

Queering Social Survey Research
Seminar 3 - Collecting Social Data on Sex, Gender
and Sexualities: Experiences in Fields

Surveying sexual orientation and gender identity in South Africa

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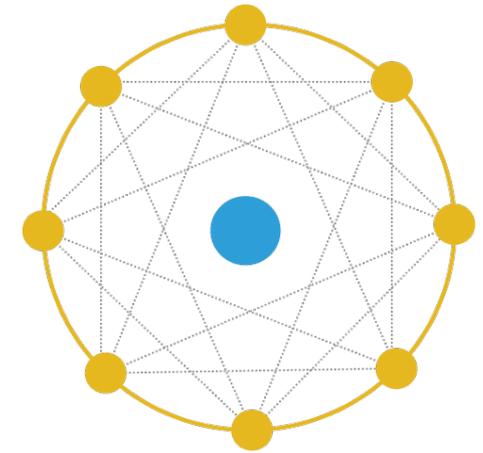
South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS)

- Nationally representative of the population 16 years and older living in private households in the 9 provinces
 - Primary sampling units: 500 **census enumerator areas (EAs)**, stratified by **province, geography type** and **majority population group**
 - Secondary sampling units: 7 **household visiting points randomly selected** per EA
 - One respondent 16+ years **randomly selected per household** (15+ can be accommodated)
- Of 3,500 **addresses** issued with a **realisation rate** of more than **75%** achieved
- Responses to the survey **voluntary** and **confidential**, collected by **face-to-face interview**
- Data collection: **November-December**



Single versus Multiple Indicators

- **Overreliance of single indicators:** Most survey-based examinations of public attitudes towards homosexuality in country relied on single item measures.
- Need to **identify different conceptual and thematic aspects** of subject matter to be examined in SASAS.
- **Subsequent indicator selection** should ideally include several items to improve scaleability and reliability of measurement
- Example: Herek Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gays (ATLG)



