The organisation played key roles in the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993, the introduction of civil partnership in 2010 and in the YE campaign to support the introduction of same sex marriage in 2015 (GCN 2015). The organisation primarily played a lobbying role in efforts to influence policy, however, GLEN also ran mental health, sexual health and work place inclusivity programs. GLEN closed in 2017 under accusations of workplace bullying and mismanagement

of the charities funds (Cullen 2017). Joe (pseudonym) who worked for the charity around the time of the YE campaign has been interviewed for this research.

NXF AND GCN

NXF (the National LGBT Federation) has been in operation since 1979 making it the oldest LGBT+ organisation in Ireland (NXF 2017). At the groups inception they rented a space in Temple bar, Dublin that became the Hirschfeld Centre, Ireland's first LGBT community centre (ibid). The centre became a hub for LGBT+ life and activism in Dublin in the 1980's. The centre burned down in a fire in 1987. The NXF have produced a number of publications since its foundation and the GCN (Gay Community News) was started by the NXF in 1988 and continues to be published today (GCN 2017). The GCN is a mix between a lifestyle magazine and a community newsletter. The GCN is a free magazine, distributed nationally and has editorial independence from the NXF. Today the NXF is run by a small volunteer led board, the mainstay of NXF's work consists of hosting the GALAS, an all-Ireland awards ceremony for LGBT+ individuals and community groups and supporting the work of the GCN. Brian Finnegan, the current editor of the GCN and Ciaran Ó hUltachain Co- Chairperson of the NXF have been interviewed for this research.

TENI

TENI (Trans Equality Network, Ireland) is an advocacy and support organisation for trans people and their families (TENI 2017). The organisation offers support services for trans people coming out or transitioning as well as advocating for more trans inclusive public and social policies. The organisation is made up of a volunteer led board and paid staff working on areas such as support, education and health. Former CEO of TENI Broden Giambrone was interview for this research.

BELONG TO

BeLonG To is a LGBT+ youth service that aims to support young people aged 14 to 23 across the country. The organisation currently works with 1,500 young people through 17 different groups nationwide (BeLonG To 2017). The service works on areas such as health, mental health, coming out and supporting parents.

Interviews has also been conducted with Greg, the Chairperson of a North West based LGBT+ group, Hayley Fox Roberts, Former West, North West and Midlands Coordinator of 'LGBT Diversity' and Joe [pseudonym]who worked in a national LGBT+ organisation. Finally an

overview of the LGBT+ group, Mullingar Pride, where participant observation data was taken from will be outlined.

2.9.2 RECRUITMENT

From the survey of the national originations that was done at the outset of the project I could identify the key groups that were working in the field and I aimed to have respondents to represent each group. Unfortunately, it was not possible to have each organisation represented but broadly speaking the major Irish LGBT+ organisations are represented here. A second grouping of interviews was done with people working on more localised LGBT+ issues or in smaller less local groups. This decision was made to reflect the miso level of activism between more grass roots and national organisations. All individual interviewees were approached directly or through the interaction with a participant that had been previously interviewed.

Those interviewed for this project include:

- Brian Finnegan, Current editor of the GCN (Gay Community News)
- Hayley Fox Roberts, Former West, North West and Midlands Coordinator of LGBT+ Diversity
- Broden Giambrone, Chief Executive of TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland)
- Ciaran Ó hUltachain, Co-Chairperson of the National LGBT+ Federation (NXF)
- Joe [pseudonym] former staff member of a national LGBT+ organisation
- Greg [pseudonym] Chairperson of a North West LGBT+ group

2.9.3 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

In focusing on what questions to ask participants a semi-formal interview schedule has been used to give flexibility to both the researcher and the participants to discuss issues that the participants deem to be important. The starting point for both elite interviews and focus group interviews has been an interview schedule designed for open ended answers and discussion.   The schedule has been drawn up to reflect both the international research on the LGBT+ movement but also local concerns. The historical analysis of the movement's development, as seen in Chapter 2, has informed the more local elements of the interview schedule for participants.

Participants were asked to discuss their role in the organisation they worked or work in and what the organisation does more broadly. They were then asked about the relationship between their organisation and the LGBT+ community. Following on from this the researcher

read a number of criticisms that have been levelled at the movement to the participants. They were then asked to reflect on these criticisms and give their opinion of the critiques. The list was compiled by the research from an examination of international literature on the LGBT+ movement and from the historical analysis of the Irish movement compiled for this project. The last parts of the interview centre on the participants feelings on being LGBT+ and where they see the movement going in the future.

2.9.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

For participants that were interviewed as elite interviewees an option was given to either include their name or not. For many their names are already associated with their positions and they are well known with the community so remaining anonymous could be difficult. This in mind, any participant who did wish to remain anonymous was accommodated and it was made clear to them that while my best efforts were made, again as above, the nature of such a small community can not mean a complete guarantee.

2.10 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation has been incorporated in the methodological design of this project to triangulate the experiences of both elites within the movement and constituent members of the movement with my own experiences as a researcher and activist. My own biographical narrative would prove important in exploring the dynamics of the LGBT+ movement in Ireland through my work with 'Mullingar Pride' – a LGBT+ group I helped form in 2016. Having moved to the town in 2015 and finding there were no real queer spaces or groups (with the exception of some online activity through social media). Having experience of community organising I decided to bring people together in order to create a dedicated LGBT+ space in the town. The initial impulse here was not academically motivated but more personal, not being from the town I wished to grow a friend network as well as work on issues like LGBT+ visibility.

While the initial impulses to start a LGBT+ group in the town had no academic links, it became apparent that through this activism I would have access to both participants for this study and have a vantage point to engage with national actors. I started to keep a field work journal of my interactions with both other LGBT+ people in the locality documenting my day to day dealings around forming the group. Establishing a rapport with local LGBT+ people was not a challenge having been involved in LGBT+ activism abroad, having a background in

community work and as there was a perceived need for some form of queer space in the town.

The first meetings were with people I encountered through a social media group. These initial meetings resulted in two social nights in the town organised almost entirely by me. I realised that those I met initially were not interested in developing community structures or working on visibility issues but solely in attending social events. Through the first more public social event I organised I encountered people who were interested in both the social and community building aspects of LGBT+ organising. A committee was formed with these people. This small group had similar aspirations to me which were primarily to create a dedicated queer space where socialisation and activism would take equal president. The first project for the group came in the form of a vigil for the victims of the Orlando shooting in June 2015.

One of the key advantages for me as an activist in this small town setting was my own outsider status, as I was not from the town and had only lived there for a few months. The outsider status I held was embedded within an insider status of having the same LGBT+ identity as the participants. As an unknown to those within the local LGBT+ population I had initial success in my attempts in organising events with good attendance and a favourable reception by local media. However, as I continued to organise events the interested in the group's work decreased. As an Irish LGBT+ person I had the advantage sharing many similar experiences as the participants and my motivations for starting a local LGBT+ group were never questioned, in fact once the group started holding events many attendees commented on the need for such a queer space in the town.

The majority of the events organised by Mullingar Pride are social and as I am both an organiser and a participant in these events I have an excellent vantage point to observe the local LGBT+ population. Another advantage of being at the organisational end of the group means I can critically analyse the opportunities a local group has to interact with national groups and how these interactions play out.

The committee members of Mullingar Pride where informed formally about the research project and I asked their permission for me to include our interactions as data. I introduced my research work to the committee members in our first formal meeting and how I would use my observations, with their permission, in the final written work. I sought both committee members agreement individually and gave them time to ask questions, both were

happy were asked to sign a consent form. For other people I have encountered through the group I have informed them about my work and how I am including my observations from Mullingar Pride but this is not done in a formal sense. The observations in this research are recorded so that no one individual can be identified. While overt observation was the technique used in describing the committee work of the group for those outside of this agreement the work of Mullingar Pride is used as an indicator of how I feel the Irish LGBT+ movement is engaging with its constituents and what, from my work in the group, I can see as issues for "regular" Irish LGBT+ people. Individuals who engaged with Mullingar Pride have not been identified formally, informally or anonymously and all mentions of the group are done from my observations and to reflect the work of the group broadly.

2.11 CODING

The data for this project was coded using MAXQDA, a software tool used to code qualitative data sets. The data from the field notes, focus groups and elite interviews where first coded under the topics of community, lived experience, movement and the YE campaign. These topics where then re-examined to be broken down into more specific codes. This second reading of the data and the formation of the codes under the initial topics became the formal coding system which was the foundation of the analytical framework for the project. The codes were analysed for convergence and divergence across the three data streams and themes where analysed for substantive significance. While significance is important, as the data set is small, the understandings of participants were determined to be of equal weight to those themes that emerged throughout the data set. In cases where one participant has expressed something that has not presented itself in other parts of the data, this has been analysed in view of the broader literature around LGBT+ movements and activism to understand its significance. Finally the codes have been arranged into three categories looking at; the lived experience of Irish LGBT+, the YE campaign for LGBT+ activists and finally the impact of YE and the current activists landscape for Irish LGBT+ activists. These three categories form the four findings chapters of the thesis.

2.12 LIMITATIONS

I acknowledge that the small sample set for this project limits the generalizability of these findings to other LGBT+ movements and communities. However, when this project is read in conjunction with other examinations of LGBT+ movements and communities there is a high degree of transferability of the projects findings once examined with the literature from

Chapters 2 and 3. One of the key advantages of this project however is the placement of the research in the heart of a movement and a community in which they are researching. A key point of discussion from the chapter focuses on the ethical considerations it brings follow.

2.12.1 ETHICALLY CONSIDERATIONS TOWARDS PARTICIPANTS

As stated above the community in question, the Irish LGBT+ community is small and there is the possibility for individuals to be identified even after anonymisation. Certain participants have also made negative remarks about either other participants or about organisations that could, in theory be traced back to them. This has left me, as a researcher with data that while rich in insights could be attributed to a participant. I have weighted my responsibilities to these individuals against my desires to represent the lived realities of those I have encountered and aimed to communicate the latter while keeping the integrity of the former.

While this can also be a time consuming process it does also give perspective into what the project is about and how it can in the long run be of assistance to the participants and the wider LGBT+ community as a whole.

The following chapter looks at the historical development of the same sex marriage movement in Ireland and is supported by Appendix 1 which gives an overview of the early Irish LGBT+ movement for context. This is followed by a literature review of scholarly work drawn from social movement literature, rural geographies and LGBT+ studies.

3. The Development of the Yes Equality Campaign.

This chapter will focus on the development of the 'Yes Equality' (YE) campaign which advocated for a 'yes' vote in the 2015 referendum to introduce marriage rights for same sex couples in Ireland. This chapter aims to situate the campaign in the broader Irish LGBT+ movement and offer context for the analysis of this projects findings. Appendix 1 sets out the development of the Irish LGBT+ movement from the 1960's until the 2000's and outlines the development of many of the social movement organisations (SMO's) within the movement. This chapter follows on chronologically from Appendix 1. Knowledge of the movement's development that illustrates the critical actors, groups and campaigns offers an entry point to explore the data gathered on the contemporary movement. This chapter will chart the development of the campaign, starting at the KAL case in 2003 to the passing of the referendum in 2015 and some developments beyond. As demonstrated in Appendix 1 the movement from the 1960's has been directed by a small collection of academics and elites, primarily based in Dublin. There has been a focus on the incremental gaining of rights and on professionalism. The development of the movement demonstrates how the YE campaign did not emerge in isolation but as a product of decades of LGBT+ campaigning in Ireland focused on litigation, political lobbying and some community development. This chapter gives context around how the YE debates were framed, which major social movement organisations where key players, the predominately urban centric nature of the campaign and sets out how the counter movement campaigned during the referendum. The chapter ends with an overview of some of the contemporary issues for the LGBT+ movement in Ireland.

3.1 The KAL Case

KAL is an acronym for Katherine (Zappone) and Anna Louise (Gilligan) who were a lesbian couple who married in Canada in 2003. They sought to have their relationship recognised by the Revenue Commissioners, in 2004, for tax reasons. The Revenue refused to change their marital status and the couple decided to challenge the decision in the High Court through a judicial review (Gilligan and Zappone 2008).

The women were both well-known civil society leaders, having started a women's training centre in a working class area of Dublin. Gilligan was working as an academic in *Trinity College Dublin* and the case garnered a lot of media attention. Katherine O'Donnell, Director of Woman's Studies in *UCD*, in speaking about the couple said:

They were ideal poster girls, which is very important when you are going for a legal case. So, they were perfect in that regard, and they were able to speak to Middle Ireland (O'Donnell 2014).

Like David Norris before them (See A1.4) the women's middle class credentials, as well as their ability to convey themselves and their aspirations for the case expertly to the media, attracted a lot of support. At the judicial review final hearing in 2006, Justice Dunne of the High Court ruled that there was no provision under the 1937 Constitution to broaden the definition of marriage under Article 41 and the case was lost. However for Zappone and Gilligan and for the wider movement the idea of same-sex marriage was now firmly in the public mind and the debate had started. Grainne Healy, Marriage Equality Chairwoman, in speaking about the women said:

Their case and how they comported themselves really lit the fuse under the marriage equality movement (Healy 2014:76).

Like Norris and Lynch from the IRGM in the 1980's (as outlined in Appendix 1), Zappone and Gilligan represented a middle class urbane respectable queer person, with reasoned arguments and the support of civil society groups. This respectability gave the women and their cause legitimacy and progressed the idea of same sex marriage as a reasonable target for LGBT+ people to aspire too. This middle class, Dublin focus of movement goals predominates the early stages of the formation of 'Yes Equality' as we will see further.

3.2 AGITATION FOR MARRIAGE RIGHTS BEGINS

In 2004, Senator David Norris (serving in Seanad Éireann since 1987) had tabled a Civil Partnerships Bill to establish civil partnership for same-sex couples. The Bill was debated in 2005 but was not successful. It did, however, prompt other political parties and groupings to formulate a stance on the issue (Mullally 2014).

In 2005, the then Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell put together a working group, headed by former Progressive Democrats (PD) TD Anne Colley, to look at the issue of civil partnerships and relationship recognition. On speaking about the working group, then GLEN Chairperson, Kieran Rose said:

Michael McDowell set up the Colley Working Group and then it went native. The Colley Working Group ignored his [the ministers] parameters and came out for civil marriage (Rose 2014:72).

The Colley Report was shelved. The result of the KAL case was understood by the political establishment that same-sex marriage would be unconstitutional if implemented through legislation. The Minister also ensured that the Labour Party's Private Members bill in 2006, aiming to introduce Civil Unions, was voted down. GLEN had thrown their weight behind the Labour bill seeing it as the most tangible option open to them to introduce relationship protections at the time. Brian Sheehan, former GLEN chairperson, in speaking about the Civil Unions Bill said:

> *In a sense GLEN had to turn on a sixpence because here was a real concrete offer that was serious in legislative intent, serious in consequential intent…* (Sheehan 2014: 78).

This backing of civil partnerships over full civil marriage would cause tensions within the movement.

3.3 THE FORMATION OF MARRIAGE EQUALITY AND LGBT NOISE

GLEN's relationship with the state elites was perceived as problematic for more radical elements of the LGBT+ community. The invitation that was extended to the then Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell, to speak at the launch of the 2005 LGBT+ film festival - GAZE, by GLEN and GAZE Chairperson Sheehan, was a microcosm of this difficult juggling act of engaging with politicians while keeping a community focus . Hugh Linehan writing in the *Irish Times* about the launch outlined that the:

> *online bulletin boards and discussion forums of gay community groups have been buzzing with debate and argument over whether McDowell is an appropriate choice to launch this year's festival. There has been talk of egg and tomato throwing, organised protests and boycotts, while one member of the festival committee has resigned in protest at the invitation* (Linehan 2005).

There were protests (no fruit was thrown) and resignations but, more broadly, the incident demonstrated the division between those willing to work closely with elites and make incremental changes to relationship laws and those who were willing to be more disruptive and look for the larger goal – same-sex marriage. Around this period two organisations formed that represented these latter attitudes – Marriage Equality and LGBT Noise.

LGBT Noise was a response to what the organisers felt was a lack of active and visible activism around the civil partnership/same-sex marriage issue. The group was formed in the wake of

the failed Labour Party Bill in 2007 and the aim was to be vocal, visible and non-hierarchical. The group ran into difficulty early on, firstly in the lack of a clear hierarchy and secondly with LGBT+ community apathy towards the issues. Una McKevitt was one of the founders, she reflects on the start:

> *Mostly I just remember the tyranny of structurelessness….The clashing. The clashes. The meetings of clashing personalities*. (McKevitt 2014:122).

All the LGBT Noise founding members spoke about the difficulty in getting people enthused about the project. One founder Lisa Connell remarked about the issue:

> *One of our biggest jobs in, I would say, the first year of Noise was to convince our own community that this was something worth fighting for* (Connell, 2014:123).

Following on from their work on the KAL case, some of the team supporting the couple formed what became Marriage Equality. Initially fundraising for the KAL case, Grainne Healy, then Chair of the National Women's Council along with other volunteers, started to look at strategy and tactics for a broader push for same-sex marriage. Initially, the group had broad support from other LGBT+ groups (GLEN, NXF and LGBT Noise) as well as seed funding from Atlantic Philanthropies (Mullally 2014). Marriage Equality sought to win hearts and minds by telling personal stories of real LGB people looking for equality under the constitution's article 40 relating to marriage. Moninne Griffith took over the communications strategy:

> *It was always about raising visibility. We knew that talking about the issue of marriage equality in the abstract academic human right equality sense – nobody connects with that except other activists and other people in the sector. So it was about the human stories* (Griffith, 2014: 93).

LGBT Noise and Marriage Equality became the public face of the campaign while GLEN continued to work behind the scenes on civil partnership which would lead to a further rift.

3.4 Tension caused by Civil Partnership and Civil Marriage

By 2008 LGBT Noise was starting to raise awareness of same-sex marriage within the LGBT+ community. A blog post written in defence of Noise's work by activist and Drag artist Rory O'Neill/Panti Bliss entitled "No More Mr. Nice Gay" both chastised the community for their lack of interest and praised LGBT Noise for their initiative. The blog post made an impact with

a community that had, up until that point, been muted on the issue. Eloise McInerney, one of LGBT Noise's founders:

> *Panti had done her righteous angry blog, which really finally I think galvanised people, I think it was a snowball moment really where everything changed* (McInerney 2014:126).

Marriage Equality published "Making the Case For Marriage Equality" in July 2008 and this document set out their stall on the issues and why civil partnership was not an adequate solution for LGB people (Marriage Equality 2008). With Marriage Equality pushing for civil marriage and LGBT Noise garnering more and more support, GLEN started to be scrutinised by those within the community. Marie Mulholland of the *Equality Authority* sets out the LGBT+ communities' perception of GLEN:

> *GLEN was seen as a bunch of nice, white, middle-class boys who had friends in high places and behaved with, what came across as quite a degree of arrogance…..to the community,* [they] *didn't have any kind of openness about the activities* (Mulholland 2014:102).

GLEN, having spent over a decade campaigning and advocating on behalf of the LGBT+ community, had both their own networks formed and a strategy to achieve results that had worked well in the past. They had amassed a knowledge of campaigning from previous campaigns, such as decriminalisation of homosexuality and favoured an incremental approach to winning rights. Brian Sheehan, the Director of GLEN, laid out the groups positions on civil partnerships:

> *…it's GLEN's MO, we knew an incrementalist approach isn't a bad approach necessarily. We knew we had to build over time both political and Irish public support by presenting every win as a win for the Irish people, not a victory for the 'gays', if you like* (Sheehan 2014: 108).

On the lead up to the 2007 general election GLEN was working with the major political parties to get a commitment for civil partnership in their political manifestos. This behind the scenes approach and a lack of gender balance was alienating GLEN from certain parts of the LGBT+ community. Dr Ann Louise Gilligan, the AL in the KAL case, noted:

> *…if we engage in a gender analysis of the strategy for civil partnership, it was absolutely male led* (Gilligan, 2014:103).

There was also a fear from GLEN that the increased push for civil marriage would jeopardise the civil partnership bill. On the tensions arising from Marriage Equality insistence that civil partnership was not enough, Monnie Griffin remarked:

> *I think they [GLEN] got pissed off with us and I think we certainly – there were meetings; we were summoned to meetings and asked to shut up, asked to tone things down* (Griffin 2014:105).

The rumblings were kept, as much as possible, within the activist movement. A feeling that damage would be done to the movement if they were to be aired publicly, however, did not go away.

3.5 THE INTRODUCTION OF CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Fianna Fáil (FF) were re-elected in the 2007 general election, GLEN lobbied hard to have civil partnership included in the programme for government and found a champion in the Green Party. A commitment to civil partnership was made in the programme for government and GLEN started working with the Department of Justice on making it a reality. Ciarán Ó Cuinn was an advisor to the then Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern:

> *No other organisation in the whole LGBT area ever made contact. Never picked up the phone. Never emailed. Never called the whole way through. It's strange but it's true…..* (Ó Cuinn 2014:145).

Ciarán Cuffe, a former Green party TD, didn't find it strange that GLEN was the only LGBT+ group interacting with the government but was unhappy with the rest of the movement organisations' opposition to civil partnership:

> *…I was very frustrated by that* [a lack of lobbying of TD's by LGBT+ groups], *because I said it very directly to Grainne Healy in Marriage Equality and I just felt even the other groups – the Noise group were big into having great demonstrations outside the Dáil gates. That's not how lobbying works… I was frustrated by the public manifestations that weren't grounded on the same amount of back -room activity. And I think GLEN felt the same* (Cuffe 2014:139).

The demonstrations Cuffe was speaking about were the LGBT Noise 'March for Marriage', a demonstration which would become an annual event. The first march was in 2009 and had a very large turnout. The LGBT+ community were also becoming more informed about civil

partnership and how it would differ from full marriage rights. Information evenings were being held in gay bars and community spaces as well as on online forums. The 2009 Pride march in Dublin had a very political feel with one LGBT Noise demonstrator ripping the civil partnership bill up in front of the crowd. The act was quite divisive among the community but LGBT Noise founder Eloise McInerney was unrepentant:

> *I could see why some people, supporters of civil partnership might have been offended and seen it as attacking rights that were very badly needed by certain couples, or that we were attacking the great work that had been done by previous campaigners….We would stay by the fact that we believed that we needed a strong rhetoric to really show that this wasn't going to be enough for us* (McInerney 2014:155).

While the discontent with the bill was noted by the leaders of GLEN, they continued their work on having the civil partnership bill passed into law.

In July 2010 the Civil Partnership Act was passed by both houses of the Oireachtas and came into effect on the 1st of January 2011. The act, although similar to marriage in many ways, did not have any protections for LGB headed families. It afforded no rights of civil partners to guardianship of their partners naturally born or adopted children (Ryan 2014a). The Bill's passage through the houses was not smooth as a FF backbenchers revolt had to be quelled and Senator David Norris denounced the Bill as nothing more than a dog licence (he did however vote in favour of it), all set against the backdrop of LGBT+ protests outside the gates of the Dáil. The passing of the Bill had mixed reactions. Minister for Justice, Dermot Ahern described the Bill as:

> *"one of the most important pieces of civil rights legislation to be enacted since independence.*" (Irish Times 2010).

However, same-sex marriage campaigners did not lose anytime in pointing out the deficiencies they saw in the new law. The introduction of civil partnership for same sex couples demonstrates growing divisions within the Irish LGBT+ movement over tactics used by the larger SMO's, particularly the incremental approach of GLEN in attaining rights. These divisions lead to the foundations of the YE campaign as will be demonstrated further.

3.6 THE GROUNDWORK FOR CIVIL MARRIAGE IS LAID

In February 2011, the coalition government of Fianna Fáil and the Green Party lost the 2011 general election and were replaced by a coalition made up of Fine Gael (FG) and the Labour Party (RTE 2016). While the focus of the new government was firmly on the economy, the programme for government also included a Constitutional Convention[4] which would look at six specific areas, one of these being same sex marriage. The Labour Party had campaigned during the election for a referendum on the issue but through the programme for government talks they had to settle for having the issue as one of the areas explored by the convention.

The Convention was formally set up in July 2012 with Tom Arnold, CEO of development charity Concern, as its chairperson. The issues of same sex marriage was heard in March 2013 with GLEN, Marriage Equality, the ICCL (Irish Council of Civil Liberties), the Iona Institute (a Catholic Church lobby group discussed further), the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference and the Knights of Columbanus all invited to speak. The convention was held over a weekend.

GLEN, the *ICCL* and Marriage Equality came together to make a joint presentation to the Assembly. Children, familial rights and guardianship where the main issues for both those supporting and opposed to inserting marriage rights for same sex into the constitution. The LGBT+ groups invited two children from LGB headed families to speak as part of their presentation and this had a major impact on the delegates. (Healy, Sheehan and Whelan 2016). Those opposed to same sex marriage presenters focused on the status quo being maintained as this would be in the best interests of children. The presentation of two heterosexual children of LGB headed families is an example of the LGBT+ SMO's strategy of homogenising and sanitising LGBT+ lives to cater to a heterosexual audience.

79 out of 100 delegates voted in favour of asking the government to introduce marriage for same sex couples while 81 delegates voted in favour of revised laws on parenting to reflect LGB headed families. Legal scholar Tobin (2016), in his examination of the legal and political context for the convention and the subsequent referendum, has described the process "as a

---

[4] The convention would be an assembly of voters drawn from the electoral register (66 people) as well as a mix of elected representatives from both the Oireachtas and the Northern Irish Assembly. The convention heard from a collection of interest groups on each of the topics they had to discuss. The convention looked at the abolition of the Seanad, the reduction of the presidential term from seven years to five, the issue of same-sex marriage, and the role of women in the home, among other issues. (Irish times 2011).

crude but effective method of legalizing same-sex marriage" (2016: 115). He chastised the government for taking the decision as there was no clear indication that the Supreme Court would shoot down the notion that marriage was just for different sex couples. There was no political will, according to Tobin, to tackle the problem through legislation as there was fear of a political backlash and the political parties formed and hid behind the convention. Tobin also notes that:

> *The referendum process was crude because placing the rights of a minority group in the hands of the majority seems almost ludicrous…, if the majority had voted against the measure gay and lesbian citizens would undoubtedly have felt a profound sense of rejection* (2016: 116).

We can see that for Irish LGBT+ SMO's the opportunity context was difficult however over time their activism and the economic crisis and austerity provided an opening for the political establishment to support a referendum. That support was in part made possible through the unthreatening version of LGBT+ lives that was presented before during and after the campaign. Tobin (2016) also talks about the destabilising effects some of the oppositional groups framing had on the 'Yes Equality' campaign. Some of these groups and their formation will be explored further.

3.7 THE IRISH COUNTER MOVEMENT TO LGBT+ RIGHTS

For further context it is necessary to take stock of those operating against the introduction of LGBT+ rights. The Catholic Church, as stated at the start of this chapter, has had huge influence in the development of Irish social policy since the formation of the state. However, their influence has been in decline since the 1980s. The church still comments on issues of public policy today but the majority of campaigning around issues the Church is opposed to is done by lobby groups that are not directly affiliated to the church. While some pro-Catholic anti-choice groups formed in the early nineties around the X Case on abortion, namely Youth Defence and The Pro Life Campaign (Irish Times, 1992), the majority of resistance to LGBT+ rights legislation has come from the Iona Institute.

The Iona Institute describes its work as promoting:

> *the place of marriage and religion in society. Our starting point in debates about the family is that children deserve the love of their own mother and father whenever possible* (Iona Institute 2014).

Its director is religious affairs correspondent with the Irish Independent, David Quinn, and has a Catholic Bishop and priest as patrons. The organisation is publically opposed to same sex civil partnership, same sex marriage, same sex parenting, abortion under any circumstance, surrogacy and promotes the freedom of religious expression. Throughout the public debates on civil partnership and same sex marriage, Iona and those affiliated to it have been given a platform to speak out against new legal provisions for LGBT+ people. They have been prominent on both national and local airwaves as well as in print to give balance to the debates (Sheridan 2012). The majority of civil society groups involved in the campaign were in favour of the amendment. As broadcasters are required to give a balance of opinions during referendums, Iona was given many opportunities to express their opinions in broadcast media on the topic of same sex marriage and adoption; this was cited by participants of this study as particularly damaging for LGBT+ people and particularly for the mental health of LGBT+ people.

Iona and some smaller organisations formed the counter movement to what would become 'Yes Equality' and their work galvanised the resolve of the LGBT+ community, to some extent, throughout the campaign through their anti-same-sex family rhetoric. Their messaging, as will be discussed in the findings, was also problematic for the LGBT+ community and had contributed to a great degree of discomfort for LGBT+ individuals.

3.8 YES EQUALITY: BEGINNINGS

Marriage Equality, GLEN and the ICCL felt their joint submission to the Citizens Assembly was a huge success. The three groups started meeting together to formulate a plan for an upcoming referendum to ensure the government would call a referendum. Grainne Healy from Marriage Equality spoke about the difficulties at first in working together:

> *It hasn't been the easiest thing I've ever done, but these things are really important....*
> *I think we all realised the writing would be on the wall then [after the constitutional*
> *convention]. We were just going to have to work together to get this one route that*
> *is now open to us* (Healy 2014:245).

Tanaiste Eamon Gilmore announced in October 2014 that a referendum would be held either in 2014 or early 2015, with 2015 being settled on a few weeks later by the Cabinet to give time for Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter, to publish the Children and Family Relations bill which would come before a referendum (Healy, Sheehan and Whelan, 2016).

The three organisations kept a low profile during the formation of the new Families Bill, deciding to work alongside other family and children's organisations and to focus their energy on the upcoming referendum. The three groups put in a joint submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice for the pre-legislative hearings in January 2014. The introduction of the Bill to the public sphere also brought with it a new group that opposed any change to the law – Mothers and Fathers Matter.

3.9 MOTHERS AND FATHERS MATTER

Basing their logo and many of their arguments on the relatively successful 'Manif Pour Tous', the group that emerged to oppose same sex marriage in France, *Mothers and Fathers Matter* (MFM) claimed that the new bill:

> *is unjust because it says mothers and fathers don't matter to children* (*Mothers and Fathers Matter* 2014)

The group were also opposed to the introduction of same sex marriage. While some members of the Iona Institute were included in their advisory team, MFM were unique as they had very little ties to the Catholic Church (in comparison to other groups opposing the Bill or same sex marriage) and had an openly gay spokesperson - Keith Mills (The Irish Independent 2015). Mills made many appearances during both the passage of the Bill and during the referendum campaign, drawing attention to both his sexuality and his agnostic beliefs. As well as having connections to the Iona Institute, the group also had connections to Senator Ronan Mullen, who voted against civil partnerships and now wanted civil partnerships inserted into the constitution during the Constitutional Convention to avoid the introduction of same sex marriage (Healy, Sheehan and Whelan 2016). Around the same time as the Bill was at committee stage an unlikely event prematurely kick-started the referendum campaign and started a national conversation about homophobia – Pantigate.

3.10 PANTIGATE

The unofficial and unexpected launch of the referendum campaign came due to a controversy involving drag artist Rory O'Neill is known as Panti Bliss on stage (and will be referred to here using both names and with both pronouns). On the 1st of February 2015 Rory, as Panti, spoke on the stage of the Abbey Theatre, at the end of a play about the Dublin Lockouts, The Risen People. The speech detailing the effects of homophobia was in response to a controversy that emerged from a pay out by the state broadcaster RTE to members of

the Iona Institute that claimed O'Neill had slandered them on one of its TV shows. The speech in the Abbey was recorded and uploaded to YouTube that night, it went viral and its impact resonated, not just for Irish LGBT+ people but globally. The fallout from the speech included the issue being discussed in the European Parliament, in the Dáil (where two TDs effectively came out as gay to the House to discuss the topic), on national and international media and by celebrities on social media. While GLEN, ICCL and Marriage Equality would have preferred a more structured start to the campaign, with Pantigate and the exposure it brought both domestically and internationally, the campaign was now in full swing and the LGBT+ community worldwide had a new champion – Panti Bliss. 'Pantigate' offers an interesting juxtaposition in a campaign that had very tight messaging criteria. The presence of Panti Bliss, a HIV+ Drag artist in the campaign ran counter the tight messaging of 'Yes Equality' that distanced the campaign from overt connections to LGBT+ symbols or language. While Panti took a backseat for the rest of the campaign, Rory O'Neill made a few appearances. For many Panti became a symbol of the campaign as evidenced by her presence in Dublin Castle on the day of the referendum (*Irish Times*, 2015).

3.11 YES EQUALITY: MESSAGING AND GROUNDWORK

While the Pantigate controversy raged in the media and on social media, GLEN, ME and the ICCL were now meeting weekly to put together a professional referendum campaign. 'Language', an advertising company, was hired to manage the brand that would become 'Yes Equality'. Brand image was important to the three groups. They each wanted to make the campaign global and not simply LGBT+ focused. On the concept and name choice, the group leaders stated:

> *Yes Equality felt right. It did not identify the campaign as lesbian, or gay, or LGBT, but identified it as the collective values of Irish people* (Healy, Sheehan and Whelan 2016:23).

Image was key to the leaders of the three groups. Their brand had to be young but not easily identifiable with the LGBT+ community:

> *Adam [from Language] suggested a colour splash as the design execution for Register to Vote. It conveyed movement, energy and excitement and was overlaid with 'Yes Equality'. Everyone in the wider collation knew it was exactly right. It stayed away from the rainbow used so often for gay issues but transformed the energy of those primary colours* (Healy, Sheehan and Whelan 2016:26).

The leaders of the YE campaign here demonstrate a self-reflective awareness of the framing of the campaign design. They were aware that the exclusion of any overtly LGBT+ images would potentially displease some LGBT+ activists but the campaigns focus was not on LGBT+ people but on the heterosexual majority. While decisions like the above on design could be considered exclusionary it does demonstrate that these critical actors had a strategy to win a referendum over other forms of community appeasement. One of the major initiatives of the newly minted group was a voter registration drive to get as many younger people registered to vote for the upcoming plebiscite. With a specific date in mind – the 25th of November 2014 (the annual voter registration deadline for the coming year) the group worked to register as many new voters as possible. For the Yes Equality leaders they:

> *wanted them* [young people] *to realise that the upcoming referendum was a key generational moment where they could become agents of the change they wished to see* (Healy, Sheehan and Whelan 2016:25).

Yes Equality worked with the USI (*Union of Students, Ireland*), *BeLonGTo* (LGBT+ youth work organisation), LGBT+ student groups and the youth wings of various political parties to make the registration drive a reality. It also coordinated with different LGBT+ community groups around the country and was the first meaningful connection between the three national organisations and local grassroots LGBT+ organisations where the grassroots groups could be active in assisting the campaign.

