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ABSTRACT

Factors that predict an individual’s tendency to possess homonegative attitudes and beliefs have been disputed in social science and social psychological literature since sexual orientation became a variable of interest to researchers of human behavior and cognition. The interaction of race, it seems, has been especially nebulous in research on homonegative differences among social groups. This study explored the predictive value of race, Christian religiosity, sex, gender, marital status, age, political party affiliation and education on homonegativity. The results revealed that Christian African Americans are generally more religious than Christian European Americans. Additionally, regression analyses showed that being Black is the single-most predictive factor for homonegativism.
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INTRODUCTION

Preface

During his presidential campaign in the mid 1990’s, Bill Clinton’s platform included a gay rights agenda with promises of progress in the social politics of healthcare for the HIV/AIDS community and ending the federal ban of gays and lesbians in the military. To the chagrin of the gay community, Clinton’s administrative oversight of gay-centered issues faded after he become president, as HIV and AID’s patients went largely ignored and the military instituted a “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy which allows for gay men and women to serve in the nation’s armed forces as long as they do not openly reveal themselves as homosexual (Estes 2006). The process of embracing pro-gay legislation while campaigning then turning toward a more homonegative (unfavorable attitudes toward gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered individuals [Malcolmson, Christopher, Frazen, and Keyes, 2006]) political perspective after elections has become endemic of political ideologues bent on garnering votes from gay and gay-supporting constituencies. After inaugurating, many leave those promises behind to embrace a more centrist political ideology, most likely in attempt to secure future elections and mainstream voter support. Seemingly landlocked by elected officials, gay rights activists turn their claims to the courts for recognition and validation (Wirum and Winders 2001).

As voters in California prepare to either enact or decline to pass historic civil rights legislation regarding gay and lesbian citizens, another social issue bubbles to the surface of the mainstream debate: the presumed social conservatism of African Americans. Introduced to the state congressional floor in 2008, Proposition 8 (or the California Marriage Protection Act)
would “eliminate the rights of same-sex couples to marry in California” and deny marriage recognition to same-sex couples who have already entered into matrimony. One of the bill’s major supporters was Bishop George McKinney, director of the Coalition of African American Pastors, whose mission statement includes “supporting the role of religion in public life, protecting the lives of the unborn, and defending the sacred institution of marriage” (www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov; www.caapusa.org). The measure passed the state legislature with just a 4% lead. In the fallout, emboldened by their success, proponents of the ballot began to disperse resources to other states where the possibility for support of similar ballots was high, gay rights activists turned to the courts for reprieve, and the media sets its sights on a yet unexamined aspect of Proposition 8: the supposed racial divide (Shubert and Flint 2009).

On November 8, 2008 (the same month the measure was up for a vote), the Los Angeles Times published an article entitled “Why gays, blacks are divided on Prop 8” which chronicled the antagonistic climate surrounding Proposition 8 that permeated the African American community. The article’s main claim was that religion was the single-most cited reason for which such a favorable stance was founded. Individuals interviewed for the story appeared to be especially at odds with categorizing same-sex marriage as a civil right. One interviewee stated that he was “born Black” but “[homosexuals] weren’t born gay; they chose it.” Another individual claimed that same-sex marriage was “an abomination against God” (www.articles.la.times.com). Other media outlets followed-suit – publishing similar stories like the ABC’s “Prop 8 Sparks Gay-Black Divide” and NPR’s “Why Black Voters Didn’t Fight Prop 8” (www.abcnews.go.com; www.npr.org). Most of these stories seemed to spotlight the religiosity of African Americans as the primary factor in why so many Black communities in California seemed to support the same-sex marriage ban. However, other than interviews and
comparisons of the Afro-American and Euro-American vote by percentage, the media provided no empirical evidence in support of their claim.

Statement of the Problem

It is the responsibility of sociology – in the public tradition – to strip social issues of the emotive media, psychological processes, and speculative aura that envelops them in contemporary society. Here, in the tradition of C. Wright Mills’ ‘sociological imagination’ (1959), emerges a research question which warrants exploration: does homonegativity indeed vary by race? If so, can the religiosity of African Americans account for the (alleged) racial disparity in the acceptance of same-sex relationships? Using data from the General Social Survey of 2004, this project will investigate the cultural claim of hyper-homophobic African Americanism by conducting a statistical analysis of survey questions from a representative sample which comprise an index of Christian religiosity and drawing comparisons across the racial divide.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Race & Religion

In a chapter titled Difficult Dialogues at the Intersections of Race, Culture and Religion, Stewart and Lozano (2009) argue that it is crucial for social science “to understand that both racial/ethnic cultural identity and religious identity may play salient roles in the lives of the individual, particularly among people of color”. They suggest that the subjugated and marginal experience of African Americans may be “multiplied” (where both identities are the source of
hardship) or “divided” (where one identity is marginalized and the other is not). In addition, religious values are generally entrenched in racial identity. Thus, much like American Indians, African American racial and religious identities should not be considered distinct social entities. Instead, our cultural understanding of Black communities should entail an appreciation for the tightly-woven interconnectedness of African American religious institutions and the character of Black ethnicity.