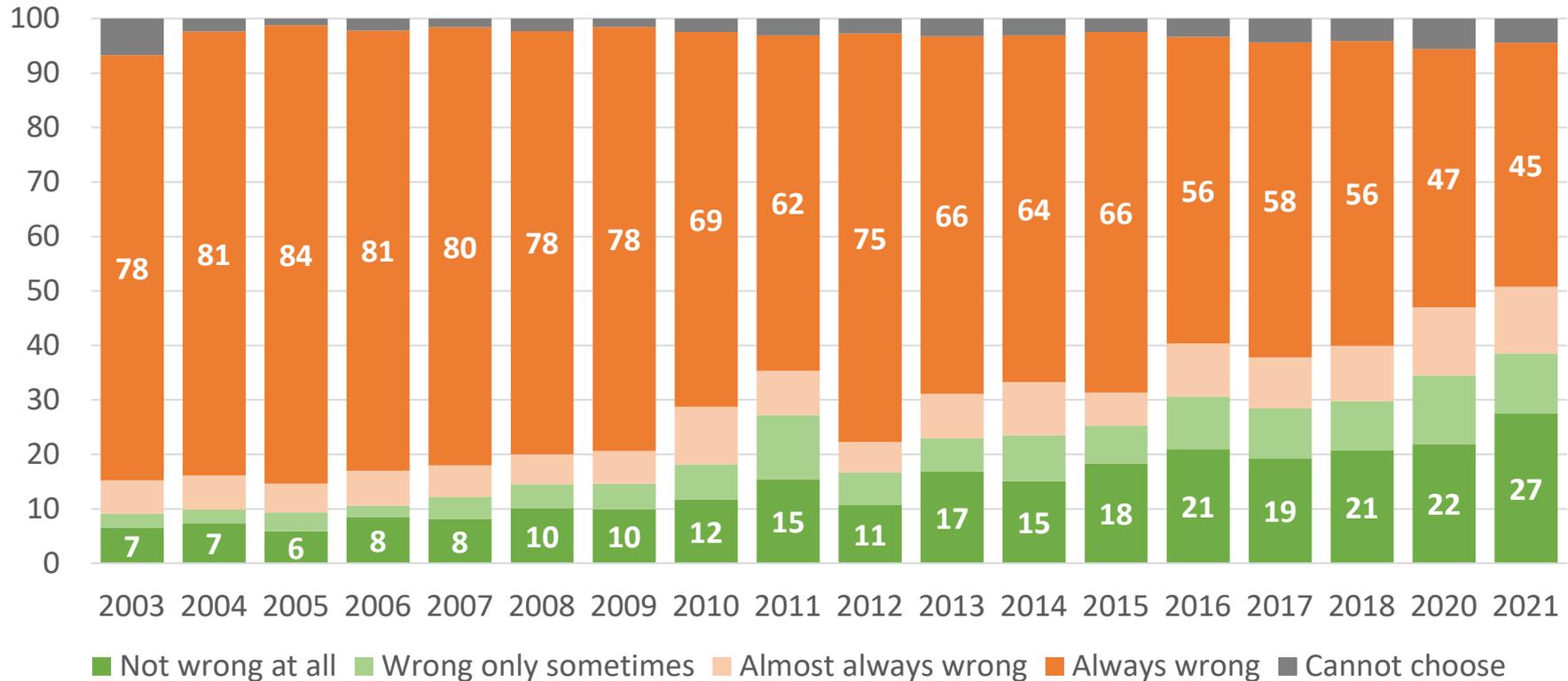
Single-item indicators fielded in SASAS

- **“Do you think it is wrong or not wrong for two adults of the same sex to have sexual relations?”** – 4 point scale
 - Core SASAS item, 2003-2021
- **“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement...Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish”** – 5-point agreement scale
 - ESS measure fielded in SASAS 2012-2021; alt. form 2010-11
- SASAS 2012, 2021 Special Family Questionnaire
 - Parenting: **“A same sex female couple can bring up a child as well as a male-female couple”**; **“A same sex male couple can bring up a child as well as a male-female couple”** – 5-pt agreement scale
 - Same-sex marriage (2012 only): **“Please say to what extent you approve or disapprove of...Same-sex couples (gay men / lesbian women) getting married”** – 5-pt scale

Same-sex sexual relations

SAME-SEX SEXUAL RELATIONS (2003-2021)

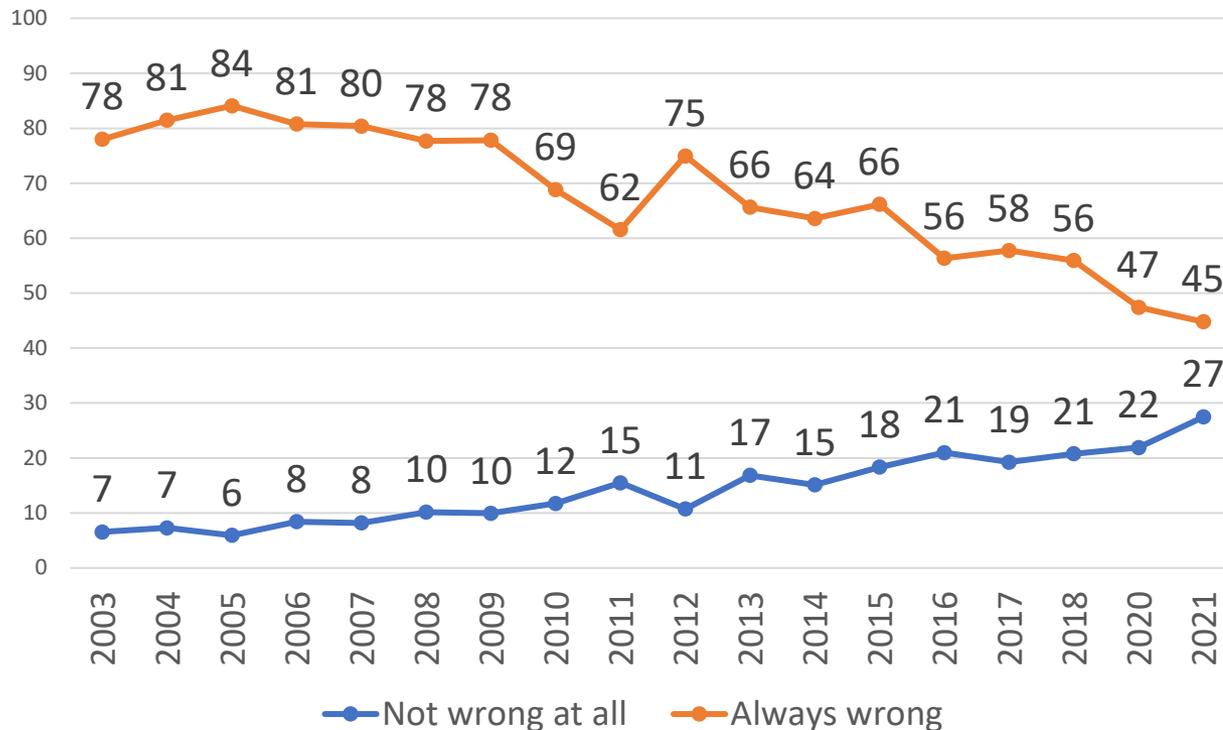
Views on two adults of the same sex having sexual relations