The registration drive generated lots of national interest. High ranking politicians, celebrities, sports people and local groups all got involved to publicise the closing date, November 25th, when people had to have their registration forms completed to be able to vote for the following year. Yes Equality set up a sophisticated social media presence to manage the campaign in order to keep the registration drive in the public consciousness. By the 25[th]November closing date it was estimated that 40,000 new voters were added to the register of electors (*Newstalk,* 2015). Registration drives are one of the tools used by social movements to both highlight their message but also to gainer support for their cause. Here the YE campaign team demonstrated their understanding of the importance of a youth vote in the referendum but also the international aspect of LGBT+ activism. As Ayoub (2016) points out, LGBT+ social movements, particularly across Europe, share tactics and campaigns internationally across differing national movements. Marriage Equality and the YE campaign analysed other international success and failures in developing their strategy of which voter registration played a key part.

3.12 Yes Equality: The Referendum Campaign

If the origins of the referendum were unusual, the conduct of the campaign was equally so. This was an intense referendum campaign that resulted in a remarkably high turnout (Elkink, Farrell, Reidy and Suiter 2016:2).

Elkink et al (ibid) found that the 2015 referendum campaign was unique in many respects. It reversed a steady decline in voter turnouts in referendums. There was a mix of traditional campaigning strategies (door to door canvases and media appearances) as well as new methods (social media campaigns). There was an influx of newly registered voters and voters returning to Ireland to vote and the referendum result demonstrated a shift in Irish political attitudes on social issues to a more liberal stance. Another key factor Elkink et al (ibid) found that contributed to the passing of the referendum was the impact of the constitutional convention. The authors found that the convention diluted the connection the vote had to any particular political party and de-politicised, so to speak, the referendum so voters were less like to try and punish the sitting government by voting against the amendment (a common result in Irish referenda). The convention also resulted in a much more informed electorate who were more in tune to the issues before the campaigning started and were less likely to be misinformed.

'Yes Equality' used a number of different strategies to communicate its message including 'I'm Voting Yes: Ask Me Why?'; A Yes Equality bus which toured the country; the social media strategy which contained clear messaging and was multi-platform; there was a strong merchandising strategy which doubled as a campaign symbol in the form of the bilingual Yes/Tá badges. The oppositional voices to the referendum, particularly 'Mothers and Fathers Matter', had an extensive poster campaign and YouTube video advertisement campaign. The focus of their campaign was on children and that same sex marriage was detrimental to young people. This messaging may have had the opposite effect the group intended as many children's rights organisations criticised the campaign posters. Fergus Finlay CEO of children's charity Barnardos, in particular, criticised the tagline 'Every Child Deserves a Father and a Mother' as an 'insult to the thousands of lone parents and children who love and care for each other' (O'Connor, 2015). Even the models in the posters, who were unaware of what their image was being used for, penned a statement opposing the messaging and the campaign. The 'No campaign' while having some impact on the messaging within the campaign has had, as evidenced through this study, a particularly negative impact on LGBT+ people who felt frustrated, alienated and upset by the 'No' campaign.

The Twitter hashtag #HomeToVote was used 72,000 times in 24 hours around the day of the referendum and was the result of a larger campaign that encouraged young Irish emigrants to return home to vote 'yes' in the referendum (Elkink, Farrell, Reidy and Suiter 2016). Many media outlets attributed the higher turnout and subsequent 'yes' vote in some part to the returned emigrants and the newly registered voters that were added to the register months previously. Participants of this study felt that younger people, and to some extent young people returning from abroad to vote, had an impact on the vote. One LGBT+ group who contributed to the findings of this research had visited their nearest airport the day of the vote and encountered many people who had returned to vote.

The referendum was passed on 23rd May 2015 by 62.1% (RTE 2015). Crowds gathered around the country to celebrate and a huge crowd had gathered in Dublin Castle at the main count centre for the city. The referendum had generated a lot of international attention and the images of happy people singing and carrying colourful banners reading 'equal' were beamed worldwide. 'Yes Equality' released a statement thanking all those who worked on the campaign and declared:

> *Today's result means that having been "branded and isolated" for decades each lesbian and gay person knows now that they too belong in Ireland, as full and equal citizens* (Healy and Sheehan 2015:175).

3.13 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FOR IRISH LGBT+ PEOPLE

Two research reports have been released since the Gender Recognition Act and the Same Sex Marriage Referendum – *LGBTIreland* supported by GLEN and *BeLonG To* and 'Burning Issues 2' supported by the NXF. The LGBTIreland report is the largest study of LGBT+ people in Ireland to date, the largest study of transgender people, and the first study with a sample of intersex people (Higgins et al 2016). The report found that there are greater mental health issues among LGBT+ young people in comparison to their heterosexual counterparts and that bullying, intimidation and harassment in both school and work are still common for LGBT+ people. The 'Burning Issues 2' study revealed some of the pressing concerns of the community including: more protections for trans people; more supports within the education system for LGBT+ pupils; the introduction of hate crime legislation; the separation of Church and state particularly in health care, education and elder care sectors; more recognition of the diversity of the LGBT+ community and more support for LGBT+ people outside of urban centres (NXF 2016).

These two reports give a snapshot of where the LGBT+ community find themselves today. While many legal changes have been fought for and introduced to protect the community there are still many issues facing LGBT+ people today.

GLEN replaced CEO Brain Sheehan (serving since 2007) with Áine Duggan in October 2016 (Eile 2016). The new CEO uncovered financial irregularities and alleged cases of bullying within the registered charity and stepped down from her post in April 2017 to allow the Charities Regulator investigate the charity and to have the board replace her with a consultant that could rectify the situation (*Irish Times*, 2017). GLEN was deemed to be no longer 'financially viable' and closed in May 2017. The auditor assigned to the case Jillian Van Turnhout stressed that "there was no misappropriation of funds in GLEN … the charity could attract funding for individual projects but could not get funding for its core activities, which meant it did not have a reserve fund. (RTE 2017). GLEN as some commentators noted (GCN 2017; Irish Times 2017) will be a loss to the community and the movement at a crucial time of reorganisation in the wake of the Yes Equality campaign win.

Katherine Zappone, from the KAL court case, has become the current governments' Children's Minister and is introducing a LGBT+ Youth Strategy, making Ireland the first country to do so (*The Journal*, 2017). The strategy has put young people's voices to the fore through online and public consultation. Zappone noted young peoples:

> *input in the coming months will directly impact our policies, regulations and laws in terms of equality, fairness and justice for all* (Zappone 2017).

The details of the strategy are not available at the time of writing. An overview of LGBT+ organisations is offered in the following chapter to give context of the current state of LGBT+ community and activism.

In conjunction with Appendix 1, this chapter has analysed the development of the Irish LGBT+ movement from a small collection of Dublin based individuals working on repealing Victorian laws to more professionalized community development and lobbying focused organisations working to support LGBT+ people. The repealing of the Victorian laws against homosexuality in the 1980's and 1990's by a small group of committed activists laid the ground work for organisations such as the NXF and GLEN. The closure of the Hirschfeld centre and publication of the GCN resulted in the NXF focusing their work on publication of the GCN magazine. GLEN became the de facto lobbying group of the LGBT+ community and shifted LGBT+ activism to more professionalized and lobbying based tactics over the previous litigation and protest

based actions of the 1980's and early 1990's. This ethos of professionalization, policy change through lobbying and engagement with elites in government agencies is evident today in the work of contemporary LGBT+ organisations such as TENI and BeLonG To.

The campaign for extended marriage rights brought a mix of both engaging with elites and formalized lobbying with street protests, public meetings and door to door canvasses. Here movement organisations, activists and members of the LGBT+ community and their allies came together to push through a single campaign objective. The result was not only the passing of the marriage referendum but an engagement of LGBT+ community members in a campaign that had direct impact on their lives on a national scale, which had not happened in Ireland on the same scale previously. The end of the campaign could be categorised as the end of a movement trajectory. The majority of legal barriers for the equal participation in society of LGBT+ individuals have been repealed through movement agitation or lobbying.

This chapter laid out the development of the Irish LGBT+ movement to provide some context to the data gathered on how the movement is functioning today. This context is important as it lays out the growth in the movement over a number of decades, how the movement formed and has come to be in its current state and who the main actors are in the current LGBT+ community and movement. The following chapter will look at some of these contemporary issues in LGBT+ movement from a sociological perspective, incorporating social movement theory, queer theory and LGBT studies.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will contain four parts examining different literatures to understand the complexities of LGBT+ activism both in Ireland and internationally. Firstly to give context of the civil society environment the Irish LGBT+ movement operates there is an examination of both international and domestic environments. Key issues in the LGBT+ movement internationally are explored to demonstrate how the experiences of Irish LGBT+ activists share common elements to their international counterparts. Then to add context, the political landscape of Irish civil society is examined. In exploring the civil society context in which Irish LGBT+ groups are operating we can see why certain modes of operating (particularly lobbying over protest) are favoured by LGBT+ groups. Secondly, through the examination of the representation of minority voices within the broader LGBT+ movement we can see how Irish rural activists, in particular, experiences are in line with LGBT+ individuals internationally. Thirdly the impact of geographical location for LGBT+ lives is explored. Finally, social movement concepts applicable to this research project are examined to explore how key social movement research ideas apply to the Irish LGBT+ movement. Building on the previous chapter on the historical development of the Irish movement, these four parts will give a more nuanced understanding of the legacy of the 'Yes Equality' campaign for LGBT+ people in Ireland. It is important to understand when speaking about LGBT+ people there are some limitations, which will be discussed briefly next.

LGBT+ populations present difficulties for demographic researchers in trying to quantify their size. Gates (2011) notes that there are a number of issues in measuring the demographics of the LGBT+ community. Some issues include; participants unwillingness to accept identity markers (measuring gender non-conforming or gender queer individuals is difficult for example); the lack of acceptance of family members or work colleagues thus pressuring participants to not declare a LGBT+ identity and the lack of longitudinal data on measuring LGBT+ populations. Gates estimates that 3.5% of US adults identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual while .3% are transgender (2011: 1). Gates (2017) has subsequently noted a rise in people identifying as lesbian, gay and bisexual to 4.1% with a rise in those identifying in the 'millennial' age bracket (21 to 34 year olds) from 5.8% in 2012 to 7.3% in 2016 (Gates 2017).

The number of young people not identifying as exclusively heterosexual is rising according to recent research. The J. Walter Thompson Innovation Group (2016) found in a US based survey that 48% of 13 to 20 year olds identified as exclusively heterosexual, compared to 65% of participants aged 21 to 34. The same survey demonstrated a much more liberal

understanding of gender by 13 to 20 year olds, with over half of participants having a gender non-conforming friend. Some social commentators are attributing the increase in young people identifying as 'other than heterosexual' as a result in a decrease in stigma around being LGBT+. Allen (2015) in the Daily Beast notes:

> *The fact that a full 7 per cent of millennials identify as LGBT is an encouraging sign that reluctance to self-report may be fading as social acceptance of LGBT people increases. Being labelled as "gay" was once a big deal. These days, it's just one of 12 sexual orientations on OKCupid* (2015: Online)

This growth in those identifying as LGBT+ is matched by a growth in organisations from local to multinational who represent LGBT+ people. Ayoub (2016) demonstrates the LGBT+ movement has become transnational and works on international issues as well as on national and local ones. While the movement shares successes, tactics and campaigns internationally across differing national movements it also shares similar issues and cleavages. While in Ireland a unified front was presented to campaign for the introduction of marriage rights for LGB couples the broader international movement has at times been more fractious on this and other movement goals. This fragmentation has come in many forms and some of the cleavages particularly around class, gender, age, geography, race and sexual orientation will be explored here. The experience of many of the participants of this study is that the Irish movement is fragmented around cleavages of geography, age, gender and to some extent class. The following section explores both the international and domestic civil society environment in which the Irish LGBT+ movement operates in.

4.1 THE INTERNATIONAL LGBT+ MOVEMENT LANDSCAPE

The involvement and importance of international organizations in today's LGBT+ movement is well documented (Kollman 2009, Hildebrandt 2013, Ayoub 2013, 2016) and they have played an important part in the advancement of the movement's aims and objectives. This international element can be seen in Hildebrandt's (2013) work. Hildebrandt (2013) sets out a three phase theory of the decriminalization of same-sex acts with the third and final phase starting with the 1982 European Court of Human Rights case of Dudgeon against Northern Ireland. The UK government was forced to decriminalize same-sex acts in Northern Ireland following the ruling and this is where Hildebrandt's third phase or internationalisation phase begins. Since the Dudgeon case Hildebrandt states:

the Council of Europe but also and more importantly the European Union have become important engines of legal emancipation of gays and lesbians during the last few decades (2013: 242).

The importance of supranational powers has been echoed by Ayoub (2016) who argues that international influence is not just vertical but also horizontal with LGBT+ organisations supporting each other across boundaries. He notes:

A series of European actors – the EU institutions, the ECHR (European Court of Human Rights), and a transnational network of activists – have fostered change by propagating an international norm on LGBT rights and diffusing the issue into the domestic discourses of various European states (2013: 279).

This internationalization has led to the formation of organisations such as ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) which has regional affiliates such as ILGA Europe and Pan Africa ILGA which work on supporting LGBT+ people at intergovernmental level. The ECHR has been used as a tool to bring about the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland (see the Norris case in Appendix 1).The ECHR has also been used to coheres governments into legal changes when governments have not been compliant with national judiciary decisions such as the gender recognition legislation brought on the back of a case by Dr. Lydia Foy (see Appendix 1). While the European Court of Human Rights does not confirm any marriage rights for same sex couples, the internationalisation of the LGBT+ movement has led to the three groups that comprised of the YE campaign learning and adapting their strategies from similar campaigns in both Europe and the US (notiably the 'Prop 8' campaign in California). The impact of national success and campaigns from one national movement has impacts globally as the movement is now more interconnected. Likewise some of the difficulties movements face, both internally and externally, is also held in common and these will be explored further. To set the context of where the Irish LGBT+ population stands today the following section will look at demographics and acceptance of Irish LGBT+ people.

4.1.1 CIVIL SOCIETY IN IRELAND

To provide an assessment of the broader context and distinctive political culture within which LGBT+ organizations operate within in Ireland it is important to be able to situate it within the larger context of Irish civil society. An exploration of some of the characteristics of Irish civil society and how it is unique in comparison to its European neighbours follows.

In looking at Irish civil society from a European context, it may be perceived as under developed or less active. To take one example, the European average of political party membership is 6% while the Irish (the third lowest average in 20 European countries) is 2% (Mair 2010). Ireland tends to have a lower voter turnout rate than other European counties (Walsh and Strobel 2009), lower participation of woman as elected public representatives (Kirby and Murphy 2011), and a low interest in the political process in general (The Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007).

Irish civil society has come to its current manifestation through a number of contributing factors, yet it can be argued that civil society is also undergoing a shift, with factors such as the global downturn of 2008 and consequent government imposed austerity (Murphy 2011) and a possible widening of people's engagement with the media through the internet and social media outlets, contributing to this. Austerity has been particularly impactful on civil society groups since the economic downturn of 2008. The decrease in funding has impacted the way that groups are able to both provide services and effectively represent their constituents (Harvey 2012; Cullen and Murphy 2016).

To understand how Irish civil society today is, as Mair describes it, "politically neutralised and overly cordial" (2010) we need to look at a number of factors in the historical development of the Irish state that has lead us to this point. The first of these will be the success of the political party Fianna Fáil (FF). This dominance of FF is so great it has been described as an institutional entity of the Irish state (O'Toole 2011). Its populist policies position it as a centralist party willing to take on issues that are topical at the time and either incorporating social demands into its own policy documents or smothering issues that are not within its political ethos. FF has pushed Irish political parties to be far more populists in outlook compared to their European counterparts, whose policies would be more class based. One of the tools FF governments have used in the past to either incorporate or smother civil society has been the process of social partnership (Kirby and Murphy 2011).

4.1.2 SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON CIVIL SOCIETY

Social partnership has been described as a uniquely Irish phenomenon. Initially a process of government and industry talks to boost employment in the economic doldrums of the 1980's, these talks morphed into the social partnership process and have become a cornerstone of how governments deals not only with the business, trade union and farming sectors but the 'community and voluntary' sector also. The community and voluntary sector were invited to the talks in 1996 and environmental NGO's in 2009 (Kirby and Murphy 2011). Some LGBT+

organisations (GLEN and NXF) were included in this community and voluntary pillar. The inclusion in the social partnership talks of the 'third sector' – community and voluntary groups, has led many to describe the social partnership process as another tool by the state to circumvent and co-opt civil society actors (Powell and Geoghegan 2009). The process has been viewed as a formalised process of quietening dissent and the focus on consensus driven policy implementation has left many in the civil society realm feeling without a voice to question governmental policies or societal issues they see as important.

Other facts of note when talking about Irish civil society are the conservative influence of the church and charity inflected models shaping government policy but civil society in general, the small and generally homogenous Irish media sector, the clientelistic nature of Irish politics (stemming from the PR (proportional representation) electoral system and the populist nature of Irish political parties) and immigration (Kirby and Murphy 2011). All of these factors and those mentioned above have given the Irish civil society sector a very unique standing when looked at from a European angle. Irish LGBT+ organisations are also dependent on the state for funding which may inhibit their ability to criticise the actions of the state. In taking this uniqueness into account we will examine further the interaction the Irish LGBT+ movement groups has had with the government and how like other international LGBT+ movements it has negotiated this.

4.1.3 Irish LGBT+ Groups Working within Irish Civil Society

In looking at the LGBT+ movements in Argentina (Diez 2011), Belgium (Paternotte 2011) and the UK (Kollman and Waites 2011) there has been a pattern of LGBT+ movements using the change of governments during election time as a mechanism to implement their demands. In the Argentinean case there was a change of political structure within the country and in the UK and Belgium cases a change of power from one political party to another. In none of the studies was there noted to be a huge swelling of support for LGBT+ policies at a societal level but there was intelligent framing of the movement goals by the movements to fall in line with the new policy frameworks put forward by the new governments. The Irish movement has also used different political opportunities to further their own goals.

The early work of LGBT+ activists trying to achieve their goals was thwarted by the dominance of FF and their close affiliations with the church. The Norris case as outlined in Appendix 1 challenged the state in both domestic and international courts to remove the laws criminalising homosexuality. On losing the case in the European Court of Human Rights, the FF Taoiseach of the time, (Charles Haughey), did not overturn the law but it was the following

Taoiseach Albert Reynolds, under pressure from its junior partner, the Labour party that eventually decriminalised homosexuality. These alliances with junior coalition partners has gained the LGBT+ movement the majority of their legal changes that were campaigned for- for example civil partnership was brought in through a PD/FF coalition through work with a PD minster for Justice and civil marriage in a Lab/FG coalition. This is similar in strategic terms to the Belgium, UK and Argentinian movements with the engagement of certain elites that were predisposed to a LGBT+ message as it was framed to match their own political goals. The political opportunity context provided by sympathetic elites was key to achieving progress for LGBT+ people both in Ireland and internationally as is demonstrated in the introduction of the Civil Partnerships Act and the inclusion of same sex marriage in the Constitutional Convention (as discussed in Chapter 3).

The characteristics of Irish civil society and by extension the LGBT+ sector illustrate the tensions that exist between a reliance on charity based models of service provision, a reliance on state support for advocacy and efforts to politicise and mobilize for minority rights. A reliance on litigation and human rights frameworks has provided some success and fit with international patterns. However, such strategies have their limitations. The following section explores some of the issues that exist around representation in the broader LGBT+ movement internationally but with a focus on the US LGBT+ movement.

4.2 THE BROADER LGBT+ MOVEMENT AND REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY VOICES

Using the US movement as a case study we can see some of the issues that exist for minorities within the movement and how the US movement is not as equally representative as it could be to all its members. In applying concepts like, secondary marginalization (Cohen 1999) and social capital theory (Hourigan 2006) we can see a disconnect between leadership and the membership of the US movement. In looking at specific cohorts of the LGBT+ population (Trans, lesbian, older members, youth members and queer theory proponents, ethnic minorities, rural populations – for example) we can see that many of these members feel that the movement is not working on their behalf and can feel isolated or unrepresented.

4.2.1 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Hull and Ortyl (2013) interviewed the non-activists base of the Minnesota LGBT+ movement to gauge their opinion of the movement and their relationship with it. Using individual interviews and focus group data Hull and Ortyl (2013) found that the majority of 'ordinary' LGBT+ people did not feel represented by their movement but were happy with the

movement overall. The authors explain that this paradox is partially down to individuals being happy with broad movement goals but unhappy with tactics to achieve those goals. For example the majority of participants were happy to have the extension of marriage rights as a movement goal, however some felt that the movement was being too incremental in this goal while others felt that the moment was moving too fast. Hull and Ortyl's (2013) work has resonances in this research as participants of this study also presented, sometimes contradictory views of movement organisations. In Hull and Ortyl's (2013) work, an individual's social position dictates their opinion of the LGBT+ movement, white cis gender lesbian and gay's feeling happy with the movement while Trans, gender non-conforming or bisexual individuals had mixed opinions of the movement. In an Irish context while all participants of this study where happy with the 'Yes Equality' result some participants had mixed opinions about how the campaign was run and more broadly about LGBT+ movement organisations. Participants of this research, as in Hull and Ortyl's (2013) work, expressed how they felt that movement organisations did not always represent them, depending on their social or geographical position. In an examination of Melucci's (1995) work, we can see how social movement actors can remain part of a movement even when these individuals disagree with movement tactics as these dissenting actors focus on the larger movement goal. Another reason for the paradox Hull and Ortly (2013) present is a degree of secondary marginalization of certain cohorts of people within the movement, namely transgender, gender queer, bisexual, working class people and ethnic minorities (2013: 94). Cohen (1999) states that

> "secondary marginalisation occurs when the more privileged members of a marginalised social group attempt to manage the behaviour, attitudes and public image of the marginalised [within that group]" (Cohen 1999: 86).

In looking at the response of the Black civil rights movement in the US to the HIV/Aids crisis, Cohen (1999) explores such secondary marginalisation. She draws on data gathered through an examination of responses in African American targeted publications by black political organisations to the epidemic. Cohen's work demonstrates the stratification of the black civil rights movement and identifies marginal groups within the movement who are excluded from institutions, stigmatised and lacked control within the movement. Cohen's (1999) identification of a privileged stratum of movement actors within the Black movement calls the movements premise into question as it claims to be a movement that represents all black people. Hull and Ortly (2013) drawing on this concept explain the effect of secondary

marginalisation is not to distract or ignore minorities but to "downplay the needs and priorities of the less privileged members" for movements ends(Hull and Ortyl 2013:86).

Stone's (2009) work on transgender-inclusive non-discrimination ordinances in Michigan also demonstrate the marginalization of the Trans community within the LGBT+ movement. Stone explains:

> [transgender people] are subject to implicit inclusion in the LGBT movement.......they are formally identified as part of the movement [but] their issues are not treated as important ....or distinct from the issues of the dominant constituency (Stone 2009: 89).

The formation of Irish trans organisation TENI, as a separate organisation to represent trans issues speaks to Stone's (2009) work on exclusion in an Irish context. The formation of a separate trans organisation, as presented by participants of this study, demonstrates the marginalisation and frustration trans people felt working under the remit of LGBT+ organisations.

Stein's (2013) work also revisits issues of class, race and sexual orientation in exploring the foregrounding of certain movement goals over others. In comparing the LGBT+ communities in two different towns in the state of New Jersey, Stein found a divergence in attitudes to pursuing same sex marriage rights along the lines of race and class. The author notes that middle class LGB headed families have more choice in family formation than their working class counterparts in the neighbouring town. She states:

> it takes resources for middle-class families to achieve the "ordinariness" they desire....in Newark [working class community] so many decisions that structure one's life...are beyond one's control (Stein 2013: 75)

For Stein(2013) middle class LGB headed families have prioritized the family structure that is suited best to them, that being a monogamous family unit. Family units like these are formed far easier for middle class people than for working class queers who have to rely more on different and diverse forms of family formations due to the necessities that exist in their lives. The extension of marriage rights is the number one movement priority, excluding the realities of working class and often ethnic minority families, for example providing protections for diverse family types or a more open approach to protecting existing family formations. Activists and social commentator De Filippis argues that "white, middle-class leaders of national gay organisations set the agenda" (2011: 2). These leaders ignore, in his opinion,

working class, ethnic, trans and gender based issues. Bassichis, Lee and Spade in talking about transgender people argue that "those dubbed the leaders of the "LGBT movement" insist that marriage rights are the way to redress the inequalities in our communities" (Bassichis, Lee and Spade 2011:16). In the account of the development of the Irish LGBT+ movement and community in Chapter 2 we can see how urbane and middle class voices have been privileged. The pursuit of formal recognition of same sex couples rights has been the major focus of LGBT+ organisations from the early 2000's until 2015 while trans people formed their own organisation, TENI, as their issues where not receiving similar attention in comparison to issues such as marriage rights.

As well as a full inclusion of differing cohorts of queer people within the LGBT+ movement there are issues around the inclusion of differing points of view around queerness. At the heart of queer theory is that queer people are a people set apart, unique and outside of normal constraints on society's limits of romantic and intimate relationships. For many queer theorists same sex marriage is assimilation into the societal mainstream and a retraction of the fundamentals of being queer (Bernstein and Taylor 2013). Shoring up the queer theory world view is the notion of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity as seen by Cohen (1997) is:

> *both those localized practices and those centralized institutions which legitimize and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and "natural" within society* (Cohen 1997:440)

Stein states that "a number of critics have lodged a sustained and spirited critique of the increasing dominance of marriage politics within gay and lesbian movements in the United States, arguing that it sacrifices and diffuses radical challenges to heteronormativity by privatizing sexuality [and] forces queer people to conform to a fundamentally heterosexual script." (Stein, 2013, 53). Bernstein and Taylor (2013) make the juxtaposition within the LGBT+ movement that:

> *While for some, marriage is a simple matter of equality and a sign of progress toward achieving that goal, for others, it is an alarm signalling the death of what makes queer people unique* (2013:23)

For people identifying as Queer and for queer theorists the broadening of marriage rights to LGB people is the abandonment of what they consider their unique 'outsider status'. For some queer people marriage is a "move toward decentring a lesbian and gay identity, with

the implication that it spells the beginning of the end for the LGBT+ Movement" (Bernstein and Taylor 2013:33). This will be explored further when we look at Ghaziani's (2014) post-gay era thesis, first we will take a look at the exclusion of queer discourses within the marriage debate.

An example of the exclusion of an analysis of marriage from a critical queer perspective can be found in Olsen's (2013) research on the formation and subsequent disbandment of 'Love Makes a Family' (LMF), the Connecticut based activist group that aimed to, and succeeded in, bringing marriage equality into law in the state of Connecticut. Olsen finds that the group's commitment to the goal (of marriage-equality) and their refusal to outwardly examine the more critical elements of marriage put forward by members resulted in members of the group feeling under represented. The critique is that marriage is a "heterosexist, patriarchal institution, they [LMF Leadership] treated this understanding of marriage as problematic." (Olsen 2013:385).

This attitude echoes what we have already seen in the approach of Marriage Equality to the branding and positioning to the Irish referendum in Chapter 3.11. The formation of the Yes Equality campaign's messaging to exclude any overtly queer or LGBT+ imaginary or discourse was deliberate and intentional to gain the support of 'middle Ireland' but led to a very sanitized version of LGB lives and entirely excluded trans people. This positioning away from a queer identity was problematic for some queer identified or trans participants of this study.

The inclusion and exclusion of people and ideas in the process of movement is not unique to the LGBT+ movement or movements in the US. Hourigan (2006) in her analysis of the Irish language movement's campaign to establish an Irish language radio and TV station uses a social capital approach to examine the differing Irish language representative groups.

> *This approach assumes that the more centrally social movement actors are located within movement networks, their social milieu and in terms of relations with political and cultural elites, the greater their impact will be on political decisions and cultural outcomes* (Hourigan 2006:125)

In looking at how GLEN was categorized previously (see Chapter 3.4) we can see an element of how social positioning both furthered the agenda of the organization but also alienated them to some degree from the broader LGBT+ community. GLEN was not considered by many within the community as representative (particularly along the lines of gender and class) and echoes some of Hull and Ortly's (2013) findings at the start of this chapter. Many Irish LGBT+

people did not feel that the largest movement organization represented them in the civil partnership debates as can be witnessed in the LGBT Noise protests. This study demonstrates how many participants were willing to agree to the YE messaging in order to achieve marriage rights even if they disagreed with that messaging which is in line with the paradox that Hull and Ortly (2013) found in Minnesota.

4.2.2 GENERATIONAL DIVIDES

As the numbers of young people identifying as LGBT+ are growing (Gates 2011, 2017) we can start to see an increasing generational divide within the LGBT+ community. While the number of older LGBT+ people is small in comparison to the greater population of the community they have however suffered the most difficulties in their lifetimes. As Adelman, Gurevitch, de Vries and Blando (2006) state, in t examination of older members of the communities lives:

> *the legacy of discrimination and harassment endured by many of the older members of today's LGBT community cannot be overstated* (Adelman, Gurevitch, de Vries and Blando, 2006)

Younger LGBT+ identified people are living in a time of more openness and acceptance of sexual and gender minorities, in comparison to their LGBT+ elders and have more access, through the internet, social media and mobile technology to information and support on LGBT+ issues.

Young people are learning about dating, identity and sexuality online and not like their predecessors through encountering other LGBT+ people in physical spaces. Hammack, Thompson, & Pilecki (2009) found that in both school and family life heterosexuality is still the default identity and many young people turn to the internet for emotional and informative support. Pingel, Bauermeister & Johns (2013) found that young gay men learned about their sexual identities online through online dating and social media while also acquiring the skills to navigate sources of risk effectively. Sexual and gender minority young people may be especially attracted to the anonymity afforded by the Internet (Chiou 2007). Cullen (2011) in her research on LGBT+ young people and social media micro blogging site 'Tumblr', found that many young people learned about different and diverse sexual and gender identities but also cultivated their own identity through blogging on the site. Diversity in sexual and gender expression through the internet according to Alexander (2002) requires a rethink on what constitutes community:

Queers from around the world have used the Internet to reveal and represent the diversity of their experience in ways that are challenging to static notions of both identity and identity politics. Such varieties suggest the need for alternative notions of both community and social agency, and these variations of representation - at both the local and global level - speak to us not just about the diversity of what it means to be queer, but also how individuals are attempting to connect with others to create a sense of community, perhaps even political purpose and social agency across those differences and through those varieties (2002:81-82)

Gray (2009) demonstrated in her study of rural LGBT+ youth that they access images via the Internet to construct an understanding of "queer realness" (2009:124). Young people have shifted away from physical spaces of queerness (gay bars and LGBT community spaces) to virtual spaces (social media and mobile dating applications) (Thomas 2011) in their identity formation and in searching for friendship networks and romantic partners. Fraser attributes this in part to the younger age in which young people explore queer identities and their own sexuality or gender identity (Fraser 2010:31). In this study social media did have a function for campaign logistics and dating sites featured as elements in navigating LGBT+ life especially in rural context. In this sense social media and the internet more broadly could be understood to compensate somewhat for rural isolation. However, virtual connectivity does not I argue replace access to supports and services and participants suggested that face to face encounters and interactions were of most importance to their sense of belonging and connection.

From Ghaziani's (2014) and Reynolds's (2009) work we can see another shift, this time not quite assimilationist as young people are stressing their non-heterosexual statuses and embracing their diversity but also not quite LGBT+/Queer as they are not engaging with traditional LGBT+ spaces. Oisin McKenna is an artist and his theatre piece "Queers Against the Free State" was a talking point following the 2016 Dublin Fringe Festival, his theatre piece explores the Irish Millennial generations relationship with Queerness. McKenna states

…if some of our elders are to be believed, radical queer culture is all but dead, and the apathetic youth who are too busy scrolling through Twitter feeds to radically mobilise, shoulder at least some of the blame. But maybe those elders are looking for queer culture in the wrong places. Gay bars and clubnights may be on the decline, but gay bars and queer spaces are not necessarily always the same thing. In actuality, radical queer culture is not being eradicated, it's simply reorganising in a far more

inclusive and intersectional way than ever before. Queer culture is alive and well in Ireland, it just exists further to the fringes than older generations might sometimes think to look — in squats, online, at punk gigs and pro-choice rallies (McKenna 2016).

McKenna's quote above is echoed in some of the discussions with participants of this research project, some participants have indicated that 'queerness' or as McKenna indicates "radical queer culture" is accessible both in real spaces (through theatre, activism or performance art) or online. The LGBT+ community is in flux, with declining heteronormativity and homophobia and Transphobia, at least on the statute books, and in some ways the youngest generation are at odds to those who have gone before. Gamson's (1995) analysis of the schism between older and younger activists over the idea of 'Queer' in the 1990's San Francisco Pride movement is reflected in dynamics observed here. We now have another version of 'Queer' emerging in young people who have grown up in a country where their sexuality has not been legislated against and where the radical queer futures envisioned by their elders are optional. Young people can live open queer lives, transgressing for the norm or they can assimilate and have their relationships accepted (far easier than their older counterparts did). In the cities this generational divide is marked but this research has shown that the lack of LGBT+ spaces has brought both young and older LGBT+ people together where these understandings of identity can be discussed, argued and explored.

Bernstein (2015) argues that the acceptance of marriage by LGB people, instead of shunning the Queer theory view of marriage as an archaic, gendered and discriminatory institution has in her opinion created a more egalitarian and less gendered society. The creation of queer spaces and open displays of homosexuality in places like parent teacher meetings, sports clubs, anti-natal classes or work places are bringing heterosexuals to the cold face of same sex relationships and making them question their own heteronormative practices and understandings. Bernstein (2015) does not see the assimilation of queer people into a heteronormative world but the queering of the straight world by non-heterosexuals entering fully into heteronormative institutions. I argue in this research that the more radical version of sexual and gender identity that young people are learning and exploring online is also queering their older, less radical LGBT+ community members, particularly in rural settings. An example of this came through participant observation where individuals (mainly over the age of 50) decided to join the LGBT+ group after the passing of the marriage referendum. Here for they met with younger and confident LGBT+ people and discussed ideas around queerness and identity, relationships and acceptance.

4.3 LOCATION AND LGBT+ LIFE: URBAN LGBT+ LIFE

While there are divisions and cleavages within the movement some writers have identified a shift away from traditional LGBT+ spaces. Ghaziani (2015) looks at the changing nature of Queer spaces and how LGBT+ people no longer feel a need to hide their identity in 'the closet' as described by Seidman (2002). According to Ghaziani (2015) a generational drift is emerging in how LGBT+ people view themselves and their relationships to queer spaces. Ghaziani explores the phenomenon of younger LGBT+ people finding the ideas of both gay only institutions and 'gay ghettos' as old fashioned and marginal (2015: 46).

