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Evaluation and attitude towards homosexuality in the Irish context: A corpus-assisted discourse analysis of APPRAISAL patterns in 2008 newspaper articlesⁱ

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Abstract

The analysis of newspaper discourse offers valuable insights into how society represents or misrepresents certain social participants and their actions. In view of the bias claimed to exist in journalistic prose (Bednarek, 2006; White, 2006), it is not uncommon to find evidence of the mistreatment directed towards particular minorities (Baker et al., 2008; Fowler, 1991). In this paper, the ideological stance associated with a specific minority group (i.e. homosexuals) is brought to the forefront in 2008, when Ireland's vibrant economy took a dramatic turn for the worse. Incidentally, this coincided with homosexuality taking centre stage in Ireland's political agenda, as 2008 marked the final stage of the long drawn-out debate on the Civil Partnership Bill. This paper is designed to offer insights into how evaluative language may reflect the mentality of Irish society in relation to the LGBT community. Martin & White's (2005) APPRAISAL theory is highly relevant and applicable for this purpose, as it covers the idea of social esteem, social sanction, personal attitude and appreciation, which can be powerful indicators of a society's take on current affairs. The methodology employed here is that of corpus-assisted discourse analysis (Stubbs, 1996). The dataset comprises over 200,000 words taken from three different newspapers: Two tabloids and one broadsheet. Our dataset is annotated on the basis of the categories in Martin & White's (2005) subsystem of ATTITUDE (AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION). The application of this taxonomy uncovers a remarkably negative stance towards the Irish LGBT community in the sample analysed. This is particularly evident in the predominance of evaluative and emotive language associated with the categories of negative JUDGEMENT and AFFECT. Previous research on the same sample, looking at metaphor, transitivity and modality (e.g. Bartley & Hidalgo-Tenorio, 2015), has cast light on how homosexuals are repeatedly discriminated against and vilified in the Irish public arena. This study confirms the results so far obtained through the analysis of evaluative language.

Key words: CDA; appraisal; attitude; Ireland; homosexuality

Introduction

The landslide victory of the ‘Yes’ vote in the same-sex marriage referendum on 23rd May 2015 marked a major watershed for the Irish LGBT community. The run-up to the referendum saw a number of campaigning groups step into the limelight to influence public opinion in favour of or against marriage equality. Among critics of the proposed constitutional amendment, certain radical Catholic groups voiced their opposition through leaflets denouncing the dangers of raising children in same-sex families. One notorious example was a leaflet distributed by the Alliance for the Defence of the Family and Marriage, where same-sex couples were claimed to be more prone to depression and suicide, as well as naturally inclined to abuse childrenⁱⁱ. These beliefs and opinions are characteristic of a discourse of ‘moral panics’ (Baker, 2005, p. 70), which identifies a particular community as a threat to the integrity of certain traditional values. In the Irish context, the institution at stake is that of the family.

The traditional heterosexual family represents the cornerstone of the Constitution of Ireland (1937), recently amended in 2013, where Article 41 identifies the ‘Family’ as ‘[...] a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights [...]’ⁱⁱⁱ. Underpinning this Article is the powerful influence the Roman Catholic Church exerted in Ireland until the 1980s. The Constitution was, thus, originally intended to benefit only the religious ‘[...] heterosexist patriarchy [...]’ (Conrad, 2001, p. 125) that dominated Irish society, depriving the LGBT community of their rights. For almost five decades, homosexuality was not only excluded from the Constitution but, until 1993, also criminalised under 19th century British laws that treated homosexuality as an ‘Unnatural Offence’ (Article 61, 1861 Offences Against the Person Act)^{iv}.

The long campaign to decriminalise homosexuality in Ireland was spearheaded by Independent Senator David Norris, who, after two unsuccessful attempts to challenge its criminalization before the Irish High and Supreme Courts, took his case to the European Court of Human Rights in 1983. In 1988, the Court ruled that Irish laws were in breach of fundamental human rights^v, leading the Irish Government to effectively decriminalise male homosexual acts five years later (1993). Since then, Irish gay rights organisations such as the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) have brought to public attention the significant advances of the LGBT community over the past 20 years. At the core of these advances are the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2008, the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 and, most recently, the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, and the Gender Recognition Act 2015. These last two Acts extend parental rights and responsibilities to same-sex couples and remove all medical criteria from the legal recognition process for transsexual people.

All of the aforementioned legislative milestones in the history of LGBT rights in Ireland should be understood on the basis of the rapid socio-economic transformation the country underwent during the Celtic Tiger period (1995-2008). Ireland evolved from the highly religious and conservative society of the 1980s into a more plural and liberal country. Research based on the European Values Studies conducted from 1981 to 2008 reveals that Irish citizens have become more tolerant and understanding in relation to homosexuality (from 33.2% of intolerance in 1990 to 19.1% in 2008) (Breen & Reynolds, 2011, p. 205). Nevertheless, despite the positive results of official opinion polls, members of the Irish LGBT community continue to report negative experiences on a daily basis. For example, in an opinion article published in *The Irish Times* in April

2013, the author maintains that, in spite of the positive outcome of official polls on attitudes to same-sex marriage, ‘[a]ll I hear is hate’^{vi}. These opinions and experiences are also supported by substantial research on homophobic attitudes and hate crime in Ireland (e.g. Reygan & Moane, 2014; O’Higgins-Norman, 2010; O’Higgins-Norman, 2009; Walsh & Conlon, 2009; Minton et al., 2008; Coughlan, 2006; Sarma, 2004).

