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## Masculinity in Jamaica

Masculinity threat: understanding why Jamaican men report more anti-gay prejudice than  
Jamaican women

**Abstract**

Jamaica is a developing country known for its high levels of sexual prejudice. Additionally, prior research has shown that Jamaican men reliably report more anti-gay prejudice than Jamaican women do. This study investigated potential explanations for these gender differences. Using a large, diverse data set ( $N = 659$ ), we found that Jamaican men reported more anti-gay behaviour than women did, but this difference was largest under conditions of lower income, less education and younger age. Also, in line with our hypotheses, religiosity and preferences for dancehall music did *not* moderate the effects of gender on anti-gay behaviour. These findings suggest that Jamaican men's anti-gay prejudice may be driven, at least in part, by motivations to bolster their masculinity in the face of underlying contemporary threats. Implications for anti-gay prejudice and prejudice-reducing interventions are discussed.

Keywords: Gender differences; sexual prejudice; prejudice against gay people; masculinity

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Violence and discrimination against sexual minorities occur all over the world and are currently on the rise (Bartoş, Berger, & Hegarty, 2014; Herek, 2000; Lovelock, 2018; Meyer, 2003). For instance, in the United States of America, reports of sexual orientation-based hate crimes have risen each year from 2014 to 2017, reaching 1130 incidents (Hauk, 2019). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the prevalence of hate crime towards the LGBTQ community has significantly increased, with crimes based on sexuality rising by 27% (National LGBT Survey, Summary Report, 2019).

Prior research has investigated psychological and social factors that can explain anti-gay pre-judice and violence. These include (though are not limited to) gender, age, education, religiosity and income (Bartoş et al., 2014; Herek, 1984; Herek, 2000; 2002; Meyer, 2003; Takács & Szalma, 2011). Research across different countries throughout Europe, the Americas (both North and South) and Russia, has found that prejudice against gay people is more likely to be expressed by men rather than women (West & Cowell 2015; Cannon, 2005; Gulevich, Osin, Isaenko, & Brainis, 2016; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2008; Herek & McLemore, 2013; Hooghe & Meeusen, 2012; Sarac, 2012; Steffens & Wagner, 2004), by older participants rather than younger ones (Herek & Gonzales-Rivera, 2006; Steffens & Wagner, 2004), by less educated individuals (West & Cowell, 2015; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2008; Takács & Szalma, 2011), and by more religious individuals (West & Cowell, 2015; Gulevich et al., 2016; Takács & Szalma, 2011). In fact, Lamontagne et al. (2018) showed that, across 158 countries, lower economic output predicted higher rates of sexual prejudice, such that a 10% increase in GDP per capita, equated to a 1% reduction in the mean prejudice against gay people.

Above all other demographic parameters (e.g., location, education, income, etc), gender (being male) is the most reliable and consistent predictor of higher sexual prejudice (Herek, 1989, Herek, 2000, 2002; West & Cowell, 2015). In fact, across studies and over time, results

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have confirmed that besides being young, and straight, perpetrators of sexually prejudiced-based crimes are more likely to be men (Brown & Amoroso, 1975; Chakraborti, Garland & Hardy, 2014; Glassner & Owen, 1976; Gurwitz & Marcus, 1978; Hansen, 1982; Iganski, Smith, Dixon, & Bargen, 2011; Kite, 1984; Laner & Laner, 1979; Williams & Tregidga, 2013). In spite of this, very few attempts have been made to understand the circumstances under which men are more likely to be sexually prejudiced than women and why (Kite, 1984). Those who have tried have suggested that the high proportion of young, heterosexual men as anti-LGBTQ aggressors may reflect men's strategy to defend or bolster their masculinity (Bosson, Weaver, Caswell & Burnaford, 2011; Glick, Gangl, Gibb, Klumpner, & Weinberg, 2007; Parrott, 2009; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008).

Several areas of research including sociology have thoroughly studied men's expressions of masculinity. For instance, Carrigan, Connell, and Lee. (1985) described the masculine identity as a hegemonic posture of compliance to aggressive, masculine prescribed types. These researchers went as far as connecting men's masculinity to the subordination of women and disapproval of any alternative expressions of one's sexuality, including expressions of effeminate masculinity and homosexuality. This sociological conceptualization connects well with research in psychology, which has shown that threats to one's masculinity have led to aggressive compensatory mechanisms in men (Bosson, Weaver, Caswell, & Burnaford, 2012). It should be noted, however, that these masculinity types materialize from gender role systems that vary according to culture and history (Carrigan et al., 1985; Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

In line with Connell and Herek (1986, 2000)) posited that contemporary society generally sees heterosexuality as a necessary condition of masculinity. Hence, men reject, mistreat, or distance themselves from gay men as a means of re-affirming their own

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masculinity; these actions clearly define what they are (e.g., masculine) by demonstrating what they are not (e.g., gay). In this context, any gender-masculinity threat (e.g., experiences that undermine a man's status as a 'real man'), could cause men to have more negative attitudes against gay men (Glick et al., 2007; Parrott, 2009; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). Further, it has been suggested that the relationship between masculinity threat and antigay attitudes lies in the different cultural constructs of masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Horrocks, 1994).

