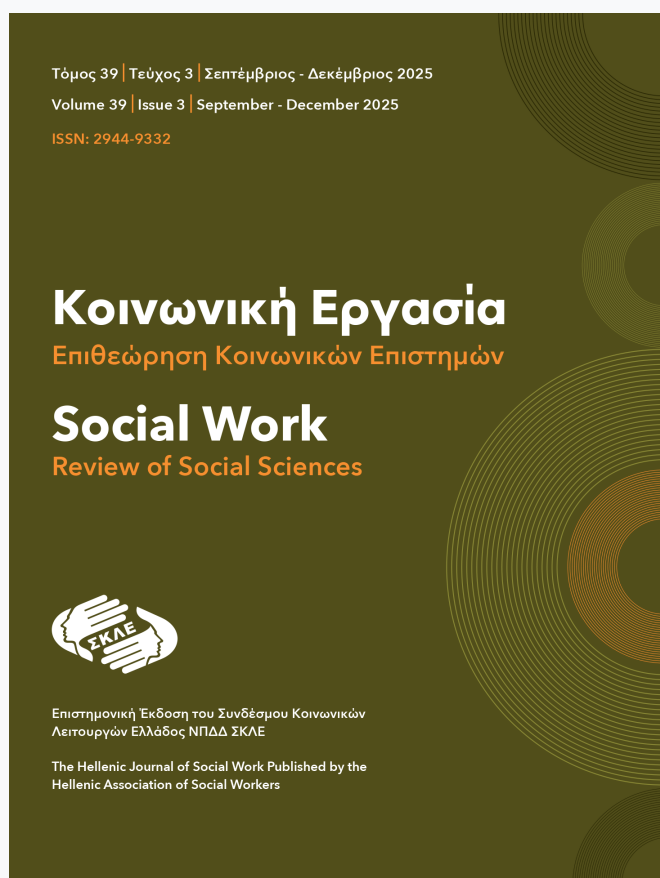


## Κοινωνική Εργασία. Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Επιστημών

Τόμ. 39, Αρ. 3 (2025)

3/2025



**Η αλληλεπίδραση θρησκείας, πνευματικότητας και στάσεων απέναντι στις τρανς και αμφιφυλόφιλες ταυτότητες: επιστημονικές ενδείξεις από φοιτητές υγείας και κοινωνικών επιστημών**

Παναγιώτης Πεντάρης

doi: [10.12681/socialwork-rss.42568](https://doi.org/10.12681/socialwork-rss.42568)

Copyright © 2025, Παναγιώτης Πεντάρης



Άδεια χρήσης <https://plugins.generic.pdfFrontPageGenerator.front.license.cc-by-nc-sa4##>.

### Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

Πεντάρης Π. (2025). Η αλληλεπίδραση θρησκείας, πνευματικότητας και στάσεων απέναντι στις τρανς και αμφιφυλόφιλες ταυτότητες: επιστημονικές ενδείξεις από φοιτητές υγείας και κοινωνικών επιστημών. *Κοινωνική Εργασία. Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Επιστημών*, 39(3), 4–17. <https://doi.org/10.12681/socialwork-rss.42568>

# **The interplay of religion, spirituality, and attitudes towards trans and bisexual identities: insights from health and social science students**

Pentaris Panagiotis<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thanatology Research Lab, Goldsmiths University of London

## **ABSTRACT**

The relationship of religion, spirituality and individuals self-identifying as transgender or bisexual is a complicated one, while religious beliefs tend to inform attitudes towards trans identities and bisexuality. This study takes the latter as its starting point and explores the extent to which religion, religiosity and spirituality predict negative attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality. With a probability sampling technique, 597 health and social science students were recruited. The hierarchical regression analysis of the data showed that religious attitudes, age, and political opinion have a significant predicting effect on attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality, as well as indirect effects of attitudes towards trans and bisexual identities. The study also showed that the effect of religion and religiosity on the attitudes toward trans identities also affects the attitudes toward bisexuality, and vice versa. These findings add to the current body of literature but separate trans identities and bisexuality as worthy areas of direct exploration and not categories merged with the overall umbrella of gender and sexual diversity, commonly referred to by the variations of the acronym LGBTQIA+.

**Key-words:** bisexual, transgender, gender and sexual diversity, religion, politics

**Correspondence:** Panagiotis Pentaris, [Panagiotis.Pentaris@gold.ac.uk](mailto:Panagiotis.Pentaris@gold.ac.uk)

## Background

Literature has at large articulated the many and complicated ways in which LGBTQIA+-identified individuals pursue their religious identities (e.g. Kidd & Witten, 2008); manage the contradictions between gender and/or sexual, and religious identities of their own (e.g. Levy & Lo, 2013); and make use of their religious identities as coping mechanisms to overcome difficulties and challenges associated with socio-political and psycho-emotional impacts of how societies respond to their gender and/or sexual identity (e.g. Levy & Lo, 2013). Research has also highlighted that religion and faith, when essentialist in nature, often predicts negative views towards LGBTQIA+ people (e.g. Compare et al., 2024).