African Americans are more likely to have formal church affiliations than other ethnic group in the United States (Pitt 2010). Richard Pitt (2010) studied the religious habits of gay Black males by conducting interviews and a brief survey on beliefs about religion and homosexuality and demographic information. Gay African Americans – particularly men – also report high levels of church-related religious activity. In fact, research shows that many gay Black men do not define their religious involvement and being gay as oppositional (Pitt 2010). However, the church environment can be turbulent, as homosexuality is often deconstructed and vilified in the pulpit, and subsequently, in the pews (Ward 2005). Most Afro-American Protestant churches consider homosexuality a sin and therefore deem the gay ‘lifestyle’ unacceptable (Schulte and Battle 2004). Pitt’s results reveal that without supportive institutions in the network of Protestant Black churches, gay African American church members do not have the religious ammunition to fire back against the homonegativism in their own churches.

Other studies that examine race and negative views of gays have also positioned religion as their locus of investigation. In 2004, E. L. Kornegay conducted a study examining homonegativity through the lens of Black theology. Kornegay’s analysis revealed that much of what could be called a ‘African American identity’ is crouched in a “Black biblical hermeneutic” – thus, the cultural ideology behind defining homosexuality in religious terms (as ‘evil’ or
‘perverse’) is lodged in the heteronormative culture of the African American church. Furthermore, this heteronormality is vital to securing the male hegemony that has existed within Black theology – and therefore Black culture – since its beginnings (Kornegay 2004).

In addition, Kornegay argues that unlike some Euro-American Protestant churches, accepting gays into the Afro-American churches would be a direct contradiction to the patriarchal network in which Black theology is entrenched and as such, homonegativity becomes a catalyst through which the power structure of African American gender relations is maintained (Kornegay 2004). Similarly, Elijah Ward’s (2005) meta-analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data sources also suggests a religious basis to homonegativity in the Black community. Indeed, Ward states explicitly that African American churches are at the heart of the homonegativity attitudes that plague the Black community. Like Kornegay, Ward urges that African American religiosity (as well as Black culture) fuel anti-gay attitudes by reiterating the ‘machismo’ and antigay rhetoric of male African Americanism and Black Nationalism.

Race & Homonegativity

Although an overt claim is made by some media sources regarding overactive levels of homonegativity in African American communities (see Preface), there is very little social research to back it up (Jenkins et al. 2009). In fact, much of the research concerning the demographic breakdown of homonegativity compares anti-gay attitudes across every socio-demographic category (such as gender or class) except race (Jenkins et al. 2009). Out of the few projects that do include race, many have either yielded mixed results, are more than a decade old, or both (e.g., Finlay and Weather 2003; Clark 1983; Dalton 1983; Icard 1985; Peterson 1992). Some studies reported that Blacks expressed more negativity toward gay men and women than
Whites (e.g., Hudson and Ricketts 1980; Lewis 1985; Black, Oles, and More 1996; Nyberg and Alston 1977), while others report the opposite (e.g., Klassen, Williams, and Levitt 1989; Larsen 1996; Hensley 2000). Still, others reported no difference between the races (e.g., Irwin and Thompson 1977; Glen and Weaver 1979; Marsiglio 1993; Lottes and Kuriloff 1992; Herek and Glunt 1993).

Furthermore, few have attempted to view the effect of religiosity on homonegativity as incremental – a methodological perspective that could provide a more accurate account of religious-based homonegativity because of an increased statistical sensitivity to small differences in respondent Likert scale scores. However, those studies that do focus on African American homonegativism (and in particular its crossroads with religiousness), as well as research which describes the sexed and gendered experience of African Americans, may offer vital data from which we might extrapolate information about levels of acceptance of same-sex relationships among Black Americans.

Gender and sexuality are undoubtedly bound together by cultural definition – more than likely, this bind reflects the socialized view of gender roles as bound to a genetically-assigned sexed physicality. Thus, it is useful to examine the system of gender norms which facilitate identity formation among African American individuals. Often, the gender structure of a community or society coincides with its structure of sexuality, as the norms of gender and sexuality are continually shaped by cultural prescriptions of sex. For example, Corby, Hodges and Perry (2007) hypothesized that an attempt to measure pressures to conform to gender norms would reveal varying levels of felt pressure among Euro-American, Hispanic American, and Afro-American children. Corby and colleagues distributed a Self-Concept Questionnaire and Peer Nomination Inventory to 863 Hispanic, White, and Black fifth graders. The study exposed
two interesting phenomena. First, Black children reported feeling more pressure to conform to
gender stereotypes than Hispanic children, and White children reported feeling much less
pressure to conform than both African American and Hispanic American children (Corby et al.
2007). Second, the research also revealed that there was a significant positive correlation
between gender typicality and felt social pressure to conform, but only for African American
males. Interestingly, Bimbi, Nanin and Parsons (2005) also found evidence of increased pressure
for people of color to conform to mainstream ideas of gender and sexuality. Bimbi et al.’s survey
revealed that racial minorities on average reported a younger age of self-identifying as
homosexual and ‘coming-out’ to their families and friends than European American
homosexuals. Correspondingly, African American participants also had lower rates of openness
about their sexuality with their parents post-coming out.

