

# About 9 in 10 Nigerians Support the Proposed Anti-Same-Sex Marriage Bill

## An NOI POLL

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**NOI** Polls

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Latest weekly poll results released by NOI Polls Limited has revealed that about 9 in 10 Nigerians (92%) support the proposed 'Anti Same-Sex Marriage Bill' and the reasons for this support mostly revolve around morality and religion. To further buttress their support, most Nigerians believe the proposed bill is not an infringement on the human rights of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) community because homosexuality is not in our culture as Nigerians. These are two of the key findings from the recent Fundamental Human Rights Poll conducted in the week of June 3rd 2013.

On May 30th 2013, the House of Representatives passed the 'Anti Same Sex Marriage Bill' that makes same-sex unions in Nigerian a criminal offense punishable by a maximum sentence of 14 years in prison. The bill passed unanimously by the House also criminalizes public displays of affection by same-gender partners. The bill also states that "any person who registers, operates or participates in gay clubs, societies and organizations directly or indirectly, makes a public show of a same-sex amorous relationship commits an offence and shall be liable to a term of 10 years' imprisonment."

Under existing Nigerian federal law, sodomy is punishable by jail, but this bill legislates for a much broader crackdown on homosexuals and lesbians, who already live largely in an underground existence<sup>1</sup>. The present law in Nigeria already declares gay marriages invalid but the new law takes it a step further by criminalizing it. According to Rashidi Williams, the director of Nigeria's Queer Alliance rights group "It (the bill) takes away the fundamental rights accorded to Nigerians under the constitution. This is really, really not a pressing national issue."

Against this background, NOI Polls conducted its latest poll on Fundamental Human Rights to explore the views of Nigerians regarding homosexuality and level of ratification on the latest law on same sex unions. It is our expectation that the results from this poll will contribute to the on-going discussion, and particularly highlight the perceptions of Nigerians regarding rights of the LGBT community in Nigeria.

Respondents to the poll were asked five specific questions.

Firstly, to ascertain the level of awareness of the new proposed law to make same-sex marriage punishable by imprisonment, respondents were asked: **Are you aware of the recent legislative vote by the House of Representative banning same sex marriages in Nigeria?**

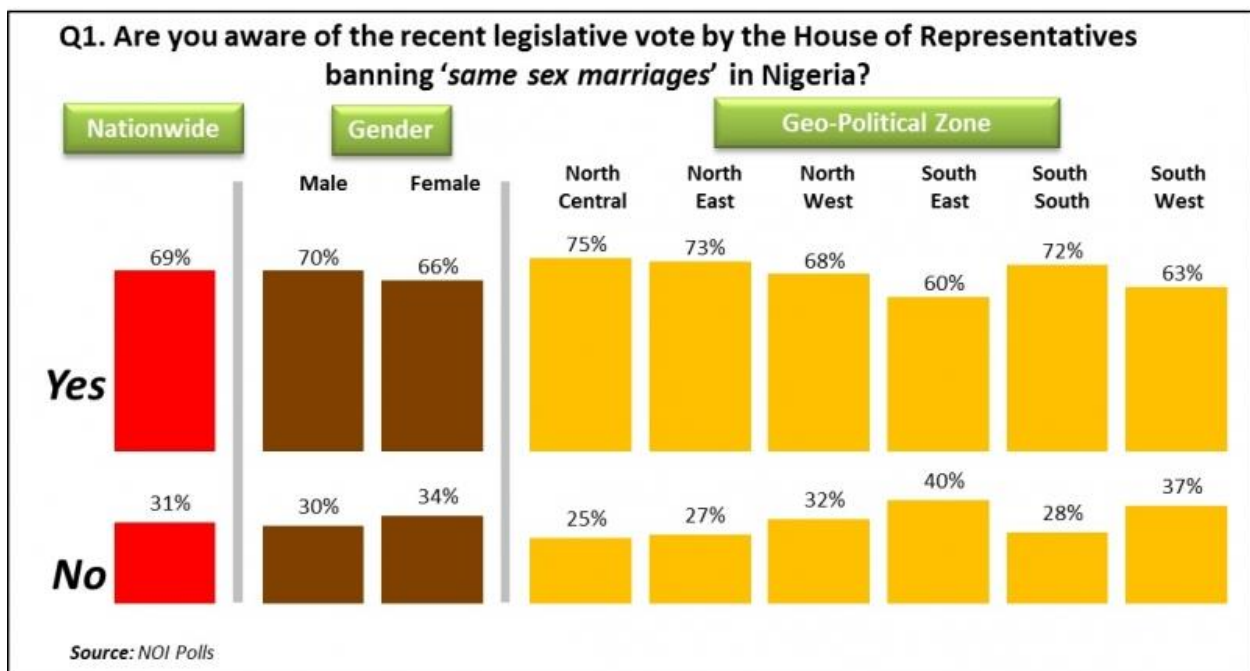
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<sup>1</sup> Reuters News: *Nigeria Bill Banning Same-Sex Marriage Awaits President's Assent*

