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Conservative Christian Beliefs and Transgender Identities

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Abstract

Our research explores the intersection between Christianity and conservatism, focusing on how these two belief systems can influence perceptions about transgender people. Sociological research often addresses Christian (particularly fundamentalist and evangelical) influence on homophobia and lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) discrimination: how religion can negatively influence perceptions of same-sex couples, same-sex marriage, LGB (not including transgender) communities, people, and political efforts (Whitehead, 2013; Mellinger, 2014); however, we will focus on the under-studied relationship between conservative Christian beliefs and perceptions of transgender people or identities. To do that, we examined the construction of gender and religion in the Western world, looking into how the two can work together to uphold trans-exclusionary beliefs (Cragun, 2015; Darwin, 2018; Engler, 2011; Franzen, 2013; Moon, 2019; Sumerau, 2016; Westbrook, 2014; Wilkins, 2022). We explore how this relates to recent events in Nashville—including TN SB-3 and the recent Covenant School shooting—and their political, social, and religious perceptions (Restrepo, 2023). Previous studies have shown political or social conflict between conservative Christians and transgender or generally LGBT groups/individuals through methods such as survey research and interviews (Cragun, 2015; Rouse, 2021; Whitehead, 2010; Wilkins, 2022; Lisnek, 2022). The methods we have used in our own research included content analysis, survey research, interviews, secondary data analysis, and literature review. Our research has found that conservatism is a key compounding factor that can negatively influence Christians' perceptions of transgender issues, although there are discrepancies between individual beliefs.

Keywords

Christianity, conservatism, transgender, gender, fundamentalism

Sources

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