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Cohort replacement effects in attitudinal change in tolerance of homosexual couples in Thailand

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Abstract

Previous literature has shown that demographic and socio-political transformations have played an important role in improving social attitudes towards homosexuality in developed societies. Research into the social acceptance of homosexuality in Thailand, which has been referred to as a “living paradise for LGBTQ+ people” in the media, is, however, limited and the understanding of real-life experience of local LGBTQ+ is often obscured by stereotypical representation in the media. This paper aims to explore attitudes towards homosexuality and homosexuals in Thailand and examine how these attitudes have evolved over time in relation to the country’s economic development and social movements. Using data from the latest three waves of the cross-sectional World Values Surveys, this study employed linear decomposition and multivariate logistic regression analysis to investigate the extent to which demographic and socio-political factors influence these attitudinal changes. The results showed that between 2007 and 2018, tolerance of homosexual individuals increased, but tolerance of homosexuality remained unchanged. The degree of tolerance varied significantly over time and by factors including gender, age, region, and moral attitudes. The decomposition analysis revealed that intracohort change, rather than cohort replacement, is what drives the attitudinal change towards tolerance of homosexual couples. These results provide important insights for policymakers and advocates working towards equal rights and opportunities for the LGBTQ+ community in Thailand.

Keywords: birth cohorts, homosexuality, intracohort, LGBTQ+, social recognition