Overall, the majority (69%) of the respondents are aware of the recent legislative vote banning same sex marriage. The level of awareness is quite high even though the bill was passed in the last week of May and the poll was conducted in the first week of June.

When the level of awareness is analyzed from geo-political zones standpoint, the North-central, North East and South-South have the highest level of awareness with 75%, 73% and 72% respectively.

Comparatively 31% of respondents claimed they are not aware of the legislative vote by the House of Representatives banning 'same-sex marriage' in Nigeria.



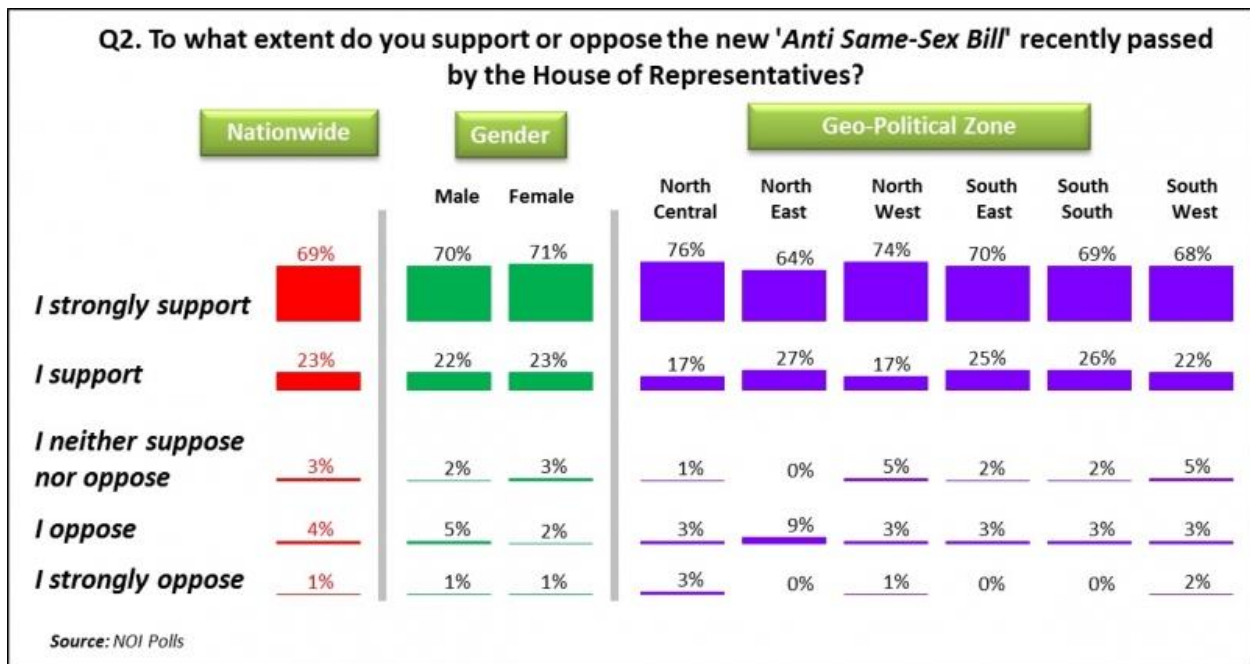
To determine the level of ratification of the proposed law respondents were subsequently asked the following question: **To what extent do you support or oppose the new 'Anti Same Sex Bill' recently passed by the House of Representatives?**

In reaction to this, most respondents 92% (69%+23%) support the 'Anti Same-Sex Bill', where 69% strongly support and 23% support the bill.

Furthermore, 5% (4%+1%) oppose the bill while 3% are neutral since they neither support nor oppose the bill.

In addition, when the results were analyzed per geo-political zones, the North-central zone accounts for the highest proportion of respondents (76%) that strongly support the proposed law, this is followed by the North-West (74%) and the South-East with 70%.

Overall, respondents across the geo-political regions support the new bill.