The work of Seidman (2002) on 'the closet' is the starting point for many scholars when looking at the phenomenon of a 'Post-Gay' society. Seidman (2002) explores the social process of 'being in the closet', this can be not living your life openly as a homosexual and still engaging in homosexual sex or self-identifying as 'not straight' but in secret. This idea of the closet for Seidman (2002) created many of the LGBT+ institutions we have today, bars, clubs, bookshops and community centres. The need for people to keep their gay identities separate and secret have, in his view, led to the establishment of separate and safe spaces where people could "escape" their closet. The fear of discrimination, homophobia, violence and being "outted" solidified the importance of these spaces for members of the LGBT+ community, around these institutions the 'gay ghettos' or 'gay-bourhoods' were born. The Castro in San Francisco, Le Marais in Paris, Soho in London, the West Village in New York and Oxford Street in Sydney are examples of 'gay-bourhoods' in larger cities. The move away from traditional LGBT+ spaces has been interpreted by some LGBT+ individuals as a move towards assimilation and the eradication what it means to be queer. Bernstein (2015) reflects the worries of queer identified LGBT+ people when she asks:

> *Are LGBT people truly marching en masse to the suburbs where they will be enclosed behind white picket fences, sipping homonormative Kool-Aid and failing to realize that heteronormativity and homophobia are alive and well?* (Bernstein 2015: 321).

This worry by queer identifying members of the community is echoed in an Irish context in an article in GCN (Gay Community News) on the closure of gay bars in Dublin and Cork:

> *here on our little island, safe spaces for LGBT have changed. The closure of the Other Place in Cork or the Dragon in Dublin are inevitably greeted as death knells of the real-world gay community, a combination of the integration we've wanted for so long and the advent of faster, bigger, easier online communities* (Meyler 2015: online).

The move away from traditional LGBT+ spaces demonstrates some of the tensions that are emerging for the LGBT+ community in navigating the newly acquired sexual citizenship rights of equality, marriage, adoption. This is coupled with the emergence of a new generation of LGBT+ people who are constructing their own queer self-image around different institutions and norms than those that had existed previously (Ghaziani 2015, Reynolds 2009). There is a feeling among some participants of this research that there is an "abandonment" of traditional queer spaces for either straight or digital ones. For established LGBT+ activists there is a sense that the identities they have fought hard to defend are being deconstructed (Seidman 2002).

LGBT+ institutions and physical locations created safe spaces for queers to live their lives away from the heteronormative pressures of society and the homophobia that permeated their lives. These societal structures of both heteronormativity and homophobia however have been on the wane, although more in a public discourse sphere and not maybe as Bernstein (2015) alludes to above, as lived experiences. The introduction of same-sex marriage, a political and legal rubber stamp on same-sex relationships has accelerated the deconstruction of heteronormative institutions and has brought the idea of same-sex relationships and even queer people out of their closets and gay-bourhoods and into the mainstream.

Ghaziani (2014) in his concept of a 'post gay era' explores the phenomenon of younger LGBT+ people finding the ideas of both gay only institutions and gay ghettos as old fashioned and marginal. In his analysis younger generations of LGBT+ people feel entitled to access mainstream straight establishments and yet keep their queer identity. However for older members of the community these queer spaces are far more important both culturally and emotionally, for some they are a safe harbour from troubled experiences in the same institutions that the young generation feel comfortable accessing. Ghaziani (2014) also finds that these once exclusively queer spaces are now being polluted by heterosexuals who no longer feel there is a stigma attached in socialising in a LGBT+ space.

Reynolds (2009) explores the Sydney LGBT+ space of Oxford Street and the declining engagement of young people with the gay institutions (mainly bars) that exist there. He found that while young people were less likely to choose a gay bar over a straight one they still did frequent the bars but just to a lesser degree than their older counterparts. Reynolds (2009) strikes a less pessimistic note than Ghaziani (2014) as while they find some of the same

findings they note that young queers still find the gay-bourhoods to be important places in their gay identity and still feel an attachment to them.

4.3.1 LOCATION AND LGBT+ LIFE: LIVING AN AUTHENTIC LGBT+ LIFE AWAY FROM URBAN SPACES

Ghaziani's (2014) work demonstrates that attachments to LGBT+ institutions are receding and a more complex versions of being queer are developing, however, this is done within the comfort and relative safety of urban neighbourhoods. For LGBT+ people living outside of these environments, as will be explored further, living rurally offers many challenges. In looking at queer geographies (Gorman-Murray 2007, Halberstam 2005; Knopp and Brown 2003; Brown 2015) we can see the nuanced nature of rural LGBT+ life and the difficulties inherent in living rurally as an 'out' LGBT+ person. The data from this study demonstrates from an Irish context, that LGBT+ institutions are still very important to rural LGBT+ dwellers and that the 'post-gay' disengagement with these institutions has not happened rurally.

Rural Irish LGBT+ people, as identified through the focus groups in this study, share similar experiences with rural people with non-normative sexual and gender identities in the US, Australia and the UK. Brown (2015), Gorman-Murray (2013; 2012; 2011; 2006) and Halberstam (2005) research on LGBT+ people living in rural contexts illustrates the nuanced and complex decision making process at play for LGBT+ people when choosing to live in a rural area. The work of rural LGBT+ geographies highlights the specific challenges of rural living for LGBT+ people and points to a central finding in this research of the importance of queer community structures for LGBT+ rural people. This is relevant to this project as many participants from rural LGBT+ groups expressed their strong connection to their respective local LGBT+ group and some accredited the group to a more positive or fulfilling life as they had a space to be their authentic selves in without fear of judgment or appraisal.

Gorman-Murray (2011) and others (Halberstam 2005; Knopp and Brown 2003; Brown 2015) challenge the view that all rurally born LGBT+ people migrate to urban gay-bourhoods to avoid stigma and form relationships. Halberstam coins the phrase 'metronormativity' to demonstrate the notion of urban spaces being the only progressive spaces for LGBT+ community life, while the rural is considered a 'backward' and oppressive space (Halberstam 2005). Gorman-Murray finds, in agreement with Ghaziani (2015), that while moving to an urban centre affords people the comfort of 'coming out' in a safe space, many LGBT+ also choose not to, or are unable to, leave rural environments (2007: 106).

In his study on Gay Rural Aid & Information Network (GRAIN) – a support network for rurally based LGBT+ people in England and Wales in the 1970's and 1980's, Brown (2015), looks at the phenomenon of LGBT+ people moving from cities to more rural environments and explores the complex decision making at play. GRAIN provided a support network for lesbians and gay men living in rural England and Wales and included a mix of LGBT+ environmentalists, older lesbians and gay men who had retired to the countryside, and rural-based LGBT+ activists. In addition Brown (2015) explores the diverse ways that rural LGBT+ inhabitants engage with the economy and labour market by engaging in non-normative or diverse economic practices.

Choosing to or being obliged to live in rural environments can prove challenging for LGBT+ people, these challenges will be examined further to shed light on the lived experience of LGBT+ rural inhabitants as this is a key aim of the research for this thesis.

While living out LGBT+ lives rurally can be complex for some, having a support network has been identified as a way for LGBT+ people to navigate these complexities (Haddock 2016; Oswald and Culton 2003). The importance of a LGBT+ support network in rural environments is discussed below. The importance of LGBT+ specific groups to rural LGBT+ people and the need for rural LGBT+ people to manage their sexual identity are examples of how Ghaziani's (2014) 'post-gay' era is dependent on geographical location. Urban LGBT+ people may have more options to engage with supports and social activities. For rural dwellers the exclusion from traditional community spaces such as GAA and faith based contexts coupled with the need to manage ones identity in a smaller scaled context raise the stakes in terms of access to LGBT+ designated spaces.

For many living in a rural setting the degree of your "outness" to others is important as rural environments do not give the same anonymity as living in an urban space. LGBT+ people in rural contexts are selective in how they portray themselves to others (Oswald and Culton 2003). In Oswald and Culton's (2003) study of 527 self-identified LGBT+ people living in non-metropolitan Illinois, the authors found that 45% of respondents felt they lived in a homophobic environment and managed their "outness" accordingly (2003: 72). This management included being selective about who was aware of the respondent's sexuality in order to protect either the respondent or a loved one by not displaying public signs of affection for a same sex partner. Many of the participants in Oswald and Culton's work cited that they felt the majority of people in their localities were bigoted towards LGBT+ people and only a few were accepting (2013: 74). Bigotry and Christian values were also cited by

participants to work in tandem to marginalise LGBT people outside of urban centres (2013: 74).

The management of "outness" is echoed again in Haddock's (2016) geographical study of LGBT+ communities in rural Kansas. The author finds "many individuals acknowledged that they had a system of navigation of rural environments: where to go, to whom to speak openly, how to blend in to the larger population" (Haddock 2016: vi). The author found however a sense of resilience among LGBT people which stemmed from a strong LGBT+ community or network that the respondents drew support from (2016: 56).

In looking at acceptance of LGBT+ people in rural environments, recent hate crime research in the UK (Hardy 2015) found that LGBT+ people in rural Britain who experienced hate crime were lonely, felt isolated and were afraid to approach the police about hate crime as they feared being 'outed' to their families or friends. The LGBTIreland Report (2015) (as discussed in Chapter 4 and 5) found that in Ireland there still is a predominance of ignorance among the general public around LGBT+ issues. The management of "outness" for participants in this Irish study and the lack of knowledge on LGBT+ identities of the wider Irish public can be seen as an indicator that although progress has been made on public policy in developing LGBT+ protections, for some LGBT+ Irish people living openly as LGBT+, not just in rural areas, is complex and possibly precarious

Homophobia and Transphobia has been identified as a common aspect of living in rural environments (Haddock 2016; Hardy 2015; Kazyak 2011, 2012; Oswald and Culton 2003). Haddock (2016) finds that perceptions of LGBT+ participants in rural Kansas of their locality and their own LGBT+ identity were influenced greatly by their interactions with a local LGBT+ group or network of LGBT+ people (Haddock 2016:5). People's lived experience of rural life was enhanced by community connections and this in turn coloured the participants view of living rurally. Participants in Haddock's (2016) work had a strong affinity to living in a rural area over their perceptions of urban living (2016: 6).

In looking at supports for older rural LGBT+ people, Lee and Quam (2013) found that the presence of a family of choice, as the defined by the authors as "close friends who are 'like family' or 'like a second or extended family'" (Lee and Quam 2013: 116) is considered a considerable support for being elderly, LGBT+ and living in a rural environment away from LGBT+ urban centres. Oswald and Culton (2003) found that while older LGBT+ people were hesitant in accessing LGBT+ formal community supports they did have strong connections to

other rural LGBT+ people and noted that these relationships were a source of strength (2003: 75). By necessity rural LGBT+ neighbours became more close-knit and had a sense of family. We can see here the pressures that age can have on LGBT+ individuals. In the following section there will be an exploration of generational divides in the LGBT+ community and how this might affect the LGBT+ movement.

In examining the Irish LGBT+ movement I will also apply social movement theory in exploring certain aspects of the movement. This part of the section lays out some of the key areas of social movement theory for consideration for this project.

4.4 SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY CONCEPTS APPLICABLE TO THE IRISH LGBT+ MOVEMENT

Snow (2001) defines collective identity as:

> *in a shared sense of 'one-ness' or 'we-ness' anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity and in relation or contrast to one more actual or imagined sets of others. Embedded within the shared sense of we is a corresponding sense of collective agency* (Snow 2001: online)

The work of Melucci (1995) on European based new social movements demonstrates the shift from traditional class based movement organizing (for example trade unions) to contemporary identity driven groups (LGBT+, environmental, anti-war etc.). For Melucci collective identity is a network of active relationships and he stresses the importance of the emotional involvement of activists in the work of the group. Melucci explores movement groups "submerged networks" (1985) where activists generate cultural meaning through their daily interactions with each other. Unification on movement goals is not entirely necessary and there is movement for activists to disagree on interests or goals as the broad understandings of what brings and keeps activists together dominates. Melucci stressed the importance of, conflict for consolidating an identity through solidarity, emotional ties to the movement on the part of the activists and how a collective identify defines the limits of the movement organisation and regulates those who can join (Melucci 1995).

Gamson (1995) in his work exploring the boundaries defined between Queer and Gay Libertarian activists in the 1990's San Francisco LGBT+ movement noted that activists create identities that establish a reciprocal identification between group members which simultaneously express commonalities and differences from a reference group. Gamson (1997) notes this boundary work is used to establish a division between challengers under

the same movement banner (competing anti-war groups) as much as to differentiate between one movement group and an oppositional group to that movement group. The more protest orientated LGBT Noise, as discussed in Chapter 3 offers a good example of a group that defined itself differently from other LGBT+ groups in an Irish context. LGBT Noise was a non-hierarchal group focused on street protest and public displays of performative activism (such as sit ins and street art). This was to differ themselves from the work of GLEN and other more lobby orientated LGBT+ groups operating at the same time. Participants of this research working in local rural groups denoted the difference of their activism from the national organisations representing LGBT+ people as the rural groups work was focused on awareness raising in rural areas. Rural activists felt that this work was necessary as the national organisations, in their view, was not representing rurally based LGBT+ people well enough.

Giugni (2013) in discussing how social movement researchers analyse success and failure, notes that the focus of the writing is on success and not failure. He argues that while there can be success within groups this sometimes comes at a cost and the measurement of failure is as valuable as measuring success. Haalsa (2009) gives an example of the varying impact of success: "the impact of a progressive legal change can be very different when we are considering everyday personal lives and discourses instead of social policies" (Haalsa 2009). When comparing long and short term goals Gamson (1990) found short term goals are usually more successful. Gamson's (1990) study of fifty-four American organizations found that single issue groups were by far the most successful in realising their objectives. Long term goals can be much harder to measure as they are usually very broad and can incorporate a massive societal change that can take years to accomplish. In looking at long term goals in the black civil rights movement in the US Fox Piven and Cloward state:

> *To be sure, what was won was not enough—neither the gains of the one period nor those of the other. It is not what we wanted. But it is far from being negligible. And over all, it is what seemed possible* (Fox Piven and Cloward, 1979)

Movement organisations need to take 'wins' when they arrive but these 'wins' normally are incremental towards a broader movement goal. Tarrow (1989) offers a differing view of success and failure with a "protest cycle" theory. "Cycles of protest are likely to occur when political conditions reduce the cost of collective action and increase the likelihood of success" (Tarrow 1989). Mizruchi's abeyance process as applied by Taylor (1989) in looking at feminists' movements demonstrates that "social movements maintain continuity between

cycles of peak activity" (Taylor 1989). Flesher Fominaya (2010) in her work on Madrid's anti-capitalist network explored collective identity formation and found that "regular face-to-face assemblies are the crucial arena in which collective identity can form and must be both effective and participatory in order to foster a sense of commitment and belonging" (Flesher Fominaya 2010:377). Drawing on the work of Melucci (1995) and Snow (2001) Flesher Fominaya (2010) argues that failure to generate collective identity at the group level can nevertheless foster collective identity at the network level as activists, working on a project – successful or not – are generating a collective identity through the process. The process of being in the YE campaign has strengthened the resolve of rural participants of this research to continue to participate in their respective LGBT+ groups as they have expressed a stronger tie to both the group and other activists from participating in the campaign. Urban participants of this research however have expressed they no longer have a similar need to participate in LGBT+ activism and are happy to take a step back from activist work for a period of time, pointing more to Taylor's (1989) analysis of abeyance in feminists movements. Urban participants have demonstrated interest in other social justice campaigns (for example the Repeal the 8th movement) and this could be an indication that a form of abeyance is occurring where one campaign is replacing another due to the LGBT+ movements lack of a clear direction in the aftermath of the referendum. Flesher Fominaya (2010) also found that motivations for staying in a group are continually assessed by activists and decisions to remain are complex and incorporate emotional and rational connections to a group. Flesher Fominaya (2010)-sees collective identity both as a result of the process of collective action and the product of collective action. Collective identity from this perspective is internally constructed between members of a social collective or community and also externally produced to communicate campaign and movement goals.

The Irish LGBT+ movement has been broadly successful to date, as seen above, however when we measure success of movements, we cannot assume that movement success reaches all members of the movement equally. Social movement success may be measured differently depending on the lens we apply, be that personal, national or international. Social movement theorist Haalsa states that "the impact of a progressive legal change can be very different when we are considering everyday personal lives and discourses instead of social policies" (Haalsa 2009:14). Social movement theorist Giugni suggests that:

> *collective efforts for social change occur in the realms of culture, identity, and*
> *everyday life as well as in direct engagement with the 'State'. Movements do not*

operate exclusively at the level of revolution, mass mobilisation and major legislative change – they also problematize the ways in which we live our lives and call for changes in the private as well as public sphere (Giugni 1999:71).

In looking at Ghaziani's (2014) 'post-gay' era we see that successful movements bring about cultural changes that can be subtle yet long-term. The decrease in institutional homophobia and Transphobia has led to a more relaxed need, particularly for younger LGBT+ people, for LGBT+ spaces such as gay-bourhoods or gay bars. The closure of these spaces or the encroachment of straight people into these spaces has been heralded as a death knell by some LGBT+ commentators, as discussed above. In measuring what is success and failure Gamson (2013) states that "there is a degree of arbitrariness in drawing a line in the middle of a variable and declaring that the group has failed if the outcomes are not above it" (Gamson 2013: online). Measuring successful outcomes alone leaves open the possibility that this outcome is not considered successful for all members within the movement.

Movement outcomes are nuanced and complicated; a large success can result in a period of abeyance or further spur the movement on to greater wins. A failure can be considered a win when societal norms change or if the visibility of a movement is increased due to a campaign. The resonances of the YE campaign are now unfolding, two years on from the referendum win, whereby the nuanced nature of movement outcomes are becoming evident. Is there a possible moment of abeyance for the LGBT+ movement in the wake of a GLEN closure and a reluctance of funders to fund LGBT+ projects or is the new societal acceptance of same sex relationships creating a less heteronormative Ireland? The data in this project points to a middle point where abeyance is definitely a possibility but there are new activists, particularly politicized young people, coming into movement groups to work on not only LGBT+ issues but broader social justice issues such as abortion rights.

The data that has been gathered for this project will be examined in the next four chapters, exploring engagement by participants with the YE campaign, the post referendum moment for the Irish LGBT+ movement while the final two chapters explore LGBT+ experiences of both identity and location.

5. PARTICIPATION IN THE 2015 'YES EQUALITY' (YE) CAMPAIGN

The 'Yes Equality' (YE) campaign, led by a collection of LGBT+ and human rights organisations was the lead campaign grouping advocating for the 'yes' vote in the 2015 referendum to extend marriage rights to same sex couples. The Irish electorate was asked to vote on an amendment[5] to the constitution that stated "Marriage may be contracted in accordance with law by two persons without distinction as to their sex" (Bunreacht na hÉireann, 2016). If voters agreed with this change they voted 'yes' and likewise if they did not agree they voted 'no'. The campaign against the amendment, here known as the 'No' campaign, was composed of civil society groups that held socially conservative stand points. Many had strong connections to the Catholic Church, while others were established solely to oppose the constitutional amendment. The Catholic Church also took a strong public stance against the referendum. The YE campaign advocating/supporting the amendment was supported by a number of children's rights groups and civil liberty groups as well as LGBT+ groups.

The YE campaign put LGBT+ concerns to the forefront of public consciousness in a way not seen since the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1993. The campaign also unified LGBT+ organizations around a common cause and was the catalyst for the formation of satellite canvas groups throughout the country. Nearly all members of this study participated in the campaign to some extent, either through leadership roles in the direction of the campaign or through door to door canvassing efforts. Sometimes participants were involved at multiple layers of the campaign. This chapter will examine the impact on participants of being involved in the campaign, and how the campaign has affected those in the LGBT+ community in the wake of the referendum win. The chapter explores how the campaign unified a somewhat disjointed community; how it politicized LGBT+ people, particularly young people; how the messaging, particularly the messaging of the 'No' campaign has affected the LGBT+ community and finally how the campaign increased local pride and connection to place for rural activists. In short the outcomes of the YE campaign can be said to be both negative and positive for the activists that were involved.

---

[5] The constitutional amendment involved the insertion of an extra section into Article 41 of the Constitution. The section is Article 41.4 comes at the end of the provisions on marriage of that Article. No changes were made to the existing constitutional provisions on marriage.(The Department of Justice 2015)

5.1 A Unified Movement, if Only Momentarily

For movement leaders, the Yes Equality (YE) campaign was a clear victory over the "tribal" environment of the LGBT+ movement organizations. Participants have noted previously in Chapter 5.1 that certain groups have claimed ownership over parts of the movement, or held "territory". When asked about the movement and its tribal nature Brian, GCN editor, called it

> *an exemplary movement, in that everyone put their weapons down and came together. In minority movements, across the world, you'll see there's always infighting and often that infighting takes the movement down …they completely, for the surface story, put their differences aside to achieve the one goal. They were mature enough not to destroy the facade.* (Brian, Individual Interview)

Brian's feeling that the new-found unity was a "façade" is evident in the coming together of GLEN and Marriage Equality to form the YE campaign. We can see as far as some LGBT+ leaders were considered the movement is disjointed and remains so after the campaign. The rifts that emerged within the movement during the debates around civil partnership and civil marriage, when considered, do give weight to Brian's position. As stated in Chapter 3 the divisions between those in favour and those against civil partnership were pronounced and the debates were a relatively recent memory. YE provided the stimulus for earlier divisions to be overlooked, as Ciarán from NXF explains

> *I think the 'Marriage Equality' campaign really brought that; it brought a level of cohesion together. There had been a level of divisive or different perspectives let's say before 'Marriage Equality,' and around the time that civil partnership were introduced…As in many small movements there can be personality clashes or there can be different emphasis within the movement and I think 'Marriage Equality' campaign has been very good at bringing the movement together, as a whole and providing the movement with a goal.* (Ciaran, Individual Interview)

Joe from GLEN, echoes Ciarán's sentiments and added that the nature of the referendum itself helped.

> *I think the example of the referendum was an example where people set aside differences and came together to work to a common goal and it worked very well and it was a time limited period so people were quite disciplined around that. There's an awful lot of territory that really should not take place in a sector with very limited*

resources and very common goals in general. There is definitely more potential for
more working together and more pooling of resources. (Joe, Individual Interview)

The claim here by Joe that people set aside differences can also be read in terms of the power
dynamics that exist within the movement. The agenda and framing of the message was set
by the larger Dublin based SMO's and the more peripheral smaller groups fell into formation
around these. Joe makes an important point about resources which will be explored further
In Chapter 7. The austerity policies implemented following the 2008 financial crisis have
adversely affected all community and voluntary lead organizations including the LGBT+
organisations that make up the movement as they are heavily reliant on government funding
to implement projects on health and mental health. We can see here how the clear goal of
winning the referendum brought the different factions of the movement together, if only to
achieve the referendum win.

The YE campaign was also a moment where the Dublin based LGBT+ organizations made a
concise effort to reach out to LGBT+ people across the country. Brian from GCN notes,

"I think the larger part of the movement is based in Dublin I think there was a really
strong reaching out on a national level around Marriage Equality. There was a huge
mobilization of people across the country. (Brian, Individual Interview)

Brian's claim that the movement is based in Dublin is debatable, as this study demonstrates
the diversity of groups that are operating around the country under the banner of LGBT+
activism. However the YE campaign did see a connection of these various groupings (national
and provincial) to campaign for a 'Yes vote'. Greg from Leitrim found the YE campaign
empowering and that it gave him a voice he felt he didn't have before.

It is a source of empowerment... It is this power that in the face of the YE Campaign
sometimes others would try and stifle or speak for us but we got to speak for
ourselves and finally be listened to by our friends, family and communities. (Greg,
Individual Interview)

The visibility that campaigners in rural areas strived to attain prior to the YE campaign
received a boost from the campaign and the national coverage the campaign and referendum
received. It also brought many smaller LGBT+ groups together in the absence of any other
forum where they currently meet, as Greg explains

"As I said above it gave Irish LGBT people a taste of how we can work together between our 'tribal' groupings to network and share information and how to empower people to continue speaking".(Greg, Individual Interview)

The lack of any shared space for LGBT+ community activists or leaders was evident through participation in Mullingar Pride. There was no existing LGBT+ group in the town and the closest thing to an established group was a Facebook page for the local canvasing team for YE. To find resources to start or maintain a LGBT+ group outside of Dublin was problematic, as there was nothing in Mullingar to build from and there were no groups that I could look to for guidance. Eventually, I made contact with other groups in the region, but through my own agency of actively reaching out to other groups and I had no support from larger national organisations. One resonance of the YE campaign was a network of social media sites for local groups, many defunct once the campaign finished. The YE campaign page for Westmeath on Facebook provided a starting point to make contact with individuals but as will be discussed in Chapter 7 there are very few opportunities to avail of training, support or guidance when starting or trying to maintain a LGBT+ group in Ireland away from Dublin.

YE created that national space for LGBT+ groups that had been lacking previously and established a network for them to interact with each other with a central point in the form of a campaign headquarters to look to for guidance. Margaret in Mayo Equality sums up the security that activists felt from being part of something national and established for the first time.

It wasn't that we were just sitting here, our little satellite, a disconnected group, we were connected to something much bigger that was happening in the west and the rest of Ireland as well. (Margaret Mayo Equality)

From a Dublin perspective many canvassers where encouraged to canvass in urban areas as the density of houses would yield a greater number of voters reached. Patrick, a Dublin Focus group participant, visited Sligo, where he was born and was struck how people reacted but ultimately was not convinced he was making an impact:

I went down to Sligo and I stood outside Supervalu and people kept saying you're really brave…it was kinda interesting but then I realized it was a waste of energy (Michael, Dublin Focus Group)

The ease of canvasing in Dublin was marked in contrast to how people in rural areas experienced the campaign. One man in Mayo explained to me how he stood outside his local

supermarket, for an entire Saturday in the week leading up to the vote. He lived on an island off the west coast and said as far as he was aware he was the only LGBT+ person living on that island. He was proud of his contribution. This in contrast to an experience Ciara in the Dublin focus group recounted:

> *We had regular canvases where we had 20 people but then we had one with 60. So we had 63 people walking out of this Dublin 7 estate and it looked like a mini Gay pride* (Ciara, Dublin Focus Group).

While the YE campaign brought activists together, under a common cause, like no other LGBT+ issue before in Ireland, the ways in which the campaign was felt by participants was dependent on geography. Many rural activists felt distant from the centre due to lack of material supports, such as posters and leaflets, but were still encouraged by being part of the larger campaign. Urban activists felt part of a larger movement and have very positive responses to the campaign. Rural activists heard of the reports of large canvas groups and noted they felt both buoyed by positive engagement of so many people but also frustrated by the lack of supports they received in their areas. The distance that activists outside of Dublin felt to movement organisations was reinforced by this frustration. While emotions around engagement with the campaign where mixed the YE campaign still led to an increase in politicization as we will see next.

5.2 CASE STUDY OF EQUALITY MAYO AND THE YE CAMPAIGN.

The interactions of a locally based LGBT+ community group, Mayo Equality, are used here to demonstrate some the interactions the YE campaign had with constituent members of the LGBT+ community. The mixed experiences that members of Equality Mayo had of the YE campaign highlight some of the broader issues that are evident from this research in the Irish LGBT+ community. Equality Mayo is a reincarnation of another LGBT+ focused group 'TOST?' which was initiated by the South-West Mayo Development Company and Mayo County Council to create a community space for LGBT people in the county. 'TOST?' worked on a mixture of visibility and community building projects which included; the lighting of a prominent bridge in Castlebar town in the rainbow colours for 'Social Inclusion Week'; the distribution of pride flags to local businesses; the hosting of debates on same sex marriage; social events for LGBT+ people in the town; talks on civil partnership and LGBT+ training for local businesses. The group received support from local business, local government representatives, some politicians representing the area at a national level and local mental

health, family and youth organisations (Toner 2014). While the majority of interactions the group had were positive, they also received some hostile reactions from one group in particular connected to the Christian Solidarity Party. This group have been involved in anti-abortion and anti-same sex marriage campaigns previously (Field Notes 2016). The group, who are based in Mayo, protested many of Equality Mayo's events and the members of Mayo Equality felt harassed and stressed by their presence.

Once the announcement of a referendum on same sex marriage was made in 2015 the group decided to rebrand as Equality Mayo and to campaign for the introduction of same sex marriage. While still focusing on raising awareness of LGBT issues within the region, the group decided to incorporate their awareness raising with referendum campaigning. Visibility and the raising of awareness that LGBT people were based in the town and region were always part of the work of 'TOST?'. Now as Equality Mayo, the group were going to use this plank of their work to bring people in the region into contact with LGBT people in order to open dialogue on why marriage was an important issue for the LGBT community.

Equality Mayo participated in various public events that had no specific gender or LGBT focus but were of cultural importance to the greater public of county Mayo. These events included the St. Patricks Day parade, the Mayo's Women's Mini Marathon and the "Pink Ribbon" bicycle race. The groups attendance at these events always included the use of both LGBT Pride symbols and symbols of Mayo, which included Rainbow and Mayo flags, colourful clothing (the group have green hats with Equality Mayo in rainbow colours written on the front), using the colours of the county flag (red and green) and the wearing of the local GAA team jersey. The incorporation of these symbols of queerness and regionality can be seen as strategic, as the group pursued their objective of raising visibility of an LGBT community in the region through the invocation of these symbols.

In examining Equality Mayo's deployment of a local identity through Bernstein's (1997; 2002) identity deployment concept we can see the group have chosen to emphasis their localness. This emphasis on localness works alongside the groups aim of visibility raising, to tie the group to their locality and to educate the broader population of Mayo on LGBT issues. From Bernstein and Olsen's (2009) continuum, Equality Mayo are at the 'education' pole trying to legitimatise themselves in the minds of locals while also non-confrontationally including symbols of locality with those of the LGBT community. The emphasis on locality is also seen in the claiming of the referendum win in the Mayo constituency as a win for Equality Mayo

and not for the broader 'Yes Equality' campaign. I explore this further in conjunction with Longford LGBT's success claims.

5.2.1 EQUALITY MAYO AND THE MARRIAGE REFERENDUM

The group campaigned around the county for a 'yes' vote in the referendum. For the majority of Equality Mayo members this had been their first time canvasing in an election. They received support and training from staff connected to the Taoiseach's constituency office. While they did receive some support from the national 'Yes Equality' headquarters they did not receive adequate amounts of canvasing materials (leaflets and posters) and so made their own to distribute. As the group is mainly Castlebar based, the largest and most central town within the county, they also worked with other activists to canvas the other towns in the region such as Ballina, Westport and Claremorris with some members canvasing their own local villages and areas alone but with resources from the group. (Field Notes 2016).

A number of incidents, during the marriage referendum campaign, were discussed during the focus group that framed the campaigning experience for Equality Mayo. Firstly when the group approached a number of local politicians with a national profile they were told they would be supported through whatever means possible but where the support did not tie the politicians directly to the 'yes' campaign. For example they were offered training and the use of office equipment but the politicians would not canvas with the group or be seen to support the group in local media or online. One politician explained to the group members that they were afraid of the backlash they might receive and the votes they could lose. The politician talked of certain members of a religious group attacking their office previously in relation to a vote on abortion. The group were strategic in their decisions and took the supports offered to them, as they had very little campaigning experience. This engagement with formal political parties came at the beginning of the campaign and both frustrated Equality Mayo and made them apprehensive of what they would encounter (Field Notes 2016). This example highlights the conditional form of support available to rural based LGBT groups. Due to their peripheral nature in the broader LGBT movement groups like Equality Mayo are pressed to accept conditional support as more formal supports are not forthcoming. Rural politicians were reluctant to canvas for a 'yes' vote during the referendum in rural areas of their constituencies (MidWest Radio 2015). In seeking support for their advocacy work rural LGBT groups, in an Irish context, are still at a disadvantage in accessing political support. This conditional political support is in contrast to the support offered by some urban based

politicians who actively campaigned for and with LGBT organisations during the 'Yes Equality' campaign.

An example of implicit inclusion of Equality Mayo by 'Yes Equality' is evident in the organising of a campaign event with the Taoiseach. At the time of the campaign, Taoiseach Enda Kenny, was a Mayo TD and was running his own national campaign, through his party Fine Gael, for a 'Yes' vote. His constituency office offered assistance to Equality Mayo's campaign. This included one day where the Taoiseach would come to Mayo to participate in a photo-shoot and make a speech with the group. This event was initially initiated and organised by Equality Mayo. On the day of the event it transpired that the 'Yes Equality' headquarters had made contact with the Taoiseach's office in Dublin and assumed the lead in organizing the event. The 'Yes Equality' head office did not inform Equality Mayo of any developments. Equality Mayo members were frustrated at the lack of communication and at having, what they saw, as their event and a central part of their local campaign, taken out of their control. While the group were marginalised in the organisation of what they saw as 'their' event, they continued their alignment with the national campaign. The urgency of the upcoming referendum vote and the campaign momentum was deemed more important than the group members' feelings of frustration. However, events like this have deepened the sense of isolation and an understanding of urban/rural divide for group members.

Mayo Equality provides clear examples of how local identity deployment is used by the group to strengthen the group's ties to their locality. The disconnect between the national movement and the group compounds the groups feelings of isolation and sheds a light on the remoteness of LGBT people in Mayo from LGBT specific services. The local framing of the YE campaign win is explored further and demonstrates the local over national narrative that participants expressed.

5.3 POLITICISATION

One repeated theme, particularly from the grass roots activists, was that the campaign was a success and it had been a long time since these activists felt they had experienced victory. Pat from the Mayo focus group, in speaking about her previous activist work, sums up the importance of the YE campaign for her.

> *While working in London I got involved in campaigns against section 28 and against Thatcher, I feel like I've spent my whole bloody life marching against something. One fantastic thing about the marriage referendum was we won.* (Pat, Mayo Equality)

This sentiment was repeated many times and had particular resonances for activists who were interested in participating in the Repeal the 8th movement, this indicates to me that while participants were still interested in being involved in social justice activism they did not necessarily feel the work on LGBT+ specific causes. Pat also spoke about the effect that the win would have on younger activists, and how she felt that younger people would be more inclined to participate in social movement activity in the wake of such a positive experience. Many of the participants spoke about the politicisation of people, particularly young people, during the YE campaign.

Participants spoke about the Repeal the 8th movement in positive ways and about how they wanted to become a part of this movement. The YE campaign was cited by Patrick as his inspiration in getting involved in the Repeal the 8th movement:

> *It gives me courage to come out and canvass for Repeal the 8th* (Patrick, Dublin Focus Group).

