

Monitoring acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands

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1 Concerns about rise in homonegativity

Reports appear with some regularity in the Dutch media claiming that the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands is declining. According to some, the Netherlands has lost its position as one of the most gay-friendly countries in the world. What conclusions can be drawn about this from research, which periodically tests the attitudes of the public within and beyond the Netherlands? To answer this question, we focus attention here on four dimensions of attitudes towards homosexuality that we have distinguished in earlier research (Keuzenkamp et al. 2006). The first dimension relates to what we have called 'general acceptance': attitudes to and opinions on homosexuality in general. One statement that is used in much opinion research to gauge this acceptance is that gay people should be free to live their lives as they choose. The second dimension is concerned with equal rights and (anti)discrimination; to what extent do the public feel that gays and straight people should have equal rights, for example with regard to marriage and adoption? Reactions to public displays of homosexuality constitute the third dimension; what do people think if two gay men kiss each other in the street, and to what extent are those reactions different if a straight couple does the same? Finally, we explore reactions to homosexuality in people's immediate setting; for example, what do people feel about having gay friends or neighbours?

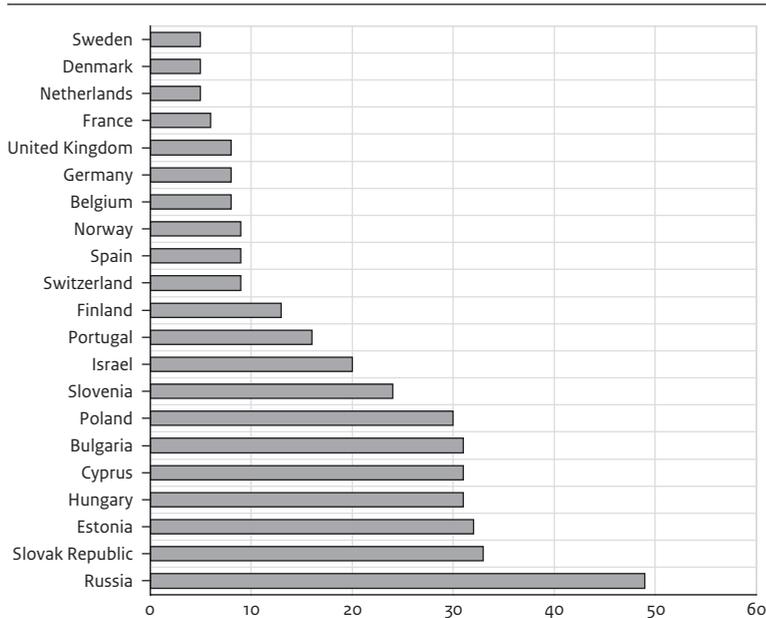
We begin with a brief comparison of Dutch attitudes and those of other countries, and then look in more depth at the present situation in the Netherlands and the trends that have occurred over the past few decades. We use a number of representative surveys for this; for more information on these, the reader may refer to www.scp.nl.

2 An international comparison

The most general statement, which is frequently submitted to respondents in opinion research, is that gays and lesbians should be free to live their lives as they choose. The percentage of people in the Netherlands and the surrounding countries who do not agree with this statement is small. Together with Sweden and Denmark, the Netherlands presents the most favourable picture in response to this statement. Among the Southern European countries, the Spanish population are the least negative in their views of homosexuality, at least based on responses to this general statement. It is mainly in the countries of Eastern Europe and Russia that large parts of the population are found who do not believe that gay men and women should be allowed to live their lives as they choose.

Figure 1

Statement: 'Gays and lesbians should be free to live their lives as they choose', opinions of population aged 15 years and older, 2008 (percentage disagreeing or disagreeing strongly with this statement)



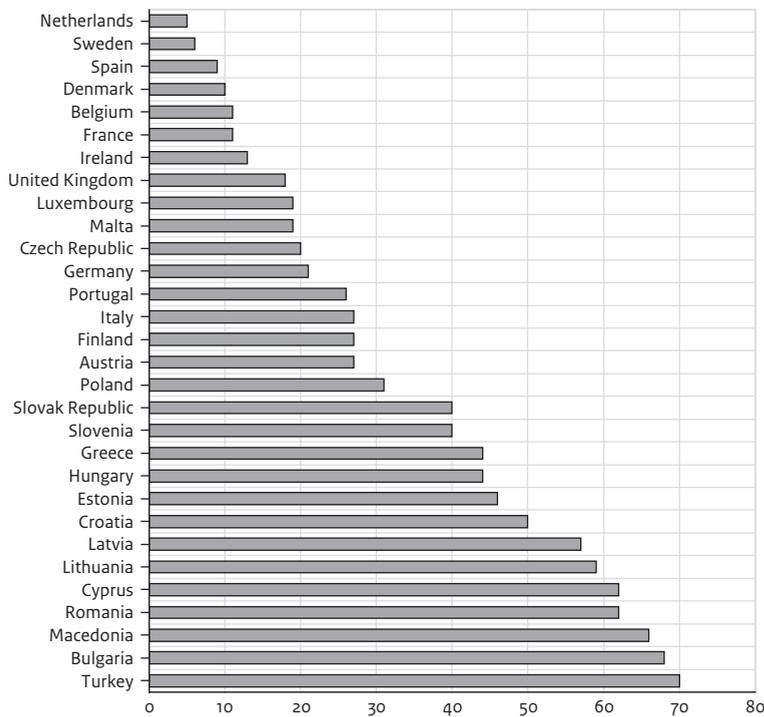
Source: ESS (ESS'08/'09 4th round)