Kidd and Witten (2008) found that female-to-male transgender individuals express religion, religiosity, and spirituality differently from their counterparts. This study highlights the need to recognise the variability in understanding faith and beliefs and advocates for belief-specific examinations. It challenges normative views and explores the intersection of faith, sexuality and gender diversity. Transgender, transexual, or gender queer individuals identifying as Christian face unique challenges in integrating their faith and gender (Ghazzawi et al., 2020; Levy & Lo, 2013). Levy and Lo (2013) and Couch (2021) suggested these individuals often reconceptualise their faith through their gender identity, recognising a fluid relationship between the two. Their experiences with socialisation and defiance of gender norms are key in their dual identity as transgender and Christian. Current research acknowledges that these experiences are influenced by socio-political environment that either support or hinder the balance between identities.

Etengoff and Rodriguez (2020) argued that transgender Muslims often experience multiple forms of minority stress, including religious, gender and ethnic minority identities. However, they also found that religion and spirituality serve as coping mechanisms for these individuals. Lefevor et al. (2023) reported that sexual minorities from conservative religious backgrounds experience significant distress and difficulty integrating their faith with their gender or sexual identity. There is limited information on the origins of these difficulties, but existing knowledge about the global disenfranchisement of LGBTQIA+ and reports of hate crimes, such as the 2016 Pulse nightclub massacre, suggest that internalised homophobia and fear exacerbate his distress.

## Attitudes by religion

In geographies with a more radical socio-political context, like Iran, the tensions between traditional faith and gender identity are heightened. Najmabadi (2011) examined the varied attitudes toward sexuality and transgender people in Iran, and concluded with an acknowledgment that Islam and transsexuality, as well as trans identities are incompatible when the former is perceived in its traditional and non-conforming form.

Not dissimilar, Rosenkrantz et al. (2020) report on a study about the association of cognitive-effective experiences and religious values with parental responses to a child's non-heteronormative and/or non-gendernormative identity, inclusive of transgender and bisexual. The study found, among other results, that lower levels of religious fundamentalism and religiosity are positively correlated with higher levels of acceptance of children's identities that do not fit in normative standards. A link is drawn here between religious fundamentalism and conspiracy theories (Bronstein et al., 2019), based on which, we can hypothesise that heightened conspiracy theories might lead to higher levels of negative attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality.

In a cross-cultural analysis, Elischberger et al. (2018) found that political views and religious beliefs are directly linked with people's attitudes toward transgender-identified individuals. Yet, whether the attitudes are negative or positive depends on the cultural context in which they are found. In particular, Elischberger et al. found that the contrast between Westernised and non-Westernised countries is bold, and religious and political conservatism are more intense in the former.

A recent and most telling literature review by Campbell et al. (2019) shed further light in the correlations between religion, religiosity and transgender, as well as gender-variant people. This review revealed that identities such as 'religious', 'Christian', and rarely 'Muslim' are associated with transprejudice. Similarly, forms of religiosity like religious fundamentalism, church attendance and literal

interpretations from the bible associate with negative views of and attitudes toward transgender people.

Research has already shown us that specific religious groups, such as evangelical Christians, view transgender-identified individuals of lower class than all others in society (Kanamori et al., 2019). Such findings are widespread in literature and often challenge the tendencies to avoid generalisations. Primarily, evidence in this area comes to challenge, in this case, evangelical Christian principles like that of human dignity. In their study, Kanamori et al. (2019) attempt to understand the disconnect between the two (i.e. principles of human dignity and view that transgender people are lower class citizens). Similar to previously mentioned studies, religious fundamentalism and traditionalism were linked with negative attitudes, while women appeared to show more compassion toward transgender-identified individuals.

Religiosity, political beliefs and feminist views also predict negative attitudes toward LGBTQIA+-identified people (Worthen, et al., 2017) and at times associated with service delivery, like healthcare (Roe et al., 2022). De Bruin and Arndt (2010) also found increased negative attitudes toward bisexuality based on religiosity and religious beliefs. Similarly, Hertlein et al. (2016) opined that heterosexuality and conservatively religious views are predictors of prejudice and biases towards bisexuality.