For many LGBT+ activists, in this study, the Repeal the 8th movement is the next goal for them in dismantling, what they see, as Irelands patriarchal legal heritage. This demonstrates how the LGBT+ activists who were involved in the YE campaign have still the desire to participate in social movement activity; this is in contrast to how LGBT+ people reacted to the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the 1990's. Brian started working with GCN around the time of the 1993 decriminalisation of homosexuality, and talked about the highly political atmosphere and content the magazine had at the time. He explained that once the Act was passed and homosexuality was effectively decriminalised that the political edge receded and LGBT+ issues of a political nature became less prevalent in political/social discourse. He does not anticipate the same phenomena in the wake of the YE campaign. Brian notes that during the YE campaign,

> *It became super political and we thought it would bound back into the apolitical, what are we wearing. But it's very interesting to see that it hasn't done so and the Repeal the 8th is an interesting element of that. A lot of people that were fired up by the politicization they are reaching out to grab onto something. It's not become more apolitical and I think it's become more community* [focused] *since that as well.* (Brian, Individual Interview)

Brian also commented about how he felt there was a need for community and that people were, in his opinion, gravitating towards community groups more than before the campaign.

Through participant observation with Mullingar Pride, I feel people are gravitating more towards community groups such as Mullingar Pride; possibly because this is the first time these spaces have been normalised and legitimised in broader society. Likewise, the positive visibility garnered by LGBT+ relationships and being LGBT+ that the campaign brought about allowed rural LGBT+ people the space to join a LGBT+ focused group. For me this is evident in the demographics of Mullingar Pride with the majority of the members being over 50, and having little experience of LGBT+ groups previously. Brian here talks about what he sees are the impacts of the campaign, and how it has not just politicised people, but has changed the way future social justice campaigns will be run.

> *It made everyone an activist. I canvased in Dublin and I canvased in Sligo. I know loads of people in Sligo that canvased, straight and gay and I think it was phenomenal to see people becoming activists for a movement. I think it changed what you can do, all those people coming back to vote, all of those people who registered to vote… but it changed the idea of how through your actions you can affect change, positive change in Ireland. That people can affect positive social change and the Catholic Church has nothing to do with it and can be over-ridden.* (Brian Individual Interview).

Brian's claim that 'everyone' became and activist is quite broad but there was a large engagement of LGBT+ activism which had not happened previously to the same extent. While the campaign did mobilise new people interested in campaigning on social justice issues, some LGTB+ participants expressed a sense of alienation. The sanitised image of the campaign, which often did not even depict LGBT+ people but focused more on straight people connected to LGBT+ people, was difficult for some participants. Also, the lack of nuance in the discussions on the individuals comprising the LGBT+ community; the insistence of the campaign leaders on only using gay and lesbian instead of LGBT, Transgender or queer; and the insistence that marriage rights were the sole goal from the LGBT+ movement for a fixed time period alienated Trans and queer people particularly. As Broden from TENI points out

> *I think the vote did politicise people but it did also alienate a lot of people, like there was a politicisation but then people did grin and bear the referendum message themselves and hold their nose and were just going, we just need this to pass.* (Broden, Individual Interview)

The alienation that some felt is illustrated in how participants spoke about the campaign messaging of the YE campaign. Flesher Fominaya (2010) sees collective identity both as a result of the process of collective action and the product of collective action. While the YE campaign framing was difficult for many within the LGBT+ community, their participation in activism based on this 'official' sense of community has created new connections or strengthened existing ones at the local level. The resonances of both the No and YE campaigns messaging had a large impact on LGBT+ people and is explored further.

5.4 YE CAMPAIGN FRAMING

Broden, former TENI CEO, feels that because the legal changes for the extension of marriage came through a referendum, the messaging needed to be focused and this produced some negative repercussions.

> *Because it was a referendum and the message became very simplified it was this idea*
> *that the marriage equality is going to give you equality. I mean that is ludicrous and*
> *in fairness and I don't think the organizers ever said that or believed that but that*
> *was how it was framed. That isn't true, it's a step.* (Broden, Individual Interview)

Colm O'Gorman, the head of Amnesty International in Ireland and a notable public campaigner for the YE campaign, advocating a Yes vote on national media, spoke at an event in 2017 about contemporary political resistance. The event was organized by GCN and when he was asked about the resonances of the YE campaign, he spoke about the messaging and its impact on subsets of the LGBT+ community

> *The history of that referendum is very troubling not just because we didn't have the*
> *conservations we needed to have after it, on the impact of the referendum and the*
> *impact it had on sections of the community. I think it was known some of the impacts*
> *that were going to result from that but that wasn't processed, that wasn't addressed*
> *or dealt with and the consequences of it. And quite frankly one of the things that*
> *troubles me with what happened directly after it is the mad rush to tell the history.*
> *And the history that is being told of that referendum, in my view and I am routinely*
> *criticized for saying it is profoundly dishonest* (Colm O'Gorman, GCN Town Hall Talks)

Colm then spoke about how this alternative discourse of the referendum win; that the entire LGBT+ community came together with the straight community to win the referendum through telling personal narratives and using the strategy of downplaying LGBT+ identities, is being used in other countries to further LGBT+ rights and in Ireland in other campaigns.

Colm went on to discuss how other movements and other marriage campaigns (particularly Australia) are being policed through this discourse.

> *Not only has that history been rewritten and used to tell another really important campaign in this country* [The Repeal the 8th Campaign] *what to do and it's also been rewritten and I think this is even more worrying is its being used as a model, so this false history is being used as a model of how this should be done in other places.* (Colm O'Gorman, GCN Town Hall Talks)

Marriage Equality learned from Californian referendum on Proposition 8[6] and used the Californian campaign as a reference point of how not to formulate the YE brand and messaging. The Californian messaging centred on same sex couples and how supporting them was a progressive step towards a more inclusive society, it included LGBT+ symbols and couples. The YE campaign focused on centring straight people with lesbian of gay relatives and on how same sex marriage would make lesbian and gay people equal to straight people. The placing of straight people at the centre of the campaign message and speaking to "Middle Ireland" was the approach advocated by GLEN in their previous work. Joe explains that during the campaign for civil partnership LGBT+ people were never the target of GLENs messaging.

> *Perhaps that messaging was too nuanced, it wasn't focused on LGBT people, it was focused on Leinster House where the power to make changes was. That's where our audience was, it wasn't you in Mullingar. If I hear what you're saying, did we bring LGBT people along? I would say probably not as well as we could have, yeah definitely and I think it wasn't deliberate if we had more resources yes we would do both, yes but we didn't and we did then try to have.... I think if we had a person working on LGBT relations or community outreach we would have but we didn't have the resources to direct into that so yeah, I think we could have.* (Joe, Individual interview)

GLEN's success with this approach and the professional manner the YE campaign was run lead many activists to follow the messaging, even if they did not agree with it. Brian from GCN talked about although he was not comfortable with the messaging on some levels he still followed the messaging as he saw this to be the best way to achieve a referendum win.

---

[6] Proposition 8, known informally as Prop 8, was a California ballot proposition and a state constitutional amendment passed in the November 2008 California state elections banning same sex marriage (Washington Post 2013)

You have to suck it up because this is a movement for one thing and these are the people leading it and you just have to go in and do your best. Certain people and certain organisations went by the wayside and that was hard for people who fought long and hard. Anecdotally there were people who felt they weren't heard or that their efforts were not going, or being marked or celebrated. We were the first country to vote for it, every though it should never have gone to a referendum to begin with. At the end of the day who gives a fuck, who gets the glory or how the newspapers reported it or how the west was won. It was won. (Brian, Individual Interview)

Broden spoke about this impact and how it is now becoming an obstacle to the work of the trans movement.

There was a danger post referendum that gay people, in the eyes of society all looked a certain way, they all wanted a certain thing. Marriage primarily set us back in a way. And yes some people do [want to be married] *and yes they should definitely get that if they want that, but not all LGBT people want that and that's not necessary the priority for a lot of people. I would really like to see conversations that go beyond that.* (Broden, Individual Interview)

Broden's wish to see more conversations around the barriers that LGBT+ people are facing in a post YE environment is echoed by participants in this study. For many, the referendum while hugely successful was still a difficult period. Activists endured high levels of stress during the campaign and once the referendum was over there was very little coming together to address this. Another contributor to this high stress environment was the impact of the 'No' campaign and how their messaging adversely affected many within the LGBT+ community, this will be explored further.

5.5 THE IMPACT OF THE 'NO CAMPAIGN'

For participants of this study the impact of the No campaigns messaging, against the extension of marriage rights, was profound. The stress of the campaign was experienced and mitigated in different ways, one important factor of this was the participants' location. Many talked about how they felt once they encountered the messages through the media or on the campaign posters. The messaging, which centred on gay and lesbian parents depriving children of a mother or father was deeply troubling for many. Hayley who categorized the 'No' campaign as a "dirty campaign" spoke about the impact of the posters on her

> *I would go to work every day, past a bunch of posters and I would be in tears everyday going to work and I am genuinely as hard as nails...What those posters were telling me was that I was not a fit parent and I had colleagues coming into me on Monday saying you will not believe what the priest was saying on Sunday.* (Hayley, Individual Interview)

Hailey's experience mirrored that of others, for many living outside of urban areas the 'No' posters where the only posters in their locality. The lack of campaign funding that YE had meant that they could not get access to posters with 'Yes' messaging around the country as effectively as the 'No' campaign. Equality Mayo members talked about the struggle they had with the YE HQ to get posters to their area and how they felt that their campaign in Mayo was not a priority for the national campaign. While posters did arrive, in the interim the Equality Mayo group created their own posters to counter some of the 'No' messaging.

The impact of the No campaign messaging on individuals was varied but many had negative and emotional reactions to the messaging. Michelle in the Dublin Focus group discussed how she felt after watching a TV debate where the No campaign had equal share of the airtime.

> *I would say that, that night I spent not sleeping was one of the most distressing nights I have spent on earth...much more the media coverage upset me way more than any experience on the door step* (Michelle, Dublin Focus Group)

The Dublin focus group discussed how unhappy they were that the No campaign were allowed to, in their view, scaremonger the public around LGB headed families. David referred to the media preoccupation of portioning airtime equally to each group in an attempt to be impartial as "a few nutcases got 50% of the time" (David, Dublin Focus Group). Ciara from the Dublin group did note that there was a larger risk in letting laws relating to minority rights be amended by referendum as it put many peoples mental health at risk:

> *Sometimes I do get a kind of a shiver and think, luckily it went to a 'yes' [the referendum result] but was it right that the mental health, wellbeing and safety of a minority group was placed in the hands of the majority?* (Michelle, Dublin Focus Group)

A demonstration of the uneven spread of resources across the country is demonstrated by Síle when she explains her own feelings after the referendum and how she sought support from a Dublin based LGBT+ centre:

I went to an emotional debriefing, the campaign were aware that you were going through an emotional mood swings and having all the feelings (Síle, Dublin Focus Group)

Síle was in a position where she was close to a resource, provided of the YE campaign, where she could debrief and recover from the emotional strain of the campaign. Rural activists noted how they banded together for emotional support as there were very few such resources. The impact of a lack of resources and specific LGBT+ services for rural activists was quite stark when we take into account what Hayley in Leitrim recounts. Hayley who lives in the only electoral region that rejected the referendum feels like the 'No' messaging has permitted individuals to air homophobic or transphobic sentiment following the referendum.

I feel that campaign activated a great deal of homophobia actually. People have been given the space to be homophobic and think its ok....there was a great deal of hatred generated and it was generated by the' No' campaign and the church. ..When the campaign is won and everybody is jumping up and down there's very little room to counter act that 'No' side. There just isn't the place any more (Hayley, Individual Interview)

Hayley's comments are in contrast to what Dublin activists feel in the after math of the campaign. Ciara and Michelle feel like homophobic and transphobic words and actions will no longer be tolerated in a post YE Ireland in the following exchange

Michelle: *I won't accept other people being intolerant of me*

Ciara: *and I think other people know that won't be accepted.* (Dublin Focus Group)

During the conversation in the Dublin focus group about the No vote of Roscommon/South Leitrim, Ciara commented:

I'll probably never go to Leitrim or Roscommon (Ciara, Dublin Focus Group)

Hayley's comments on the lack of reflection for the community and the movement in the wake of the referendum win, resonates with Colm O'Gorman's take on the retelling of history. When I first proposed the focus group to the leaders of Mayo Equality they were very happy as they felt they had not addressed the experience of the referendum collectively and wished to do so.

Áine Duggan, former CEO of GLEN at the time of its closure was also present at the GCN event where Colm O'Gorman spoke about the YE campaign resonances. I asked her a question from the floor about leadership in the Irish LGBT+ movement and she responded by saying:

> *There is a feeling that organizations around the country are not sure what the strategy is what the agenda is and there is a need for a regroup and a rethink. There are a lot of people who felt excluded by the referendum and we need to be big enough and bold enough to have that conservation. I think the leadership is not right there this second, you can't see it but I think the commitment is there to have it re-emerge over the next few months* (Áine Duggan, GCN Townhall Talks)

5.6 WE WON – WE ARE NOT ROSCOMMON

"We would have been Roscommon, we would have been red" (Emily, Mayo Equality).

Activists from rural focus groups consider their work during the 2015 marriage referendum as a key factor in their region voting to pass the amendment. Mayo voted 'Yes' to the amendment by 52%, Longford – Westmeath voted 'Yes' by 53.6%, the only constituency in the country to vote 'No' was Roscommon- South Leitrim, which voted no by 51.4% (The Journal 2016). These narrow margins of victory and defeat were seen by participants in both groups as being down to their canvassing of voters. While local activists in rural areas took inspiration from the YE campaign, the victory is not claimed as just a national victory for the LGBT+ community but as a success for the activists that worked on the ground to make it happen. Participants cited the Roscommon- South Leitrim defeat as a clear example of how their regions would have voted if they (and their respective groups) had not mobilised to pass the amendment. The participants did not see the work of the larger movement in orchestrating the wins in their constituencies. According to participants the local canvassing of their respective groups was the catalyst that pushed their regions into the margins of victory. Both groups talked at length about the huge amount of time and resources they put into the campaign, about the emotional strain it had on some members, and how the groups were spaces of recuperation and support at the end of difficult canvasses or events.

Mick from Longford talks about the ground campaigns effect, as he saw it

> *"Without the Yes Equality group, not to blow our own trumpet, but without this group in Longford, I think the vote might have been about 30%, 'Yes' in Longford but by the time, it could have even been less... and we, I think, managed to carry, I think,*

a huge percentage of the population in Longford with us by going door to door and telling our stories, not by some abstract argument about changes to the constitution but what was it like for us to grow up in this way" (Mick Longford LGBT).

The ground campaign of canvasing, information events and publicity campaigns were, for both of these groups, almost independent of the national campaign. Rural participants neither discredited the national campaign's tactics nor messaging but, in fact, praised how well the campaign was run, at a national level. However, the participants did not see the impact of TV debates and national campaign strategies impacting locally to the same extent as their own efforts on the ground. Rural groups have claimed the marriage referendum win as a local win for their respective groups instead of a win for the national movement. This local over national standpoint stems from local identity deployment in conjunction with the marginalisation the groups felt both over time and during the 'Yes Equality' campaign.

In this chapter I explored the impacts of the YE campaign on those who took part in the campaign and for the broader movement as a whole. The campaign, although successful in its aim to pass a 'yes' vote in the same sex marriage referendum, also has had some unintended consequences both positive and negative as is evidenced in the case study of Equality Mayo. While mobilising new activists to not only LGBT+ issues but other causes such as the repealing of abortion legislation, the YE campaign also alienated some LGBT+ people through the sanitised messaging. The adverse effects of YE messaging was compounded further by the negative and at times homophobic campaign by the 'No' campaign which affected many participants negatively.   The adverse effects were not addressed comprehensively in the aftermath of the campaign as there was no centralised response to deal with any negative consequences of the referendum, particularly as the narrative of victory was quite strong. Likewise, the understanding of funders and wider society that LGBT+ individuals are now 'equal' to their heterosexual counterparts means the ability of organisations to secure funding or achieve goals is being curtailed. The following chapter will explore in more detail the current environment of LGBT+ activism in Ireland.

6. The Irish LGBT+ Movement in the Post 'Yes Equality' Moment

This chapter looks at Irish LGBT+ movement organisations in the post 'Yes Equality' (YE) moment. The mobilization of people around YE was unprecedented for a LGBT+ cause in an Irish context and as we have seen in the previous chapter brought the movement out of its urban centres to engage with all parts of the country. The YE campaign demonstrated the potential for national organising around LGBT+ issues but this potential has not been fully realised by the leadership of LGBT+ movement organisations. To illustrate this, this chapter will look at the work of 'LGBT Diversity', a rural LGBT+ project funded by Atlantic Philanthropies which demonstrated the potential for a more inclusive and representative movement. Finally this chapter will then explore some of the issues that demonstrate how the movement has not reached the potential of the YE campaign while finally looking at the current state of the national organisations in the movement. It will also examine how these organisations could start to unleash the potential of the YE campaign again and work towards a more representative movement.

6.1 Irish LGBT+ Networks

The lack of communication between different LGBT+ groups around the country has been evident through participant observation and analysis of focus group data. In addition, analysis of data demonstrates there is almost no collaboration on different projects between LGBT+ groups or between LGBT+ groups and the national LGBT+ organisations. Groups are working independently of other groups in their vicinity, and almost exclusively independently from the work of national organisations. The YE campaign was an exception to this, as documented in Chapter 6. Another exception was the 'LGBT Diversity' project that was funded by Atlantic Philanthropies[7], and ran for three years from 2009 to 2012. The aim of the project was:

> *to address the particular concerns and needs of LGBT people living outside of Dublin who are often an afterthought in the larger LGBT community* (Atlantic Philanthropies 2013).

---

[7]Atlantic Philanthropies is a private philanthropic foundation created in 1982 by Irish-American businessman Chuck Feeney and has funded numerous Irish and international projects.

This project was operationalized through three workers who developed regional strategies that supported locally based LGBT groups. Hayley was the regional worker for the West and North West and explains in a 'LGBT Diversity' document the proposed outcomes of the project:

> *One of the challenges that face the rural LGBT community is the limited infrastructure that keeps us from coming together. There were two main outcomes of this grant. One was the development of a social network where rural isolation was targeted. The other was a movement toward involvement in civic life. I've witnessed a much increased number of people who are willing and able to identify as LGBT within the local community.* (Hayley as quoted in Atlantic Philanthropies 2013)

The aim of training local LGBT+ activists and linking these activists into broader services (both national and LGBT+ specific) was seen by Atlantic Philanthropies as a way to create a more even movement where all LGBT+ people could find access to both community and LGBT+ activism. When I asked Hayley as to what she saw as the biggest loss of the 'LGBT Diversity' program (which had been closed for 5 years when I spoke with her), she replied:

> *The networking that is lost by having a support worker. What 'Diversity' did was to communicate between groups and organizations and to act as go between in some sense between new community or emerging community groups and statutory [agency's], the [biggest loss to the community is] of knowledge and networking* (Hayley, individual interview).

Hayley commented in another part of our interview that when she started in 'LGBT Diversity', the groups she met with were very hostile to each other. She felt there was a lot of territorialism among them. However, once these groups were brought together by an independent source, she noted how they found common ground easily and worked well together. Hayley attributed this territorialism to funding shortages and a competition for resources.

On an individual level there can be a lack of opportunity for LGBT+ people, particularly in rural environments, to access any form of community or movement group. Margaret from the Mayo focus group highlighted her and her partner's reluctance to join a LGBT+ group because they felt there were none that reflected their needs. The only group in the region that existed, prior to the establishment of Equality Mayo, was male dominated, with many of the members still closeted, and was primarily for social interaction. The lack of community

and other LGBT+ people in their lives pushed them to seek out a LGBT+ group that reflected them:

> *Yeah, well I suppose when we met we weren't part of any organisation before that. And after maybe two or three years we realised we didn't know anybody else who was gay, we certainly didn't know anybody else who were women and had kids and that was really important to us to, I suppose, not feel alone. When I think we were maybe about two or three years together at that stage* (Margaret, Equality Mayo).

Margaret explained that she travelled to Dublin with her partner to meet with another lesbian couple with children before joining a lesbian group in Roscommon. Travelling to engage with forms of community or activism was a strong theme for many rural participants, as noted in Chapter 5.3. The lack of opportunity to come together and the difficulties of travel are reiterated by Greg in Leitrim.

> *One aspect I was heartened by was the National LGBT Federation's survey [2016 Burning Issues 2] and focus groups being run as a means to encourage local community groups to come together but when travel and costs eventually feature this can all too often be short-lived* (Greg, Individual Interview)

Here, Greg draws attention to the lack of any meaningful interaction that local groups have with each other. The NXF research was purely a data gathering exercise but an outcome, for Greg, was the opportunity to network with other LGBT+ activists. However the relationships formed could not be sustained because of the problem geographical distance presents to sustaining any interaction between the activists in the North West region where Greg is based. Greg noted that his reliance on public transport makes networking and accessing training difficult. Participants have expressed a need for sustained networking, as articulated by Brian from GCN who felt that:

> *There's a demand around community, I can really feel it. I can see it through the level of contact with the community* (Brian, Individual Interview).

This is particularly evident in areas outside of Dublin where community is harder to access, due to the smaller number of groups that exist, and the geographical distances between them. The LGBT+ census carried out for this study counted eight LGBT+ focused groups in the North West, West and Midlands. There is one LGBT+ community centre in the West and North West situated in Galway city. These groups cover huge distances and only meet sporadically leaving access to community for LGBT+ rural people difficult.

One of the recurring themes emerging from this research in rural areas was that the groups often had more contact with local authorities (such as county councils), or local development funding organisations such as LEADER, than with national LGBT+ organisations. Both Longford LGBT and Equality Mayo had received support from their local county council; this was in the form of funding, organisational support such as office space or access to a telephone, or in the form of training. Longford LGBT members discussed their remoteness to BeLonG To, the national LGBT+ youth service. From their interactions with the service, Longford participants do not believe the service to be a national service. Parents of a young (12/13 year old) transgender person approached the group looking for a local youth service they could engage with on behalf of their child. The family was based in Leitrim. The Longford group contacted BeLonG To and were told that there was a BeLonG To group in both Athlone and Sligo. On further enquiry, they found that the Athlone group was not yet fully established, and the Sligo group had ceased working. The parents now bring the child to a Dublin BeLonGTo group once a month. Examples such as this have, in turn, made the Longford group reluctant to seek support from national LGBT+ organisations. Anger at a strong city-rural Ireland divide was expressed. Participants felt that services existed to solely serve the urban populations. If Longford residents sought to participate in a LGBT+ specific service it would not be provided. It was the understanding of participants that if you wanted specific LGBT+ services, you had to travel to Dublin, or another urban centre. When members described the services they would like to see in their area their responses were negative and pessimistic as they could not see national organisations engaging with their group or their locality in any meaningful way. The lack of services and infrastructure available to rural LGBT+ groups and individuals, as well as the perception that these services would not be extended beyond urban centres to accommodate rural LGBT+ people, increases the reluctance of groups like Longford LGBT to engage with national movement organisations. This disengagement from the broader LGBT+ community is a symptom of the marginalisation that rural dwellers feel. Through participation in Mullingar Pride and through the network of other LGBT+ groups that were developed through that participation it is understood that the majority of funding steams available to locally based LGBT+ organisations come from local county council community funds. There are few funding streams available to community groups to focus on community building outside of these county council grants, the national LGBT+ organisations as mentioned in Table 2.4 in Chapter 2, have no funding available to support locally based community work and instead focus on building their own capacity and supporting their own projects. In a much broader sense the lack of available funding for

locally based groups supporting LGBT+ populations speaks to the lack of funding available to other locally based groups supporting minority populations. Cullen and Murphy's (2016) work on how austerity has impacted Irish feminist groups demonstrate that while groups are resisting retrenchment, they are doing so in an absence of intersectional solidarities. The impact of government spending on community groups has impacted their ability to support the communities they represent fully and this is the case for Irish LGBT+ groups as it is the case for other representative groups across Irish civil society.

Institutions such as County Councils also offer an established and respected ally for LGBT+ groups working in rural areas. Ann from Equality Mayo noted that council support gave an air of legitimacy to their group when they felt it was not receiving supports from LGBT+ groups in Dublin.

> *The county council, massively important, mainstream, support for a real virgin group, as we were coming out. I mean that's hugely important as its saying to mainstream society that the county council are supporting us, like that just gives you a whole different weight* (Ann, Equality Mayo).

The lack of support from national LGBT+ organisations, coupled with the support of local institutions of power, further reinforces the idea for rural LGBT+ groups that the YE campaign success was a local success and not a national movement win. YE activism at the local level has led to better local political support and connections between local activists but this has not extended into a comprehensive national network of activists and organisations. The isolation from national organisations, coupled with participants' hard work and dedication at a local level, compounds the feeling that the advocacy and support for the LGBT+ community is predominantly Dublin focused. Consequently activists felt the need to focus on local issues to support themselves; including searching for locally based funding streams to fund localised projects as they feel the national organisations can not or will not support them. This localism seems to be exacerbated further by the lack of funding which creates tension between groups and is stopping collaborative work between groups. The closure of 'LGBT Diversity' and the untapped potential of the YE campaign are explored further when the issues for grassroots activists are unpacked. The difficulties that grassroots rural activism face demonstrate further the uneven nature of the Irish LGBT+ movement.

6.2 RURAL GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM IN IRISH LGBT+ MOVEMENT

Many of the leaders of the grass roots organisations, particularly those based outside of the Dublin area spoke about how their LGBT+ activism began in an urban location. Many had lived abroad and were activists outside Ireland before they moved back. The reasons for returning to Ireland were varied. Some older activists returned to Ireland to care for relatives, while younger activists had studied in an Irish city or abroad and returned home after graduation. The younger activists identified LGBT+ societies in their third level institutions as their first encounter with LGBT+ activism. Older activists who started their activism while living outside Ireland had done so largely in relation to protests against homophobic public policy decisions. Hayley, who is based in the North West, is from Liverpool. She indicated that she felt this conferred an outsider status on her, which to a degree was advantageous. To explain she referred to a point frequently made by her partner:

> My partner always says "Oh Hailey is from Liverpool, she'll put her head over the parapet whenever she sees the need" and I do think the different cultural background has assisted me greatly in the LGBT activism I have done here… [non Irish people] sometimes stand up and in the way where people would accept a stranger standing up [easier than if] you were from the town (Hayley, Individual Interview).

Ann, based in Mayo, had lived in Germany for nearly 15 years and was an activist there. She highlighted how the volume of activism there made it easy to become involved.

> Like Berlin was, yeah, well a lot happens in Berlin and there's always something going on and you almost feel you're not doing enough because there's so much happening around you (Ann Equality Mayo).

Greg's experience of activism while being a university student spurred him to bring what he had learned in university back to his home town:

> I remember thinking how great would it be if I could get trained as a volunteer and work towards bringing that experience back to the North-West (Greg, Individual Interview).

While Greg intended to bring his newly acquired activism back to his home place, for some LGBT+ people returning to Ireland meant an escape from the relentless pressures associated with activism. Pat, in speaking about her move to Ireland from the UK, explains how she initially enjoyed not having any activism to engage in or being asked to participate in anything:

> *To be honest with you, when we first came over here it was nice not to know anyone. It was one of the things I actually enjoyed was, there wasn't going to be anyone knocking on the door* (Pat, Equality Mayo).

Those who stated that they enjoyed the lack of activism when they returned to Ireland noted that they got involved again once they saw an opportunity to participate in a group that they connected with. Individuals with experience in activism from abroad or from university societies are present in all three focus groups. Their experience and training (formal or informal) received while in a group outside Ireland or in university were important components of their activism work in Ireland. While almost all focus group members had never previously participated in political canvassing, they were able to include grassroots activist skills in their repertoire of campaigning work. These included public talks, public demonstrations or protests, and the canvassing of elected officials. The opportunities for up-skilling are very limited in rural Ireland, as the only LGBT+ specific training for activists is based in the cities. The lack of convenient available training has led to rural groups becoming hubs of sharing and mentoring for activists without prior experience. The asset of an activist with previous experience is evident when the leadership of rural LGBT+ groups is considered. Many who do not have the skills base from previous campaigns are reluctant to put themselves forward as leaders. This, in turn, puts further pressure on those who do take leadership positions in rural based groups, leading to burnout and frustration.

6.3 LEADERSHIP, NEGATIVITY AND BURNOUT

Burnout was discussed by leaders, particularly after the YE campaign, as a regular outcome of activism for LGBT+ activists. Joe, who worked for GLEN, explained his departure from the organisation simply as:

> *I was burnt out, I just wanted to be a… I didn't want to be a professional gay any more. It might be a joke but it's actually true* (Joe, Individual Interview).

The 'No Campaign's' framing has had a profound effect on participants in this study as documented in Chapter 5. Respondents noted feeling depressed, alienated and angry by the 'No campaign'; feelings which remain for some, particularly in rural areas. In the Cabra focus group participants noted that they were still aware of parts of the city that had voted 'no' or were negative when canvassed by the group. As a result, participants now avoid what they now consider to be homophobic enclaves in their neighbourhood. However, there are more prevalent, longer term examples of burn out discussed by participants in rural areas. The lack

of services; the difficulties in forming and maintaining groups; difficulties around the geographical spread and lack of transport options; and the isolation from larger LGBT+ organisations and projects, have all contributed to the burn out of rural LGBT+ activists.

Hayley spoke about the intensity of LGBT+ rural activism. When I asked her about burn out in the wake of the YE campaign she responded:

> *To an extent, grassroots activists got burnt out earlier than that. I mean they still did that campaign [YE] and they went out all over again, but you know I think some organisations got burnt out before that, just by the intensity of it* (Hayley, Individual Interview).

Whilst discussing the intensity of rural LGBT+ activism, Hayley repeated what others had noted before: isolation, lack of access to LGBT+ specific supports, transport issues, and lack of people interested to run campaigns and groups. Longford LGBT is an interesting example, of how adequate training and support can help a group form and thrive. The Longford group was set up with the help of 'LGBT Diversity', and the members were supported in the early stages of establishing their group. The committee was trained by 'LGBT Diversity' and they were assisted in making connections with local resources such as the local HSE (Health Service Executive), health promotion personnel, and administrators in the local county council that could assist the group. During the Longford LGBT focus group a prominent issue for participants was that of recruitment and retention of members. On the three occasions I met with the group they spoke about the difficulty in getting new members and younger people involved in the group. This is especially of concern to the longer serving members, who have been involved since the outset of the group. During one meeting, there was a discussion about how the group has "plateaued" since the referendum, with some members concerned about sustaining the group's existence due to a general lack of interest in events. The lack of support that the group receives from other LGBT+ groups and national LGBT+ organisations is articulated by some members as a key factor in the lack of progress. Another frustration for the group is that they believe there is a large population of gay men in the locality choosing not to engage with the group. The Longford members make this assumption based on dating applications such as 'Grindr', which is location based. The members have tried many different styles of communicating their group and its work and still do not get an increased uptake in members. The members are discouraged that none of these men (that they have viewed on the applications) are interested in becoming involved in the group. Mick,

in speaking about the organisation of an art event by the group in Longford town, provided an example of the reluctance of people to be involved in locally based LGBT+ events:

We were doing the Pride Art thing and, I don't know, but 60 people in the region I messaged on Grindr, not one of them showed up like. You know, where are all the young people, why are they not getting more involved in more political aspects of the LGBT movement or gay movement? (Mick Longford LGBT).

Ghaziani's (2015) 'post-gay' lens provides a theoretical framework within which to understand why LGBT+ groups are experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining members. The data emerging from this research supports Ghaziani's (2015) theory and can be understood as another example of community disengagement due to a decrease of homophobia. With higher levels of societal acceptance, people are less inclined to feel the need to be part of LGBT+ specific groups. The findings of this research, however, point to continued levels of latent homophobia and transphobia in rural Ireland, and the continuing exclusion of LGBT+ people from traditional community spaces such as GAA clubs, schools, and the church, as cited by participants. There may be a fear, for some at least, to be seen as part of a LGBT+ group as they may not be 'out' to family or friends. As previously highlighted by Haddock (2016) and Oswald and Culton (2003) rural environments do not offer the anonymity that urban environments do, and being visibly 'out' in a rural environment is still dangerous at most, and unpleasant at least for some LGBT+ people.

Leadership was also problematic in rural areas. In my observations of how different LGBT+ groups operate, there is a tendency for certain individuals to drive the work of the group. Greg, who runs a LGBT+ group in the North West, gives an account of his position within the group.

As I said I am working as a Coordinator for the group. I am aiming to make this role a bit more about the community outreach side of things and enable and encourage others to meet and take part in the group. Basically, I'm the first point of contact and can help members to polish ideas and help promote them in the right areas (Greg, Individual Interview).

Greg elaborated by explaining how he travels to Dublin to receive training from the national organisations which he then in turn provides to his group's members. While the presence of training, at some level is welcomed, the availability and access of LGBT+ specific training is primarily aimed at serving those in or around the Dublin region. Activists must travel to avail

of training opportunities and this can be difficult for some. Both Greg and Hayley mentioned the lack of public transport that served their region and how this impacted on people's ability to attend events. Through participation in Mullingar Pride I observed reluctance by individuals to take on leadership positions. Participant observation from this research indicates two key explanations for this reticence. Firstly, individuals felt they did not have adequate skills to take on a leadership role, compounded by a lack of locally based training schemes for them to avail of. Secondly, as commented on by rural activists in Chapter 5.3, being out in a rural environment leaves an individual exposed and often vulnerable. Taking on a leadership position in a LGBT+ group serves to accentuate that person's LGBT+ status. This can be a daunting prospect for those living in rural or small town settings.

In summary, the difficulties that LGBT+ rural activists face in comparison to their urban counterparts are not just hindering activism and community building in rural areas, but in some cases are stilting any group formation at all. The lack of support from the Dublin centred LGBT+ organisations for the formation of new groups in towns and rural areas is hindering LGBT+ community development. This lack of support, combined with the lack of funding available from statutory agencies to provide adequate LGBT+ specific services results in; a lack of training; a lack of motivation to join groups; high levels of frustration for LGBT+ rural activists; and high burnout rates among leaders. These conditions for limited movement resources impact on the potentiality for movement growth and limits political opportunities. Looking at the national LGBT+ movement organisations in the post YE moment, this situation of rural isolation is not a current priority.

6.4 National Organizations GLEN, TENI and NXF

The fieldwork for this research was conducted in late 2016 and early 2017 when GLEN was still in operation. Along with GLEN there are a number of LGBT+ organizations that claim a national remit, namely the National LGBT Federation (NXF), the Trans Equality Network, Ireland (TENI), BeLonG To, a youth service for LGBT+ young people, and the LGBT helpline, a phone and internet based service for LGBT+ to contact with queries. As discussed previously by participants, many are unhappy with the level of service and the reach of these organisations. From an organisational perspective they are deeply constrained by low levels of funding, staff and general resources. In the following section, data gathered from interviews with leaders from NXF, GLEN and TENI about the movement's future are reviewed.

