

Research of the FADA at a glance:

Attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Germany

Results of a representative survey

Overview of the survey

The survey aims to provide a current overview on the attitudes of people in Germany towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB). In addition, the views on questions regarding equality before the law and on addressing the topic of sexual diversity at school were to be ascertained. The survey is based on nationwide telephone interviews of about 2,000 people aged 16 years or older. It was carried out by the Social Science Survey Centre in Duisburg (*Sozialwissenschaftliches Umfragezentrum GmbH Duisburg - SUZ*) from 04 October to 29 November 2016.

Authors, year of publication and title of the survey

Küpper, Beate; Klocke, Ulrich; Hoffmann, Lena-Carlotta (2017): *Einstellungen gegenüber lesbischen, schwulen und bisexuellen Menschen in Deutschland. Ergebnisse einer bevölkerungsrepräsentativen Umfrage*. Edited by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Results

Assumptions and attitudes towards LGB

- The majority of respondents (81 per cent) also perceive that homosexual and bisexual people still experience discrimination. In addition, there is a broad agreement regarding the **protection against discrimination** on grounds of sexual orientation: 95 per cent support the existing statutory prohibition of discrimination.
- Regarding the forms of **traditional homophobia** - i.e. overtly expressed attitudes disparaging homosexuality as being immoral or unnatural as well as denying equal rights - a positive trend continues: only a small part of the population shares such views (12 per cent).
- When the survey was conducted - i.e. a few months prior to the resolution of the German *Bundestag* on opening up the institution of marriage for same-sex couples - 83 per cent of respondents partly or entirely agreed that **same-sex marriage** ought to be permitted. A majority also supported equal rights regarding adoption and support with assisted reproduction, though to a slightly lesser extent.
- **Modern or indirect forms of homophobia** - e.g. rejecting overt display of homosexuality in public or the discussion of the issue in media - are more common than forms of traditional homophobia. For instance, 44 per cent hold the view that homosexual people should stop "making such a fuss about their sexuality".
- This also manifests in the **affective component** of prejudice, which represents the feelings towards a particular group of people. Thus, a relatively large part of respondents have negative emotions towards an open approach to homosexuality in public: 28 to 38 per cent

feel uncomfortable when seeing two women or men kissing in the street. Moreover, about every tenth respondent would have a problem with homosexual colleagues. In contrast, almost four out of ten would feel uncomfortable if their own child were homosexual.

- According to the survey, about 20 per cent of respondents tend to have **derogatory attitudes towards trans* people**. The attitudes towards trans* and homosexual people are closely linked: someone who disparages one group is likely to do the same with the other group.

Differences between sociodemographic subgroups of the population

- Derogatory attitudes towards homosexual and bisexual people are to be found throughout all population groups, though they are more noticeable among some subgroups. Hence, homophobic attitudes are more common among **older age groups** than among younger respondents. The same holds true for those with lower formal **educational attainments**. In addition, the well-known difference between **men and women** is confirmed: on average, men are more likely to have negative attitudes than women.
- Likewise, the attitudes of respondents with a **migrant background** turn out to be more negative compared to those of people without a migrant background. In this respect, the characteristic 'migrant background' refers to a very heterogeneous population group with completely different immigration backgrounds, in particular from Poland, countries of the former Soviet Union and Turkey.
- Derogatory attitudes towards LGB range up to society's political centre, albeit they are most widely represented among people who consider themselves as **right-wing** and **potential voters** of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CDU/CSU) as well as non-voters.

Approach to sexual diversity in schools

- 90 per cent of those surveyed endorse the imparting of **acceptance towards homosexual and bisexual people** to pupils. A part of respondents, however, reject the specific means to achieve this goal: for instance, around one quarter of them hold the view that only couples of man and woman should be presented when the topic is of love and partnership at school.
- Respondents who are aware that the **curricula** aim to impart acceptance towards LGB and not to encourage to try out different sex practices significantly more often argue in support of addressing the topic of sexual diversity at school.
- In addition, it is also apparent that the topic **is yet hardly present in school lessons**. Thus, 64 per cent of respondents aged between 16 to 29 years report that their teaching staff have never used teaching examples or materials dealing with LGB people too.

Further selected results

- One's personal **affiliation to a group perceived as being discriminated against** (e.g. on grounds of age or ethnic, cultural or religious affiliation) correlates with a higher tendency to derogatory attitudes towards LGB.
- Moreover, the results confirm the known correlation between **religiousness** and homophobia: the more the respondents consider themselves as being religious, the more likely they tend to disparage LGBT people. In contrast, the religious affiliation *per se* is less significant.

- Finally, the correlation between homophobic attitudes and **right-wing populism** becomes clear. In this respect, an authoritarian attitude, distrust of democracy and disparagement of "strangers" are linked with a higher likeliness of disparaging homosexual people.

Need for action

The following needs for action for politics, society and research were identified in consultation with experts from the academia and practice:

- eliminating unequal treatment before the law and revising arrangements in organisations and companies along the lines of the precept of equality and the prohibition of discrimination;
- information about homosexuality and same-sex lifestyles and awareness building towards modern, indirect forms of disparagement;
- establishing the topic of sexual diversity in initial and continuing training for professionals in the fields of education, health and nursing as well as the police;
- increasingly addressing and presenting sexual diversity in different spheres of life in a natural manner without depicting homosexuality and bisexuality as "deviations from the norm" or unduly emphasising the topic of sexuality;
- imparting of knowledge about the aims of curricula taking sexual diversity into account at school, thus preventing misinformation and rumours;
- consolidating nuanced surveys on public attitudes towards LGB people and increased consideration of attitudes towards trans* and intersex people.

More information

The entire report on the survey can be downloaded (in German language only) => [here](#).

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