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Relationships between Varieties of Religious Experience and Manifest Hate

A Sociological Analysis

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Abstract

In a recent article appearing in the *Journal of Religion and Society*, a novel quantitative measure of *hate* applicable to ecological units of analysis, the Hate Group Representation Rate (HGRR), was operationally defined and its relationships to various indicators of religiosity were examined (Delamontagne 2010a). Whereas that study was explicitly *descriptive* and *exploratory*, the purpose of the current research is substantially *explanatory*, and it also demonstrably improves upon the original indicators of both *hate* and *religiosity*.

Measuring Manifest Hate

You shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Matthew 22:39).

Moderation is the silken string running through the pearl-chain of all virtues.

Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State* (1642)

The Hate Group Representation Rate (HGRR) that was introduced in “Religiosity and Hate Groups” was based upon the number of active hate groups distributed among the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia as those groups were identified and enumerated by the research staff of the Southern Poverty Law Center during the year 2008 (Delamontagne: 2010a). The HGRR was developed as a simple ratio of a state’s percentage share of the nation’s total number of hate groups to that state’s percentage share of the total U.S. population for 2008. For example, of the 926 hate groups active in the U.S., 84 were counted in California, so that its percentage share was 9.07% $[(84 \div 926) * 100]$. During the same

year, California’s population accounted for 11.95% of the U.S. total, so that its HGRR was .76 (9.07% ÷ 11.95%). By comparison, 40 hate groups were observed to be active in New Jersey, so that its percentage share was 4.32% [(40 ÷ 926) * 100]. Since its share of the country’s population was 2.84%, its HGRR was therefore 1.52 (4.32% ÷ 2.84%). As a measure of hate descriptive of ecological units of analysis, the HGRR has two important characteristics that make its interpretation straightforward: First, it “controls” for the size of a state’s population. For example, by simply observing the differences between California’s 84 active hate groups and New Jersey’s 40, one might be inclined to think that hate is more manifest in the former state than the latter, whereas comparing the respective HGRRs of .76 and 1.52 suggests that active hate groups are actually “underrepresented” in California while “overrepresented” in New Jersey. Second, in those situations when a state’s percentage share of the total hate groups coincides with its share of the U.S. population, the HGRR assumes the value of 1. In 2008, HGRRs ranged from highs of 4.53 and 3.38 for Washington, D.C., and South Carolina, to lows of 0 for both Hawaii and Alaska. States with values at or approximating 1.0 were Arizona at .99 and Florida at 1.01 (Delamontagne: 2010a).

Since the appearance of the 2010 “Religiosity and Hate Groups” article, the Southern Poverty Law Center published its list of active hate groups for 2009, which showed an increase to a total to 932 groups for the year (Potok). The net increase of 6 reflected notable variations in the specific year-to-year differences for the 50 states and D.C., however, with some degree of accompanying changes in the HGRRs. While for 36 states the two-year differences in the numbers of active hate groups ranged between – 3 and + 3, several others exhibited larger variation, the most extreme instance being that of California with its 84 hate groups for 2008 decreasing by 24 to 60 for 2009. The largest increase for any state was the jump of 9 for Iowa, from 8 to 17. Accordingly, and in the interest of maximizing measurement reliability and validity, it seemed most prudent to utilize the two-year average of HGRRs as the indicator of *manifest hate* for the 51 units of analysis, and I call this new measure the *State Hate Index (SHI)*. To be consistent, I have also re-designated the 2008 and 2009 HGRRs as *SHIs*. Table 1 displays the numbers of active hate groups for 2008 and 2009 in the first two data columns, the two-year numerical difference in the third, the 2008 and 2009 *SHIs* in columns four and five, respectively, and the two-year *SHI* average as *SHI0809* in the sixth column.

Table 1: Number of Hate Groups and State Hate Index (SHI) Values

| State | Number of Hate Groups | | Difference 2009-2008 | <i>State Hate Index (SHI) 2008-2009</i> | | |
|-------|-----------------------|------|-------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------|
| | 2008 | 2009 | | <i>SHI 2008</i> | <i>SHI 2009</i> | <i>SHI0809</i> |
| AL | 36 | 32 | -4 | 2.58 | 2.24 | 2.41 |
| AK | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.47 | 0.235 |
| AZ | 19 | 16 | -3 | 0.99 | 0.8 | 0.895 |
| AR | 20 | 24 | 4 | 2.32 | 2.74 | 2.53 |
| CA | 84 | 60 | -24 | 0.76 | 0.53 | 0.645 |

Relationships between Varieties of Religious Experience and Manifest Hate

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|------|------|-------|
| CO | 15 | 17 | 2 | 1.02 | 1.11 | 1.065 |
| CT | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0.47 | 0.56 | 0.515 |
| DE | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1.54 | 1.49 | 1.515 |
| FL | 56 | 51 | -5 | 1.01 | 0.91 | 0.96 |
| GA | 40 | 37 | -3 | 1.38 | 1.24 | 1.31 |
| HI | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.25 | 0.125 |
| ID | 7 | 9 | 2 | 1.55 | 1.92 | 1.735 |
| IL | 23 | 28 | 5 | 0.59 | 0.71 | 0.65 |
| IN | 16 | 17 | 1 | 0.84 | 0.87 | 0.855 |
| IA | 8 | 17 | 9 | 0.88 | 1.86 | 1.37 |
| KS | 8 | 6 | -2 | 0.94 | 0.7 | 0.82 |
| KY | 11 | 10 | -1 | 0.86 | 0.76 | 0.81 |
| LA | 22 | 28 | 6 | 1.7 | 2.05 | 1.875 |
| ME | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0.26 | 0.5 | 0.38 |
| MD | 13 | 13 | 0 | 0.76 | 0.75 | 0.755 |
| MA | 13 | 16 | 3 | 0.66 | 0.8 | 0.73 |
| MI | 23 | 26 | 3 | 0.75 | 0.86 | 0.805 |
| MN | 8 | 9 | 1 | 0.51 | 0.56 | 0.535 |
| MS | 22 | 25 | 3 | 2.51 | 2.79 | 2.65 |
| MO | 30 | 31 | 1 | 1.69 | 1.71 | 1.7 |
| MT | 6 | 12 | 6 | 2.1 | 4.05 | 3.075 |
| NE | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0.74 | 0.73 | 0.735 |
| NV | 13 | 15 | 2 | 1.67 | 1.87 | 1.77 |
| NH | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0.74 | 1.24 | 0.99 |
| NJ | 40 | 44 | 4 | 1.52 | 1.66 | 1.59 |
| NM | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0.17 | 0.33 | 0.25 |
| NY | 24 | 31 | 7 | 0.41 | 0.52 | 0.465 |
| NC | 30 | 29 | -1 | 1.05 | 1.02 | 1.035 |
| ND | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.52 | 0.51 | 0.515 |
| OH | 23 | 27 | 4 | 0.66 | 0.77 | 0.715 |
| OK | 19 | 15 | -4 | 1.74 | 1.34 | 1.54 |
| OR | 7 | 10 | 3 | 0.62 | 0.86 | 0.74 |
| PA | 37 | 28 | -9 | 0.84 | 0.73 | 0.785 |
| RI | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0.63 | 0.94 | 0.785 |
| SC | 45 | 36 | -9 | 3.38 | 2.6 | 2.99 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|----|-------|-------|-------|
| SD | 4 | 3 | -1 | 1.65 | 1.22 | 1.435 |
| TN | 38 | 37 | -1 | 2.04 | 1.94 | 1.99 |
| TX | 66 | 66 | 0 | 0.91 | 0.88 | 0.895 |
| UT | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0.62 | 0.71 | 0.665 |
| VT | 2 | 1 | -1 | 1.1 | 0.53 | 0.815 |
| VA | 26 | 22 | -4 | 1.12 | 0.92 | 1.02 |
| WA | 12 | 15 | 3 | 0.62 | 0.74 | 0.68 |
| WV | 14 | 13 | -1 | 2.56 | 2.35 | 2.455 |
| WI | 10 | 8 | -2 | 0.59 | 0.47 | 0.53 |
| WY | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1.29 | 2.42 | 1.855 |
| DC | 8 | 9 | 1 | 4.53 | 4.94 | 4.735 |
| Totals | 926 | 932 | 6 | 60.39 | 65.47 | 62.93 |

Sources: For the numbers of active hate groups in 2008 and 2009, see Holthouse; Potok.

