

ABSTRACT

Religion and Differential Justice

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Historical processes of domination and discrimination have contributed to the emergence of racial stratification in the United States. Differential enforcement of criminal justice on racial minorities have demonstrably contributed to the perpetuation of a racial hierarchy. Religious culture, too, has been differentially shaped by a history of racial dominance and oppression. Framed by Weber's distinctions between religion of the privileged and religion of the disprivileged, three studies on the roles of religion and differential justice are included herein.

First, using data collected among a random sample of U.S. adults at a time when incidents of police-minority violence were prominent in public discourse, I assess the relationship of politics, religion, and media consumption on attitudes about the police. Confidence in police was found to be positively related to religious attendance and viewing FOX News Channel and negatively related to political liberalism, religious salience, and viewing other TV news (e.g., PBS, BBC). Fear of police brutality, though, was positively associated with viewing MSNBC and other TV news.

In the second study, I assess the role of black Protestant churches in civil society by estimating the effects of county-level affiliation rates on crime rates in the South. Applying spatial analyses to data from the 2010 Religious Census and Uniform Crime Reports, Black Protestant affiliation rates were found to be negatively associated with county-level property crime arrest rates, but unrelated to violent crime arrest rates. Affiliation rates were also found to be protective in counties with low median income and high resource disadvantage. While they also buffered the effects of prior property crime arrest rates, they exacerbated prior violent crime arrest rates.

In the third study, I investigated whether religious participation buffers the negative effect of past incarceration using panel data collected from 1979 to 2002. While religious participation decreased the expected count of self-reported and medically-diagnosed health outcomes among black and Hispanic former inmates, it was a substantial risk factor for white ex-cons.

Implications for critiques of religion offered by Karl Marx and Richard Dawkins are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE

Modalities of Religion and American Criminal Justice

While sociologists have long wrangled with the fate of religion in modernizing society, the more normative question of the role of religion in society has been methodologically ignored, and for good reason. As Berger (1967, p. 100) articulated, an a-normative approach he calls “methodological atheism” is necessary for the scientific investigation of religion because of the supra-empirical nature of theological claims. Nevertheless, two important critiques of religion in society have been advanced in social science and popular philosophy, and the substance of these critiques can be tested empirically. The first was famously offered by Karl Marx (1978 [1844]), that:

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.

The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their *real* happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their condition is a *call to abandon a condition which requires illusions* (p. 54, emphasis in original).

Religion might well-express the longings of an oppressed people, according to Marx, but it also placates them by providing “illusory” hope for otherworldly satisfaction rather worldly liberation. Religion thus supports the status quo and stifles social activism. Whatever else religion might be, it was for Marx a diversion, and true freedom required its abolition.

The second critique of religion in society, often advanced by proponents of New Atheism, is that it is inherently dangerous, violent, or evil. Just such an argument has been clearly articulated by Richard Dawkins (2006):

Faith is an evil precisely because it requires no justification and brooks no argument. Teaching children that unquestioned faith is a virtue primes them – given certain other ingredients that are not hard to come by – to grow up into potentially lethal weapons for future jihads or crusades. Immunized against fear by the promise of a martyr’s paradise, the authentic faith-head deserves a high place in the history of armaments, alongside the longbow, the warhorse, the tank and the cluster bomb. If children were taught to question and think through their beliefs, instead of being taught the superior virtue of faith without question, it is a good bet that there would be no suicide bombers. Suicide bombers do what they do because they really believe what they were taught in their religious schools: that duty to God exceeds all other priorities, and that martyrdom in his service will be rewarded in the gardens of Paradise. And they were taught *that* lesson not necessarily by extremist fanatics but by decent, gentle, mainstream religious instructors, who lined them up in their madrasas, sitting in rows, rhythmically nodding their innocent heads up and down while they learned every word of the holy book like demented parrots. Faith can be very very (sic) dangerous, and deliberately to implant it into the vulnerable mind of an innocent child is a grievous wrong (pp. 347-8, emphasis in original).

For Dawkins, religion poses a threat to civil society because of the very nature of faith itself. Its content cannot be tested, ergo it cannot be questioned. Religious extremism is a logical and inevitable consequence of faith communities inhabited by otherwise well-meaning, mainstream followers.