At large, literature is highlighting the undeniable links between religiosity, religious identity and attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality. Of course, we cannot claim abundant research in this area as research with transgender and bisexual individuals is only a recent achievement. The disenfranchisement of such identities, which changes from place to place, has not allowed for many explorations, while the beginning of those was neither critical social research nor empowerment research. To be precise, when the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry in Toronto started researching into trans identities, in 1993, the main concern was to find out 'what makes people transgender'. Similarly, the psychiatrist Robert Stoller (1975) set the tone for exploring sex and gender through a heteronormative and pathologizing lens. Only in the last two decades have we seen more work that is not built on pre-conceived stereotypes or essentialist views.

Even though this study is not concerned with essentialist beliefs, it is worth noting the following, given the frequency by which religious views are associated with essentialist beliefs (Prothero, 2020). A recent study (Hubbard & de Visser, 2015) found that heterosexual-identified individuals, lesbians and gay men viewed bisexuality to be somewhat of an unstable state. The same study found that heterosexual-identified persons hold the essentialist view of discreteness about all sexual minorities or minoritized groups. The connections between essentialist beliefs and negative attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality are evident, while the links with religious beliefs (Prothero, 2020) and/or conspiracy theories (Bilewicz et al., 2015; Van Prooijen, 2018) are uncannily not to consider.

Religious fundamentalism, gender and sexuality essentialism, conspiracy theories, and the politics of religion are interrelated phenomena that often reinforce each other. Religious fundamentalism highlights adherence to specific doctrines, often rejecting modernism and promoting traditional gender roles and sexual norms, for example. This rigidity aligns with gender and sexual essentialism, which posits that gender and sexual identities are biologically determined (Wood & Eagly, 2015). Both perspectives resist social change and the acceptance of LGBTQIA+ identities altogether, thus fostering environments where these identities are marginalised. Furthermore, conspiracy theories often thrive in fundamentalist contexts, as both involve a distrust of mainstream narratives and institutions (van Prooijen & Douglas, 2017). Such theories further entrench essentialist views of gender and sexuality by presenting them as under threat from external enemies.

The politics of religion plays a crucial role in this dynamic. Political actors may exploit religious fundamentalism and essentialist ideologies to gain support, framing themselves as defenders of traditional values against perceived threats (Appleby, 2003). This interplay between religion and politics can institutionalise discriminatory practices and policies, further marginalising non-conforming gender and sexual identities (Green, 2007).

This study considers conspiracy theories and the politics of religion to add to the current body of literature that explores how religiosity and belief influence attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality. No distinction is made between inner and outer group attitudes. The main research question

of this study is whether religiosity, religious views and beliefs predict attitudes towards transgender and bisexual identities. Specifically:

1. Do religiosity and religious beliefs predict attitudes towards transgender and bisexual identities?
2. Do spiritual beliefs predict attitudes towards transgender and bisexual identities?
3. Do religiosity, religious and spiritual views in the context of far-right politics predict negative attitudes towards transgender and bisexual identities?

New knowledge is important in these areas to help us better appreciate diversity and associated socio-cultural challenges, as well as understand how intersected identities in this area, filtered through cultural and social factors like conspiracy theories, complicate people's experiences. For the purposes of transparency, this study approaches 'religion' as the institutionalised set of traditions and practices that influence once belief system, 'faith' as a more personalised concept including subjective interpretation of religious teachings (Possamai & Blasi, 2020), and 'political views' as the set of beliefs on issues managed by governments and relevant to political action (Heywood & Chin, 2023). The study's aim is the exploration of the relationship of religion, belief, political views, and transgender and bisexual identities, while examining the prediction of attitudes towards the latter.

## Method

### *Participants and procedure*

Five hundred and ninety-seven (597) participants (Mage = 36, SDage = 6.14, 440 women; 144 men; 13 other) were recruited in the United Kingdom. The average age was 36, with 24 the youngest and 58 the oldest participant (SD: 6.2). The majority of the participants identified as White (n=401) and Black (n=124). Further, most of the participants identified as cisgender (n=543) and heterosexual (n=524), while 54 identified as non-binary or transgender, and 73 as gay, lesbian, bisexual or pansexual. Following the exclusion criteria (failing a seriousness check, Aust et al., 2013; failing an attention check, Niessen et al., 2016; reporting being clearly disturbed during the study), three participants were excluded from the initial sample size of 600 participants.

Participants were recruited via Prolific Academic (i.e., an electronic participant tool for research), compensated with £1.20 for their time to complete the survey. A random probability sampling strategy was applied for participants' recruitment. Prior to recruiting the random probability sample of university students of health and social sciences, it was ensured that the random probability sample satisfied two criteria: (a) every health or social science student registered on a programme in the country has a chance of being selected for the sample of this study; (b) the probability of selection for any health and social science student is known and can be calculated (Daniel et al., 2008). Ethical approval was granted by the University of Greenwich Research Ethics Committee in June 2020.