Another fairly general statement which is occasionally included in surveys relates to the question of what people would think if a gay man or woman were to hold the highest office in the country. There are several past and present government ministers in the Netherlands who are openly gay (e.g. Joop Wijn and Gerda Verburg), but Iceland is

the first and so far only country to have an openly gay government leader: the lesbian Johanna Sigurdardottir, who was previously Minister of Social Affairs in the Icelandic parliament.

Figure 2

'How would you feel if a gay person held the highest office in your country?' (Proportion who would feel uncomfortable), 2009



Source: EC (Eurobarometer 71.2)

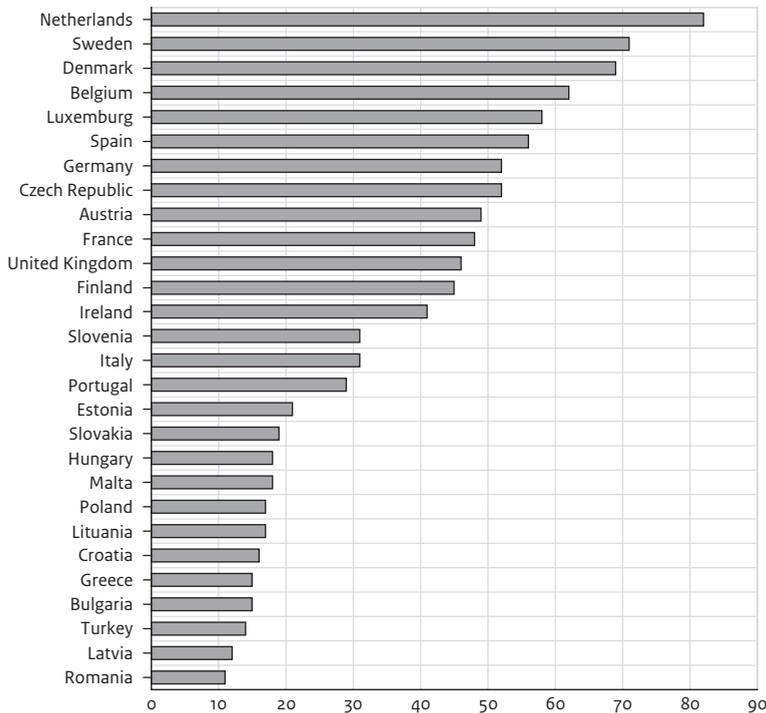
The Eurobarometer survey, which is conducted on behalf of the European Commission, provides an impression of how people in the various countries feel about this issue. The figures should be treated as largely indicative, because the sample used is not random and it is therefore not possible to say to what extent the picture that emerges is truly representative. Iceland did not take part in the Eurobarometer 2009 survey, and we are therefore unfortunately unable to discern how the Icelandic population feel about this statement, though it may be safe to assume that they will probably have little difficulty with it. In the Netherlands, too, the proportion of people who would feel uncomfortable with a gay prime minister is small. In fact, of all countries participating in this edition of the Eurobarometer, the percentage is lowest in the Netherlands, followed by Sweden,

Spain, Denmark and Belgium. We see once again that this idea encounters considerably more resistance in the countries of Eastern Europe. The proportion of people who would have difficulty with this idea is highest in Turkey.

Since 1 April 2001 it has been possible for members of the same sex to marry legally in the Netherlands. The Netherlands was the first country in the world to make this possible. The debate about this form of equal rights is however still raging in many countries, and as at the start of 2010 there were only six other countries where gays are legally permitted to marry: Belgium (since 2003), Spain (2005), Canada (2005), South Africa (2006), Norway (2009) and Sweden (2009). This right is scheduled to be implemented in Portugal in April 2010.

Public support for what is commonly termed ‘gay marriage’ was greatest of all countries in the Netherlands in 2006, followed by Sweden, Denmark and Belgium. Respondents from Eastern European countries and Turkey were least in favour of its introduction in Europe.