Other studies have viewed sexuality and sexual orientation through the lens of culture
and social class. Shirley Hill’s (2002) research considers the comparison of homonegativity and
race through the concept of social status. Hill’s ethnographic study examined 35 Black families
and reflected on the importance of the African American familial structure in norm-passing and
culture-sharing in the Black community. Her findings revealed that social class was a good
predictor of religiosity and, correspondingly, of homonegativity. Lower class families (thus,
many African American families as Afro-Americans disproportionately populate the lower
classes) appear to exhibit more fervent religiosity and thus displayed a more ferocious
homophobic character than middle and higher class families (Hill 2002). Additionally, contrary
to previous studies on African-American families (e.g., Lewis 1975; Peters 1997; Scott 1993),
Hill’s research indicated that gender and sex play a major role in child socialization in African
American households. Along with Bimbi et al. (2005) and Corby et al. (2007), Hill’s findings
propose that African Americans (especially males) may feel more pressure than European Americans to identify with gender, sex, and sexuality roles and norms exemplified by the Black cultural model. Correspondingly, it may be harder for Black gays to combat in-group prejudices toward their sexual orientation – since gender norms and sexuality norms are so closely related – as the consequences for norm-breaking in the African American community could be more severe than in the European American community.

Apart from race, establishing the predictors of homonegativity has been the subject of a limited number of studies focusing on gender, age, educational status, religiosity, and political affiliation. Research indicates that women, people with high levels education, and younger individuals are more likely to express homopositive attitudes than men, older people, and the less educated (Jenkins et al. 2009). In addition, attending frequent religious services and expressing high levels of religiosity has also been positively correlated with anti-gay attitudes (Jenkins 2009). Although in-group processes are important in the maintenance of homonegative attitudes, society at-large also has an influence.

In a study on ‘prejudice with compunction’ toward African Americans and homosexuals, research by Devine, Elliot, Monteith and Zuwerink in 1990 concluded that high-prejudiced people tend to have personal standards greatly shaped by their perceptions of societal norms. Similarly, using survey responses from Mexican immigrants, Gonzalez-Riveria and Herek (2006) found that participants who expressed more negative attitudes towards homosexuals tended to more readily conform to American mainstream cultural norms and be more religious (as well as be less educated and more politically conservative). Again, the findings of these various studies seem to charge religious conservatism with being the most influential contributor to the homonegative zeitgeist of African American culture.
Christianity & Homonegativity

Homosexuality has been both embraced and shunned by cultures all over the world at different periods in their historical development. Cultures in ancient Asia and Africa, for example, embraced homosexuality and in some cases, even elevated homosexuals to high social status positions (Gunkel 2009). However, during the height of African colonialism, these values were supplanted by Christian imperialists with ideations of homosexuality as ‘sinful’ which proclaimed the ‘act’ of being gay or lesbian an ‘abomination’. From this tradition was born cultural homonegativity, which positions “negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women” as the standard (Malcolmson et al. 2006). The effects of homo-negativism can be readily appreciated through an examination of the oppositional socio-political climate of global society toward gays, lesbians, and transgendered individuals (with notable exceptions). Even in the democratic post-industrial United States, the gay rights movement has struggled to gain ground. As late as 2001, one thousand four hundred hate crimes were filed regarding the physical assault of a gay or lesbian individual. It is also still legal to fire someone for being homosexual in thirty-six states (Malcolmson et al. 2006).

Many Protestant and Catholic denominations make the claim that homosexuality is condemned by the Christian Bible and thus denounced by homosexuality as a sinful act – in fact, many would probably prefer to see homosexuality denounce by society at-large. In the past three decades, much research has attempted to analyze the sometimes dangerous intersection of religion and sexuality. However, many of these studies find evidence for varying levels of acceptance of gay individuals within theistic entities. For example Laythe, Finkel and
Kirkpatrick (2001) examined predictors of prejudice against homosexuals. They found that religious fundamentalism, although negatively associated with racial prejudice, was positively associated with homonegativity. Their analysis revealed that it was socio-political ‘pulpiting’ (i.e., content delivered during church services), not inherent Christian authoritarianism, that is at the heart of antigay attitudes of religious fundamentalists. Similarly, using NORC General Social Survey data, Cochran and Beeghley (1991) found that religiosity was positively correlated with negative attitudes toward homosexuals. Their work employed four measures of religiosity: frequency of church attendance, belief in an afterlife, strength of religious affiliation, and membership to a religious organization. Using these measures, the effect of religion on homonegativity was compared across religious affiliations including Jewish, Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, and other Protestant affiliations. Findings showed that opposition towards homosexuality was not static across affiliation boundaries, but varied from one affiliation to the other, with Lutherans and Methodists at the ‘least tolerant’ end of the spectrum and Jews and Episcopalians at the ‘most tolerant’ end.

