This is the ESRC End of Award Report Form. The form should be completed and returned on or before the due date to: Evaluation Reports Officer, Communications & Information Directorate, ESRC, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN1 1UJ.

Please note that the Report can only be accepted if all sections have been completed in full, and all award holders have signed Declaration One.

Award holders should also submit seven additional copies of this Form, and eight copies of the research report and any nominated outputs to be evaluated along with the Report.

A copy of the complete Report, comprising this form and the research report, should be formatted as a single document and sent as an email attachment to
reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk. Please enter the **Award Reference Number** as the email subject.

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ESRC End of Award Report is a single document comprising the following sections:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>End of Award Report Form</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Report</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nominated Outputs (Optional)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eight copies of the End of Award Report document and any Outputs must be submitted to ESRC.</strong></td>
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**Award holders should note that:**

1. The final instalment of the award will not be paid until an acceptable End of Award Report is received.

2. Award holders whose reports are overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the reports are accepted.

ESRC reserves the right to take action to reclaim up to **20%** of the value of awards where submission of an acceptable End of Award Report is more than six months overdue. For grants issued after 1st October 1999, where the End of Award report has not been submitted within six months of the termination date, ESRC may recover all payments made on the grant.
DECLARATION ONE: CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH

This Report is an accurate statement of the objectives, conduct, results and outputs (to date) of the research project funded by the ESRC.

1. Award Holder(s) Signature

NB. This must include anyone named as a co-applicant in the research proposal.

<table>
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<th>TITLE</th>
<th>INITIALS</th>
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2. Administrative Authority Signature

DATE:

3. Head of Department, School or Faculty Signature

DATE:

Photocopies of this page are acceptable in the seven additional printed copies of the report. This page should be left blank in the email copy.
DECLARATION TWO: ESRC SOCIETY TODAY

ESRC Society Today is a publicly available online research database, containing summary details of all ESRC research projects and their associated publications and outputs. This includes Summary and Full reports from End of Award Reports since 2005. ESRC Society Today provides an excellent opportunity for researchers to publicise their work; the database has a large user base, drawn from Higher Education, government, voluntary agencies, business and the media.

Summary details of publications and/or other outputs of research conducted under ESRC funded awards must be submitted to the ESRC Society Today Awards and Outputs Database.

For queries relating to ESRC Society Today, please contact: societytodaysupport@esrc.ac.uk or 0871 641 2115 (technical queries, eg uploading outputs)

Please sign at either A or B below.

A. Details of relevant outputs of this award have been submitted to ESRC Society Today and details of any ensuing outputs will be submitted in due course.

Signature of Principal Award Holder

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B. This award has not yet produced any relevant outputs, but details of any future publications will be submitted to ESRC Society Today as soon as they become available.

Signature of Principal Award Holder

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Award holders should note that the end of award report cannot be accepted, and the final claim cannot be paid, until either ESRC has received confirmation that details of relevant outputs have been submitted to ESRC Society Today or the award holder has declared that the award has not so far produced any relevant outputs.

Photocopies of this page are acceptable in the seven additional printed copies of the report. This page should be left blank in the email copy.
DECLARATION THREE: DATA ARCHIVE

A machine-readable copy of any dataset arising from the research must be offered for deposit with the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) at the UK Data Archive within three months of the end of the award. All enquiries should be addressed to the Acquisitions Team, ESDS, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ or by email to acquisitions@esds.ac.uk

ESDS maintains an informative website at http://www.esds.ac.uk/

Award holders submitting qualitative data should refer to the ESDS Qualidata website at http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/

Please sign at either A or B below.

A. Machine-readable copies of datasets arising from this award have been, or are in the process of being, offered for deposit with the ESDS.

Signature of Principal Award Holder

DATE:

B. There are no relevant datasets arising from this award to date.

Signature of Principal Award Holder

DATE:

Award holders should note that the ESRC will withhold the final payment of an award if a dataset has not been deposited to the required standard within three months of the end of award, except where a modification or waiver of deposit requirements has been agreed in advance.

Photocopies of this page are acceptable in the seven additional printed copies of the report. This page should be left blank in the email copy.
**PROJECT DETAILS**

**ESRC END OF AWARD REPORT: PROJECT DETAILS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AWARD NUMBER:</th>
<th>RES-000-22-2612</th>
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<tr>
<td>AWARD TITLE:</td>
<td>Sexuality, Citizenship and Migration: the Irish Queer Diaspora in London</td>
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<td>AWARD START DATE</td>
<td>January 1st 2008</td>
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<td>AWARD END DATE</td>
<td>April 30th 2009</td>
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<td>TOTAL AMOUNT EXPENDED:</td>
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In the case of awards which have transferred please include the full expenditure at each institution and relevant transfer dates.

**AWARD HOLDER(S):**

NB. This must include anyone named as a co-applicant, as originally listed in the research proposal.

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<td>Department of Sociology, University of Essex,</td>
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ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Non-Technical Summary

This research project examined the experiences of Irish lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people living in London. There is a long history of Irish migration to the UK, particularly London. This has coincided historically with many Irish LGBT people feeling compelled to emigrate in search of a more supportive social climate. The appeal of global cities to LGBT people has long been acknowledged. Metropolitan centres are associated with tolerance of sexual diversity and established queer communities. The Irish diaspora in one of the largest in the world, with over seventy million people worldwide claiming an Irish identity, of whom only four million live in Ireland. Although the literature on the Irish diaspora has provided invaluable insights about ethnicity, postcolonialism, whiteness, gender and place, the significance of sexual dissidence to Irish migration and diaspora has been relatively unexplored. The lives of Irish LGBT migrants therefore constitute a ‘hidden history’ within the wider field.

