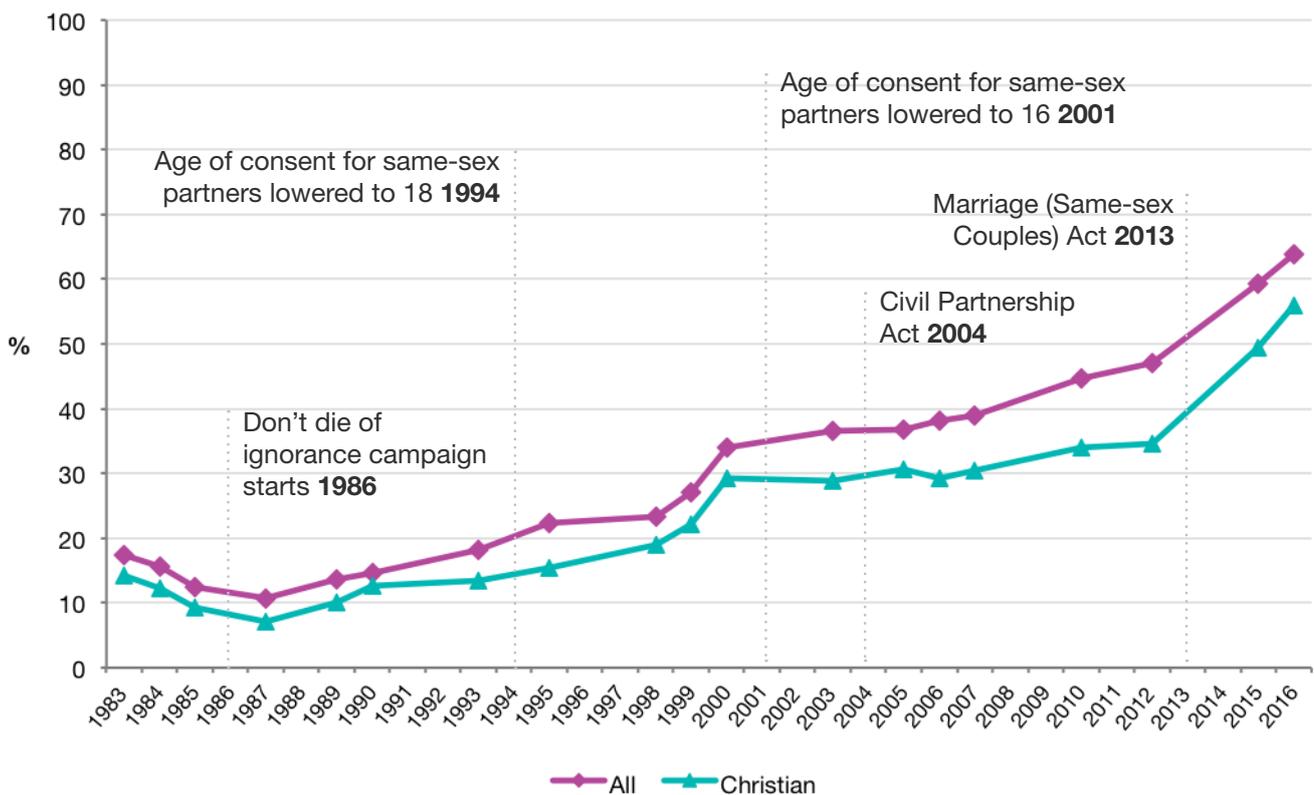


Moral issues

Sex, gender identity and euthanasia

Attitudes to sex before marriage, same-sex relationships, abortion and pornography have all become more liberal. While people who identify as religious, older people and those without a formal education are less liberal, there are signs this is changing.

Acceptance of same-sex relationships has increased quickly in the last four years, especially among Christians



Overview

This chapter explores attitudes to a range of personal and political issues and finds that the growth in social liberalism seen in recent decades continues. Attitudes to sex before marriage, same-sex relationships, abortion and pornography have all become more liberal, while attitudes to euthanasia remain largely unchanged. For the first time using the British Social Attitude (BSA) survey's method, attitudes to transgender people are also examined. Underneath this liberalising trend however, we find some important demographic dividing lines.

The growth in social liberalism continues

The liberalisation in attitudes to pre-marital sex, same-sex relationships, abortion and pornography continue. For the first two of these, this trend has accelerated in recent years.

- A significant majority of people (75%) say that sex before marriage is “not at all wrong”, an increase of 11 percentage points since 2012, and 5 percentage points since 2015.
 - Attitudes towards same-sex relationships have become significantly more liberal with 64% of people saying that they are “not wrong at all”, up from 59% in 2015, and 47% in 2012.
 - 93% of people think that if a woman's health is seriously endangered, an abortion should be allowed. Record-highs of people say an abortion should be allowed if a woman decides on her own she does not want the child (70%) or if a couple cannot afford any more children (65%).
 - 41% of people feel some films are too violent or pornographic to be watched even by adults, down from 59% of people in 1996.
-

Some views contradict policy and practice

Broad support for a form of euthanasia continues and contrasts with its total legal prohibition. Meanwhile, low self-reported levels of prejudice to transgender people contrast with when people are asked about specific situations.

- 77% of people feel a person with a painful incurable disease should be able to legally request that a doctor end their life. This support has been stable for over 30 years.
 - The vast majority of people (82%) describe themselves as “not prejudiced at all” to transgender people. However, less than half of people say suitably qualified transgender people should definitely be employed as police officers or primary school teachers (43% and 41% respectively).
-

Divides by age, religion and education

While social liberalism seems to be growing, there are notable divides by certain demographics.

- People who have a religion are less likely to hold liberal views than those with no religion on all of the topics we examine in this chapter.
- Similarly, older people are less likely to hold socially liberal views than younger people for all of the topics except transgender issues.
- People without formal educational qualifications are more likely to be socially conservative than those with qualifications in their views on same-sex relationships, abortion and transgender issues.

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Introduction

In this chapter we examine whether there is a further onward trend of ‘social liberalism’, typically the belief that there is a personal realm in which the only role of the state is as a guarantor of freedoms, counter-posed against ‘social conservatism’, which suggests that societal or state-sanctioned moral judgement is what keeps society cohesive and strong.

This year’s BSA questions allow us to examine this question across a range of questions covering personal or private autonomy, including sex before marriage, same-sex relationships, the use of pornography, transgender rights and attitudes to abortion and euthanasia. While this is not an exhaustive list and spans different types of issues, it does nonetheless provide us with an indication of whether there has been continued growth in social liberalism. Further, this chapter also examines whether there is a pattern in which demographic characteristics typically predict answers to questions on these issues.

Previous analysis of BSA data over the last 30 years has found evidence of increasing acceptance of people having children before marriage, premarital sex, abortion and same-sex relationships. The latter, in particular, has seen a dramatic fall in intolerant attitudes from the late 1980s through to the 2010s.

By contrast, attitudes to euthanasia have been more mixed. Clery et al’s (2007) chapter found a more complex picture of trends in views on euthanasia; while a large majority of people support doctor-assisted dying where the patient is painfully and terminally ill, in 2005 there had been a decrease in support for assisted dying where someone was not going to die from their illness.

This chapter will seek to update the findings from these previous BSA chapters, and also include some findings from questions not before presented in a BSA report. Firstly, views of pornography and adult content in films, and secondly, new questions on views towards transgender people, their use of public bathrooms and their employment in two public-facing jobs.

Sex and relationships

It is well documented that recent decades have seen great changes in the way British people approach marriage and family. Official statistics show a dramatic decline in marriage rates since the early 1970s, while the average age of marrying for the first time has increased from 26 for women and 29 for men in 1974, to 35 for women and 37 for men in 2014 (for opposite-sex couples) (Office for National Statistics, 2017a). This has been accompanied by an increase in cohabiting couples, either instead of marriage or for long periods before marriage.

Perhaps the most significant change to marriage in Britain in the more recent past was the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act in 2013. Britain is now one of 22 countries (at the time of writing) that legally

recognise same-sex marriages, and in 2014 there were around 5000 same-sex marriages in England and Wales. This forms part of a significant shift in societal and legal status for LGB people over the last 50 years.

We know from previous BSA surveys that the public has become increasingly accepting of same-sex relationships as well as sex outside of marriage. Park and Rhead previously speculated that this would likely steadily continue as each older, more conservative generation is replaced by a younger, more liberal one (Park and Rhead, 2013). Here we examine whether this has been the case in years since.

In this section we focus on changing attitudes to both sex before marriage, and same-sex relationships, using two questions that have been asked on the BSA survey since its inception in 1983:

If a man and woman have sexual relations before marriage, what would your general opinion be?