Figure 3
 ‘Gay marriage should be allowed in Europe’, population aged 15 years and older, 2006 (percentage agreeing with this statement)

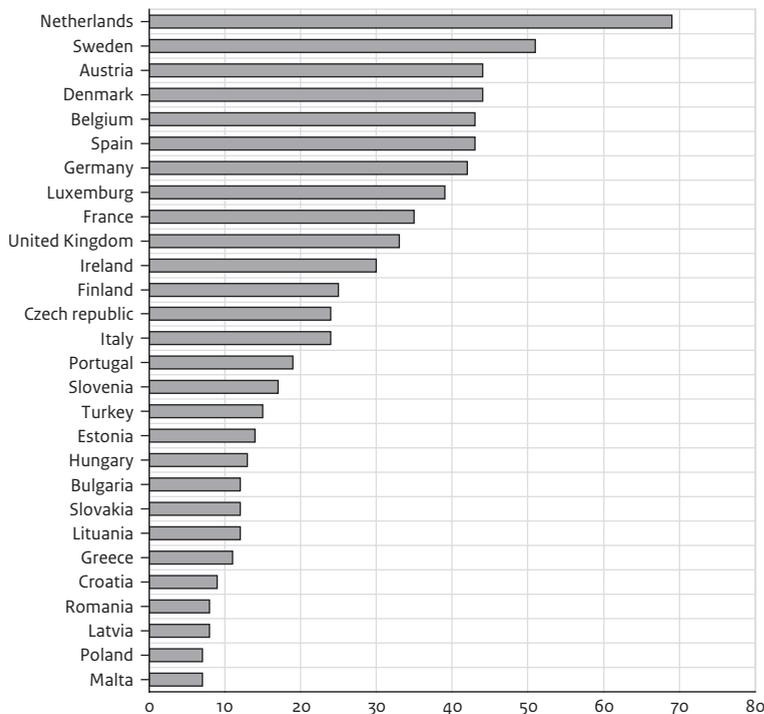


Source: EC (Eurobarometer 66.1)

In the same Eurobarometer survey from 2006, respondents were asked whether they felt that child adoption by gay couples should be accepted in Europe. Once again, support for this was greatest in the Netherlands (almost 70%), again followed by Sweden and Denmark (figure 4). At the bottom of the list we again find many Eastern European countries.

In fact, Sweden and the Netherlands are the only countries where there is a majority in favour of this form of equal treatment. As figure 3 shows, there are rather more countries where a majority support equal marriage rights, with the Netherlands and Sweden being joined by Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, the Czech Republic and Germany.

Figure 4
 'Child adoption by gays should be accepted in Europe', population aged 15 years and older, 2006
 (percentage agreeing with this statement)

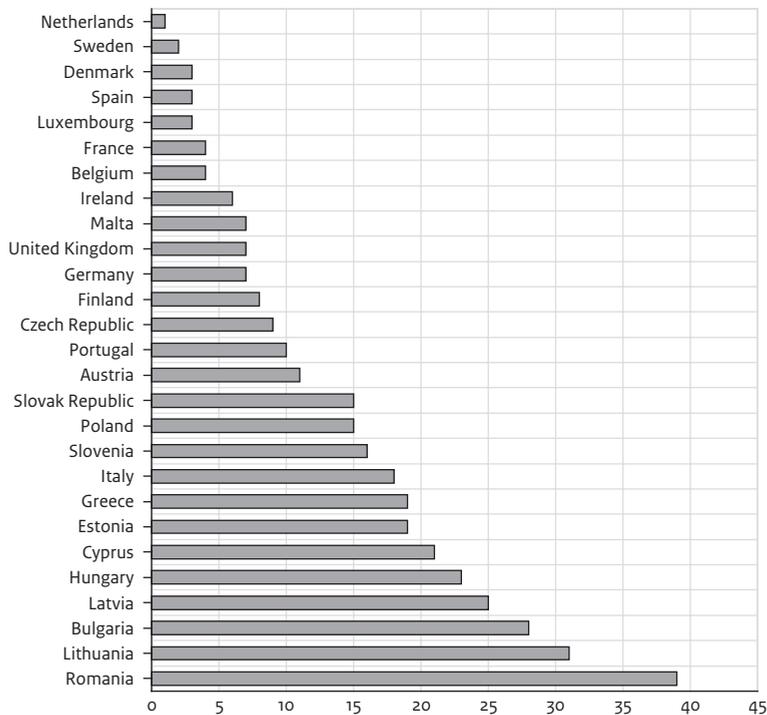


Source: EC (Eurobarometer 66.1)

Having gay neighbours is something that affects people more personally. This could imply that it generates more resistance, but this is found not to be the case; the differences between the countries are broadly in line with the earlier differences. Once again, the group who would feel uncomfortable if they had a homosexual neighbour is greatest in

the Eastern European countries, and more especially in Romania, where four out of ten would have difficulty with this. The Poles, who in response to earlier statements were often found at the bottom of the rankings, have now moved up more towards the middle group, with 15% who would feel uncomfortable. The Netherlands has the smallest proportion of people who say they would feel uncomfortable if they had a gay neighbour (1%).