With all of the above in mind, this paper intends to uncover the attitudes towards homosexuality in the newspaper coverage of 2008, the year marking the final stage of the long drawn-out debate on the Civil Partnership Bill (see GLEN, 2009). Prior to 2008, the Bill had been voted down by the Dáil on two occasions (2004 and 2007). Nevertheless, despite the Government’s veto in 2007, they promised to introduce their own Bill by March 2008. GLEN and Marriage Equality soon reacted to the news by launching a campaign in January 2008 to encourage LGBT people to talk to the media about their experiences in relation to their lack of legal support (ibid, p. 20). Following this campaign, in 2009, it was reported that, notwithstanding the lack of research on the representation of LGBT people in the media, ‘[...] LGBT persons enjoy a positive and nuanced presence in the Irish media’ (Walsh & Conlon, 2009, p. 11). This research gap has recently been filled by studies (e.g. Bartley & Hidalgo-Tenorio, 2015) exploring the representation of homosexuality and LGBT people in Irish newspaper texts through a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis (see e.g. Baker & Levon, 2015; Baker et al., 2008; Stubbs, 1996). This paper follows a similar approach, but instead focuses on APPRAISAL theory (Bednarek, 2008; Martin & White, 2005), and particularly, on the sub-system of ATTITUDE, to analyse explicit and implicit evaluative language. It aims to address the following objectives:

- (i) To establish the ways in which homosexuality is evaluated in articles from three Irish newspapers;
- (ii) To compare the evaluations reported in the tabloids (i.e. *The Evening Herald* and *The Irish Post*) with those in the broadsheet (i.e. *The Irish Independent*);
- (iii) To identify who is evaluating homosexuality, be it in a more positive or negative light.

Theoretical background

APPRAISAL theory rests on the assumption that evaluation is a discourse semantic system, as its focus is on ‘[...] meaning beyond the clause [...]’ (Martin & White, 2005, p. 9) or ‘[...] meaning as text’ (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 17). A major contribution of APPRAISAL theory to the study of evaluation lies in its coding of explicit (or *inscribed*) and implicit (or *invoked*) evaluation (Martin & White, 2005, p. 67). Implicit evaluation is most evident in cases of metaphor, as in (1) below, where homosexual practices are likened to the destruction of nature.

- (1) Pope Benedict said yesterday that saving humanity from **homosexual or transsexual behaviour** was just as important as saving **the rainforest from destruction**. (*Irish Independent*, 23/12/2008)

This evaluation, however, is less evident when attitudinal meanings emerge from textual position or seemingly neutral lexical associations, as in (2) below, where *gay strangler*

conjures up images of LGBT people as violent criminals (Stychin, 1995; Baker, 2005, p. 75). This is due to its prominent position in the text (headline) and to its explicit mention of the murderer's sexual orientation.

- (2) **Gay strangler** gets life for killing friend over sex row. (*Evening Herald*, 08/10/2008)

APPRAISAL theory assigns evaluative meanings to three broad domains: (i) The attitudes and feelings towards people, their actions, products and things (i.e. ATTITUDE); (ii) the intensification or downtoning of feelings (i.e. GRADUATION); and (iii) the signalling of writers' or readers' commitment to their messages (i.e. ENGAGEMENT) (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 34-37).

ATTITUDE, the focus of this paper, is subdivided into three sub-domains: AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 42-91). AFFECT encompasses emotions such as happiness, sadness, fear or anger, as in examples (3) and (4) below.

- (3) I'm **much happier** being a gay man in Dublin these days. (*Evening Herald*, 03/04/2008)

- (4) He died **terrified** and alone. (*Irish Independent*, 08/10/2008)

JUDGEMENT concerns our assessment of human behaviour that is either praised (as in (5)) or frowned upon (as in (6)) on the basis of a range of social norms and standards.

- (5) I strongly believe that **gays and lesbians** make just as **good parents** as straight couples. (*Evening Herald*, 01/08/2008)

- (6) He wants to force people to wear tattoos proclaiming **their deviancy**. (*Irish Independent*, 07/10/2008)

Lastly, APPRECIATION deals with our assessment of the emotive and aesthetic qualities of tangible things, events, practices, states of affairs and other abstract entities, as in (7) below. APPRECIATION may also apply to people in cases where the evaluative focus is not on their behaviour (as in JUDGEMENT), but on their aesthetic qualities, as evidenced in (8).

- (7) She described **homosexuality** as: "**Disgusting, nauseous, loathsome, shamefully wicked and vile**". (*Irish Post*, 18/06/2008)

- (8) Arnold Schwarzenegger et al. are a mite too reminiscent of **gay men, with their adoringly sculpted physiques** [...] (*Irish Independent*, 08/04/2008)

Materials and method

The corpus and the sample

This paper draws on a 395,883-word sample of 544 Irish newspaper articles on homosexuality published in 2008, the year that paved the way for the implementation of the Civil Partnership Bill in 2010. The sample was extracted from a 1.5 million-word corpus of articles on LGBT issues for a 7-year period spanning the final stage of the Celtic Tiger era (2006-2007) and the subsequent recession (2008-2012). In its current form, the corpus contains data for three Irish newspapers, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Corpus metadata

Newspaper	Type of newspaper	No. of texts	Word tokens
Evening Herald	Tabloid from Dublin	177	98,915
Irish Post	Tabloid for the Irish community in Britain	7	4,122
Irish Independent	National broadsheet	360	292,846
Total		544	395,883

Data collection was based on the *LexisNexis Academic* (2014) database, following a search for three key terms (i.e. *gay**, *homosex** and *lesbian**). The star wildcard query was intended to retrieve any newspaper article containing one of the search terms, as well as their inflectional forms and derivatives (e.g. *gay*, *gays*, *gayness*). The resulting 544 texts were then fed into the corpus analysis toolkit *AntConc 3.4.1w* (Anthony, 2014). A query of each of the three aforementioned key terms returned a considerably larger number of concordances in the broadsheet sub-corpus by comparison to tabloids, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Individual occurrences for the three search terms in the two sub-corpora

Search terms	Tabloids	Broadsheet
Gay*	267	598
Homosex*	39	163
Lesbian*	44	128
Total	350	889

In view of the complexity of the analysis at hand, the broadsheet dataset was reduced using a random number generator to ensure an equal proportion of occurrences in both newspaper types (see Table 3). The data for each newspaper type was recorded in two separate Excel spreadsheets.