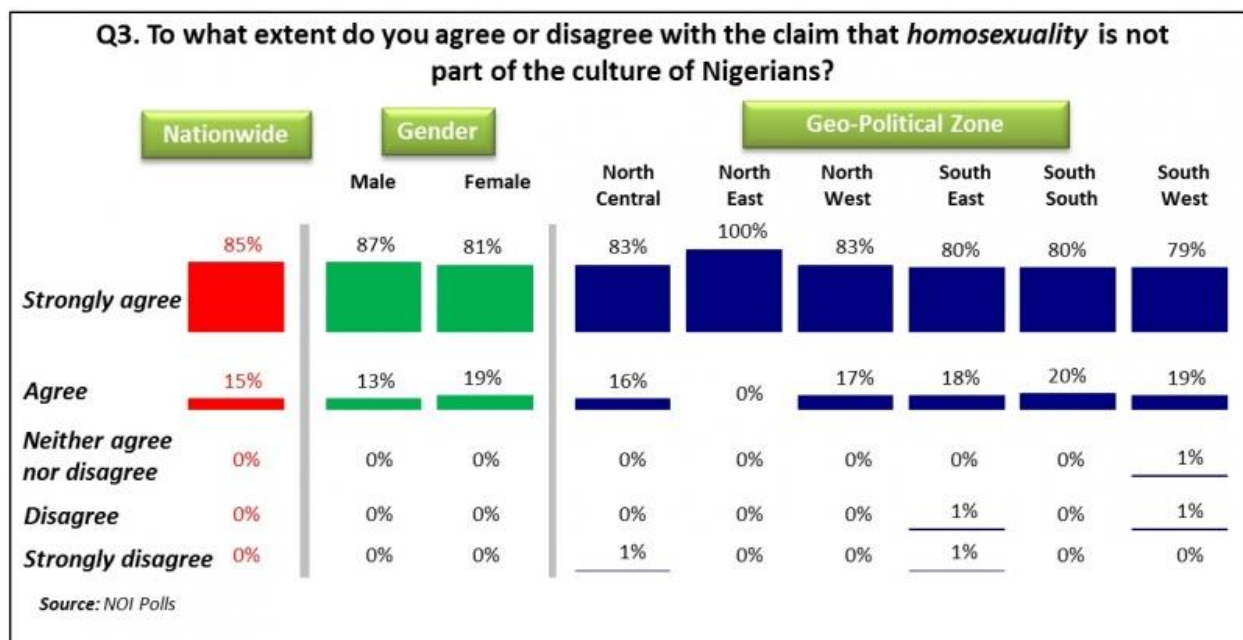


A common argument in support of the legislation is that “Homosexuality is not part of our culture”, this assertion was also made by the Senate President, Mr. David Mark when the Upper House passed the bill.

The third question sought to determine the opinion of Nigerians regarding this claim: **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the claim that homosexuality is not part of the culture of Nigerians?**

The results show that the overall majority of the respondents (85%) strongly agree with the claim that Homosexuality is not part of the culture of Nigerians. Also 15% agree that homosexuality is not part of the culture of Nigerians.

Therefore, on the average, none of the respondents surveyed disagree with the claim that homosexuality is not a part of the Nigerian culture. Interestingly, while the North-East zone accounts for respondents in full agreement with the assertion, support still cuts across all other geo-political regions.



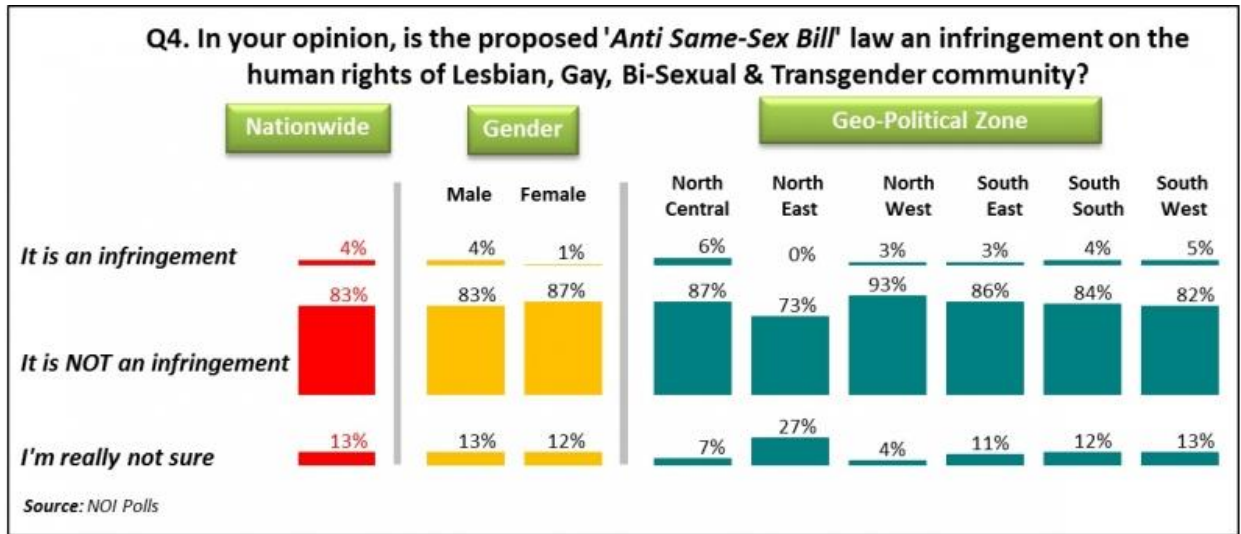
Next, respondents were asked: **In your opinion, is this proposed law an infringement on the human rights of Lesbians, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender community?**