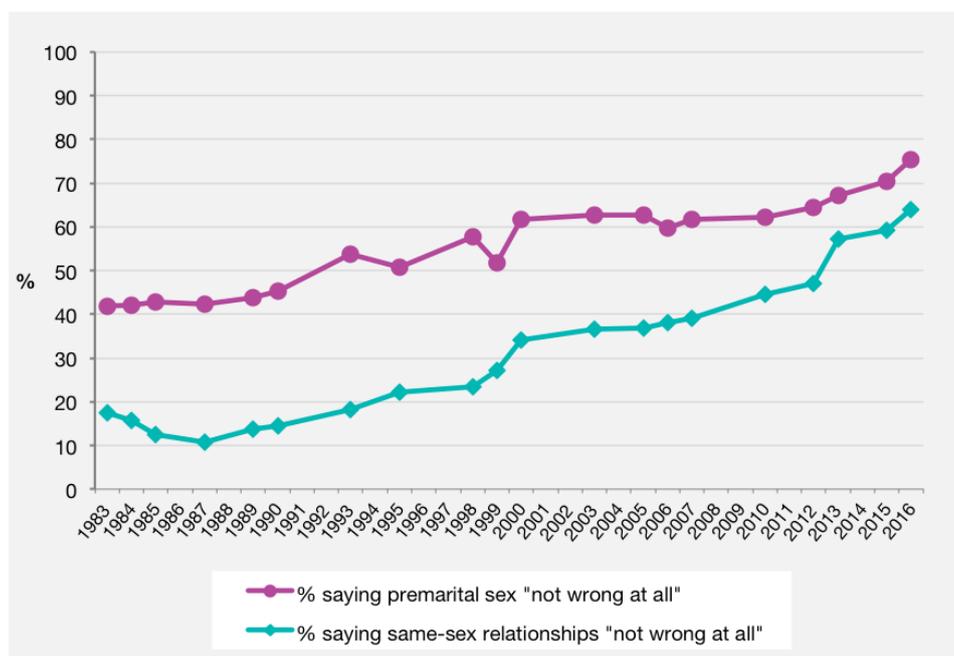
What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex?

[Always wrong, Mostly wrong, Sometimes wrong, Rarely wrong, Not wrong at all]

As shown in Figure 1, we see no evidence of a slowing down of this liberalisation of views towards premarital sex and same-sex relations – in fact data from the past 5 years appear to show acceleration towards more liberal attitudes. Attitudes to premarital sex were fairly stable between 2007 and 2012, however there has been a marked increase in acceptance of sex before marriage since 2012; 75% now say that sex before marriage is “not at all wrong”, an increase of 11 percentage points since 2012, and 5 percentage points since 2015. Now just 8% think premarital sex is “always” or “mostly” wrong.

There has also been a significant increase in liberal attitudes towards same-sex relationships since the introduction of same-sex marriages in 2014; the proportion saying that same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all” is now a clear majority at 64%, up from 59% in 2015, and 47% in 2012. Looking further back to when the question was first asked in the 1980s an even starker picture emerges. In 1983 only 17% were completely accepting of same-sex relationships. Attitudes hardened further during the late 1980s at the height of the AIDS crisis; in 1987 just 11% said same-sex relationships were “not wrong at all”. At that time three-quarters (74%) of British people thought same-sex relationships were “always” or “mostly” wrong, a view that has fallen to 19% today.

Figure 1 Views on premarital sex and same-sex relationships, 1983-2016



The data on which Figure 1 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

While the British public is generally more accepting of premarital sex than same-sex relationships (75% and 64% respectively), this gap has narrowed substantially

Comparing the change over time in attitudes towards premarital sex and same-sex relationships we see that while the British public is generally more accepting of premarital sex than same-sex relationships (75% and 64% respectively), this gap has narrowed substantially from 26 percentage points in 2005 to 11 percentage points in 2016.

Premarital sex: generational differences or lifecycle change?

To further explore this attitudinal shift, we examine the differences between various societal groups and how these have changed over time. One particularly pertinent characteristic here is age; it may come as no surprise that past BSA reports have found older people to be less liberal in their views of sex and relationships than younger people, and our analysis confirms this pattern. In 2016 84% of 27 to 36 year olds say premarital sex is “not wrong at all”, compared with 59% of people aged 67 to 76.

This age difference might be due to a ‘**generational effect**’ (or ‘cohort effect’); that is that each new generation develops views in their formative years, and retains similar attitudes throughout their life. Therefore as older generations formed their opinions in a more socially and politically conservative period in time, their views are likely to be more conservative than younger generations. If this is the case then as older generations grow older and are eventually replaced by younger, more liberal ones, the attitudes of society as a whole will become more liberal.

A second possible explanation for this age difference is a **‘lifecycle effect’** (sometimes known as an ‘ageing effect’); the concept that people become more conservative in their views as they become older.

As well as generational and lifecycle effects, looking at change over time might reveal a **‘period effect’**; which means all cohorts are changing their views in the same direction over time, due to changes in the societal climate. Often, the three drivers of change are interrelated.

One way to unpick these different possible effects is to follow how each generation change their views over time using cohort analysis. As the BSA survey uses a fresh sample each year we are not following the same individuals over time, however, the long-term nature of the project does allow us to examine how people born in the same era change their views over time. In this chapter we have chosen to group people by the decade they are born in, rather than larger conceptual groups (for example the groups of Pre-war, Baby boomers, and Generations X and Y used in Ipsos, 2012), because this allows us a more detailed view of generational attitudes and how they change over time.

In Figure 2 we present attitudes to sex before marriage over time by age cohort, with lighter purple lines representing younger age cohorts, and darker lines older ones. In general there is a clear generational divide, with younger cohorts tending to be more liberal than older ones. And this is true across time; in general each generation retains similar views over time, reflected by the fact that each line is relatively stable and so suggests there is not a strong lifecycle effect on this measure. For example, if we look at those born in the 1940s, in 1983 53% said that premarital sex is “not wrong at all”, and although the view of this cohort moved around slightly over the years, in 2016 we find a similar 59% of this group held this view. This pattern suggests that the change we have seen overall of an increased liberalism towards premarital sex is related to a generational effect; as older generations are being replaced by younger, more liberal ones, the views of society as a whole have become more accepting of premarital sex.

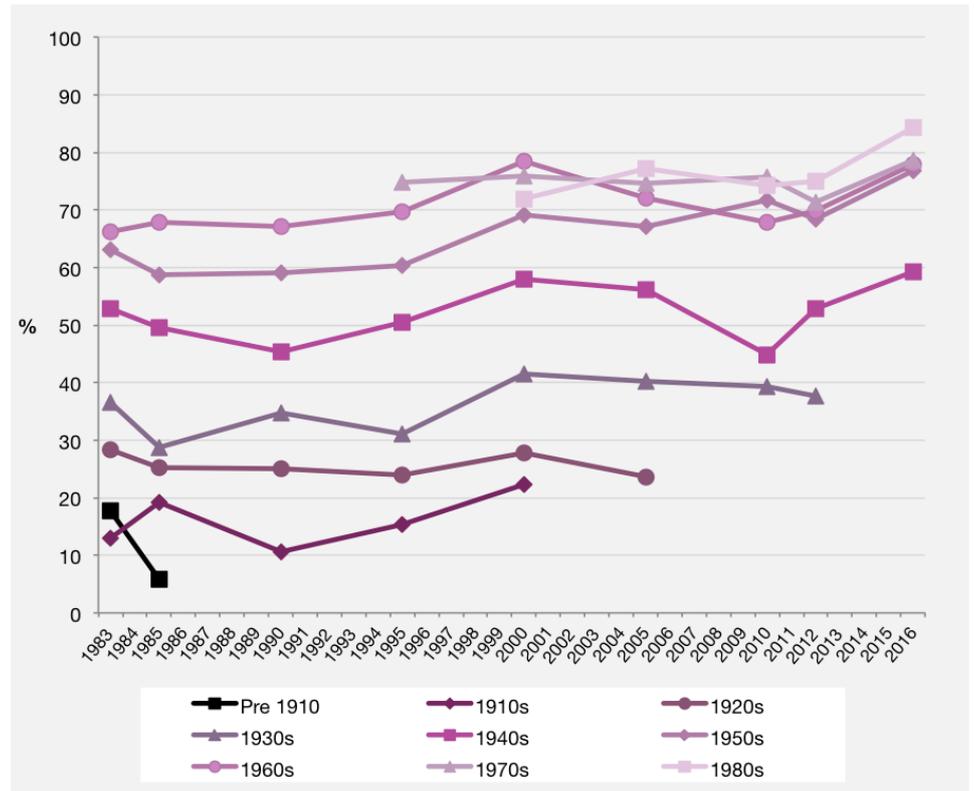
Two further points can be made about the data in Figure 2. Firstly, while in 1983 there was a wide range of views across the generations, from 17% of the oldest generation being accepting to 66% of the youngest group, in 2016 all but the oldest cohort are clustered together in a group with relatively homogenous views spanning from 77% to 84%. So while historically there were clear divisions between age cohorts in their views of premarital sex, most of the cohorts now sit together with little difference between their views.

The second point is that although looking at the long-term trend there has been little change over time within cohorts, between 2012 and 2016 there was a substantial increase in acceptance of premarital

There is a clear generational divide, with younger cohorts tending to be more liberal than older ones on premarital sex

sex among all age cohorts. This suggests that while the liberalisation of attitudes towards premarital sex has been driven by generational effects in the past, in the most recent 5 years other factors are also at play, leading to a society-wide shift.

Figure 2 Proportion saying premarital sex is “not wrong at all”, by generation cohort, 1983-2016



The data on which Figure 2 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

So if the increased acceptance of sex outside wedlock is not being only driven by age, are there particular societal groups that have changed their views over the past 5 years?

Religious groups are more conservative in their views on premarital sex than people without a religion. However, there has been an increased acceptance of sex before marriage over the past 5 years among all religious groups and the gap in attitudes between the religious and non-religious appears to be narrowing (Table 1). Note that small sample sizes mean caution should be used when looking at figures for the Roman Catholic group in 2012 and 2016, and the Non-Christian group.

