Jamaica, 3 years later: Effects of intensified pro-gay activism on severe prejudice against lesbians and gay men

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Abstract

Jamaica has developed an international reputation for severe anti-gay prejudice. However, in the past few years, between 2012 and 2015, intensified waves of activism have increased the visibility of LGBT Jamaicans and fought for their social and legal inclusion in Jamaican society. This research investigated the effects of that activism by taking advantage of two large, representative surveys of Jamaicans' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: one in 2012 and one in 2015. Over the 3-year period there were significant reductions in desire for social distance and opposition to gay rights. However, there was no significant change in anti-gay attitudes, and evidence of an increase in anti-gay behaviours. There was also no evidence of polarisation of responses to gay men and lesbians; rather, the most prejudiced Jamaicans showed the largest reductions in bias. Implications of these findings for activism in Jamaica and other anti-gay countries are discussed.

Keywords: sexual orientation; prejudice; Jamaica; activism

Introduction

Jamaica has earned an international reputation for blatant anti-gay prejudice (West, 2014), laws that implicitly criminalize consensual sexual relationships between gay men (Jamaica Ministry of Justice, 1969; Wheatle, 2013), dancehall music that (whether literally or figuratively) urges listeners to kill gay men and lesbians (Farquharson, 2005), and a series of gruesome and sometimes deadly anti-gay attacks (Clunis, 2004; Martinez, 2013; Pearson, 2012). However, the last few years have seen a significant increase in both social and legal activism (Reynolds, 2013; Walters, 2013), and an increased willingness to speak out against Jamaican anti-gay prejudice (K. Walker, 2012; West & Geering, 2013). To investigate the effectiveness of this recent period of intensified pro-gay activity, this field experiment took advantage of two large, representative surveys of Jamaicans' responses to gay men and lesbians that occurred in 2012 and 2015. What changes, if any, are associated with this recent surge in activism, and what lessons can be learned from Jamaica that may be applicable to other severely anti-gay countries?

Jamaica's Changing Social Climate

In Kingston, Jamaica, on an evening in November, 2012, two male students of the University of Technology were caught engaging in sexual activities with each other. One of them escaped, but the other was pursued across the campus by a group of fellow students. As this group grew in size and ferocity and began calling for his death, he ran into the security office, looking for refuge. He escaped with his life, but not without consequences; two of the security guards took matters in their own hands, beating him themselves ("Caught on Tape! UTech Security Guards Beat Alleged Gay Student," 2012). This was followed by a period of intense debate about the actions of the students and the guards, with many arguing that the gay students should have been killed (Pearson, 2012).

Less than three years later, in August 2015 and October 2015, Jamaica's first Pride

events were held in Kingston and Montego Bay respectively (Spaulding, 2015). Here, in sharp contrast with the events of three years prior "persons of all classes, sexualities and gender expressions (including several straight allies) freely and easily rubbed shoulders in a safe, fun and incident-free environment" (Tomlinson, 2015).

This seems to signal a very rapid change in Jamaica's social climate. If so, it has not occurred without effort. Several organisations including AIDS-Free World, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Quality of Citizenship Jamaica, the Jamaica Anti-Homophobia Stand, and J-FLAG – the nations largest gay rights organization – have engaged in a series of protests and similar activities; these were intended to increase the visibility of Jamaican LGBT persons, call attention to the seriousness of Jamaican anti-LGBT prejudice, and put pressure on Jamaican politicians to treat the problem more seriously (Johnson, 2016; Reynolds, 2016; Silvera, 2013a, 2013b; Walters, 2013). At the same time multiple legal challenges have been made against Jamaica's so-called "buggery law", which imposes consequences of up to ten years imprisonment for consensual anal sex between adults (Dunkley-Willis, 2013; Jamaica Ministry of Justice, 1969; Reynolds, 2013).

While these efforts appear to have met with some success, a number of questions remain that have important practical and theoretical implications. First, to what extent is this apparent, highly-visible change reflected in nation-wide responses to gay men and lesbians? Empirical research on Jamaican anti-gay prejudice has found it to be very strong (West & Hewstone, 2012a), extremely wide-spread (West & Cowell, 2015), and part of accepted social norms (West & Hewstone, 2012b). Thus, given the strength and apparent resilience of this prejudice, it is important to determine whether any community-level changes in Jamaican prejudice against lesbians and gay men accompany these efforts at pro-gay activism.

Second, it is important to investigate whether and how different types of anti-gay prejudice have altered in the wake of this activism. Sexual prejudice - negative beliefs, attitudes or behaviours toward others based on sexual orientation - is a serious, global

problem with many unique, though inter-connected, manifestations (Hegarty, 2010; Herek, 2000, 2004; Ottosson, 2009). These range from social negativity, such as avoidance, ostracism, disgust, or disapproval (Herek, 2004), to discrimination in employment and the withholding of legal rights (Araiza, 2010; Grant et al., 2011), to violent hate crimes, sexual attack, and murder (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999; Willis, 2004). Prior research in the Jamaican context (e.g., West & Cowell, 2015) has identified some particularly relevant facets of sexual prejudice that can be divided into two categories: (1) *structural prejudice*, such as social distance and opposition to gay rights and (2) *personal prejudice* such as anti-gay attitudes, and negative behaviours.

Structural prejudice refers to more systemic limitations that prevent LGBT individuals from participating fully in society. Within this category, social distance reflects a reluctance to permit members of an outgroup to occupy increasingly close social positions such as employee, friend, or in-law (Bogardus, 1925; Brockman & D'Arcy, 1978; Link, Phelan, Bresnahan, Stueve, & Pescosolido, 1999). Also within structural prejudice, opposition to gay rights reflects an unwillingness to allow gay men and lesbians equal treatment under the law (Wheatle, 2012), which is particularly relevant in Jamaica considering the continued support for the "buggery law" (Spaulding, 2014).

Personal prejudice, on the other had, refers to a more individual level of antipathy toward LGBT individuals. Within this category, outgroup attitudes reflect an (often negative) affective response to an outgroup, such as fear, disgust or disapproval (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002) and are among the most widely researched aspect of intergroup bias (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). Negative behaviours, by contrast, generally receive less empirical attention, but are extremely important as they indicate the individual's actual treatment of the outgroup (Devine, Evett, & Vasques-Suson, 1996; West & Turner, 2014).