When Joe from GLEN was asked about the movement, he expressed a negative outlook for organisations working on LGBT+ issues:

> *If you're talking about the organisations, my sense is, I think they are probably are struggling because, you know, they have come out of [the last decade] with a lot of philanthropic funding in the NGO sector to that funding stopping. There is a rebalance, and it has come at a critical time, as people have invested huge amounts of time and energy. I think ordinary LGBT people have taken their foot off the pedal a little bit, you know they have done lots of organising here, and I don't need to continue that. So I think the groups are struggling a bit and struggling to see what their purpose is and what their objective are in the face of all that change and with reduced resources* (Joe, Individual Interview).

Atlantic Philanthropies, the funders of 'LGBT Diversity', have also been key philanthropic funders of a number of LGBT+ organisations, namely GLEN, TENI and Marriage Equality, who ran the YE campaign F*rom 2004 to2013, Atlantic Philanthropies provided these four LGBT+ organisations with $11.5m to increase LGBT+ visibility, improve human rights for queer communities and provide services.*(Atlantic Philanthropies 2013). These funding streams have now come to a close and, as Joe has stated, this leaves these organisations without a key funding source that has not been replaced. As stated previously 'LGBT Diversity', Marriage Equality and GLEN have now all disbanded leaving only TENI in situ.

Broden, former TENI CEO, noted that funding was vital to the work of his organisation, but it was also constraining at times:

> *There is a lot of emphasis from funders to do these tick box exercises. This would have been true for the ME too, the funders for Marriage Equality would have said winning a referendum would be perfect, you tick that box. It is a very easy to measure outcomes in that way.*

> *Once [gender recognition] came in they stopped funding us. That was very specific. Which, in fairness to them, was what they always said they were going to fund us for. It's dictated by that and similarly when you are working in this sphere you are somewhat constrained, now within that you can do a lot* (Broden, Individual Interview).

When funding is tied to a specific public policy or legal goal the scope for developing a community organisation or more broadly a movement is hindered. Broden spoke about the

pressures that funding put LGBT+ lead organisations under, and how it creates a competitive atmosphere. In speaking about the inclusion of Trans voices in the work of other LGBT+ organisations work he noted,

> *I think over the years there has been a frustration around the (trans) community and within TENI that the LGBT organisations haven't meaningfully included the trans, but I think that is something that is fairly commonly spoken about or believed. Part of that is priorities lay in other areas. That did come up in the ME referendum that there was a lack of trans engagement. But I do think its improving; we do work with Belong To, GLEN, NXF. It's tough because there is limited resources and everybody is trying to survive, trying to do the important work they do. By and large it's pretty good* (Broden, Individual Interview).

Ciarán, former NXF Co-chairperson, talked about the lack of funding the NXF has received, with the exception of the funding earmarked for the publication of GCN, and noted that it hindered the work the organisation does and has the ability to do. In talking about NXF, he noted that the federation is just a descriptive term as:

> *There was a time it was an actual federation, it isn't now (*Ciarán, Individual Interview).

Ciarán notes that the NXF is no longer a federation as it was previously where LGBT+ groups around the country were advocated for, and shared the NXF as a common platform for change, networking and support. Currently the NXF is a small committee working almost exclusively in Dublin whose main objective is the management of GCN, with little further national remit. This notwithstanding, Ciarán does see NXF as having intrinsic value within the LGBT+ community:

> *We see ourselves as an umbrella role for representing the LGBT community across Ireland as a whole and maybe being a sounding board for the needs of that community* (Ciarán, Individual Interview).

Ciaran also noted the NXF and

> *GCN had a pivotal role in developing the* consciousness *around marriage equality amongst LGBT people* (Ciarán, Individual Interview)

Away from the GCN the way the NXF exerts influence on behalf of the community is tenuous as the organisation has very little contact with individuals on the ground. Not only is the NXF

a federation without affiliated groups, it is also a member-less organisation. Ciarán explains this is again down to a lack of resources:

> *We have no money, we have no funding other than for GCN and we have no members really. I remember talking to a friend of mine who I was in college with and he was saying how you define a successful organisation and he said you either have members or you have money. We are demonstrating that as an organisation now we are achieving more than we set out with very little money or members* (Ciarán, Individual Interview).

While Ciarán's claim maybe overstated, the GCN is successful in its mission of providing a voice by and for the LGBT+ community. However, no other NXF project has had a similar impact. The Burning Issues 2, the key project of the NXF in 2016 has yet to be applied in any meaningful way in either a policy push or in a campaign for LGBT+ people. Through participation in Mullingar Pride and focus group facilitation, most LGBT+ individuals I encountered do not know of the NXF. The same does not apply to GCN. There is little to no input into the NXF from community members and the organisation does not do any outreach work to members of the community. Emblematic of the Dublin centred nature of national organisations, the Burning Issues 2 survey was the first time the organisation went outside of Dublin to conduct its research. This research coincided with a period of change in the NXF committee. It was observed that the process of recruiting new members was quite opaque. When I questioned Ciarán on this point he noted it was a "recruitment style process", and that it was not conducted through a public meeting nor by consultation with community members. He did note the NXF were trying to diversify its membership to include Trans and migrant voices.

While NXF is ineffective in its role as a national representative organisation, and has little to no community contact, GLEN was very effective at setting policy agendas on LGBT+ issues. However it too did not have much community contact. As stated in Chapter 6.3, GLEN was very clear about its focus; implementation of LGBT+ inclusive public policy; and did not purport to be a community organisation in the aftermath of the YE campaign. With a new CEO in 2017, there was a push by GLEN to become more community development focused to service the needs of community groups throughout the country. When I interviewed Broden, former TENI CEO, he commented on how he, like many in the community, saw GLEN as a possible flagship organisation for building a stronger nationwide LGBT+ community:

I think most groups want to survive, which is part of the non-profit industrial complex as well, like theoretically if you are working in a non-profit you are working to end your job, right. But in reality people just shift priorities which makes sense because things are never going to be perfect. GlEN is a good example, Marriage Equality ended, which made sense. What GLEN does now in the aftermath is, GLEN has always had other programs out there, 'Diversity Champions', around HIV/AIDS but a big chunk of their work over the last while has been Marriage Equality so where do they kinda go from there. I guess we will see when they get their new director (Broden, individual Interview).

On building stronger community ties and a more inclusive LGBT+ community, Broden added:

We all need to take responsibility. Maybe that is what GLEN will end up doing, I mean they are a national organisation. I don't know who that falls on, I don't know and who convenes and creates a platform I don't know. Somebody should though (Broden, individual Interview).

As Brian, current GCN editor, noted earlier, there is a "need for community", particularly as demonstrated outside of the larger urban areas. This was acknowledged by the former GLEN CEO Ann Duggan, as documented in Section 5. With the loss of GLEN, there is potential for the mantel of stronger LGBT+ community development to be lost, particularly with the weak grassroots ties of NXF. In highlighting the importance of strong community interaction, I argue that TENI is a model LGBT+ organisation. TENI is well aware of the uneven nature of Irish LGBT+ supports and tries to rectify this for its members. Broden from TENI in discussing the role of their national outreach worker programme commented that:

We are a national organisation so we work with people in all corners but realistically the majority of the work occurs in Dublin. We do make a really concerted effort to work outside this area (Broden, individual interview)*.*

TENI has strong links with the Trans community, with regional support hubs and a volunteer board of management that is elected at a national conference. Broden sets out the ethos of his tenure in the role of CEO:

What we do in TENI is very member oriented so what we do comes from our members. So it's not me, from the top down, going you know what we need in the Irish Trans community is X, you know obviously I have my own thoughts and opinions and I drive that but it's trying to get that feedback (Broden, individual interview).

Broden did discuss the difficulties that being a truly national organisation entails, from logistical issues of transport and resources, to the time and effort it involves. He mentioned how he wished TENI could do more for the Trans community however he was proud of the work of TENI. The difference in TENI and organisations like NXF and GLEN is the understanding that being a national organisation is a challenge, but that challenge can be met by implementing some cost effective measures. For example TENI has achieved transparency, has connection to their community, which in turn has access to decision making within TENI. The transparency of an elected board and the holding of an annual conference to discuss matters pertinent to the community; the connection a regional worker and regional groups bring between community members and movement leaders; and finally the open ethos of management makes TENI a much more responsive, representational and inclusive LGBT+ organisation than others in Ireland. TENI has also balanced the needs of its community with the needs of communicating a message to legislators on the community's behalf. A notable obstacle for using TENI as a model is the population sizes of the Trans community in contrast to the wider LGBT+ community. This research cannot offer a clear way of bridging the gap of a larger population size, however, it is worth noting the amount of volunteer led LGBT+ community work that is already in action around the country in the absence of a centralised source. In my opinion, adopting a more nationwide and inclusive model, such as the TENI model, can only enhance and support this community based volunteerism further.

In this chapter we can see the challenges that are facing the Irish LGBT+ movement and community. These include; a lack of leadership from grassroots to the larger organisations which is stagnating growth and capacity of LGBT+ groups; issues around communication and connectivity, a lack of funding; an unevenness in services and connection to forms of community and movement; and now there is a vacuum at the top level of movement organisation with the departure of GLEN. In the following chapter the experience of living as an out LGBT+ person will be explored from the perspective of the participants of this study.

7. THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE IRISH LGBT+ COMMUNITY

The historical development of LGBT+ life in Ireland, as demonstrated in Chapter 3 and Appendix 1 shows the fast pace of legal change over a thirty year period. For participants of this study over the age of 40 the 1993 Bill repealing all previous Victorian legislation criminalizing homosexuality was a lived reality. This chapter will look at the challenges that still exist for Irish LGBT+ people, particularly for minorities within the community; the positive developments that have occurred; the issues that participants see as needing to be addressed in the future by their LGBT+ community and the impact of activism on the participants lives.

This chapter continues by looking at two debates that still exist for LGBT+ people in Ireland; the presence of a cohesive LGBT+ community, and how LGBT+ identified people respond to certain identities connected to being queer. In discussing participation in the YE campaign with participants some participants who identified as queer, indicated they did not believe that marriage was important to them personally, but it was important in a political or activist sense. Participants noted generational shifts within the community, a theme which will be explored to identify some key issues around marginalization within the Irish LGBT+ community.

7.1 COMMUNITY OR MOVEMENT, NEITHER OR BOTH?

The terms community and movement are used interchangeably and synonymously at times by participants. For some respondents the idea of community and movement blended together, for others they only see a movement and not a community. For Joe, a former staff member at GLEN, there is no distinguishable LGBT+ community:

> *I have always been a little reluctant to ascribe the term community. Because it hasn't been my experience, I have a community of people who I call my community, some that are straight, some that are LGBT. With the exception of gay pride I have never really experienced what I believe to be a community, which is people looking out for each other. I do think that LGBT people are a very heterogeneous group and there is an assumption that because we all identify by our sexual orientation that we are all the same and we're not* (Joe, Individual Interview)

Joe worked in GLEN at the time it was the largest LGBT+ SMO in Ireland. He does not identify with a community despite the fact that he was one of the individuals trying to drive social

change through his work for a cohort of people that are described by many others as a community. This personal definition of what it means to be LGBT+ demonstrates the elastic nature of collective identity as defined by Flesher Fominaya (2010). As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, for many GLEN represented a lead movement organization. Joe's speaks about a lack of cohesion between movement organizations further when he discusses the "territory" between the different movement groups. This idea of 'territory' or ownership over certain parts of the movement is echoed by Greg who is based in Leitrim. He does not see a movement, or at least a movement that is representative of all LGBT+ people.

> *When it comes to the LGBT movement in Ireland I don't think we are one - we probably haven't been for some time. Most of our community and social groups are funded in part or full so it becomes more about red-tape and proprietary ownership. This, in my mind, makes elements of the LGBT community tribal in nature. It's difficult then to coalesce people into a movement* (Greg, Individual Interview).

In talking about the resource dependence of LGBT+ groups Greg encapsulates what other participants have spoken about also, mainly how professionalization drives competition in the sector and to some extent can undermine cohesion and community. Hayley who is based in Leitrim, is an activist who was involved in movement organizations in both Dublin and in the West voiced sentiments which echoed those of Joe and Greg. Hayley, a former Dublin based activists and one of the coordinators behind the LGBT Diversity project that will be discussed further reiterates the lack of community cohesion when she states:

> *I don't want to say LGBT community, it's not like we are all one community.* (Hayley, Individual Interview).

Hayley feels that she is not represented by those who run lead LGBT+ organisations and this colours her view of what the notion of community means. This marginalisation she feels is shared by many other LGBT+ participants that do not feel represented by the mayor LGBT+ SMO's operating in Ireland. Participants who identify themselves in the spectrum of LGBT+ do not express outright discomfort with the idea of a community made up of different gender and sexual-orientations.

Ciarán, the Vice Chairperson of NXF, sees a clear divide between the movement and community.

*All your questions are around the movement but there is a difference between the movement and maybe the community, because a lot of LGBT society, a lot of gay society could be concerned with issues that are social solidarity[*but not specifically LGBT+ issues*]* (Ciarán, Individual Interview).

Ciaran's comment resonates with further observations on this point from Joe. Many people consider themselves community members. They may not be political, and may not participate in what they consider political or activist work, but are happy to be part of LGBT+ community projects. Here is a social aspect to many of the community focused LGBT+ projects which assist in forming friend networks for the individuals that participate in them and are less politically focused. Joe feels that the introduction of legal changes and the relaxing of heteronormative norms have resulted in,

A better ability to be LGBT now regardless of what your identity is, then there was before. People felt that you have to look a certain way or have whatever politics and you know, I think we are grown up enough to know that's not the case. You know, I have encountered many LGBT people for who equality, in a broad sense, is not a big issue or maybe they're worried about their own life and nobody else's (Joe, Individual Interview).

This ambiguity about what is and what is not a community or a movement and whether people are members of both, one, or neither is common. One of the few moments that united the ideas of community and movement for many LGB people and some Trans people was the referendum in 2015. Many members of the community became involved in canvasing and movement organisation for the first time. Through observations of Mullingar Pride I argue that the referendum has encouraged some people to come out and participate in LGBT+ community events for the first time. Through discussion with other LGBT+ group leader in the aftermath of the YE campaign and vote, they have indicated that there does not seem to be a larger uptake in LGBT+ centred activism, but there is some uptake in LGBT +community participation. The elastic notion of what constitutes community or a movement speaks to Flesher Fominaya (2010) definition of collective identity and its elasticity. While leaders of organisations refer to a broad based or elastic versions of LGBT+ identity, at the local level participants also suggested a variety of different ways they identified in terms of sexual orientation.

These differing ideas of a lack of clear sense of community movement warrants further exploration, in examining how people choose to identify themselves, and how they feel about the term LGBT+, we can see there is a degree of disunity in how people relate to the idea of a LGBT+ identity. This disunity presents a lack of firm solidarity with other sexual orientation and gender minorities. Likewise, when we explore representation within the movement we can see that not all members of the LGBT+ community feel represented by the organizations that purport to represent them. Hull and Ortyl (2013) found that those within the Minnesota LGBT+ movement with negative views of the movement are less likely to support movement campaigns or donate to the movement causes. Here we see more ambiguity of what the movement is or is not, while this does not denote a negative perception of the movement (more an ambivalence to it) it does demonstrate a lack of connection to either the movement or the community. This ambiguity is consistent with Flesher Fominaya's (2010) definition of an elastic collective identity. However without a clear campaign, such as the YE campaign, to work on there is a lack of solidarity between the different levels that exist within the movement. This chapter continues to draw out these points by analysing the research data to understand the experience of living as LGBT+ in rural Ireland, and the importance of visibility for LGBT+ rural people.

7.2 CONNECTIONS TO A LGBT+ IDENTITY

LGBT+ is not a term that enjoys universal usage or agreement between participants of this study. There is a notable division between those over the age of 40 and those below. The acronym "LGBT" is problematic for older members of the focus groups particularly, many preferring to be referred to as either gay or lesbian. Younger members had less difficulty in identifying as LGBT+, and when asked about the term spoke about how it reflected their connection to a wider community of people and how they connected it to community. There are many ways people identify themselves within the spectrum of LGBT+. There are also some difficulties that people, particularly those who lived through the years of legal discrimination, face in identifying themselves as is demonstrated in the contrast in how Margaret and Mick identify (or struggled to identify) themselves below. One woman in her mid-50's in the Mayo focus group, Ann, speaks about how being a woman, being a feminist and being politically active has coloured her way of thinking about the term LGBT. For her, being a woman and being a lesbian is her identity. Being an activist against what she perceives to be patriarchal injustices formed her opinion on how she viewed herself. Ann noted:

I have nothing against LGBT but to me LGBT is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, that's four things, I'm not four things I'm one. The movement maybe four, I'm one. And that's what being lesbian means to me. (Ann, Equality Mayo).

Many older participants rephrased the question, 'What does it mean to be LGBT?' themselves to fit their own identity, citing that LGBT+ did not represent them or that they simply do not identify with LGBT+. Some participants talked about the struggle they had in accepting their homosexuality and in coming to terms with using the terms lesbian or gay to identify themselves. One couple in the Mayo focus group spoke about the early years of their relationship where they refused to use the word lesbian. Sarah describes the challenge she had at the beginning of her relationship.

Being over 45, before stepping out and always being afraid to step out or have that, have my gayness being part of my identity. Even being in a relationship for three years and say, oh I'm not gay. I just fell in love with a woman, you know, being asked all my life 'are you gay'. No I'm not gay I'm just a feminist, you know because I had certain stereotypical visions of to be gay I had to be wearing combat boots and camouflage (Sarah, Equality Mayo).

The experiences of homophobia and living in a heteronormative society are cited by another focus group member Margaret, when she talks about accepting the term lesbian or how she at least came to use the term more.

And finally accepting being lesbian which I rarely say because I say I'm gay. Even that, I question that because I think that maybe it's nearly too close to the bone and it's something I am looking at, at the minute. It's almost like in some way a little bit removed if I say I'm gay. That, it's like that history, that society, that pressure to be somebody that I am not has been in most cases a painful journey and one where I really had to I suppose fight a lonely battle for a very long time. (Margaret, Equality Mayo).

For older participants, the LGBT+ terminology is not neutral when describing their sexuality. For them, it is loaded with negative consequences and experiences. Henry from the Longford focus group reacted to a more positive comment by another speaker who talked about being a positive role model for younger LGBT+ people in the area by being visible. Henry wanted to give a more rounded view of his experience for young people

It's also very tough to be gay, you know what I'm saying, it's not all lovey and happy, I mean in terms of the question you're asking now, what does it mean to be gay, you know at times it's shite. It's very difficult in a social aspect, in a work aspect, in a family aspect. It's very difficult. Like Mick when the question was asked first I don't see myself as LGBT. I see myself as gay and it can be very difficult and that's where the honesty needs to come through for young people, it's not all rainbow flags. (Henry, Longford LGBT)

For these participants, living through years of both legal and societal discrimination has had its toll. They are coming to terms with their own identity and are not comfortable in identifying with a broader spectrum of sexual and gender identities. As will be discussed further, there is also very little opportunity for these middle-aged people to openly identify in a safe and comfortable space.

For other participants, identity incorporates more elements than just a same-sex attraction or a gender identity. For example, some participants identified as queer and cited this as also aligning with their political leanings.

I identify as gay or queer, I don't identify as LGBT even though I come to an LGBT meeting. It's an umbrella of convenience that doesn't always work. I think there are huge problems with it. I know the alliance between lesbian, gay, bi and transgender is there to push forward social progress, equality, and is necessary. But I think sometimes it's kinda a tense alliance. If you ask me what it means to be gay or queer, it's a social identity. It's increasingly a political identity. It's a way of life in a many ways. (Mick, Longford LGBT)

One participant, Broden, former TENI CEO, identifies as queer. I asked him about his experience of identifying as queer in Ireland, having come from Canada where the term, he noted, did not receive much scrutiny.

People were like - grand call yourself whatever you want - but when I first moved here I felt that people didn't like that word …. But I think that's changing a lot more young people I met would identify with the word queer…... And it was queer as political and also as non-gendered in some ways (Broden, Individual Interview).

Broden noted that internal surveys in TENI reported that the second most common identity used by their service users was queer. He sees a generational shift around the identity and analysis of this theme is explored later in this chapter. The last most notable finding on

identity incorporates the queer theory stance on marriage and assimilation. For Mick from Longford, who also identifies as queer, the term fits his sexual and political identification. In contrast, he understands the term LGBT+ in a negative sense.

> *I think an LGBT identity is closer to an assimilationist, notion of equality and liberation where queer is quite confrontational and I would come from a confrontational background.* (Mick, Longford LGBT)

Some participants, in talking about a queer identity, noted they did not believe that marriage was important to them personally, but it was important in a political or activist sense. Access to marriage was a movement target that needed to be met to break down barriers for the LGBT+ community. However it contradicts some personally held queer beliefs of individuals. Brian, editor of GCN, talking about a play about queer life in Ireland (Gays Against the Free State by Oisin McKenna) argued that there should more nuanced discussion within the movement about identity.

> *Unfortunately the other side of the coin is assimilation and assimilation is a conservative thing and I don't desire to assimilate. I don't really want to get married. Don't want to be just like Mary and Joe living in their semi-d in Lucan but unfortunately the other side of the movement, for equality, is assimilation and that's conservative. I would like to see radical expressions of it, I liked that play, I thought it was interesting, I would have preferred if it was more radical. So I like radical expressions of our sexual orientation and reminding people about sex, and sexual relationships and that can't be sanitised just so you can feel comfortable.* (Brian, Individual Interview)

For one participant, Hayley in Leitrim, there is a pressure to conform to a standard that in her view challenges her queer identity, now that the legal changes have come into place:

> *There is this feeling that if you don't want to be assimilated, be a nice tidy queer that looks like you're supposed to in the magazines then your somebody else, you're not in our movement. And obviously that is a generalisation, that is not how every individual is acting, but that is how I see the movement in Ireland.* (Hayley, Individual Interview).

The messaging of the YE campaign during the referendum is the subject of Chapter 4.3. For the purposes of this chapter, we have an example of the resonances of the campaign from a queer perspective. The exclusion from marriage was considered an equality issue for LGBT+

people. The YE campaign constituted a sanitised homogenised and partial representation of collective identity, Flesher Fominaya's (2010) definition explores an elastic form of collective identity which can incorporate such a view of identity to support a campaign or movement goal. Campaigning for marriage rights was unproblematic for those identifying as queer as they saw the existing system as discriminatory. However, the messaging and the representation of the community was sanitized and directed at a straight audience which created a tension for more radical queer activists. Ultimately, pragmatism won out for these activists and they campaigned for marriage to be extended, but the feeling of exclusion or that certain identities were not included for some are still present.

The removal of state sanctioned homophobia and transphobia, and the opening of discourses facilitated by the marriage referendum in broader society, has, in my assessment, allowed for more dialogue on LGBT+ identities within the LGBT+ community. However there are still barriers that exist for minority groups within the LGBT+ community which will be explored further.

7.3 Marginalisation of LGBT+ individuals from minority groups.

While many respondents have talked about the progress the community and movement have made in becoming more accepted into Irish society, many also commented about how fractious they see their own LGBT+ community, this is consistent with the work cited in Chapter 3.3.2.

Broden in TENI notes he has seen a shift in discourses in the six years he has worked in the organisation but that there are still some issues.

> *I do think in Ireland everything is very binary, like you're gay or straight, you're man or you are a women. I don't think there is much conversation around the complexity or nuance of people's identity whether they are bi or queer or whether their experience or political label or trying to tease that out more. We find that with trans, people are trying to gain an understanding of trans issues but it's still a very much binary identity and a lot of assumptions about a trans narrative…I don't think we have teased that out as much as we could as a movement.* (Broden, Individual Interview)

Here Broden is talking from a movement leader's perspective about the movement, however, in my view this critique can be applied to the community also. The dominance of discussions on marriage and legal changes around gender identity has left little room for

discussion on the nuances that exist for gender and sexual minorities. The messaging of the YE campaign demonstrates how a clean, sanitised and presentable version of the lesbian and gay community (omitting the bi and trans community) was presented to 'Middle Ireland' and left no space for a discussion on identity issues or on the institution of marriage. Broden from TENI spoke about how Transphobia is prevalent in the Irish LGBT community. He referred to a colleague who is trans identified, and who has stopped frequenting gay bars as she feel harassed when she does so. From my own experience in Mullingar Pride I have encountered a lot of ignorance on Trans issues and some out-dated and derogatory language directed at Trans people. This is not always from a transphobic perspective, and is at times due to ignorance and being misinformed; however there are transphobic elements also. Brian from GCN notes that Transphobia is an issue, as is bi-visibility.

> *There are still lots of transphobic gay folk and lots of misogynistic gay men, you know but on a base level [Trans voices are] heard and is represented and heard. Bi voices aren't listened to that's for sure and that needs to be addressed.* (Brain, Individual Interview)

Joe from GLEN gives the example of the Bisexual community, echoing what many participants mention.

> *I mean in the LGBTIreland research the evidence points to the fact that voices or the experiences of bisexual people are quite invisible and I do think that there is definitely a strong rationale to bring that experience out a bit further and get people to understand the experiences of bisexual people* (Joe, Individual interview)

Ciarán from NXF speaks about the lack of a Bi presence.

> *Bisexuals in Ireland are totally invisible, there is no bisexual community. In Ireland there are no bisexual community organisations really. There is a bi Ireland group on Facebook but they are really just a Facebook support group* (Ciarán, Individual Interview)

Bi+ Ireland, the group that Ciáran is referring to here is in fact quite an active group and is continually working on visibility projects. While both Joe and Ciarán are correct that bisexuality does not get similar attention to gay, lesbian or trans issues, Bi+ is growing a presence. A broader issue here, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, is with NXF and other LGBT+ organisations' lack of presence on the ground for LGBT+ people and thus a

lack of knowledge of what is happening on the ground for LGBT+ people in Ireland. Broden from TENI can see a change emerging in the community around these issues.

> *I think you are starting to see a conversation on bisexuality, I think people are talking about Queerness, I think people are talking about the interchapterality like people of colour and your also LGBT.* (Broden, Individual Interview)

The intersectionality that Broden talks about is demonstrated by Greg in Leitrim when he talks about his disability and how it has impacted on his inclusion.

> *I find it infuriating that people with disabilities - both hidden and seen - can be invisible. This may not be political in strictest sense but it fits with advocacy. I've had Pride committees argue against my presence at meeting because of seizures and I've had people dismiss accessibility for wheelchair users.* (Greg, Individual Interview).

While this study does lack voices that could represent people of racial or religious minorities, Greg's insight does give an example of how a person with a disability can be side-lined by activist groups and how there are ableist elements to LGBT+ organisations. One difficulty the organisers of the Burning Issues 2 survey, NXF, expressed was the difficulty in connecting with people to attend a focus group on issues for migrant LGBT+ people living in Ireland. The focus group for this had low attendance, and I believe that organizations like NXF and the Pride organisation that Greg references above are not equipped to reach out to others from outside their normal intake of activists/volunteers. Additionally, when they do, it can be construed as tokenistic to those being targeted for inclusion. Síle from the Dublin Focus group is the only woman in her work LGBT+ group and as the only woman she feels compelled to remain to keep women's issues at the fore of what the group does.

> *I am the only women in the LGBT group at work and that's why I am still in it because we can't just solve all the problems of the white gay men* (Síle Dublin Focus Group)

This feeling of white gay men taking the lead in the community is echoed by a number of participants, Broden from TENI recognises that more work is needed to make minority groups feel welcome in LGBT+ organisations.

> *No I don't think as many conversations around privilege as we should in Ireland around racism, sexism, xenophobia. I think all of these things we should be talking about more, again that brings in interchapterality and class and all that. Like I do*

think organisations tend to be dominated by white, middle class, cis gender men.
(Broden, Individual interview).

The majority of the movement leaders I spoke to acknowledged that there is a problem of representation within the movement, and that the movement is particularly middle class, white and cis gender. There was some who believed that there was a gender balance, while others disagreed that this was the case. There was however very little offered by movement leaders as to ways to address these issues. The current make-up of movement organisations' management structures do not represent the make-up of the LGBT community. It is my view that the misogyny, Transphobia and ableism that has been talked about here will only continue until diversity in leadership in LGBT+ organisations is prioritized. Generational shifts are another schism that was observed in the data and are explored in more detail in the following section.

7.4 GENERATIONAL SHIFTS

For Irish LGBT+ people over the age of forty the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1993 means they have a living memory of being a target for both legal and societal sanction. Many also lived through the HIV/Aids crises of the 1980s and early 1990s. Brian from GCN talked at length about generational shifts and the affect decriminalization had on him and "his generation". He feels that those younger than him are less radical for not having experienced the same events.

Here's what I think. I don't think in my generation I am alone, I think a lot of people my age feel the same and I think a lot of younger people would feel the same, like in their early 20's late teens up to 30's but I think that from 28 - 30 up to 45 I don't think they feel. I think they are the generation that assimilated. That's your [researcher] *generation…It's all they've known, is the fight for assimilation. I never knew, like when I came of age, marriage was, I didn't even think that was something to fight for because that was beyond my imagination that that could ever happen or that you could fight for it. And also I grew up in a time of AIDS so we were outsiders, pushed to the outside completely. So your generation has grown up where AIDS is not such a spectre and for a time, when you came of age, you came of age in a world that I assume, I can't speak for you, the drive was there the sense of your righteous place in society …. I didn't grow up with that and I think that younger people now. The*

> *younger generation are like going, hold on for a minute, we don't just want to be like everyone else.* (Brian, Individual Interview)

Brian here is speaking about the rise of non-binary or gender/queer identities which echoes comments by Broden in TENI who spoke previously about the rise in TENI members identifying as queer. Brian suggests that for older LGBT+ people assimilation was the goal but for younger ones it is less the case. Emily, one of the youngest members of the Equality Mayo focus group speaks about the desire to live without being labelled or using a particular identity identifier.

> *I find all labels really restrictive, and I prefer if we all could just be human and then, you know whatever happens after that. So that's what it means to me, it's kinda a progressive thing to the next thing, which will lead to utopia where everyone gets on.* (Emily, Equality Mayo)

As discussed towards the beginning of this chapter, there is a generational split in how people choose to identify themselves. Older members choose to identify as either gay or lesbian while those younger than 30 are happy to refer to themselves as LGBT or use terms like queer. The generation of younger people learning about LGBT+ identities online as in the work of Pingel, Bauermeister & Johns (2013), Hammack, Thompson, & Pilecki (2009) and Cullen (2014) (Chapter 3.3.5) are opening up discourses about LGBT+ identity through their broad understandings of gender and sexuality. From my experience in Mullingar Pride I could see the divide as Brian depicts, but with one notable exception in the over 40's demographic. The youngest members of the group were happy to openly express their identities through clothing, make-up, or other symbolic elements, as well as through their social media presence. People in their late 20's to early 40's presented in a much more heteronormative fashion, emphasizing their stable relationships and family connections (I include myself in this category). However the older members had very often not come out, had recently come out, or were still hiding their LGBT+ identity from their family. For this cohort there was still a sense of stigma and some had relationships, marriages, and children with opposite sex partners. The radical LGBT+ people over 40 that fight assimilation in Dublin which Brian talks about have very different counterparts once outside the city. Bridie from the Mayo group came out in the 1980s and talks about how that was received then

> *Yeah I think for me it's kinda coloured my view of the world because, I mean, initially, the recognition for me that I was a lesbian wasn't a positive thing … there I was*

thinking oh my God, you know, the horrors, how could I identify with this world [of being a lesbian] because it's a horrible seedy, underbelly of humanity and that's how it was perceived in the culture when I came out. (Bridie, Equality Mayo)

For many outside of the capital, living in the environment as Bridie described, the option of coming out was wrought with stigma and so many got married to hide their identity, and many more emigrated. Another example of how younger people presented new ways of understanding identity to their elders was presented in the Dublin focus group. Patrick discussed the experience of having a transgender nephew and how this informed his understanding of trans issues and gender.

When Tom [pseudonym] *came out it was real, there was a T. I agreed with all of this in theory but it's hard to get your head around it once it's real. I think the LGBT is like a union* (Patrick, Dublin Focus Group)

Patrick discussed how he understood better the reactions of his parents to his coming out in the 1980's through his nephews coming out process and how he now was more conscious of trans issues as a result. While the interactions around generational learning, witnessed in the process of data collection are not as marked as the above there have been moments of trans-generational learning around acceptance and normalization of LGBT+ identities. Hayley from Leitrim, also talks about the lack of opportunities that exists for cross generational interaction in the community.

There is a generational shift because of a lack of general spaces, social spaces, which isn't necessarily a pub, there are very few places where the older and the younger come together. So if it's a night club, well there is a demographic for a night club. The lack of opportunity of generations to come together has a big impact for movement …This is generalising hugely but what that can result in is younger people not having a sense of their history and where they come from (Hayley, Individual Interview)

This cross-generation mix is what Ann in Mayo Equality finds the most enjoyable aspect about being part of the Mayo group

the other thing is a cross chapter, mixture of older and younger … and I think it's very very healthy and very very necessary to have cross chapters of, especially of age and all that. I mean I don't want to be sitting there chatting to [older members of the group] for the rest of me life without hearing from younger people, without having that, because we have a certain perspective on life and it has to do with age… I need

to know or to get a feeling from younger people what's going on and the referendum or the campaign brought in younger people… that for me was hugely important and made a big difference. (Ann, Equality Mayo).

Due to the lack of other options for members of rural LGBT+ communities, the groups formed in small towns that I have encountered have a much better mix of generations than in the city, as Hayley comments on. There is a sharing of experiences in the rural groups around generational experiences which I viewed in both focus groups and through my work in Mullingar Pride. While Hayley spoke about younger generations learning from older generations about their history, I witnessed, through participation in Mullingar Pride, younger LGBT+ people exploring ideas of identity with older members through their interactions, and through the younger members affirmation of (to quote Brian from the beginning of this chapter) "sense of righteous place" in society. The following chapter will explore deeper the impact that location has on LGBT+ people as they engage in activism and experience everyday life.

8. THE IMPACT OF LOCATION ON LGBT+ INDIVIDUALS

Through examination of the data gathered it became apparent that an activist's location impacted not only on how they experienced the YE campaign but on how they experience being LGBT+ in Ireland today. The following sections explore the impact of location on the lived reality of being LGBT+ in Ireland today.

Participants in interviews and focus groups reflect positively on the result of the marriage referendum, however, the referendum itself, and the campaigning around the referendum, have elicited mixed responses from participants. There is a notable divide in how participants who live in the Dublin region and those who live in more rural areas or in small towns in the Midlands and West felt about the YE campaign and about the result of the campaign. Urban LGBT+ participants of this study have different levels of access to and dependence on LGBT + organizations in comparison to rurally based LGBT+ people. Activism and being part of a LGBT+ group is of great importance to participants who are based outside of the capital, while in comparison those who live within the capital have looser ties to LGBT+ focused groups, organisations and institutions. Participants who live in the Dublin region are aware of some of the difficulties that exist outside of the city but do not demonstrate a deep understanding of the difficulties expressed by those who live outside the capital. While participants in rural areas have credited the referendum campaign with an opening of discourses around LGBT+ issues and a rise in visibility, they also displayed feelings of frustration and annoyance with Dublin based organisations that represent LGBT+ people.