Across cultures, men's masculinity is perceived as more precarious than women's femininity (Bosson & Vandello, 2011). Masculinity is considered as a status that is hard to achieve and which men have to constantly actively defend (Gilmore, 1990). However, masculinity, once achieved, can be easily lost due to misbehaviours. Hence, threats to one's masculinity are especially worrying, frequently leading men to restore their masculinity by aggressive means (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Arzu Wasti, 2009). Therefore, the negative attitudes towards gay men caused by masculinity threats may reflect men's strategy to reaffirm their masculinity to bystanders. Indeed, research across different disciplines has found support for this hypothesis. For instance, when studying the relationship between masculinity and violence amongst school boys in South Africa, Connell (1995) found that boys who identified themselves as 'real boys' used violence in the playground to marginalize other boys whom they perceived as 'unmasculine' and/or 'gay'. Similarly, Theodore and Basow (2000) found that men's gender self-discrepancy and the importance they attributed to masculinity interacted to predict prejudice against gay people. Glick et al. (2007) also found that telling male participants that they had 'feminine' (vs. 'masculine') personalities led to an increase in prejudice against effeminate gay men. Furthermore, Falomir-Pichastor and Mugny (2009) found that men's (but not women's) gender self-esteem predicted their negative attitudes towards homosexuality.

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As described above, a large body of prior research sheds light on manifestations of sexual prejudice when masculinity is threatened. However, this prior research has generally either measured gender-threat directly (e.g., Theodore & Basow, 2000), given participants explicitly gender-related or sexuality-related feedback (e.g., Bosson et al., 2012; Glick et al., 2007) or asked participants to perform an explicitly feminine or emasculating task. Research has not yet investigated masculinity threats as they occur naturally in contemporary society. In normal, contemporary interactions, much of the information that men receive about their own masculine status may come from more subtle, less explicit cues. The lack of current institutionalized rites of passage make the status of manhood more uncertain and ambiguous (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Herek, 1986; Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). Thus, masculinity-threats are more likely to occur as subtle reminders of one's inadequacy as a man.

### **Jamaica as field site**

Although there has been an increase in research on sexual prejudice over the last four decades (West, 2010; Brown & Amoroso, 1975; Chakraborti, 2014; Glassner & Owen, 1976; Gurwitz & Marcus, 1978; Hansen, 1982; Iganski et al., 2011; Kite, 1984; Laner & Laner, 1979; Williams & Tregidga, 2013), most of this research has been done in developed countries, such as the United Kingdom (Bush, Anderson, & Carr, 2012) and the USA (Herek, 1984; 1988), but very little attention has been given to developing nations known to be less friendly (more sexually prejudiced) towards sexual minorities (West & Hewstone, 2012). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate prejudice against sexual minorities (gay people) in Jamaica. While there are similarities in the context across countries, prejudice is known to have culture-based specificities (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses, 2010), hence it is imperative to investigate prejudice against gay people outside the European and North American framework.

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In terms of sexually prejudiced behaviour, compared with other countries, there are aggravating circumstances in Jamaica that may contribute to its higher sexual prejudice. In Jamaica, anal sex is prohibited and criminalized, which constitutes an indirect criminalization of male homosexuality (West & Hewstone, 2012; Wheatle, 2012). Furthermore, the public discourse is inundated by anti-gay propaganda at all levels of society (Cowell & Saunders, 2011), from serious political discourse Homophobic silliness and a failure of leadership, 2008) to even popular dialogue (Adepitan, 2014; West, 2013; Clunis, 2004; Fink, 2013), and music (Hope, 2004). In fact, in recent years and across a variety of social media outlets, increasing international attention has been paid to the severe anti- gay prejudice in Jamaica (Adepitan, 2014; West, 2013; Fink, 2013). Anti-gay incidents have mostly been described as violent, deadly and even gruesome Gay lobby rebuked – Church says won't accept homosexual lifestyle in Jamaica, 2008; J-FLAG, 2013; Pearson, 2012). Further, even dancehall music performances and lyrics are broadly known for their anti-gay messages and the promotion of traditional gender roles (Hope, 2004). Several authors have suggested that dancehall music evolved due to the social and economic restrictions experienced by Jamaican men in the 1980s and has been used as a mouthpiece for identifying and clarifying the culture's evolving gender norms (West & Cowell, 2015, West, 2016; Crawford, 2010; Hope, 2004).