Structural and personal prejudice are usually positively associated, but nonetheless meaningfully distinct (Hewstone et al., 2002). Furthermore, each is most successfully

managed in different ways. Structural prejudice can be effectively reduced with collective action strategies (Iyer & Ryan, 2009). In contrast, personal prejudice is more effectively handled with strategies that promote cross-group friendship and harmony, such as intergroup contact and its derivatives (West & Hewstone, 2012a; West, Husnu, & Lipps, 2014). Some researchers have noted a potential tension between these strategies, finding that the promotion of harmony can undermine the fight for equal rights and privileges, and vice-versa (Becker, Wright, Lubensky, & Zhou, 2013; Becker & Wright, 2011; Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2010; Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009).

For example, Dixon, Durrheim and Tredoux (2007) found that intergroup contact between White and Black South Africans predicted more positive attitudes between the two groups, but also predicted *less support* for pro-Black structural changes among Black South Africans. Similarly, Wright and Lubensky (2008) found that in contact with White Americans improved Black Americans' cross-racial attitudes, but also undermined their support for collective action to achieve racial equality. In a genuine experiment using a minimal-group paradigm, Saguy et al. (2009) showed that positive contact increased expectations of fair treatment for disadvantaged groups, but did not actually cause the advantaged groups to behave more fairly toward the disadvantaged groups. Given the focus on protest and legal challenges employed by LGBT Jamaicans in recent years, I expect the strongest changes to be in social distance and opposition to gay rights, rather than attitudes or negative behaviours.

Third, though there have been signs of reduction in Jamaican anti-gay prejudice, there have also been signs of resistance to these changes. Jamaican gays and lesbians continue to be attacked or killed at alarming rates (J-FLAG, 2013), and reactions to some pro-gay protests have been quite negative (Reynolds, 2016). Furthermore, a number of lobby groups have come into existence for the specific purpose of opposing equal rights for gay and lesbians in Jamaica and retaining the law prohibiting consensual anal sex between adults (Buckley, 2012). One manifestation of these efforts is the 'Love March', an annual religious

demonstration that started in 2012 with the goal of opposing homosexuality and other forms of sexuality not supported by certain Christian beliefs (Welsh, 2013; West, 2012). Other demonstrations include a 25,000 strong march in the centre of Kingston in 2014 that aimed to "resist the homosexual agenda and the repealing of the buggery act" (Skyers, 2014). These demonstrations could signal either a backlash of anti-gay sentiment, or possibly a polarisation of Jamaicans' attitudes with parties on both sides becoming more entrenched and extreme in their views. These important questions must be investigated to gain a fuller understanding of the effects of the recent period of pro-gay activism.

Current Research

This research investigated whether and how levels of anti-gay prejudice in Jamaica changed over a recent three-year period of increased visibility and activism. This was done by taking advantage of two large, representative surveys of Jamaicans' responses to lesbians and gay men, which took place at the start and end of this three-year period, in 2012 and in 2015 respectively. Specifically, the following research questions were addressed: (1) given the increased visibility and activism, it was hypothesised that prejudice against lesbians and gay men would have declined over that 3-year period; (2) though I expected an overall decline in prejudice, I also expected differences in the patterns of changes for different types of prejudice; specifically greater reductions were expected for social distance and opposition to gay rights than for anti-gay attitudes and negative behaviours; and (3) given the signs of resistance to gay rights in Jamaica, the possibility of a polarization of attitudes was also investigated.

Method

Participants and recruitment. The data were obtained from two large, nationally representative[1] samples of Jamaican adults, one in 2012 and one in 2015, each drawn from a diverse sample of 231 communities across Jamaica. According to the original reports (Boxill et al., 2012; Johnson, 2016), participants were recruited in person and through word of mouth

by an independent agency. Participants did not receive payment or other reimbursement for participation. Each survey was completed in person with the assistance of an "experienced interviewer" (Boxill et al., 2012, p. 6), who was trained to minimise intrusion and self-presentation biases. Each participant took about 25 minutes to complete the survey.

The 2012 sample contained 945 participants: 482 men (51%) and 463 (49%) women. The 2015 sample contained 942 participants: 429 men (45.5%) and 513 women (54.5%). In both 2012 and 2015 the modal age group was *25 – 34* (29.7% in 2012 and 22.5% in 2015). The median age group in 2012 was also *25 – 34*, though the median age group in 2015 was *35 – 44*.

Measures. In both 2012 and 2015 the data were collected by an external company hired by JFLAG and none of the data was collected with these hypotheses in mind (Johnson, 2016). Consequently, the measures are not ideal because items had to be selected from data sets not designed for this purpose. To manage this, as far as was possible, I used exactly the same measures as those successfully used by West and Cowell (2015) to assess both the characteristics of the participant samples and the measures of prejudice against lesbians and gay men: i.e., social distance, opposition to gay rights, anti-gay attitudes, and negative behaviour. A second limitation of the measures is that there were very subtle differences in the wording used for some items between 2012 and 2015. This limitation was managed by using only items that seemed identical in meaning between the 2 samples. A full list of items from both years is shown in Table 1.

Sample characteristics. Participants indicated their gender (1 = *male*, 2 = *female*). In 2012, participants had indicated and their age as a whole number between 0 and 100. However, in 2015, participants only indicated their age group (1 = *18 – 24*, 2 = *25 – 34*, 3 = *35 – 44*, 4 = *45 – 54*, 5 = *55 – 64*, 6 = *65 and older*). Age values from 2011 were thus transformed into age groups for the purpose of the analyses in this current research. Participants also indicated their highest level of education (1 = *No formal education*, 2 =

Primary/ Prep school, 3 = *Some secondary education*, 4 = *Completed secondary education*, 5 = *Vocational/Skills training*, 6 = *University*, 7 = *Some professional training beyond university*, 8 = *Graduate degree, e.g., MSc, PhD*). Finally, participants also indicated whether "dancehall [was] the kind of music [they] listen to the most" (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*), and how often they attended church (1 = *Less than once a year,* 2 = *Every year,* 3 = *2 to 3 times a year*, 4 = *Every month*, 5 = *Every Week*). In both 2012 and 2015, participants indicated their monthly income in Jamaican dollars, by indicating whether their income fell in particular ranges. However, different ranges were used in 2012 and 2015 and not enough information was present to enable translation of the income values across the two samples. Thus, income data were not included in the analyses below.