In reaction to this question, overall most respondents (83%) believe the proposed law is not an infringement on the human rights of the Lesbians, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) community.

Furthermore, 13 % are not sure if the proposed law is an infringement on their human rights and only 4% think that the law is an infringement on their human rights.

Analysis across the geo-political zones show that the North-West has the highest number of respondents (93%) that say that the Anti-Same-Sex bill is not an infringement; this is followed by the North-Central with 87% and the South-East with 86%.

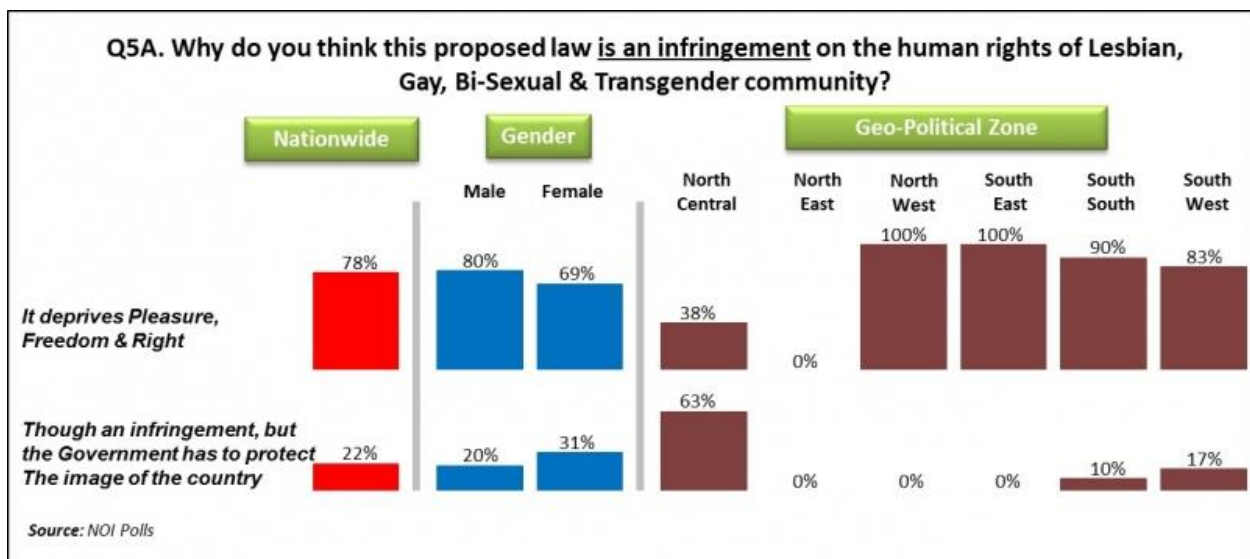
Furthermore, the North-East zone had the highest proportion of respondents (27%) that are not sure that the bill is an infringement on the human rights of the Gay community. In addition, the North-Central has the highest proportion of respondents (6%) that believe the new bill is an infringement of the human rights of the LGBT community.



Finally, to generate a more in-depth understanding of the responses gotten from the previous question respondents were asked: **Why do you think it is an infringement/not an infringement on the human rights of Lesbians, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender community?**

From the view point of respondents that think that the Anti-Same-Sex marriage bill is an infringement on the human rights of the gay community (4% of the total), the reason given by the majority (78%) is that the proposed law 'deprives pleasure, freedom and right' from people in the LGBT community.