Figure 5
'How would you feel personally if you had a gay man or woman as a neighbour?' Population aged 15 years and older, 2008 (percentage 'uncomfortable')



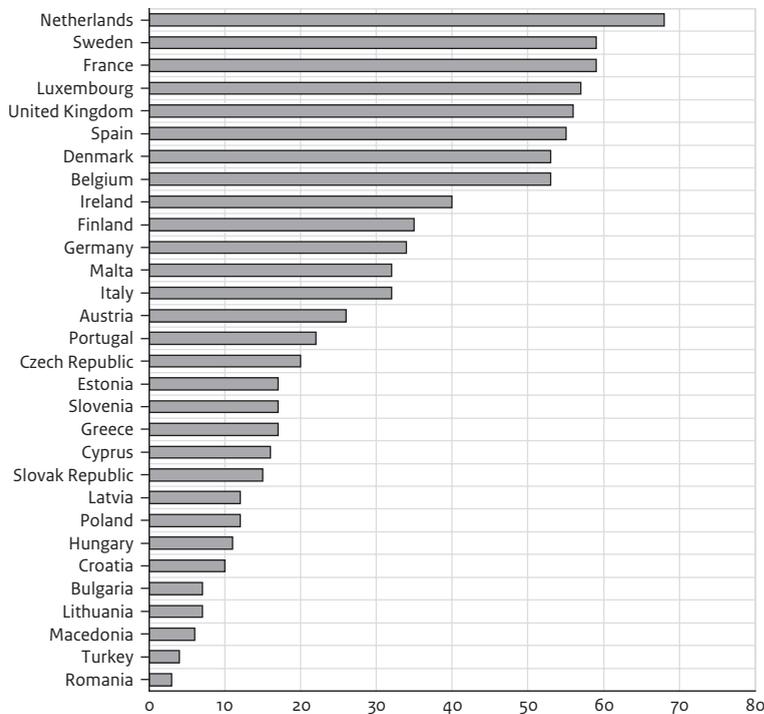
An interesting question that has occasionally been asked in recent Eurobarometer surveys is concerned with having homosexual friends or acquaintances. This question is interesting for several reasons. First and foremost, it provides an indication of the extent to which gay men and women are able to be open about their sexual preferences. It seems reasonable to assume that the proportion of homosexuals in society will be the same across Western countries, and in countries where homosexuals are able simply to be themselves, more people will know that their circle of friends and acquaintances includes gays and lesbians. Secondly, attitudes to homosexuality are often found to undergo a positive change when people experience gay men or women in their own

setting. The answers to this question can thus be interpreted as an indicator of the social climate in a country as regards attitudes to homosexuality.

Seen in this light, the findings can be readily understood. The Netherlands tops the list; with its relatively long tradition of growing acceptance of homosexuality, the percentage of the population who have one or more homosexuals in their circle of friends is greatest in the Netherlands. The majority of Southern and Central European countries occupy the middle ground, while the proportion of people with a ‘sexually diverse’ circle of friends is smallest in the former Eastern Bloc and Turkey.

Figure 6

Proportion who say they have friends or acquaintances who are homosexual, population aged 15 years and older, 2009 (percentages)



Source: EC (Eurobarometer 71.2)

The picture that emerges from these international opinion surveys is clear: when asked for their opinions on various topics, the Dutch population still hold the most liberal attitudes in Europe towards homosexuality. The difference compared with Sweden and Denmark is small, but compared with the majority of Southern, Central and above all Eastern European countries, views in the Netherlands are much more positive.

Nonetheless, in the Netherlands, too, there are some areas, and some groups, where attitudes are more negative; we shall explore this in more depth in the next section. It is also important to remember that investigating opinions is not the same as investigating behaviour – something for which empirical data are sadly not available.

3 The present situation in the Netherlands

When people are asked to respond to a range of statements about homosexuality, it is found that those with negative opinions form a clear minority. However, there are differences depending on the specific aspects concerned (the four dimensions referred to earlier).

The most general statement put to respondents is that gay men and women should be free to live their lives as they choose. Almost nine out of ten Dutch people agree with this statement. This is also the statement that is most often incorporated in all manner of surveys (including international surveys) and which attracts the most support. Two statements about sex also belong to this general dimension. The idea of sex between two people of the same gender evokes a fair amount of revulsion, especially sex between two men (27% find this offensive).

Homosexuality is sometimes seen as eroding the distinction between women and men. One in ten people believe that gay men are not really men; two in ten evidently consider this a complex issue, because their views on this subject are ambivalent.

Equal rights for gays and lesbians is something that is endorsed by the majority of the population, but the level of support is lower if children are involved than for relationships between adults: more than 20% reject the idea of equal adoption rights for gay couples. By contrast, the idea of no longer allowing people of the same sex to marry is endorsed by 'only' 11%; 70% believe that marriage should also be open to gay couples. Earlier studies have shown that public expressions of sexual preferences (gay or straight) will often meet with disapproval. In 2000, for example, 42% of the population aged between 18 and 70 years said they found it offensive if two men kissed each other in public. 32% held the same view for two women kissing (figures from the *SOCON* survey of Social and Cultural Developments in the Netherlands; Keuzenkamp et al. 2006). In 2006 the Netherlands Institute for Social Research/*SCP* put this question to the Dutch population aged 16 years and older and found comparable outcomes, except that the rejection of men kissing in public was greater (49%) than in the earlier survey (Keuzenkamp 2007). The percentages in the most recent *SCP* survey were slightly lower: 40% said they would find it offensive if two men kissed each other in public, while 27% would feel the same about two women. Some people in fact find anyone kissing in public offensive, though the percentage objecting is lower when it involves a straight couple (13%).