There has been an increased acceptance of sex before marriage over the past 5 years among all religious groups

Table 1 Views on premarital sex, 1985-2016, by religion¹

% saying premarital sex “not wrong at all”	1985	1995	2005	2012	2016	Change 2012-2016
Religion						
Church of England/ Anglican	37	43	58	54	73	+19
Roman Catholic	38	39	62	64	76	+12
Other Christian	28	36	47	45	62	+17
Non-Christian	‡	‡	36	21	33	+11
No religion	59	68	79	82	87	+6

The bases for this table can be found in the appendix to this chapter

‡ = percentage not shown as base is under 50

There also appear to be differences by education level; those without any formal qualifications (62%) are least likely to be accepting of premarital sex, while those with higher education and A-levels (82%) and GCSEs or equivalent (80%) are most likely to be accepting of this. However, regression analysis found that once the relationship between level of education and other variables is controlled for², level of education is not significantly associated with attitudes to premarital sex. Nevertheless it is notable that people with qualifications are more likely than those with no qualifications to have become more liberal since 2012.

Who is most and least likely to be accepting of same-sex relationships?

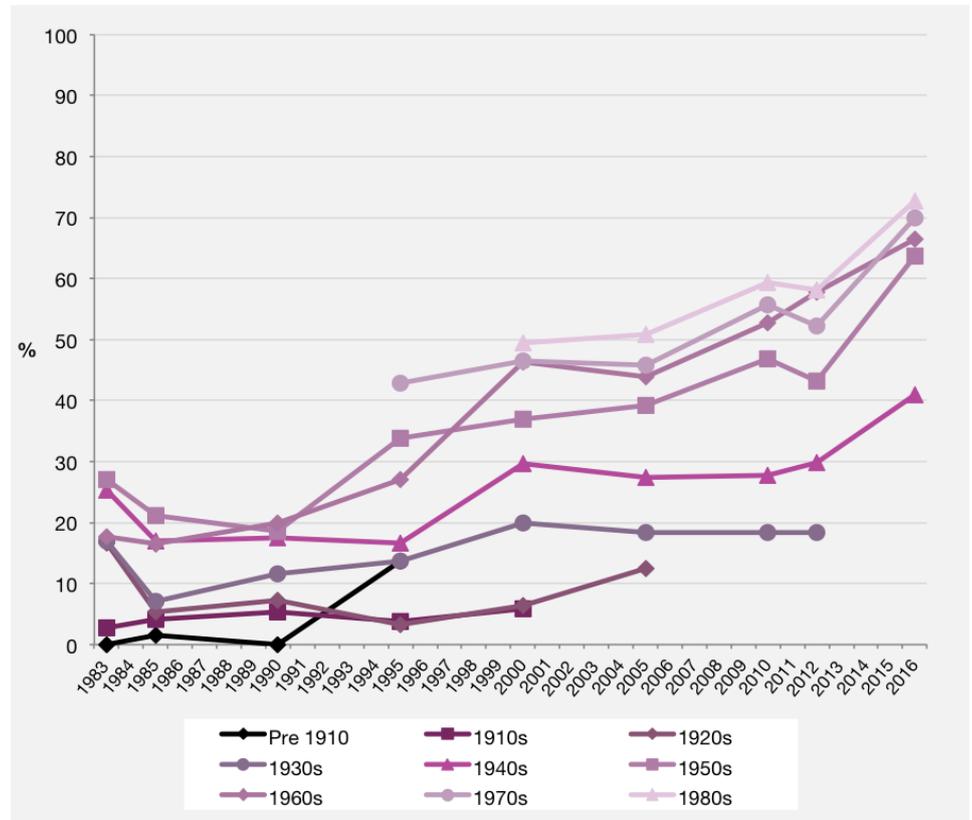
When we turn to views on same-sex relationships we again see a marked difference in views between age cohorts, for example 73% of people born in the 1980s say that same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”, compared with just 41% of people born in the 1940s (Figure 3). Unlike the pattern of generational differences we saw with premarital sex, attitudes towards same-sex relationships have changed markedly within cohorts; people born in all cohorts from the 1940s onwards have become more accepting of same-sex relationships since the early 1990s. The fact that nearly all cohorts have become markedly more accepting of same-sex relationships suggests that the shift in views over time has been caused by wider societal changes, rather than a predominantly generational effect. This increased liberalisation of views therefore appears to mainly be a period effect – driven by a society-wide cultural shift.

¹ Figures showing change over time in this table are calculated from the exact data, rather than the rounded figures that appear in the table. As a result they will sometimes appear to be incorrect by +/-1%. This applies to all similar tables in this chapter.

² Variables included in this binary logistic regression analysis (as well as other regression analyses in this chapter) were: highest level of education, age, sex, religion, party identification and social class. Education level is known to be associated with age, religion, party identification and social class. Full results of the multivariate analyses can be found in the appendix to this chapter.

73% of people born in the 1980s say that same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”, compared with just 41% of people born in the 1940s

Figure 3 Proportion saying same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”, by generation cohort, 1983-2016



The data on which Figure 3 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Looking at attitudes by religion, education and party identification we find that since 2012, all sub-groups have become more liberal in their views towards same-sex relationships. There has been a shift towards acceptance among every religious group in the past 5 years, notably now well over half (55%) of Anglicans say same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”, an increase of 24 percentage points since 2012 (Table 2). As with attitudes to pre-marital sex, we see a narrowing of the gap between the religious and the non-religious, as religious groups, specifically Christian groups, are increasing their acceptance at a faster rate, (note that again, small sample sizes for the non-Christian and Catholic groups mean caution should be used).

Well over half (55%) of Anglicans say same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”

Table 2 Views on same-sex relationships, 1985-2016, by religion

% saying same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”	1985	1995	2005	2012	2016	Change 2012-2016
Religion						
Church of England/Anglican	9	14	31	31	55	+24
Roman Catholic	9	21	37	38	62	+24
Other Christian	9	13	25	37	53	+16
Non-Christian	‡	‡	19	19	30	+11
No religion	19	32	50	63	76	+13

The bases for this table can be found in the appendix to this chapter

‡ = percentage not shown as base is under 50

There is particularly low acceptance of same-sex relationships among those without any formal qualifications, 38% of this group say that same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”, compared with 60% of people with GCSEs or equivalent, 75% of people with higher educational qualifications or A-levels, and 74% of people with a degree. This more conservative attitude among people with fewer qualifications holds up when we use regression analysis to control for variation in age and other characteristics, confirming that education level is significantly associated with attitudes to same-sex relationships. However, even those without any formal qualifications have become more liberal in the past 5 years; in 2012 only 27% of this group said that same-sex relationships were “not wrong at all”, meaning an increase of 12 percentage points.

One might expect public opinion on this issue to divide clearly down party lines; however this is not the case. While acceptance of same-sex relationships is slightly lower among Conservative supporters (60%) compared with Labour supporters (69%), the gap is not large and it has narrowed since 2012 (from 13 to 9 percentage points). There are now comfortable majorities accepting of same-sex relationships amongst the supporters of both the country’s largest parties.

Summary

In 2013 Park and Rhead suggested that based on their findings to date it was likely that liberalisation of attitudes to sex and relationships would steadily continue before plateauing. This year’s findings in fact show that this growing liberalism has accelerated in recent years. This analysis shows that while changes continue to be driven by a generational effect of older, more conservative cohorts being replaced by younger ones with a more liberal outlook, there is a period effect at play too. With the exception of those without any formal qualifications, which merits further examination, there has been a society-wide liberalisation of views towards sex

This year’s findings show that this growing liberalism has accelerated in recent years

and relationships. It is possible that the interesting acceleration in liberalisation we have seen has occurred because we have reached a tipping point after which normalisation occurs.

Transgender people

Transgender people and their stories are becoming increasingly visible in society; with the emergence of various public figures in the last decade or more such as celebrity Caitlyn Jenner, actress Laverne Cox, Big Brother winner Nadia Almada and former soldier Chelsea Manning. This has come alongside high-profile films and TV programmes centred on transgender characters, such as the 2015 film *The Danish Girl* starring Eddie Redmayne, Hayley Cropper on *Coronation Street*, and the first of its kind, BBC2 sitcom *Boy meets Girl* in 2016.

Nonetheless transgender people continue to face both personal prejudice and structural discrimination affecting many aspects of their lives. For example, the first parliamentary inquiry into transphobia and discrimination in 2016 reported widespread societal and systemic transphobia, citing a multitude of issues such as the way the NHS deals with transgender patients (in particular by medicalising trans identity, i.e. considering it as a condition that needs to be treated), as well as how the criminal justice system deals with transphobic crimes (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). The *Trans Mental Health* study (McNeil et al, 2012) found that 81% of its respondents feared and avoided certain social or public situations, such as gyms, public toilets and shops, while 38% had experienced sexual harassment and 37% physical threats or intimidation for being transgender. Some transgender people have also experienced attacks from the press, with primary school teacher Lucy Meadows taking her own life three months after transitioning to being a woman, after being hounded by media reporters (Brown, 2013). While her suicide note made no mention of the press, the coroner of the case criticised the “sensational and salacious” coverage, in particular an article by Richard Littlejohn in the *Daily Mail* entitled “He’s not only in the wrong body ... he’s in the wrong job”, which has since been removed from the newspaper’s website.

Another battleground is the use of gendered public toilets. In the UK in order to make trans and non-binary people feel more comfortable a number of universities and other spaces have introduced gender-neutral toilets. However in the US some states have passed bills requiring people to use public bathrooms according to the gender listed on their birth certificate rather than their gender identity, meaning transgender women would have to use a men’s bathroom and vice-versa.

In this section we use data collected on BSA 2016 which, for the first time, measures public attitudes around transgender issues on

The first parliamentary inquiry into transphobia and discrimination in 2016 reported widespread societal and systemic transphobia

We use data collected on BSA 2016 which, for the first time, measures public attitudes around transgender issues on a general population random probability survey

a general population random probability survey. For this survey we used a definition of transgender people that was developed in past research (Balarajan et al, 2011):

[people who] have gone through all or part of a process (including thoughts or actions) to change the sex they were described as at birth to the gender they identify with, or intend to. This might include by changing their name, wearing different clothes, taking hormones or having gender reassignment surgery

Prejudice against people who are transgender

We first turn to prejudice against people who are transgender. We asked people to self-report transgender prejudice (also known as transphobia) using the following question:

How would you describe yourself...