Integrating sexual diversity into migration research requires rethinking the connections between identity, citizenship and place. Heteronormativity and homophobia structure the migrant experience, in relation to marriage, employment and housing possibilities. Important changes to sexual citizenship possibilities have taken place in Britain in the past decade, for example the introduction of civil partnerships in 2003. Most of these changes were enacted after the majority of participants moved to London, although the shift in possibilities was significant in their more recent experiences of queer life in London.

This study explored Irish LGBT migrants' reasons for moving to London and experiences there. The research questions focused on notions of home, identity, belonging, familial relationships and subjectivity. Interviews were carried out with 40 Irish LGBT people living in London from a range of social backgrounds and age groups. There was also considerable diversity in terms of length of time spent living in London, although the minimum period was two years. Focus groups were also carried out and helped to generate interview questions for semi-structured individual interviews.

The interview narratives uncovered a wealth of original data about Irishness, sexual citizenship and intersections of sexuality and migration. Although sexuality was significant in the migration experience, particularly in relation to disadvantage and social exclusion upon arrival in London, sexual identity was only part of the motivation to leave Ireland. Far more significant were questions of economics and
employment prospects. This also reflected different moments in Irish history, from high levels of unemployment in the 1980s through to the rise of the Celtic Tiger in the 1990s. The changing context within Ireland in terms of sexual equality was also reflected in coming out experiences and family relationships. The experiences of younger participants reflected an Ireland that is becoming gradually more tolerant and diverse, despite instances of homophobia and exclusion.

The research also indicated changes in the context for Irishness within Britain. In particular, developments in the peace process in Northern Ireland appear to have had a positive impact on Irish experiences in London. The post 7/7 displacement of the ‘terrorist threat’ from Irish communities has also changed the context for Irishness in contemporary Britain. Although many participants had experienced instances of anti-Irishness, this was mediated by class, with participants from more disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds experiencing greater vulnerability to discrimination.

Interview narratives revealed discourses of kinship that contrasted with prevailing theoretical work in the field. Literature on lesbian and gay kinship has focused on the difficulties encountered in family relationships upon coming out. Homophobic reactions from wider family can lead to a distancing between lesbian and gay people and their families. They therefore create new ‘families we choose’ consisting of friends and lovers, where choice, rather than blood or legal ties are the basis of the relationship. While previous work has emphasized exclusionary experiences from families of origin, who may react negatively to the coming out of their LGBT child/sibling, participants demonstrated enormous commitment to their families in Ireland. This was evidenced by regular communication through phone, email and letter, as well as visits to Ireland and hosting of family members on trips to London. Participants demonstrated striking generosity of spirit and provided considerable ‘emotional labour’ in their efforts to maintain family relationships. These research findings suggest a reconsideration of queer kinship, to acknowledge the possibility of ongoing connections and the ways in which families of origin may be significant to identity, intimacy and care.

This exploration of the relationship between sexuality, ethnicity and diaspora contributes to greater understanding of the ways in which contemporary sexual citizenship, migration and queer imaginaries of the metropolis are mutually implicated in complex ways. In addition to generating new theoretical and empirical work on sexuality and migration, the research findings will be used to inform policy and debate regarding processes of social exclusion.
2. Dissemination

A. Please outline any specific plans you have for further publication and/or other means of dissemination of the outcomes and results of the research.

Publications:

Journal special issue:


Articles:


Book chapters:


Monograph:

8. Book monograph – Sexuality, Migration and Citizenship: The PI has been invited to submit a book monograph, provisionally entitled Sexuality, Migration and Citizenship, which would draw on the empirical work for the research project. A book proposal is in development, which will be submitted to Palgrave shortly.

Research Report:

relevant user organisations, including Stonewall in London, the Dublin Equality Authority, the Hammersmith Irish Centre in London, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, UK and Outhouse Community Centre in Dublin.

**Qualitative Dataset**

9. Qualitative Dataset: The interview transcripts from the study have been anonymised and deposited with the ESDS at the University of Essex.

**Popular articles**

10. The publication *Gay Community News* in Dublin has requested an article about the research.

**List of presentations to date:**

**International conference papers and seminars:**

6. (2009) ‘Negotiating Sexual Citizenship’, the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society (IASCSS) Conference, Hanoi. This conference also led to two new papers on postcolonial sexualities and migration for the journal special issue with *Sexualities* (see above).

**UK conference papers and presentations:**


**Future presentations (2009-2010):**

2. (2009) Seminar for the Cultural and Historical Geography Research group seminar series, Department of Geography, University College London.
3. (2009) Seminar for the Centre for Intimate and Sexual Citizenship (CISC), University of Essex.
5. (2009) Presentation at the Department of Sociology seminar series, City University, London.

**Future media (2009-2010):**

1. Interview on the Irish radio programme News Talk.
2. Interview on Thinking Aloud programme, BBC Radio Four.
3. Article for *Gay Community News*, Ireland.

B. Please provide names and contact details of any non-academic research users with whom the research has been discussed and/or to whom results have been disseminated.