Measuring Varieties of Religious Experience

Reliable state-by-state data on religiosity are available from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, conducted from May 8 to August 13, 2007, which involved a representative sample of more than 35,000 adults. Among the several dimensions of religiosity examined were religious beliefs and practices and denominational affiliation.

High Religiosity, Moderate Religiosity and Low Religiosity

The following general findings concerned survey questions pertaining to religious beliefs and practices, from which I have developed composite measures of high, moderate, and low religiosity. The percentages of the 35,000+ total United States respondents selecting identified response alternatives are presented in parentheses:

Belief regarding the existence of God or universal spirit: Absolutely certain that God exists (71%); Fairly certain (17%); Not too certain/not at all certain/unsure how certain (4%); Does not believe in God (5%); and Don't know/refused to answer (3%).

Belief regarding interpretation of Scripture [Bible or Holy Book]. Word of God, literally true, word for word (33%); Word of God, but not literally true word for word/unsure if literally true (30%); Book written by man, not the word of God (28%); Don't know/refused to answer/other (9%).

Belief regarding importance of religion in one's life. Very important (56%); Somewhat important (26%); Not too important/not at all important (16%); Don't know/refused (1%).

Practice of frequency of attendance at religious services. At least once a week (39%); Once or twice monthly/few times a year (33%); Seldom or never (27%); Don't know/refused (1%).

Practice of frequency of prayer. At least once a day (58%); Once a week/a few times a week (17%); A few times a month (6%); Seldom or never (18%); Don't know/refused (2%).

While the above percentage findings pertain to the U.S. as a whole, the website version of the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey includes a series of maps of the states displaying the same data for each state, and I utilized the state-level data to prepare my composite measures of *high*, *moderate*, and *low religiosity*. Disregarding the “don't know/refused to answer” selections, the *first response alternative* for each of the above survey question topics were considered as *high religiosity* responses: Absolutely certain that God exists; Word of God, literally true, word for word; Very important; At least once a week; At least once a day. *Low religiosity* was defined by the *last response alternative(s)* to each question: Not too certain/not at all certain/unsure how certain or Does not believe in God; Book written by man, not the word of God; Not too important/not at all important; Seldom or never; and Seldom or never. *Moderate religiosity* included the middle or in-between responses: Fairly certain; Word of God, but not literally true word for word/unsure if literally true; Somewhat important; Once or twice monthly/few times a year; Once a week/a few times a week or A few times a month.

Three separate Pearson correlation coefficient matrices were prepared, one for each level of religiosity (high, moderate, and low) and a principal component factor analysis with Varimax rotations was performed for each matrix, each of which revealed a single strong predominating factor. Accordingly, Z scores were calculated representing each state's high, moderate, and low religiosity levels, the results of which are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. High, Moderate and Low Religiosity Composite Z Scores

| State | High Religiosity | Moderate Religiosity | Low Religiosity |
|-------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| AL | 8.360133229 | -5.433101894 | -7.198088425 |
| AK | -7.8299239 | 0.853747741 | 9.504921545 |
| AZ | -2.91253301 | -0.720639989 | 3.7904989 |
| AR | 7.098260287 | -6.381169013 | -6.220726055 |
| CA | -3.8464711 | 0.675314558 | 4.001588035 |
| CO | -5.04645253 | 1.397880336 | 5.760296281 |
| CT | -6.20014856 | 2.492767496 | 6.437649282 |
| DE | -0.51036236 | 2.579651033 | 0.198102434 |
| DC | -0.35723926 | -1.570797751 | 0.767745626 |
| FL | -0.04045946 | -0.461625241 | 0.594143882 |
| GA | 5.028804995 | -2.745564204 | -4.974241271 |

Relationships between Varieties of Religious Experience and Manifest Hate

| | | | |
|----|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| HI | -0.20486575 | -2.07967874 | 0.768575589 |
| ID | 1.001902226 | -2.459252902 | 0.231565283 |
| IL | -1.22385134 | 3.440494281 | -0.846590192 |
| IN | 1.918898437 | 0.288653428 | -2.957040781 |
| IA | -1.25235559 | 1.561649234 | 0.137273379 |
| KS | 2.866942554 | -0.677351955 | -3.191158216 |
| KY | 5.778185504 | -3.473844434 | -5.899346027 |
| LA | 8.093229461 | -7.281381779 | -6.128608955 |
| ME | -7.41326516 | 2.809032288 | 7.926622183 |
| MD | -0.35723926 | -1.570797751 | 0.767745626 |
| MA | -6.89062275 | 3.752175687 | 6.480511248 |
| MI | -0.74530109 | 2.611209776 | -0.299667074 |
| MN | -1.75435212 | 5.905145626 | -0.874368572 |
| MS | 11.87607746 | -8.730652058 | -9.882729103 |
| MO | 1.90148911 | 1.084709263 | -2.368602824 |
| MT | -1.59411211 | 2.719679953 | 1.095943123 |
| NE | 1.277883108 | 0.785092942 | -3.588238565 |
| NV | -2.85165595 | -1.519683868 | 3.479443719 |
| NH | -8.66159046 | 3.024099868 | 9.213178294 |
| NJ | -2.89446798 | 2.837035654 | 1.949687889 |
| NM | -1.62970076 | -0.431962225 | 2.407174227 |
| NY | -4.33262298 | 1.74153802 | 4.325755799 |
| NC | 5.823315259 | -4.321154464 | -5.207531029 |
| ND | 0.692860326 | 6.979192392 | -3.373847999 |
| OH | -0.17497521 | 0.908440528 | -0.778429973 |
| OK | 5.148453356 | -1.74987739 | -4.873967617 |
| OR | -4.28648346 | -1.627067465 | 7.277456693 |
| PA | -0.52365865 | 2.529055823 | -0.817880327 |
| RI | -6.20014856 | 2.492767496 | 6.437649282 |
| SC | 7.733582672 | -7.306897359 | -5.263507864 |
| SD | 0.692860326 | 6.979192392 | -3.373847999 |
| TN | 7.347121474 | -4.68647614 | -6.519905461 |
| TX | 4.297023797 | -2.89326224 | -4.544945347 |
| UT | 4.565205967 | -2.493083689 | -3.53576744 |
| VT | -8.66159046 | 3.024099868 | 9.213178294 |

| | | | |
|----|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| VA | 1.027080716 | -0.956201892 | -0.785247442 |
| WA | -3.21963495 | 0.23956368 | 3.849571079 |
| WV | 4.087713704 | -1.569924295 | -4.299258077 |
| WI | -3.40682712 | 6.709579421 | 0.091321823 |
| WY | -1.59411211 | 2.719679953 | 1.095943123 |