Table 3: Individual occurrences for the three search terms (randomised concordances)

Search terms	Tabloids	Broadsheet
Gay*	267	267
Homosex*	39	39
Lesbian*	44	44
Total	350	350

Subsequent to the coding of examples (as explained in section 3.2 below) and following the removal of concordances where reference was made to *gay* as a proper name (e.g. *Gay Byrne*), the evidence obtained in this paper amounts to 548 coded instances of APPRAISAL and to 118 cases where homosexuality is mentioned in passing with no evaluation apparent (as in (9) below).

- (9) Electric Six the academy Glam-disco rockers take everyone to a **Gay Bar** and, with support from Gringo and the Pony Girls, should serve up a night of Formula 409. (*Evening Herald*, 11/12/2008)

As outlined in Table 4, the total evidence analysed corresponds to 304 texts comprising 207,619 words. On these grounds, the dataset used in this paper is, according to Bednarek (2010, p. 249), typical of a small-scale corpus analysis. These analyses combine some of the automation inherent in the use of large corpora with the exhaustive and detailed analysis of individual texts.

Table 4: Total evidence analysed

Newspaper type	No. of texts	Work tokens	Coded cases
Tabloids	128	70,763	187
Broadsheet	176	136,856	361
Total	304	207,619	548

The analysis

The analytical procedure of this paper involved concordances as a starting point. In line with Stubbs (1996) and Taylor (2010), for the sake of a more exhaustive analysis of evaluation, however, concordance lines were expanded to the entire texts from which they were extracted (as in (10a) and (10b))

- (10) (a) My daughter, who is in her mid-20s, has just told me that she is gay. At first **I was supportive**, but now **I am just angry**. (*Irish Independent*, 27/04/2008)
 (b) My daughter, who is in her mid-20s, has just told me that she is gay. At first **I was supportive**, but now **I am just angry**. She has had a few boyfriends and was absolutely mad about the last one. She would still be with him if he hadn't finished with her. I feel she has chosen this path. It has not been thrust upon her. I mean, even if she is bisexual, couldn't she wait until she met another boyfriend? She is now living with her girlfriend. **Is she trying to shock**, to show that **she's not confined by convention**? (*Irish Independent*, 27/04/2008)

Each APPRAISAL example was discussed and deliberated at length by the two researchers and, following an agreement on its categorisation, a code was manually assigned and recorded in the Excel spreadsheet. Figure 1 below provides a screenshot of the database.

	A	B	C	D
218	TA-IP-160108-2.txt	263(B)	In April 2001, the couple began their fight to seek legal recognition of their long-term partnership. [...] While their marriage is legally valid in Canada, at this time they have none of those legal rights in Ireland. On returning to Ireland after their marriage, the couple wrote to the Revenue Commissioners to inform them of their marriage and to seek the allowances married couples are entitled to in Ireland.	JU-TEN(+)
219	TA-IP-160108-2.txt	263(C)	We have requested that the human right to marry is extended to us.	AF-INC-DES(*)
220	TA-IP-160108-2.txt	263(D)	In November 2004 it was argued before the High Court that the women had a constitutional right to equality, a right to marry, to property rights and to family rights under the constitutional protection of the family in Article 41. The Revenue Commissioners and the State filed their defence six months later although the pair had won the right to have their case heard. The High Court held the case between October 3 and October 13. Mr Gerard Hogan SC told the High Court: The nature of homosexuality was misunderstood in 1937. It was considered immoral, furtive and unnatural. *People tacitly understood marriage in a particular way and excluded a particular type of marriage because of that misunderstanding.	AP-RCN-QUA(-)
221	TA-IP-160108-2.txt	263(E)	The Revenue Commissioners and the State filed their defence six months later although the pair had won the right to have their case heard. The High Court held the case between October 3 and October 13. Mr Gerard Hogan SC told the High Court: The nature of homosexuality was misunderstood in 1937. It was considered immoral, furtive and unnatural. *People tacitly understood marriage in a particular way and excluded a particular type of marriage because of that misunderstanding.	AP-RCN-QUA(-)

Figure 1: The analysis database (a screenshot)

Column A indicates the metadata corresponding to the original corpus texts. The code comprises four digits detailing the category of newspaper (e.g. TA = Tabloid), the name of the newspaper (e.g. IP = Irish Post), the date of publication (e.g. 160108 = 16th January 2008) and a number to distinguish between the articles on homosexuality appearing on the same day (e.g. 1, 2, etc.). As illustrated in columns B and D, each APPRAISAL occurrence within a given text was coded and counted individually in separate rows. For example, 263 in column B represents the text number and the letters stand for each case of APPRAISAL within the same text (263A, B, etc.). The codes in column D are abbreviations of the terms within the APPRAISAL system in Table 7 below. The first two digits within each code stand for the three APPRAISAL ATTITUDE sub-domains (i.e. AF = AFFECT, JU = JUDGEMENT, AP = APPRECIATION), whilst the remaining digits reflect the sub-categories pertaining to each (e.g. AF-INC-DES* = AFFECT Inclination Desire Neutral valence; JU-TEN+ = JUDGEMENT Tenacity Positive valence; AP-RCN-QUA- = APPRECIATION Reaction Quality Negative valence). In addition to the coding of each APPRAISAL occurrence, the annotation also accounted for instances where the entire text conveyed a global evaluation that differed in some way from the individual evaluations recorded. Furthermore, any examples of nominalisation, as in (11), were also unpacked and assigned their corresponding APPRAISAL category.

- (11) [...] **she had Christian love for gay people** themselves [...] (*Evening Herald*, 28/07/2008) [<She *loved* gays in a Christian way]

The analysis revealed not only explicit evaluative references to LGBT people (as in (11) above), but also to other related discourse entities. These were coded and include: Homosexuality, LGBT rights groups and the laws/acts relating to the status of LGBT people.

Our coding draws on Martin & White's (2005) categories for the sub-domains of JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION, and Bednarek's (2008) modification of their categories for AFFECT, stemming from her use of a corpus-based methodology. The updated classification enables a more realistic coding of authentic linguistic data (Bednarek, 2008, p. 169). Table 5 below displays Martin & White's (2005) original classification

and Bednarek's (2008) modified version. Boldface and italics indicate the areas where the updated system differs from the original.