Ms. Martha Whyte  
The Manager  
Outhouse Community Centre  

Dublin, Ireland
Ruth Hunt
Head of Policy and Research
Stonewall

London

Laurence Bond
Head of Research
Equality Authority

Dublin
Ireland

Catherine Casey
Manager
Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith
3. **Nominated Outputs (see Guidelines 1.4)**

Please give full details of the two nominated outputs which should be assessed along with this report. Please provide one printed copy of publicly available web-based resources, eight copies of any nominated outputs must be submitted with the End of Award Report.

Due to the timescales of publishing, all the project outputs are under review or in preparation at present. However, copies of all outputs can be made available to the ESRC once they are in their final published form. The research report will be available shortly.

4. **Staffing**

Please detail appointments and departures below for ALL staff recruited for this award. Where possible, please note each person's name, age, grade; and for departing staff, destination type on leaving.

(Destination types: Academic post, Commercial, Public Sector, Personal, Other).

**NB. This section must not include anyone who is an award holder.**

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>Other</td>
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5. **Virements**

Since 1st April 1996 investigators may vire between grant headings without reference to Council, except where major capital items are being provided for. Please detail below any changed use of resources and the benefits or problems this brought.

N/A
6. Major difficulties

Although snowballing was not used to recruit participants and there was considerable diversity among the sample in terms of age, class background, and length of time living in London, it proved difficult to find transgendered participants for the study. Transgendered support groups and organisations throughout the UK and Ireland were contacted about the research and given leaflets. There were also presentations at the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, which features numerous transgendered themed films every year. Information about the project was also disseminated on various transgender emailing lists, as well as distributed among activists and acquaintances. Despite the best efforts of the investigators, just one transgendered migrant was interviewed for the project. We were contacted by transgender migrants from other ethnic groups who were interested in participating in the study, but as they were not Irish we were unable to include them. It may be that there is a relatively small number of migrants living in London who are both transgender and Irish. However, the conversations we had with other transgendered migrants living in London who approached us for the project, suggest that research on transgendered migrant experience would be interesting and productive.

Similarly, we would have liked to include Irish travellers in the project, reflecting the diversity of ethnicities within Ireland. Although considerable efforts were made in relation to contacting Traveller organisations, activists, events and mailing lists, we were unsuccessful in our attempts. Again, it seems likely that this is a small population, but nonetheless one which it is important to include in analyses of Irish diasporic experience where possible.

7. Other issues and unexpected outcomes

Please describe any outcomes of your research, beneficial or otherwise that were not expected at the outset or other issues which were important to the research, where these are not addressed above. Further details should be included in the main report.

Media interest:

There was considerable interest from the media in the research, including reports in the Times Higher Education Supplement and The Irish Times. This unanticipated response to a press release about the project ultimately proved very helpful. The media interest in the early stages of the project ensured a wider
response from potential participants. It is notoriously difficult to recruit a wide sample for LGBT research. The media attention ensured that information about the project was brought to a far wider audience than could otherwise have been achieved. This was enormously helpful for recruitment as we were quickly inundated with emails and phone calls from a wide sample of participants. The publicity resulted in us reaching a far wider audience than could otherwise have been possible, ensuring a wide sample of participants, particularly in terms of socio-economic background. This suggests that media attention can be extremely useful for recruitment in LGBT research projects. The PI, who had previously received some training in media skills, subsequently attended media training sessions organised by the ESRC and the University of Essex. Her experience was further developed through media interviews about her recent book on lesbian motherhood (Ryan-Flood, 2009a). This further training and practical experience will be helpful in future engagement with the media for this project. The experience of dealing with the media also inspired an article about representation, ethics, media engagement and sensitive research, which appeared in a recent issue of *The Journal of Lesbian Studies* (Ryan-Flood, 2009b).

**Financial savings**

There were considerable savings in the financial management of the project, despite the fact that all of the objectives were met and the outputs and number of presentations exceeded the plans in the original application:

The project included funds for travel between London and Essex. However, the RO did not live in Essex, so did not require extensive reimbursement for travel.

The original budget also included funding for a training course in Atlas software analysis. However, we discovered excellent online training sessions in combination with support available at the University of Essex, so completed training that way.

The PI gave a presentation at the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society (IASSCS) conference in Hanoi Vietnam, in April 2009. This is a bi-annual conference that attracts leading scholars in sexualities from across the globe. The presentations and discussions of postcolonial sexualities were particularly useful for the project. Two further papers were recruited for the special issue arising out of the project as a result of the conference. The trip also tied in with a visiting professorship by the PI to the Department of Sociology at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, where she also gave a presentation of her work from the project. The proximity of Bangkok to Hanoi meant that it was a cost-effective means of attending the Vietnam conference. The Hanoi conference was scheduled at the same time as the British Sociological Association (BSA) annual conference, which meant that it was not possible to attend both and there were therefore considerable savings on the BSA conference, which had been costed into the original budget. However, the PI will give a paper from the project at the BSA in 2010.
8. Contributions to ESRC Programmes

If your project was part of an ESRC Research Programme, please describe your contributions to the Programme's overall objectives, and note any impacts on your project resulting from your involvement.

9. Nominated Rapporteur

Please suggest the name of one person who would be suitable to act as an independent rapporteur for your project. Please state full address and telephone number.