Other research into religiosity and the tolerance of same-sex relationships shifts focus to Protestantism exclusively. For instance, Malcolmson, Christopher, Frazen, and Keyes (2006) found that religious attitudes affect an individual’s social perception of gays and lesbians. They found a significant positive correlation between homo-negativism and religion, suggesting that the stronger the respondents’ religious beliefs, the more negatively they view gays and lesbians. Analogously, Olson, Cadge and Wilderman (2006) also found evidence that religiosity fuels homonegativity. Their results provide grounds for the assertion that religious variables outperform demographic variables in predictive models of homo-negative attitudes. In addition, Olson et al. suggest that non-Protestant individuals are much more likely than Protestants to be
accepting of homosexuals. Therefore, the condemnation of homosexuality was found to not be endemic to religion itself but a product of those socio-political aspects and issues made relevant to each particular denomination, which tend to be uni-racial (Pitt 2010).

Religion also becomes a factor in support for same sex marriage. Andrew Whitehead (2010) analyzed attitudes toward same sex marriage and religious beliefs using binary logistic regression. Using the Baylor Religion Survey, the study was an attempt to establish the predictive power of religiosity on same sex marriage attitudes while controlling for whether or not respondents attributed the ‘cause’ of homosexuality to nature or nurture, genetic make-up or social-psychological forces (Whitehead 2010). Whitehead found that religiosity is highly correlated with attributing the occurrence of gay sexual identities to environmental causes. However, even controlling for attribution beliefs, religion is still fiercely connected to the condemnation of same sex marriage. The results imply that even a genotypic explanation for homosexuality cannot shield gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals from the scrutiny of religious institutions.

Although the literature indicates a strong linkage between Christian religiosity and homonegativity, the same cannot be said for race and homonegativity. Indeed, the inconclusiveness of past research into race, religion, and homonegativity leaves much to the imagination. Without clear and concise statistical evidence either way, social critics are free to make unchecked claims as to the homophobic nature of African American culture. Therefore the importance of providing clarity on this topic is paramount to the effort to alleviate social obstacles to the well-being of Black gay individuals as well as to the Afro-American community itself. Thus, this research seeks to explore the relationship between African and European Americanism, religiosity, and homonegativism. In doing so, I will explore the extent to which a
correlational relationship exists between religiousness and homonegativity, and the effect that relationship has on the acceptance of gay lifestyles by the African American community at-large.

Theoretical Perspective

Given the ambiguity of research results surrounding race and homonegativity, it would be premature to claim just one theory as the flagship theoretical perspective of research of this kind. In fact, apart from methodological discrepancies, there is also no consensus among researchers on theoretical explanations for the (supposed) racial differences in anti-gay attitudes (Jenkins 2009). Hence, this study will attempt to include any theoretical paradigm deemed particularly germane to the investigation of race, religiosity, and homonegativity. However, any pontification of theory related to this subject should stem from an acknowledgement of the pivotal role power plays in social relationships. A multicultural feminist theoretical perspective allows for the integration of the importance of the discrepancy in social valuation of what is masculine and White and what is feminine and non-White (Hill 2002) into a theoretical position concerning race, religion and homonegativity.

An overview of theory presented in the literature (e.g., Goode-Cross and Good 2009; Gresham 2002; Ward 2005; Lemelle and Battle 2004) suggests that theoretical perspectives concerned with social learning and attitude formation through group processes may provide an ideological framework for research of this kind. Scholars of African American culture have noted the historical importance of religion in African American life (Ward 2005; Gresham 2009). During slavery, the Bible provided a cognitive safe haven from the brutality of slave life, as Blacks found solace in a literal translation of the scripture (Ward 2005). Some scholars have
claimed that the contemporary utility of biblical literalism in the African-American culture also serves as a safe-guard from the perceived threat of liberal Anglo-American ideological encroachment into the realm of the so-called ‘Black Church’ (Ward 2005). Moreover, church revisionist movements, which are constituted primarily of predominately White churches, that attempt to incorporate an acceptance of gay culture into their religious paradigm are viewed as part and parcel of the overarching White culture (Ward 2005).

Central to understanding of homonegativity in the African-American culture is the concept of hypermasculinity (Ward 2005; Goode-Cross and Good 2009; Lemelle and Battle 2004; Gresham 2009). Hypermasculinity heightens traditional characteristics of men’s culture (i.e., mastery of immediate physical and social environment, competitiveness, independence, exhibition of brawn, suppression of emotion, and antagonistic control of social relationships) to distorted levels, thus increasing the likelihood of declaring dominance through the use of violent force (Ward 2005). Consequently, a value system is maintained through masculine symbols which permeates culture in the United States (including sports, television, corporate models, and foreign policy) – one that exalts male typicality and derides that which is socially categorized as feminine (Ward 2005). Such symbols are inherently homonegative, as homophobia is necessary for constructing cultural hegemony. Thus, in the Black male community as well as in the larger male culture of the United States, to be perceived as masculine one must also be perceived as homonegative (Ward 2005).