Sample size was calculated bearing in mind the estimation of the levels of precision and risk; the margin error (levels of precision) and levels of confidence, as well as the estimation of variance/heterogeneity of the population (Taherdoost, 2017). Additionally, the appropriate sample sizes were double checked, in order for correlations to be stabilised (Schönbrodt & Perugini, 2013). All independent and dependent variables and measures as well as the raw data and the SPSS syntaxes can be found there. Data collection took place between July and August 2020.

### *Measures*

**Gender conspiracy beliefs scale** (Marchlewska et al., 2014): This is a 3-item scale using items like "Gender ideologies were created in order to destroy the Christian tradition". Participants had to evaluate these statements on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree). Reliability of the scale in this study was good (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .76$ ).

**Conspiracy Mentality Questionnaire** (Bruder et al., 2013): This is a 5-item scale measuring participants' general tendency to believe in conspiracy theories as a consequence of their broader conspiracy mentality, using items like "Events which superficially seem to lack a connection are often the result of secret activities". Participants had to evaluate these statements in terms of the extent to



which they believe these statements are true in a scale rating from 0% (certainly not) to 100% (certain). Reliability of the questionnaire in this study was very good (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.86$ ).

**Attitudes toward religion** (Joseph & DiDuca, 2007): This is a 19-item scale using items like "Everything that happens to me reminds me of God", exploring perspectives and beliefs toward religion. Participants had to evaluate these statements on a 5-point scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Reliability of the scale in this study was very good (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.96$ ).

**Attitudes toward transgenderism** (Walch et al., 2012): This is a 17-item scale using items like "Transgendered individuals should be accepted completely into our society". Participants had to evaluate these statements on a 7-point scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). Reliability of the scale in this study was good (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .79$ ).

**Attitudes toward bisexuality** (Dodge et al., 2016): This is a 10-item scale (5 items first refer to women and then the same items refer to men next) using items like "I think bisexuality is just a phase for women/men". Participants had to evaluate these statements on a 7-point scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). Reliability of the scale in this study was very good (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.94$ ).

**Demographic information:** Beyond the dependent measures described above, participants were also asked to provide information regarding their age, gender, highest educational level at the time of completion of the survey, as well as their political orientation, such as left-wing and right-wing perspectives.

## Analysis

SPSS Statistics 22.0 was used for the data analysis. Descriptive analyses were performed for all variables. Zero-order correlations were performed between dependent variables to explore the link between gender conspiracy belief, religiosity, and attitudes toward transgenderism and bisexuality. To identify factors that predict attitudes toward transgender and bisexual identities, hierarchical multiple regressions were used, and the models considered gender conspiracy beliefs and conspiracy mentality as the context for the analyses.

## Results

### Descriptive statistics

Zero-order correlations between the dependent variables are presented in the table below.

**Table 1.**

*Zero-order correlations between gender conspiracy theories, conspiracy mentality, attitudes toward religion, attitudes toward trans identities and attitudes toward bisexuality*

	Mean	St.Deviation	1	2	3	4	5
<b>(N = 597)</b>							
1. Gender conspiracy beliefs	4.58	.62	1	.18	.09	-.06	.07
2. Conspiracy mentality	8.01	1.64		1	.14	-.05	.01
3. Attitudes toward religion	2.98	1.46			1	.12	.42
4. Attitudes toward transgenderism	3.71	.33				1	.16
5. Attitudes toward bisexuality	1.56	.92					1

The next two sections present results of the two hierarchical multiple regressions, where the study tested whether attitudes toward religion predict attitudes toward bisexuality (Table 2) and attitudes toward trans identities (Table 3) via gender conspiracy beliefs and conspiracy mentality in both regressions and via attitudes towards trans identities/bisexuality in the respective regression analysis.

**Table 2.**

*Attitudes toward religion predict attitudes toward bisexuality via gender conspiracy theories, conspiracy mentality and attitudes toward trans identities*

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$t$
Political orientation	.37	9.71	.01	.32	.01	.45
Age	.08	2.20	.05	1.85	.04	1.77
Attitudes toward religion			.14	4.73	.14	4.78
Attitudes toward transgenderism		.67	-	-20.6	-.67	-20.5
Gender conspiracy beliefs					-.02	-.99
Conspiracy mentality					-.01	-.48
F-change	50.71		285.33		.72	
R	.38		.75		.75	
R <sup>2</sup>	.14		.56		.56	
R <sup>2</sup> $\Delta$	.14		.56		.56	