*... as very prejudiced against people who are transgender,
a little prejudiced,
or, not prejudiced at all?*

Overwhelmingly, the public reports themselves as not prejudiced against transgender people. Over 8 in 10 (82%) describe themselves as “not prejudiced at all”, while 15% say they are “a little prejudiced”, and just 2% say they are “very prejudiced” (Table 3). Of course, this question does have the possibility of a social desirability bias affecting the responses. To get around this we also asked a second question placed on the self-completion element of the survey that approaches the topic of prejudice from a rather less subjective point of view:

Do you think that prejudice against transgender people is always wrong, sometimes wrong, rarely wrong or never wrong?

Here we find that only 53% condemn transphobia completely, saying that prejudice against people who are transgender is “always wrong”, however a further 19% say that prejudice against transgender people is “mostly wrong”, meaning a total of 72% have a largely negative view of prejudice against transgender people. A minority (15%) say that transphobia is “sometimes wrong”, while very few (4%) say it is “rarely” or “never” wrong.

Only 53% condemn transphobia completely, saying that prejudice against people who are transgender is “always wrong”

Table 3 Prejudice against people who are transgender

Would you describe yourself ...	%
... as very prejudiced against people who are transgender	2
... a little prejudiced	15
... or not prejudiced at all	82
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>974</i>
<hr/>	
View of prejudice against transgender people	%
Always wrong	53
Mostly wrong	19
Sometimes wrong	15
Rarely wrong	3
Never wrong	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>782</i>

Public-facing jobs

We also asked respondents how they feel about people who are transgender being employed in public-facing roles, in the following two questions:

If they are suitably qualified, do you think that people who are transgender should be employed as ...

... police officers?

... primary school teachers?

Overall around 4 in 10 are completely accepting of transgender people being employed in public-facing jobs, with 43% saying that a qualified transgender person “definitely should” be employed as a police officer and 41% saying they “definitely should” be employed as primary school teachers (Table 4). Overall, acceptance (whether definite or more tentative) is slightly higher for employment as a police officer than as a primary school teacher, with 74% saying transgender people “definitely” or “probably” should be employed as police officers, compared with 67% saying the same for primary school teachers. This difference suggests there may be some who are accepting of a transgender person being employed in a general public-facing job, but not for a job working closely with children. The extent to which this is the case, and how attitudes vary by other types of role, could be worth exploring in further research.

There is still a substantial minority who do not approve of transgender people being employed in these jobs, including 15% who say transgender people “probably” or “definitely” should not be employed as police officers, and 21% saying they should not be employed as primary school teachers.

Overall, acceptance (whether definite or more tentative) is slightly higher for employment as a police officer than as a primary school teacher

Table 4 View of transgender people in public-facing jobs

	Should suitably qualified transgender people be employed as ...	
	... police officers	... primary school teachers
	%	%
Definitely should	43	41
Probably should	32	26
Probably should not	10	12
Definitely should not	5	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	974	974

Public toilets

To further examine people's levels of prejudice in less theoretical terms, we explore how comfortable the general public is with a transgender person using toilets according to their own gender identity. We asked separate questions to men and women. To women we asked the following question:

Please think about a transgender woman - that is a man who has gone through all or part of a process to become a woman. How comfortable or uncomfortable would you be for a transgender woman to use female public toilets?

To men we asked the same question but concerning a transgender man, "that is a woman who has gone through all or part of a process to become a man".

For both sexes a majority say they are comfortable with a transgender person using a public toilet according to their gender identity (Table 5). Women tend to be more comfortable with this than men, with 72% of women saying they are "very" or "quite comfortable" with a transgender woman using a female toilet, compared with 64% of men saying they are comfortable with a transgender man using male toilets. Around 1 in 6 (14% of women, and 15% of men) say they are not comfortable with this.

For both sexes a majority say they are comfortable with a transgender person using a public toilet according to their gender identity

Table 5 View of transgender people using public toilets

	How comfortable would feel for a ...	
	... transgender woman to use a female toilet (asked of women only)	... transgender man to use a male toilet (asked of men only)
	%	%
Very comfortable	47	41
Quite comfortable	25	24
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	14	19
Quite uncomfortable	9	9
Very uncomfortable	4	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	561	413

58% of women say transgender prejudice is “always wrong” compared with 46% of men

Who is most and least likely to be accepting of people who are transgender?

Women are more likely than men to condemn prejudice against transgender people (58% of women say it is “always wrong” compared with 46% of men). Younger people are also more likely to say that prejudice against people who are transgender is “always wrong”; while 61% of 18-34 year olds say this, 40% of those aged 65 or more do. However, this difference reduces when looking at the proportion of people saying transgender prejudice is “always or mostly wrong”, which was 76% among the youngest group and 64% among the oldest. Further, on this measure regression analysis found that, once other characteristics are controlled for, age is not a significant factor in explaining transgender prejudice.

Anti-transgender prejudice is also linked to religious belief; people without a religion (59%) are more likely to think prejudice against transgender people is always wrong than those with a religion (46%).

Similarly, education is linked with views on transgender prejudice; people with degrees (64%) and higher education qualifications or A-levels (63%) are more likely than those with GCSEs or equivalent (43%) or no formal qualifications (35%) to say transgender prejudice is “always wrong”.

Summary

Overall, these findings suggest the majority of the public have supportive attitudes towards transgender people and their interaction with public life. However, the low levels of people with overtly-stated prejudice against transgender people contrasts with the high proportions of transgender people who report facing regular harassment and intimidation found in previous research.

Only 4 in 10 people feel a suitably qualified transgender person should definitely be employed as a police officer or primary school teacher

This gap is perhaps explained by the questions that reveal prejudice more indirectly. Only 4 in 10 people feel a suitably qualified transgender person should definitely be employed as a police officer or primary school teacher. This stands in contrast to employment law and people's earlier, more accepting views. This implies a gap, seen elsewhere, between people's view of their prejudices and their revealed ones. This in turn might explain why many transgender people experience the country not to be as accepting as the first answers imply.

As this is the first time we have asked questions about transgender rights, we do not have any time series data to look at changes in attitudes over time. However we might speculate that in the context of increasingly liberal attitudes towards same-sex relationships, attitudes towards transgender people – another group that breaks out from traditional gender norms – are likely to become more liberal in future years.

Pornography and adult content in films

The ubiquity of the internet has dramatically increased the availability of pornography. This section explores whether this greater prevalence has normalised adult content and liberalised our views to it, or instead led to more conservative attitudes in response.

Attitudes to pornography and adult content in films touch on a huge number of issues. Traditional conservative perspectives often concern offending 'public decency' and whether adult content encourages sexual permissiveness. Feminist perspectives typically argue that pornography leads to an objectification of women (Hernandez, 2011), fuels an exploitative industry and can inspire or legitimise violence against women. In more recent developments, the high proportions of children now seeing pornography on the internet, often via smart phones, has led to government policy discussions about whether pornography should be more tightly censored, and whether this is indeed now possible.³ Children's advocates have flagged serious concerns about whether the pervasiveness of pornography among young people is leading to children exploiting other children, to growing sexual anxiety and body confidence issues, and unrealistic or warped expectations about sex and relationships (Parker, 2014). Most recently concerns about how children manage the increased availability of porn have renewed debates about the delivery of sex education in schools (Turner, 2017). This is already a long but not exhaustive list of debates that pornography touches upon and it is not possible to do any of them justice in this section. BSA can nonetheless help us understand the degree to which cumulative changes to the technology, prevalence and societal responses surrounding porn have marked a shift in attitudes.

³ BBC (2014), *Online pornography to be blocked by default, PM announces*, BBC, London: available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23401076>

The public is fairly evenly divided on the question of whether “adults should be able to see whatever films they like” or if “some films are too violent or pornographic even for adults”. A similar proportion (just over two-fifths) choose each view, though 15% cannot choose or do not answer the question (Table 6).

Table 6 Views about pornography and adult content in films

Should adults be able to watch whatever they like?	%
Adults should be able to see whatever films they like	45
Some films are too violent or pornographic even for adults	41
Can't choose/not answered	15
How wrong is it for an adult to watch pornography at home	%
1 (Not wrong at all)	30
2	11
3	11
4	11
5	7
6	7
7 (Always wrong)	13
Can't choose/not answered	10
You shouldn't try to stop teenage boys from watching pornography	%
Agree strongly	6
Agree	24
Neither agree nor disagree	29
Disagree	21
Disagree strongly	14
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1619

To judge attitudes on the overall morality of pornography, people are asked the following question:

On the scale below 1 means “not wrong at all”, 7 means “always wrong” and 2 to 6 means something in between. The following question is about pornography that shows people having sex – not just actors pretending to do so.

How wrong do you personally think it is for an adult (18 or over) to watch pornography at home, or is it not wrong at all?

The single most common view is that an adult watching pornography is “not wrong at all” and just over half of respondents (51%) choose categories 1-3 (Table 6). By contrast, there is a minority of people (28%) who choose categories 5 to 7, indicating they are not at all

comfortable with letting adults watch pornography. Again about 1 in 10 people are not able to answer this question.

Next, we asked people whether they agree or disagree that:

You shouldn't try to stop teenage boys from watching pornography that shows people having sex (not just actors pretending to do so); it is just a normal part of growing up.