Table 5: AFFECT categories and sub-categories

	Martin & White (2005)	Bednarek (2008)
Un/Happiness	Affection, Antipathy, Cheer, Misery	Affection, Antipathy, Cheer, Misery
In/Security	Confidence , Disquiet, Trust, Surprise	Quiet , Disquiet, Trust, Distrust
Dis/Satisfaction	Pleasure, Displeasure, Interest, Ennui	Pleasure, Displeasure, Interest, Ennui
Dis/Inclination	Desire, Fear	Desire, Non-desire
Surprise		Surprise

As shown in the table above, the changes affect:

- (i) Fear, which is removed from Dis/inclination and treated as a type of Disquiet, rather than as the polar opposite of Desire (now labelled Non-Desire);
- (ii) Surprise, which features as a main category rather than as the polar opposite of Trust (now labelled Distrust);
- (iii) Confidence, which, not being a true polar opposite of Disquiet, is now subsumed under the newly established category of Quiet.

In addition to Bednarek's (2008) modifications, the analysis of the evidence in this paper suggested two other changes, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: AFFECT categories and sub-categories (Bednarek, 2008 and our modifications)

	Bednarek (2008)	Our modifications of AFFECT
Un/Happiness	Affection, Antipathy, Cheer, Misery	Affection, Antipathy, Cheer, Misery
In/Security	Quiet, Disquiet, Trust, Distrust	Quiet, Disquiet, Trust, Distrust
Dis/Satisfaction	Pleasure, Displeasure, Interest, Ennui	Pleasure, Displeasure, Interest, Disinterest
Dis/Inclination	Desire, Non-desire	Desire, Non-desire
Surprise	Surprise	Surprise, Expectation

The subcategory Ennui was replaced with Disinterest, the latter including instances of lack of enjoyment other than simply boredom. Additionally, Expectation was created to accommodate instances of lack of Surprise.

Table 7 below brings together Table 6 (Bednarek 2008 and our modifications for AFFECT) and the two other sub-domains within ATTITUDE (i.e. JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION, as in Martin & White, 2005). It thus outlines the entire framework used for the analysis of our corpus.

Table 7: ATTITUDE (whole framework)

ATTITUDE		
AFFECT (Bednarek, 2008 and our modifications)	Un/Happiness	Affection, Antipathy, Cheer, Misery
	In/Security	Quiet, Disquiet, Trust, Distrust
	Dis/Satisfaction	Pleasure, Displeasure, Interest, Disinterest
	Dis/Inclination	Desire, Non-desire
	Surprise	Surprise, Expectation
JUDGEMENT (Martin & White, 2005)	Social esteem	Normality, Capacity, Tenacity
	Social sanction	Propriety, Veracity
APPRECIATION (Martin & White, 2005)	Reaction	Impact, Quality
	Composition	Balance, Complexity
	Valuation	Valuation

With the above in mind, our analysis follows APPRAISAL theory in distinguishing between examples denoting positive, negative and neutral valences or evaluative associations. It should be noted that, as in Bednarek (2008, pp.161, 166), neutrality applies only to the sub-categories of Surprise and Dis/Inclination. These emotions are not inherently positive or negative (cf. e.g. Affection, Fear or Pleasure); rather, their presumed positivity or negativity stems from the context where they are experienced (e.g. one may feel negatively surprised by someone's death and positively surprised by someone's full recovery after a terrible accident). In addition to the three main evaluative valences, our analysis accounts for both LGBT people's attributes and feelings, as well as the way others feel about them. The latter adheres to our aim to understand the way others feel about homosexuality in Ireland and how homosexuals are treated in Irish society. Thus, our coding includes instances where LGBT people are the target of particular emotions (as in (12)), as well as cases where they are judged to benefit or suffer from positive or negative treatment or actions (as in (13)).

(12) [...] **this guy's hatred for me simply because I'm gay.** (*Evening Herald*, 02/10/08)

(13) So that **gay teenagers don't have to get the shit kicked out of them in school** [...]. (*Irish Independent*, 22/11/08)

Finally, our analysis also involved the identification of appraisers (i.e. the person who is emoting, judging or appreciating something) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 72) in order to establish possible links between particular groups and their reactions towards the LGBT community. A list of the appraisers detected in our newspaper corpus (ranked in terms of their frequency) is provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Appraisers. Percentages are based on the number of evaluative occurrences in the corpus (n=548)

Appraisers	Frequency
Gays	27.55
Author	26.09
Irish population	11.68
World societies	8.39
Irish politicians	6.93
Catholic Church	6.57
Glitz	6.02
Author-gay	2.37
World politics	2.19
Irish media	1.28
Foreign media	0.73
Unknown	0.18

Results and discussion

This section comprises three subsections addressing each of the objectives detailed in the introduction. The overall evaluative patterns in the corpus are first examined in section one. Subsequently, the tabloids are compared with the broadsheet to establish whether newspaper type affects the kind of evaluation reported (section two). Finally, section three explores the connection between evaluative patterns and the appraisers in our corpus. The results for sections one and three are expressed in percentages, whilst in two, raw figures are also presented to test for any statistical significance of the differences recorded between the two sub-corpora.

1. How are homosexuals and homosexuality represented in the corpus?

A quantitative analysis of the evaluative valences linked to homosexuals and homosexuality seemed like the natural starting point to obtain a general idea about the portrayal of this group in the Irish press. As evidenced in Figure 2, there is a strong tendency towards negative evaluations (63.69%), with more than twice as many negative appraisals as positive ones (29.56%).