Denominational Affiliation

In addition to querying survey respondents about their religious beliefs and practices, the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey asked about denominational affiliation. Of the 35,000+ sample, 84% identified with one of the following major religious traditions:

- Evangelical Protestant (26%)
- Mainline Protestant (18%)
- Catholic (24%)
- Unaffiliated (16%)

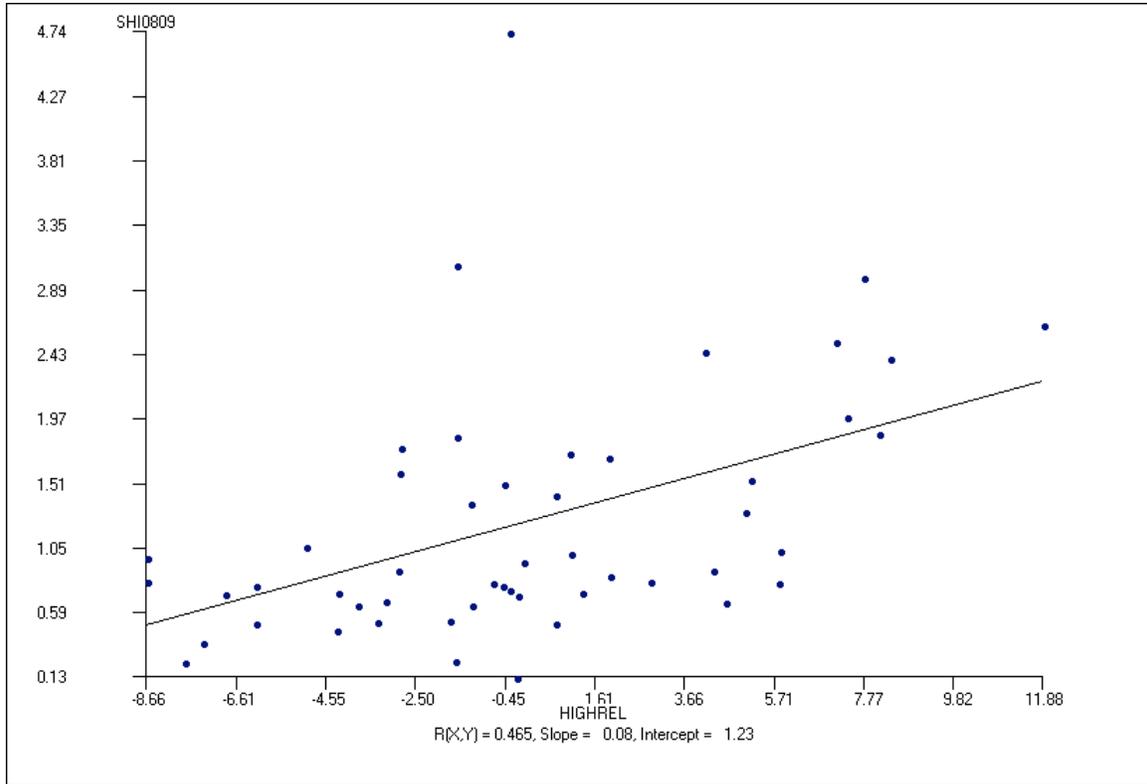
No “tradition” other than the above 4 exceeded 10%. The next largest group self-identified with Historically Black Churches at 7%, with the Jewish tradition at only 1.7%; while Buddhists comprised .7%, and Muslims and Hindus were .6% and .4%, respectively. Among the Unaffiliated were Atheists at 1.6%, Agnostics at 2.4%, and “Nothing in particular” at 12.1%. Denominational affiliation data, like those regarding religious beliefs and practices, are also made available at the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey website.

Relationships between Varieties of Religious Experience and Manifest Hate¹

Figures 1 through 3 display the bivariate correlational relationships between high, moderate, and low levels of religious beliefs and practices with manifest hate, while the focus of Figures 4 through 7 is on the probable effects of denominational affiliation.

¹ Although this study focuses on the relationships between manifest hate and varieties of religious experience, the author has discovered through his ongoing research that his *State Hate Index (SHI)* correlates with several indicators of societal dysfunction or pathology, including the *existential insecurity* variables of median household income, poverty rate, top 20% to bottom 20% income ratio, Gini Coefficient (discussed above and considered herein), educational attainment, percentage of African Americans (who are frequently targets of hate) within states, and percentage of females (who are also frequent targets of hate, and whose recent average advances in education, employment and income *vis-à-vis* males may be a cause of male resentment); *crime and punishment*, namely, violent crime rates, murder rates, and prison incarceration rates; and *morbidity and mortality*, involving, “overall health,” “well-being” (as measured by the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index), adult obesity rates, smoking rates, teen pregnancy rates, teen birth rates, infant mortality rates, and life expectancy rates. Readers interested in seeing the actual results of these analyses are encouraged to request a copy of “Results of Statistical Analyses Describing Relationships between Manifest Hate and Its Several Social Correlates” from the author at rgdelamontagne@gmail.com.

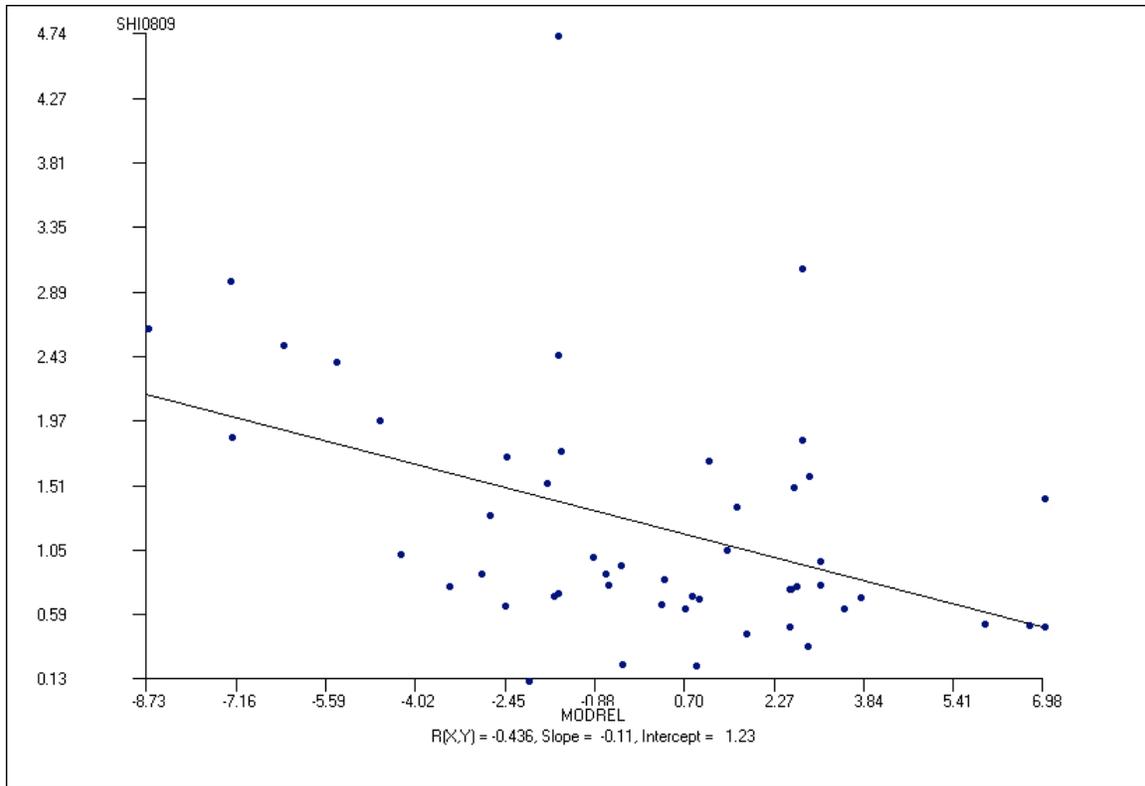
Figure 1. Relationship between High Religiosity of Beliefs and Practices Levels and Manifest Hate (SHI0809) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Note: The “R[XY]” of .465 is statistically significant at $p = .001$. The extreme outlier is Washington, D.C., with its *SHI0809* of 4.74.