Prof Rosalind Gill
Professor of Subjectivity and Cultural Theory
Faculty of Social Sciences
The Open University
Milton Keynes

10. Nominated User Rapporteur (Optional)

Please suggest the name of one non-academic user who would be suitable to act as an independent rapporteur for your project. Please state full address and telephone number.

Laurence Bond
Head of Research
Equality Authority
Dublin
Ireland
Sexuality, Citizenship and Migration: the Irish Queer Diaspora in London

Reference Number: RES-000-22-2612

• Background

The Irish diaspora is one of the largest in the world, with over seventy million people claiming an Irish identity, of whom only four million live within Ireland itself. In recent years, a growing body of work has explored the multifaceted nature of the Irish diaspora. These studies have made a valuable contribution to academic work on ethnicity, whiteness, and postcolonialism (Gray, 2004; Hickman 2002; Nash, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2008; Walter, 2001). Yet a significant omission within the wider literature is a consideration of the links between sexual dissidence, migration and Irishness. The experiences of Irish lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) migrants constitute a ‘hidden history’ within the wider field of Irish studies. Similarly, work on migration more generally has largely overlooked the relevance of sexual identity and sexual citizenship to mobilities. This raises a number of questions: how does sexual identity influence the migration experience? What are the particular exclusions faced by LGBT migrants? How does the intersection of sexual identity and migration affect their relationships with family ‘back home’? How are processes of citizenship – for example, civil partnership, gender recognition, employment rights – different for LGBT migrants? In what ways is Irishness significant to these experiences? This project provided a timely contribution to the field by exploring the Irish LGBT diaspora in London, illuminating the relationship between ethnicity, migration and sexual dissidence.

Sexual citizenship refers to the ways in which citizenship possibilities and processes are mediated by sexual identity (Bell and Binnie, 2001; Binnie, 2004). An exploration of sexual citizenship in relation to migration processes raises a number of issues about how LGBT migrants are configured within citizenship debates. It is clear that in the past decade significant changes have occurred in the realm of sexual citizenship in many countries, particularly Europe, through for example the introduction of civil partnership/same sex marriage in some countries and the inclusion of sexual orientation for the first time in the equalities agenda of the EU through Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty. Yet we know relatively little about how transformations in sexual citizenship affect processes of migration. Theoretical work on LGBT sexuality and migration has emphasised the significance of metropolitan cities to queer imaginaries (Weston, 1998; Binnie, 2004; Lüibhéid & Cant, 2005). The general consensus in the literature is that cities provide a more tolerant space of difference and visibly queer community, compared to smaller towns or rural areas. The presence of commercial districts – such as Soho in London - catering to an LGBT client base in the form of cafés, clubs and retail outlets is presented as evidence for the possibility of living an openly queer life. However, as Knopp (1998) notes, the ability to access these spaces is mediated by economic, racial and gender privilege. The greater
anonymity afforded by urban living is also seen as conducive to a more openly gay or lesbian lifestyle.

The theoretical approach taken in this project contrasts with writers advocating the so-called ‘ethnic’ model of LGBT identities, whereby LGBT migrants are assumed to have a greater sense of affinity and connection with other LGBT migrants than with migrants from a similar ethnic background. For instance, Valentine (2001) suggests that for many members of the LGBT population, sexual citizenship may supersede national identity. Similarly, Sinfield (1996) and Cant (1997) suggest that LGBT migrants differ from other migrant groups because there is no ‘homeland’ that fully validates their group identity. However, this position may obscure complex dimensions of power across intersectional identities. Rather than risk universalising LGBT identities through this model, this research chose to adopt an intersectional approach that integrated multiple identity frameworks across axes of power – incorporating for example questions of gender, ethnicity, class, and age. This facilitated reconsidering the notion of ‘queer diaspora’ in favour of a position that queers the concept of diaspora itself.

There is a long history of Irish migration to England, especially London. This coincides with the appeal of London for LGBT migrants in search of a more tolerant environment. Both of these factors compounded the likelihood of Irish LGBT migrants moving to London. The difficulties traditionally faced by Irish migrants in Britain include social disadvantage, discrimination, and related issues such as homelessness, poor health and mortality rates (Hickman and Walter, 1997; Parekh, 2000). There have been significant shifts in Anglo-Irish relations following developments in the peace process in Northern Ireland. The rise of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ has also changed perceptions of Irishness at home and abroad.

The project explored a number of themes, including coming out narratives; family relationships, motivation for migration, experiences of queer life in London, and being Irish in London. Findings suggest that sexuality is highly relevant to the experience of migration, including the motivation to emigrate and choice of destination. LGBT migrants face particular vulnerabilities in relation to employment and housing. Thus, sexuality shapes and organises processes of migration and modes of incorporation. In addition, the contextual and structural transitions that mark the migration experience impact the ways in which identities are formed. There was some evidence that constructions of Irishness have undergone transformation, both within Ireland and the UK. The experiences of migrants from Northern Ireland suggested that ‘the Troubles’ were also mediated by processes of heteronormativity. Finally, the research suggests a reconceptualisation of queer kinship, challenging previous theoretical work that emphasises alienation and conflict with parents and other relatives, in favour of an approach that incorporates efforts to maintain family connections.
Objectives

Aims and objectives

This project explored a number of research questions exploring processes of ‘home’, identity and belonging among Irish queer migrants. The study addressed processes of social exclusion and the formation of queer subjectivities. The aims and objectives of this project illustrate a central concern with equality issues and documenting the narratives and historical geography of a minority group, thus reflecting the ESRC’s concern with issues of social importance. The objectives of the project were as follows:

1. **Document the social geography of a minority group:**

   The research generated a qualitative dataset that fills a gap in current research on Irish migrants (which has ignored the dimension of LGBT identity) and work on sexual dissidents in the UK (since little research has been done on migrant LGBT citizens). The study uncovered the experiences of Irish lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people living in the UK, including coming out, their relationships with families of origin and contemporary queer life in the capital. The qualitative dataset produced from the research was deposited with the ESDS.