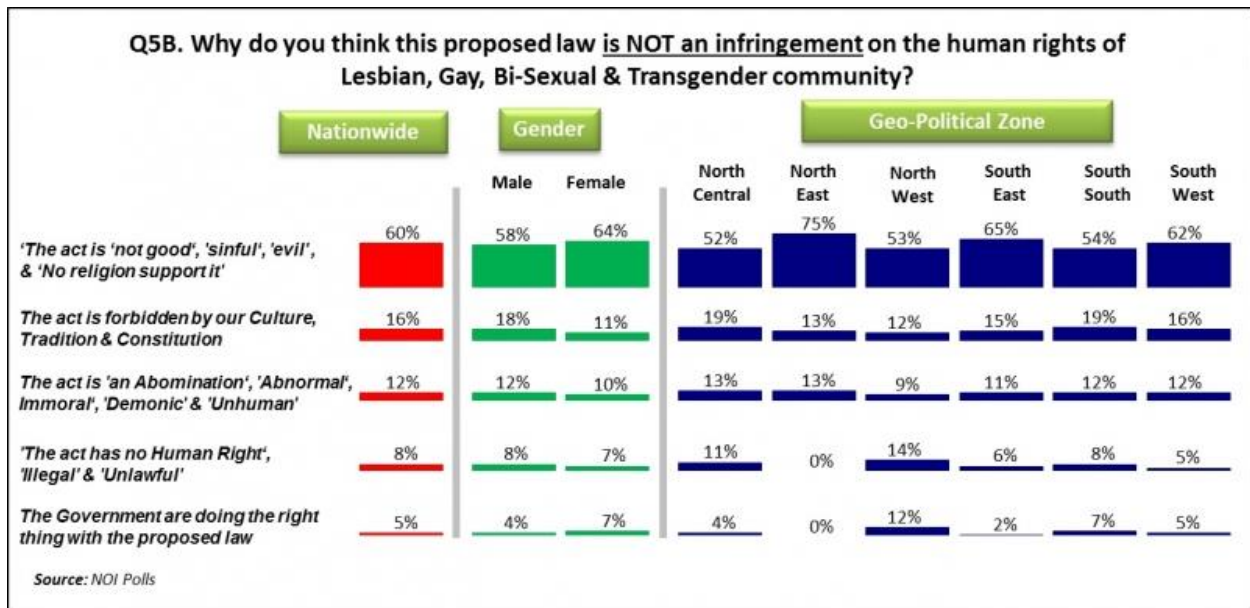
The other reason given by 22% is that 'though it is an infringement, but the government has to protect the country'.



From the view point of respondents that indicated the bill is not an infringement on the human rights of the Gay community (83% of the total); the majority (60%) believe the bill is not an infringement because “The act is not good, sinful, evil and no religion supports it”.

This is followed by 16% of respondents who stated that “The act is forbidden by our Culture, Tradition and Constitution”.

Furthermore, 12% said “The act is an Abomination, Abnormal, Immoral, Demonic and Inhuman”, another 8% said “The act (homosexuality) has no Human Rights, as it is Illegal and Unlawful” while 5% said “the Government are doing the right thing with the proposed law” thus they do not see it as an infringement on the human rights of the Gay community.



**In conclusion**, the results from this current poll have revealed that Nigerians generally support the proposed 'Anti Same Sex Marriage' bill and mostly agree that homosexuality is not a part of the Nigerian culture. Also, the majority do not think that the proposed bill is an infringement on the human rights for the people in the LGBT community. However, examining the reasons given for stating that it is not an infringement in more detail reveals that they are mostly moral and religious arguments since they make assertions like homosexuality is 'sinful, evil, immoral, an abomination' etc. Also, a minority believe that even though it is an infringement, it is still in best interest of the country for the government to pass these laws to protect the country.

## **Survey Methods**

The opinion poll was conducted on June 4th to 6th 2013. It involved telephone interviews of a random nationwide sample. 1,004 randomly selected phone-owning Nigerians aged 18 years and above, representing the six geopolitical zones in the country, were interviewed. With a sample of this size, we can say with 95% confidence that the results obtained are statistically precise - within a range of plus or minus 3%. NOI Polls Limited is Nigeria's leading opinion polling and research organization, which works in technical partnership with the Gallup Organization (USA), to conduct periodic opinion polls and studies on various socio-economic and political issues in Nigeria. More information is available at [www.noi-polls.com](http://www.noi-polls.com)

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