Measures of anti-gay prejudice. I used items that matched, as closely as possible, the original items used by West and Cowell (2015). Cronbach's alphas and factor loadings are reported for both the 2012 and 2015 items below, though only the wording 2015 items are included in the main text below. The full wording of all 2012 items can be seen in Table 1.

Social distance. To assess social distance from gay people I selected four items (α_{2012} = .82, α_{2015} = .73) that addressed participants' willingness to permit gays to occupy different social roles. These are similar to the social distance items developed by Bogardus (1925), contempory versions of which are still being used (see Corrigan, Green, Lundin, Kubiak, & Penn, 2001); "If I found out that a friend of mine was gay/lesbian I would stop talking to him/her", "It does not matter to me whether my friends are gays/lesbians or not" (reversed), "I would be very upset if I found out that a close friend of mine was gay/lesbian", "Gays/lesbians should not be allowed to work with children". All items loaded onto a single factor, and all factor loadings were high ($.68 < \lambda_{2012} < .88$, $.68 < \lambda_{2015} < .80$).

Opposition to gay rights. To assess opposition to gay rights I used three items (α_{2012} = .60, α_{2015} = .50) that directly addressed the rights and treatment of gays in Jamaican society; "It is acceptable for gays/lesbians to get married to each other." (reversed), "I believe that

gays/lesbians should be considered normal by society." (reversed), and "Gay/lesbian sexual behaviour should be illegal." Though this scale did not attain the conventional level of reliability, I retained all items as these items had previously been used by West and Cowell (2015), item deletion did not result in a more reliable scale, all items loaded onto a single factor, and all factor loadings were moderate to high ($.72 < \lambda_{2012} < .79$, $.57 < \lambda_{2015} < .79$).

Anti-gay attitudes. I selected four items ($\alpha_{2012} = .67$, $\alpha_{2015} = .68$) to assess anti-gay attitudes. Three of these items assessed emotional reactions toward gay people similar to the widely-used semantic differential scale developed by Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe and Ropp (1997; also used by West & Hewstone, 2012 to measure attitudes toward gay men in Jamaica); "I feel you can trust a person who is gay/lesbian." (reversed), "I get annoyed, angry or feel uncomfortable when I see two gays/lesbians together in public", and "When I see gays/lesbians I think "what a waste". The other item assessed judgments of homosexuality similar to the Attitudes Toward Gays scale developed by Herek (1988; also used by Turner, Crisp, & Lambert, 2007); "Homosexuality is a sin.". All items loaded onto a single factor, and all factor loadings were moderate to high ($.59 < \lambda_{2012} < .82$, $.60 < \lambda_{2015} < .80$).

Negative behaviour. Finally, to assess self-reported negative behaviour toward gays I used five items ($\alpha_{2012} = .77$, $\alpha_{2015} = .69$) with which participants indicated whether they generally behaved in specific negative ways toward lesbians and gay men. These were similar to the behavioural intentions scale developed by Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, and Cairns (2009; also used by West & Bruckmüller, 2013) except that they assessed past behaviour rather than future behavioural intentions; "I have threatened to hurt or damage the property of someone who is gay/lesbian", "I am one of those who speak badly about or say negative things about gays/lesbians", "I use terms such as faggot, sodomite, fish, battyman, sheman, when I refer to gays/lesbians", "I tease and make jokes about gays/lesbians", "I avoid gays/lesbians". All items loaded onto a single factor, and all factor loadings were moderate to high ($.42 < \lambda_{2012} < .87$, $.47 < \lambda_{2015} < .77$).

Unless otherwise stated, participants responded to all items on 5-point Likert scales (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). All four scales were coded so that higher values represented more negativity toward lesbians and gay men. This was done for clarity of presentation. However, it is worth noting that some were reversed, which reduced the tendency for participants to respond similarly to all items, and that items used for the same scale were not necessarily close to each other in the survey. No combination of scales could be made into a single, internally reliable scale with items that loaded onto a single factor.

Results

Differences between the 2012 and 2015 participant samples. West and Cowell (2015) found that a number of factors predicted more prejudice against lesbians and gay men. These included participant gender (male), older age, less education, higher levels of religiosity and a preference for dancehall music. I thus compared the two samples collected in 2012 and 2015 to determine if they differed in any of these characteristics. There were small, but significant differences in all. In the 2015 sample, there was a lower proportion of men (45.5% vs. 51%), χ^2 (1) = 5.64, p = .018. Participants in the 2015 sample were also older (for the full breakdown of age-groups by year see Table 2), χ^2 (5) = 58.05, p < .001, slightly less educated (M = 4.21, SD = 1.63 vs. M = 4.57, SD = 1.30), t $(1582)^2$ = 4.93, p < .001, less religious (M = 3.29, SD = 1.69 vs. M = 3.45, SD = 1.29), t $(1850)^3$ = 2.25, p = .025, and less likely to prefer dancehall music (7% vs. 14%), χ^2 (1) = 24.08, p < .001. Given the established relationship between these variables and anti-gay prejudice both in Jamaica (West & Cowell, 2015), and internationally (Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006; Herek, 1988; Irwin & Thompson, 1978; Jensen, Gambles, & Olsen, 1988), I statistically controlled for them by including them as covariates in all analyses below.

Changes in Jamaican anti-gay prejudice between 2012 and 2015. Levels of all four types of anti-gay prejudice, for both the 2012 and 2015 samples, are presented in Table 3. As expected, levels of prejudice were high; in both years, participants scored significantly above

the midpoint of the scale on almost all facets of anti-gay prejudice (with the exception of negative behaviours, which fell below the midpoint of the scale; see Table 3). Correlations between all types of prejudice can be seen in Table 4.