As in first world countries (Bush et al., 2012; Herek, 1988), empirical evidence points to male gender as the most important predictor of Jamaican anti-gay prejudice (, West & Cowell 2015, West 2018). In a large-scale empirical investigation of Jamaican anti-gay prejudice, West & Cowell (2015) found that gender was both the strongest and the most reliable predictor of anti-gay prejudice in Jamaica, trumping age, education, income, dancehall music and religiosity. Further research showed that it was also a stronger predictor than intergroup contact West, 2018). Gender also predicted anti- gay bias in multiple ways; male participants'



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attitudes towards gays were more negative than females' attitudes, and more negativity was directed towards gay men than towards lesbians.

It should be noted that abundant literature in history and sociology point towards British colonialism as one of the main causes for the strength of hegemonic masculinity in Jamaica (Beckles, 2010; Messner & Sabo, 1990). Their main argument is that during slavery, Black men were emasculated and constantly infantilized, hence their post-slavery renovation went beyond securing economic justice and their civil rights to being acknowledged as 'real men'. The British imperial masculinity was validated through this process as it was never challenged but drastically implemented into Black culture (Downes, 2005; Messner & Sabo, 1990). Jamaican men, having largely lost the ability to affirm their masculinity through wealth, power, or control over their environment, responded by relying excessively on more aggressive and sexualized forms of masculinity.

Financial status (income), education level and age, have been previously linked to demonstrations of masculinity (Johnson, Brems, & Alford-Keating, 1997; Parker & Bhugra, 2000; Plummer, McLean, & Simpson, 2008; Wade & Rochlen, 2013). Education has been argued to be a means to achieving better financial prospects for men (Bellony, Hoyos, & Ñopo, 2010). It is important to note that in Jamaica the opportunities for education and financial success are limited. We, therefore, hypothesized that the gender differences in prejudice against sexual minorities should increase under conditions of masculinity threat (e.g., lower income, lower level of education, and being younger) and decrease when this threat is absent (e.g., higher income, higher level of education, and being older).

## **Current research**

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We investigated the (naturally occurring) circumstances under which gender differences in prejudice against gay people occur in the Jamaican context. In their paper on the predictors of anti-gay prejudice in Jamaica, West & Cowell (2015) identified 6 important predictors of anti-gay prejudice: (male) gender, (lower) income, (less) education, age, (stronger) religiosity and a preference for dancehall music. Three of these parameters (income, education and age) have been consistently associated with affirmations of masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1983, 1987; Johnson, 2005; Mankowski & Maton., 2010; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986; Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009), while the latter two (religiosity and dancehall music) have not. Thus, we specifically hypothesized that Jamaican men would report more bias than Jamaican women, but this difference would be most evident under conditions of lower income, education, and age. This pattern, however, should not occur for predictors that are not used to demonstrate masculinity (e.g., listening to dancehall music and religiosity). Though the data below are from a single data set, we analysed and presented each moderated effect separately.

Although straight men's negative behaviours towards sexual minorities have been constantly claimed as a means of reaffirming or regaining their masculinity, the current paper contributes to past literature by: 1. investigating possible explanations of the differences in prejudice against gay people between Jamaican men and Jamaican women; 2. looking at naturally occurring masculinity threats rather than lab-induced ones (e.g., low education level, income level and age); 3. studying the population of a developing country instead of a first world country and 4. showing the relevance of gender in understanding social dynamics in a new context.

## **Method**

Research protocols were approved by the relevant university Ethics Committee. All data were collected and stored in compliance with the UK's Data Protection Act.

### **Participants and recruitment**

The data were obtained from a nationally representative sample of 945 adults aged 18 and over ( $M$  age = 35.02,  $SD$  = 13.46), drawn from 231 communities in Jamaica recruited in person by research assistants trained for this task. All data collection was conducted in private and by mature female research assistants to reduce social desirability concerns. The initial sample contained 482 men ( $M$  age = 35.64,  $SD$  = 12.96) and 463 women ( $M$  age = 34.37,  $SD$  = 13.94). However, some participants had not responded to some of the questions necessary for this study (e.g., level of education, monthly income, age, gender or negative behaviour towards gay people). These participants were excluded from the final analyses. The final sample thus consisted of 659 participants. These participants were demographically very similar to the original sample of 945 participants, being 362 men ( $M$  age = 36.68,  $SD$  = 12.33) and 317 women ( $M$  age = 36.1,  $SD$  = 13.03). The complete dataset can be accessed at [https://osf.io/svrqz/?view\\_only=c53582bb96c1432dae023491618b9f69](https://osf.io/svrqz/?view_only=c53582bb96c1432dae023491618b9f69).