8.1 RURAL LIFE FOR LGBT+ PEOPLE

> *I was just looking at the 'Longford Leader'* [local newspaper] *and it said Longford LGBT group and I just, like, nearly fall over, I was standing, and I said to my mother - an LGBT group and she says "Oh yeah, they march in the parade and everything* (Mick, Longford LGBT)

Rural participants highlighted the lack of LGBT+ representation or support prior to the formation of their respective LGBT+ groups. Margaret from Equality Mayo discussed how surprising it was to her to have the institutional support (from the county council and the LEADER funding) and to find other LGBT+ people in the locale to form a LGBT group for the region.

> *I never dreamt we could have had something here in Mayo* (Margaret, Equality Mayo)

For Hayley, on moving to Leitrim from Dublin the lack of community or movement was striking.

> *There was nothing up here. It's not about no social scene but there was no visibility what so ever. And I found that very very difficult* (Hayley, Individual Interview)

The lack of LGBT+ support services or any LGBT+ centred space magnified the importance to participants of their dedicated LGBT+ group. While different participants drew different things from the groups, depending on their motivations for joining and participating, it was clear that a common motivation to be in a rural LGBT+ group was a lack of a LGBT+ social network.

Participants spoke about how they felt isolated and disconnected from the wider LGBT+ community before they joined or formed their group. For some, this disconnection was welcome as they had previously been involved in LGBT+ activism abroad and were somewhat burnt out from campaigning. However, for others it was a very lonely and unhappy existence to not know other LGBT+ people in the area. John from Longford LGBT, a long term resident of the town, thought himself and his partner where the town's sole LGBT+ residents prior to joining the group.

> *As far as I was aware we were the only gays in the village…… there are other people like me, I'm not the only one.* (John Longford LGBT)

The formation of a friendship network with other LGBT+ people is one of the resoundingly common factors in each participant's motivation behind joining a LGBT+ group.

In the rural groups there were discussions around 'coming out' and the personal impact of coming out on the individuals. For many participants, particularly older ones, a fuller acceptance of their sexual identity was made after they joined their respective local LGBT+ group. Many older participants particularly talked about the struggle they had in coming to terms with their sexuality, some being married previously to opposite sex partners, some having children and others joining religious orders. The joining of an LGBT+ group and then the activism of the group was part of their 'coming out' process.

For one member of the Longford group, coming to terms with his sexuality and his own identity was particularly difficult. He credited the group as a safe space where he could come and find support in working through his issues. Henry, in talking about the weekly meetings stated:

I mean for me the group has been a life saver, literally and the Wednesday groups were fantastic and I would like to think that, you know, it's important to me that….. I was in a very low place when I came here, to these meetings and it took a lot of courage to come here and, you know, it just opened a completely different avenue to me (Henry, Longford LGBT).

The Longford group prides itself on being more than a social club, and deliberately does not hold meetings in pubs so as to protect the idea of a safe space away from a more heteronormative outside world. Richard from Longford also credits the group in helping him accept his sexuality.

It's given me the opportunity to stand up and be proud of who I am. Now being gay and being proud is a wonderful combination because for many years I was gay and ashamed and terrified that people would realise… and now I will stand up and be counted and that's what this group has given me (Richard, Longford LGBT).

The emotion of fear was mentioned on numerous occasions in the rural LGBT+ focus groups. Some participants talked about fear when they spoke about their coming out process. Others talked about fear and hiding their identity in work or to friends and family. Some talked about the fear of being an LGBT+ activist in a rural environment where they would stand out quickly and be identifiable. Sarah in Mayo describes the way in which the original name for the group came about in a discussion their fears.

So it was all very nervous at that point in time. It was all about, the fear we were feeling, the fear I was feeling and not wanting to make that for other people and knowing the turmoil that we had gone through with the unanswered questions, the uncertainty of everything to try and make that easier for other people. So that became, TOST? which came from sitting around a table and everybody said well what should we call this group and a big pregnant silence emerged in the midst of a lot of chatter and somebody looked up the word for silence in the Irish dictionary and that's where TOST? came out of. And it was moving forward from there. (Sarah, Equality Mayo)

I asked why the TOST? contained a question mark and Ann in the group told me it was because they were "questioning the silence." (Ann, Mayo Equality). The Mayo participants had, to some degree, come to terms with their own sexuality but wanted to question the silence that existed around LGBT+ issues in the region. Their primary aim was to raise

awareness of LGBT+ issues and highlight or flag that there was a LGBT+ community living in the area. They embarked on a series of visibility raising initiatives to accomplish this. However, these projects involved making themselves known to a wider population and this provoked much anxiety among the group. Their first event was targeted by a religious group (which went on to target a number of their projects) and this further raised the anxiety of the group. However, the more visibility projects they undertook, coupled with the increasingly warm responses they received from the general public, buoyed them. Ann outlines the point at which she felt the group started to overcome their fear.

> *There was a bridge that we wanted to have that lit as part of social inclusion week and that, really, really I think gave us the energy from that day forward, that we weren't going to be shot* (Ann, Equality Mayo).

While there was not a genuine fear of such violence the group did comment on the risks of exposure they faced while being publically part of a LGBT+ group. The ramifications for participants of being 'out' for their careers and privates lives were understood as real and the public knowledge of their participation in an LGBT+ group eroded the management of their 'outness' (Oswald and Culton 2003). I participated in a vigil in a western small town with the members of Equality Mayo in 2015 for the people killed in the Orlando Nightclub massacre. I held a rainbow flag during the ceremony in the central square of the town. At one point I realised how exposed I was and I understood the fear that the participants talked about. The likelihood of someone seeing me, and knowing who I was in a small town setting, was very high. As I stood with the flag in my hands I thought about how my parents and wider family might react. I spoke about this with one of the organisers after and she commented about how difficult it was for her too. She is a teacher in the town and she said she had no idea how her students might react if they saw her in the square doing the same thing. She drew attention to how exposure is a serious consideration for people contemplating becoming involved with an LGBT+ group in the region. She also commented on how movement leaders in Dublin really did not understand the potential ramifications for rural activists when they participate in LGBT+ activism. She said as this is not a similar consideration in a large urban context, this exposure did not resonate with movement leaders and this frustrated her. The management of 'outness' as discussed by Oswald and Culton (2003) and Haddock (2015) is also a factor or Irish LGBT+ rural life, people manage their 'outness' depending on the situation they are in and are careful, even after the very public celebrations around the same sex referendum win, in how they 'out' themselves.

Fear, anxiety and isolation have all been identified as part of LGBT+ life in rural Ireland. While the marriage campaign gave the activists some positive experiences it did however expose some of the difficulties that exist in living in rural Ireland and being LGBT+. As will be explored further the participants from the rural focus groups still feel under represented by the LGBT+ movement, which in their view is centred around those living in Dublin. There is a feeling that the movement, based in Dublin, isn't aware of the difficulties that rural people face in their day to day life as LGBT+ people, and the difficulties that rural living poses for LGBT+ people. One of the ways that the LGBT+ groups are dealing with these issues is by raising the profile and visibility of their members in their localities.

8.2 RURAL LGBT+ VISIBILITY

Visibility emerged as a theme when speaking with rural activists. The lack of visibility captured in the comments above about the formation of TOST?, and the commitment to raising the visibility of local LGBT+ communities, indicates how isolated rural LGBT+ communities feel from the movement core in Dublin. As Hayley from Leitrim stated:

> *The visible side of the movement is very focused on Dublin. It becomes a movement that is owned by a particular sector of the population and that ownership has its own agenda and its own class and it's not working class.* (Hayley, Individual Interview)

Here we can see, through the way rural activists express their need for visibility that the movement is Dublin focused. There is also a conflation of metropolitan and middle class, rural and working class. Hayley was particularly concerned with middle class males taking over the movement and not seeing herself represented in the movement. While she was alone in voicing this concern in the rural participants, movement leaders are aware the management of LGBT+ movement groups are not always representative of the LGBT+ population (as demonstrated earlier in this chapter).

The efforts to raise visibility locally have come in different forms, but there is a common aim: by raising the visibility of a local LGBT+ community life is made easier for younger or more vulnerable LGBT+ people in the area, and the wider straight population become educated about the presence and goals of their local LGBT+ group. Richard from Longford sums up his experience of participating in the local St. Patrick's Day parade.

> *going through the, excuse my language, the bullshit and the hardship and the grief and the pain and all of that that I would have grown up with, 30/40 years ago in this*

country, when I hung my head in absolute shame I don't want to see young people have to do that. I want young people, seeing people of my age walking proudly and saying, well if its ok for that 50+ year old, to walk the streets of Longford and be proud, with a Tri-colour then its ok for me at 18 years of age or 16 years of age to stand up among my peers and say I'm gay. That's so important and this group is doing that all the time both directly and indirectly by our presence. (Richard, Longford LGBT)

Again, Richard comments on the heteronormative and homophobic Ireland he grew up in and how this experience drives his activism so that future generations do not have to encounter the same experiences. All activists had similar impulses, either when they spoke about the school system; when they spoke about their coming out story, and how they wanted to make Ireland less homophobic for future LGBT+ people coming out; and when they spoke about the lack of services for young people. Rural activists also spoke about their need to raise awareness, to counterbalance the absence of national movement organisations coming to their localities to perform this function. Rural activists felt the onus was on them to do this work, indicating an overall assessment that the majority of interactions with national organisations are disappointing, and that there was just no presence of national movement organisations in their areas. Hayley from Leitrim felt it wasn't just the LGBT+ movement, but LGBT+ academia that had left rural LGBT+ dwellers behind.

There is very little research on the rural queer and there is still this myth that young people will migrate to the cities. There isn't the money or the kudos in doing the research in rural areas. (Hayley, Individual Interview).

Cohen (1999) explains that secondary marginalisation is not an intentional process of marginalisation but a ranking of priorities where minorities within a minority group get ranked lower in the movement priorities. The experiences of rural activists here can be understood as secondary marginalisation. The lack of LGBT+ services, the lack of movement organisations engagement with rural LGBT+ people, the lack of research and funding on and for rural LGBT+ projects have left activists feeling isolated and frustrated. In the aftermath of the YE referendum win, many rural activists framed the win as a local win for their group as opposed to a national win for the LGBT+ movement, this in my view demonstrates how distant rural activist feel from the national movement organisations and how they feel marginalised in their own movement.

8.3 URBAN LGBT+ ACTIVISM

While the visibility of LGBT+ people in rural areas is increasing due to the efforts of rurally based activists in some parts of the country, in Dublin some participants discussed the potential for more radical queer activism now that the various legal changes have come to fruition. Brian from GCN noted "*I would like to see a wider expression of who we are, maybe the opportunity is there now that we have assimilated, to rebel against ourselves a bit*" (Brian, Individual Interview). Broden from TENI talks about the emergence of more radical voices within the movement, albeit only on the fringes.

> There is some great some very radical voices everywhere. It's there. It's on the fringes, it's just not visible yet but I think the more it goes towards professionalisation an increasing number of people will go that's not enough and that's not going to change our lives day in day out so I think there is a kind of conservatism in the non-profit world but I think there are activists and from a TENI point of view there are activists who keep us on it, for lack of a better word. In a sense that they come to us and say look what about this or that and we try to respond to that. (Broden, Individual Interview)

These activists that, to borrow Broden's words 'keeping us on it' are present in the broader LGBT+ population to some extent. However, when we look at the resonances of the YE campaign in Chapter 7 we can see a large amount of burn out within the activism community. There is also a degree of apathy among the broader LGBT+ community to activism in the wake of the legal changes, and this is reflected in the numbers becoming or remaining involved in activism in the aftermath of YE. An example of this is Dublin Pride. The most visible LGBT+ event has become less of an expression of community or a protest march as it was originally set out to be, and more of an opportunity for corporate organisations to publicize their products as LGBT+ friendly. While there are LGBT+ community groups involved in the parade, the lowest price point for a group to enter the parade is €500 (Dublin Pride, 2017) and a float can cost €2,000. These are prohibitive prices for community groups with low incomes and limited resources. The lack of access for a local community to the country's only large-scale LGBT+ event demonstrates a monetisation of the LGBT+ identity coupled with a lack of movement organisations focus on community needs. For participants of this study, rural activist's visibility is key, and for some movement leaders a more radical queer identity is necessary. However, financial constraints largely prohibit expression of such needs as part in the community's main visibility event. Hayley from Leitrim who worked on the Dublin Pride committee before she moved to the North West said she tried to maintain its

community focus but noted that it "is long gone by the way" (Hayley, Individual Interview). Participants from the Dublin focus group commented on the change in Dublin Pride

> *When we started going on Pride it was much more of a protest march than it is now. That was a form of activism being out there and being visible.* (Patrick, Dublin Focus Group)

Participants noted how the parade had become more commercial and less LGBT+. Here is the following interaction participants had about Dublin Pride.

> Síle: [Pride] *is becoming massively commercial; it's like every pub in town, which wouldn't have a flag 15 years ago. I remember the Turks Head barred a lesbian couple for kissing 16 years ago.*

> *Michelle: Pride has sort of become… companies now march in the parade and I know they are trying to show they are pro-gay and all that but*

> *Síle: yeah their main concern is making something marketable for the Millennials*

> *David: Pride has changed. It's much more corporate but maybe we are old and cynical, maybe if you're 17 and quivering going into it and buzzing at the end of it, were just a bit more blasé*

> *Síle: Very few of the people actually marching are actually gay, they give away the free t-shirts and the free booze and there's no stigma attached now to being LGBT and its very international so peoples families are there*

For Dublin participants the commercialization of Pride was only slightly problematic, they understood the positive elements of larger companies wanting to be part of the parade as it de-stigmatized being LGBT+ however they did feel it was less of a LGBT+ community event because of this. Participants did not, as David in the above exchange express that Pride was an exclusively LGBT+ event and that this commercialization was less problematic in this light.

Dublin participants said they felt there was less to work on now that the referendum was passed. While they acknowledged there were still some issues to be addressed, in their opinion, particularly around Trans rights and access to abortion, they felt that their LGBT+ activism was no longer as pressing. Ciara had mentioned how she felt she had to live her life with her "elbows out" to defend herself as a lesbian in various aspects of her work and family

life, she now noted she would let her arms hang loose as she felt more comfortable since the referendum passed. Michelle responded to this with:

> *I think I can agree with pushing the elbows out because I think the older I've got the more accepted … a huge thing would be the marriage referendum. It made me realize I forged my way along by pushing my elbows out but now I'm quite happy to almost just let them hang in. I am another woman who lives on the road among her neighbours and the whole gay thing is there all the time but I align myself with people for other reasons more than before* (Michelle, Dublin Focus Group)*.*

The feeling that LGBT+ activism is no longer as necessary as before as there is potentially more opportunity to assimilate , coupled with LGBTIreland Report's findings (2015) that a third of Irish people feel that LGBT+ people are equal should be alarming for members of LGBT+ organizations who are continuing to try and advocate on behalf of LGBT+ people. While feeling disenfranchised and isolated from a LGBT+ movement due to geography is a problem, those who have an ease of access to LGBT+ groups or specific services are losing interest in LGBT+ activism. While Michelle's comments could be a sign of a movement moving into abeyance there are undertones of assimilation here, which could lead to point to less active or less radical urban LGBT+ activism. Michelle mentions later in the focus group that she may not live an average LGBT+ life:

> We canvased our street and all the doors the response was so overwhelming positive. We are probably a bit cocooned and cloistered and we even don't realize to what extent (Michelle, Dublin Focus Group).

The potential for activists to disengage from the movement, particularly in urban settings as people feel comfortable living out lives is real. The following exchange between Síle and Ciara is an example of how comfortable their out lives are:

> Síle: *I know four other gay couples on my street. It's [being LGBT+] become normalized.*

> Ciara: *Since we have lived in Central Dublin, I have joked, I have been out to my butcher, my baker and my candlestick maker and no one has given us grief. It's always been fine.*

Comments like these show for these participants the gulf that exists between an out urban life and an out rural life for participants of this study. Another cleavage that will be explored is that of age and how the generations of LGBT+ differ on certain aspects.

8.4 BELONGING

For many research participants, the work they did with their respective groups helped them to overcome personal obstacles and gain confidence. Rose, one of the younger members of the Equality Mayo groups talks about the group's impact on her.

> *it built my confidence. I'd gone from, you know, when your unemployed and you're not working ....you know this group is given me a lot of confidence, it has given me a lot of support and I don't know, in its own way the group, it means a lot to me. They're like family now.* (Rose, Equality Mayo)

The sense of belonging and being in a safe environment to work through the coming out process is echoed by a number of participants. This is particularly important for older members but is mentioned by some younger ones too. Karen in Mayo gives her experience of joining the group

> *Well I struggled most of my life with my sexuality and two years ago I decided to do something about it and I contacted Margaret and she was good enough to contact me back and invite me to it … it's just a privilege to be part of the group to be honest because there's such nice people and welcoming and I have never felt unwelcome within the group, even though I struggle myself with it, to come out and to be myself. That's it, it's just a privilege to be part of the group.* (Karen, Equality Mayo)

Family, belonging, and pride are all words used when asked about what the group means to rural participants which echoes the work of Haddock (2015) on rural LGBT+ people living in the US. In the Central Dublin group these words are not as prevalent, as for urban participants a LGBT+ community is not so distant, either geographically or visibly. For the participants of the Central Dublin group their group was connected solely to the Yes Equality campaign and winning the election. This experience of being part of the YE campaign for the Central Dublin participants is also positive but the effects have different resonances for the members. The lack of a LGBT+ community in rural Ireland means the involvement in these small groups can be transformative for some people, particularly if they are struggling with their LGBT+ identity. But there may be a timeline issue here for some as Dublin participants did talk

about attending their first Pride marches in the 1990's and how they were fearful as there was much more opposition than there is today.

> *I do remember being at Prides and being frightened and being like come on get your braves on but now I don't think of it as that at all.* (Michelle Dublin Focus Group)

Participants talked about their early experiences of activism in the 1990's were marked with fear and a sense that they were outsiders and deviant. Urban participants did not have the same experiences when canvasing for YE and if they met with opposition were able to manage this opposition much better than in their younger activism days. However one participant did mention that the Pride march in Belfast was still a tense affair for her in response to Dublin Pride no longer having an element of fear:

> *if you've ever been to Belfast Pride it's still there, it's real and it's the fear* (Síle, Dublin Focus Group)

Mayo Equality talked about the fear they felt in organising their first public event, a talk on civil partnership. They were fearful of the opposition they would face. They had been targeted by religious groups who threatened to protest the event and they were also fearful of the exposure they would receive. The event was a success and the group gained confidence from that point on but they continued to face opposition, particularly from religious groups. Participants noted that their activism is not without a certain element of apprehension.

In Mullingar Pride the majority of the people who attended events ranged from their mid-40's to their mid-70's. Many had only come out since the 2015 referendum, and for them this was their first interaction with a LGBT+ group or organisation (with the exception of canvasing for Yes Equality). The option of attending events in Dublin is largely an activity for younger people. In contrast, the middle-aged cohort found the availability of events in their locality more interesting and accessible. They recounted stories of how they and others struggled with their LGBT+ identity, some being married to opposite sex partners previously, and some talking about the loneliness of living in a rural environment and feeling an outcast. The group became a safe space for certain individuals where they could discuss their private life or their love life without reproach. A common refrain was that they did not feel comfortable discussing these issues with their family, and that they had no LGBT+ friends. While the group in Mullingar did not achieve as much as the other groups in Longford and Mayo, it did demonstrate the need for such groups for people who continue to feel like

outsiders and providing a space for them to become more comfortable with their LGBT+ identity. The referendum campaign did create a more open environment for discussion of LGBT+ topics. Flesher Fominaya (2010) sees collective identity both as a result of the process of collective action and the product of collective action. In the YE campaign we can see the product as a representation of the LGBT+ community as sanitised and homogenised and more urban than rural. The participation in the campaign based on this 'official' sense of community, however, has in turn supported a more organic form of connection between activist in rural settings. The reception of the YE campaign in rural Ireland also speaks to a dynamic idea of rurality as presented by Wright and Annes (2014). However while acceptance is on the rise in rural Ireland, the journey for many, particularly older and rurally based people, on claiming their identity and living more comfortably with that identity is just beginning.

8.5 LOOKING BEYOND YES EQUALITY

For the participants of this study, while there is a realisation that certain aspects of LGBT+ life are not easy, particularly for the rural participants, there is also a sense that in the aftermath of the YE campaign and the referendum that life will become easier and improve. Ciara in the Dublin focus group notes she sees a change in her life after the referendum:

> *We see it in our everyday as well, like all the effort and all the charm you used on the doors, like all the nights you didn't get to have a dinner because you had to go out canvasing and all those times you didn't get to do fun things. I was in hospital recently and they* [the staff] *all referred to my wife and that made me really happy* (Ciara, Dublin Focus Group)

The normalization of LGBT+ relationships in the wake of the referendum was commented on by a number of participants, many discussed how straight people they meet are more comfortable in discussing same sex relationships now, like in Ciara's case. This demonstrates what Haalsa (2009) discusses in the changes in everyday life in the wake of social movement success.

One participant, Richard in Longford, told a story about attending a wedding with his partner. Richard declined to dance with his partner at the wedding as he was uncomfortable with the idea of such a public display of affection and this hurt his partner's feelings. He tells the story because in the aftermath of the campaigning he regrets his decision and thinks he could have used the opportunity of dancing at a wedding to educate the majority straight attendees

about LGBT+ relationships. Padraig, one of the other men in the group, offered that it could have been an opportunity to "*normalise things for them.* (Padraig, Longford LGBT). Richard responded with

> *Absolutely, it's not an issue now. We have come leaps and bounds in those four or five years. We have had a marriage referendum in those four or five years* (Richard, Longford LGBT)

For me this exchange confirms two research findings. Firstly, for the older members in rural environments, their relationships still need to be normalised and a simple display of affection can still be considered somewhat radical in their own locality. Secondly, that there is an expectation now that the legal changes have been put in place and people have canvassed openly in their localities on the issues of same sex marriage, that there will be an improvement in the LGBT+ lived experience. The legacy of the campaign will be explored more deeply in the following chapter, I feel the wedding dance anecdote marks this expectation, as it demonstrates the strength that many LGBT+ people have drawn from the referendum win despite still also living in a deeply heteronormative and at times homophobic and transphobic environment The final chapter will explore the four previous findings chapters in conjunction with academic work on LGBT+ social movements and from LGBT studies. It will also make recommendations for a future focus for LGBT+ activism in Ireland.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations for Future LGBT+ organising in Ireland

In drawing together the findings from the data gathered during the focus groups, interviews and participant observation that constitute this project a number of areas have been examined. The contribution to knowledge this project brings will have multiple utility for the LGBT+ community, LGBT+ social movement organisations and for grassroots LGBT+ activists. In intellectual terms this project highlights the uneven impact of a social movement success - the YE campaign's target of winning the 2015 referendum achieved its primary aim while also bringing the LGBT+ community together like no previous campaign. However, participation in the YE campaign held mixed outcomes for rural LGBT+ people as it underscored their distance from both LGBT+ specific services and the supports of national LGBT+ organisations. The discourse around the YE campaign and the coming together of various sections of Irish society to pass the referendum has left little room for LGBT+ people to discuss the negative effects, particularly homophobic and transphobic behaviour that they have experienced in the wake of the campaign. Likewise, some LGBT+ people felt excluded in the framing of the YE campaign messaging with implications for subsequent assessments of its legacy.

This project also uncovers how age and geography shape the lived experience of LGBT+ activists. These are potential areas for future focus that the movement and community in order to sustain Irish LGBT+ activism, at both grassroots and national level. The data of this project speaks to previous work of US authors on the concept of secondary marginalization (Cohen 1999; Hull and Ortyl 2013; Stein's 2013) and the idea of Ireland being 'post gay' (Ghaziani 2014). The examination of the LGBT+ movements history, in conjunction with data gathered for this project highlights the marginalisation that exists in the Irish LGBT+ movement, particularly for; proponents of full marriage rights in the 2000's; rural LGBT+ people; LGBT+ people with disabilities; trans people; identity non-conforming LGBT+ people, queer people and gender queer people, and bisexual people who have at one time or another been marginalised through secondary marginalisation (Cohen 1999). Finally Ghaziani's concept of a 'post-gay era' can be applied to Ireland but only in certain conditions. The analysis of data indicates that urban dwelling middle class men may be more likely to experience a 'post-gay era'. However, for some of those outside of this demographic living in an Ireland sexuality and gender identity remains a source of negotiation in their day to day life. A concern for LGBT+ organisations is that the narrative of a 'post-gay Ireland' has been

adopted by public servants and funding bodies and this could hamper the development of these organisations and the broader community and movement in the future, particularly when many issues for Irish LGBT+ people still exist. This 'post- gay Ireland' understanding in the context of austerity in contemporary Ireland, where community work of every hue is impacted by reduced funding, further endangers the development of an impactful LGBT+ movement and community for its constituents.

Throughout this conclusion recommendations will be made to further strengthen community ties and LGBT+ activism in Ireland. Firstly the dynamics of age and intergenerational connectedness will be explored.

9.1 GENERATIONAL DIVIDES AND GENERATIONAL INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF IRISH LGBT+ PEOPLE

In the space of 24 years, since 1993 to 2017, Ireland has moved from a country where homosexuality was a criminal offence to where the leader of the country is an openly gay man and where same sex marriage was introduced by means of popular vote. This short time space of societal change has resulted in different generations of Irish LGBT+ people experiencing being LGBT+ differently, sometimes this difference is quite marked. The data from this study found that LGBT+ is not a term that enjoys universal usage or agreement between participants. There is a notable division between those over the age of 40 and those below in this study. The acronym of LGBT+ is problematic for older members of the focus groups particularly, many preferring to be referred to as either gay or lesbian. Younger members had less difficulty in identifying as LGBT+ and when asked about the term spoke about how it reflected their connection to a wider community of people which they felt a part of.

The toll of legally sanctioned homophobia, transphobia and oppression on older LGBT+ members is marked in comparison to younger LGBT+ participant's easy acceptance of terms like LGBT+, queer and gender neutral. For the older rural participants of this study, coming to terms with their gender or sexuality identity was quite difficult and for some painful. Rural safe spaces for LGBT+ people are vital for these older LGBT+ members to fully explore their identities and come to terms with some of the oppression they felt throughout their life. These spaces are also providing an element of exposure to younger LGBT+ people who often are more comfortable with their sexuality and gender identity which may broaden older

member's understandings of sexuality and gender. This intergenerational connectedness was not evident to the same degree in urban LGBT+ spaces surveyed here.

While the younger LGBT+ generation exposes the older generation to a different version of gender and sexuality the older generation has a wealth of knowledge around activism and activist skills. The YE campaign brought both generations together under a common cause and politicised many young people around a social justice issue for the first time. The politicisation of younger people is bleeding into campaigns such as the Repeal the 8th movement and tactics used during the YE campaign, particularly the recounting of personal experiences, is being used again. LGBT+ activist spaces have become spaces of learning, friendship and support. Flesher Fominaya's (2010) and Melucci (1995) have demonstrated that the formation of collective identity through the process of being in movement strengthens activist's commitment to a movement cause. However in the Irish case there is a waning of connectedness to the movement and community groups. Some rural groups have difficulty in recruiting new members, while some participants in the urban areas take a step back from LGBT+ activism. While the urban disengagement may be attributed to Ghaziani (2014) concept of a 'post gay era' where sexuality is less a politicising factor in peoples day to day life. The rural reluctance to engage, is in my view, is down to a persistent heteronormative environment and at times homophobic and transphobic atmosphere that persists in rural and small town Ireland. The threshold for engagement for rural LGBT+ activists is higher than for urban activists. This is maintained by institutions such as the Catholic Church and cultural institutions such as the GAA. The management of ones 'outness' is still a concern for rural LGBT+ people and this feeds into their decisions to join, take part in or participate in activist work for a LGBT+ group. I hypothesise that many young rural LGBT+ people are not willing to disclose their sexual or gender identity until they are older and have established support networks outside of their family and locality, many choosing to come out in adulthood while living away from their family (LGBTIreland Report 2016). Many young people would be reluctant to join a LGBT+ group in their locality if this meant they would be exposed to their family or local community before they were ready. Participants have continuously noted that the presence of the Catholic Church as patron to the majority of Irish schools is problematic to young LGBT+ people and this feeds into the need for young people to control their coming out. As well as the strong influence that Catholic ideology has over the state, neo-liberal economic policy decisions, which currently champion austerity, are impacting on LGBT+ groups funding from state institutions.

Sean O'Toole, writing in the 'Huffington Post Queer Voices' blog illustrates the issues LGBT+ organisations are having post YE in accessing funding. O'Toole (2017) outlines how Teach Solas proposed to be the only LGBT+ centre in the west of Ireland but had funding difficulties. The centre was earmarked funding in 2014 but however had that funding blocked by the City Council in 2016 as O'Toole puts it there was a

> *misconception that in the wake of the Yes vote in the Marriage Equality referendum, that there is simply no more everyday LGBT discrimination because there is no more legal discrimination, and that allocating funding, resources or platforms of agency to LGBT initiatives is simply no longer needed.*(O'Toole, 2017)

The funding was released after public pressure, generated by Teach Solas, was applied, and the centre opened in 2017. Following the Teach Solas incident, and what Duggan from GLEN and Broden from TENI have both commented on there is an understanding that LGBT+ concerns are no longer a public policy priority. There is a worrying consensus among public officials, and more broadly as O'Toole notes in Irish society, that all LGBT+ issues are now rectified and no more funding is need for LGBT+ projects. The closure of GLEN now underlines a vacuum in a coordinated national level leadership for LGBT+ organizations and groupings across Ireland. The reticence of state bodies to fund LGBT+ initiatives also reflects a growing consensus among policy makers that LGBT+ equality has been secured in important ways. In the context of austerity, other social issues including homelessness and health funding are taking priority both in a public policy discourse and in media discourses. The movement no longer has a lead organisation without GLEN, and the community does not have any central point to refer to as they did during the YE campaign. The success of the YE campaign plays a part in the closing of opportunity structures for the Irish LGBT+ movement organisations. This is, in my view, an unintended consequence of the campaign but could lead to the closing of a protest cycle for Irish LGBT+ activism for the immediate future. The disjointed nature of the movement is compounded when we look at how local groups look to themselves and not towards the broader movement when they speak about the success of the YE campaign. We can see how a local lens is applied by activists when they spoke about YE and their part in, setting more distance between them and national organisations.

 LGBT+ community groups are underfunded and badly resourced and are working in isolation from each other. The difference of urban and rural LGBT+ life is explored in more depth further. Austerity and the lack of meaningful funding for LGBT+ community development has restricted network building in the aftermath YE campaign. The potentiality of the YE

campaign to build on the systems and networks it produced is being missed due to a lack of resources and as a function of burn out of activists. Activists in rural environments particularly face an exposure being in movement in rural spaces that their urban counterparts do not experience to the same degree. Irish LGBT+ social movement organisations have not looked beyond their urban centres to develop the networks that were built up during the YE campaign. The wider politics of underfunding community development for smaller, more locally based and in this case rural community groups has stunted the potentiality of YE and of LGBT+ community development. The lack of a political constituency that could represent LGBT+ people in the Irish political system means that the influence of LGBT+ organisations to try and leverage funding for community development work in the Irish clientelistic system is also limited.

9.2 LIVING AN AUTHENTIC LIFE AS AN LGBT+ PERSON IN IRELAND CITIES, TOWNS AND COUNTRY

The experiences of participants from this study demonstrate the marked differences there are in living an authentic LGBT+ life in Ireland today. While urban participants spoke about acceptance and integration within their communities, rural participants talked about fear, a fight for visibility and isolation from LGBT+ specific services.

There was a strong connection for many LGBT+ rural participants to their respective groups, many spoke about how they felt isolated and disconnected form the wider LGBT+ community before they joined their group. The heteronormative atmosphere of rural Ireland is reflected in the discussion rural activists had about their lived realities. The emotion of fear was mentioned on numerous occasions in the rural LGBT+ focus groups. Some participants talked about fear when they spoke about their coming out process. Others talked about fear and hiding their identity in work or from friends and family. Some talked about the fear of being an LGBT+ activist in a rural environment where they would stand out quickly and be identifiable. This speaks to the work of Oswald and Culton (2003) and Haddock (2016) on the management of 'outness' and how LGBT+ rural dwellers are careful on how they present themselves to others to protect their LGBT+ identity from being known. While many chose to forgo their privacy with regard to their sexual orientation for the YE campaign, there were participants who chose to have less public roles in campaigning to protect their anonymity. The management of 'outness' is still a factor in where rural groups meet, how they publicise their events and where they socialise. For Dublin based participants these factors were not as important in the way they navigated their lives. Many rural participants spoke about how

they managed their identities, how they previously stayed in the closet well into adulthood and very rarely interacted with other LGBT+ people. Urban participants detailed a contrasting experience of work or home environments that were accepting, and a degree of ease in accessing both social interaction and activism connected to LGBT+ life. They also outlined how in the wake of the YE campaign they no longer felt the need to engage in LGBT+ activism as the social justice issues that concerned them did not have a direct link to LGBT+ issues.

The rural participants of this study share elements with the rural actors of change in Wright and Annes (2014) definition of a dynamic rurality, through their pursuit of raising an awareness of LGBT+ issues in their localities. For rural participants efforts to raise visibility locally have come in different forms, but there is a common aim: by raising the visibility of a local LGBT+ community, life is made easier for younger or more vulnerable LGBT+ people in the area, and the wider straight population become educated about the presence and goals of their local LGBT+ group. There is a complicated balance here for activists that underscores there exposure in doing LGBT+ activism in rural spaces. The raising of awareness around LGBT+ issues through visibility projects exposed rural activist's (particularly leaders of groups) sexuality. Participants were aware of this loss of anonymity and still pursued the visibility projects as they understood their benefit in the long term, particularly in supporting younger LGBT+ individuals. Rural activists also spoke about their need to raise awareness on LGBT+ issues, to counterbalance the absence of national movement organisations working in their localities. Rural activists felt the onus was on them to do this work, indicating an overall assessment that the majority of interactions with national organisations were disappointing, and that there was just no presence of national movement organisations in their areas.