As all 4 types of prejudice were positively correlated, I investigated the differences in prejudice against gay men and lesbians between 2012 and 2015 with multivariate analyses of variance; year (2012 vs. 2015) was the independent variable, social distance, opposition to gay rights, anti-gay attitudes, and negative behaviours were dependent variables, and all relevant demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, education, religion, dancehall music) were included as covariates.

I found the expected significant multivariate effect of year F (4, 1533) = 28.34, p < .001, η_p^2 = .07, indicating a change in prejudice against lesbians and gay men between 2012 and 2015. Examining each measure of prejudice individually, I found a significant decrease in desire for social distance between 2012 (M = 3.56, SD = 1.08) and 2015 (M = 3.42, SD = 1.02), F (1, 1536) = 7.01, p = .008, η_p^2 = .005, as well as a significant decrease in opposition to gay rights (M = 4.33, SD = .78 vs. M = 4.07, SD = .85), F (1, 1536) = 39.67, p < .001, η_p^2 = .03. There was no significant difference in anti-gay attitudes between 2012 (M = 3.93 SD = .81) and 2015 (M = 4.00, SD = .78), F (1, 1536) = 2.71, p = .11, η_p^2 = .002. However, participants in 2015 reported *more* negative behaviour toward gay men and lesbians (M = 2.98, SD = .83 vs. M = 2.80, SD = .96), F (1, 1536) = 16.56, p < .001, η_p^2 = .01 (see Figure 1).

It was noted that 303 participants (35 in 2012 and 268 in 2015) did not report any information about their level of education and thus had to be excluded from the previous analysis of variance. Because this large number of missing participants may have affected the results, I repeated the analyses without including education as a covariate, which permitted the inclusion of these previously excluded participants. However, the results were almost identical. I found the significant multivariate effect of year F (4, 1830) = 39.69, p < .001, η_p^2 = .08. Desire for social distance decreased between 2012 (M = 3.55, SD = 1.08) and 2015 (M

= 3.35, *SD* = 1.02), *F* (1, 1833) = 8.89, *p* = .003, η_p^2 = .005, as did opposition to gay rights (*M* = 4.32, *SD* = .78 vs. *M* = 4.03, *SD* = .88), *F* (1, 1833) = 50.19, *p* < .001, η_p^2 = .03. There was an increase in anti-gay attitudes between 2012 (*M* = 3.92 *SD* = .82) and 2015 (*M* = 3.98, *SD* = .79), which was not quite significant at the 5% level *F* (1, 1833) = 3.73, *p* = .054, η_p^2 = .002. Finally, participants in the 2015 sample reported *more* negative behaviour toward gay people (*M* = 2.94, *SD* = .85 vs. *M* = 2.79, *SD* = .96), *F* (1, 1833) = 22.92, *p* < .001, η_p^2 = .01. In summary, structural manifestations of prejudice against lesbians and gay men (i.e., social distance and opposition to gay rights) appear to have declined over the recent 3-year period, while personal manifestations of this prejudice have either remained stable (as is the case for anti-gay attitudes) or increased (as is the case for negative behaviours).

Testing the polarization hypothesis. As mentioned above, simultaneous increases in both pro-gay and anti-gay activism suggest a potential polarization of the Jamaican population around the issue. In other words, it is possible that individuals who were least prejudiced in 2012 became even less prejudiced, while those who were the most prejudiced simultaneously became even more so.

For efficiency of presentation the social distance and opposition to gay rights measures were condensed into a single measure (*structural prejudice*; 7 items, α = .78) as were the measures of anti-gay attitudes and negative behaviours (*personal prejudice*, 9 items, α = .79). This was done to avoid unnecessary repetition in the presentation of our results. The polarisation results for the two structural prejudice variables - social distance and opposition to gay rights – were extremely similar, as were the results for the personal prejudice variables – anti-gay attitudes and negative behaviours. Social distance and opposition to gay rights scores were also strongly correlated (*r* = .51, *p* < .001), and prior analyses showed that both decreased between 2012 and 2015. Similarly, anti-gay attitudes and negative behaviours were also strongly correlated (*r* = .54, *p* < .001), and prior analyses showed that both increased (although only negative behaviours increased significantly) between 2012 and 2015.

For both the *structural prejudice* and *personal prejudice* variables, the 2012 and 2015 samples were separated and each sample was divided into quartiles (i.e., a *lower quartile*, *second quartile*, *third quartile* and *upper quartile*, with each successive quartile reporting higher levels of that prejudice). I then conducted 2 separate univariate analyses of variance (one for structural prejudice and one for personal prejudice) with year and quartile as independent variables and level of prejudice (or quartile) as the dependent variable. If the polarization hypothesis were correct, I should have found that between 2012 and 2015, the largest *decreases* in prejudice should have occurred for participants in the *lower quartiles*, while the largest *increases* in prejudice should have occurred for participants in the *upper quartiles*.

Structural prejudice. The data did not support the polarisation hypothesis; rather, the reverse appeared to be true. I found the expected effect of year, F (1, 1878) = 253.78, $p <$ .001, $\eta_p^2 = .12$; overall, participants reported less structural prejudice in 2015 (M = 3.65, SD = .84) than in 2012 (M = 3.88, SD = .84). Unsurprisingly, there was also a main effect of quartile, F (3, 1878) = 4979.08, $p <$ .001, $\eta_p^2 = .89$, participants reported more structural prejudice in each of the successively higher quartiles (lower quartile, M = 2.59, SD = .45, second quartile, M = 3.56, SD = .25, third quartile, M = 4.15, SD = .19, upper quartile, M = 4.74, SD = .25).

There was, as hypothesised, an interaction between year and quartile, F (3, 1878) = 9.03, $p <$ .001, $\eta_p^2 = .014$. However, participants in the lower quartiles did not become less prejudiced while participants in the upper quartiles became more prejudiced. On the contrary, participants in the lower quartile (mean difference = .099) and second quartile (mean difference = .210) showed smaller reductions in prejudice between 2012 and 2015 than did participants in the third quartile (mean difference = .303) and upper quartile (mean difference = .228). Thus, it appeared that individuals who were initially more prejudiced experienced larger reductions in structural prejudice (see Figure 2).