### **Measures**

We used the same measures as West & Cowell (2015). Participants indicated their gender (0 = *female*, 1 = *male*) and their age as a whole number between 0 and 100. Participants also indicated their highest level of education (1 = *No formal education*, 2 = *Primary/Prep school*, 3 = *Some secondary education*, 4 = *Completed secondary education*, 5 = *Vocational/Skills training*, 6 = *University*, 7 = *Some professional training beyond university*, 8 = *Graduate degree, e.g., MSc, PhD*), their monthly income in Jamaican dollars (1 = *Under 5,000, USD* 2 = *5,000 USD to 19,999, USD* 3 = *20,000 USD to 49,999, USD* 4 = *50,000 USD*

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to 69,999, USD 5 = 70,000 USD to 89,999, USD 6 = 90,000 USD to 109,999, USD 7 = 110,000 USD to 129,999, USD 8 = 130,000 USD to 149,999, USD 9 = 150,000 USD to 169,999, USD 10 = 170,000 USD to 189,999, USD 11 = 190,000 USD to 209,999, USD 12 = 210,000 USD and above), whether ‘dancehall [was] the kind of music [they] listen to the most’ (-1 = *no*, 1 = *yes*), and how often they attended church (1 = *Less than once a year*, 2 = *Every year*, 3 = *2 to 3 times a year*, 4 = *Every month*, 5 = *Every Week*).

To assess self-reported negative behaviour towards gay people we used the same five items ( $\alpha = .79$ ) from West & Cowell (2015) with which participants indicated whether they generally behaved in specific negative ways towards them: ‘I have damaged property of a homosexual person’, ‘I usually make derogatory remarks about homosexuals’, ‘I make derogatory remarks like “faggot” or “batty man” to people I suspect are homosexual’, ‘I tease and make jokes about homosexuals’, ‘I avoid homosexuals’. Participants responded to all items on 5-point Likert scales (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*).

### **Statistical analyses**

We used moderation analysis to investigate: 1. the relationship between gender and self-reported anti-gay behaviour; 2. whether the aforementioned relationship was affected by the participants’ education, income, or age. This method was used as it allows to test for the influence of a third variable (e.g., education), on the relationship between a predictor (gender) and an outcome variable (anti-gay prejudice). Results from such tests enable us to conclude when and under what conditions the gender difference occurs, as well as the independent effects of the moderator on the outcome variable. Each moderator could strengthen, weaken, or reverse the nature of the relationship between gender and anti-gay bias.

### **Moderation analyses**

For each of the analyses below a masculinity-related variable is used to moderate the relationship between gender and anti-gay prejudice. We aimed to show that these effects occurred for each moderator, even when all other moderators were considered. Thus, whenever one variable was used as a moderator (e.g., monthly income) all the other potential predictor variables (e.g., education, age, a preference for dancehall and religiosity) were included in the model as covariates. We investigated these relationships using Preacher-Hayes bootstrap tests, Model 1, with a 95% confidence interval based on 10,000 bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2009). This bias-corrected bootstrapping technique (developed relatively recently) is considered superior to older, widely used tests of moderation (e.g., the multi-step methodology of Baron & Kenny, 1986), due to its superior ability to detect significant effects with smaller sample sizes while retaining the most power (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). Both regression-based tests of moderation (i.e., Preacher-Hayes tests and multi-step approaches) are also superior to median-split techniques, which spuriously create categorical variables from continuous data and risk losing much of the nuance of the results (Bissonnette, Ickes, Bernstein, & Knowles, 1990).

## Results

### Income

We found the hypothesized moderating effect of income on the relationship between gender and anti-gay behaviours ( $b = 0.07$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = 2.38$ ,  $p = 0.017$ ). As expected, men reported more anti-gay behaviour than did women, but this difference was largest when monthly income was low ( $b = -0.66$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = -6.91$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ), smaller at the mean income ( $b = -0.58$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t = -7.32$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), and smallest when monthly income was high ( $b = -0.37$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = -3.78$ ,  $p = .00017$ ). See Figure 1. The effect of income on anti-gay behaviour was also significant in this model ( $b = -0.15$ ,  $SE = 0.04$ ,  $t = -3.36$ ,  $p = 0.0008$ ).