Ghaziani's (2014) work demonstrates that attachments to LGBT+ institutions are receding and a more complex version of being queer is developing, however, this is done to an extent within the relative safety of urban neighbourhoods. The importance of LGBT+ specific groups to rural LGBT+ people and the need for rural LGBT+ people to manage their sexual identity are examples of how Ghaziani's (2014) 'post-gay' era is dependent on geographical location. For those in the city accessing LGBT+ specific institutions have fewer barriers (such as long distances or a lack of services). For rural dwellers the exclusion from traditional community spaces, such as schools, the GAA and the Church, and the need to manage ones identity make LGBT+ spaces more vital in rural LGBT+ life. Gender and sexual identity also play a factor in how comfortable LGBT+ individuals feel living their authentic life in their localities. While men (and some women) in this study indicated they were comfortable living an out and authentic

life in an urban setting, trans, queer, disabled and some women noted they still struggled for acceptance in both urban and rural spaces.

The findings of this study revealed that rural LGBT+ groups have meagre resources and are badly networked to other LGBT+ groups. While many community groups are underfunded in the current political climate of austerity they may have large memberships or well developed networks, LGBT+ groups have neither. With a lack of nationwide LGBT+ specific services or organisations working on a national scale, LGBT+ groups in rural environments rely heavily on local institutions such as county councils for support and legitimacy. There are few opportunities for groups to network, collaborate or feed into the work of national organisations. For Dublin based LGBT+ individuals have multiple options to engage with LGBT+ groups catering for different social, activists and cultural interests. The isolation LGBT+ rural groups feel from the national organisations and movement is demonstrated in how they frame the referendum result, as a local win of their respective groups over a national campaign win as many Dublin participants understand the referendum result.

The lack of convenient available training has led to rural groups becoming hubs of sharing and mentoring for activists without prior experience. The leadership of rural LGBT+ groups relies on having the asset of an activist with previous experience. Many who do not have the skills base from previous campaigns are reluctant to put themselves forward as leaders which in turn leaves a small number of people to drive the work of the groups. This in turn puts further pressure on those who do take leadership positions in rural based groups, leading to burnout and frustration due to lack of support, training or energy.

The potentiality for Irish LGBT+ organisations to be more representative of their members was evident in the structures of the YE campaign which demonstrated how a network of groups, working on a single campaign but at the local level, can both bring about social change but also foster connections between groups and individuals. The network of YE groups nationwide has dissipated but there is potential, in my view, to tap into the resonances of the campaign, which would deepen membership of LGBT+ organisations and further strengthen a network of LGBT+ groups that currently exists. While there is an expectation now that the legal changes have been put in place and people have canvassed openly in their localities on the issues of same sex marriage, that there will be an improvement in the LGBT+ lived experience there has been no measured increase in membership for LGBT+ rural groups or further access to LGBT+ specific services for rurally based LGBT+ people as is evidenced through participation in Mullingar Pride. In my view this

is due, in part, to the lack of a nation structure for LGBT+ activists and community groups to tie into. The work of Han (2014) demonstrates the need for movement organisations to develop individuals to become movement leaders and effective activists which would not only will long term success be achieved but a sense of community will be developed. Han (2014) speaks about 'lone wolf' activists that are operating in a quasi-independent capacity as they have the drive and skills but however are prone to burnout – the data of this project has demonstrated how this has happened to many rural based LGBT+ activists. The USI (Union of Students, Ireland) Pink Training event is a good example of both a network building and capacity and skills building exercise for activists. This national training event brings together all third level student LGBT+ societies and trains them in LGBT+ identity issues, on being effective activists and on managing a LGBT+ group for students. USI claim this is the largest training event for students of its type in Europe (USI 2013). An event like this for LGBT+ groups across Ireland would bring together activists and community organisers as YE did while also building the skills set of both local LGBT+ groups and deepening the potentiality for LGBT+ activism on a national level.

In summary, the difficulties that LGBT+ rural activists face in comparison to their urban counterparts are not just hindering activism and community building in rural areas, but in some cases are stilting any group formation at all. The lack of support from the Dublin centred LGBT+ organisations for the formation of new groups in towns and rural areas, combined with the lack of funding available from statutory agencies to provide adequate LGBT+ specific service results in a lack of training, a lack of motivation to join groups, high levels of frustration for LGBT+ rural activists, and in high burnout rates among leaders. The establishing of a national training program, like the USI Pink Training, could build as Han (2014) describes, scale and alleviate the 'lone wolves' working in isolation from the national organisations and of each other.

9.3 LEADERSHIP FOR THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

The 2017 closure of GLEN has had a large impact on the psyche of the LGBT+ community, many participants from this study indicated that they envisioned GLEN taking a lead role in directing LGBT+ organizing in the wake of the YE campaign and its closure leaves a vacuum of leadership. Áine Duggan become GLEN CEO in October 2016 and was CEO when the organisation closed in May 2017. In discussion with Duggan in March 2017 she discussed about her intention for GLEN was to reach out to all Irish LGBT+ organisations and extend the remit of GLEN beyond policy into more of a community focused role. She noted in that

conversation that she had negative conservations with civil servants around accessing funding, as the civil servants she spoke with felt that post YE the LGBT+ community should not need any more financial assistance. This is echoed by other participants that lead Irish LGBT+ groups on how straight people now viewed LGBT+ issues as null and void as they understood the last obstacle to LGBT+ equality as the lack of marriage rights for same sex couples. The success of the YE campaign is a shift towards a 'post gay era' when we consider the closing political opportunity structures as outlined above. The increasing lack of resources for mobilisation will make any further development of movement campaigns difficult and also hamper the further development of community structures.

The dual challenges of convincing policy makers of the importance of continued LGBT+ funding and building the scale of LGBT+ community organizing nationally are now left to the smaller LGBT+ organizations to take leadership on. The first signs of leadership surfaced at a 2017 Pride event , dubbed a '*LGBTQI Platform for Change'*, where a number of national and some locally based organizations, came together to open a dialogue on building the capacity of the LGBT+ movement in the wake of GLEN's departure. However, this meeting has already fallen into the trap of omitting to invite many regionally based groups and focusing on the work of the Dublin based organizations. The continuing secondary marginalization of rural groups will only compound their feelings of isolation and perpetuate the disjointed nature of the Irish LGBT+ community of LGBT+ organisers.

It is my view that the organisation structure of TENI should be used as a model for the work of national based organisations. The use of regional groups tied together in a network with access to an outreach officer brings far more reach to the work of the organisational and more support to those working outside of the capital. Secondly the open and democratic nature in which governance is carried out in TENI means there is a more transparent and accessible organisation that members of the Trans community both feel ownership of and feel represented by. With the exception of paid staff, these are cost effective measures that LGBT+ national organisations can undertake.

9.4 'YES EQUALITY' AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT SUCCESS

While some social movement scholars take substantive policy gains as a measure of social movement success (Gamson 1990; Goldstone 1980; Gurr 1980; Snyder and Kelly 1976) New Social Movement scholarship offers a more nuanced approach in exploring outcomes (Connolly 2004; Diani 1997; Giugni 1999; and Melucci 1996). We can see from an examination

of the subjective experience of movement activists and through participant observation of involvement in a LGBT+ locally based group that success is more textured and nuanced than just legislative success. Members of Mayo Equality, Longford LGBT and Mullingar Pride demonstrate the complexities of rural LGBT+ life and how the success of the 2015 YE campaign, while welcome and positive for the participants, highlighted the deficits of rural LGBT+ life.

Through the rural perspective we can see how the national Irish LGBT+ movement is fragmented and does not offer a comprehensive national alliance of organisations. Rural members feel isolated due to the remoteness of LGBT+ specific services and feel their voices are not valued at a national level. There are examples of Cohen's (1999) 'secondary marginalisation' in the experience of Mayo Equality in their relationship with the lead groups in the 'Yes Equality' campaign and for Longford LGBT with groups like BeLonG To and TENI. LGBT+ services are centred in urban areas and national organisations operate out of urban centres, with little contact with rural LGBT+ people. While there is a sense among rural activists of a rural/urban divide, rural LGBT+ people have worked to create vibrant pockets of LGBT+ community supports. Rural LGBT+ groups are examples of resilience in the face of apathy from the broader movement, particularly in connection with building LGBT+ support networks for rural people. While there is a disconnect with the national organisations, there is a trend of a diversifying LGBT+ community with more LGBT+ groups opening around the country. In 2016, Amach LGBT Centre, Galway; Mullingar Pride; Westmeath; SAGA, Sligo all started operation and the first Mayo Pride event has been planned for 2017 (RTE 2016; SAGA Sligo 2016; Mullingar Pride 2016; Outwest 2016). This resurgence in rural based activism and community building indicates the success of YE and the referendum campaign in bringing LGBT+ activism out of the urban centres and closer to rural based LGBT+ people. This resurgence can be seen as a product of the YE campaign (Flesher Fominaya 2010).

This study focused on how in examining movement success, through placing the experiences of rural and minority activist experiences alongside leaders of movement organisations, we can see the impact of secondary marginalisation within a movement and how activists deployed a local frame over a national one in claiming a campaign success. There is also scope to explore further issues that will shed a light on how movement participants understand success including an examination of emotion and affect (Jasper 1998), symbolic capital (Joseph 2010), generational divides (Ghaziani 2015; Reynolds 2016; Brotman, Ryan and Cormier 2003) and activist identities (Cortese 2015; Klandermans 2004; Gamson 1995).

Overall, the 'Yes Equality' campaign and the referendum vote of 2015 indicate a measure of progress for LGBT+ people in Ireland and a substantive campaign success for the Irish LGBT+ movement. The examination of rural voices and the subjective experiences of rural LGBT+ activists of the campaign and of being in movement shed a light on the nuances of movement success and how it resonates differently for different people and how location matters. Future work on the understandings of success by activists will lead to a deeper understanding of the nuances of movement success and the impacts social movements have on people's everyday lives.

9.5 Is Ireland 'Post gay'?

Ghaziani (2014) denotes a shift in 'gaybourhood' life in US cities and how previously important LGBT+ urban institutions are now passé to younger LGBT+ people who do not express the same need for these institutions as their older peers do. If we apply a 'post gay' lens to Ireland we can see some similarities; a decrease in homophobic and transphobic legal structures, the recent marriage referendum and Gender Recognition Act, both in 2015; a decrease in homophobic and transphobic attitudes, for example Leo Vardrakar becoming the countries first openly gay leader in 2017 (RTE 2017) and the comprehensive win for the YE campaign are testaments to this. The LGBTIreland Report (2016) found that a third of their participants thought that Irish LGBT+ people had full equality and the continued discourse by social commentators that the YE campaign and the extension of marriage rights to same sex couples by popular vote, are examples of a new and more progressive Ireland. However, when we examine the disjointed nature of LGBT+ life in Ireland between the generations and across the regions we can see that the picture is more nuanced. The demonstrations of secondary marginalisation as experienced by rural, disabled, Trans, female and queer members of the LGBT+ community in Ireland demonstrate a two speed acceptance of LGBT+ people.. In my opinion 'post gay' is an apt term as it refers to gays and not LGBT+ people, Ireland is not 'post LGBT+' but for urban gay men, Ireland is moving in the direction of 'post gay'. If the LGBT+ community choose to acknowledge the cleavages that exist within the community and work on supporting those at the margins, the move towards 'post LGBT+' is a possibility. The introduction of a national network of organisations supported and connected to both each other and the nation organisations will, in my view, bring the depth that is lacking in LGBT+ organising at the moment. The conversations around class, ethnicity, ability, identity and gender that are starting to happen are also an important development (Drivetime RTE Radio One, 2017).

Panti Bliss, became an unlikely hero of the YE campaign considering the strict messaging the campaign maintained. She was asked to deliver a "Queens Speech" on TV3 television for Christmas 2015 to mark the extraordinary year the LGBT+ community in Ireland had had. In the speech Panti echoing the 1916 proclamation which would enjoy its centenary in 2016, noted "The kind of change we need to make to live up to the promise to cherish all the children of the nation equally may seem daunting, but if May 22nd taught us anything, it's that if we feel strongly enough about something, and if we work together, we can achieve incredible things" (Panti Bliss 2015). The sentiments were directed at addressing the homeless crisis and the marginalisation of Travellers and refugees. However, the same sentiment could be applied to LGBT+ organising in Ireland in the post YE moment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A Different Country". 2017. Producer and Director Edmund Lynch. RTE

Adelman, M. J, Gurevitch. B, De Vries and J, Blando. 2006. "Community Building and Research in the Aging LGBT Population". In Kimmel, D. T, Rose. and S David editors. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Aging: Research and Clinical Perspectives*. Columbia University Press

Agar, M. 1986. *Speaking of Ethnography. Volume 2 of Qualitative Research Methods*. United States: SAGE.

Alexander, J. 2002. "Queer Webs: Representations of LGBT People and Communities on the World Wide Web". *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies* 7(2 and 3): 77–84.

Allen, C. 2014. *GCN Issue 299*. Retrieved 18 September 2017 (https://gcn.ie/gcn-issue-299-november-2014/)

Allen, S 2015. "Millennials Are the Gayest Generation". *The Daily Beast.* Retrieved 12 September 2017 (http://www.thedailybeast.com/millennials-are-the-gayest-generation)

Alvesson, M. and K. Sköldberg. 2000. *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research.* United States: SAGE

Amenta, E., B.G. Carruthers and Y. Zylan. 1992. "A Hero for The Aged – The Townsend Movement, The Political Mediation Model, and United -States Old-Age Policy, 1934-1950". *American Journal of Sociology* 98: 308-339.

Atlantic Philanthropies. 2013. *Catalysing LGBT Equality and Visibility in Ireland*
A Review of LGBT Cluster Grants, 2004-2013. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/app/uploads/2015/09/Atlantic -LGBTCluster-ROI.pdf)

Ayoub, P. 2016. *When States Come Out: Europe's Sexual Minorities and the Politics of Visibility,* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ayoub, P. 2013. "Cooperative Transnationalism in Contemporary Europe: Europeanization and Political Opportunities for LGBT Mobilization

in the European Union." *European Political Science Review*, 5(2): 279-310.

Bailey, C. A. 2007. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research 2nd Edition*. United States: Pine Forge Press.

Bassichis, M, A Lee and D Spade. 2011. "Building an Abolitionist Trans and Queer Movement with Everything We Got". In Stanley, E and N, Smith. *Captive Genders*. AK Press. Edinburgh.

BeLonGTo. 2017. "History of BeLonG To" Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (www.belongto.ie)

Bernstein, M. 1997. "Celebration and Suppression: The Strategic Uses of Identity by the Lesbian and Gay Movement". *American Journal of Sociology* 103: 531-565.

Bernstein, M. 2002. "Identities and Politics: Toward a Historical Understanding of the Lesbian and Gay Movement". *Social Science History* 26: 531-581.

Bernstein, M. 2015. "Same-sex marriage and the future of the LGBT movement: SWS presidential address". *Gender & Society* 29:3 321-337. SAGE Publications

Bernstein, M. and K.A. Olsen. 2009. "Identity Deployment and Social Change: Understanding Identity as a Social Movement and Organizational Strategy". *Sociology Compass* 3: 871-883.

Bernstein, M and Taylor, V.A. 2013. *The Marrying Kind? Debating Same-Sex Marriage Within the Lesbian and Gay Movement*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Brotman, S, B. Ryan and R. Cormier. 2003. "The Health and Social Service Needs of Gay and Lesbian Elders and Their Families in Canada". Gerontologist 43: 192-202.

Brown, G. 2015. "Rethinking the Origins of Homonormativity: The Diverse Economies of Rural Gay Life in England and Wales in the 1970s and 1980s". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 40: 549-561.

Brown, M.K. 2000. "Cohen, Cathy J - The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics". *The American Political Science Review (1927).* Washington, D.C: American Political Science Association.

Buchanan, R. 2014. "A Numbers Game" *GCN*. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (https://gcn.ie/numbers-game/)

Carolan, M. 2008. "Government asked to outline plan in Foy case". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 14 September 2017. https://www.irishtimes.com/news/government-asked-to-outline-plan-in-foy-case-1.894059

Central Statistics Office, The. 2017. "Marriages and Civil Partnerships 2016". Retrieved on the 12 September 2017 http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/mcp/marriagesandcivilpartnerships2016/

Chakraborti, N. and Hardy, S. 2015. *LGB&T Hate Crime Reporting: Identifying Barriers and Solutions*, London: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Cohen, A. P 1985. *The symbolic construction of community* (1st ed.). London: Ellis Horwood Ltd. and Tavistock Publications Ltd.

Cohen, C.J. 1997. Punks, "Bulldraggers, and Welfare Queens The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" GLQ 3: 437-465

Cohen, C.J. 1999. *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Community Platform. 2009. *A Better Ireland is Possible.* Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (http://communityplatform.ie/publication/a-better-ireland-is-possible-2009/)

Connell, L. As Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History*. Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Connolly, L. and N. Hourigan. 2006. *Social Movements and Ireland.* Manchester: Manchester University Press

Cortese, D.K. 2015. "I'm a "Good" Activist, You're a "Bad" Activist, and Everything I Do is Activism: Parsing the Different Types of "Activist" Identities in LBGTQ Organizing". *Interface: a journal for and about social movements* 7: 215 – 246.

Coulter, C. 2008. "State to Appeal Judgment in Foy Case to Supreme Court". *Irish Times.* Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (https://www.irishtimes.com/news/state-to-appeal-judgment-in-foy-case-to-supreme-court-1.908534)

Cuffe, C. 2014. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History*. Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Cullen, A. 2014. *Positive spaces: An ethnographic assessment of the influence of the internet on LGBT identity*. United States: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Cullen, P. 2017. "Glen caught in 'perfect storm' as funds dried up and staff left". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/glen-caught-in-perfect-storm-as-funds-dried-up-and-staff-left-1.3086761?mode=sample&auth-failed=1&pw-origin=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.irishtimes.com%2Fnews%2Fhealth%2Fglen-caught-in-perfect-storm-as-funds-dried-up-and-staff-left-1.3086761)

Davis, B & D, Sumara, 2010. "If things were simple . . .: complexity in education". *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 16 (4):856-860.

DeFilippis, J.N. 2016. "What About the Rest of Us?" An Overview of LGBT Poverty Issues and a Call to Action". *Journal of Progressive Human Services* 27: 143-174.

Denzin, N.K. and Y.S. Lincoln. 1998. *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* United States: Sage Publications.

Diez, J. 2011. "Argentina: A Queer Tango between the Lesbian and Gay Movement and the State". Pg 13 – 27 In: M. Tremblay, D. Paternotte and C. Johnson, editors, *The Lesbian and Gay Movement and the State: Comparative Insights into a Transformed Relationship. Great Britain:* Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Dublin Aids Alliance. 2013. "25 Years Addressing HIV/AIDS". Retrieved on 12 September 2017 http://www.hivireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/Dublin-Aids-Alliance-25-Brochure.pdf

Eile. 2016. "Exciting new departure for GLEN and for LGBT Equality in Ireland" Retrieved on 9th October 2017. https://eile.ie/2016/09/30/exciting-new-departure-for-glen-and-for-lgbt-equality-in-ireland/

Earley, K. 2017. "Why We Need to Reconsider How We View Gay Pride Festivals". *The Daily Edge*. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (http://www.dailyedge.ie/politicize-pride-3451448-Jun2017/)

Elkink, J.A., D.M. Farrell, T. Reidy and J. Suiter. 2016. "Understanding the 2015 Marriage Referendum in Ireland: Context, Campaign, and Conservative Ireland". *Irish Political Studies* 1-21.

European Court of Human Rights. 1988. NORRIS v. IRELAND. In: E. C. o. H. Rights, editor 10581/83.

Ferriter, D. 2012. *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* London: Profile Books Limited.

Finn, C. 2017. "Ireland is the first country to carry out a national LGBT youth strategy". *The Journal*. Retrieved on 12 September 2017. http://www.thejournal.ie/lgbt-strategy-3336083-Apr2017/

Finnegan, B. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Finnegan, B. 2017. "A Bad Day for LGBT Ireland As GLEN Closes Its Doors". *GCN*. Retrieved on 12 September 2017 https://gcn.ie/bad-day-lgbt-ireland-glen-closes-doors/

Fitzgearld, J. 2014. *Ireland's Recovery from Crisis*. ESRI, Dublin, Ireland.

Frankham, J. and C, McRae. 2010. "Ethnography". In Somekh, B. and Lewin, C. eds. 2011. *Theory and methods in social research*. United States: Sage.

Fraser, V. 2010. "Queer Closets and Rainbow Hyperlinks: The Construction and Constraint of Queer Subjectivities Online". *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*. 7(1): 30-36.

Fominaya, C. F. 2010. "Collective Identity in Social Movements: Central Concepts and Debates." *Sociology Compass* 4(6): 393-404.

Foucault, M. and F, Ewald. 2003. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*. Editors Bertani, M. and A Fontana. UK: Allen Lane

Fox Piven, F. and R, Cloward. 1979. *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. UK: Vintage books,

Gamson, J. 1995. "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma". *Social Problems* 42(3): 390-407.

Gamson, J. 1997. "Messages of Exclusion: Gender, Movements, and Symbolic Boundaries." *Gender and Society* 11(2): 178–99

Gamson, W. A. 1975. *The Strategy of Social Protest* Homewood, Ill: Dorsey Press.

Gamson, W. A. 1990. *The Strategy of Social Protest. 2nd ed*. Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth Pub,

Gamson, W. A. 2014. "Measuring Movement Outcomes". *Mobilizing Ideas* Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (https://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/)

GCN - Gay Community News. 2015. "Finally The Long Journey to Marriage Equality is Over" GCN. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (https://gcn.ie/i-do-finally-the-long-journey-to-marriage-equality-is-over/)

GCN - Gay Community News. 2017. "Homepage". GCN Retrieved on 18 September (https://gcn.ie/)

GCN - Gay Community News. 2017. "GCN Town Hall Talks: LGBT Resistance In The Age of Trump". Retrieved on 19 September 2017. (https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/gcn-town-hall-talks-lgbt-resistance-in-the-age-of-trump-tickets-31832288231)

Gates, G. J. 2011. "How Many People are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender?". *UCLA: The Williams Institute*. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (http://escholarship.org/uc/item/09h684x2)

Gates, G. J. 2017. "In US, More Adults Identifying as LGBT". *Gallup*. Retrieved on 15 September 2017 (http://www.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx)

Ghaziani, A. 2011. "Post-Gay Collective Identity Construction". *Social Problems* 58: 99-125.

Ghaziani, A. 2014. *There Goes the Gayborhood?* Ewing; Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gibbon, P. 1973. "Arensberg and Kimball Revisited". *Economy and Society* 2(3): 479-498.

Gilligan, AL and Zappone K. 2012. *Our Lives Out Loud: In Pursuit of Justice and Equality*. Dublin: The O'Brien Press.

Gilligan, AL. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Giugni, M. 2007. "Useless Protest? A Time-Series Analysis of the Policy Outcomes of Ecology, Antinuclear, and Peace Movements in the United States, 1977 - 1995". *Mobilization* 12: 53-77.

Giugni, M. 2008. "Political, Biographical, and Cultural Consequences of Social Movements". *Sociology Compass* 2: 1582-1600.

Giugni, M. 2009. *The Politics of Unemployment in Europe: Policy Responses and Collective Action* Farnham, England: Ashgate Pub.

Giugni, M. 2013. "Movement Success and Failure: Looking both at 'Ones' and 'Zeros'". *Mobilizing Ideas*. Retrieved on 12 September 2017 https://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/2013/12/02/movement-success-and-failure-looking-both-at-ones-and-zeros/

GLEN. 2015. "About Us". Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (www.glen.com/aboutus)

Gobo, G and L, Marciniak. 2016. "What Is Ethnography". In Silverman, D. *Qualitative Research Fourth Edition*. United States: SAGE.

Goldstone, J.A. 1980. "The Weakness of Organization: A New Look at Gamson's 'The Strategy of Social Protest'". *American Journal of Sociology* 85: 1017.

Goldstone , J.A. and D, McAdam. 2001. "Contention in Demographic and Life-Course Context". In: R. R. Aminzade, editor *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gorman-Murray, A. 2006. "Homeboys: uses of home by gay Australian men". *Social & Cultural Geography*. 7(1): 53-69

Gorman-Murray, A. 2007. "Homemaking and mature age gay men 'down-under': Paradox, intimacy, subjectivities, spatialities, and scale". *Gender, Place and Culture* 14 (5): 569-584

Gorman-Murray, A. 2012. "Interrogating Rurality in Settler-Societies: Place, Identity and Culture". *Cultural Studies Review* 18 (1)

Gorman-Murray, A. 2013. "Documenting lesbian and gay lives in rural Australia". Pg 95-109. In Gorman-Murray, A., Pini, B., & Bryant, L *Sexuality, Rurality and Geography*.

Gorman-Murray, A.W, Gordon Waitt and C Gibson. "Chilling out in 'cosmopolitan country': Urban/rural hybridity and the construction of Daylesford as a 'lesbian and gay rural idyll". *Journal of Rural Studies*. 28(1): 69-79

Gray, M. 2009. *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*. New York: NYU Press.

Griffith, M. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Gurr, T.R. 1980. *Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research* New York: Free Press.

Halsaa, B. 2009. "The "impact" of women's movements and the "architecture" of gender-fair citizenship – conceptual discussions within FEMCIT". *University of Oslo, Centre for Gender Studies: FEMCIT* as in Santos, A. 2012. *Social Movements and Sexual Citizenship in Southern Europe.*UK: Palgrave Macmillan

Haddock, B.H. 2016. *In Plain Sight: The LGBT Community in the Kansas Flint Hills.* United States: ProQuest Dissertations

Halberstam, J. 2005. "Shame and White Gay Masculinity". *Social Text* 23(3): 219-233.

Hammack, P. M, Thompson, & A, Pilecki. 2009. "Configurations of Identity Among Sexual Minority Youth: Context, Desire, and Narrative". *Journal of youth and adolescence*. 38(2). 867-83.

Healy, G. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Healy, G. 2015. *The Meaning of Civil Partnership for Same-Sex Couples in Ireland: An Interpretative Phenomenological Study*. DCU, Dublin.

Healy, G, B. Sheehan and N. Whelan. 2016. *Ireland Says Yes: The Inside Story of How the Vote for Marriage Equality was Won* Kildare, Ireland: Merrion Press.

Hesse-Biber, S.N. and P. Leavy. 2004. *Approaches to Qualitative Research: a Reader on Theory and Practice* New York: Oxford University Press.

Higgins, A., L. Doyle, C. Downes, R. Murphy, D. Sharek, J. DeVries, et al. 2017. *LGBT Ireland Report*. *GLEN*. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (http://www.glen.ie/attachments/The_LGBTIreland_Report.pdf)

Hildebrandt, T. 2012. "Development and division: the effect of transnational linkages and local politics on LGBT activism in China" *Journal of Contemporary China*, 21 (77): 845-862.

Holland, K. 2015. "Children's charities call for Yes in same-sex marriage vote". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 13 September 2017. (https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/children-s-charities-call-for-yes-in-same-sex-marriage-vote-1.2193759?mode=sample&auth-failed=1&pw-origin=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.irishtimes.com%2Fnews%2Fsocial-affairs%2Fchildren-s-charities-call-for-yes-in-same-sex-marriage-vote-1.2193759)

Hourigan, N. 2006. "Movement Outcomes and Irish Language Protest". In Connolly, L. and N. Hourigan (Eds). 2006. *Social movements and Ireland* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Howlin, G. 2014. "Homophobia Controversy Left RTÉ Side-lined as Abbey Stepped in". *Irish Examiner*. Retrieved on 14 September 2017 (http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/columnists/guest-columnist/homophobia-controversy-left-rte-sidelined-as-abbey-stepped-in-257627.html)

Hug, C. 1999. *The Politics of Sexual Morality in Ireland* New York: Palgrave.

Hughes, B. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Hull, K, E and T,A. Ortyl. 2013. "Same-Sex Marriage and Constituent Perceptions of the LGBT Rights Movement" In: Bernstein, M and V Taylor, editors *The Marrying Kind? Debating Same-Sex Marriage Within the Lesbian and Gay Movement*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Inglis, T. 1998. *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland. 2nd ed.* Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

Inglis, T. 2008. *Global Ireland* Great Britain: Routledge Ltd.

Iona Institute. 2014. "About The Iona Institute". Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (www.ionainstitute.ie)

Irish Independent. 2015. "Why I'll Be Voting 'No' to Same-Sex Marriage, Even Though I'm Gay" *Independent.ie*. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/why-ill-be-voting-no-to-samesex- marriage-even-though-im-gay-30953906.html)

Irish Queer Archive. 2014. "Dublin: The Fairview Park Murders and the Declan Flynn Murder Case" Editor T. Walsh. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (https://gayhistory.wordpress.com/2014/06/28/dublin-the-fairview-park-murders-and-the-declan-flynn-murder-case/)

Irish Times. 1992. "Guide to Pressure Groups". *Irish Times* Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (https://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1992/0919/Pg004.html#Ar0   0402)

Irish Times\IPSOS MRBI. 2015. "The Changing Irish Family". *Irish Times* Retrieved on 12 September 2017 (https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/family-values/family-values-poll/the-changing-irish-family-1.2146952)

J Walter Thompson 'Innovation Group' .2017. as cited in T, Zing "Teens These Days Are Queer AF, New Study Says". *Broadly.* Retrieved on 12Sept 2017 (https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/kb4dvz/teens-these-days   -are-queer-af-new-study-says)

Jenkins, S. 2013. "Methodological Challenges of Conducting 'Insider' Reflexive Research with the Miscarriages of Justice Community". *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 16: 373-387.

Kamikaze, I. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Kaplowitz, M. 2000. "Statistical Analysis of Sensitive Topics in Group and Individual Interviews". *Quality and Quantity* 34(4): 419–431

Kazyak, E. 2011. "Disrupting Cultural Selves: Constructing Gay and Lesbian Identities in Rural Locales". *University of Nebraska – Lincoln Sociology Department*, Faculty Publications. 158

Kazyak, E. 2012. "Midwest or Lesbian? Gender, Rurality, and Sexuality". *Gender & Society* 26: 825-848.

Kenny, M. 2012. "The End of Catholic Ireland" *The Guardian*. Retrieved on 18 September 2017 (https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2012/aug/08/end-of-catholic-ireland)

Kingston, S. 2010. *Aspirations for Ireland*. Dublin: The Columba Press.

Kinsman, G.W. 1987. *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* Montreal: Blackrose Books.

Kirby, P. and M. Murphy. 2011. *Towards a Second Republic: Irish Politics and the Celtic Tiger* London: Pluto Pr.

Klandermans, B. 2004, "The Demand and Supply of Participation: Social-Psychological Correlates of Participation in Social Movements", in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (eds D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule and H. Kriesi), Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Knopp, L. and M. Brown. 2003. "Queer Diffusions. Environment and Planning" *Society and Space* 21: 409-424.

Kollman, K. 2009. "European institutions, transnational networks and national same-sex union policy: when soft law hits harder". *Contemporary Politics*, 15(1): 37-53.

Kollman, K. and M. Waites. 2009. "The Global Politics of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Human Rights: An Introduction". *Contemporary Politics* 15: 1-17

Kollman, K. and M. Waites. 2011. "United Kingdom: Changing Political Opportunity Structures, Policy Success and Continuing Challenges for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Movements". Pg. 181 -197 In: D. Paternotte, C. Johnson and M. Tremblay, editors, *The Lesbian and Gay Movement and the State: Comparative Insights into a Transformed Relationship* Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Lambkin, I. 2014. "Taking Pride in our future: 40 years of Dublin Gay Pride". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 14 September 2017. https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/taking-pride-in-our-future-40-years-of-dublin-gay-pride-1.1830312

Leane, M. and E. Kiely. 2014. *Sexualities and Irish Society: A Reader* Dublin: Orpen Press.

Lee, M.G. and J.K. Quam. 2013. "Comparing Supports for LGBT Aging in Rural Versus Urban Areas". *Journal of Gerontological Social Work* 56: 112-126.

Linehan, H. 2005. "McDowell's Role Splits Gay Festival". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 19 September 2017. (https://www.irishtimes.com/news/mcdowell-s-role-splits-gay-festival-1.472253)

Lynch, E. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Mair, P. 2010. "Political Representation and Government in the European Union". *Journal of European Public Policy* 17:1. 20-35.

Mair, P. 2014. *Parties, Party Systems and Democracy* UK: ECPR Press.

Mair, P., I.v. Biezen, S. Bartolini and H. Daalder. 2014. *On parties, party systems and democracy: selected writings of Peter Mair* UK: ECPR Press,

Marcus, G. 1998. *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mayock, P.; Bryan, A.; Carr, N. & Kitching, K. 2009. *Supporting LGBT Lives: A Study of the Mental Health and Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People.* Dublin: BeLonG To Youth Services

Melucci, A. 1995. "The Process of Collective Identity". Pp. 41–63 in *Social Movements and Culture*, edited by Johnston, H and B, Klandermans. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mid-West Radio. 2015. "A Number of Rural Fine Gael TDs are Reportedly Reluctant to Knock on Doors, Canvassing for a Yes Vote in the Forthcoming Marriage Equality Referendum". Retrieved on 19 September 2017

(http://www.midwestradio.ie/index.php/news/25555-a-number-of-rural-fine-gael-tds-are-reportedly-reluctant-to-knock-on-doors-canvassing-for-a-yes-vote-in-the-forthcoming-marriage-equality-referendum)

Minton, S.J., Dahl, T., O'Moore, A.M. and Tuck, D. 2008. *"An Exploratory Survey of the Experiences of Homophobic Bullying Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Young People in Ireland"* Irish Educational Studies 27(2):177-191.

Mothers and Fathers Matter. 2014. "About Us". Retrieved on 19th September 2017 (https://mothersandfathersmatter.org/about/)

McAdam, D. 1989. "The Biographical Consequences of Activism". *American Sociological Review* 54: 744.

McAdam, D. 1995. "'Initiator' and 'Spin-off' Movements: Diffusion Processes in Protest Cycles." Pp. 217-39 in *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action,* edited by M. Traugott. Durham, NC: Duke University Press

McAdam, D. 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* University of Chicago Press, Chicago

McAdam, D., J.D. McCarthy and M. Zald. 1996. *Comparative perspectives on social movements: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* New York: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, D. and R. Paulsen. 1993. "Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism". *American Journal of Sociology* 99: 640-667.

McAdam, D. and Y. Su. 2002. "The War at Home: Antiwar Protests and Congressional Voting, 1965 to 1973". *American Sociological Review* 67: 696-721.

McCann E, Sharek D, Higgins A, Sheerin F & Glacken M. 2013. "Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older people in Ireland: Mental health issues", *Aging & Mental Health* 17:3, 358-365

McInerney, E. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

McGarry, P. 2016. "Mass Attendance in Dublin to Drop by One-Third by 2030". *Irish Times.* Retrieved on 19 September 2017

(https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/mass-attendance-in-dublin-to-drop-by-one-third-by-2030-1.2504351)

McGreevy, R. 2011. "Citizens' Assembly to Have Say in Constitutional Reform". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 19September 2017 (https://www.irishtimes.com/news/citizens-assembly-to-have-say-in-constitutional-reform-1.629361)

McKenna, O. 2016. "Gay Bars Closures Aren't The End of Queer Culture". *GCN*. Retrieved on 16 September 2017 (https://gcn.ie/gay-bars-closures-arent-end-queer-culture/)

McKevitt, U. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

McMahon, P. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Meyler, S. 2014. "What's next and how should the LGBT community play it? *GCN* Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (https://gcn.ie/gcn-issue-291-march-2014/)

Morgan, D.L. 1988. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* United States: Sage Publications.