Same-sex sexual relations

SAME-SEX SEXUAL RELATIONS (2003-2021)

% saying that two adults of the same sex having sexual relations is 'always wrong' or 'not wrong at all'

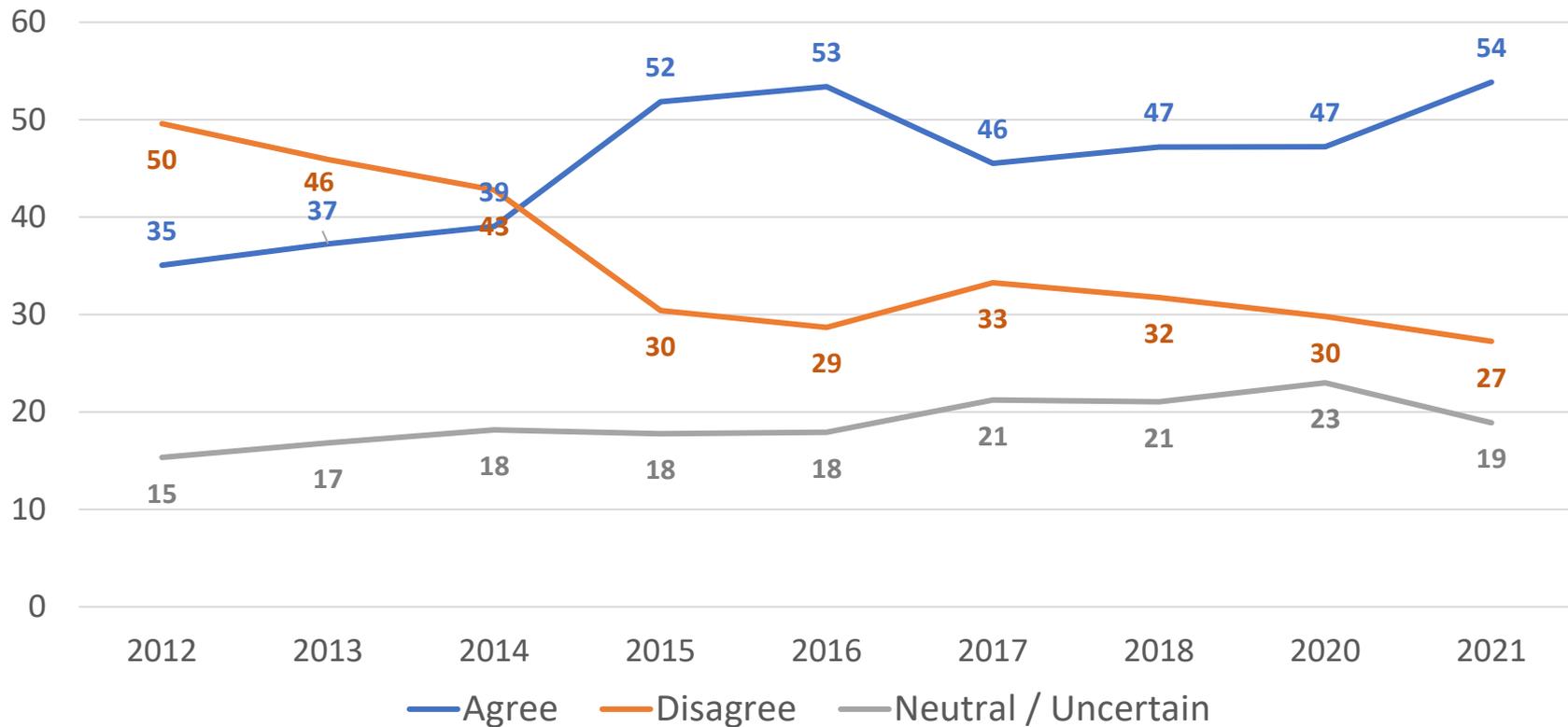


- Core SASAS single-item measures typically focused on same-sex sexual relations
- Very narrow focus
- Trends show some signs of progress from an exceptionally negative perspective
- Changes also evident on acceptance of same-sex marriage