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Likewise, education ( $b = -0.09$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = -2.81$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ), age ( $b = -0.007$ ,  $SE = 0.002$ ,  $t = -2.25$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ), dancehall music ( $b = 0.25$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ,  $t = 2.29$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ), and religiosity ( $b = -0.07$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = -2.34$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ), significantly predicted anti-gay behaviours.

### Education

We found the hypothesized moderating effect of education on the relationship between gender and anti-gay behaviours ( $b = 0.14$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $t = 2.71$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). As expected, men reported more anti-gay behaviour than did women, but this difference was largest when education was low ( $b = -0.75$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ,  $t = -6.57$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ), smaller at the mean education level ( $b = -0.61$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t = -7.44$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ), and smallest when education was high ( $b = -0.32$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $t = -3.06$ ,  $p = 0.0023$ ). See Figure 2. The effect of education on anti-gay behaviour was significant in this model ( $b = -0.30$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t = -3.49$ ,  $p = 0.0005$ ). Similarly, monthly income ( $b = -0.048$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ ,  $t = -2.66$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ), age ( $b = -0.007$ ,  $SE = 0.003$ ,  $t = -2.24$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ), dancehall music ( $b = 0.24$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ,  $t = 2.19$ ,  $p = 0.029$ ), and religiosity ( $b = -0.064$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = -2.19$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ), significantly predicted anti-gay behaviours.

### Age

We found the hypothesized moderating effect of age on the relationship between gender and anti-gay behaviours ( $b = 0.01$ ,  $SE = 0.005$ ,  $t = 2.08$ ,  $p = .037$ ). As expected, men reported more anti-gay behaviour than did women, but this difference was largest when participants were younger ( $M = 23.84$ ,  $b = .67$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $t = -6.49$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), smaller at the mean age ( $M = 36.53$ ,  $b = .53$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t = -7.12$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), and smallest when participants were older ( $M = 49.21$ ,  $b = .37$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $t = -3.67$ ,  $p = .0003$ ). See Figure 3. The effect of age on anti-gay behaviour was significant in this model ( $b = -0.024$ ,  $SE = 0.008$ ,  $t = -2.66$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ).

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Similarly, education ( $b = -0.087$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = -2.66$ ,  $p = 0.0078$ ), monthly income ( $b = -0.0052$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ ,  $t = -2.89$ ,  $p = 0.0039$ ), dancehall music ( $b = 0.24$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ,  $t = 2.21$ ,  $p = 0.027$ ), and religiosity ( $b = -0.067$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = -2.28$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ), significantly predicted anti-gay behaviours.

### **Dancehall music and religiosity**

For these findings to be meaningful, this moderating effect should only occur for the predictors of anti-gay prejudice that can also function as ways of expressing or demonstrating masculinity. These effects should not occur for the other predictors (e.g., a preference for dancehall music and religiosity) that do not bolster masculinity. As hypothesized we did not find that either dancehall music ( $b = 0.106$ ,  $SE = 0.23$ ,  $t = -0.46$ ,  $p = 0.64$ ) or religiosity ( $b = 0.054$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t = 0.93$ ,  $p = 0.35$ ) moderated the relationship between gender and anti-gay behaviours.

## **Discussion**

The goals of the current study were to investigate possible explanations of the differences in prejudice against gay people between Jamaican men and Jamaican women. In line with prior research on the effect of masculinity threat on prejudice against gay people in first world countries, Jamaican men reported more prejudice than Jamaican women did, but this difference was largest under conditions of low income, low education, and older age. Indeed, women's levels of prejudice did not change according to varying levels of income, education or being older, while men's did (see Figures 1, 2 and 3). Below we summarize and discuss our findings in terms of similarities with previous literature, the moderating effects of income, education, age, a preference for dancehall music, and religiosity as well as comment

on possible directions for future studies and the implications for dealing with and perhaps decreasing anti-gay prejudice in Jamaica.

### **Replication of previous findings**

In agreement with previous studies, findings concerning gender differences indicated that, compared to women, men expressed more negative behaviours towards gay people (e.g., Herek, 1988). These results suggest a similarity in behaviours between the Jamaican, British, Russian and American populations. A possible explanation for this, is that sexual orientation is more of a concern for men's gender identity (e.g., men's masculinity), regardless of the social context. In fact, Hamilton (2007) proposes that men's sexual prejudice reflects the protection of heteronormative standards of masculinity.

### **Moderating effect of income**

In line with our hypothesis, we found that men showed more anti-gay behaviours than women, and this difference was particularly large when participants earned less money. In accordance with Carrigan et al.'s (1985) idea that masculinity expressions are dependent on culture, we suggest that these results reflect the Jamaican context as it does not seem to be the ideal scenario to demonstrate a man's resource-holding potential with at least 20% of the population living in extreme poverty and an estimated unemployment rate of 14.5% (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2015). Our findings of men's more negative behaviours towards gay people (an indirect way to support traditional gender-role norms), may be part of men's strategy to compensate for the fact that they cannot demonstrate their masculinity by means of their earning capacity. This interpretation goes in line with Aronson, Whitehead, and Baber (2003) and Whitehead. (1992), who coined a man's economic capacity as the most valuable aspect of masculinity.



