

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY

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ABSTRACT

On June 25, 2015, the United States Supreme Court held in *Obergefell v. Hodges* and three other related cases that same-sex couples had a constitutional right to marry. While the decision did not take everyone by surprise, many have commented on the apparent rapid evolution of attitudes regarding the rights of homosexuals. Indeed, it was only 12 years before *Obergefell* that the Supreme Court struck down laws that made gay sex a crime in *Lawrence v. Texas*. Much of the opposition to these changing social norms came from, and continues to come from, conservative religious groups. This research examines the role that changing views on religion may have had on changing views on homosexuality by examining 40 years of data (1974-2014) from the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is the most comprehensive, highly validated, and long-standing survey of demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral characteristics of American residents including hundreds of different variables. This research found that 1) attitudes towards homosexual relations changed significantly over the study period; 2) eight separate measures of religiosity also changed significantly; and 3) the two changes occurred roughly at the same time (i.e. there is no apparent lag-time).

KEYWORDS: Homosexuality, Religiosity, General Social Survey