More people disagree with this statement than agree with it (35% compared with 29%), highlighting there is not a strong body of support for a laissez-faire attitude towards teenage boys' consumption of pornography (Table 6). However, a similar proportion opt not to choose either way, indicating people find this a difficult question to answer and perhaps reflecting the practical difficulty in now restricting teenagers' access to pornography.

Only one of the questions detailed above on attitudes towards pornography and adult content in films has featured in previous BSA surveys (see Table 7). However, this does show a clear and marked increase in the more relaxed attitude on this measure. It appears that in just a decade that a lot more people are willing to allow any film to be viewed. In 1996 the majority (59%) of people felt some films were too violent or pornographic, whereas that view was in a minority by 2016 (41%), albeit a sizable one.

It appears that in just a decade that a lot more people are willing to allow any film to be viewed

Men are much more likely than women to view adult content in films as acceptable

Table 7 Views about adult content in films, 1996 and 2016

	1996	2016
	%	%
Adults should be able to see whatever films they like	32	45
Some films are too violent or pornographic even for adults	59	41
Can't choose / not answered	9	15
<i>Unweighted base</i>	989	1619

Who is most and least likely to have liberal views on adult content in films?

There are some important divides in views towards pornography among the major demographic subgroups of the population. Similar patterns were found across all three measures of attitudes towards pornography. In particular, men are much more likely than women to view adult content in films as acceptable, for example saying adults should be able to watch whatever films they like (58% for men compared with 32% for women). The youngest group is also most likely to say adult content is acceptable and the oldest group most likely to say it is unacceptable (60% of those aged 18-34 compared with 20% of those aged 75+ respectively say adults should be able to watch whatever films they like). Those with no religion are also more likely to say it is acceptable than all religious groups, with 54% of

people with no religion saying adults should be able to watch whatever films they like, compared with 31%-39% among the religious groups.

Those with some educational qualifications (45%-49%) are more likely to be accepting than those with no qualifications (35%), however regression analysis found that once the relationships between level of education and other variables are controlled for, level of education is not significantly associated with attitudes to adult content. Instead, belonging to a younger age group, having no religion and being male remain significant in explaining views on adult content.

Finally, we looked at whether differences between subgroups have changed over time. Men have become more accepting over the period compared with women (16 percentage point increase between 1996 and 2016 compared with 9 percentage points for women). In terms of religion, the 'other Christian' (i.e. Christian but not Anglican or Catholic) and 'no religion' groups have seen the most increase. Finally, we found an educational divide, with the 'no qualifications' group seeing the smallest increase in acceptance since 1996 (5 percentage points). While some of this is likely to be related to age, even those in the oldest age groups saw an increase of 10 percentage points or more. This does therefore suggest that those with no qualifications have experienced the least liberalisation in their views in relation to pornography.

Summary

Unlike some other indicators of moral attitudes, the population as a whole is evenly balanced in reaction to questions of pornography and adult content. In this sense, it is very much a 'live' moral issue for society and there is not yet a settled view of what is acceptable or not, especially between the sexes. In common with other issues, there is also a clear divide by age and religiosity.

Having said that, there has been a clear shift in the last decade towards people being more 'liberal' or 'relaxed' about the showing and use of pornography, at least for adults. It remains to be seen whether this continues or whether pornography's ubiquity creates any increased nervousness in the future, especially stemming from the impact on children.

Abortion

Abortions have been allowed by law in Britain since 1967, when the Abortion Act made it possible for abortions to be performed for pregnancies under 28 weeks. This was updated in 1990 by the Human Embryology and Human Fertilisation Act, which reduced the time limit for abortions from 28 to 24 weeks, although later-term abortions are allowed in special circumstance where there is grave risk to the mother or there is severe foetal abnormality.

There has been a clear shift in the last decade towards people being more 'liberal' or 'relaxed' about the showing and use of pornography, at least for adults

The British public is almost unanimous in their belief that if a woman's health is seriously endangered, an abortion should be allowed by law

Recent years have seen a decline in abortion rates since a peak in 2007 of 17.9 abortions per 1,000 women in England and Wales of child-bearing age, down to 16 in 2015. At the same time there has been a shift in the age profile of women having abortions (Office for National Statistics, 2016), with fewer teenage abortions (the teenage pregnancy rate has been halved since 1998 (Office for National Statistics, 2017b)) and an increase in abortions among women aged 30 plus.

But have these changes been accompanied by a shift in public perceptions of abortion? BSA has included a number of questions on abortion since the survey's inception in 1983 that help us explore this:

Here are a number of circumstances in which a woman might consider an abortion. Please say whether or not you think the law should allow an abortion in each case.

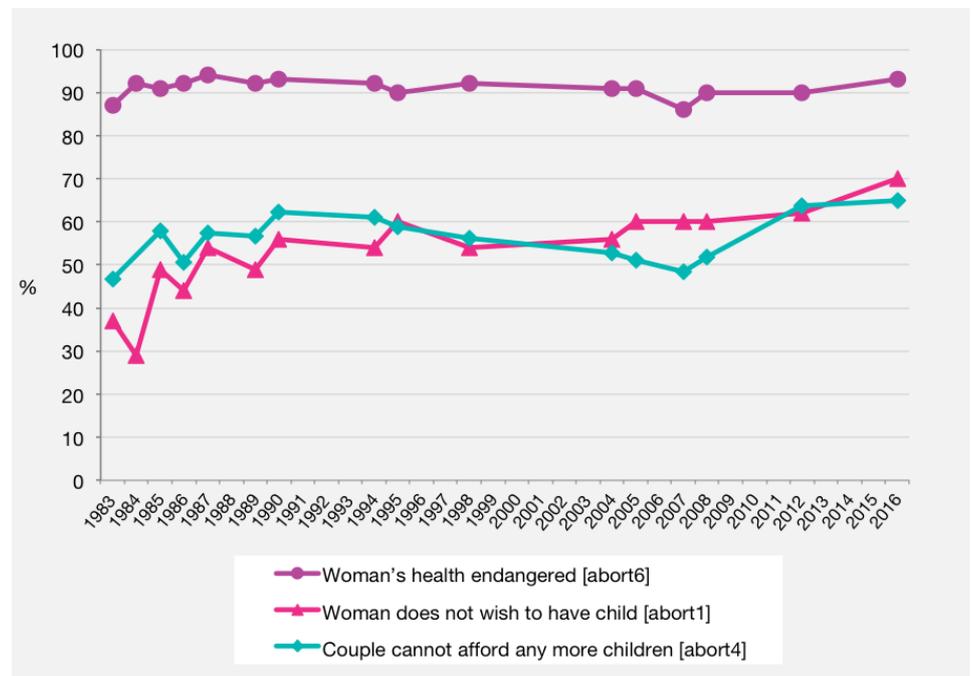
The woman decides on her own she does not wish to have a child

The couple cannot afford any more children

The woman's health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy

The British public is almost unanimous in their belief that if a woman's health is seriously endangered, an abortion should be allowed by law. Over 9 in 10 (93%) say this, a figure that has changed very little in the last three decades (Figure 4).

Fewer people say that abortion should be allowed if a woman decides on her own she does not want the child (70%) or if a couple cannot afford any more children (65%), however, for both questions a clear majority of people think these abortions should be allowed, and in both cases these are the highest-recorded levels of approval. Views on whether abortions for parents who can't afford another child saw a decline in approval during the 1990s to a low of 48% in 2007 before a steady increase in support to 65% in 2016. Acceptance of abortions where the woman does not want the child has slowly increased from a low of 29% in 1984 to 70% in 2016.

Figure 4 Views towards abortion in different scenarios, 1983-2016

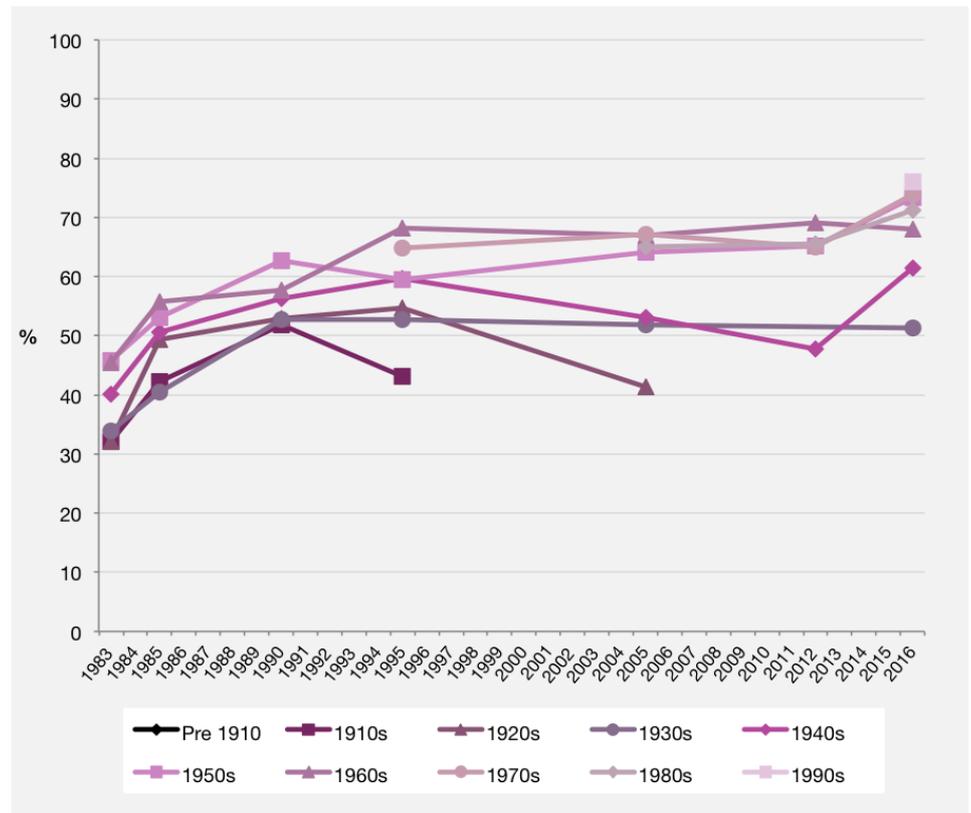
The data on which Figure 4 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Who is most and least likely to be accepting of abortion?