Finding: There is a moderately strong positive correlation between High Religiosity and Manifest Hate; the higher the former, the higher the latter.

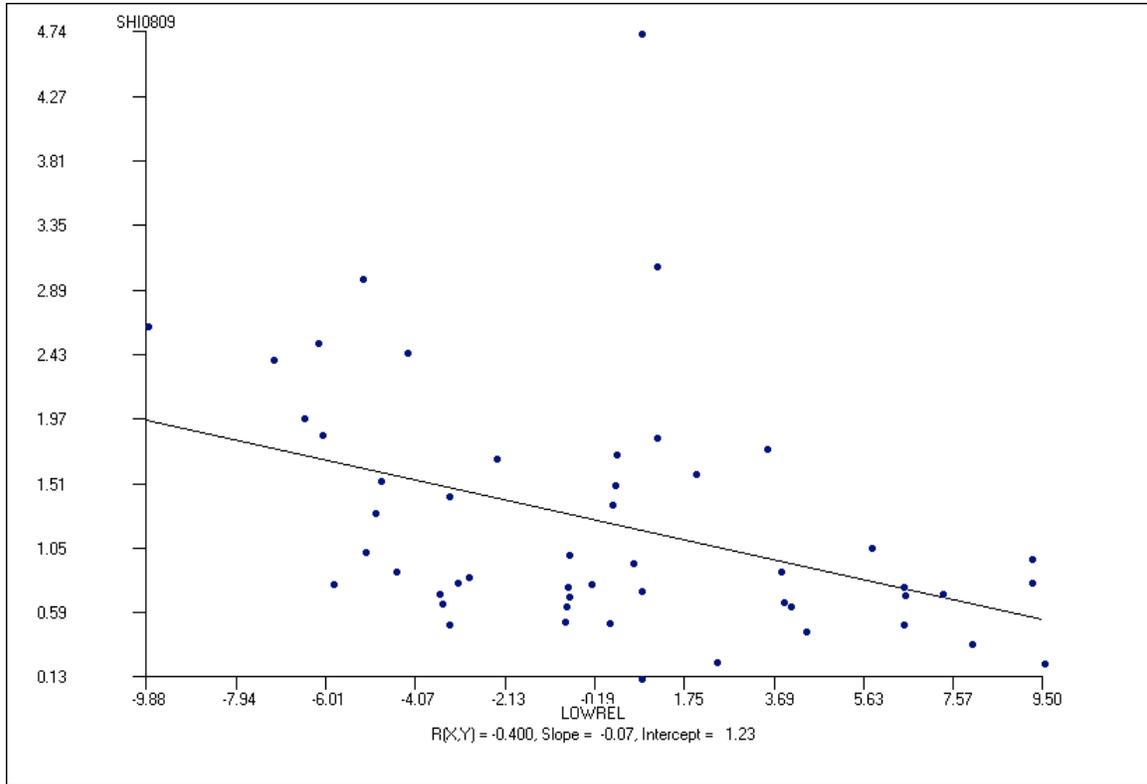
Figure 2. Relationship between Moderate Religiosity of Beliefs and Practices Levels and Manifest Hate (SHI0809) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Note: The “R[XY]” of -.436 is statistically significant at $p = .001$.

Finding: There is a moderately strong negative correlation between Moderate Religiosity and Manifest Hate; the higher the former, the lower the latter.

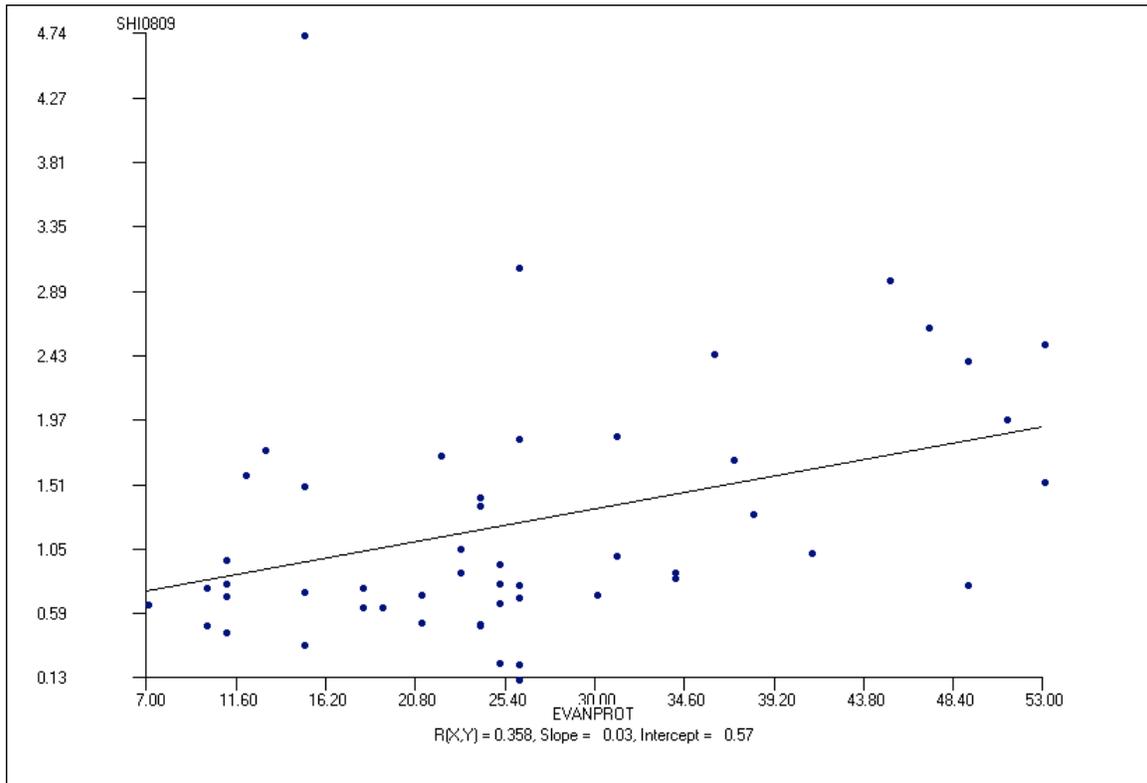
Figure 3. Relationship between Low Religiosity of Beliefs and Practices Levels and Manifest Hate (SHI0809) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Note: The “R[XY]” of -.400 is statistically significant at $p = .004$.

Finding: There is a moderately strong negative correlation between Low Religiosity and Manifest Hate; the higher the former, the lower the latter.