Political orientation and age significantly contributed to the regression model,  $F(2,590) = 50.17$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $R^2 = .14$ , while adding attitudes toward religion and attitudes toward trans identities led to a statistically significant increase in  $R^2$ ,  $F(2,588) = 285.33$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $R^2 = .56$ . Adding gender conspiracy beliefs and conspiracy mentality in the regression model did not change  $R^2$ ,  $F(2,586) = .72$ ,  $p = .48$  and  $R^2 = .56$ . When all dependent variables were included in stage 3 of the regression model, attitudes toward religion were a significant predictor of attitudes toward bisexuality ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $t = 4.78$ , and  $p < .001$ ), as well as attitudes toward trans identities ( $\beta = -.67$ ,  $t = -20.59$ , and  $p < .001$ ). However, gender conspiracy beliefs ( $\beta = -.02$ ,  $t = -.90$ ,  $p = .32$ ) and conspiracy mentality ( $\beta = -.01$ ,  $t = -.48$ ,  $p = .63$ ) were not found to be significant predictors of attitudes toward bisexuality. Significant indirect effects on the relationship between attitudes toward religion and attitudes toward bisexuality were found of attitudes toward trans identities ( $b = .11$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .05$ ), but not of gender conspiracy beliefs ( $b = -.05$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p = .16$ ), nor of conspiracy mentality ( $b = -.04$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $p = .25$ ). Indirect effects can be calculated via bootstrapped mediations, and in this case, three paths were followed to calculate those. First, the measurement of the effects of the predictor (religion) on the mediator (transgender identities). Next, the effects of the mediator (transgender identities) on the outcome (bisexuality), and last, calculating the significance via the standard error and p value. These are very common techniques in calculating indirect effects with hierarchical regression.

**Table 3.**

*Attitudes toward religion predict attitudes toward trans identities via gender conspiracy theories, conspiracy mentality and attitudes toward bisexuality*

Model 1			Model 2		Model 3	
Variable	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$t$
Political orientation	-.47	-12.9	-.21	7.47	-.20	-7.16
Age	-.05	-1.57	-.008	.30	-.009	-.32
Attitudes toward religion			-.08	2.89	-.08	-2.84
Attitudes toward bisexuality					-.62	-20.5
Gender conspiracy beliefs					-.04	-1.80
Conspiracy mentality					.01	.46
F-change	86.09		271.99		1.64	
R	.47		.77		.77	
R <sup>2</sup>	.22		.59		.60	
R <sup>2</sup> $\Delta$	.22		.59		.59	

Political orientation and age significantly contributed to the regression model,  $F(2,590) = 86.09$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $R^2 = .22$ , while adding attitudes toward religion and attitudes toward bisexuality led to a statistically significant increase in  $R^2$ ,  $F(2,588) = 271.99$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $R^2 = .59$ . Adding gender conspiracy beliefs and conspiracy mentality in the regression model led to an increase in  $R^2$ , which however was not statistically significant,  $F(2,586) = 1.64$ ,  $p = .19$  and  $R^2 = .60$ . When all dependent variables were included in stage 3 of the regression model, attitudes toward religion was a significant predictor of attitudes toward trans identities ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $t = -2.84$ , and  $p < .05$ ), as well as attitudes toward bisexuality ( $\beta = -.62$ ,  $t = -20.5$ , and  $p < .001$ ) and marginally gender conspiracy beliefs ( $\beta = -.04$ ,  $t = -1.80$ ,  $p = .07$ ), but not conspiracy mentality ( $\beta = .01$ ,  $t = .46$ ,  $p = .64$ ). Significant indirect effects on the relationship between attitudes toward religion and attitudes toward trans identities were found of attitudes toward bisexuality ( $b = .13$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and marginally of gender conspiracy beliefs ( $b = -.07$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $p = .06$ ), but not of conspiracy mentality ( $b = -.05$ ,  $SE = .008$ ,  $p = .16$ ). Indirect effects can be calculated via bootstrapped mediations, and in this case the measurement of the effects of the predictor (religion) on the mediator (bisexual identities, mental health and conspiracy), as well as the effects of the mediator (bisexual identities, mental health and conspiracy) on the outcome (transgender identities). The indirect significance was calculated via the standard error and p value.

## Discussion

This study used regression models to explore the extent to which religion, religiosity and spirituality predict negative attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality, but considering conspiracy theories and political views and the way those inform such opinions or tendencies. Some of the findings align with previous work, but the data presented here add to the current literature by highlighting the interconnectedness of religious views, political views, and attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality. In addition to that, this study adds to the limited body of knowledge in this area and specifically about attitudes toward trans identities and bisexuality, which often is by proxy included in research about LGBTQIA+ identities, or gay men, or lesbian women.