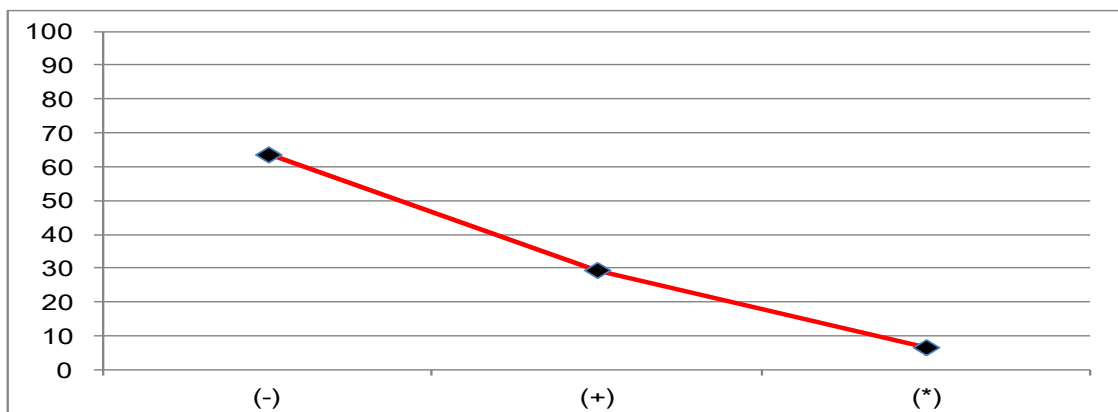


Figure 2: General evaluative valences across the whole corpus (where ‘-’ stands for negative, ‘+’ for positive and ‘*’ for neutral). Percentages are based on the total number of evaluative occurrences in the whole corpus (n= 548)

Figure 2 is consistent with previous research uncovering a typically negative representation of LGBT people in the press from various countries (e.g. Baker, 2005; Gouveia, 2005; Chirrey, 2003; Morrish, 2002), which leads Gouveia (2005, p. 140) to conclude that ‘[...] homophobia and homophobic discourses are [...] not constrained by geographical or political boundaries’. This negativity is now explored in more detail by examining the different APPRAISAL categories. Table 9a lists each of the general APPRAISAL categories, whilst Table 9b specifies the ten most frequent subcategories (accounting for 62.02% of the total).

Tables 9a and 9b: APPRAISAL categories and subcategories (top ten). Square brackets indicate examples where homosexuals are the object of (someone else’s) AFFECT or JUDGEMENT (i.e. [AFFECT], [JUDGEMENT])

General categories	%	Subcategories (Top 10)	%
JUDGEMENT(-)	22.08	JUDGEMENT-Propriety(-)	10.22
JUDGEMENT(+)	15.51	APPRECIATION-Reaction-Quality(-)	8.76
AFFECT(-)	12.77	[AFFECT-Unhappiness-Antipathy(-)]	7.12
APPRECIATION(-)	10.40	JUDGEMENT-Normality(+)	6.57
[AFFECT(-)]	9.67	[JUDGEMENT-Propriety(-)]	5.84
[JUDGEMENT(-)]	9.12	AFFECT-Dissatisfaction-Displeasure(-)	5.47
AFFECT(+)	7.48	JUDGEMENT-Capacity(-)	5.47
[AFFECT(*)]	4.20	JUDGEMENT-Normality(-)	4.93
APPRECIATION(+)	2.92	AFFECT-Insecurity-Disquiet(-)	4.01
AFFECT(*)	2.37	[AFFECT-Disinclination-Non-desire(*)]	3.65
[AFFECT(+)]	2.19		
[JUDGEMENT(+)]	1.28		

As shown in Table 9a, negative JUDGEMENT is the most frequent category, followed by positive JUDGEMENT and negative AFFECT. The least common categories include references to gays and lesbians as the object of positive AFFECT, as in (14), or of positive JUDGEMENT, as in (15), where gays are seen as benefiting from a positive action.

(14) “It’s great to see people dressed up and be able to express themselves and be able to learn to do what they want in order to enjoy themselves. **I admire all of them here**”. (*Irish Independent*, 23/06/2008)

(15) **THE Northern Ireland government department headed by Peter Robinson is due to provide 99,600 Euros to gay groups within the next seven months – despite his wife’s controversial views on homosexuality.** (*Irish Independent*, 28/08/2008)

The high frequency revealed by negative JUDGEMENT in Table 9a materialises in the sub-category of negative JUDGEMENT Propriety in Table 9b. This subcategory refers to ‘how ethical someone is’ or ‘how far beyond reproach’ (Martin & White 2005, pp. 52-53). As such, our corpus contains examples that describe gays and lesbians as evil, sinful, criminal, violent, insulting, offensive, rude and outrageous, as in (16) and (17) below^{vii}.

(16) Fr Fergus O'Connor, parish priest of Our Lady Queen of Peace on Merrion Road, has drawn media attention by saying that **homosexuals would need to repent** before receiving holy communion [...]. (*Evening Herald*, 25/09/2008)

(17) Three islanders from Lesbos told a court yesterday that **gay women insult their home's identity** by calling themselves lesbians. (*Irish Independent*, 11/06/2008)

Furthermore, homosexuality is often rendered deviant, an abomination or a threat to the rest of society, which explains why the second most common subcategory in Table 9b is negative APPRECIATION Reaction Quality (as in (18) below). Its treatment as APPRECIATION stems from the assignment of an evaluative category to the practice of homosexuality, rather than to the homosexual person (as in (16) and (17) above; see also section 2 above).

(18) [...] senior Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) politician Iris Robinson sparked controversy by **branding homosexuality an abomination**. (*Evening Herald*, 28/07/2008)

This also ties in, for example, with Duffy's (2011, p. 5) research on the history of homosexuality in Ireland, which, he argues, has consistently regarded homosexuality as inferior and as threatening society's stability.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the third most common subcategory in Table 9b includes examples where others show their dislike, hate, intolerance or opposition towards gays or gayness, as in (19).

(19) [...] Pastor Becky teaches children as young as six [...] **to hate gays and Muslims**. (*Evening Herald*, 07/05/2008)

2. What similarities or differences emerge between the two tabloids and the broadsheet in their evaluation of homosexuals and homosexuality?

Figure 3 below reveals that, whilst both newspaper types show a marked preference for negative APPRAISAL, this is slightly more noticeable in the broadsheet (65.93% vs. 59.36%). This tendency, however, is reversed with positive evaluation, where the two tabloids prevail (34.22% vs. 27.15%).