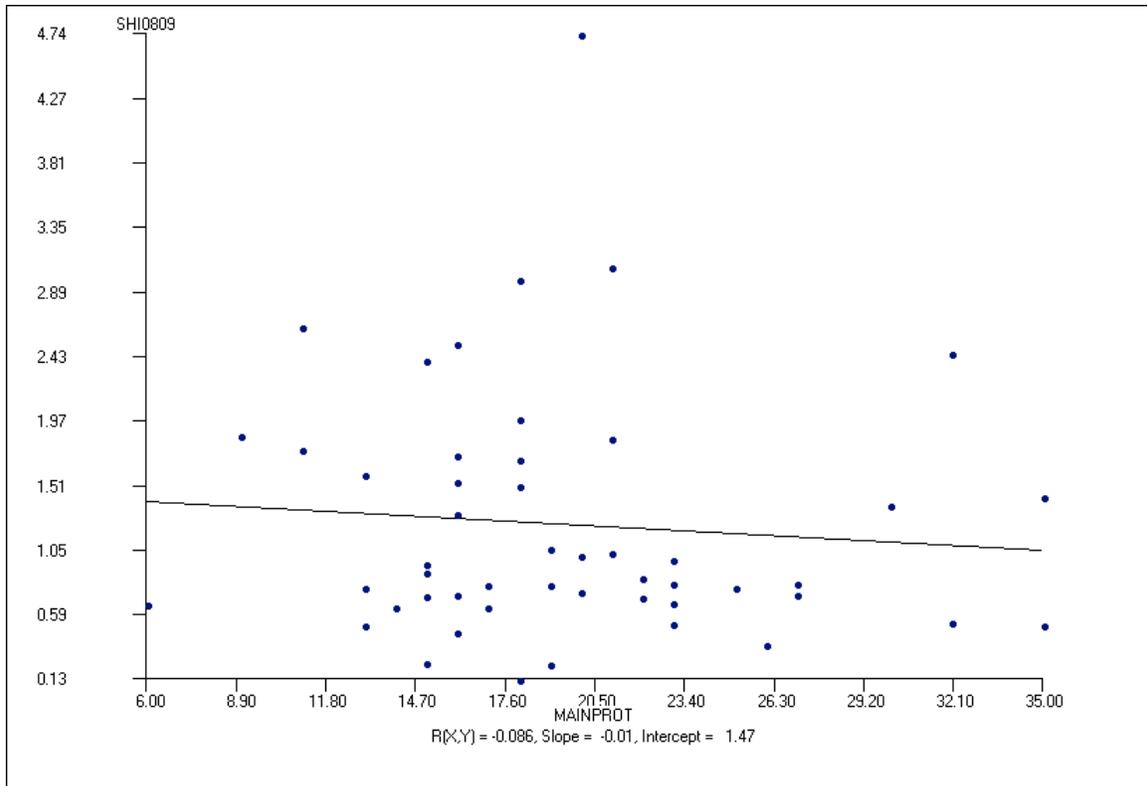
Figure 4. Relationship between Identification with the Evangelical Protestant Tradition (EVANPROT) and Manifest Hate (SHI0809) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Note: The “R[XY]” of .358 is statistically significant at $p = .010$.

Finding: There is a moderately strong positive correlation between Identification with the Evangelical Protestant Tradition and Manifest Hate; the higher the proportional representation of the former, the higher the value of the latter.

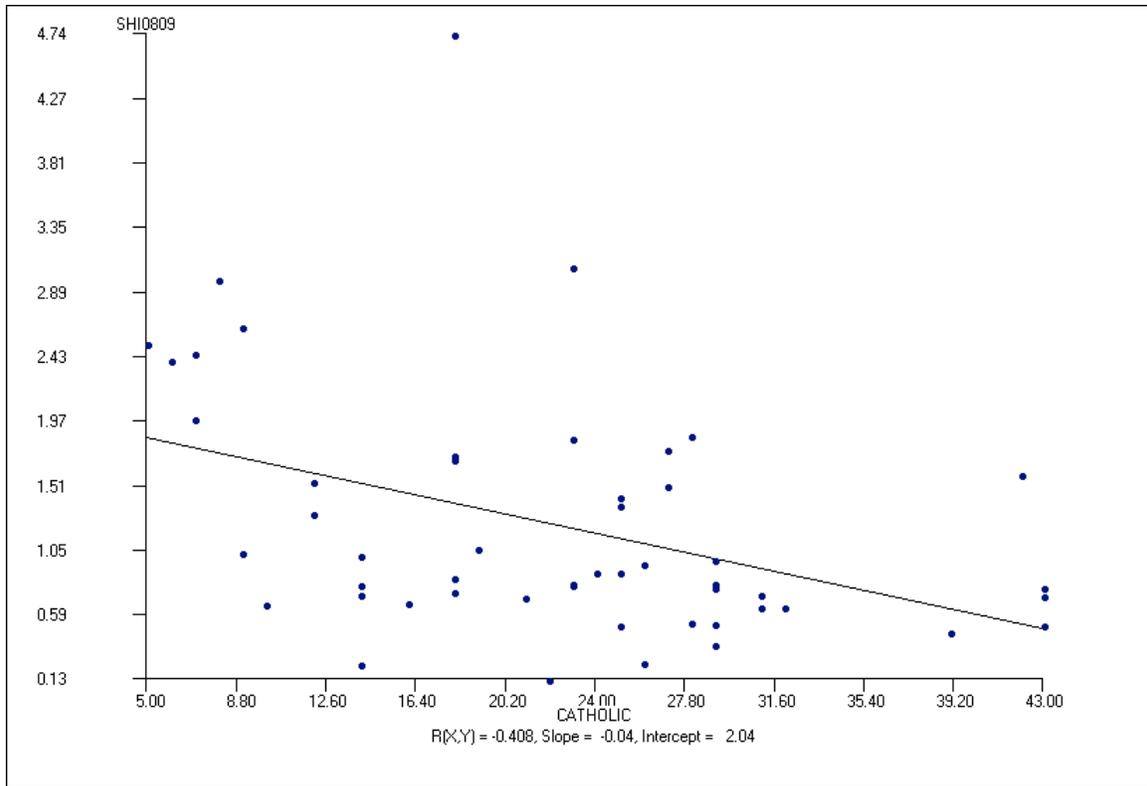
Figure 5. Relationship between Identification with the Mainline Protestant Tradition (MAINPROT) and Manifest Hate (SHI0809) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Note: The “R[XY]” of -0.086 is not statistically significant.

Finding: There is no correlation between Identification with the Mainline Protestant Tradition and Manifest Hate; the variables are unrelated.