2. **Contribute to our understanding of the relationship between sexuality, migration and citizenship and explore its theoretical significance:**

   The research considered the ways in which home, identity and belonging become reconfigured among this group and the implications for wider theories of ethnicity, sexuality and citizenship. In addressing experiences of sexual dissidence and migration, the study elucidated significant processes and meanings in relation to reflexive understandings of personal identity, as well as negotiation of family, wider community and society. The findings – which are elaborated further in the results section of this report - are of interest to scholars in the fields of Irish studies, sexuality, equality and migration.

3. **Develop existing methodologies for work on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities:**

   Researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the role of the internet for LGBT communities as a site of interaction, connection and communication. A website was set up with information about the project and proved useful for recruitment. However, the considerable media attention given to the project in the early stages also proved immensely helpful in obtaining research participants. It has long been acknowledged
that recruiting a diverse LGBT people for research can prove difficult, due to the ways in which people develop close community networks, or the reluctance of more closeted people to participate in research. The media attention ensured that information about the project reached a wide range of participants, ensuring diversity across age and socio-economic background. There was no reliance on ‘snowballing’ to recruit participants, which is highly unusual in LGBT qualitative research. This suggests that ways of engaging with the media can prove highly useful for researchers of LGBT life. The PI undertook extensive media training during the project, including an ESRC session on dealing with the media, and also sessions organised by External Relations at the University of Essex. She has also been carrying out numerous interviews with the media in relation to her recent book *Lesbian Motherhood: Gender, Families and Sexual Citizenship* (Palgrave, 2009a), which has provided extensive experience of dealing with the media. This will prove invaluable when disseminating the research results of this project.

4. **Inform theoretical debate and social policy:**

Theoretical work and empirical findings:

The project resulted in numerous publications, including a journal special issue, several articles and book chapters, as well as a research report. A monograph is also planned. These outputs contribute to theoretical work on sexuality, migration and citizenship, by illuminating the ways in which LGBT migrants navigate and negotiate wider processes of citizenship. The findings highlight the importance of inflecting migration theories with an awareness of sexual dissidence. They also illustrate the significance of mobilities to theories of sexual citizenship. Furthermore, the research indicated the need for a reconceptualisation of theories of sexuality and kinship. Previous work has highlighted the difficulties encountered by LGBT people in terms of relationships with parents and siblings. This research project encountered different narratives of family relationships, which challenge prevailing theoretical work by suggesting a need to incorporate continuity and change in family relationships. Finally, the research findings suggest that experiences of the Irish in Britain have undergone considerable change in recent years, which can be attributed to several factors – the rise of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ economy; developments in the peace process in Ireland; and in the wake of the 7/7 bombings, the shift in focus regarding potential terrorist activity from Irish communities to Islamic communities. This suggests the possibility of a reconceptualisation of contemporary understandings of Irishness in Britain.

Non-academic users:

The research highlighted ways in which sexual dissidents experience migration differently and uncovered the particular strategies Irish LGBT migrants utilised to access support resources and manage difficulties. A research report will be
disseminated to relevant user groups and the PI has already agreed to give presentations for the LGBT equality organisations Stonewall in London and Outhouse Community Centre in Dublin. The study will help to identify the particular needs of this group and will therefore be useful for service providers and equality bodies working with Irish and queer populations, identifying overlapping patterns. The PI will also be giving seminars and doing media interviews regarding the project.

• Methods

The data collection process involved semi-structured in-depth interviews with 40 Irish LGBT participants (20 women and 20 men), 3 focus group discussions (each consisting of 6 members – 3 women and 3 men), and 4 pilot interviews. Fifteen individual interviews were carried out by the RA, and the remainder by the PI. The RA also attended and transcribed the focus group interviews, which were facilitated by the PI. The focus groups helped to generate an interview schedule that was used for the semi-structured individual interviews.

The recruitment process engaged with multiple sources to ensure a diverse sample across age, socio-economic background, gender and sexual identities. Focus groups were organised by age group to encourage discussion. The interviews and focus groups explored a range of topics, including life in the UK, family relationships and Irish identity. The PI has extensive experience of these methods. Individual interviews generated detailed data on complex topics and aspects of personal experience. The focus groups developed a free flowing discussion that stimulated debate and consensus among participants about different aspects of their experiences. This proved helpful in developing questions for individual interviews.