The fourth dimension of attitudes towards homosexuality is concerned with (hypothetical) situations designed to investigate people's attitudes to homosexuality closer to home: a child receiving lessons from a gay teacher, for example, or going to live with a partner of the same sex. Although this might be expected to be precisely the kind of thing with which people would have difficulty, more so than situations where homosexuality remains 'at a distance', this is found not to be the case. Only one in 20 people say they would find it a problem if their child were being taught by a gay teacher; rather more people, though still a clear minority (13%), would find it unacceptable if their son or daughter were to cohabit with someone of the same sex.

Table 1

Views on homosexuality, population aged 18 years and older, 2008 (in percentages)

	(completely) agree	neither agree nor disagree	(completely) disagree	missing
general				
gay men and women should be free to live their lives as they choose	86	7	4	3
I think that sex between two lesbians is disgusting	12	24	57	7
I think that sex between two gay men is disgusting	27	25	40	8
gay men aren't real men	9	18	67	7
equal rights				
gay marriage should be abolished	11	14	70	6
gay couples should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples	53	21	21	6
homosexuality in public				
I find it offensive if two men kiss in public	40	26	29	4
I find it offensive if two women kiss in public	27	27	42	5
I find it offensive if a man and a woman kiss in public	13	22	60	5
if I see a man and woman walking hand-in-hand, I find it more acceptable than if I see two men walking hand-in-hand	33	18	45	5
homosexuality in own setting				
I would have a problem if my child was being taught at school by a gay or lesbian teacher	6 (very) unacceptable	11	75 (very) acceptable	8
Imagine you had a son or daughter cohabiting with a partner of the same sex. Can you indicate how acceptable you would find that? ^a	13	23	64	

a Respondents had to select a number between 1 and 5, where 1 stands for very unacceptable and 5 for very acceptable.

Source: SCP (SLI '08)

Summarising measure

Promoting the social acceptance of homosexuals (homosexual men, lesbian women and bisexual men and women) is the main objective of the homosexual emancipation policy of the fourth government under Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, which took office

in 2007 (TK 2007/2008). At the request of the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Ronald Plasterk, SCP has developed a summarising measure which can serve as an indicator for measuring progress in achieving this objective (Keuzenkamp 2007). The measure is based on scores for the statements discussed above (see table 1').

The 2006 population survey revealed that 15% of the Dutch population had a negative score on the measure 'social acceptance in a broad sense' (table 2). In all three subsequent surveys, this percentage was substantially lower (9% in 2008 and 7% in 2009 and 2010). It is important to note here that non-Western migrants are not well represented in these surveys, whereas the proportion of people within this group with a relatively negative attitude to homosexuality is relatively high (see also below). Differences in the research methods used also mean that some caution is called for in comparing the first two surveys with the two later editions². Nonetheless, the conclusion would seem to be justified that the proportion of the population with negative attitudes to homosexuality has fallen substantially since 2006, prior to the present Balkenende government taking office.

Table 2

Public attitudes to homosexuality summarised in one measure, population aged 16 years and older^a (in percentages)

Source	completely negative	negative	neutral	positive	completely positive
Cultural Changes (Culturele Veranderingen) 2006	3	12	33	40	12
SCP Life Situation Index (Leefsituatie Index) 2008	2	7	27	46	19
Intomart survey for Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) 2009	1	6	25	47	21
Intomart survey for Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) 2010	1	6	23	45	26

a The figures for 2008 relate to the population aged 18 years and older. Analyses of the other sources involving only that age group lead to the same findings as for those aged 16 years and older.

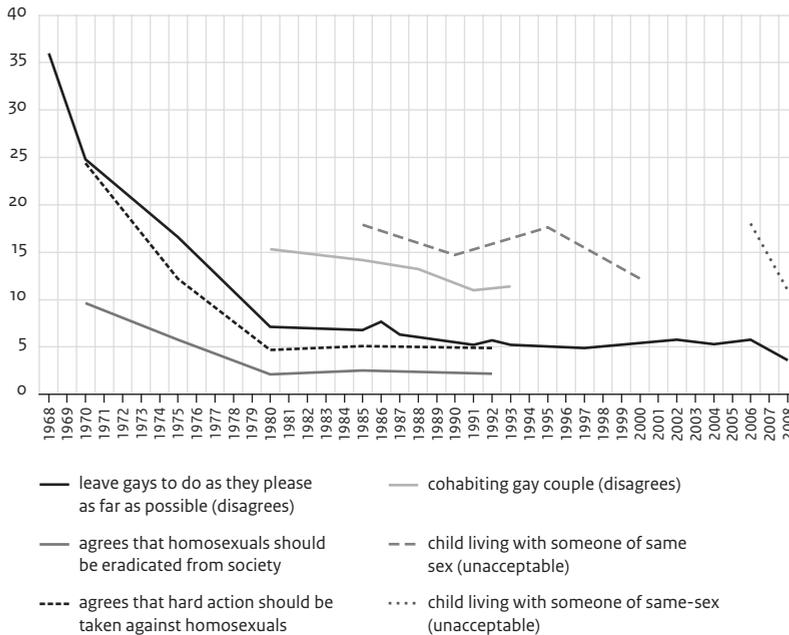
Source: SCP (CV'06); SCP (SLI'08), OCW (HOMO 2009); OCW (HOMO 2010)