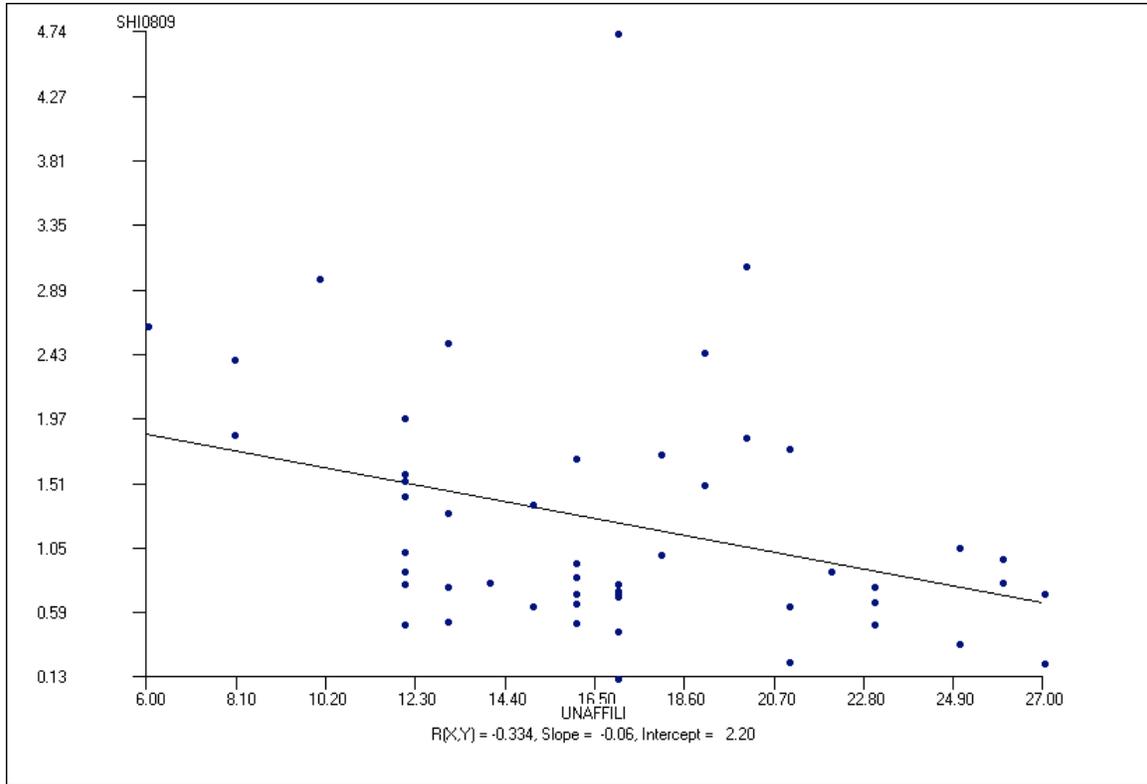
Figure 6. Relationship between Identification with the Catholic Tradition (CATHOLIC) and Manifest Hate (SHI0809) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Note: The “R[XY]” of -.408 is statistically significant at $p = .003$.

Finding: There is a moderately strong negative correlation between identification with the Catholic Tradition and Manifest Hate; the higher the proportional representation of the former, the lower the value of the latter.

Figure 7. Relationship between being Unaffiliated with any Religious Tradition (UNAFFIL) and Manifest Hate (SHI0809) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Note: The “R[XY]” of -.334 is statistically significant at $p = .017$.

Finding: There is a moderately strong negative correlation between being Unaffiliated and Manifest Hate; the higher the proportional representation of the former, the lower the value of the latter.

Discussion

Methodological Caveats

Although the above findings are suggestive of corresponding empirical generalizations, interpretation of results of cross-sectional correlational research utilizing ecological units of analysis (such as states) must always be undertaken and interpreted with appreciation of certain applicable methodological *caveats*, arguably the greatest threat being posed by the *ecological fallacy*, which occurs when the researcher erroneously infers level at the level of individuals based upon findings from aggregate state-level data. For example, if one finds, as in the case of the present study, that High Religiosity (as measured by my composite Z score) correlates positively with high levels of Manifest Hate (as measured by my *SHI0809*), it does not necessarily follow, logically nor empirically, that highly religious individuals are more likely to join and be active in hate groups. The only way one can produce evidence of more convincing validity is by directly questioning or observing the behavior of individuals

regarding both variables. To the best of my knowledge, to date no national surveys on manifest hate comparable to, say, the Pew Religious Forum U.S. Religious Landscape Survey of 35,000+ have been conducted. In fact, the few sociologists who have even attempted to conduct research on actual hate groups *in situ* have generally found the challenges to be daunting. Kathleen Blee's experiences in attempting to study white supremacist groups are typical: "Gathering accurate information about members of organized racist groups is difficult. Racist activists tend to be disingenuous, secretive, intimidating to researchers, and prone to give evasive or dishonest answers. Standard interviews are often unproductive, yielding little more than organizational slogans repeated as personal beliefs" (50).

Other methodological errors to be avoided include *confusing correlation with causation*. For example, the relationship between high levels of religiosity and manifest hate may be due to the fact that they are both related to another variable, such as income inequality, a distinct possibility that I actually consider in a later section. A closely related caution pertains to *bivariate analyses* of the sort utilized in this study. Although the two above variables may, indeed, be related in some causal manner, there may be other factors affecting levels of manifest hate, with income inequality again being among the usual suspects. In such situations, a *multivariate analysis* is appropriate, such as that discussed below. While not a source of error *per se*, *cross-sectional data reveal nothing about change(s) over time*.

Empirical Generalizations

The findings resulting from the above analyses warrant formulation of the following probabilistic empirical generalizations:

1. Higher levels of religiosity of religious beliefs and practices are likely to be associated with higher levels of manifest hate.
2. Evangelical Protestants are more likely to exhibit higher levels of manifest hate than are Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and the Unaffiliated, and especially as compared with the latter two categories.

Findings from Related Research Bearing upon the Empirical Generalizations

University of Manitoba psychologist, Bob Altemeyer, spent the better part of his career studying the authoritarian personality and its correlates. In *The Authoritarians*, he characterizes *religious fundamentalists* as right-wing "authoritarian followers" who are easily and readily manipulated into ideologies of hate by authoritarian leaders, and:

They are highly submissive to established authority, aggressive in the name of that authority, and conventional to the point of insisting everyone should behave as their authorities decide. They are fearful and self-righteous and have a lot of hostility in them that they readily direct toward various out groups. They are easily incited, easily led, rather un-inclined to think for themselves, largely impervious to facts and reason, and rely instead on social support to maintain their beliefs. They bring strong loyalty to their in-groups, have thick-walled, highly compartmentalized minds, use a lot of double standards in their judgments, are surprisingly unprincipled at times, and are often hypocrites (140).

Psychologist Robert J. Sternberg's "duplex theory of hate" (2003, 2008), includes, as a major component, *stories* of hate that function to describe the real or imagined characteristics of the target of hate, often as compared with the perpetrators of hate. For example, the Nazi propaganda machine pictured Jews as dirty, dark-skinned, scheming, greedy, Christ killers, while the "pure" Nordic Aryans were presented as the antithesis, honest, generous, blond and blue-eyed God-fearing Christians. Sternberg develops a typology of 28 identifiable hate stories, which include, for example: (a) "stranger (vs. in-group)"; (b) "impure other (vs. pure in-group)"; (c) "*enemy of God (vs. servant of God)*" [where] "*The hated enemy is not only your enemy, but, also, an enemy of God*"; (d) "controller (vs. controlled)"; (e) "barbarian (vs. civilized)"; (f) greedy enemy (vs. financially responsible in-group)"; (g) "criminal (vs. innocent party)"; "animal pest (vs. human); and (h) "comic character (vs. sensible in-group)" (2008: 83-95) (Emphasis added).

Similarly applicable works by psychologists providing direct or indirect supportive evidence of the empirical generalizations advanced here have also been discussed by Delamontagne (2010a). They include studies pertaining to the relationship between political evangelicalism and critical thinking, by Williams and Quillivan; "Verbal Imagery and Connotation as Memory Induced Mediators of Aggressive Behavior," by Turner and Layton; Hunsberger and Jackson's "Religion, Meaning and Prejudice"; "Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice," by Allport and Ross; and *The Authoritarian Personality*, by Adorno et al.