Whatever their empirical merits or the internal consistencies of their logics, both major critiques of religion in society suffer from at least one conspicuous deficiency: over-generalization. Specifically, both arguments are blind to how collective location within systems of stratification can moderate religious functioning. Max Weber (1993 [1922]) offers a more nuanced approach. For him, “classes with high social and economic privilege... assign to religion the primary function of legitimizing their own life pattern and situation in the world” (p. 107). He explains:

This universal phenomenon is rooted in certain basic psychological patterns. When a man who is happy compares his position with that of one who is unhappy, he is not content with the fact of his happiness, but desires something more, namely the right to this happiness, the consciousness that he has earned his good

fortune, in contrast to the unfortunate one who must equally have earned his misfortune (*ibid.*).

Weber's privileged adherents, importantly, are not consciously oppressed in the sense of Marx's proletariat. Nevertheless, they have an inherent stake in the status quo, much like the proletariat imbued with false consciousness. But religion for them is not a tool for the imposition of order upon the working class, but rather one that assuages their own guilt and justifies their privilege on the basis of character and merit. And as long as their privilege remains secure, the violence feared by Dawkins would be disruptive to their collective goals, and therefore heavily sanctioned.

Contrast this with Weber's (1993 [1922]) historically-informed description of religion among the "disprivileged":

Their particular need is for release from suffering. They do not always experience this need for salvation in a religious form, as shown by the example of the modern proletariat. Furthermore, their need for religious salvation, where it exists, may assume diverse forms. Most importantly, it may be conjoined with a need for just compensation, envisaged in various ways but always involving reward for one's own good deeds and punishment for the unrighteousness of others (p. 108).

Considering Weber, Marx's assertions about religion among the oppressed are not wrong *per se*, but they are incomplete. To be sure, the promise of otherworldly reward can fuel a false consciousness that placates members of oppressed groups into inaction. But invoking the Nietzschean concept of *ressentiment*, Weber suggests that the religious ethic of the disprivileged tends to be built upon a theodicy that material inequality is the result of sinfulness and injustice. It is the quest for justice, then, that compensates "a conscious or unconscious desire for vengeance" (Weber, 1993 [1922], p. 110). Salvation religions can therefore also contain the seeds of social activism, the most radical forms of which, as Dawkins rightfully suggests, perhaps might entail use of force.

Privilege and Disprivilege in the American Context

Due to historical processes of domination and discrimination, race has emerged as an important cleavage of privilege in the United States (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009; Omi & Winant, 2014). Bonilla-Silva (2004) has argued that a tri-racial system of racial stratification is emerging in the post-civil rights era because racism has become more covert and institutionalized, race relations have become more globalized, and multiculturalism has become more celebrated. At the top of the racialized hierarchy are whites, including assimilated white Latinos. Blacks and dark-skinned Latinos, meanwhile, occupy the least privileged category, to which he refers as the “collective black,” and light-skinned Latinos occupy a middle category known as “honorary whites.” Despite greater inclusion in the top rungs of privilege, the system nevertheless serves to secure white supremacy.

Among the instruments of racial dominance, the criminal justice system has been particularly important and pernicious in the United States. To be sure, tough policing walks a fine line; it can either institute social order or stimulate civil unrest. But the contemporary context is characterized by an enduring legacy of racism that continues to frame the greater discussion of race relations in the U.S., even while its expression is becoming increasingly covert, inherited, and institutionalized (Alexander, 2010; Coates, 2014; Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009). Since the mid- to late-twentieth century, the apparently race-blind rhetoric of “law and order” has justified support for policing and incarceration practices that continue to be disproportionately enacted on racial minorities (Alexander, 2010; Walters, 2003). African Americans and Hispanics are more likely than whites to experience racial profiling and repeated abuse by police (Harris, 1999;

Lundman & Kaufman, 2003; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004), and African Americans are more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for drug crimes, despite similarities with whites in prevalence of drug use (Stuntz, 1998).

As a result of these racial differences in enforcement, an unprecedented “prison boom” that began around 1975 has disproportionately affected some of the most vulnerable populations in America, namely “poor, undereducated black and Hispanic men” (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009, p. 256). The practical impact is far-reaching, including implications for employment (Pager, 2003), crime (Corsaro, Frank, & Ozer, 2015; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003), voting rights (Walters, 2003), and health (Massoglia, 2008b).