4 Is acceptance declining or increasing?

The proportion of the Dutch population who hold negative attitudes towards homosexuality has declined since the middle of the 1960s (Keuzenkamp et al. 2006). The longest data time series available³ includes the question of whether people think that gays and lesbians should be free to live their lives as they choose. The percentage who disagreed with this statement fell in the 1970s and 80s from 36% to 7%, after which it fluctuated but still continued to fall slightly. As became apparent in the foregoing section, only 4% now disagree with this statement. Extreme statements such as 'hard action should be taken against homosexuals' and 'homosexuals should be eradicated from society' have not been included in large-scale surveys for some time now. The proportion of the population (21-64 years) who held this view fell until 1980 and at the start of the 1990s was held by 5% and 2%, respectively, of respondents.

Figure 7

Share of the population aged 21-64 years with negative scores on a number of items, 1968-2008 (in percentages)



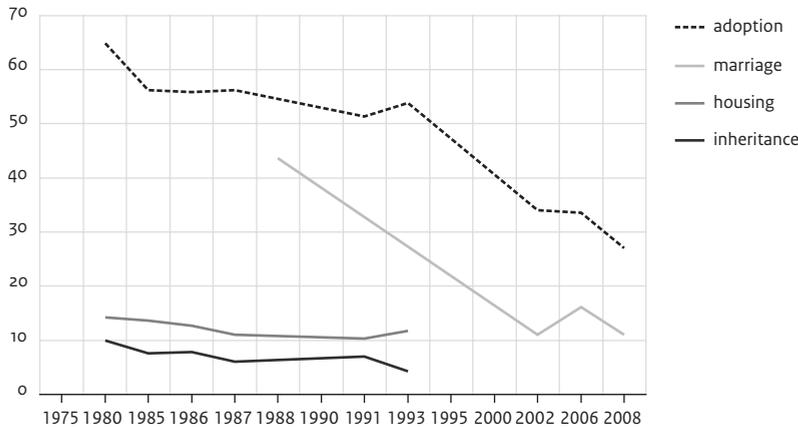
Source: SCP (Sex in Nederland 1968; Progressiviteit en conservatisme 1970; cv '75-'06; ESS '02 and '04); SLI '80); ITS (Socon '85-'00)

The question of how people feel about gay men and women living together has been covered in several surveys and in several different ways. Owing to differences in question formulation, it is difficult to make firm statement about this, but the findings do all point in the same direction: people have become more tolerant over the years, both as regards the idea itself and if it were to involve their own child.

Equal rights

The periodic survey 'Cultural Changes in the Netherlands' (*Culturele Veranderingen in Nederland*) also contains several questions relating to equal treatment. Older surveys were concerned about the right to housing and about inheritance. As long ago as the early 1980s, few people objected to this, and since the middle of the 1990s these questions have no longer been asked. By contrast, the right to adoption has a long tradition in terms of attention received in opinion surveys. In 1980, two-thirds of the Dutch population had a negative attitude towards equal adoption rights for gay and straight couples. This proportion has shrunk considerably since then, and in 2008 'only' 27% of the population held this view (while adoption by gay couples was made legal in 2009).

Figure 8
Share of the population aged 21-64 years who reject equal rights for gays as regards inheritance, housing, adoption and marriage, 1980-2008 (in percentages)



Source: SCP (CV'80-CV'08)

The attention devoted in surveys to allowing homosexual partners to marry is of more recent date, being included in the *Cultural Changes* survey, for example, for the first time in 1988. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed with the statement 'Gay couples should have the right to marry'. More than four out of ten Dutch respondents were against the idea. Once civil marriage was made legal for gay couples, the question

was changed from 2000 to: 'Gay couples are now legally allowed to marry. Do you think that is a good thing, a bad thing or do you not mind one way or the other?'. One in ten Dutch citizens at that time felt it was a bad thing; subsequent surveys show some fluctuations: in 2006, 16% felt it was a bad thing, while in 2008 the percentage was the same as in 2002 (11%).

5 Differences between population groups in the Netherlands

5.1 Sex, age, education and religiosity

Earlier research has shown that there are clear differences between different groups in the population in their attitudes towards homosexuality. Men, older people, the lower-educated and people with orthodox religious beliefs emerge in nationally representative surveys as groups which have more difficulty on average with homosexuality (Keuzenkamp et al. 2006; for an overview of the literature see Kuyper & Bakker 2006). Here we first explore on the basis of the policy indicator for social acceptance to what extent that picture still holds in 2010. In the subsequent sections we home in successively on young people and migrants.