The findings showed that attitudes toward religion, religiosity and religiously fundamental views are predictive factors for attitudes toward bisexuality and trans identities. A few studies have focused on this relationship before and tried to explore how discriminatory views against trans individuals and



bisexual people are fuelled by religious traditions, practices and beliefs. Campbell et al. (2019) reviewed systematically 28 papers exploring this very question. Their review and meta-synthesis found that there is a further variation based on the religious denomination or affiliation of those with religious views that needs to be further considered. For example, their review showed that people identifying as 'religious' or 'Christian' presented with increased transprejudice compared to those identifying as 'nonreligious'.

Furthermore, Worthen (2013) explored the dearth of information about attitudes and views toward the different groups of people included in the categorisations of LGBTQIA+, arguing that studies primarily homogenise those experiences without a fair separation of the data between these groups. Worthen's work draws on the evidence reporting on the positive relationship between religious fundamentalism, religiosity, and transphobia (Nagoshi et al., 2008) and biphobia (Herek, 2002). Similarly, this paper reports on data highlighting that this positive relationship feeds into transphobia and biphobia respectively, showing that the two go together. In other words, religiosity is positively correlated with biphobia, and this relationship has an indirect effect on attitudes toward trans people, as well, and vice versa.

Another interesting finding in this study is that of how political views and age are indicators of heightened religiosity and negative attitudes toward bisexuality. Malka et al. (2012), helpfully, set out to explore the determinant factor in the relationship between politically conservative views and religious identities, concluding that in fact it is the degree of engagement in public and private discourses about those views which emphasises the relationship with one's religiosity, which thereafter affects other views and attitudes. To complicate this more, Cohen et al. (2008) have found that race can be used as a moderator to measure the connections between conservative views, religious fundamentalism, and religiosity, highlighting that White counterparts present a much stronger relationship between their religious and political views, which appear aligned. On the other hand, Willmott (2014) found that the stronger the religious affiliation, and especially Christian views, the higher the likelihood for negative attitudes toward homosexuality, and the same was found in relation to age; the older the individual, the more likely to perceive homosexuality as something wrong. The present study adds to this literature by providing empirical evidence of the relationship both of political views and age with attitudes toward bisexuality.

What is also important to recognise is that the study's findings did not show any connections between conspiracy mentality and attitudes toward religion, religiosity, trans people, and bisexuality.

## Conclusion

The relationship between religion, religiosity and homosexuality have been explored in research, in the last fifteen years, but not extensively, while the risk of homogenising experiences and new knowledge across the GSD population and placed outside of context is not mitigated. Research primarily reports on evidence relevant to gay men and lesbian women, but rarely in relation to trans identities and bisexuality. This study has added to the current body of knowledge with findings about the predictors for negative attitudes toward bisexuality and trans identities, while it found that a similar tendency is presented between the two when religious views and political opinions interject. This study lends more insights to those shaping policies and practices in order to facilitate safer spaces across sectors for GSD people, but without recommending that religion or political opinion are the cause of the negative attitudes and exclusion faced by trans and bisexual individuals. These findings open up the space for exploration in future research about how religious and political views can be negotiated without a negative impact on GSD individuals and their experiences.

## Limitations

No study is free from limitations, and it is important that evidence is always received and applied with caution of its implications. The participants of this study identified primarily as women with a large number identifying as men and a small portion as 'other'. This should be taken into consideration if we are to have a robust view of the predictors of attitudes toward bisexuality and trans identities. Furthermore, the use of random probability sampling has positive impact on a randomised and unbiased

recruitment of participants. Yet, such sampling techniques may be criticised for not being able to ensure representation of the wider population, thus further studies should employ a mix of sampling techniques to ensure better representation. Lastly, this study focused on religion and religiosity but did not consider different religious affiliation to draw comparisons. Thus, the data should be received with the intent to explore further and across religious groups, affiliations and/or denominations, to increase the external validity of the study.

**Data availability**

All research materials have been uploaded to the Open Science Framework ([https://osf.io/hnxgj/?view\\_only=336e50e0818140feb2dabe587f9226ee](https://osf.io/hnxgj/?view_only=336e50e0818140feb2dabe587f9226ee)).