Recruitment methods were successful in reaching a wide range of participants across gender, age and class. The study also reflects diversity among migrants in terms of length of time living in London, capturing different moments of migration and of being Irish in Britain. The research was advertised within Irish and LGBT organisations and mailing lists in the UK and Ireland, such as the Irish Community Centre in London, a London-based Irish lesbian group, the LGBT equality campaigning organisation Stonewall and LGBT parent groups. Information about the project was also distributed to organisations within the Greater London Authority and local community organisations that have members from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. A website about the project was set up, including information about how to participate. In addition, the project was advertised through various LGBT publications in the UK, for example The Pink Paper and DIVA magazine. Flyers were distributed at LGBT events, including the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, which usually screens at least one Irish film every year. Project information was also advertised in The Irish Post, as well as Irish traveller organisations and community networks. Media interest in the project was also significant in ensuring rapid recruitment among a range of participants. In the end, we were contacted by far more potential participants than we could accommodate. The experience of managing the interest from the media inspired the PI to write an article about media engagement, ethics and sensitive research (Ryan-Flood, 2009b).
Given the sensitive nature of the research, it was particularly important that participants are reassured about confidentiality and anonymity in the research process through verbal and written confirmation. All participants signed a release form. They were also informed that they had the opportunity to withdraw from the study without explanation at any time, although none did so. The research received approval from the University of Essex Ethics Review Committee prior to fieldwork. The interview transcripts were anonymised before submission to the ESDS. The Gender Studies department at University College London provided an office space for the project for two days a week during fieldwork, which proved invaluable. Although some interviews took place in participants’ homes, it was found that many LGBT people felt more comfortable being interviewed in a ‘neutral’ office space due to issues of anonymity, particularly for participants living in shared accommodation.

The PI and RA received training in the qualitative software package Atlas, which was used to index the vast amount of qualitative data generated. Interviews typically lasted 2-3 hours. The Atlas programme allowed us to organise large quantities of data thematically, without losing sight of the relationship between different sections. The data generated by the study was analysed using a discourse analysis approach. An intersectional analysis was also used, which helped to identify patterns across dimensions of experience.

- Results

The research resulted in a number of important theoretical and empirical findings:

1. Sexual citizenship and the politics of migration

Although the academic literature on LGBT identities and urban migration tends to present sexuality as a sole determining factor in migration paths and choices, the research indicates that LGBT migration must be situated within wider histories and contexts of migration. For example, participants who moved to London during the 1980s indicated that they would have been forced to emigrate irrespective of their sexuality, given the prevailing economic conditions in Ireland at that time. This suggests that the literature on sexuality and citizenship needs to situate theories within wider frameworks that encompass cultural and economic specificity. Similarly however, a critical engagement with sexual identity would displace the heteronormativity of much migration theory.

The usual difficulties facing migrants were experienced by participants in this study, such as vulnerability in the absence of familial networks and support. However, in many cases they were exacerbated through homophobic exclusions, such as homophobia in the workplace. Legal protection against homophobic discrimination in employment was introduced in Ireland in 1997, six years before it was finally introduced in the UK in 2003. Other difficulties experienced by longterm residents in London included lack of legal protection for cohabiting partners prior to the introduction of civil partnerships in 2004. The significant legal changes introduced since the turn of the millennium regarding partnership and employment had a clear impact on participants’ lives, many of whom had moved here prior to these changes. However, even when participants were able to avail themselves of these possibilities,
particular vulnerabilities remained. The taking up of new possibilities, such as civil partnership, was also not always straightforward. For example, one participant moved to London in order to have a civil partnership with his Latin American partner. He gave up a well-paid job in Ireland in order to work in menial employment in London. Unfortunately he and his partner suffered at the hands of an unscrupulous lawyer and were forced to live in different countries for ten months, as well as losing a substantial amount of money. This highlights Binnie’s (2004) argument that even when legislative provisions and support are in place, the process of migration is not straightforward for queer migrants. More information and support is needed for LGBT migrants to the London about rights and services, particularly in the context of new forms of citizenship, such as civil partnership.

LGBT migrants may not find it easy to be integrated into their ethnic community upon emigrating. This can result in them becoming less visible within wider diasporic stories. There were ways that participants managed to circumvent this however. Some participated in community networks and events that were both Irish and queer. This enabled them to meet other Irish people in an environment where they felt comfortable being ‘out’. Nonetheless, it is therefore important for scholars of migration to integrate an awareness of sexual diversity into their work, and to consider seeking out these alternative spaces for migrant communities. Rather than present a notion of ‘queer diaspora’ in an essentialising way, this research has alternatively sought to queer the concepts of diaspora and migration.

### 2. Changing Ireland, Changing Irishness: cross-generational differences

Participants’ ages ranged from 22 – 80 years. The average age was 32 years. The time spent living in London ranged from 2 years to 66 years, with a mean of 10 years. A number of cross-generational differences emerged in the research. These reflected different temporalities concerning: tolerance and diversity within Ireland itself; as well as differing contexts for migration from Ireland, and of being Irish in England. There was a clear awareness that Ireland had undergone significant changes in recent decades. The experiences of more recent migrants contrasted sharply with those of previous generations. Contemporary Ireland is seen as far more tolerant and diverse than in previous years. This is not to say that younger, recent migrants had not experienced difficulties within Ireland. However, the increased visibility of LGBT people in popular culture and the media, as well as their inclusion in the equalities agenda within Ireland has clearly had an impact on their experiences and ability to be open about their life with family and friends within Ireland. At the same time, migration could offer greater freedom and privacy to explore their sexual identity.