Mulholland, M. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Mullally, U. 2015. "Team Panti: the making of a queen". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 14 September 2017. (https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/film/team-panti-the-making-of-a-queen-1.2394777?mode=sample&auth-failed=1&pw-origin=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.irishtimes.com%2Fculture%2Ffilm%2Fteam-panti-the-making-of-a-queen-1.2394777)

Mullingar Pride. 2016. "Mullingarpride.ie | NEWS". Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (www.mullingarpride.ie/news)

Murphy, M.P. 2011. "Civil Society in the Shadow of the Irish State". *Irish Journal of Sociology* 19: 170-187.

Murphy, Y. 2016. "The Marriage Equality Referendum 2015". *Irish Political Studies* 31: 315-330.

National LGBT Federation (NXF). 2009. *Burning Issues*. D. S. Denyer, O. Howard, O. McEvoy and C. Ó hUltacháin, editors, Dublin: NLGBTF.

National LGBT Federation (NXF). 2017. "Our History" Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://nxf.ie/our-history/)

Nielsen, Joyce, (ed.), 1990, *Feminist Research Methods*, Boulder, Col.: Westview.

Newstalk. 2015. "Group Hails 'Phenomenal' Push, as 2,000 New Voters Joined Register Every Day". Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://www.newstalk.com/Theres-been-a-2-increase-in-the-number-of-registered-voters-ahead-of-the-referendum)

Norman, J. & Galvin, M. 2006. *Straight Talk: An Investigation of Attitudes and Experiences of Homophobic Bullying in Second-Level Schools.* Dublin: Dublin City University: Centre for Educational Evaluation

Ó Cuinn, C. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

O'Donnell, K. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

O'Gorman, C. 2017. "Drivetime" *RTE Radio 1* Retrieved on 23 June 2017 (http://www.rte.ie/radio1/drivetime/programmes/2017/0804/895329-drivetime-friday-4-august-2017/)

O'Toole, F. 2011. *Enough is Enough: How to Build a New Republic*. UK: Faber & Faber

Ocean FM. 2016. "First Sligo Lesbian Couple to Get Married Celebrate at Pride Parade". *Ocean FM, Sligo*. Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (https://soundcloud.com/oceanfm/first-sligo-lesbian-couple-to-get-married-celebrate-at-pride-parade-nwt-mon-15th-aug)

Olsen, K A. 2013. "What Happens When You Get What You Want?: The Relationship between Organizational Identity and Goals in the Movement for Same-Sex Marriage". In *A Marrying Kind: Debating Same-Sex Marriage Within the Lesbian and Gay Movement*, Edited by Bernstein, M and Taylor, V.A . Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press.

Oswald, R.F. and L.S. Culton. 2003. "Under the Rainbow: Rural Gay Life and Its Relevance for Family Providers". *Family Relations* 52: 72-81.

OutWest. 2016. "Mayo Pride OutWest". Retrieved on 19 September 2017. (www.outwest.ie/)

Paternotte, D. 2011. "Belgium: The Paradoxical Strength of Disunion". p. 43-57 In: D. Paternotte, C. Johnson and M. Tremblay, editors, *The Lesbian and Gay Movement and the State: Comparative Insights Into a Transformed Relationship*. Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Paternotte, D. and M. Tremblay. 2015. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Lesbian and Gay Activism* UK: Ashgate.

Pingel ES, Bauermeister JA, Johns MM, Eisenberg A, Leslie-Santana M. 2013. "A safe way to explore: Reframing risk on the Internet amidst young gay men's search for identity". *Journal of adolescent research*. 28(4):453-478.

PinkNews. 2014. "Ireland: Gender Recognition Bill to Be Published 'By End of the Year" *PinkNews*. Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/09/17/ireland-gender-recognition-bill-to-be-published-by-end-of-the-year/)

Powell, F. and D. Guerin. 1997. *Civil Society and Social Policy* Dublin: A&A.

Powell, F. and M. Geoghegan. 2004. *Politics of Community Development* Dublin: A&A.

Power, A. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Reynolds, R. 2009. "Endangered Territory, Endangered Identity: Oxford Street and the Dissipation of Gay Life". *Journal of Australian Studies* 33: 79-92.

Rose, K. 1994. *Diverse Communities: The Evolution of Lesbian and Gay Politics in Ireland* Cork: Cork University Press.

Rose, K. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

RTE. 2013. "Decriminalisation of Homosexuality". *RTE Archives*. Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://www.rte.ie/archives/2013/0621/457935-20-years-since-decriminalisation-of-homosexuality/)

RTE. 2016. "First LGBT Resource Centre Opens in West of Ireland". *RTE Player*. Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (https://www.rte.ie/news/video/2016/1211/838132-lgbt-resource-centre/)

RTE. 2016. "General Election 2007". *RTE Archives*. Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/688-elections/702-general-election-2007/)

RTE. 2016. "Huge Collapse in Fianna Fáil Vote". *RTE Archives*. Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/688-elections/703-general-election-2011/139422-huge-collapse-in-fianna-fail-vote/)

RTE. 2017. "Charity Glen to close following review after financial issues raised". *RTE*. Retrieved on 13 September 2017. (https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2017/0518/876090-glen/)

Ryan, F. 2014a. "We'll Have What They're Having': Sexual Minorities and the Law in the Republic of Ireland". In: M. Leane and E. Kiely, editors, *Sexualities and Irish Society: A Reader*. Dublin: Orpen Press,

Ryan, P. 2012. *Asking Angela Macnamara : an intimate history of Irish lives*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Ryan P. 2014b. "The Pursuit of Gay and Lesbian Sexual Citizenship Rights, 1980-2011". In: M. Leane and E. Kiely, editors, *Sexualities and Irish Society: A Reader*. Dublin: Orpen Press.

Santos, A. 2016. *Social Movements and Sexual Citizenship in Southern Europe*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sarantakos, S. 2013. *Social Research.* UK: Palgrave Macmillan

Sarma, K. 2004. "A review of research on victimisation of the gay and lesbian community in Ireland". *Garda Research Unit.* Retrieved on 19 September 2017

(http://www.garda.ie/Documents/User/Gru_Report_Gaylesbian%5B
1%5D.pdf)

Seidman, S. 2004. *Beyond the Closet: The Transformation of Gay and Lesbian Life*. New York: Routledge.

Sheridan, K. 2012. "How Gay Marriage Went Mainstream". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 17 September 2017 (https://www.irishtimes.com/news/how-gay-marriage-went-mainstream-1.536209?mode=sample&auth-failed=1&pw-origin=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.irishtimes.com%2Fnews%2Fhow-gay-marriage-went-mainstream-1.536209)

Shogam, D. 1999. *The Making of High Performance Athletes: Discipline,Diversity,and Ethics / Edition 1*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division

Strolovitch, D Z.2006. "Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender". *Journal of Politics*. 68:4.

Snow, D. 2001. "Collective Identity and Expressive Forms". University of California, Irvine eScholarship Repository. Retrieved on July 26, 2009 (http://repositories.cdlib.org/csd/01-07).

Snyder, D. and W.R. Kelly. 1976. "Industrial Violence in Italy, 1878-1903". *American Journal of Sociology* 82: 131-162.

Sheehan, B. Quoted in Mullally, U. 2014. *In the Name of Love: the Movement for Marriage Equality in Ireland: An Oral History* Dublin: History Press Ireland.

Stein, A. 2013. "What's the Matter with Newark? Race, Class, Marriage Politics, and the Limits of Queer Liberalism". In: V. A. Taylor and B. Mary, editors, *The Marrying Kind? Debating Same Sex Marriage within the Lesbian and Gay Movement*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Stone, A.L. 2009. "More than Adding a T: American Lesbian and Gay Activists' Attitudes towards Transgender Inclusion". *Sexualities* 12: 334-354.

Supreme Court of Ireland. 1983. Norris v. A.G. [1983] IESC 3; [1984] IR 36 (22 April 1983).

Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007. *Report of the Task Force on Active Citizenship*. Dublin: Task Force on Active Citizenship.

Tarrow, Sidney G. 1989. *Struggle, Politics, and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements and Cycles of Protest*. Ithaca, NY: Center for International Studies, Cornell University.

Tarrow, S.G. 1998. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, V. 1989. "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance." *American Sociological Review* 54(5): 761–75

Taylor, C. 2010. "Civil Partnership Bill Signed into Law". *Irish Times*. Retrieved on 14 September 2017 (https://www.irishtimes.com/news/civil-partnership-bill-signed-into-law-1.861242)

TENI (Trans Equality Network). 2016. "Legal Gender Recognition in Ireland: Gender Recognition" Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://www.teni.ie/page.aspx?contentid=586).

TENI (Trans Equality Network). 2017. "Our Work: About Us" Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://www.teni.ie/page.aspx?contentid=6)

Tobin, B. 2016. "Marriage Equality in Ireland: The Politico-Legal Context". *International Journal Of Law Policy And The Family*, 30 (2):115-130

Toner, F. 2014. "Castlebar Goes Rainbow Bright for Social Inclusion Week". *Mayo Advertiser*. Retrieved on 19 September 2017 (http://www.advertiser.ie/mayo/article/73095/castlebar-goes-rainbow-bright-for-social-inclusion-week)

Tremblay, M., D. Paternotte and C. Johnson. 2011. *The Lesbian and Gay Movement and the State: Comparative Insights into a Transformed Relationship* UK: Ashgate.

Walsh, F. and E. Strobel 2009. "Recent trends in trade union membership in Ireland". *Economic and Social Review* 40(1): 117–38

Weeks, J. 2015. "Gay Liberation and It's Legacies". In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Lesbian and Gay Activism*. Eds Paternotte D. and Tremblay M. UK: Routledge

Wilson, M. 2017. "Drivetime" *RTE Radio 1* Retrieved on 23 June 2017 (http://www.rte.ie/radio1/drivetime/programmes/2017/0804/895329-drivetime-friday-4-august-2017/)

Zappone, K. 2001. *Charting the Equality Agenda*. Belfast: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Zappone, K. As quoted in Finn, C. 2017. "Ireland is the first country to carry out a national LGBT youth strategy". *The Journal*. Retrieved on 12 September 2017 (http://www.thejournal.ie/lgbt-strategy-3336083-Apr2017/)

APPENDIX 1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY IRISH LGBT+ ACTIVISM AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Irish LGBT+ movement and it's community organisations developed from humble beginnings in the 1960s to where it stands today. This Appendix sets out the development of the movement and community groups between the 1960's and 2000 to offer context for this study. Knowledge of the movement's development that illustrates the important actors, groups and campaigns offers an entry point to explore the data gathered on the contemporary movement. This section will outline the development of the LGBT+ movement since the foundation of the State in 1922. It will chart the development of the movement from a small collection of academics and elites, primarily based in Dublin, fighting legal discriminations, right through up to the start of Chapter 2. There is also a short history of the Trans movement.

A1.1 TRADITIONAL IRISH VALUES PRE 1961

From the origin of the state in 1922 until the mid-1960s, sexuality in Ireland was under the strict supervision of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church's teaching on sexuality and morality was the dominant influence in both public policy and social mores for the fledgling state. Economic hardship and the interdependence of religion and national identity infused the influence of the Church's teachings into every aspect of Irish life (Ferriter 2012).

Arensberg and Kimball's study of a small village in county Clare in the 1930s paints a picture of a simple agrarian lifestyle where intimate matters or romance and courtship were dominated by economics and religion. The centrality of the family and the family farm was what dictated the destinations of all those connected to it (Gibbon 1973). The church played a central role in both upholding and propagating this system through marriage or vocations to religious orders. Immigration became a convenient safety valve for those who were expressly ostracised by this system. Inglis, in an examination of the Church's stance on sexuality and shame, concludes that the Church instilled a sense of shame in order to produce *internally controlled bodies,* which in turn led to its monopolization of public morality (Inglis 1998:102).

The Church had its ethos firmly implanted in all aspects of people's private lives with stances taken on issues as varied from private motor cars to dancehalls – all to portray the facade of a pure and catholic populace. A stark example of the policing of sexuality was the

establishment of mother and child homes for "fallen women". These institutions were established to hide away any evidence of promiscuity and to punish women and their children for the transgression of pre or outer-material sex. The system again was initiated and funded by the state but administered by the Church. This Church, in tandem with the State, had full authority over the Irish citizenry on matters of morality. The influence of the Church and Catholic teachings has impacted on the development of a cohesive network of LGBT+ organisations through challenging the expansion of LGBT+ specific legal protections, as will be demonstrated further.   This system, however, started to loosen from the 1960s onwards (Ryan 2012).

A1.2 THE OPENING OF DISCOURSES AROUND TRADITIONAL VALUES

One of the predominant factors keeping the system of religious control in order was the State's censorship system that blocked any form of media deemed unacceptable by the Church being transmitted to the general public. This influence started to sway in the early 1960s with the proliferation of television sets, the repeal of censorship laws and the establishment of RTÉ in 1961. Ryan (2014) states control was taken away from the Church to direct the nature of debates on morality, sexuality and propriety through the establishment of a national television service. Irish audiences were further exposed to views other than the Church's through British press (widely available throughout the country) and the *BBC* (attainable to those on the East coast).

Second wave feminism, globally and domestically, emerged in the 1960s and further eroded the Church's dominance over family and sexuality matters in Ireland. The ad hoc collection of women's groups that formed in 1968 that demanded a National Commission on the Status of Women later formed into the Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM) in 1970. This group successfully put in motion the lifting of the "Marriage Bar" (which excluded married women from working in the civil service) and the introduction of equal pay legislation (Connolly 2006). The feminist movement grew exponentially throughout the 1970s and had successes in areas such as reproductive rights, employment rights and family law (Ryan, 2014a).

A1.3 THE EARLY IRISH LGBT+ MOVEMENT

The success of early second wave feminism was the catalyst for the Irish LGBT+ movement to start making their own demands. Between 1962 and 1972, there were 455 convictions for acts of gross indecency under the 'Labouchere' amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment

Act of 1885. Names of men convicted under the act were published in the newspapers which led to serious personal repercussions for those involved (Hug 1999). An off-shoot of the umbrella group - the Union of Sexual Freedoms in Ireland, in Trinity College Dublin, was called the Sexual Liberation Movement (SLM) and had David Norris and Edmund Lynch on its roll of members. The two men, unhappy with the group's insistence on focusing on only heterosexual issues, and energized by the LGBT+ movement in the US, left the group and formed the IGRM, the Irish Gay Rights Movement in 1974 (Ryan, 2014b).

The IGRM set out its stall to fight the Victorian legislation still in force by both the police and the judiciary i.e. to arrest, try and convict men for acts of 'gross indecency'. The IGRM used sympathetic solicitors to defend men who were arrested under the act and also set about fighting the legitimacy of the legislation and the institutions that upheld it. In a broader sense the IGRM hoped to lift the stigma of homosexuality imposed by the Church and state and capitalize on the emergence of a gay community in Dublin (Ryan 2014a). The strategy of defending men convicted under the 1885 Act started to pay off. The judiciary, accustomed to men coming into court in a state of distress and pleading guilty, were now faced with a confident and well-spoken academic in Norris who acted as both a character witness and a defending council willing to fight the charge. Police prosecutions declined steadily in the aftermath of the IGRM interventions (Hug 1999).

Edmund Lynch of IGRM was also using his influence in RTÉ to forward the cause of the new organization. He would direct journalists to the LGBT+ movement organization and persuade them of its newsworthiness. In 1977, a Cathal O'Shannon documentary on homosexuality was aired on the state broadcaster and included footage of an IGRM disco. Discos were held to raise funds for the group and yet would ultimately be the catalyst for Norris and others to leave the IGRM and forge a more political path (Ryan 2014b). The decimalization of homosexuality in the UK in 1967 brought increased gay visibility which, in turn, led to an increase of arrests (up 160%) for gross indecency[8] (Kinsman 1987) and there was a fear among certain members of the IGRM that the same would happen here if Norris and his supporters continued their political campaigning. One cohort wanted to continue with the successful social events and to assume a low political profile so as not to draw attention to themselves or their actions. While Norris wanted to continue his fight against the injustices

---

[8] While gay sex may have been legal, most of the actions that might lead to it were still classified as 'procuring' and 'soliciting'.

he saw, there was a schism and Norris left the group in 1975 to form the CHLR (*Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform*) (Healy 2015).

A1.4 LEGAL CHALLENGES TO DECRIMINALIZE HOMOSEXUALITY

The CHLR group decided to fight the 1861 and 1885 laws that were, in effect, criminalizing people being gay through the courts. David Norris was to be the plaintiff. Edmund Lynch, speaking about the case, said Norris was the perfect candidate as

> *he was articulate; two, he was Church of Ireland, minority religion; and three, both his parents were dead. So he had that sort of freedom. And that was important* (Lynch 2014:21).

The case, *Norris v Attorney General* [1984] was fought on the grounds that Norris' constitutional rights to privacy, equality, free expression and free association were being infringed by the Victorian acts. The case was lost in the High Court and was appealed in the Supreme Court. Chief Justice O'Higgins cited Christian theology - a belief that homosexuality was a mental illness, that gay men were 'diseased' and that homosexuality was contagious - in his dissenting judgment. (Ryan 2014). The Chief Justice, in giving the majority ruling specified:

> *"I regard the State as having an interest in the general moral well-being of the community and as being entitled, where it is practicable to do so, to discourage conduct which is morally wrong and harmful to a way of life and to values which the state wishes to protect"* (Norris v Attorney General, 1983; 64).

Defeat in the Supreme Court was not the final option open to the CHLR and Norris. In 1981, The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) sided with Northern Irish plaintiff Jeffery Dudgeon in upholding his right to privacy against the UK. Dudgeon took the UK to the ECHR to try and quash the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, which had effectively criminalized homosexuality in Northern Ireland, and won (Ryan 2014b). At the ECHR, Norris won the case on similar grounds to Dudgeon. The ECHR said Ireland had failed to show the "pressing social need" to maintain the Victorian laws and banning homosexual intimacy. Though this was politically embarrassing for the State it did not change the law until 1993 (Rose 1994). When

the acts were finally repealed, Minister for Justice Maire Geoghegan Quinn described the bill which repealed the acts criminalizing homosexuality as a necessary development of human rights, to cheers of delight from the LGBT+ activists in the public gallery (RTE 2013).

A1.5 DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOVEMENT AND A COMMUNITY - 1980S

While the Norris case was moving through the courts, the LGBT+ community worked on developing institutions and representative bodies of their own that would reflect the needs of their community. The Hirschfield Centre opened in 1979 on Found Street in Dublin and would be the home to a plethora of LGBT+ organizations, among them the *National Gay Federation* (now the *National Lesbian and Gay Federation* or NXF) (Mullally 2014). During the 1980s, the centre became a hub of activism and the centre of queer life in Dublin. A woman's centre opened nearby which was mainly run and frequented by lesbians. It housed various LGBT+ and Feminist groups, a bookshop, a library, a help line and, more generally, a safe space for Dublin's lesbian community. Izzy Kamikaze, in speaking with journalist Una Mullally about her experiences there, said:

> *"It was largely dykes who were running the centre and staffing the centre, but there was always a bit of tension with the straight women that they felt we were putting straight women off coming in……….It was a very good environment in a sort of activist era"* (Kamikaze 2014:21).

While organisations were also forming in Cork around this time the majority of LGBT+ community building and movement work was focused in Dublin. The city provided some degree of anonymity for individuals to attend LGBT+ focused events which living in regional cities or rurally could not. Many moved to Dublin or frequented Dublin to access information or to make connections with other LGBT+ people and felt they could not do this in their own localities (A Different Country 2017). This influx of people both bolstered the ranks of Dublin based LGBT+ groups and stifled any development outside the city.

A1.6 THE IMPACT OF THE HIV/AIDS CRISIS ON IRISH LGBT+ ACTIVISM

By the time the first cases of AIDS were identified in 1982 in Ireland, the AIDS crisis was a global pandemic and thousands were infected across the globe. Here, the number infected

rose to 126 by 1989 (*Dublin AIDS Alliance* 2013). The Irish movement was quicker to act than the US LGBT+ community, having seen the effects of the virus abroad. Organisations were set up to support people with the virus including *Gay Health Action*, *AIDS Action Alliance* in 1985 and the *Dublin AIDS Alliance* in 1987 (*Dublin AIDS Alliance* 2013). The *Health Service Executive* (HSE) set up the *Gay Men's Health Service* (GMHS) in 1992. The *Gay Health Network* was set up in 1994 and *Open Heart House* in 1997 (Open House 2013).

HIV and AIDS have made a lasting impact on the mentality and the mental health of the LGBT+ community and its effects are still clearly evident today. At the outset of the epidemic there was huge resistance from all quarters of public life to support LGBT+ people fight the epidemic. It was left to many queer groups and collectives to support their own and those who were affected by the disease. The slow action on the part of governments, health institutions and others resulted in many needlessly lost lives. On many levels in the LGBT+ community, the effects were profound. For some it was a rallying cry to stand up for their brethren, while for others it was another excuse to distance themselves from the growing notion of community that had been on the rise among LGBT+ people (Shilts 1987).

In talking about the pandemic from an Irish perspective Bill Hughes, a television producer and activist, spoke about the lack of legal support available to gay men with the virus.

> *"I started to become aware of the sadness because the families started to move in. People who had come to Dublin and made a career for themselves … and the family hadn't wanted anything to do with them. But as soon as they got sick and there was a sense of 'oh well'; they just moved in and the partners got pushed aside and the partners had no recourse and had no access…..so you were caught in an illegal limbo"* (Hughes 2014:22).

It has been cited by some Irish activists that the AIDS crises slowed down and even stalled much of the activism of the late 1980s as many activists succumbed to the virus or were occupied with fundraising and providing services that dealt with the crisis. HIV/AIDS unfolded while homosexuality was still illegal and the government refused to support the work of AIDS prevention as it would contravene laws on homosexuality and contraception (A Different Country 2017). Bill Hughes comment demonstrates the personal impact that the epidemic had on individuals in this environment.

A1.7 THE VIOLENT BIRTH OF DUBLIN PRIDE

Homophobic violence was also a common aspect of life as an 'out' gay person in 1980s Ireland. Charles Self was stabbed to death in January 1982 in Dublin in a suspected homophobic attack. No prosecution was ever made in relation to this crime. In the same year, there was another murder in Cork when John Roche was stabbed to death by Michael O'Connor. O'Connor cited Roche's sexuality as the motive for the crime. The jury found O'Connor not guilty of murder but guilty of manslaughter (Mullally 2014). The murder which had the greatest impact on the LGBT+ community occurred in 1982. Declan Flynn was beaten to death by a number of young men in Fairview Park in September. Five boys and young men, who had been routinely attacking gay men in the park for six weeks prior to the incident, attacked Flynn with sticks, beat him and robbed him. Like O'Connor in Cork they did not receive a verdict of murder but of manslaughter and were given suspended sentences. Justice Sean Gannon, on handing down the sentence said "*This could never be regarded as murder*." (Irish Queer Archive 2014). In March 1983, 700 people marched in protest at the sentences handed down and the attitude of the court. The protest organised by the *Dublin Gay Collective* was called a 'Gay Rights Protest March' and had the support of many civil society groups in Dublin at the time. For many in the community, this was considered the first official Pride march in Dublin (Lamkin 2014).

After repeated attacks, the Hirshfield Centre was finally closed in 1987 after a major fire. The NXF no longer had a premises and the gay scene in Dublin had started to be run by commercial interests. The NXF launched GCN (*Gay Community News*) in 1988 and this became the main focus of the organisation but also the main media platform for LGBT+ people in Ireland (Mullally 2014). GLEN (*Gay and Lesbian Equality Network*) was also founded in 1988. Tonie Walsh, founder of the *Irish Queer Archive* and the GCN, felt GLEN came at an opportune time:

> "*GLEN claim the middle ground in LGBT agitation. When it was set up in '88, it was a response to a lot of people being individually burnt out, emigration – the campaigning movement had been decimated by AIDS, and there was a real need to focus the energies of all the disparate organisations under an umbrella group and just specifically focus on law change*" (Walsh 2014:22).

A1.8 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSIONAL LGBT+ LOBBY

Prior to decriminalisation in 1993, there was some legal reform made in regards to LGBT+ rights and protections. The 1989 Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act and the Video

Recording Act along with the 1990 Criminal Law (Rape) Amendment Act, all explicitly mentioned sexual orientation (Ryan 2014a). From the 1990s onwards, sexual orientation was incorporated into laws concerning employment, discrimination from public services and right to asylum to name but a few. The formation of the *Equality Authority* in 1999 under the Employment Equality Act of 1998 was another significant step towards safeguarding the equal treatment of minorities (Zappone 2001).

Throughout the 1990s GLEN became the de facto representative organisation for LGBT+ people in Ireland and professionalised LGBT+ lobbying in an Irish contest. The organisation worked alongside other government agencies to create policy documents and research reports e.g. working with the *Combat Poverty Agency*, the *Equality Authority* and various health boards (precursors to the *Health Service Executive* - HSE). GLEN lobbied elected representatives and made presentations to government committees. In 1996 GLEN was invited, as part of the community sector representatives, to the social partnerships talks that were held to create a social partnership agreement between the government, unions and business leaders (Community Platform 2009).

The 1990s also saw a substantial growth in the gay 'scene' – the social venues catering for LGBT+ people. The decriminalisation of homosexuality meant a more confident community was not as reluctant to meet and socialize together. Brian Finnegan, the current editor of GCN, in talking about the scene after '93 said:

> *Almost immediately what happened in Dublin after decriminalisation was the scene went from two tiny pokey little bars to just basically exploding into something that was unheard of in this city…This idea that we were free and we were visible* (Finnegan 2014:28).

As the century drew to a close, the focus of the movement shifted towards legal recognition for same-sex couples and rights for same-sex headed families. Like so much of Irish LGBT+ activism this began in the courts with the KAL case in 2003.

A1.9 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COHERENT IRISH TRANS MOVEMENT

Around this time too, the trans movement in Ireland started to formalise with the formation of TENI (*Transgender Equality Network Ireland*) in 2006 (TENI 2016). Up until this point there was very little trans visibility and the majority of trans activism was done under umbrella groups like GLEN and NXF but very little progress was made. Like so many LGBT+ issues in

Ireland, the right to gender recognition for trans people has been fought and won through the courts system. Dr Lydia Foy, born male but who has lived as female since 1991, underwent gender realignment surgery in 1992. Dr Foy brought the State to the High Court in 2002 to have her birth certificate changed to correspond to her gender but lost her case. Mr Justice McKechnie refused her application to have her birth certificate altered but urged the Government to review its position on transgender people (Irish Times 2008).

In the wake of a European Court of Human Rights judgment, which found in favour of two UK trans people, Dr Foy revisited the High Court in 2008 and this time the court found in her favour. The court found the State to be in breach of its positive obligations under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (TENI 2016).

Foy brought the State to the High Court again in 2013 due to the States failure to introduce any route to gender recognition. The Government passed the Gender Recognition Act in July 2015. The legislation provides a process enabling trans people to achieve full legal recognition of their preferred gender and allows for the acquisition of a new birth certificate that reflects this change. The Gender Recognition Act allows all individuals over the age of 18 to self-declare their own gender identity. The Department of Social Protection stated that 198 people had been legally recognised from 04th September 2015 – 31st December 2016 (TENI 2017).

The development of the Irish LGBT+ movement is continued in Chapter 3 of this thesis and will cover the time frame from the KAL case in the early 2000's until 2017.

APPENDIX 2 - ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (conditions resulting from HIV infection)

CHLR – Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform

CSO – Central Statists Office

ECHR – European Court of Human Rights

FF - Fianna Fáil

FG – Fine Gael

GAA – Gaelic Athletic Association

GAZE – Dublin International LGBT+ Film Festival

GCN – Gay Community News

GLEN – Gay and Lesbian Equality Network

GMHS - Gay Men's Health Service

GRAG - Gender Recognition Advisory Group

GRAIN Gay Rural Aid & Information Network (UK based group)

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus (sexually transmitted infection)

HSE – Health Service Executive

ICCL - Irish Council of Civil Liberties

IGRM – Irish Gay Rights Movement

IQA – Irish Queer Archive

IWLM – Irish Women's Liberation Movement

KAL – Katherine (Zappone)and Ann Louise (Gilligan)

LEADER - Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale (EU rural development project)

LGB – Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (used to denote a difference between Cis gender and Trans gender queer people)

ME - Marriage Equality

MFM - Mothers and Fathers Matter

NXF – The National LGBT Federation

PD – Progressive Democrats

PD Progressive Democrats

RTÉ - Raidió Teilifís Éireann (Irish semi state media company including TV and radio)

SLM – Sexual Liberation Movement

SWMDC - South-West Mayo Development Company

TD - Teachta Dála (member of Irish lower house of parliament)

TENI - Trans Equality Network Ireland

UCD – University College Dublin

USFI – Union of Sexual Freedoms, Ireland

USI – Union of Student, Ireland

YE – Yes Equality

Appendix 3 – Interview Schedule for Elite Interviewees

Tell me about yourself?

Tell me about the activism you have been involved in?

What other LGBT organisations have you been active in?

Overall how do you think the LGBT movement is doing in Ireland?

Tell me about X – the structure, the numbers involved and the main focus of the work?

Tell me about your role in X?

What do you see as the role of X for the LGBT community?

How well does X communicate with the LGBT community?

How well do different movement organisations work together? How well do they work with organisations outside of the LGBT movement?

How would you like to see that role change?

Has there ever been tension between what you believe and what X stands for? How do you overcome that?

The movement has been criticized in a number of ways, do you agree with any of the following?

- The movement is only concerned with those based in Dublin
- The movement puts more weight on professionalism over grassroots organizing
- The movement is conservative
- The movement puts legal reform over tackling homophobia and Transphobia
- Committees are run mainly by white, middle class gay men
- The movement is not engaged in politics outside of topics that have a direct LGBT consequence.
- Certain voices are not listened to (trans, bi, queer)

What criticisms have you heard of the movement and do you agree with any?

What does being LGBT mean to you?

What challenges do you think exist for Irelands LGBT community?

How has Yes Equality changed LGBT activism in Ireland?

What does being an activist mean to you?

What do you think is the difference between good and bad activism?

APPENDIX 4 – INFORMATION FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Nigel Connor, post graduate researcher at the Department of Sociology, Maynooth University would like to invite you to participate in a voluntary study of the LGBT movement and your relationship with it. I am interested in hearing how you experienced the Marriage Referendum, how you felt about the movement both before and after this referendum, what issues, concerning LGBT people, are important to you know and what issues you think the movement will need to work on in the future. More broadly I am interested in how you view yourself within the LGBT community and how you view the community in broader Irish society.

If you would like to participate, I hope to interview you in a group interview (for approximately 2-3 hours) about the way organisations and individuals have worked on the behalf of the LGBT community.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can answer as many or as few questions, in any way you wish, as well as discuss related topics and ideas. Do not feel all questions must be answered, if there are any you do not wish to answer just indicate that and we will move to the next question. Please feel free to ask me questions as well. At any time you can decide to discontinue the interview. You can also withdraw your participation from the study at any time, even after the interview is finished.

Your name and certain information about your identity will be changed to give you anonymity in any documents I publish. I will do my best to maintain confidentiality and anonymity during the research process and in research. Otherwise all personal information for the study will be masked, and kept in a secure place in Maynooth University Sociology Department. The data will be retained for ten years following the study. If we need to refer to the data after this time, we will ask for your permission again. *It must be recognised that in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances, Maynooth University will take all reasonable steps within Irish law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.*

The results of the research will be used for scholarly publications, academic presentations and educational purposes. I am happy to send you a digital copy of these outcomes if you provide me with your contact details. The interview transcript, with personal identifiers changed to keep you anonymous, will be deposited with the Irish Qualitative Data Archive (IQDA). The IQDA is a central access point for qualitative social science data generated in or about Ireland. This database is only accessible to other researchers and with permission of both me and the team who run the archive. If you do not want you responses included in the archive you can opt –out. More information can be found at www.iqda.ie or by asking me.

If during your participation in this study, you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or ignored in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at

research.ethics@nuim.ie or +353(0)1 7086019. *Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.*

If you experience any stress or reactions following participation, the organisations listed on the other side of this page can offer support.

You may also contact me at any time through email at nigel.connor.2016@mumail.ie or via post at the Sociology Department, Auxillia, Maynooth, Co Kildare, Ireland. Equally, if you feel more comfortable, you can contact [enter name of community group contact here] and they will get in touch with me or the university.

Please feel free to ask any questions at this time or in the future. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the research and get your thoughts and feedback.

Nigel Connor

LGBT Helpline

Provide access to a network of trained volunteers who provide a non-judgemental, confidential, listening support and information service for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as well as their family and friends. The website also provides a gateway to information and support options for LGBT people across Ireland.

www.lgbt.ie

Ph: 1890 929 539

Gay Switchboard

is a LGBT+ support service available 7 days a week. Friendly volunteers are trained to offer confidential support, signposting and information. Switchboard's core values ensure that you will get a non judgemental and reassuring attitude from us when you make contact. There are 40 trained support volunteers who come from all walks of life, genders and ages. Service includes email and online support.

http://gayswitchboard.ie/

01-872 1055

Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI)

TENI seeks to improve conditions and advance the rights and equality of trans people and their families. In addition to policy work and advocacy they provide a range of support services that aim to increase the well-being of trans people and their families by providing support that mitigates common experiences of isolation, misunderstanding and exclusion.

www.teni.ie

01 873 3575

TENI also provide links to organisations providing support around the country http://www.teni.ie/support.aspx

BeLonG To

BeLonG To is the national organisation for Lesbian, Gay Bisexxual and Transgendered young people, aged between 14 and 23.

www.belongto.org

Ph: 01 670 6223

The Samaritans

Offer a non-judgemental, confidential listening service 24 hours a day.

www.samaritans.org

Free Phone: 116 123

Rape Crisis Network

Information and Resources centre on rape and sexual violence. Acts as an Umbrella organisation for rape crisis centres across the country. They can put you in touch with a local rape crisis centre.

www.rapecrisishelp.ie

24 Hour Helpline: 1800 77 88 88

Aware

Is a mental health support orginisation with free online service and helpline. The organisation provides a range of services including group meetings offering support and information, a telephone and email support service, and a number of programmes based on principles of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

http://www.aware.ie/

Email service: supportmail@aware.ie

1890 303 302