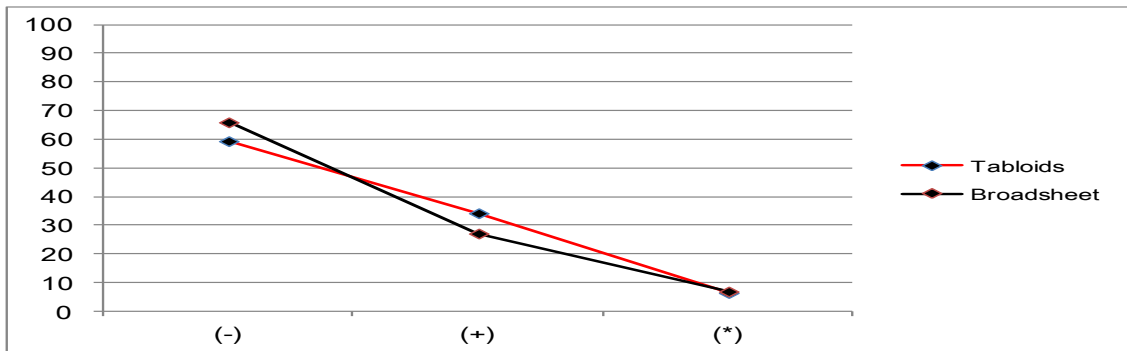


Figure 3: Distribution of general evaluative valences in relation to newspaper type. Percentages are based on the total number of evaluative occurrences in each (tabloids, n=187; broadsheet, n=361)

The aforementioned differences were subsequently tested for statistical significance through *log-likelihood* (henceforth, LL), which computes the difference between the raw frequency of one word or category in two sub-corpora of different sizes. Oakes (1998, p. 189), Rayson & Garside (2000, p. 2) and McEnery & Hardie (2012, p. 52) maintain that this is the preferred statistical test in corpus linguistics, as it does not assume that data are normally distributed (which is rarely the case with linguistic data). The LL values for the evaluative valences in the two sub-corpora were obtained through an on-line calculator^{viii}, which considers only values of 6.6 or higher as statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). With this in mind, the LL values in Table 10 below reveal no statistically significant difference between both sub-corpora, which indicates that on the whole the evidence analysed is markedly negative in both.

Table 10: Evaluative valences and newspaper type (raw data and LL values)

	Tabloids	Broadsheet	LL
(-)	111	238	0.82
(+)	64	98	2.07
(*)	12	25	0.05

Therefore, our data failed to confirm Bednarek's (2006, p. 204) association between tabloids and a '[...] more explicit, 'intense', emotional and stylistically simpler evaluative style' and between broadsheets and a '[...] less explicit, subtle, mitigated and stylistically varied evaluative style [...]'. Rather, the three newspapers examined are, to a large extent, similarly explicit in the attitudes reported towards LGBT people, homosexuality and same-sex partnerships. A plausible explanation for this similarity lies in the amount of media attention given to the same-sex partnership debate in 2008, compelling the two Irish tabloids and broadsheet alike to influence public opinion as much as possible. It appears, therefore, that, as suggested by Bednarek (2006, p. 202) and Bednarek & Caple (2014, p. 151), the centrality of particular news stories and topics at certain times brings specific news values (in this case negativity) to the forefront of news reporting in most newspapers.

As in section one, the analysis then turned to the most general APPRAISAL categories. Table 11 below displays the LL values for each category, all of which are again statistically insignificant. Nevertheless, it shows that those LL values closest to significance occur with positive evaluative tags. Interestingly, although neutral evaluation in general features a negligible LL difference in Table 10 (i.e. 0.05), neutral AFFECT features as one of the LL values closest to significance in Table 11 (i.e. 1.85). For space constraints, the discussion below focuses on the four shaded categories in Table 11 (i.e. those with the LL value closest to significance).

Table 11: LL values for the distribution of general APPRAISAL categories in relation to newspaper type

CATEGORY	Tabloids	Broadsheet	LL
AFFECT(+)	18	23	1.69
JUDGEMENT(+)	35	50	1.85
APPRECIATION(+)	6	10	0.08
[AFFECT(+)]	3	9	0.46
[JUDGEMENT(+)]	1	6	1.41
AFFECT(*)	3	13	1.85
[AFFECT(*)]	8	12	0.30
AFFECT(-)	23	47	0.05
JUDGEMENT(-)	40	81	0.06
APPRECIATION (-)	16	41	0.95
[AFFECT(-)]	16	37	0.36
[JUDGEMENT(-)]	18	32	0.08

The slightly more frequent occurrence of positive JUDGEMENT and AFFECT in tabloids (Table 11) is reflected in the sub-categories of JUDGEMENT, Normality (8.02%) and Tenacity (3.74%), as well as in AFFECT, Satisfaction-Pleasure (3.21%) and Happiness-Affection (2.14%). In relation to JUDGEMENT, the tabloid examples indicate that LGBT people's Normality is often assessed in terms of their glamour and style (as in (20)), as well as through their consideration as normal human beings (as in (21)).

(20) This new class of Irishman supposedly models themselves on the metro-sexual poster boy image of the likes of David Beckham who epitomises the **image and fashion consciousness more normally associated with a homo lad**. (*Evening Herald*, 12/06/2008)

(21) My parents are gay. [...] **My family is perfectly normal in my eyes**, but then again that's just what I'm used to. (*Evening Herald*, 01/08/2008)

As regards Tenacity, APPRAISAL typically applies to their determination (as in (22)), and their loyalty or steadfastness (as in (23)).

(22) In April 2001, the couple began **their fight to seek legal recognition of their long-term partnership**. [...]. (*Irish Post*, 16/01/2008)

(23) However, these statements were at odds with the picture painted by the family directly after Ms Durkin's death. They told of a happy and confident young woman **who was in a committed relationship**. Ms Durkin was openly gay. (*Evening Herald*, 06/10/2008)

Positive AFFECT, in turn, is evident in cases where gays or lesbians show their pride and contentment in connection with their own achievements (as in (24)), as well as in situations where LGBT couples express their love and affection for one another (as in (25)).