Chapter Organization

In the aftermath of recent events involving Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in New York City, unarmed African Americans who died in confrontation with white police officers, the national conversation seems to be hitting a flashpoint. The heat of the discussion has been exacerbated by the perceived impunity with which law enforcement officers seem to be acting; to wit, protests erupted when grand juries failed to indict the officers involved in each respective incident, i.e., Darren Wilson (Davey & Bosman, 2014) and Daniel Pantaleo (Goodman & Baker, 2014). Since these events, even more vigils and protests have emerged in response to the deaths of Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina (Blinder & Fernandez, 2015), Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland (Stolberg, 2015), Sandra Bland in Hempstead, Texas (Gay, 2015), and others. And in the final years of the Obama administration, racialized practices of police departments have been subjected to increased scrutiny by the U.S.

Department of Justice, which released reports on Ferguson, MO (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2015), Baltimore, MD (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2016), and most recently, Chicago, IL (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and United States Attorney's Office Northern District of Illinois, 2017).

The need for the social scientific study of differential justice thus remains as important today as ever. While much has been written in the social disorganization literature on the link between race and disaffection with the criminal justice system (Cao, Frank, & Cullen, 1996; Corsaro et al., 2015; Sampson & Jeglum-Bartusch, 1998), less has been written on the roles of religious faith on the experience of or attitudes about a criminal justice system that is highly stratified by race.

Scholars in the sociology of religion have argued that religion not only serves as a source of meaning and purpose, but it is also an important factor in understanding various dimensions of personal and collective well-being (see Ellison & Sherkat, 1995a for an overview). They have argued, for instance, that religion has important pro-social effects with regard to deviance and criminology (Johnson & Jang, 2011), that religious faith and participation can serve as a source of social and psychological resources (Bradshaw & Ellison, 2010), and that religious faith is a critical motivator for political attitudes (Hunter, 1991, 2010). While drawing from distinct epistemologies, it is sincere commitment to personal religious faith that fuels advocates on both the Christian Right and the Christian Left to engage politically over issues such as policing and enforcement (Hunter, 2010).

But importantly, divergent “cultural tools” and subsequent strategies of action have developed between many black and white religious communities as a result of the

history of racial formation and domination in the United States (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Shelton & Emerson, 2012). In other words, differences in collective location within a racial hierarchy of privilege suggest a complex relationship between religion and both attitudes about and the experience of differential justice. The current work, then, attempts to address the need for more understanding of this complex relationship. The chapters that follow include three studies addressing distinct dimensions of the interface between religion and differential justice.

First, I explore attitudes about the police among white Americans using data from the second wave of the Social Reality Index: A National Survey of Fears (2015). I argue that the relative privilege from the emotional toll of racial profiling among white Americans allows for the politicization of police-minority relations such that political ideology, religiosity, and media exposure each have independent effects.

The second study uses county-level census, crime, and religious data to assess the spatial effects of Black Protestant affiliation rates in the southern United States. Because discourse in these religious communities tends to not only emphasize piety as individual-level survival strategies but also collective liberation and social justice, I predict that affiliation rates in black communities are negatively correlated with property and violent crime arrest rates.

Finally, I test the role of religion in buffering the differential effects of race on post-incarceration chronic health outcomes using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79). Based on cumulative inequality theory, I argue that religion can benefit physical health by providing both social and psychological resources for coping with negative life events.

CHAPTER TWO

The Politicization of Police-Minority Relations: Attitudes about the Police among White Americans in the Era of Policing's New Visibility

Introduction

Scholarly research has consistently demonstrated that evaluations of police differ significantly by race and ethnicity. Compared to whites, African Americans and Hispanics tend to have lower trust in police (Macdonald & Stokes, 2006; Tyler, 2005) and lower confidence in police (Cao et al., 1996; Skogan, 2006). They are more likely to believe that police stop people without good reason, use insulting language, use excessive force, and are involved in corruption including taking bribes and participating in the drug trade (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Blacks are more likely than whites to report that police treat blacks more harshly, that police protection in black neighborhoods is worse than in white neighborhoods, that racism is a problem among police, and that they have personally felt treated unfairly by police because of their race (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999). As Goldsmith (2005) suggests, trust in the police among a social group can be undermined when the group stands in tension with the state or when police are seen as outsiders. In the American context, the differential enforcement of criminal justice on African Americans has contributed to a broad perception of police as an “occupying force” in many African American communities (see Alexander, 2010; Brunson, 2007; Goffman, 2014; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011).