Older people are less likely to approve of abortions when a woman does not wish to have the child. Fifty-three per cent of people aged 77 to 86, and 61% of those aged 67 to 76 say they think abortion should be allowed in this situation, compared with 76% of the youngest age group aged 18 to 26.

However, unlike the views about sex before marriage, or same-sex relationships we saw in previous sections, there is not a clear pattern of trends in views towards abortion over time by birth cohort. Figure 5 shows the proportion saying that abortion should be allowed if the woman does not wish to have the child by generation cohort. The generational groups do not stay consistently in line, and do not cover a particularly large range of views. People born in the 1950s or later have a relatively narrow range of views from 68% to 76% saying abortion should be allowed in this situation. All cohorts have become more accepting of abortions in this situation over time, suggesting that the primary explanation for any change over time is not a cohort effect.

Figure 5 Proportion saying abortion should be allowed by law if the woman does not wish to have the child, by generation cohort, 1983-2016



The data on which Figure 5 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Religious groups are less likely than people with no religion to say that a woman should be allowed by law to have an abortion if she does not wish to have the child. Nearly 4 out of 5 (78%) of people with no religion say abortions should be allowed in this situation. One might expect Catholics to be most likely to disagree with abortions in this situation given the Vatican’s continued opposition. While this may be true historically, Catholics (61%) are now more likely than ‘other’ Christian groups (57%) to think these abortions should be allowed, and are not far behind Anglicans (67%). The increase in approval of this type of abortion by those of religion in general appears to have been driven in part by a change in views among Christian groups, in particular Catholics, among whom there has been a 22 percentage point increase in the view that abortions should be allowed if the woman does not wish to have the child (from 39% in 2012 to 61% in 2016). However, we need to treat these within-Christianity trends with some caution as the sample sizes are small.

Interestingly, among people with no formal qualifications, views on abortion when a woman does not want the child have changed very little since the mid-1980s. While overall approval of abortion in this situation has increased from 49% in 1985 to 70% in 2016, the increase was 49% in 1985 to 54% in 2016 among those with no qualifications. At the same time approval among those with qualifications has increased, resulting in a relatively large gap

between the most and least educated; in 2016 54% of those with no formal qualifications say abortion should be allowed if a woman does not want a child, compared with 77% of people with a degree.

Men and women are equally as likely to be supportive of abortion; there are no differences between the sexes in their views for any of the scenarios we asked about.

Summary

In general the British public is accepting of abortions, both when it is vital for the health of the mother, and for other reasons. The past decade has seen modest increases in liberal attitudes towards abortion, which appears to have been driven by the more educated, and people with religion, while religious divides are narrowing we see a deeper divide between those with qualifications and those without.

Euthanasia

This final section looks at moral attitudes to voluntary euthanasia; that is whether it should ever be legal to help someone to end their life.

This has been subject of intense debate since the 1990s, which tends to peak when there are relevant private member's bills or high profile legal cases. Arguments for and against euthanasia have been rehearsed in detail during three private member's bills introduced by Lord Joffe (Clery et al., 2007) and cases where people have sought euthanasia abroad. In brief, advocates of legalisation tend to rely on a 'human-right' and 'autonomy' view. They also argue the law is inconsistent because there is already common use of what some people call 'passive' euthanasia, whereby treatment is denied in the expectation of death.

Opponents of legalisation argue that all life is sacred, that there would be a 'slippery slope' if any form of euthanasia was allowed, that older people will feel pressure to seek assisted dying, and/or that a doctor's job should never be to kill.

In looking at public opinion on helping someone to die, we use a number of hypothetical scenarios to assess the extent to which attitudes depend on the conditions and circumstances under which it may be done. In doing so, we try to be clear on the terms used and the issues of debate.

- Voluntary decision-making. By this mean we mean helping an individual *who wishes to die to do so*. There is clearly debate about whether it is always possible to be clear whether someone's wishes are genuine and considered. The term 'non-voluntary euthanasia' means ending the life of an individual when the views of the individual cannot be elicited, and it is requested or authorised by a doctor or relative.

While religious divides are narrowing we see a deeper divide between those with qualifications and those without

- Euthanasia (otherwise known as ‘assisted dying’). By this we mean that *someone else* is administering a substance that enables a person to die. The crucial distinction here is with ‘assisted *suicide*’, where someone takes their own life. There is a further sub-distinction between who that ‘someone else’ is, for example whether they are a medical practitioner or a relative.
- The nature of the person’s situation. There are a number of dimensions to someone’s condition/s that could influence whether euthanasia is considered acceptable, particularly whether the disease is terminal and/or to what extent someone is suffering pain or severe cognitive problems.

Different countries and US states have different approaches and the form of euthanasia varies according to these issues. In the Netherlands, both voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide are legalised, albeit only when performed by a doctor. However, in Belgium, only voluntary euthanasia has been legalised, while in the US state of Oregon doctor assisted suicide is only allowed if someone is terminally ill. In Switzerland, assisted suicide is allowed but only by non-medical practitioners.

We presented respondents with scenarios of patients with different descriptions and then asked if the law should allow someone (either a doctor or relative) to help them to end their lives should they wish. The four main scenarios are:

1. Voluntary euthanasia by a doctor for “a person with an incurable and painful disease who will die – for example, someone dying of cancer”
2. Voluntary euthanasia by a close relative for a person with an incurable and painful disease who will die
3. Voluntary euthanasia by a doctor for “a person with an incurable and painful illness, from which they will **not** die”
4. Voluntary euthanasia by a doctor for “a person who is **not** in much pain **nor** in danger of death, but becomes permanently and completely **dependent** on relatives for all their needs - for example someone who cannot feed, wash or go to the toilet by themselves”

For each question, we presented four response categories:

Definitely should be allowed

Probably should be allowed

Probably should not be allowed

Definitely should not be allowed

Table 8 shows levels of public support for euthanasia by grouping those who say it should definitely and probably should be allowed in the varying circumstances. In contrast with UK law, there is strong support (78%) for allowing voluntary euthanasia where it is carried out by a doctor for a person with an incurable disease. There is less

In contrast with UK law, there is strong support (78%) for allowing voluntary euthanasia

clear-cut support for the other scenarios, that is, where euthanasia is carried out by a close relative (39%), where the person is *not* suffering from a terminal disease (51%) or is completely dependent but not in pain or danger of death (50%).

Table 8 Attitudes to voluntary euthanasia

% saying the law should definitely or probably allow...	
... a doctor to end life of someone with an incurable and painful illness from which they will die	78
... a close relative to end life of someone with an incurable and painful illness from which they will die	39
... a doctor to end life of someone with an incurable and painful illness from which they will not die	51
... a doctor to end life of someone who is dependent on relatives for all of their needs, but not in pain or danger of death	50
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1928

Table 9 explores the strength of support, or not, for euthanasia being allowed in each case. When looking at those who say whether or not voluntary euthanasia should “definitely” be allowed the support for the first scenario is even clearer (50% say it should be “definitely” allowed, compared with 16%-20% for the other scenarios). A similar breakdown shows the public is most opposed to voluntary euthanasia when it is done by a relative rather than a doctor (33% say it “definitely should not be allowed”).

Table 9 Attitudes to voluntary euthanasia

	Scenarios for voluntary euthanasia			
	By a doctor for someone with an incurable and painful illness from which they will die	By a close relative for someone with an incurable and painful illness from which they will die	By a doctor for someone with an incurable and painful illness from which they will <u>not</u> die	By a doctor for someone who is dependent, but not in pain or danger of death
Should the law allow voluntary euthanasia in this situation?	%	%	%	%
Definitely should	50	16	20	19
Probably should	29	23	30	31
Probably should not	8	26	22	21
Definitely should not	12	33	25	26
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1928	1928	1928	1928

The public is most opposed to voluntary euthanasia when it is done by a relative rather than a doctor (33% say it “definitely should not be allowed”)

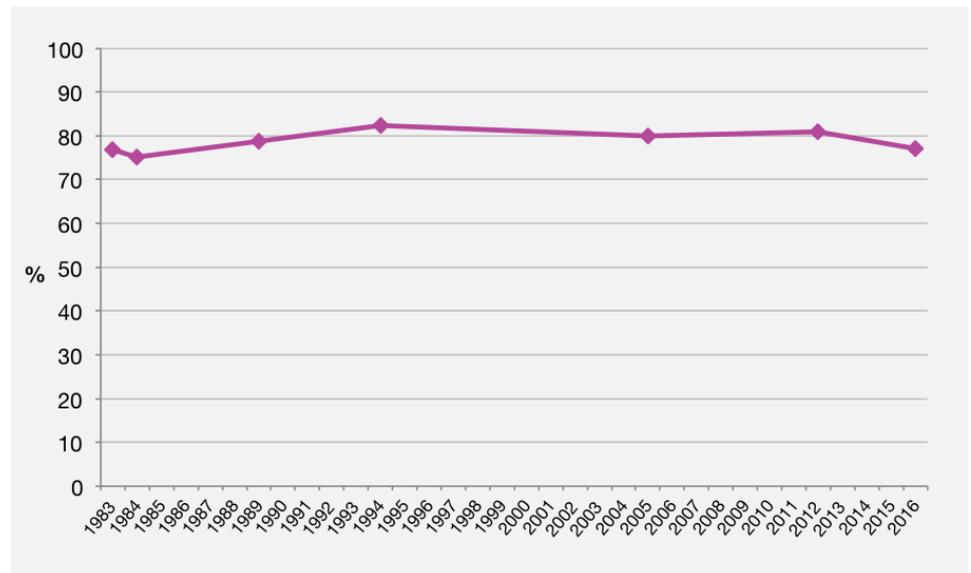
Attitudes towards voluntary euthanasia over time

One general question on attitudes towards voluntary euthanasia has been asked on a number of occasions on previous BSA surveys: “Suppose a person has a painful incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient’s life, if the patient requests it?”