Several sociologists and criminologists have discerned the role of right-wing Christianity in nurturing and promoting hate. As Jack Levin and Jim Nolan have observed, for example:

The underlying religious inspiration for many in organized hate groups is provided by the Christian Identity Church, a worldwide movement whose ministers preach that those who call themselves Jews are actually the children of the devil and that Blacks, Latinos, and Asians are "mud people" whose spiritual development remains at the level of animals rather than human beings. According to the Identity Church, the true Israelites in the Bible are the ancestors of those Americans who came from northern European countries (83).

Similarly, political scientist/sociologist Chip Berlet, principal research analyst for Political Research Associates (PRA), a hate group watchdog organization, like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Southern Poverty Center (SPLC), has written:

Christian identity accentuates "racist and anti-Semitic motifs," envisioning a "militarized apocalypse" pitting godly, white, Christian men against traitorous government officials, manipulative evil Jews, and subhuman people of color (29).

Kathleen Blee, who studied the role of women in hate groups, reported:

Some women – especially women who grew up in Christian Identity (CI) households, married CI men, and are home schooling their children in CI philosophies – claimed that they learned their racism in their families . . . Another woman recalled that her father had warned that he would kill her

himself if she was ever involved with an African-American boy . . . A CI adherent said that during her childhood her uncle was a member of the Klan . . . [Furthermore] Christian Identity women are organized as “White Nurses” preparing to heal the broken bodies of Aryan (male) combatants in the “coming race war” (56-59).

In their research into the White Separatist Movement, Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, quote several white pastors they interviewed, one of whom said:

We are God’s chosen people – the white non-Jew race . . . We believe that the North American continent was promised to us as a promised land to the sons and daughters of Abraham through Jacob Israel. So I believe that this is our country . . . But, right from the beginning, we were not supposed to bring nonwhites here. And we were supposed to wipe out all the nonwhites – Native Americans (129).

Another, different, pastor interviewed by Dobratz and Shanks-Meile is described as:

“. . . a longtime racial activist, publishing *The Torch* newspaper, which contains “good, solid, Biblical Bible teaching, news and views for White Christians.” He was involved in the John Birch Society as a junior in high school. He joined the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKKK) in 1979 and is now national director . . . His wife . . . indicated that she had also been in the movement for a long time (132).

In their “White Men are this Nation,” Ferber and Kimmel have asserted:

While Christian Identity is surely a fringe movement, easily distinguished from mainline Protestantism, this movement was nevertheless encouraged by the *evangelism* – secular and sacred – of the New Right as well. It is from the Christian Identity movement that the far right gets its theological claims that Adam is the ancestor of the Caucasian race, while nonwhites are pre-Adamic “mud people” without souls, and Jews are the children of Satan (149) (Emphasis added).

A final example of research finding a highly probable causative relationship between religion and hate is found in the work of criminologist/sociologist Barbara Perry:

A natural extension of Christian Identity ideology is that of white supremacy. Whether God-given or biologically derived, the white race is deemed inherently superior to all others . . . Race is seen as an “essence” that carries with it inherent differences between groups, differences that are claimed as justification for “natural” hierarchies (146). [And] . . . an alarming number of supremacist groups – especially those within the Christian Identity movement – argue that separation is not a sufficient means by which to preserve the white race. For them, all traces of the nonwhite presence must be erased from the United States. It is inevitable that the trajectories of world history will lead to RAHOWA – *R*acial *H*oly *W*Ar – in which whites must be victorious . . . “*it is God’s will*, since . . . we have been commissioned to

fulfill His Divine purpose and plan, the restitution of all things” . . . Only by winning the battle against evil – whether defined as Jew, black, or “mud races” – can supremacists restore *the divine order as given by God*. This is an order in which the chosen white race prevails (163-64; emphases added).

Existential Insecurity and Manifest Hate

Although I have presented evidence supportive of empirical generalizations regarding the varieties of religious experience and manifest hate, the relevance at least one other potential explanatory variable must be considered. As alluded to in the preceding section on methodological *caveats*, *existential insecurity (induced by social inequality)* may provide an alternative and/or complementary/supplementary explanation for variations in levels of manifest hate. Most relevant to the current study are the findings of previous research involving relationships between variations in socioeconomic status, including the concept of relative deprivation, and religious beliefs and practices, as evidenced in studies such as those by Schieman; Davidson; Mirowski and Ross; Pyle; Van Roy, Bean, and Wood; and McCloud. Of particular relevance is the theoretical framework developed by Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart in their comparative, cross-national study, *Sacred and Secular*.

Attempting to reconcile alternative explanations for religiosity and religious behavior proffered by proponents and opponents of the “secularization hypothesis,” Norris and Inglehart seek a middle-ground or synthesis by invoking the concept of *societal and personal insecurity* (3-32):

There is no question that the traditional secularization thesis needs updating. It is obvious that religion has not disappeared from the world, nor does it seem likely to do so. Nevertheless, the concept of secularization captures an important part of what is going on. This book *Sacred and Secular* develops a revised version of secularization theory that emphasizes the extent to which people have a sense of *existential security* – that is, the feeling that survival is secure enough that it can be taken for granted . . . We believe that the importance of religiosity persists most strongly among vulnerable populations, especially those living in poorer nations, facing personal survival-threatening risks. We argue that feelings of vulnerability to physical, societal, and personal risks are a key factor driving religiosity and we demonstrate that the process of secularization – a systematic erosion of religious practices, values, and beliefs – has occurred most clearly among the most prosperous social sectors living in affluent and secure post-industrial nations (4-5).

Norris and Inglehart amass a substantial body of confirmatory cross-national comparative data supportive of their existential insecurity hypothesis. If we grant the soundness of their work, we might hypothesize, as a corollary that variations in existential security among certain identifiable population subgroups or segments *within* post-industrial nations, such as the U.S. states, ought similarly to relate to varying degrees of religiosity. Indeed, this hypothesis has been at least partially confirmed by Reese as well as by Schieman.

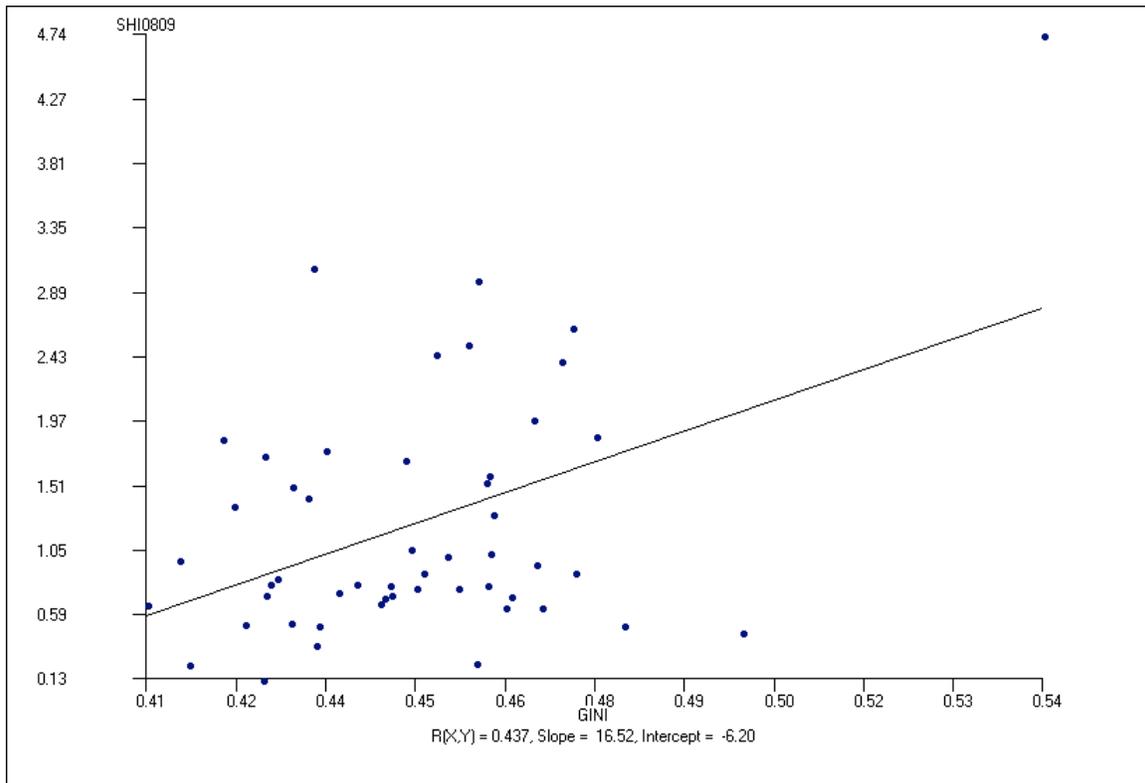
Less direct, yet compelling, evidence suggestive of a probable causal link between existential insecurity and religiosity appears in Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's, *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*. These researchers provide an abundance of data that support hypotheses predicting that greater social inequality, which affects personal insecurity as asserted by Norris and Inglehart's *Sacred and Secular*, relates to numerous measures of societal dysfunction or social problems. The units of analysis for their research are of two types, and the results are largely mutually-supporting: the first data set involves nation states, with particular emphasis upon the differences among the 20 to 30 or so "rich countries," while the second set of units of analysis are the 50 U.S. states.