The consequences of a culture of hypermasculinity can be demoralizing for Blacks who are homosexual or transgendered. As members of two sometimes oppositional social groups, gay African Americans must navigate a complex system of social networking. The theory of biculturalism (LaFrombroise, Coleman, Gerton 1993) suggests that when individuals come into
contact with a secondary culture – ‘gay culture’ in this context – they will undergo a process of cultural acquisition. During this process, Black gay individuals must develop the cognitive and behavioral dexterity to negotiate between the two worlds. In doing so, Afro-American culture and gay culture become involved in a social-psychological struggle for prominence, for which is up to the individual to referee. Thus, to analyze the multifaceted junction of race, religion, and homonegativity, it is crucial to examine the extent to which each variable affects the other and therefore, affects the individual as well as the African American community as a whole.

METHODS

Sample

This research uses data from the National Opinion Research Center’s General Social Survey (GSS) from the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research to produce a quantitative analysis of the relationships among race, religiosity and homonegativity. Since 1972, the GSS has utilized close-ended interviews with a large national probability sample to survey opinions on contemporary social issues ranging from religious preferences and attitudes about the role of government to basic demographic data like yearly income and marital status. Items which appear on the GSS social surveys fall into one of three categories: permanent questions asked every year, rotating questions that are asked on two out of every three surveys, and split-ballot items which occur in a single survey.

Each year in February, March and April trained interviewers conduct interviews with residents (age 18 or older) living in non-institutionalized arrangements in the United States. However, only data from the year 2008 was included in analysis as that year contained the least
inapplicable cases. The sample for this study is a randomly selected subset of the larger GSS sample. The subset appeared on the split-ballot questionnaire for 2008. Respondents in the subset were asked additional questions pertaining to issues of social inequality and religious attitudes. Only respondents who answered “Black” or “White” for race and “Protestant”, “Christian”, “Christian-Orthodox” or “Catholic” will be included in the sample (N=1840) as the focus of this project is on differences between Black and White Americans.

Methodology

An Adobe PDF search of the 2008 GSS codebook was conducted for variables which correspond to religious beliefs, religious behaviors, homonegative beliefs, homonegative behaviors, racial status, marital status, political party affiliation, age, gender (or sex), sexual orientation, and level of education. The search resulted in 34 variables. However, only variables with less that 50% inapplicable cases were deemed fit for analysis; thus, variables with 50% or more inapplicable cases were discarded. The remaining variables were recoded in order to eliminate inappropriate, not applicable, and “Don’t Know” cases. All variables were then separated into four categories: homonegativity indicators, religiosity indicators, race indicators, and controls.

Frequency listings and descriptive statistics (including valid percentages, means, standard deviations and ranges) were checked for adequacy of data interpretation. Bivariate correlation analysis of demographic variables (including race), homonegativity indicators, and Christian religiosity indicators was used to compare significant relationships among variables. A factor analysis was conducted on both the homonegativity and Christian religiosity indicators to assess
the degree to which index items were conjunctively measuring their respective attitudes. Lastly, multiple regression analyses tested predictive abilities of demographic variables versus Christian religiosity on homonegativity, as well as predictive abilities of race versus other demographic variables on Christian religiosity.

Analysis

Data were manipulated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0). Survey items of interest were separated into homonegativity and Christian religiosity indicators, race indicators, and demographic variables. Indicators of homonegativity included:

- Should homosexuals be allowed to make speeches in your community? (SPKHOMO)
- Should homosexuals be allowed to teach in a college or university? (COLHOMO)
- Should book about homosexuality be taken out of your library? (LIBHOMO) and
- What do you think of sexual relations between two adults of the same sex? (HOMOSEX)

Religiosity indicators include:

- Do you believe in God? (GOD)
- How often do you attend religious services? (ATTEND)
- To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person? (RELPERSN)
- How religious would you describe yourself? (FEELREL) and
- Do you believe in miracles? (MIRACLES)

All variables were recoded to ensure that their directions of correlation were identical and that all inapplicable cases were removed from analysis. The variable RACE (What race do you consider
yourself?) was the only indicator of race. Control (demographic) variables include MARITAL (What is you marital status?), PARTYID (What is your political party preference?), EDUC (What is your highest completed level of education?), SEX, SEXORNT (What is your sexual orientation?), and AGE.

Descriptive statistics and frequencies were run on all recoded variables as a secondary check for correct coding and adequate case percentage in each category of interest. A bivariate correlation tested for significant correlations between each variable and every other variable in the study. Factor analyses were conducted on both sets of indicators to assess the extent to which each variable is an indicator of homonegativity or religiosity, respectively. A reliability analysis was also performed to measure internal consistency among indicators. All indicator variables were then converted to z scores to normalize the distribution of scores. Using z scores, an index of Christian religiosity (XNRELIGIND) was created using the Christian religiosity indicators. Similarly, the indicators of homonegativity were combined into an index of homonegativity (HOMONEGIND). Indices were computed by summing indicators with each index and dividing by the total of items included within each index.