### **Moderating effect of education**

As well as with income, in terms of education, we hypothesized that men would be more prejudiced against homosexual people than women and that this difference would be largest when less money was earned. Importantly, we predicted that women's prejudice against gay people would not be influenced by their level of education. The results found here, which confirm our initial hypothesis suggest that men's antigay behaviours were higher in an attempt to recover the masculine status that was put under threat due to lack of access to education and its associated status. In line with this, novel evidence has shown that over a 3-year period (2013–2016), Jamaicans anti-gay sentiments have grown (West, 2016), while gender dynamics in education have gone through important changes in English-speaking Caribbean countries (Figueroa, 2014). In fact, women's education has significantly improved, whereas men's education has deteriorated (Plummer et al., 2008), with girls in schools constituting the majority in all age cohorts (Chevannes, 1999; Reddock, 2004).

### **Moderating effect of age**

In many societies, older age is correlated with less negative responses to gay people (Johnson et al., 1997; Parker & Bhugra, 2000), attributed to a general softening or liberalization of attitudes over time. This is not the case in Jamaica, where age is a weak and unreliable predictor of anti-gay prejudice (West & Cowell 2015). In traditional societies like Jamaica, age confers status, an important aspect of masculinity (Sahlins., 1958; Service., 1971; Silverman & Maxwell, 1978; Von Rueden, Gurven, & Kaplan, 2008). It should be noted, however, that this relationship is linear up to a certain age in men: older men (but not necessarily the oldest men) possess higher statuses (Von Rueden et al., 2008). Accordingly, we hypothesized that due to precarious masculinity, men would display more anti-gay behaviours than women, and this difference would be larger for younger participants; however, it should be noted that we

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don't anticipate women's prejudice to change depending on their age. The results found here go in line with our initial reasoning. We believe that these results reflect younger men's effort to establish a less fragile masculinity for themselves. Compared to women's womanhood, men's masculinity has been theorized, and shown, to be a status that is hard won and easily lost, thereby requiring constant and active 'proof' through displays of manly behaviour (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Bosson et al., 2009; Vandello et al., 2008). In keeping with this argument, Ellis, Kitzinger, and Wilkinson (2003) found that younger male respondents were significantly more likely to think that homosexuals were disgusting, as well as more likely to disagree with state laws (concerning lesbian behaviour) being loosened.

It is important to note that the moderation effects of each of these variables occurred entirely because of changing levels of prejudice in men (See Figures 1, 2 and 3). This supports the idea that an increase in prejudice against gay people is a gendered response due to the lack of education, income and lower age in men who need to reaffirm their masculinity. Adding to this argument, recent research on the effects of the feminization of men on prejudice against gay men found that the stronger perceptions of men's renunciation of the feminine, the greater the negative attitudes towards gay men (Falomir-Pichastor & Berent, 2019). Falomir-Pichastor and Berenet (2019) suggested that their results reflected a more egalitarian society where men have become more feminine than before and therefore have found ways to compensate for this by showing defensive behaviours that aim at asserting their masculinity.

Further, endorsement of traditional gender roles and conforming to an anti-feminine masculinity may influence men at an individual level and intragroup level by affecting men's attitudes towards culturally non-masculine, effeminate men (Falomir-Pichastor & Berent, 2019; Lemon, 1995). As expressed by Lemon (1995) and in line with Falomir-Pichastor and colleagues, it is likely that men living in today's society are not sure about it means to be a man

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and how to differentiate themselves for a woman. Interestingly, Jamaica fits this description very well, with gender roles constantly changing in society. The gender pay gap in Jamaica has shrunk considerably in the last 20 years (Bellony et al., 2010). Women now earn 62% of the money earned by men, which represents a 2% increase towards gender parity over the last 5 years (Jackson, 2020). In terms of education, 12% of women belonging to the workforce have achieved tertiary level of schooling, while only 4.5% of men have reached this level of education (Bellony et al., 2010).

### **Dancehall music and religiosity**

Considering preferences for dancehall music and levels of religiosity, previous studies have found them to be predictors of anti-gay attitudes in Jamaica (West & Cowell, 2015); however, they have not been linked to demonstrations of masculinity. We, therefore, hypothesized that neither preference for dancehall music nor religiosity would moderate the prejudice against gay people. In keeping with our prediction, we found no moderation effects for neither of these variables. Although speculative, these results may suggest that being religious and liking dancehall music, are not methods of affirming one's masculinity in this context.