If we look at which sections of the population contain the highest proportion of people with a negative attitude to homosexuality, the most religious group stand out; a third of those who go to church at least once a week have a negative attitude to homosexuality, compared with only 4% of those who never go to church. Other groups with a higher than average proportion of homonegative attitudes are the over-65s (12%), the low-educated (11%), people who vote for the Party for Freedom and Progress (PVV) (11%), people who support the Christian Democratic Union (CDA) (9%) and men (9%). Non-Western migrants are insufficiently represented in this survey population to enable them to be considered separately.

Table 3

Differences in attitudes to homosexuality by sex, age, education, and political preferences; population aged 16 years and older, 2010 (in percentages)

	negative	neither negative nor positive	positive
sex			
male	9	26	65
female	4	19	77
age			
16-24 years	4	24	71
25-34 years	8	19	73
35-49 years	5	21	74
50-64 years	5	21	74
65 years and older	12	30	58
education level *			
bao, vmbo	11	29	61
havo/vwo/mbo	4	21	75
hbo/wo	5	17	77

Table 3 (continued)

	negative	neither negative nor positive	positive
religiosity			
attends church once a week or more			
attends church once every two weeks	34	35	30
or less	5	26	69
never	4	19	77
political preference ^{a**}			
CDA	9	39	52
PvdA	3	14	84
VVD	5	22	73
SP	1	13	86
D66	3	13	84
Groen Links	0	20	80
PVV	11	25	63
total (n=1001)	7	23	71

a Other political preferences could not be considered separately because of the small number of respondents in the survey population.

* bao = primary education; vmbo = pre-vocational secondary education; havo = senior general secondary education; vwo = pre-university education; mbo = senior secondary vocational education; hbo = higher professional education; wo = university education

** CDA = Christian Democratic Union; PvdA = Labour Party; VVD = People's Party for Freedom and Democracy; SP = Socialist Party; D66 = Democrats 66; Groen Links = Green Left Alliance; PVV = Party for Freedom and Progress.

Source: OCW (HOMO 2010)

5.2 Views of young people on homosexuality

Young people are in a phase of life in which they start experimenting with relationships and may have questions about their own sexual orientation. A safe environment – at home, at school, among friends – which is not dominated by negative opinions about homosexuality is then important. Earlier research has shown that a relatively large number of young people have difficulty with homosexuality. Up-to-date figures on the attitudes of young people to homosexuality will not become available until the spring of 2010, and out of necessity we therefore use figures from 2004 here.

A high proportion of young people in 2004 had difficulty with the idea of sex between young gays, especially homosexual boys. Almost four out of ten felt disgusted by this, compared with fewer than two in ten who would think this if two girls were involved. When asked how they would react to homosexuality in their own setting, young people are less negative; 8% say they would break off a friendship with their best friend if they turned out to be gay.

Table 4

Attitudes towards homosexuality among young people aged 11-24 years, 2004 (in percentages)

	Not really good/ not good at all		ok/absolutely fine
	(completely) agree	neither agree nor disagree	(completely) disagree
Two boys care a lot for each other; if they make love, I think that's ...	30		70
Two girls care a lot for each other; if they make love, I think that's ...	19		81
It's disgusting if two boys have sex together	38	20	42
It's disgusting if two girls have sex together	17	18	65
If my best friend told me he/she was gay, I would break off the friendship	8	10	82

Source: RNG (IOS'04)

Among young people, too, however, there are differences of opinion. Research has shown that girls take a more positive stance on homosexuality than boys, and that young people aged below 18 years are more negative than those aged between 18 and 24 years. There are also differences across ethnic groups; Moroccan and Turkish youngsters have the most negative attitudes compared with their Surinamese and indigenous peers.

5.3 Differences between ethnic groups

In order to expose the attitudes of non-Western migrants to homosexuality, three statements were submitted in 2004/2005 to Dutch citizens of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean origin as well as to a control group of indigenous Dutch people from the 50 largest municipalities⁴. More recent figures on these four large groups will not become available until 2011. The reactions of the different groups to the individual statements are first given below, followed by an overview based on a summarising measure. The statement that gay men and women should be able to live their lives as they choose receives the most support in all groups. Indigenous city-dwellers respond most positively to this statement, followed by those of Surinamese origin. The support among Dutch citizens of Turkish and Moroccan origin is substantially lower, though is still the majority view (60% and 64%, respectively).

The fact that gays and lesbians are allowed to marry in the Netherlands is not something with which all groups agree. A majority of the indigenous Dutch and, to a lesser extent, those of Surinamese origin think this is a good thing, but a majority of those of Turkish

origin (55%) think it is not. 48% of Dutch citizens of Moroccan origin disagree with allowing gay marriage, while 31 support the idea.

The third statement submitted to respondents sought to ascertain whether they would have a problem if their child were to be taught at school by a gay or lesbian teacher. A majority in all groups said they would not; Dutch citizens of Turkish origin most often (27%) said they would have difficulty with this.