Another key difference concerned the experiences of being Irish in England. While those who emigrated prior to the mid-1990s often vividly described incidents of anti-Irishness in London, the experiences of more recent migrants reflect changes in Anglo-Irish relations and the rise of the Celtic Tiger economy. Thus, it could be tentatively suggested that constructions of Irishness in Britain may have changed. The economic transformation in Ireland in the 1990s resulted in a wave of inward migration to Ireland for the first time. In our study, emigrants from Ireland during this period were more likely to be in search of wider job opportunities and possibility for progress and promotion, as opposed to migration on the grounds of economic
necessity. Class seemed to be significant in exposure to anti-Irishness and the degree to which it occurred.

Developments in the peace process in Northern Ireland and changes in community relations following the 7/7 bombings also suggest that the tensions around terrorism that have traditionally been experienced by Irish communities in Britain have now been displaced onto Muslim communities. Participants often pointed to parallels with Irish experiences in England and contemporary Muslim experiences. This perhaps calls for a reconceptualisation of Irishness in Britain, or at least that contemporary Irish experiences should be explored further.

The research project included a number of participants from Northern Ireland. Their interviews were particularly fascinating and illuminating about the ways in which sexual identity and citizenship were informed by the Troubles. These included: accounts of homophobic harassment by British troops in the North towards young Catholic men; cross-community romantic relationships; and cross-community and cross-border dialogue among lesbian and gay people. The issue of homophobic harassment arose in relation to the detainment of young Catholic men, who then experienced homophobic verbal abuse from soldiers (without being out – thus the verbal abuse was not related to actual homosexuality). Cross-community relationships faced particular difficulties and exclusions. Interestingly, the possibility of interaction across the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland among the gay community has not been investigated. The interview narratives suggested that the gay community was a positive resource for people from different ethnic communities in the North, as well as different sides of the border, to meet and interact, an interesting facet of the Irish experience in relation to conflict and dialogue.

3. Reconceptualising queer kinship

A striking feature of interview narratives, were the lengths to which participants attempted to continue to sustain relationships with their families in Ireland, even in the face of hostility towards coming out. The extent to which participants engaged in ‘emotional labour’ (Hochschild, 1983) in their efforts to reach out to families, communicate and be involved in their lives was a recurrent aspect of interview accounts. Theories of LGBT kinship (e.g. Weston, 1992; Weeks et al, 2001) tend to emphasise the ways in which LGBT people may experience alienation from families of origin. Weston’s (1992) classic work posited that LGBT people often face rejection from families of origin, and therefore create new kinship networks consisting of lovers, friends and ex-lovers, where affective ties are based on choice, rather than biology or the legal ties of marriage. However, this research suggests that it may be necessary to reconceptualise our understandings of queer kinship. The efforts to continue to maintain connections with families of origin may reflect shifts in openness towards having a gay child or sibling. The narrative of ‘families we choose’ and the decentralisation of blood ties implied, is perhaps also becoming more illustrative of families more generally, with the increase in blended families for example. These findings are relevant, not just for Irish families, but for all families who have a lesbian/gay/bisexual family member. They also suggest that scholars could consider shifting the emphasis on conflict, stress and difficulty surrounding LGBT people’s relationships with parents and siblings and acknowledge the positive efforts made by
LGBT people to maintain family relationships. These efforts include keeping open channels of communication, as well as considerable forgiveness work in the face of homophobic responses to disclosures of their sexuality. This would require recasting families with a gay family member as ‘lucky’ in relation to the commitment to dialogue and forgiveness within the contexts of LGBT people’s family connections.

It was also found that mothers typically played an important role in mediating intimacy within families, particularly in relation to fathers. This echoes Conlon’s (1998) work on disclosures of non-marital pregnancies to parents. It suggests that emotional work within the family remains highly gendered and presents constructions of motherhood and fatherhood within Irish families in which women remain the conduit for intimacy and disclosure to the wider family.

4. Documenting queer histories

Finally, the research interviews and findings affirmed the importance of documenting queer histories. Participants talked of wanting to ‘tell their stories’ and a sense that they were absent from wider discussions of the Irish experience of Britain, and migration more generally. The fascinating narratives that were uncovered in the research suggest that exploring minority histories can be illuminating not just in terms of the minority groups themselves, but also the assumptions underpinning wider theory and research. Uncovering the life narratives of Irish LGBT migrants allows for a more nuanced understanding of the Irish diaspora and rectifies the heteronormative focus of much previous writing and research within migration. It also illuminates the importance of understandings of ethnicity, postcolonialism and place to work on sexual citizenship.

- Activities

**International conference papers and seminars:**

The conference also led to two new papers on postcolonial sexualities and migration for the journal special issue with *Sexualities* (see above).

**UK conference papers and presentations:**


**Future presentations (2009-2010):**

8. (2009) Seminar for The Irish in Britain research seminar series, Irish Studies Centre, London Metropolitan University
9. (2009) Seminar for the Cultural and Historical Geography Research group seminar series, Department of Geography, University College London.
10. (2009) Seminar for the Centre for Intimate and Sexual Citizenship (CISC), University of Essex
12. (2009) Presentation at the Department of Sociology seminar series, City University, London.