## References

- Appleby, R. S. (2003). The ambivalence of the sacred: Religion, violence, and reconciliation. *Pro Ecclesia*, 12(1), 116-118.
- Bilewicz, M., Cichocka, A., & Soral, W. (Eds.). (2015). *The psychology of conspiracy*. Routledge.
- Bronstein, M. V., Pennycook, G., Bear, A., Rand, D. G., & Cannon, T. D. (2019). Belief in fake news is associated with delusionality, dogmatism, religious fundamentalism, and reduced analytic thinking. *Journal of applied research in memory and cognition*, 8(1), 108-117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2018.09.005>
- Campbell, M., Hinton, J. D., & Anderson, J. R. (2019). A systematic review of the relationship between religion and attitudes toward transgender and gender-variant people. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 20(1), 21-38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2018.1545149>
- Cohen, A. B., Malka, A., Hill, E. D., Thoemmes, F., Hill, P. C., & Sundie, J. M. (2009). Race as a moderator of the relationship between religiosity and political alignment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35(3), 271-282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167208328064>
- Compare, C., Rosati, F., Albanesi, C., Baiocco, R., & Lorusso, M. M. (2024). Embracing diversity: Exploring attitudes and beliefs toward transgender and gender-diverse people in the LGBTQIA+ communities. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, (advanced online) 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2024.2335517>
- Couch, C. L. (2021). *Identity Integration Among Transgender Christians*. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.
- De Bruin, K., & Arndt, M. (2010). Attitudes toward bisexual men and women in a university context: Relations with race, gender, knowing a bisexual man or woman and sexual orientation. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 10(3), 233-252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2010.500955>
- Elischberger, H. B., Glazier, J. J., Hill, E. D., & Verduzco-Baker, L. (2018). Attitudes toward and beliefs about transgender youth: A cross-cultural comparison between the United States and India. *Sex roles*, 78(1), 142-160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0778-3>

- Etengoff, C., & Rodriguez, E. M. (2020). "At its core, Islam is about standing with the oppressed": Exploring transgender Muslims' religious resilience. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 14(4), 480-492. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000325>
- Ghazzawi, A., Suhail-Sindhu, S., Casoy, F., Libby, N., McIntosh, C. A., Adelson, S., ... & Barber, M. E. (2020). Religious faith and transgender identities: The Dear Abby project. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 24(2), 190-204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2019.1706682>
- Green, A. I. (2007). Queer theory and sociology: Locating the subject and the self in sexuality studies. *Sociological theory*, 25(1), 26-45. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2007.00296.x>
- Herek, G. M. (1984). Beyond" homophobia": A social psychological perspective on attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. *Journal of homosexuality*, 10(1-2), 1-21. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v10n01\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v10n01_01)
- Hertlein, K. M., Hartwell, E. E., & Munns, M. E. (2016). Attitudes toward bisexuality according to sexual orientation and gender. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 16(3), 339-360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2016.1200510>
- Heywood, A., & Chin, C. (2023). *Political theory: An introduction*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Hubbard, K., & de Visser, R. O. (2015). Not just bi the bi: the relationship between essentialist beliefs and attitudes about bisexuality. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 6(3), 258–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2014.987682>
- Kanamori, Y., Pegors, T. K., Hall, J., & Guerra, R. (2019). Christian religiosity and attitudes toward the human value of transgender individuals. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 6(1), 42-53. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/sgd0000305>
- Kidd, J. D., & Witten, T. M. (2008). Understanding Spirituality and Religiosity in the Transgender Community: Implications for Aging. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 20(1/2), 29–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528030801922004>
- Lefevor, G. T., Milburn, H. E., Sheffield, P. E., & Tamez Guerrero, N. A. (2023). Religiousness and homonegativity in congregations: The role of individual, congregational, and clergy characteristics. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 15(2), 195-205. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/rel0000396>

- Levy, D. L., & Lo, J. R. (2013). Transgender, transsexual, and gender queer individuals with a Christian upbringing: The process of resolving conflict between gender identity and faith. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 32(1), 60-83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15426432.2013.749079>
- Malka, A., Lelkes, Y., Srivastava, S., Cohen, A. B., & Miller, D. T. (2012). The association of religiosity and political conservatism: The role of political engagement. *Political Psychology*, 33(2), 275-299. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2012.00875.x>
- Nagoshi, J. L., Adams, K. A., Terrell, H. K., Hill, E. D., Brzuzy, S., & Nagoshi, C. T. (2008). Gender differences in correlates of homophobia and transphobia. *Sex roles*, 59, 521-531. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9458-7>
- Najmabadi, A. (2011). Verdicts of Science, Rulings of Faith: Transgender/Sexuality in Contemporary Iran. *Social Research*, 78(2), 533–556. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2011.0020>
- Pentaris, P. (2019). A constructive analysis of the formation of LGBTQ families: Where utopia and reality meet. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(1), 60-65. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3607828>
- Pentaris, P. (2014). Memorial video tribute and the enfranchised grief of a gay widower. *Thanatos*, 3(2), 1-14.
- Possamai, A., & Blasi, A. J. (Eds.). (2020). *The SAGE encyclopedia of the sociology of religion*. Sage.
- Prothero, S. (2020). *Religion Matters*. WW Norton & Company.
- Roe, D., Schaub, J., Lynn, J., & Pentaris, P. (2022). Transgender, genderqueer and non-Binary identities: Social and structural inequalities in public health. In V LaPlaca & J Morgan (eds), *Social science perspectives on global public health*. 1st edn., Routledge, pp. 179-188. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003128373-19>
- Rosenkrantz, D. E., Rostosky, S. S., Toland, M. D., & Dueber, D. M. (2020). Cognitive-affective and religious values associated with parental acceptance of an LGBT child. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 7(1), 55–65. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000355.supp>
- Stoller, R. (1975). *The transsexual experiment*. Hogarth Press.