Table 5

Opinions of 15-64 year-olds from five ethnic groups on three statements, 2004/2005 (in percentages)

	(completely) agree	neither agree nor disagree	(completely) disagree	not willing to say, no information
gays and lesbians should be able to live their lives as they choose				
Turks	60	11	23	6
Moroccans	64	11	17	8
Surinamese	88	6	4	2
Antilleans	77	9	12	2
indigenous city-dwellers	95	2	3	0
it's a good thing that gays are allowed to marry				
Turks	26	12	55	7
Moroccans	31	12	48	9
Surinamese	61	12	22	5
Antilleans	47	15	36	3
indigenous city-dwellers	83	7	9	1
I would have a problem if my child was being taught at school by a gay or lesbian teacher				
Turks	27	9	58	6
Moroccans	21	7	65	7
Surinamese	11	6	81	2
Antilleans	14	9	75	2
indigenous city-dwellers	2	3	95	0

Source: SCP (LAS'04/'05)

Based on the scores on these three items, a summarising measure was again calculated, enabling an impression to be gained of the attitudes of the different groups to homosexuality.⁵ Table 6 shows the results. The highest proportion of people with negative attitudes to homosexuality is found among Dutch citizens of Turkish origin (32%), followed by those of Moroccan origin (26%). Indigenous city-dwellers have the most positive attitudes to homosexuality, closely followed by Dutch citizens of Surinamese origin.

Table 6

Attitudes to homosexuality by ethnic group, 15-64 year-olds, 2004/2005 (in percentages)

	completely negative	negative	neutral	positive	completely positive
Turks	10	22	34	26	7
Moroccans	7	19	33	30	11
Surinamese	1	6	19	43	32
Antilleans	3	12	25	37	23
indigenous city-dwellers	-	2	9	46	44

Source: SCP (LAS'04/'05)

An earlier SCP publication (Keuzenkamp et al. 2006) investigated the extent to which the differences between ethnic groups can be explained from differences in population characteristics, such as the average lower educational level and greater importance attached to religion by members of ethnic minorities. The latter, in particular, was found to be an important determinant, though the relatively low education level of ethnic minorities also plays a role. Beyond this, generational differences are important among people of Turkish, Moroccan and Antillean origin: the first generation of these groups hold more negative attitudes to homosexuality.

6 Conclusions

The picture that emerges from the opinion surveys is that the attitudes of the Dutch population to homosexuality are generally fairly positive – not on all aspects and not in all population groups, but positive views still predominate. The summarising indicator developed by SCP to monitor the trend in public attitudes over time shows that the proportion of the population who could be described as ‘homonegative’ has declined from 15% in 2006 to 7% in 2010, though this has to be qualified with the comment that non-Western migrants are not well represented in the surveys. Since these groups relatively often have difficulty with homosexuality, the overall percentage with negative attitudes to homosexuality is likely to be higher. On the other hand, it is plausible that the trend overall is broadly moving in the direction envisaged by the Dutch government, i.e. an increase in the acceptance of homosexuality in Dutch society.

One important issue with the information presented above is that it reflects only what people say: people say what they think on the basis of a number of statements. Those responses may and often will be true, but the possibility can still not be ruled out that people will give socially desirable responses. Moreover, what people think (or say they think) is something different from how they behave when confronted with gay men and women. For example, how does someone react if it turns out that their neighbour or colleague actually is gay? And what does someone do if they witness negativity towards gays or lesbians? This type of information is difficult to gather in nationally representative research. One way of obtaining a more complete picture would be to elicit information from gays and lesbians themselves. It is therefore important that the monitoring of the acceptance of homosexuality in the future be expanded to include information gathered from the target group itself.

Notes

- 1 The negatively formulated items were recoded. A total score was then calculated for all respondents, with respondents who did not respond to more than one statement or who indicated that they had never thought about it being left out of consideration (4% of respondents). Where a value was missing for the other respondents a score was imputed, taking into account the overall response pattern of the respondent in question and the average among all respondents to the item in question. The statement about straight men and women kissing was of course not included in this measure.
- 2 The 2006 and 2008 surveys were written surveys, while those from 2009 and 2010 were conducted via the Internet. Moreover, the latter two surveys involved a panel consisting of people who declared themselves willing to take part in surveys repeatedly. These persons had not volunteered to be on a panel, but were recruited by means of a random sample.
- 3 The formulation in later years slightly different from earlier editions. From 1968 to 1997 the question was: 'Do you think that people who are homosexuals should as far as possible be free to live in their own way, or do you think that this should be countered as far as possible? ". This question formed part of the *Cultural Changes* survey, but was no longer formulated in this way after 1997. The question occurs in a slightly different form in the European Social Survey for 2002 and 2004, namely as a statement: 'Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish', and since 2006 has been included in this form [in Dutch] in the *Cultural Changes* survey (in 2008, the written questionnaire was no longer part of that survey, but was attached as a separate module (S11) to the Labour Force Survey (EBB) – see also the information on the sources at www.scp.nl).
- 4 The vast majority of migrants aged 15 years and older of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillean origin live in one of the 50 largest municipalities (75-79%); this applies for 35% of the indigenous population. As a result, the indigenous respondents in this survey are by definition a select group, because the majority do not live in the 50 largest municipalities.
- 5 Respondents who failed to provide a response to two or three items are left out of consideration here (4% of respondents).

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