(24) [...] of all the decisions I have made in my adult life, this one has had the most impact on **how content I feel with life**. (*Evening Herald*, 07/08/2008)

(25) Marriage is how people show that they love each other and **Paul and I do love each other very much**. (*Evening Herald*, 16/07/2008)

Despite the apparent positivity of the above examples, a hidden negative connotation is evident in (20) above, where a stereotypical discourse linked to the LGBT community is foregrounded (i.e. glamour). According to Gouveia (2005, pp. 245-246) and O'Higgins-Norman (2009, p. 389), gays are often stereotypically associated with the image of effeminate beings in the spotlight who are invited to many parties and, typically, work in the fashion industry.

In addition to the occurrence of positive JUDGEMENT and AFFECT in tabloids, the broadsheet reveals instances where LGBT people are the object of a positive action as well as experiencers of neutral emotions. Whilst, at first sight, this might be interpreted in a positive light, the overall texts disclose a somewhat different picture, with negativity tending to prevail. In (26), for example, gays and same-sex couples are evaluated as being treated nicely and fairly. Whilst this is the case from a local standpoint (i.e. the concordance), the whole text indicates that the author does not agree with the positive discrimination shown towards homosexuals. The acknowledgement that gay soldiers are being treated kindly contrasts sharply with the author's belief that they are being given privileges that heterosexual soldiers are denied.

(26) Being a gay soldier must be a fairly tough station in life, and one can only imagine the fun and games the Taliban would have with any captured gay servicemen, **so it's nice to see the British army being nice to its gay members. So nice, in fact, that they are paying gay soldiers to attend this weekend's Gay Pride marches in London and Brighton**. In uniform. Obviously there is no such thing as a Straight Pride march -- that would be 'offensive' -- and straight soldiers who visit the Queen (the real one, not the organiser of the march) have to cover their own costs. (*Irish Independent*, 03/07/2008)

In the case of neutral emotions, the broadsheet includes cases where LGBT people's wishes, desires and lack thereof are highlighted, as in (27) and (28) below. These feelings are presented in contexts where LGBT people voice their frustration at not being allowed to get married, or at being the object of religious intolerance.

(27) [...] Fiona Clarke and Sheila King are **one couple who would love to be able to get hitched** [...]. (*Irish Independent*, 29/08/2008)

(28) During the service, [...] an elderly priest burst forward to the altar loudly declaiming the sexual practices of gay people [...]. Robinson, however, held firm. **He refused**, and continues to refuse to recant of his 'sins'. (*Irish Independent*, 01/08/2008)

To conclude, the comparison in this section thus reveals that newspaper type had no statistically significant influence on the evaluative patterns surrounding LGBT people. As mentioned above, the two sub-corpora are equally negative in their assessments of this social group, with the greater positivity in tabloids proving purely coincidental and often underpinned by negative nuances. A possible explanation for this lack of significance might lie in the size of the sample, which, by corpus linguistic standards, is small. As such, the analysis of further evidence could help to substantiate the results reported.

3. Who appraises and how do they evaluate homosexuals and homosexuality?

The final stage of the analysis considers the evaluative patterns that appraisers most typically produce. Of the eleven appraisers identified in Table 8 (section two), here the focus will be on the top six. Table 12 below outlines the percentages for the three main evaluative valences.

Table 12: Evaluative valences for the top six appraisers. Percentages draw on the total number of evaluative occurrences corresponding to each appraiser group (Gays, n=151; Author, n=143; Irish population, n=64; World societies, n=46; Irish politicians, n=38; Catholic Church, n=36)

Appraiser	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Gays	<u>36.42</u>	<u>9.27</u>	54.30
Author	<u>37.76</u>	0.00	62.24
Irish population	26.56	7.81	65.63
World societies	17.39	<u>15.22</u>	67.39
Irish politicians	7.89	7.89	<u>84.21</u>
Catholic Church	0.00	8.33	<u>91.67</u>

From Table 12, it becomes clear that those who most often evaluate homosexuals and/or homosexuality positively are gays themselves and the author of the article. Conversely, Irish politicians and the Catholic Church show a marked tendency to portray LGBT people in a negative light. Figure 4 below offers more detail by presenting the extent to which the top ten APPRAISAL sub-categories in our corpus (see Table 9b in Section one) feature in the evaluative discourse of the top six appraisers.