Whites, in contrast, tend to have more favorable views of both police and aggressive law enforcement strategies (e.g., Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). At the micro-level, racial differences have largely been explained as the result of differences in personal and vicarious negative encounters with police (Brunson, 2007; P. J. Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007; Flexon, Lurigio, & Greenleaf, 2009; Harris, 1999; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Neighborhood characteristics and resident perception of community crime also correlate with negative evaluations of police (Cao et al., 1996; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sampson & Jeglum-Bartusch, 1998, 1998; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Moreover, legal cynicism tends to result from aggressive enforcement tactics such as “broken windows” or “pulling-levers” policing (Davis, Mateu-Gelabert, & Miller, 2005; Stoutland, 2001; Tyler, 2005), which are more likely to be practiced in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Terrill & Reisig, 2003). These practices often exacerbate rather than ameliorate crime; legal cynicism due to aggressive enforcement is related to incidence of retaliatory homicide (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003) and persistence of violent crime (Corsaro et al., 2015; Kane, 2005; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011).

Explanations of racial differences related to neighborhood characteristics imply that the relatively positive evaluation of police among middle-class whites is normative, and that the suppressed evaluation of law enforcement among minorities and residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods requires explanation. Less is known, then, about variance in attitudes among whites. One crucial difference between white Americans and their African American and Hispanic counterparts is their relative privilege from the experience of racial profiling (Gelman, Fagan, & Kiss, 2007; Harris, 1999; Lundman & Kaufman, 2003; Tyler & Wakslak, 2004; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002). Racial profiling not

only functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby pretextual stops presumably motivated by race result in disproportionate enforcement on and incarceration of racial minorities, it also has a powerful emotional impact on the innocent who are stopped, energizing feelings of alienation from the legal system (Harris, 1999). Notably, negative encounters tend to have a larger impact on evaluation of police than positive encounters as a result of a psychological “negativity bias” (Skogan, 2006).

In Swidler’s (1986) terms, American blacks and whites coexist in starkly different cultural contexts as a result of racial profiling. Among African Americans, for whom the experience of profiling is an imminent and “settled” reality, legal cynicism emerges as a cultural adaptation of self-reliance (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011). But among whites, for whom the effects of profiling are not *felt*, discourse about racial profiling can become subject to competing and “unsettled” ideological competition. To be sure, a positive evaluation of police by some whites is sometimes related to prejudiced views of the criminality of minorities or insecurity over their own group position (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). But the relative privilege of isolation from negative encounters suggests that attitudes among whites may also be susceptible to the influence of politicization (see Hunter, 2010).

The study of attitudes among the racially privileged is increasingly urgent with the rise of white nationalism (Swain, 2002; Walters, 2003) and its effects on electoral politics (Taub, 2016). Because of their privilege, attitudes among whites need not be racially motivated to be racially consequential. To wit, while formal social control through aggressive law enforcement has, historically, been an important mode of enacting racial dominance, the racial dimension of these practices has been obscured in

post-Civil Rights politics by the seemingly race-neutral rhetoric of “law and order” (Alexander, 2010; Walters, 2003). Walters (2003) therefore argues, “it may often be difficult for a White person to be conscious of the ways in which both cultural and political ‘Whiteness’ operate.” While not guided explicitly by racial interests, whites who favor aggressive law enforcement in minority communities nevertheless buttress the interests of white nationalists to preserve a racialized hierarchy.

In this study, I investigate how apparently race-neutral processes related to politics, religion, and media consumption influence both confidence in police and fear of police brutality among whites. Attitudes about police among whites have implications for the profiling of racial minorities by virtue of the role of policy in the practice of policing. Hypotheses are tested using a large national sample collected in May 2015, a period when repeated publicity of police-involved deaths of minorities had propelled police-minority relations into American political discourse.

Political Ideology and Policing

Within disadvantaged neighborhoods, there is a paradox: residents feel safer with increased levels of formal social control (Skogan, 2009), but even when perceived as competent and dependable, aggressive enforcement tactics have the potential for undermining local trust in police (Stoutland, 2001). While the implementation of professional policing tends to result in short-term declines in crime levels, it also potentially results in the persistence of long-term patterns of violence (Corsaro et al., 2015; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). But independent of their practical affects, “tough-on-crime” policies are popular, especially among political conservatives. An extensive body of empirical evidence consistently confirms that

political conservatives are likely to be more retributive than liberals (Langworthy and Whitehead 1986), including being more supportive of harsher criminal punishment (Applegate et al. 2000; Taylor, Scheppele, and Stinchcombe 1979) and the death penalty (Barkan and Cohn 1994; Finckenauer 1988; Sandys and McGarrell 1995).