Personal prejudice. Again, the data did not support the polarisation hypothesis; rather, the reverse appeared to be true. I found the expected effect of year, F (1, 1878) = 113.03, p < .001, η_p^2 = .057; overall, participants reported more personal prejudice in 2015 (M = 3.40, SD = .73) than in 2012 (M = 3.29, SD = .78). Unsurprisingly, there was also a main effect of quartile, F (3, 1878) = 4886.54, p < .001, η_p^2 = .89, participants reported more personal prejudice in each of the successively higher quartiles (lower quartile, M = 2.37, SD = .37, second quartile, M = 3.08, SD = .17, third quartile, M = 3.66, SD = .20, upper quartile, M = 4.34, SD = .26).

There was, as hypothesised, an interaction between year and quartile, F (3, 1878) = 5.31, p = .001, η_p^2 = .008. Again, however, participants in the lower quartiles did not become less prejudiced while participants in the upper quartiles became more prejudiced. On the contrary, participants in the lower quartile (mean difference = .142) and second quartile (mean difference = .187) showed larger increases in personal prejudice between 2012 and 2015 than did participants in the third quartile (mean difference = .127) and upper quartile (mean difference = .047). Thus, it appeared that individuals who were initially more prejudiced experienced smaller increases in personal prejudice (see Figure 3).

Discussion

Anti-gay prejudice in Jamaica is both severe and widespread, with serious or even deadly consequences; many LGBT Jamaicans live in fear of mistreatment, ostracism (even from their own families), and violent anti-gay attacks (Johnson, 2016). Very little empirical research has investigated solutions to this serious problem. This current research took advantage of two large, representative surveys of Jamaican's responses to lesbians and gay men to investigate the effects of a recent period of pro-gay activism. Below, I discus these findings with reference to study design and results, implications for pro-gay activism in Jamaica and similar countries, limitations and potential future research.

Research Design and Results

This research used a large-scale field test to investigate the effects of three years of gay-rights activism in Jamaica. There were significant reductions in structural prejudice during this period, but simultaneous increases in personal prejudice. There was also no support for a polarisation of responses to gay men and lesbians; rather it appeared that the greatest reductions in structural prejudice occurred among the most prejudiced individuals, while the greatest increases in personal prejudice occurred among the least prejudiced individuals.

This research has some notable strengths. Much research in social psychology, including research on intergroup relations, is criticised for using participants who are unlikely to be representative of the broader population, such as undergraduate students, samples restricted to wealthy Western nations, or similar samples of convenience (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; Sears, 1986). This current research, however, profited from large, representative, non-student samples of participants drawn from a diverse array of communities and demographic backgrounds in a non-Western nation. As such, it adds meaningfully to the body of evidence concerning interventions to reduce anti-gay prejudice, particularly to its generalizability.

Furthermore, though our measures were non-ideal in that they are not derived from prior scientific research, they also hold some potential benefits. Some intergroup relations research has been criticised for imposing the researchers' perspectives onto participants, to the detriment of participants' own interpretations of their cross-group interactions (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005). However, the items used in this research were designed by an independent Jamaican gay rights group (JFLAG) and were designed to investigate the aspects of anti-LGBT prejudice most important to them. As such, this research avoids the potential criticism of limited usefulness outside of academic circles; it was able to show changes in Jamaican anti-LGBT prejudice that mattered to the targets of this prejudice.

Implications for pro-gay activism in Jamaica and similar countries

Implications for Jamaica. In recent years Jamaica has seen a steep rise in pro-gay activism. Both in Jamaica and in the international Jamaican diaspora, a range of old and newly formed organisations like AIDS-Free World and JFLAG have been increasingly public about the human rights, legal position, and social treatment of LGBT Jamaicans (Dunkley-Willis, 2013; "Gay protest at Emancipation Park," 2010; Walters, 2013; West & Cowell, 2015). The recent pro-gay activism seems to have met with some success, particularly concerning structural manifestations of anti-gay prejudice in Jamaica. However, despite some evidence of reduced social distance and opposition to gay rights, there is also evidence of increased negativity toward gay men and lesbians, including negative behaviours (Johnson, 2016; West, 2016b).

On a theoretical level, this may signal an important shift in the perceptions of gay men and lesbians in Jamaica. According to the highly-influential Stereotype Content Model, stereotypes of outgroups can be described with two axes: warmth and competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), with specific affective responses to each kind of group. Pure disgust or contempt, is normally reserved for groups who are perceived as neither warm nor competent, such as homeless people and people with severe psychotic disorders (Harris & Fiske, 2006; Sadler, Meagor, & Kaye, 2012). However, an increase in structural acceptance coupled with an increase in personal prejudice may signal a shift in perceptions from low-competence and low-warmth to high-competence and low-warmth (Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999). In simpler terms, lesbians and gay men in Jamaica may be less liked, but more respected. Future research on the implications of stereotype content for anti-LGBT prejudice in Jamaica may prove fruitful.

On a practical level, it should be noted that the overall effect sizes, in both directions, are rather small (despite being statistically significant). Furthermore, despite reductions in some kinds of prejudice between 2012 and 2015, levels of prejudice against lesbians and gay

men in Jamaica remain very high. While this may be seen as discouraging, it could also be seen as important reminder of the strength and resilience of this bias and the effort required to change it. Also, while public perceptions may change slowly, the recent period of activism may have important legal and structural effects both in Jamaica and internationally (Reynolds, 2013; Walters, 2013).

Implications for other anti-gay societies. Legal rights and anti-gay discrimination vary widely by nation; though same-sex marriage is legally recognized in 17 states worldwide, consensual gay sex between adults remains illegal in 76 states (including Jamaica), and 6 states punish same-sex intimacy with the death penalty (Carroll & Itaborahy, 2015). An increasing body of research has shown that Jamaica is a strongly and openly anti-gay society, with a powerful mixture of social and legal discrimination against LGBT citizens (Farquharson, 2005; West & Cowell, 2015; West & Hewstone, 2012a, 2012b; West, 2016a; Wheatle, 2012). Nonetheless, though Jamaica has been called "the most homophobic place on earth" (Padgett, 2006), the reality is that citizens in some other countries face similar challenges (see e.g., Elder, 2013; Smith, 2013). In this sense, Jamaica can be seen as a testing ground for comparable anti-gay nations; like those in Jamaica, activists in these strongly anti-gay countries must select strategies that best suit their challenging social climate.