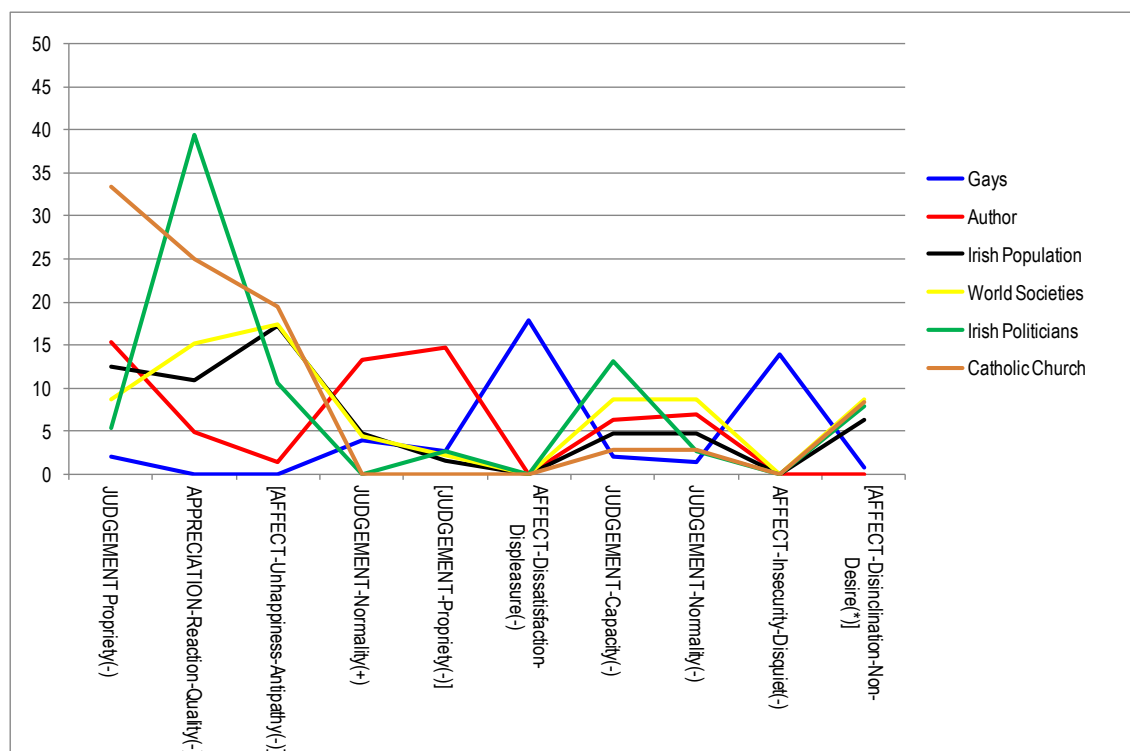


Figure 4: Distribution of the top ten APPRAISAL sub-categories across the top six appraisers. Percentages draw on the total number of evaluative occurrences for each appraiser group

Figure 4 demonstrates that gays most frequently appraise in relation to the category AFFECT. They appear to be either dissatisfied (i.e. angry, frustrated, disappointed) with society, or scared, as they also voice their fears, anxieties and uncertainty as to what the future may hold (i.e. Insecurity-Disquiet). With regard to the authors of the articles, there is a divide in opinion, evidenced by an equal number of examples denoting the unethical nature of homosexuals (negative JUDGEMENT Propriety), as of examples implying that they are the object of unfair actions ([negative JUDGEMENT Propriety]). The latter is reflected in surveys conducted, for example, by JOHNNY (Action-Based Group for Gay and Bisexual Men), where almost half of the respondents admit to having been the victims of hate crime (Coughlan, 2006, p. II). Even more worrying are statistics concerning homophobic bullying in secondary education, where it is reported to occur in 79% of schools (Walsh & Conlon, 2009, p. 3). The Irish population, as well as other world societies, seem to regularly reiterate their antipathy towards gays and lesbians, as well as their views about LGBT people as abnormal or less capable than the average heterosexual. It is interesting to look at the sharp peak concerning Irish politicians because, when appraising (negatively), they refer to homosexuality as a practice instead of homosexuals as individuals. Baker (2005, pp. 73-74) notes that British newspapers also often frame homosexuality as a sexual behaviour or practice, rather than an identity, thereby dehumanising LGBT people. Last, but not least, the Catholic Church portrays this community as sinners and an abomination against God and the Bible. This is perhaps to be expected, given the traditional belief of the Catholic Church that LGBT people are ‘[...] diseased sexual deviants [...]’ (Inglis, 1998, p. 16).

5. Conclusion

This study offers a valuable contribution to the portrayal of homosexuality in the Irish press, particularly in view of the dearth of research in this area to date. One of the questions this paper set out to address was whether Irish LGBT citizens are evaluated in a '[...] positive and nuanced way', as Walsh & Conlon (2009, p. 11) claimed following GLEN's campaign to shed light on the experiences and issues of the homosexual community in 2008. Our data reveal that this is evidently not the case, based on the notable negative discourse attached to the minority under analysis. As illustrated throughout the results sections, the three newspapers in our corpus perpetuate the stereotypical representation of gays and lesbians as immoral, evil, corrupt, violent, promiscuous, effeminate and abnormal beings that are loathed by society and, as a result, experience feelings of fear, anger and frustration. From the standpoint of APPRAISAL theory, this becomes apparent in the heightened concentration of evaluative potential in the two sub-domains of negative JUDGEMENT and AFFECT. Therefore, the results are a clear indication of the '[...] value laden, ideologically determined discourse [...]' (White, 2006, p. 37) typical of journalistic prose, which makes it difficult for the homophobia in society, as detected here, not to seep through news reporting itself.

Previous research on the same corpus is largely consistent with the results recorded here. Bartley & Hidalgo-Tenorio (2015, pp. 24-25) observe that any mention of the Irish LGBT community tends to co-occur with processes (i.e. verbs and nominalisations) denoting negative emotive feelings (e.g. *hate*, *worry*, *fear*), as well as with attributes emphasising their deviancy (e.g. *is not natural*, *is an abomination*). Similar patterns emerge from the application of metaphor analysis to the same data set, where the idea of Irish gays as criminals and soldiers at war is reinforced (Bartley & Hidalgo-Tenorio, 2016, pp. 23-24). The insights drawn from our paper serve to give additional weighting to Critical Discourse Analyses using different methods and approaches, thereby justifying the advantage of employing 'triangulation' in research intending to uncover the unequal power structures pervasive in society and discourse, as argued by Baker & Levon (2015, pp. 2-3).

That said, this paper is not without its limitations. As Martin & White (2005: 8) and Bednarek & Caple (2012: 139) acknowledge (see also Benitez-Castro In preparation), APPRAISAL theory is not a finished product, as the boundaries of the current categories would benefit from further specification and application to a wider range of text types. In addition, possible future research avenues could include the examination of a larger corpus with a more widespread sample of Irish newspapers, to establish, for example, whether the marginal differences reported in results section two are statistically significant and generalisable or, rather, due to chance. Besides, it would also be worth exploring the evaluative representation of gays and lesbians in other kinds of public discourse (e.g. parliamentary debates and political speeches on the Civil Partnership Bill in 2008), with a view to confirming or refuting the findings obtained thus far.

Notes

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ⁱⁱ “Group defends leaflet denouncing same-sex marriage”, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/group-defends-leaflet-denouncing-same-sex-marriage-1.2115978>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Constitution of Ireland, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/en/constitution/>

^{iv} 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1861/en/act/pub/0100/print.html>

^v Norris vs. Ireland (1988), [http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-57547#{"itemid":\["001-57547"\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-57547#{)

^{vi} “Gay-bashing, gay marriage, and how media needs to get a grip”,

<http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/poplife/2013/04/11/gay-bashing-gay-marriage-and-how-the-media-needs-to-get-a-grip/>^{vii} For similar findings, see Stychin (1995) and Baker (2005, p. 75), who note that

LGBT people are often associated with a discourse of crime and murder.

^{viii} <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>

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