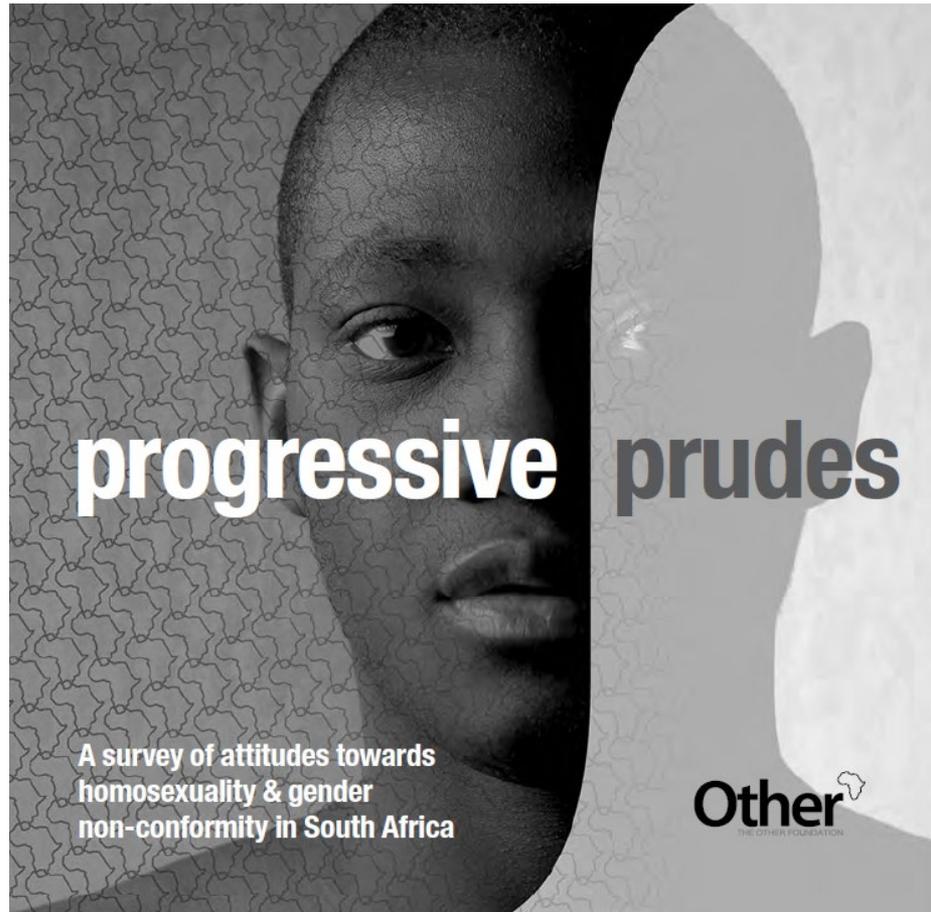
Acceptance

FREEDOM TO LIVE LIFE AS CHOOSE (2012-2021)

"Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish" (%)



Other Foundation SOGI Module (2015/16)