In sum, our results show that men are more prejudiced than women, particularly in contexts where men are young and their income and education level are low. It is imperative to understand the importance of these results in terms of its implications in policy-making for Jamaica and other countries that face such high levels of sexual prejudice.

### **Implications**

Worldwide, there's high prevalence of negative behaviours and violence against sexual minorities (UNESCO, 2016). Considering the abundance of evidence on the damaging effects

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of sexual prejudice on a person's wellbeing (McFee & Galbraith, 2016), public health policies should implement strategies to mitigate it and reframe the contexts under which sexual prejudice is most prevalent. Although different plans have been put in place to reduce prejudice against sexual minorities in Jamaica, these have mostly focused on denouncing discriminative laws and bringing attention to the issue (Reynolds, 2013). Our findings suggest another possible avenue to effectively reduce prejudice against gay people in Jamaica. We present evidence that subtle masculinity threat (e.g., low education, income) are associated with more negative responses to gay people. Accordingly, policy-related efforts could be aimed at reshaping the masculine identity, perhaps by bringing attention to the socially beneficial aspects of being masculine (e.g., having a successful career, and/or being a responsible parent).

### **Limitations and future directions**

To our knowledge, this investigation is the first to document significant moderating effects on the relationship among subtle threats to masculinity (e.g., low income and education) and prejudice against gay people and also to shift attention to a developing country known to be highly sexually prejudiced: Jamaica. Our results highlight the importance of studying masculinity identity more broadly in relation to gender threats in a contemporary society, nonetheless its limitations and future directions should be noted.

At the expense of cross-cultural comparisons, we opted for a design and analysis that was most pertinent to the Jamaican context, hence we included culturally relevant predictors of sexual prejudice in Jamaica (e.g., preference for dancehall music). Jamaica has been branded as one of the most homophobic countries in the world (Allyn, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2014; Rezvany, 2016), therefore our focus on it. Other more generally applicable factors, such as intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011) should be included in follow-up studies to allow comparison within and between different cultures. While this research offers evidence

of a causal relationship between subtle threats to masculinity and anti-gay behaviours, future experimental and longitudinal research should try to replicate the results found here.

### **Conclusion**

Consistent with our predictions and previous studies (Johnson et al., 1997; Parker & Bhugra, 2000; Plummer et al., 2008; Wade & Rochlen, 2013), compared to women, we found that men are more prejudiced against gay people. Additionally, we showed that (lower) income, (less) education, and (younger) age, moderated the relationship between gender and prejudice against gay people, while religiosity and a preference for dancehall music did not. These findings suggest that subtle threats to the masculine identity result in more negative behaviours towards gay people, which may be men's strategy to restore their masculinity.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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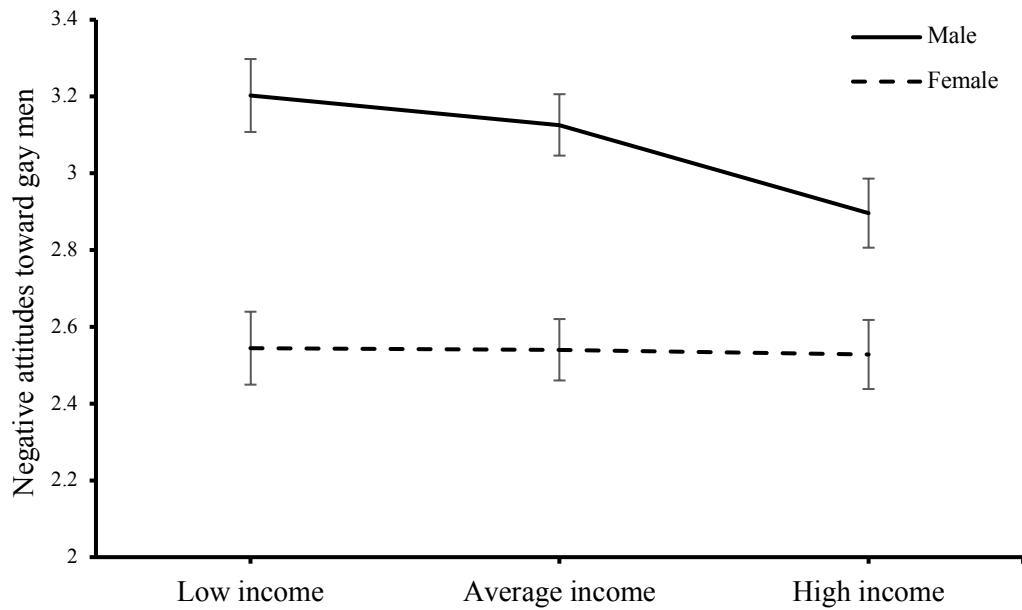


Figure 1. Moderation effect of monthly income on the relationship between gender and negative attitudes toward gay men.