Just over three-quarters (77%) of people say “definitely” or “probably should be allowed” in answer to this question, which is in line with overall responses to the first scenario outlined above which also asks about a doctor ending someone’s life if they have a painful incurable disease.

Figure 6 shows that the overall trend has been relatively stable over time. It appeared as if there was a slow trend towards increasing support between 1983 and 1994, but that has now halted and the levels of support for voluntary euthanasia are the same in 2016 as in 1983.

Figure 6 Proportion saying voluntary euthanasia should be allowed for a person who has a painful incurable disease, 1983-2016



The data on which Figure 6 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

The BSA surveys are now building up a time series on some of the scenarios of interest, so it is possible for us to look further at change for each of the four scenarios. Table 10 presents the levels of support for each scenario in 1995, 2005 and 2016 using the summary indicator of all those who think the form of euthanasia should be definitely or probably allowed.

It shows that there has not been a clear change in attitudes over time and overall trends are broadly stable. Where there has been some minor change, for example on euthanasia by a relative it appears that there was greater change between 1995 and 2005 than there was during the last decade.

The levels of support for voluntary euthanasia are the same in 2016 as in 1983

Table 10 Summary views about euthanasia over time: 1995, 2005 and 2016

% saying the law definitely/probably should allow ...	1995	2005	2016
... voluntary euthanasia by a doctor for a person with an incurable and painful disease who will die	80	82	78
... voluntary euthanasia by a relative for a person with an incurable and painful disease who will die	31	45	39
... voluntary euthanasia by a doctor for a person with an incurable and painful disease who will not die ⁴	41	46	51
... voluntary euthanasia by a doctor for a person who is completely dependent on relatives for all their needs	51	44	50
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1234</i>	<i>2113</i>	<i>1928</i>

Who is most and least likely to support voluntary euthanasia?

There are relatively few major differences in views towards euthanasia among the major demographic subgroups of the population. We noted however the main differences occur by religious affiliation; those with no religion being most likely to support euthanasia (for example, 89% of people without a religion say euthanasia by a doctor for someone with a terminal disease should be allowed, compared with 67% of people with a religion). However, views towards euthanasia where someone is completely dependent appear to behave somewhat differently to views towards other forms of euthanasia, as there is little difference among the major religious subgroups for this specific scenario.

In general there are also some differences by age; those in the oldest age groups (75+) tend to be less supportive of euthanasia than younger age groups. For example, 77% of the youngest age group say euthanasia by a doctor for someone who will die from a painful disease should be allowed, compared with 69% of the oldest age group. However it is the middle age groups who are most likely to approve of voluntary euthanasia in this situation, with 85% of 45-54 year olds and 84% of 55-64 year olds saying this. The same is also true of euthanasia for a person who is completely dependent on their relatives, with 57% of 45-54 year olds being accepting of this compared with 49% of 18-34 year olds and 42% of people aged 75 or older.

There is no suggestion in these data that those with higher educational qualifications are more likely to support euthanasia. Equally, there are no marked differences by party identification.

As there has been little change over time, we did not conduct any analysis of the generations and trends in their attitudes over time.

⁴ In 1995 this question referred specifically to arthritis, so any change over time should be viewed with caution.

In general there are also some differences by age; those in the oldest age groups (75+) tend to be less supportive of euthanasia than younger age groups

The most surprising aspect of this issue is, perhaps, how out of step UK law is with long-standing and significant majority public support for voluntary euthanasia

Across a number of issues Britain seems to be becoming more socially liberal

Summary

In the collection of issues studied in this chapter, euthanasia is unique in having attitudes that are both relatively stable and not subject to major divides by age, education or sex. The most surprising aspect of this issue is, perhaps, how out of step UK law is with long-standing and significant majority public support for voluntary euthanasia by a doctor in cases where a person has an incurable and painful terminal disease.

By contrast, that half (50%) of people support euthanasia being allowed in cases where someone is completely dependent on relatives for all their needs perhaps highlights why some anti-euthanasia campaigners worry that a legal change could result in people ending their lives out of a sense of being a burden on others.

Conclusions

We have seen that across a number of issues Britain seems to be becoming more socially liberal in its response to these questions of personal autonomy. Even in the past few years there have been marked increases in the acceptance of same-sex relationships and premarital sex; while longer-term there has been a liberalisation of views towards abortions and pornography. We have also found that a significant majority are supportive of transgender people, though this falls when people are asked questions of practical application. Attitudes to euthanasia have remained relatively stable, but support for the most limited form of euthanasia is strong. Taken together these findings do point to a wider societal spread of a socially liberal attitude.

While the growth in social liberalism seems to be continuing there are notable divides in opinion. For example: we find particularly low acceptance of same-sex relationships among those without any formal qualifications; there is a 26 percentage point gap between men and women's views on whether adults should be allowed to watch whichever adult films they like; older age groups are less likely to support an option for allowing euthanasia than the youngest age groups in all scenarios presented, but in some instances support among the middle-aged is higher; and men and older people are less accepting of transgender people.

We found that religion is closely associated with attitudes in every one of the issues covered in this chapter, even when the relationship between religious affiliation and other demographic variables has been controlled for; across the board religious people are more likely to be conservative than people without a religion. The same is the case for older people, who are generally less liberal on all topics except on attitudes to transgender people. People without formal qualifications are more conservative about same-sex relationships, abortion and transgender people. Sex, in turn, is associated with views on same-sex relationships, pornography and transgender

While across the board religious groups are more conservative in their views than the non-religious, they have become increasingly liberal in their views

people; with women being more liberal on same-sex relationships and transgender issues, while men are more likely to be liberal on pornography and adult content in film.

While these divides are notable it is important to add that in many cases they do appear to be narrowing. While across the board religious groups are more conservative in their views than the non-religious, they have become increasingly liberal in their views towards premarital sex, same-sex relationships and abortion, and narrowed the gap between them and the non-religious.

Looking at age we also see some narrowing. While much of the growing social liberalism has been caused by a generational effect, meaning that older, less liberal people are being replaced by younger cohorts with more liberal attitudes, there have also been changes within generations. This is most notable with same-sex relationships, where older generations have become more socially liberal in recent years.

In conclusion, it seems clear from these issues that 'social liberalism' is a growing feature of British society and will seemingly remain so as the older age cohorts are replaced by young ones. Some important divides exist, although they do appear to be narrowing. It will be interesting to test in future whether this growth in social liberalism also holds for other issues, such as race and the status of women.

It seems clear from these issues that 'social liberalism' is a growing feature of British society and will seemingly remain so as the older age cohorts are replaced by young ones

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Appendix

The data for Figure 1 are shown below.

Table A.1 Views on premarital sex and same-sex relationships, 1983-2016					
	1983	1984	1985	1987	1989
% saying sex before marriage "not wrong at all"	42	42	43	42	44
% saying sex between two adults of the same sex "not wrong at all"	17	16	13	11	14
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1761	1675	1804	2847	3029
	1990	1993	1995	1998	1999
% saying sex before marriage "not wrong at all"	45	54	51	58	52
% saying sex between two adults of the same sex "not wrong at all"	15	18	22	23	27
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2797	2945	3633	3146	3143
	2000	2003	2005	2006	2007
% saying sex before marriage "not wrong at all"	62	63	63	60	62
% saying sex between two adults of the same sex "not wrong at all"	34	37	37	38	39
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3426	4432	4268	4290	4124
	2010	2012	2013	2015	2016
% saying sex before marriage "not wrong at all"	62	64	67	70	75
% saying sex between two adults of the same sex "not wrong at all"	45	47	57	59	64
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3297	3248	1097	3245	974

The data for Figure 2 are shown below.

Table A.2 Proportion saying premarital sex is “not wrong at all”, by generation cohort, 1983–2016						
		1983		1985		1990
		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>
All	42	1761	43	1804	45	1397
Cohort						
1970s						
1960s	66	177	68	326	67	227
1950s	63	317	59	336	59	270
1940s	53	346	50	348	45	268
1930s	37	281	29	270	35	207
1920s	28	269	25	243	25	193
1910s	13	241	19	168	11	115
Pre-1910s	18	112				
		1995		2000		2005
		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>
All	51	1172	62	3426	63	2102
Cohort						
1980s			72	104	77	207
1970s	75	111	76	524	75	307
1960s	70	241	78	730	72	427
1950s	60	210	69	556	67	359
1940s	51	191	58	495	56	360
1930s	31	157	42	483	40	223
1920s	24	153	28	388	24	217
1910s			22	134		
		2010		2012		2016
		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>
All	62	1081	64	1103	75	974
Cohort						
1980s	74	144	75	139	84	141
1970s	76	190	71	192	79	186
1960s	68	201	70	179	78	167
1950s	72	145	68	175	77	153
1940s	45	189	53	206	59	151
1930s	39	122	38	113		

The bases for Tables 1 and 2 can be found below.