This current research suggests that gay-rights activism can have meaningful, positive effects on severely negative societies without leading to polarisation or a backlash in anti-gay prejudice. This is particularly the case with regards to legal rights and social acceptance of LGBT persons. However, these results also suggest caution, particularly concerning the types of strategies used. While Jamaican approaches have included increased visibility, specific legal challenges, and the recruitment of heterosexual allies (West & Geering, 2013), positive, high-quality intergroup contact has been largely absent from the list of strategies, despite some evidence of its effectiveness (West & Hewstone, 2012a; West, Husnu, & Lipps, 2015). It is perhaps rather telling that structural manifestations of prejudice appear to be decreasing

while personal prejudice (i.e., the kind best reduced by intergroup contact and other harmony-promoting strategies) is stable or increasing.

Similar patterns emerge in other countries. In Russia, activists work hard to combat laws prohibiting same-sex intimacy and "gay propaganda", but the majority of Russians have never knowingly interacted with a gay person (Elder, 2013; S. Walker, 2013). Activists in Zambia and Uganda are similarly working against laws prohibiting 'indecent same-sex practices' and public speech supporting these practices (Smith, 2013). Nothing in this current research discourages those efforts. However, if lessons from Jamaican can be applied internationally, these findings imply that that ardent campaigning for legal rights may not be enough on their own, and would be most effective when accompanied by cooperative interaction strategies aimed at promoting cross-group harmony and positive cross-group attitudes.

Limitations and Future Research

Like most other fields-tests, particularly those conducted in non-Western nations (see, e.g., Paluck, 2009) this research design incurred certain unavoidable limitations. As previously mentioned, some of our measures were non-ideal, as they were not designed for this purpose. I dealt with this limitation as well as possible by clearly defining the constructs investigated, identifying similarities between our items and those used in prior research, and by applying high standards of internal reliability. Nonetheless, future research could re-examine these hypotheses using well-established scales from previously published social-psychological research.

Perhaps most importantly, it is not appropriate to draw genuinely causal conclusions from these findings; that is, one cannot claim to know that the changes in prejudice occurred as a result of the recent activism. These changes in the levels of all 4 types of prejudice between 2012 and 2015 may have been caused by a number of factors. In the case of structural prejudice, some of the reductions in prejudice levels may be due to regression

toward the mean (though this explanation is somewhat contradicted by the levels of personal prejudice that *increased*, i.e., moved away from the mean, between 2012 and 2015).

Genuine randomised controlled trials are necessary before such causal conclusions can be drawn, and this level of control is rarely, if ever, available at the scale of the study conducted here. Nonetheless, despite this shortcoming, field tests like these are an essential part of the body of evidence for the practical, real-world effects of prejudice-reducing strategies. What this study lacks in controlled manipulation of variables it makes up for in external validity and real-world application. Furthermore, though causality could not be confirmed, I was able to rule out some competing hypotheses by showing that changes in prejudice against lesbians and gay men were *not* due to changes in the gender-makeup, age, religiosity, education, or musical preferences of the participants. Despite controlling for all these variables, I still found changes in anti-gay prejudice in Jamaica across two large, representative samples separated by three years.

Conclusions

The period of intensified pro-gay activism between 2012 and 2015 appears to have reduced structural prejudice against LGBT persons in Jamaica, but simultaneously increased personal prejudice against them. This does not indicate a failure of Jamaican pro-gay activism. All organisations have limited resources and anti-gay prejudice is a multi-faceted problem. No single strategy could tackle every aspect of Jamaican sexual prejudice. Furthermore, recent social-psychological research has pointed to a tension between strategies that that promote harmony or positive relations between groups (like intergroup contact) and other strategies that focus on collective action and more equal distributions of power and privilege (Dixon, Tropp, et al., 2010; Dixon, Durrheim, et al., 2010; Saguy et al., 2009). In some cases, positive intergroup attitudes must be sacrificed if the immediate goal is equality in society or before the law. However, it is also important to achieve more positive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians in Jamaica and a reduction in day-to-day violence and negative

behaviours. With those goals in mind, strategies like contact, that can improve cross-group relations and reduce antipathy, will eventually be necessary.

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Footnotes

[1] The samples are explicitly described as "nationally representative" in the original reports (e.g., Boxill et al., 2012, p. 6). However, these reports do not specify their mechanism of assuring that the samples were nationally representative (e.g., through the use of probability-based sampling). They do specify that participants were a deliberately diverse sampling of Jamaicans drawn from 231 urban and rural communities with the aim of achieving a nationally representative sample. However, it is possible that the original authors only meant that the sample was "nationally representative" in the sense that it covered a diverse and representative set of Jamaican communities.

[2] This lower value for degrees of freedom is due to the fact that some participants (35 in 2012 and 268 in 2015) did not report any information about their level of education.

[3] Similarly, this lower value for degrees of freedom is due to the fact that some participants (33 in 2012 and 2 in 2015) did not report any information about their level of religiosity.

Tables

Table 1. Full wording of all items according to year (2012 vs. 2015).

Scale / Items		2012	2015
Social Distance			
	Item 1	If I discovered a friend was homosexual I would end the friendship.	If I found out that a friend of mine was gay/lesbian I would stop talking to him/her.
	Item 2	It matters to me whether my friends are homosexual or not.	It does not matter to me whether my friends are gays/lesbians or not. (R)
	Item 3	It would upset me if I learned that a close friend was a homosexual.	I would be very upset if I found out that a close friend of mine was gay/lesbian.
	Item 4	I think homosexuals should not work with children.	Gays/lesbians should not be allowed to work with children.
Opposition to Rights			
	Item 1	Marriage between homosexual individuals is acceptable. (R)	It is acceptable for gays/lesbians to get married to each other. (R)
	Item 2	Society should recognize homosexuality as normal. (R)	I believe that gays/lesbians should be considered normal by society. (R).
	Item 3	Homosexual behaviour should be against the law.	Gay/lesbian sexual behaviour should be illegal.

Table 1 (continued). Full wording of all items according to year (2012 vs. 2015).