Van Prooijen, J. W. (2018). *The psychology of conspiracy theories*. Routledge.

Van Prooijen, J. W., & Douglas, K. M. (2017). Conspiracy theories as part of history: The role of societal crisis situations. *Memory studies*, 10(3), 323-333. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698017701615>

Willmott, T. (2014). Throughout the generations: how age and religiosity may be changing our views on key social issues. John Carroll University. Available at: <https://collected.jcu.edu/honorspapers/23>

Wood, W., & Eagly, A. H. (2015). Two traditions of research on gender identity. *Sex Roles*, 73, 461-473. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0480-2>

Worthen, M. G. (2013). An argument for separate analyses of attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual men, bisexual women, MtF and FtM transgender individuals. *Sex Roles*, 68, 703-723. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0155-1>

Worthen, M. G., Lingardi, V., & Caristo, C. (2017). The roles of politics, feminism, and religion in attitudes toward LGBT individuals: A cross-cultural study of college students in the USA, Italy, and Spain. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 14(3), 241-258. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-016-0244-y>



# **Η αλληλεπίδραση θρησκείας, πνευματικότητας και στάσεων απέναντι στις τρανς και αμφιφυλόφιλες ταυτότητες: επιστημονικές ενδείξεις από φοιτητές υγείας και κοινωνικών επιστημών**

Πεντάρης Παναγιώτης<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Εργαστήριο Έρευνας για τον Θάνατο, Goldsmiths University of London

## **ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ**

Η σχέση μεταξύ θρησκείας, πνευματικότητας και ατόμων που αυτοπροσδιορίζονται ως τρανς ή αμφιφυλόφιλοι είναι περίπλοκη, καθώς οι θρησκευτικές πεποιθήσεις τείνουν να επηρεάζουν τις στάσεις απέναντι στις τρανς ταυτότητες και την αμφιφυλοφιλία. Η παρούσα μελέτη διερευνά σε ποιο βαθμό η θρησκεία, θρησκευτικότητα και η πνευματικότητα προβλέπουν αρνητικές στάσεις απέναντι στις τρανς ταυτότητες και την αμφιφυλοφιλία. Με τη χρήση τεχνικής δειγματοληψίας πιθανότητας, στρατολογήθηκαν 597 φοιτητές/φοιτήτριες/φοιτητά υγείας και κοινωνικών επιστημών. Η ιεραρχική ανάλυση παλινδρόμησης των δεδομένων έδειξε ότι οι θρησκευτικές στάσεις, η ηλικία και οι πολιτικές απόψεις έχουν σημαντική προβλεπτική επίδραση στις στάσεις απέναντι στις τρανς ταυτότητες και την αμφιφυλοφιλία, καθώς και τις έμμεσες επιδράσεις μεταξύ των στάσεων αυτών. Η μελέτη έδειξε επίσης ότι η επίδραση της θρησκείας και της θρησκευτικότητας στις στάσεις απέναντι στις τρανς ταυτότητες επηρεάζει και τις στάσεις απέναντι στην αμφιφυλοφιλία, και το αντίστροφο. Τα ευρήματα αυτά εμπλουτίζουν τη σύγχρονη βιβλιογραφία, διαχωρίζοντας τις τρανς ταυτότητες και την αμφιφυλοφιλία ως πεδία άμεσης διερεύνησης και όχι ως κατηγορίες ενταγμένες κάτω από την ευρύτερη ομπρέλα της έμφυλης και σεξουαλικής ποικιλομορφίας, όπως συχνά αναφέρεται με τις παραλλαγές του ακρωνυμίου ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+.

**Λέξεις-κλειδιά:** αμφιφυλοφιλία, τρανς, ένφυλη και σεξουαλική ποικιλομορφία, θρησκεία, πολιτική

**Στοιχεία Επικοινωνίας:** Panagiotis Pentaris, Panagiotis.Pentaris@gold.ac.uk