Using these indices, the scores of African American respondents and European American respondents were first compared on the Christian religiosity index using a linear regression while controlling for age, sex, sexual orientation, political party affiliation, marital status, and education level. Next, a linear regression was performed to test the predictive ability of Christian religiosity on homonegativity using the homonegativity and Christian religiosity indices while controlling for race, age, sex, sexual orientation, political party affiliation, marital status, and education level.
RESULTS

Discussion

A descriptive analysis and frequency listing illustrate a normal distribution of demographic classifications across the set of respondents, except for the variable SEXORNT (sexual orientation), which will limit the ability for statistical control of sexual orientation in the regression results (Table 1). The sample was 84% White, 42% male, and 2% gay, lesbian or bisexual and evenly split between married and non-married respondents. The mean age was 49 years and the mean education level was one year of college. Democrats accounted for 48% of the sample, followed by Republicans (38%), then Independents (14%).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Control Variables and Race

<table>
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<td>912</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay/Bi</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>1342</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1579</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.42</td>
<td>17.43</td>
<td>71.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 2 and 3 display valid percentages, means, and standard deviations for homonegativity and Christian religiosity indicators. The mean scores for indicators in the homonegativity category were .19 to .91 units above the median for each variable (Table 2). This dispersion suggests that respondents expressed more homonegative attitudes than the numerical average. Responses to attitudes about homosexual sex relationships were the most homonegative of all four indicators with a mean of 2.91 out of 4. Similarly, mean scores for religiosity variables were .81 to 2.46 units above their respective medians, suggesting that respondents in the sample are more religious than the numerical average (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Homonegativity Indicators</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min.-Max.</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allow gays to give speech in your community</td>
<td>1036</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>1.00-2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow gays to teach at colleges and universities</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>4.00-5.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove gay literature from public libraries</td>
<td>1043</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>1.00-2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay sexual relations between adults wrong</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.00-4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Christian Religiosity Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev</th>
<th>Min.-Max.</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believe in God</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.00-6.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance rate</td>
<td>1391</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.00-8.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How religious you feel</td>
<td>1077</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.00-7.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in miracles</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.00-5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider self religious person</td>
<td>1573</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>1.00-4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, assessments of relationships between variables displayed a significant coalescence of data. The bivariate correlation run for all variables on all other variables revealed the potential of the regression models for garnering substantive information about the religious and homonegative attitudes of the study’s sample (Table 4). Approximately 72% of all variable correlations were significant at the .05 level. The marital status and gender indicators had the least correlations among the variables, while level of education and age had the most. Within the homonegativity indicators, SPK/HOMO had the least correlations (9) while HOMOSEX had the most correlations (13) with all other variables. Likewise, within the religiosity indicators, all indicator variables had 13 correlations with other variables except MIRACLES with only 9 correlations.

Correlation analyses were utilized to ensure the adequacy of the predictive power of each index. A factor analysis was used to demonstrate the degree to which indicators were correlated with one another. Significant correlations would suggest that variables within each index category were actually measuring the same intended attitude of interest (or component). A factor analysis of all of the homonegativity indicators and the Christian religiosity indicators resulted in significant positive correlations (p<.001) for all variables in both categories.
Table 4. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for All Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
<th>(8)</th>
<th>(9)</th>
<th>(10)</th>
<th>(11)</th>
<th>(12)</th>
<th>(13)</th>
<th>(14)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spkhomo</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colhomo</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libhomo</td>
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<td>.54**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Homosex</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend (5)</td>
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<td>.12**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God (6)</td>
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<td>.12**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relpersn (7)</td>
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<td>.09**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
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<td>Miracles (8)</td>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelrel (9)</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.71**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital (10)</td>
<td>-.003*</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>-.14**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.07**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
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<td>PartyID (11)</td>
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<td>.07*</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.09**</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>.09**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.09**</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Educ (12)</td>
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<td>-.28**</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.06*</td>
<td>-.06*</td>
<td>-.09**</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (13)</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.11**</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.08**</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>-.06*</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (14)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>.08**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.09**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age (15)</td>
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<td>.16**</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.08**</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>-.08**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Significant at .05 level. **Significant at .01 level. ***Significant at .001.
Reliability analyses revealed that the variable HOMOSEX was not consistent with the other variables in the homonegativity index (squared multiple correlation = .18; Cronbach’s alpha of index with HOMOSEX = .56) and was thus removed from the analysis, leaving the indices with a Cronbach’s alpha of .81 (Table 5). The reliability analysis for the Christian religiosity variables indicated internal consistency among items (Cronbach’s alpha = .74). The homonegativity index was computed by summing the z-scored homonegativity indicator variables and dividing by 3. Similarly, the Christian religiosity indicator variables were computed by summing the z-scored Christian religiosity indicator variables and dividing by 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Internal Consistency of Indices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homonegativity Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Religiosity Scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple regression, using linear regression modeling, explored the relationships among Christianity, race and homonegativity (Model 1) (Table 6). Controlling for gender, age, education level, and marital status, race was shown to be a better predictor (b=3.29, p < .01) of homonegativity than Christian religiosity (b = .14, p < .05). Individuals with lower levels of education (b = -.08, p < .001), who less readily identified as democrat party supporters (b = -.30, p < .05) and older respondents (b = .006, p = .01) were more likely to score higher on the homonegativity index than respondents who were younger or had higher levels of education. Marital status, gender, and identifying political party affiliation as independent or republican were not significant predictors of homonegativity. The R² coefficient for Model 1 was .15; thus 15% of the variance in Model 1 was explained by the Christian religiosity index and demographic variables.
Additionally, multiple (linear) regression analysis explored the relationship between race and Christian religiosity (Model 2) (Table 6). Race was shown to be the greatest predictor of Christian religiosity (b=.30, p<.001), followed by gender (b=.23, p<.001) and age (b=.005, p<.001). Respondents with lower levels of education (b=-.02; p<.01), who described themselves as ‘republican’ or near ‘republican’ (b=.23, p<.01), and respondents who married (b=-.14, p<01) were more likely to score higher on the Christian religiosity index than respondents who were more education, identified as ‘democrat’ or ‘near democrat’, or non-married. Respondents’ self-identification of political affiliation as independent, ‘democrat’ or ‘near democrat’ was not a significant predictor of Christian religiosity. The $R^2$ coefficient for Model 2 was .10; thus 10% of the variance in score on the Christian religiosity index was explained by race and demographic variables.

