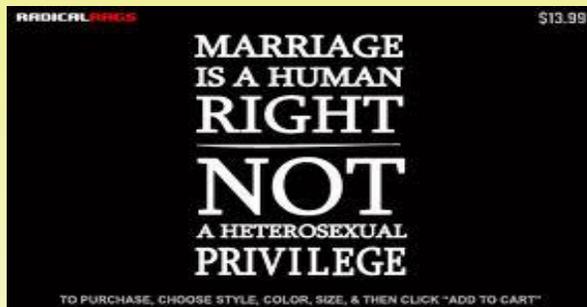


Perceptions of Same Sex Marriage in Irish Society in 2011

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Abstract

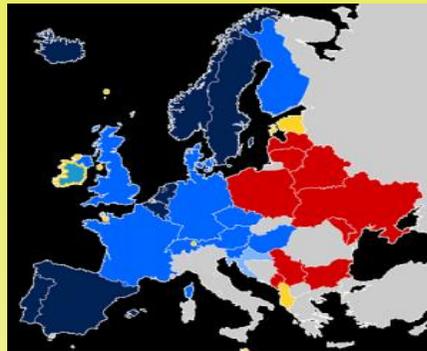
This project sought to collate an understanding of people from a particular sample at this point in time in Irish society on same sex marriage. The data was gathered using semi structured in depth interviews. The report sought to understand how peoples backgrounds, lifestyle and experiences feed into their perceptions of same sex marriage and marriage in general. This report finds that the value placed on marriage in Irish society, personally and legislatively, is a major stumbling block in moving the debate on same sex marriage forward. While it is perceived that we are more open as a society, it is apparent there are areas we need to change.



Introduction

The body of literature around homosexuality and same sex marriage in Ireland is quite limited particularly for a subject so contentious and ever changing.

As this review reveals homosexuality in Ireland has been a continual struggle against church based hypocrisy and constraining legislation. The close relationship of the church and state providing obstacle after obstacle, while this relationship has weakened and the attitudes have changed, the struggle to have a fully legal gay marriage and all the rights this entails is still on-going. This project will seek to collate an understanding of people from particular samples at this point in time in Irish society on same sex marriage.



Same Sex marriage map Europe

Dark blue – full equality;
Light blue – civil unions;
Red – constitutional restriction to opposite sex couples only;
Yellow – under review

Method

The researcher chose a qualitative; data led design for this research project. My goal was to get a deeper, more holistic view of participants from particular angles of the issue.



The sample for this research project was chosen to cover specific areas to the issue of same sex marriage and the participants proximity to the issue. Participants A were a gay married couple, both aged thirty nine. One is an Irish national and the other is from South Africa originally. They married in South Africa in 2009. Participant B was a thirty three year old lesbian, in a committed relationship. Participant C was a twenty six year old, politically active, heterosexual male. Participant D was a forty year old practicing Catholic, who is a lay parish worker in two diocese in the Dublin area. He has an extensive background studying theology and teaching religion. Participant E was a forty five year old, lesbian. She is a lecturer and director in UCD in the area of Women Studies.

Results

The main goal of this research project was to understand participant's perceptions of same sex marriage. This was to be achieved by interviewing the participants to seek to understand their perceptions of the factors that play into this issue.

Same Sex Marriage was the overriding theme of the entire research project. As part of the interview process participants were asked for their opinion on same sex marriage. The majority of participants were in favor of legalizing same sex marriage .

Discussion

The aim of this study was to understand people's perceptions of same sex marriage in Ireland from different aspects of the issue. To find an essence of the issue through people with some degree of involvement or opinion. The interviews revealed the issue is multi layered and a true consensus would appear to be absent but they also revealed that maybe a realignment of the argument could maybe move the issue forward in Irish society. The value placed on marriage above all other partnerships would seem to place it in limbo at present. A reassessment of marriage rights compared to other partnership rights would be a giant step for all domestic partnerships including same sex couples. Before further analysis though, the researcher would like to acknowledge the limitations of this study, obviously due to the small size of the sample the project is not exhaustive nor comprehensive instead small and intimate. So it would be difficult to generalize the results to the entire population.

References

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