**Outputs**

The project has resulted in numerous publications, an edited journal special issue, four journal articles, and two book chapters. A book proposal for a related monograph is also in preparation. The project research report will be distributed shortly to relevant user group organisations in Ireland and London. The report will also be uploaded to the project website and the web address circulated to relevant mailing lists in the UK and abroad. In addition to the outputs listed in the Society Today return, the project has deposited transcripts of 40 qualitative interviews at the ESDS Data Archive.
• Impacts

The project attracted considerable national and international interest. Copies of the research report were requested by several community organisations in Ireland and the UK. Numerous requests for interviews with media in Ireland and the UK were received. It was agreed to wait until the research findings were in place before giving interviews, which will take place in 2009-2010. The breadth of the contribution to theorising sexuality and migration led to an invitation to guest edit a special issue of the journal *Sexualities: Studies in Culture and Society*, a leading journal in the field; to give numerous conference and seminar presentations; and to contribute to the work of Irish and LGBT community organisations in the form of guest seminars. It is anticipated that the resulting publications, including a planned research monograph, will not only showcase the empirical data, but also provide a text that engages critically with contemporary theory in this field.

• Future Research Priorities

A number of fascinating areas for future research emerged. Potential funding sources include the Irish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the Equality Innovation Fund in Ireland, the Leverhulme Trust, European Union framework funding, the European Science Foundation, and the Ford Foundation:

1. Funding for Irish Studies in the USA is becoming increasingly focused on the American diasporic experience rather than Irish origins, so that comparative approaches are coming to the fore and will be consulted widely. The research suggests that numerous changes may be taking place in relation to Irish experiences in contemporary Britain and these could be investigated further.
2. Given that the numbers of Irish people living in London dropped significantly for the first time in decades during the period of the Celtic Tiger, it would be interesting to investigate the experiences of ‘return migrants’, including LGBT people, who may find a radically different Ireland to the one they left.
3. Queer children and family relationships across the lifetime – further research into LGBT people’s family relationships that does not assume a starting point of conflict and trauma, may reveal interesting shifts and continuities in LGBT intimate life.
4. LGBT politics in Northern Ireland, particularly cross-community relations and the backdrop of the Troubles.
5. The particular needs of queer migrants. Case studies are highly relevant to both area studies, and also different groups of migrants, highlighting patterns of similarity and difference.
6. Transgendered migrants – Although some attention has been given to transnational processes and transgender subjectivities, such as international travel for transsexual surgery, the particular constraints experienced by transgendered migrants have received far less attention. Issues highlighted in this research include: concerns about transphobia faced during travel to countries such as the US, where fingerprints held from trips prior to transition
indicate previous gender identity; and identity dilemmas about taking citizenship in host country in order to obtain gender recognition.
Bibliography:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Background data:
   a. Age
   b. Educational qualifications
   c. Occupation
   d. Annual income
   e. Length of time living in London
   f. Partnership status

Migration:

2. Why did you decide to move to London?
3. How would you describe your feelings at moving here?
4. What was the reaction of family and friends in Ireland about moving here?
5. Did you know anyone in London when you arrived here?
6. Have you lived abroad prior to coming to London?

Coming out:

7. When did you come out?
8. How would you describe your coming out experience?
9. Are you out to family in Ireland? If so, what was the reaction of family and friends to your coming out?
10. Are you out in your daily life in London?
11. Are you out when you visit Ireland? (Elaborate)

Queer life in London:

12. How does life in London compare with your life in Ireland?
13. Do you socialise with other LGBT people?
14. Do you spend time in LGBT spaces?
15. What possibilities and constraints are offered by living in London, as an LGBT person?

Irishness in London:

16. Have you ever experienced any discrimination or hostility as an Irish person in the UK?
17. How does being Irish affect your experience of living in London?
18. Do you attend any Irish organisations in London?
19. Are you part of any Irish networks in London?
20. Do you have Irish friends in London?
21. Is being Irish an important part of your identity?
22. How has Ireland changed since you left?
23. Would you consider moving back to Ireland?
24. Did you plan to stay here this long when you came over initially?
25. How often do you visit Ireland?
26. Family background of migration?
27. Images of Irishness – responses to them? E.g. Graham Norton
28. Political events in Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations – personal experiences and responses
29. Personal response to the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland last summer

Other:

1. Family religious background
2. Class identity
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FORM OF CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

CONFIDENTIAL

Title of project / investigation:
Sexuality, Citizenship and Migration: the Irish Queer Diaspora in London

Brief outline of project, including an outline of the procedures to be used:
This research project will examine the experiences of Irish lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people living in London. There is a long history of Irish migration to the UK, particularly London. In addition, many LGBT people have emigrated in search of a more supportive social climate. London has an international reputation for established queer communities and tolerance of sexual diversity. This study will explore Irish LGBT migrants' reasons for moving to London and experiences there. The research questions will focus on notions of home, identity, belonging and familial relationships and explore the relationship between sexual identity, citizenship and migration.

Interviews will be carried out with Irish LGBT participants living in London. The interviews will be transcribed and analysis will be carried out by Dr. Róisín Ryan-Flood and [the RA]. The transcripts will be anonymised and copies retained by the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) at Essex University at the end of the project. In addition to generating new theoretical work on sexuality and migration, the research findings will be used to inform policy and debate. Steps will be taken to ensure participants’ identities remain confidential and it will not be possible to identify them from the project publications and reports, or the transcripts in the ESDS. Participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time and to withdraw their interview material.

I, ................................................................. *(participant's full name) agree to take part in the above named project / investigation, the details of which have been fully explained to me and described in writing.

Signed ............................................ Date..................................................
(Participant)

I, ................................................................. *(Investigator's full name) certify that the details of this project / investigation have been fully explained and described in writing to the subject named above and have been understood by him / her.

Signed ............................................ Date..................................................
(Investigator)

*Please type or print in block capitals