Scale / Items		2012	2015
Anti-gay Attitudes			
	Item 1	I feel that you can trust a person who is homosexual. (R)	I feel I can trust someone who is gay/lesbian (2016)
	Item 2	It bothers me to see two homosexual people together in public.	I get annoyed, angry or feel uncomfortable when I see two gays/lesbians together in public.
	Item 3	When I see a homosexual I think: “What a waste”.	When I see gays/lesbians I think: "What a waste".
	Item 4	Homosexuality is a sin.	Homosexuality is a sin.
Negative behaviours			
	Item 1	I have damaged property of a homosexual person.	I have threatened to hurt or damage the property of someone who is gay/lesbian.
	Item 2	I usually make derogatory remarks about homosexuals.	I am one of those who speak badly about or say negative things about gays/lesbians.
	Item 3	I make derogatory remarks like 'faggot' or 'batty man' to people I suspect are homosexual.	I use terms such as faggot, sodomite, fish, battyman, sheman, when I refer to gays/lesbians.
	Item 4	I tease and make jokes about homosexuals.	I tease and make jokes about gays/lesbians.
	Item 5	I avoid homosexuals.	I avoid gays/lesbians.

Table 2. Number of participants in each age group in 2012 and 2015.

Age Group	Year		
	2012	2015	Total
18 – 24	235	190	425
25 - 34	281	212	493
35 – 44	229	204	433
45 - 54	120	171	291
55 - 64	57	117	174
65 +	19	48	67
Total	941	942	1883

Table 3: Means and standard deviations social distance, opposition to gay rights, anti-gay attitudes and negative behaviors in 2012 and 2015.

	Mean	SD	*t*	*df*	*p*
2012					
Social Distance	3.55	1.07	15.21	943	< .001
Opposition to Gay Rights	4.32	.78	51.84	942	< .001
Anti-gay Attitudes	3.92	.82	34.48	943	< .001
Negative Behaviors	2.78	.95	-6.97	943	< .001
2015					
Social Distance	3.36	1.02	10.76	941	< .001
Opposition to Gay Rights	4.04	.89	35.89	941	< .001
Anti-gay Attitudes	3.98	.79	37.88	941	< .001
Negative Behaviors	2.94	.85	-2.35	941	.02

Note: Degrees of freedom, *t*-values and *p*-values are for one-sample t-test comparisons between the level of each type of prejudice and the midpoint of the scale (3).

Table 4: Correlations between social distance, opposition to gay rights, anti-gay attitudes, and negative behaviors in 2012 and 2015.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1. Social distance		.51***	.67***	.59***
2. Opposition to gay rights	.50***		.55***	.27***
3. Anti-gay attitudes	.61***	.62***		.51***
4. Negative behaviors	.58***	.45***	.56***	

Note: 1) * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note: 2) Correlations for 2012 are presented above the diagonal and correlations for 2015 are presented below the diagonal.

Figure 1: Differences in social distance, opposition to gay rights, anti-gay attitudes, and negative behaviours between 2012 and 2015.