Table 6. Multiple Regression for Predictors of Homonegativity (Model 1) and Christian Religiosity (Model 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1 (R²=.14)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2 (R²=.10)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRI$^1$</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.024*</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.006**</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-2.35</td>
<td>.019*</td>
<td>-.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repub</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.58</td>
<td>.019*</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-5.94</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>-.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-1.49</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.010**</td>
<td>.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonmarried</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Significant at .05 level. **Significant at .01 level. ***Significant at .001 level.

$^1$Christian Religiosity Index
CONCLUSION

Reflections

Regression analysis (Model 1) showed that race is indeed the second leading determinant of homonegativity (p<.01) for African Americans and European Americans, behind education, even controlling for political party affiliation, level of education, gender, age and marital status. These findings suggest that regardless of the intensity of an individual’s (Christian) religiosity, ‘being Black’ is the second most significant predictor of their level of homonegativity. In regards to the divide in literature between White homonegativity and Black homonegativity, these findings give weight to the concept that African Americans are distinctly more likely to view gays, lesbians bisexual and transgendered persons in a negative light. As suggested by the literature (Jenkins 2009), respondents who were younger (p<.01) and more educated (p<.001) scored lower on the homonegativity scale than older and less educated respondents. Democrats and Republicans were inversely related in regards to homonegativity scores: every unit increase in the homonegativity scale corresponded with an increase in the ‘feeling Republican’ score (p<.05) and a decrease in ‘feeling Democratic’ score (p<.05). Thus, Democrats were shown to be less homonegative than those who identify as Republican. Marital status was not shown to be significantly correlated with homonegativity and is therefore not a sufficient predictor of attitudes toward homosexuals. Interestingly, gender was not a significant factor in the predictive model, which is contrary to literature which finds that women are less homonegative than men (see Jenkins 2009).

An additional regression analysis (Model 2) revealed that race is the second most determining factor in predicting Christian religiosity (p<.001), behind political party affiliation.
However, in support of the findings in Model 1, Christian African Americans were shown to be slightly more religious than Christian whites. Additionally, respondents who were married (p<.01), female (p<.001), older (p<.001), and less educated (p<.01) scored higher on the Christian religiosity scale than non-married, male, younger and more educated individuals. Democrats and Republicans were inversely related in regards to Christian religiosity scores: every unit increase in the religiosity scale corresponded with an increase in the ‘feeling Republican’ score (p<.001) and a decrease in ‘feeling Democratic’ score (p<.001). Thus, Christian Republicans were shown to be more religious than Christians who identify as Democrats.