RESEARCH REFERENCE GROUP

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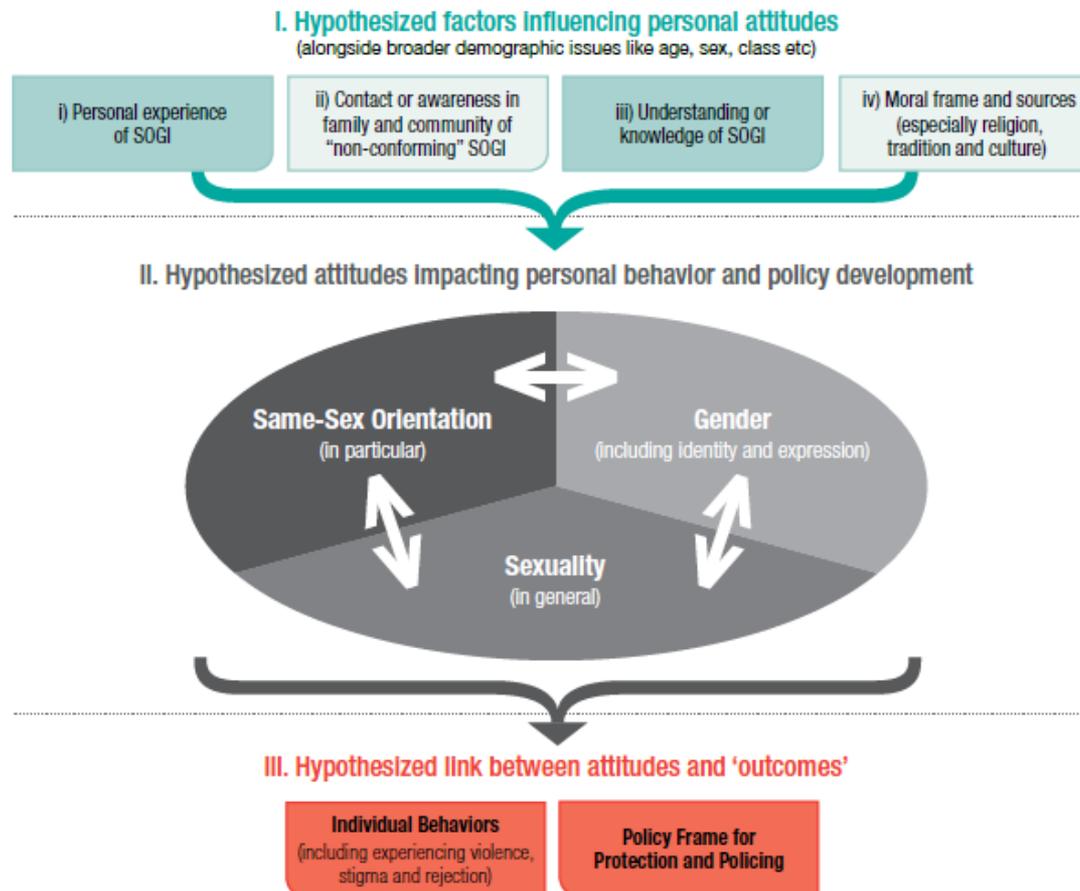
Dr Carla Sutherland

Mr Niel Victor

The purpose of commissioning the study was to provide a rich empirical resource to deepen the knowledge and understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity in Africa.

Other Foundation SOGI Module Conceptual framework

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING THE RESEARCH



Self-identity

TABLE 1: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU THINK OF YOURSELF? (COLUMN PERCENTAGES)

	Total Population		Male		Female	
Heterosexual or Straight	97.1	(96.1 – 97.8)	97.0	(95.5 – 98.0)	97.1	(95.7 – 98.0)
Gay or Lesbian	0.7	(0.4 – 1.3)	0.7	(0.3 – 1.8)	0.7	(0.3 – 1.5)
Bisexual	0.5	(0.2 – 1.1)	0.2	(0.1 – 0.6)	0.7	(0.3 – 2.0)
Other	0.2	(0.1 – 0.6)	0.3	(0.1 – 1.0)	0.2	(0.0 – 0.6)
(Don't know)	0.2	(0.1 – 0.6)	0.2	(0.1 – 0.4)	0.3	(0.1 – 0.8)
(Refused to answer)	0.2	(0.0 – 0.8)	0.3	(0.1 – 1.7)	0.0	(0.0 – 0.2)
(No answer provided)	1.1	(0.7 – 1.7)	1.3	(0.7 – 2.4)	0.9	(0.5 – 1.8)
Total	100.0		100.0		100.0	
% LGBT	1.4	(0.9 – 2.2)	1.2	(0.7 – 2.3)	1.6	(0.9 – 2.9)

Note: Numbers in brackets represent the 95% confidence intervals on the point estimates. The percentage identifying as LGBT is derived by combining the share reporting as 'gay or lesbian', 'bisexual' or 'other'.

The total percentage of the population identifying as LGBT (1.4 percent) is within the range observed in other countries around the world.