Table A.3 Views on premarital sex, by religion, 1985-2016,

% saying premarital sex 'not wrong at all'	1985	1995	2005	2012	2016
Religion					
Church of England/ Anglican	653	367	631	269	166
Roman Catholic	197	111	196	85	87
Other Christian	296	184	408	183	186
Non-Christian	44	37	77	51	55
No religion	608	471	775	506	477

The data for Figure 3 are shown below.

Table A.4 Proportion saying same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”, by generation cohort, 1983–2016						
		1983		1985		1990
		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>
All	17	1761	12	1804	15	1397
Cohort						
1980s						
1970s						
1960s	18	177	17	326	20	227
1950s	27	317	21	336	19	270
1940s	25	346	17	348	18	268
1930s	17	281	7	270	12	207
1920s	17	269	5	243	7	193
1910s	3	241	4	168	5	115
Pre-1910s	-	112				
<hr/>						
		1995		2000		2005
		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>
All	22	1172	34	3426	37	2102
Cohort						
1980s			49	104	51	207
1970s	43	111	46	524	46	307
1960s	27	241	46	730	44	427
1950s	34	210	37	556	39	359
1940s	17	191	30	495	27	360
1930s	14	157	20	483	18	223
1920s	3	153	6	388	12	217
<hr/>						
		2010		2012		2016
		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>
All	45	1081	47	1103	64	974
Cohort						
1980s	59	144	58	139	73	141
1970s	56	190	52	192	70	186
1960s	53	201	58	179	66	167
1950s	47	145	43	175	64	153
1940s	28	189	30	206	41	151
1930s	18	122	18	113		

The data for Figure 4 are shown below.

Table A.5 Views on abortion in different scenarios, 1983-2016

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989	1990	1994
% saying "yes" the law should allow an abortion when ...								
... the woman's health is endangered	87	92	91	92	94	92	93	92
... the woman does not wish to have child	37	29	49	44	54	49	56	54
... the couple cannot afford any more children	47	n/a	58	51	58	57	62	61
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1761	1675	1804	3100	2847	3029	2797	3469
	1995	1998	2004	2005	2007	2008	2012	2016
% saying "yes" the law should allow an abortion when ...								
... the woman's health is endangered	90	92	91	91	86	90	90	93
... the woman does not wish to have child	60	54	56	60	60	60	62	70
... the couple cannot afford any more children	59	56	53	51	48	52	64	65
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3633	3146	3199	4268	4124	4486	3248	1619

n/a = not asked

The data for Figure 5 are shown below.

Table A.6 Proportion saying abortion should be allowed by law if the woman does not wish to have the child, by generation cohort. 1983-2016

		1983		1985		1990		1995	
		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>	
All	37	1650	49	1530	56	1197	60	1054	
Cohort									
1970s							65		108
1960s	45	166	56	276	58	197	68		229
1950s	46	309	53	292	63	241	59		181
1940s	40	329	51	297	56	237	60		175
1930s	34	261	40	234	53	176	53		136
1920s	32	255	49	212	53	164	55		153
1910s	32	219	42	139					
<hr/>									
		2005		2012		2016			
		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>		<i>Unweighted base</i>			
All	60	2645	62	950	70	1619			
Cohort									
1990s					76	131			
1980s	65	228	65	114	71	231			
1970s	67	387	65	154	74	282			
1960s	67	518	69	164	68	277			
1950s	64	458	65	155	73	287			
1940s	53	472	48	187	61	266			
1930s	52	325			51	114			

1920s 41 256

The data for Figure 6 are shown below.

Table A.7 Proportion saying voluntary euthanasia should be allowed for a person who has a painful incurable disease, 1983-2016

	1983	1984	1989	1994	2005	2012	2016
Should doctors be allowed by law to end a patient's life, if they request it	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	77	75	79	82	80	81	77
No	22	24	20	15	18	16	21
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1650	1562	1307	984	1786	956	1619

Below are the results of five regression analyses referred to in this chapter. The multivariate analysis technique used is logistic regression, about which more details can be found in the Technical Details. Variables included in the analyses were education, age, sex, religion, party identification, and social class. Below we present results for education, age, sex and religion, as these variables were significantly associated with at least one of the five dependent variables.

In Table A.8 we present logistic regression analysis where the dependent variable is whether the respondent says pre-marital sex is “not wrong at all”. A positive coefficient indicates that the group is more likely than the reference group (shown in brackets) to say that pre-marital sex is not wrong.

Table A.8 View of pre-marital sex, logistic regression

	Coefficient	Standard error	p value
Education (degree)			.065
Higher education / A level	.426	.263	.105
O level / CSE	** .740	.281	.008
No qualifications	.392	.326	.230
Age (18-34)			.000
35-44	*-.698	.355	.049
45-54	** -1.406	.348	.000
55-64	** -1.415	.374	.000
65-74	** -2.037	.370	.000
75+	** -3.015	.412	.000
Sex (male)	-.041	.193	.832
Religion (no religion)			.000
Church of England	-.311	.280	.267
Roman Catholic	-.641	.348	.065
Other Christian	** -1.343	.239	.000
Non-Christian	** -3.208	.390	.000
Constant	** 2.831	.373	.000

Unweighted base: 862

**=significant at 95% level **=significant at 99% level*

In Table A.9 we present logistic regression analysis where the dependent variable is whether the respondent says same-sex relationships are “not wrong at all”. A positive coefficient indicates that the group is more likely than the reference group (shown in brackets) to say that same-sex relationships are not wrong.

Table A.9 View of same-sex relationships, logistic regression

	Coefficient	Standard error	p value
Education (degree)			.013
Higher education / A level	-.111	.242	.648
O level / CSE	*-.508	.247	.040
No qualifications	**-.895	.303	.003
Age (18-34)			.000
35-44	**-.773	.287	.007
45-54	**-.876	.284	.002
55-64	**-1.231	.302	.000
65-74	**-1.654	.310	.000
75+	**-2.912	.394	.000
Sex (male)	*.382	.173	.027
Religion (no religion)			.000
Church of England	-.444	.251	.077
Roman Catholic	*-.703	.304	.021
Other Christian	**-.994	.218	.000
Non-Christian	**-2.466	.366	.000
Constant	**2.317	.315	.000

Unweighted base: 862

**=significant at 95% level **=significant at 99% level*

In Table A.10 we present logistic regression analysis where the dependent variable is whether the respondent says “adults should be allowed to see whatever films they like” (as opposed to saying “some films are too violent or pornographic even for adults”). A positive coefficient indicates that the group is more likely than the reference group (shown in brackets) to say that adults should be able to see whatever films they like.

Table A.10 View of adult content in film, logistic regression

	Coefficient	Standard error	p value
Education (degree)			
Higher education / A level	.198	.166	.235
O level / CSE	.275	.182	.132
No qualifications	.394	.237	.096
Age (18-34)			
35-44	*-.401	.187	.032
45-54	**-.751	.187	.000
55-64	**-.893	.197	.000
65-74	**-1.744	.230	.000
75+	** -2.027	.293	.000
Sex (male)			
	** -1.084	.122	.000
Religion (no religion)			
Church of England	*-.406	.182	.026
Roman Catholic	-.468	.244	.055
Other Christian	*-.469	.165	.005
Non-Christian	**-.817	.277	.003
Constant	1.208	.201	.269

Unweighted base: 1453

*=significant at 95% level **=significant at 99% level

In Table A.11 we present logistic regression analysis where the dependent variable is whether the respondent says abortion should be allowed by law when a woman decides she doesn't want the baby. A positive coefficient indicates that the group is more likely than the reference group (shown in brackets) to say that abortion should be allowed in this scenario.

Table A.11 View of abortion when a woman decides she doesn't want the baby, logistic regression

	Coefficient	Standard error	p value
Education (degree)			.035
Higher education / A level	-.260	.180	.149
O level / CSE	*-.389	.193	.044
No qualifications	**-.655	.226	.004
Age (18-34)			.012
35-44	.022	.219	.919
45-54	-.128	.217	.555
55-64	-.152	.216	.483
65-74	-.409	.226	.070
75+	**-.783	.250	.002
Sex (male)	.192	.125	.125
Religion (no religion)			.000
Church of England	-.325	.172	.058
Roman Catholic	**-.799	.221	.000
Other Christian	**-.900	.161	.000
Non-Christian	**-.1.607	.291	.000
Constant	1.731	.230	.294

Unweighted base: 1453

**=significant at 95% level **=significant at 99% level*

In Table A.12 we present logistic regression analysis where the dependent variable is whether the respondent says prejudice against transgender people is wrong. A positive coefficient indicates that the group is more likely than the reference group (shown in brackets) to say that transgender prejudice is always wrong.

Table A.12 View of prejudice against transgender people, logistic regression

	Coefficient	Standard error	p value
Education (degree)			.000
Higher education / A level	-.265	.235	.260
O level / CSE	**-.905	.248	.000
No qualifications	** -1.102	.326	.001
Age (18-34)			.085
35-44	-.482	.270	.074
45-54	-.368	.276	.182
55-64	-.548	.288	.057
65-74	-.517	.311	.096
75+	** -1.155	.384	.003
Sex (male)	** .548	.173	.002
Religion (no religion)			.004
Church of England	-.302	.248	.223
Roman Catholic	-.314	.340	.355
Other Christian	*-.487	.228	.033
Non-Christian	** -1.334	.376	.000
Constant	**1.166	.295	.000

Unweighted base: 706

*=significant at 95% level **=significant at 99% level