Arguably, these attitudes have a racial – albeit possibly hidden – dimension. As Alexander (2010) recounts, the rhetoric of “law and order” was once mobilized to counteract the efforts the Civil Rights Movement. With coded language, conservative politicians cast civil rights activists as street criminals, appealing to the racist sentiments of white conservatives for political gain. The strategy culminated in Ronald Reagan’s War on Drugs, which resulted in an unprecedented rise in incarceration rates, especially among African Americans.

An orientation towards tough enforcement of street crime endures in the Republican Party to this day; the 2012 party platform strongly asserted that “liberals do not understand this simple axiom: criminals behind bars cannot harm the general public” (Republican National Committee, 2012). And while the 2016 platform did address what they perceive as unjustified expansion of the criminal code, its writers nevertheless continued to identify as “a party of law and order” (Republican National Committee, 2016). They also explicitly supported agents of law enforcement at a time when some departments were being criticized by the U.S. Department of Justice for failing to address issues of systemic racial bias (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2015, 2016).

The preference for tough policing among political conservatives has been justified by a dispositional orientation toward human culpability (Cullen, Clark, Cullen, &

Mathers, 1985). Individuals are assumed to be free, moral, and rational agents that should be held accountable for their actions (Finckenauer, 1988). Moral transgression must be met with retribution, or punishment enacted in proportion to wrongdoing (Carlsmith & Darley, 2008). Conservatives see the role of the federal government, according to Lakoff (2002), as a “Strict Father” that, through a “Morality of Reward and Punishment,” ought to instill discipline and the character needed to survive in a competitive world among its citizens. “Tough-on-crime” policies are thus seen as “tough love;” punitive police policy and aggressive enforcement is as much for the sake of the individual transgressors as it is a system of personal accountability. In fact, the rise of retributive policies in the U.S. since the 1960’s has been attributed by Finckenauer (1988) to the relative success of conservative politicians in asserting that criminal behavior is a result of free choice, rather than being determined by broader social factors.

Liberals, on the other hand, see the role of the government as one of a “Nurturant Parent,” according to Lakoff (2002). They tend to believe that better moral choices can be encouraged through economic, educational, and social support rather than through strict law enforcement. Tapping into this sentiment, the 2016 Democratic Party platform diverges from the offender-focused Republican platform with its own focus on systemic changes, including instituting additional police training and making efforts to end mass incarceration and racial profiling. “Instead of investing in more jails and incarceration,” it states, “we need to invest more in jobs and education, and end the school-to-prison pipeline” (Democratic National Committee, 2016, p. 16). This orientation is consistent with a situational attribution style (Cullen et al., 1985), whereby moral decision-making is seen to be determined by cultural, social, or economic circumstances. Harsh

punishment is thus seen as unfair because it holds individuals accountable for social circumstances beyond their control.

On the basis of polarized assumptions of human culpability and competing visions for governance and crime reduction, then, political ideology should predict variance in attitudes about police among white Americans. Empirical evidence of this relationship has been mixed; political conservatism has been found to be a significant predictor of confidence in police among Americans in some studies (Cao & Stack, 2005; Cao, Stack, & Sun, 1998) but not in others (Cao et al., 1996). But particularly among those who are privileged from the experience of racial profiling, I predict that, net of socioeconomic indicators:

H1: Political liberalism is negatively associated with pro-police attitudes.

Religion and Support for the Police: Politics or Social Capital?

Relatively few studies on police attitudes include religious controls. Those that do tend to report that religiosity, as indicated by measures of religious commitment and involvement, is positively associated with support for police (Cao & Solomon Zhao, 2005; Cao & Stack, 2005; Cao et al., 1998; Kwak, San Miguel, & Carreon, 2012). These studies typically interpret religiosity as an indicator of social conformity and support for systemic *status quo*. But social theory suggests that the conservative impulse is by no means uniform among the religious (Hunter, 1991, 2010; Wellman, 2008), so a closer examination is warranted.