For both sets of analyses, Wilkinson and Pickett utilize the Gini Coefficient as the measure of inequality of median household income (indicator or proxy for existential insecurity). The Gini Coefficient is a measure of statistical dispersion whose values range from 0 to 1, where a value of 1 is indicative of a situation where all of the income is held by one household or a very small group of households, and a value of 0 is obtained when all of the income is shared equally among all households. In 2007, for example, Gini values for the 50 states and the District of Columbia ranged from lows of .4104 and .4151 for Vermont and New Hampshire, states with the lowest levels of income inequality to highs of .4985 and .5432 for New York and Washington, D.C., respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

Using the Gini Coefficient as the measure of income inequality of median household income for the 50 states, Wilkinson and Pickett observed the following relationships, each of which is pictured graphically in a scatter diagram where the values of the Gini Coefficient occupy the horizontal or "X" axis: the higher the income inequality, the lower the score on an index of women's status; the higher the income inequality, the lower the life expectancy; the higher the income inequality the higher the infant mortality rate. Similar correlational relationships with higher inequality were observed regarding higher obesity rates, lower high school completion rates, higher teen (ages 15-19) birth and abortion rates, higher homicide rates and higher prison incarceration rates.

Arguably, extreme degrees of *hate*, which increase the likelihood of harm being perpetrated upon the victims of hate, including hate crimes, should also be considered a social problem, as evidenced by the work of the sociologists and criminologists cited above. Accordingly, the following hypothesis seems justified: *The higher the degree of existential insecurity within the United States, as measured by the Gini Coefficient, the higher the degree of manifest hate, as measured by the State Hate Index (SHI0809)*. Figure 8 displays the bivariate correlation analysis and regression line that bear upon the truth or falsity of the hypothesis.

Figure 8: Relationship between Existential Insecurity, as Measured by the Gini Coefficient of Median Household Income Inequality (GINI), and Manifest Hate, as Measured by the State Hate Index (SHI089), for the 50 U.S. States and Washington, D.C.



Note: The “R[XY]” of .437 is statistically significant at $p = .001$. Once again, the extreme outlier is Washington, D.C., with its GINI of .54 and an *SHI0809* of 4.74.

Finding: There is a moderately strong positive correlation between the Gini Coefficient and the *SHI0809*. The higher the level of Existential Insecurity the higher the degree of Manifest Hate.

Having found moderately strong positive correlations between Manifest Hate and both the High Religiosity of Religiosity of Beliefs and Practices and the Existential Insecurity variables, with correlation coefficients of .465 and .437, respectively, the question arises as to their joint effects upon Manifest Hate. The statistics of Table 3 display the results of an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis with *SHI0809* as the dependent variable and *HIGHREL* and *GINI* as the independent variables.

The results of the regression analysis suggest strongly that, taken together, High Religiosity and Existential Insecurity are better predictors of Manifest Hate than either variable considered alone. Whereas the amount of explained variance in *SHI0809* values with *HIGHREL* and *GINI* is reflected by R^2 values of .22 (.465*.465) and .19 (.437*.437), respectively, the R^2 of .32 from the regression analysis indicates that approximately one-third

of the variation in rates of Manifest Hate is accounted for by the independent variables in combination.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Analysis of Manifest Hate (SHI0809) with High Religiosity (HIGHREL) and Existential Insecurity (GINI)

| Correlation Matrix | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|----------|--------|---------|
| | HIGHREL | GINI | SHI0809 | | |
| HIGHREL | 1.000 | 0.262 | 0.465 | | |
| GINI | 0.262 | 1.000 | 0.437 | | |
| SHI0809 | 0.465 | 0.437 | 1.000 | | |
| Dependent variable: SHI0809 | | | | | |
| Regression Results | | | | | |
| Variable | Beta | B | Std.Err. | t | Prob.>t |
| HIGHREL | 0.376 | 0.137 | 0.045 | 3.056 | 0.004 |
| GINI | 0.339 | 25.615 | 9.294 | 2.756 | 0.008 |
| Intercept | 0.000 | -9.058 | 4.187 | -2.163 | 0.036 |
| SOURCE | DF | SS | MS | F | Prob.>F |
| Regression | 2 | 49.897 | 24.948 | 11.454 | 0.0001 |
| Residual | 48 | 104.549 | 2.178 | | |
| Total | 50 | 154.445 | | | |
| R ² = 0.3231, F = 11.45, D.F. = 2 48, Prob.>F = 0.0001 | | | | | |
| Standard Error of Estimate = 1.48 | | | | | |

Conclusion

The findings of the current study are consistent with and supportive of those reported by Norris and Inglehart in *Sacred and Secular*, by Wilkinson and Pickett in *The Spirit Level* (2009), by Delamontagne (2010a, 2010b), as well as by previous research on social inequality and religious beliefs and practices by Schieman; Davidson; Mirowski and Ross; Pyle; Van Roy, Bean, and Wood; and McCloud.

It is anticipated that the results of future research will support or suggest modifications to the empirical generalizations formulated here, ideally resulting in corresponding increases in explained variation of Manifest Hate to levels exceeding 33%. If there are any implications for individual and societal behavior flowing from this study, one must certainly be the imperative to embrace moderation in all things (sacred and secular), as evident in the admonitions of Buddha, Confucius, Aristotle, Jesus Christ, Adam Smith, Gandhi, the Dali Lama, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandella. Extremes of both a blind, unreflective,

perverted religious dogmatism and an obscene degree of income and wealth inequality are likely to have dysfunctional consequences, at least some of which may be predictable.²

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² It is important to emphasize that the results of our analyses should not be interpreted to suggest that all or most highly religious individuals are inclined to join or even sympathize with hate groups. Only the most extreme fundamentalists, such as members of the Christian Identity Church, are unabashedly strongly inclined to be haters (see also my discussion of the *ecological fallacy* above).

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