Self-identity



In South Africa, approximately 350,00 men and almost 2.6 million women present themselves in public – i.e, they dress and act – in a gender non-conforming way

TABLE 2: WHAT BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU PRESENT YOURSELF IN PUBLIC IN TERMS OF HOW YOU DRESS AND ACT?
(COLUMN PERCENTAGES)

	Male		Female	
Strongly, and exclusively masculine	57.5	(52.9 – 62.0)	14.5	(11.5 – 18.0)
Mostly masculine	26.4	(22.6 – 30.5)	6.8	(5.1 – 9.0)
A mixture of both masculine and feminine	3.2	(2.1 – 5.0)	4.2	(3.0 – 5.7)
Mostly feminine	5.2	(3.6 – 7.5)	41.4	(37.3 – 45.6)
Strongly, and exclusively feminine	2.4	(1.4 – 4.2)	27.0	(23.5 – 30.7)
Neither masculine or feminine	2.4	(1.3 – 4.3)	4.8	(3.2 – 7.0)
(Don't know)	0.9	(0.5 – 1.8)	0.8	(0.5 – 1.4)
(Refused to answer)	0.5	(0.2 – 1.2)	0.1	(0.0 – 0.2)
(No answer provided)	1.5	(0.8 – 2.7)	0.7	(0.4 – 1.3)
Total	100.0		100.0	
N	1,233		1,882	

Attitudes

More than 2 in 4 of all South Africans indicated that they will 'accept' a gay family member,

55%



but only

27%



of all South Africans (1 in 4) have a friend or family member whom they know is homosexual

51%

of all South Africans believe that gay people should have the same human rights as all other citizens



even though



72%

feel that same-sex sexual activity is 'morally wrong'

1 out of every 2 people believe that gay and lesbian people should be included in 'my culture and tradition'

52%



2:1

A ratio of 2:1 of South Africans supported keeping the current Constitutional protections against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation; compared to those who thought it should be removed



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Attitudes

Between 2012 and 2015, there has been a tenfold increase in the number of South Africans who "strongly agree" with allowing same-sex marriage



During the same period, the number of people who 'strongly disagree' with allowing same sex marriage dropped by half



48%

23%

however, between 14% (with regard to allowing same sex marriage)



and 27% (with regard to supporting constitutional protection)



of South Africans did not take a definite position either way

'moderately religious'
people tend to be the
most tolerant

Predictors

One in four people (27 percent) in South Africa report having a friend or family member who is homosexual and well over half the population (55 percent) said that they would “accept” a gay family member.



41%

2 out of 5 South Africans report not knowing any gay or lesbian people

people under the age of 24 are twice as likely to have gay and lesbian friends than people over 65 years old



Factors that appear to affect the likelihood of knowing and reporting to have close contact with gay and lesbian people are sex, race; and religion.

‘moderately religious’ people tend to be the most tolerant

Behavioural outcomes: Violence

80%

8 out of 10 people said they have not –nor would they ever consider– verbally or physically abusing someone who was gender non-conforming



but

450,000

South Africans have physically harmed women “who dress and behave like men in public” in the prior 12 months

90%

of both black and white adults say they have not physically hurt gender non-conforming women ‘and would never do it’

black adults



white adults



1%

of both black and white adults reported physically harming gender non-conforming women in the past year

black adults



white adults



Practical issues for consideration



- **Inclusion in multi-topic surveys:** strong appeal needs to be made
- **Funding** to ensure adequate representation of SOGI modules
- **Addressing the underrepresentation:** Capturing the voices of LGBTIQ+ in representative surveys
- **Harmonisation** of measures advocated
- **Frequency** of in-depth surveying needs to be considered
- **Comparative** research



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Conclusion: Putting pride firmly on the survey research agenda



- Poor track record, but baseline conceptually-grounded, in-depth content exists
 - Majority of survey-based research still remains thin on content
- Need for position paper/provocation from seminar series:
 - lobbying for greater representation, harmonization and moving beyond the ad hoc
- Interlinking between survey series (GCRO, StatsSA, Social Surveys Africa, HSRC, etc)



thank you

English	Thank you
Afrikaans	Dankie
Ndebele	Ngiyathokoza
Xhosa	Enkosi
Zulu	Ngiyabonga
Sepedi	Ke a leboga
Sesotho	Ke a leboha
Setswana	Ke a leboga
Xitsonga	Ndzi khense ngopfu
SiSwati	Ngiyabonga
Tshivenda	Ndi a livhuwa
Nama	Gangans

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