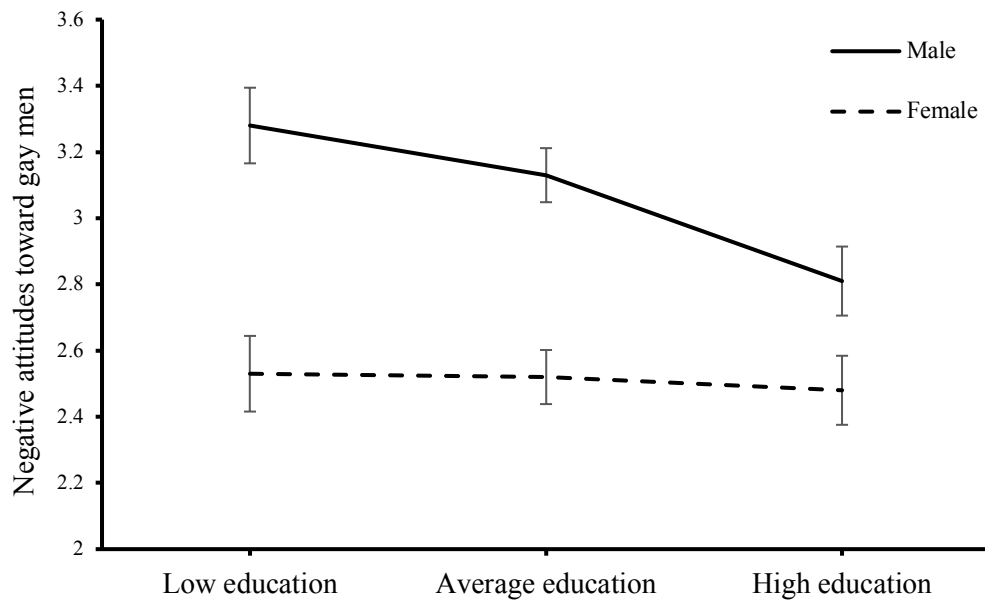


Figure 2. Moderation effect of education level on the relationship between gender and negative attitudes toward gay men.

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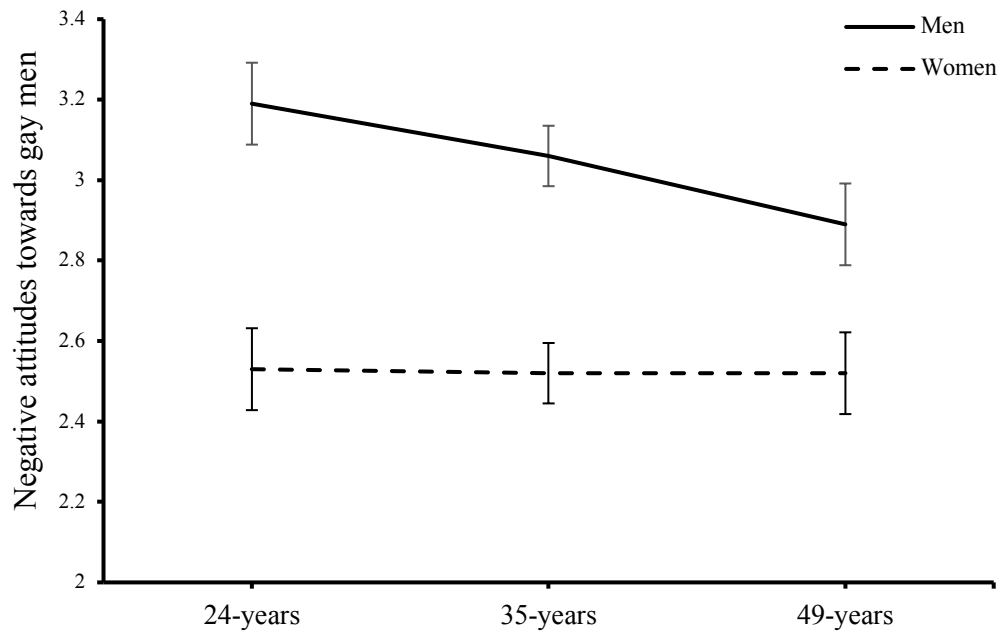


Figure 3. Moderation effect of age on the relationship between gender and negative attitudes toward gay men.