Analysis findings are in step with theoretical positions expressing a heightened homonegative factor in African American culture. Christianity in the Black community contains an aspect of hypermasculinity which pervades the cultural discourse within the social group (Ward 2005; Goode-Cross and Good 2009; Lemelle and Battle 2004; Gresham 2009). The hypermasculine paradigm places a value distinction between what is feminine and what is masculine and thus between what is heteronormative and what is homonormative (Ward 2005; Goode-Cross and Good 2009; Lemelle and Battle 2004; Gresham 2009). The confluence of Christianity and hypermasculinity in the African American community acts as a catalyst for homonegativity, thereby reinforcing the cultural devaluation of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals and lifestyles. As a result, as bicultural theory implies, African Americans (especially males) must employ strategies to successfully navigate the fine line between ‘being gay’ and ‘being Black’ (LaFrombroise, Coleman, Gerton 1993).
Limitations

The small sample of homosexuals included in the study (2%) limits the interpretability of findings in relation to sexual orientation, as comparisons cannot be made across sexual identities. Future research should repeat the process of establishing predictors of homonegativity, but control for sexual orientation identification. In addition, the low \( R^2 \) coefficients for both Models are also a limitation to the study. \( R^2 \) coefficients are measures of explanatory power of regression inputs and are therefore assessments of the internal consistency of regression analysis models. The proportion of variance explained in Model 1 was 15% and 10% in Model 2. Although the \( R^2 \) coefficients are low, they were deemed suitable for a regression analysis of attitudes as complex as homonegativity and religiosity. Future research should explore these relationships further while attempting to increase the explained variance in the either model.

Implications

There is a divide in the literature discussing homonegativity differences between African Americans and European Americans. Researchers reviewing the literature on this topic may not be able to ascertain which (if either) of the two social groups express more negative attitudes towards homosexuality than the other. This study has contributing to the knowledge base on this topic. The results suggest that among Christians, African Americans express higher levels of homonegativity than European Americans, even while controlling for religiosity. However, given the inconclusiveness of research in this area, more studies are needed to fully encapsulate the issue of racial differences in homonegative attitudes.
Aside from contributing to the general body of social science research on homonegativity, the implications of this study’s findings can prove beneficial in the public (non-academic) arena as well. Public sociologists and community-based researchers utilize academic research to inform social programs aimed at alleviating some of the malevolent consequences of the system of social inequality which exists in the United States and the world over. Although this particular study was not initially formulated for public utility, certain the results of this research could inform social programs, advocacy groups, and public policies which hope to increase the social standing of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and intersexed individuals. Recognizing the predictors of homonegativity allows for activists and public academics alike to address the issue at its root. Knowledge of the processes which reproduce and reinforce homonegativity among African American communities is crucial in providing social support for those who may need it the most.

Although media representations of homonegative attitudes and behaviors among African Americans may be biased and exaggerated, the core sentiment of these suggestions may not be far from the truth. This study revealed that, in spite of Christian religiousness, being an African American is the single-most implicative factor of possessing negative beliefs about transgendered, lesbian, gay and bisexual communities, regardless of sex, age, education level, marital status, or political affiliation. Future research should attempt to identify some of the causal motives behind this heightened sense of homonegativity. In the meantime, many African Americans continue to split their personalities between two distinct selves (one Black, the other gay) and wait for the possibility of integration.
REFERENCES

(http://www.caapusa.org/caap2_about.html).


APPENDIX

Appendix A. Variables and Indices

1. Independent Variable: Race (Nominal: Black, White)
   - GSS Variables included:
     - Race: What race do you consider yourself?

2. Dependent Variable: Homonegativity (Ordinal: Low – High)
   - GSS Variables included:
     - Trtgay: How many gay people do you trust?
     - Acqgay: How many gay people are you acquainted with?
     - Spkhomo: Should homosexuals be allowed to speak in public?
     - Colhomo: Should homosexuals be allowed to teach?
     - Libhomo: Should books with homosexual themes be allowed in public libraries?
     - Homosex: Do you think sexual relations between two adults of the same sex is wrong?
     - Homochng: Is homosexuality inherent or a choice?
     - Marhomo: Should homosexuals have the right to marry?
     - Draftgay: Should gays be included in the draft?

3. Dependent Variable: Religiosity (Ordinal: Low – High)
   - GSS Variables included:
     - Fund: How fundamentalist are you currently?
     - Attend: How often do you attend religious services?
     - Reliten: How strong is your religious affiliation?
• Prayer: Should prayer be required in public schools?

• Bible: Is the Bible the actual word of God, inspired by God, or an ancient book or moral precepts?

• Spkath: Should anti-religionists be allowed to speak in public demonstrations?

• Colath: Should anti-religionists be allowed to teach in public schools?

• Libath: Should book with anti-religious themes be allowed in public libraries?

• God: How confident are you that God exists?

• Readword: How often did you read bible last year?

• Decbible: How important is the Bible in making your decisions?

• Relhrs1: How many hours did you spend doing religious activities in your home last month?

• Relhrs2: How many hours did you spend doing religious activities outside of your home last month?

• Relpersn: Do you consider yourself a religious person?

• Irrelart: Should art that mocks or demeans religion be allowed in your community?

• Miracles: Do you believe in religious miracles?

• Feelrel: How religious are you?

• Antirel: Should books or films that attack religions be prohibited by law?

• Believe: How important is it to believe in God without doubt?
Appendix B: Measurement Model

Race, Religion, and Homonegativity

GSS: “What race do you consider yourself?”

GSS: Religiosity Index (see Appendix A)

Control Variables:
Income
Education
Sex

GSS: Homonegivity Index (see Appendix A)