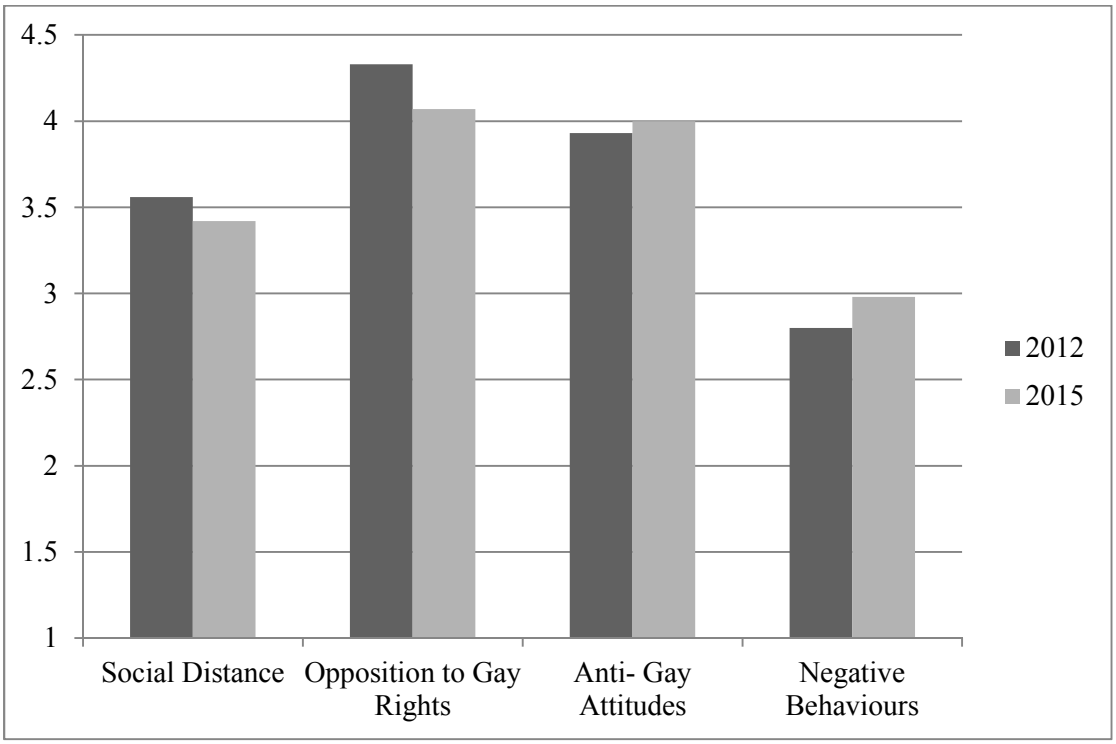
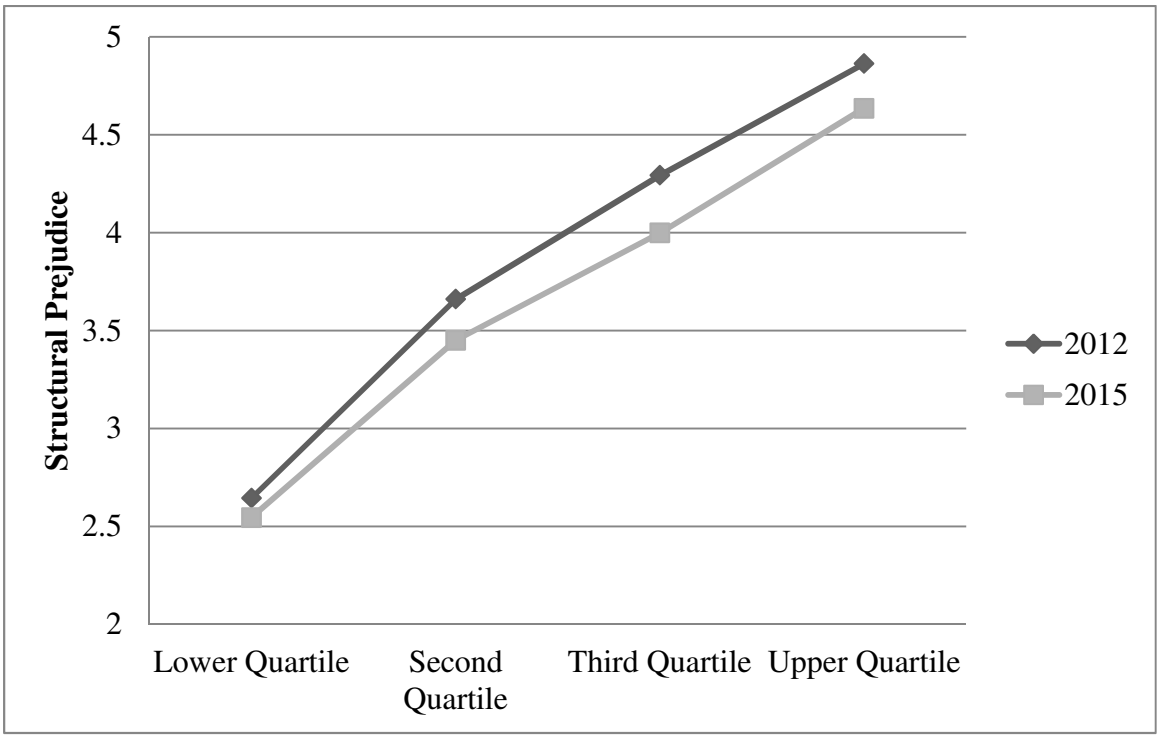
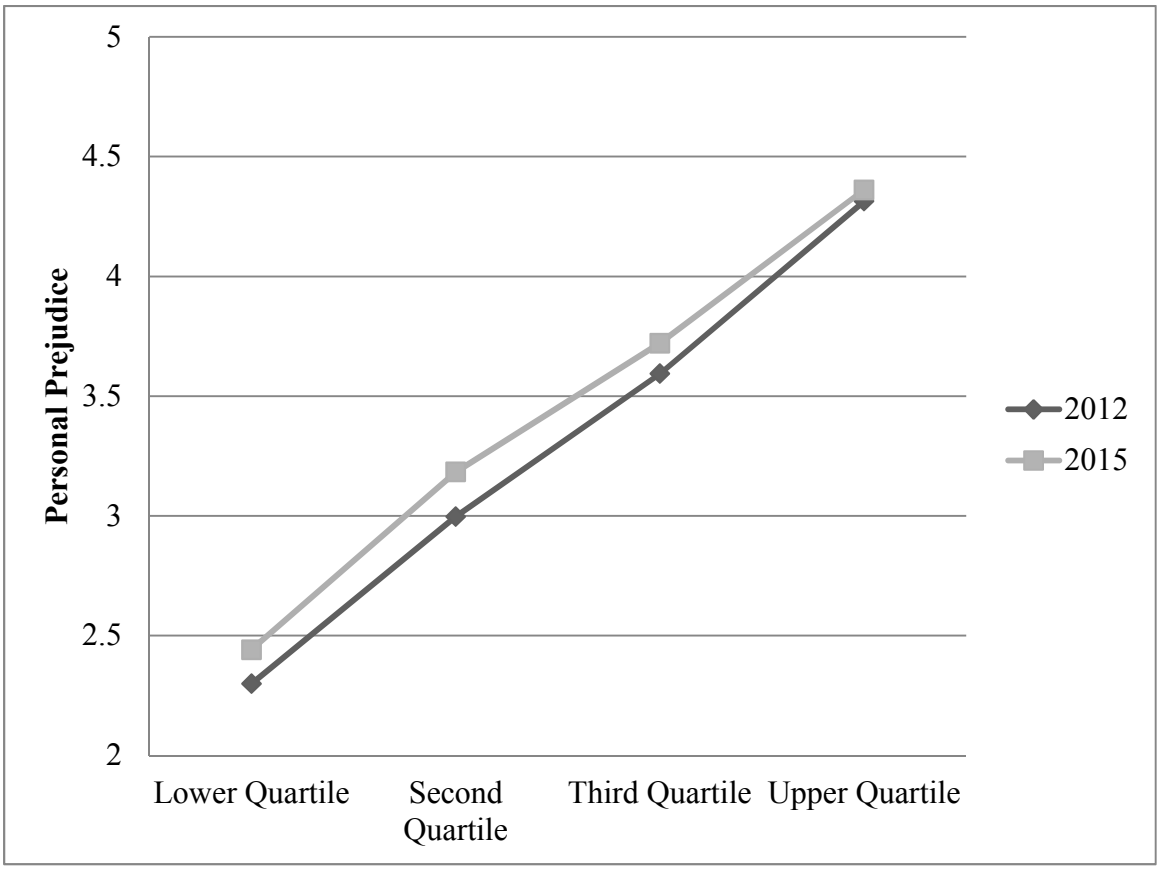


Figure 2: Changes in structural anti-gay prejudice between 2012 and 2015 according to quartile.



Note: Lower quartile = 25% of participants who reported the least prejudice in that sample, upper quartile = 25% of participants who reported the most prejudice in that sample.

Figure 3: Changes in personal anti-gay prejudice between 2012 and 2015 according to quartile.



Note: Lower quartile = 25% of participants who reported the least prejudice in that sample, upper quartile = 25% of participants who reported the most prejudice in that sample.