To be sure, religious and political conservatism has converged since the late 1970's and early 1980's for a number of social (Putnam & Campbell, 2010), economic (Kellstedt, Green, Guth, & Smidt, 1994), and political reasons (Gold & Russell, 2007).

The Religious Right, according to Hunter (2010) is concerned about the moral decline of the United States, which they perceive to ultimately be rooted in hostility toward religious faith itself. Political action, for them, is part and parcel of being faithful to their convictions, and this political action is markedly partisan in its expression, favoring the Republican Party. Moreover, the rise of the Religious Right has been accompanied by a growing ‘God gap’ whereby Republicans say grace more often, attend religious services more often, and are more likely to report being highly religious than Democrats (Putnam & Campbell, 2010).

Similar to political conservatives, those affiliated with traditional religious communities tend to support punitive policies. Evangelicals, for example, tend to support corporal punishment (Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal 1996), capital punishment (Grasmick et al. 1993), harsher punishment of juvenile offenders (Grasmick and McGill 1994), and retributive policies more generally (Applegate et al. 2000; Grasmick et al. 1992; Leiber and Woodrick 1997). What tends to unite political conservatives and religious traditionalists is a shared dispositional attribution style (Grasmick & McGill, 1994; Leiber & Woodrick, 1997; M. B. Lupfer, Hopkinson, & Kelley, 1988; M. Lupfer & Wald, 1985). Using a cultural repertoire approach, Emerson and Smith (2000, p. 76) found that white evangelicals, in particular, commonly draw upon the language of free will individualism and anti-structuralism, which results in an “inability to perceive or unwillingness to accept social structural influences” for human behavior or outcomes. The problem of crime, then, is seen as an issue of personal moral failings that requires tough policing and corrections. Further, religious congregations often serve as “echo

chambers,” wherein like-minded coreligionists simply reinforce politically-motivated attitudes rather than challenge them (Putnam & Campbell, 2010).

Independent of its association with political ideology, however, religious involvement might also enhance support for the police because it generates social capital. Social capital – or “social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity” (Putnam, 2000, p. 21) – correlates with civic participation and generalized trust. Religious participation, Putnam (2000) argues, provides members with skills necessary for civic engagement and connects them to other members who are involved in community activity. Studies confirm that church attendance relates positively to voting participation among both blacks and whites (Liu, Austin, & Orey, 2009), social trust and tolerance of other groups (Strømsnes, 2008), and feelings of connection both to friends within congregations and the community at large (Walker, 2011). Importantly, social capital operationalized as civic participation and social trust has also been found to correlate to trust in police (Macdonald & Stokes, 2006).

Religious involvement and commitment is therefore expected to correlate with attitudes about police for both ideological and structural reasons. Specifically, I hypothesize that among white Americans:

H2: Religiosity is positively associated with pro-police attitudes.

Policing and Mass Media

Incidents of police misconduct or brutality can have a detrimental effect on public trust in the police (Lasley, 1994; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997; Weitzer, 2002). Generally, studies show that (1) highly publicized events of police violence have negative effects on citizen attitudes about police, (2) the effects are stronger among racial minorities than

they are for whites, and (3) attitudes tend to eventually rebound to pre-incident levels. Attitudinal rebound often occurs in direct response to specific reforms, or when sufficient time has elapsed, but rebound can be undermined by subsequent events of misconduct (Tuch & Weitzer, 1997). This is precisely the threat of what Goldsmith (2010) calls “policing’s new visibility” resulting from the widespread diffusion of mobile phone cameras and the popularity of video-sharing websites. As the public’s ability to surveil the police has grown, so has its awareness of police-minority violence. A growing number of videos capturing use of police force against (often unarmed) African Americans have been emerging in national discourse in recent years, including those related to the deaths of Eric Garner in New York, NY, Tamir Rice in Cleveland, OH, Walter Scott in Charleston, SC, Samuel Dubose in Cincinnati, OH, Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, LA, and Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, MN (Cave & Oliver, 2015). One implication of the increased frequency of the reporting of these events is the impedance, or possibly prevention, of attitudinal rebound among media consumers.

But given the increasing political polarization of cable news networks (ADT Research, 2002; Coe et al., 2008), how audiences respond to publicized incidents of police-minority violence might depend on how the outlets they consume frame them. Evidence that mainstream news media has a liberal bias is mixed (c.f. D’Alessio & Allen, 2000; Groseclose & Milyo, 2005), but perception of a liberal bias has been well established, especially among political conservatives and Republicans (Eveland & Shah, 2003; Lee, 2005; Watts, Domke, Shah, & Fan, 1999). As Morris (2007) argues, FOX News Channel capitalized on this perception by appealing to those who were disillusioned by this perceived liberal media bias. The founding of FOX News Channel

catalyzed a process of differentiation among cable news channels – in contrast with broadcast networks that target mass audiences – whereby providers courted niche segments of a politically fragmented market by airing increasingly polarized content (Bae, 1999, 2000). To the degree that issues related to law enforcement in civil society are politicized, the increasing visibility of police-minority violence can be subjected to divergent framing on competing cable, as well as mainstream, news networks. These incidents add to a growing list of what Hunter (2010) calls “atrocities stories,” fueling competing narratives of injury that are, in turn, deployed strategically by political elites to generate solidarity and mobilize groups for political action.

Research points to partisan selectivity in media consumption (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Stroud, 2010). In a blind experiment wherein subjects did not know the actual source of news stories, for example, conservatives and Republicans preferred stories attributed to FOX News and avoided those attributed to CNN and NPR while Democrats and liberals preferred the inverse (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009). Further, partisan media selectivity empirically polarizes political attitudes among viewers, which further reinforces partisan selectivity of news sources (Feldman, Maibach, Roser-Renouf, & Leiserowitz, 2012; Slater, 2014; Stroud, 2010). Therefore, I expect that among white Americans:

H3: Viewership of FOX News Channel is positively associated with pro-police attitudes.

H4: Except for FOX News Channel, consumption of television news is negatively associated with pro-police attitudes.

Data and Measures

Data for this study was obtained from the second wave of the Social Reality Index: A National Survey of Fears, which was designed by researchers at Chapman University and collected in May 2015 by GfK. A number of highly visible incidents of police-related deaths of racial minorities had occurred in the year leading up to data collection, including (but not limited to) Eric Garner in New York, NY (July 17, 2014), Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO (August 9, 2014), Tamir Rice in Cleveland, OH (November 22, 2014), Walter Scott in Charleston, SC (April 7, 2015), and Freddie Gray in Baltimore, MD (April 19, 2015). The nature of police-minority relations had therefore become firmly entrenched in public discourse at the time of data collection, as confirmed by Weitzer's (2015, pp. 1–2) observation that we had “reached a tipping point, with each incident cumulatively fertilizing subsequent ones – in part because activists and the media are drawing connections between them.”

The sample consisted of non-institutionalized adults residing in the United States who were part of GfK's KnowledgePanel, which is a probability-based web panel designed to be representative of the United States. The sample size was 2,660, with 1,541 respondents completing the survey (58% response rate). Non-Hispanic whites comprised about 72 percent of completed surveys. To test hypotheses related to trans-local influences on attitudes about police among whites, only non-Hispanic white respondents were retained in procedures reported herein, yielding an *N*-count of 1,106.

Dependent Variables

Researchers have argued that attitudes about police are multidimensional (Stoutland, 2001; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2005). Stoutland (2001), for instance,

found that residents of a poor Boston neighborhood perceived police to be dependable and competent, but not respectful or concerned with long-term concerns regarding quality of life.

Two dimensions of attitudes toward the police were therefore assessed in this study, including confidence in the police and fear of police brutality, representing positive and negative emotions, respectively, that are thought to be associated with the gain or loss of power and status (J. H. Turner & Stets, 2005). The former is a composite measure comprised of four indicators ($\alpha=.89$): (1) “I think that the service I get from the police is good for the taxes that I pay;” (2) I feel safe assuming that the police share my sense of fairness;” (3) “I would approach a police officer for help in the street because I would expect the officer to treat me fairly;” and (4) “How comfortable do you feel about trusting the following people: the police in your local community?” The first three indicators were measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1=“strongly disagree” to 5=“strongly agree” and the fourth was measured on a scale ranging from 1=“uncomfortable” to 4=“comfortable.” The composite measure represents a sum of z-scores. Fear of police brutality was indicated by a single measure with responses ranging from 1=“not afraid” to 4=“very afraid.” Responses for fear of police brutality were mean-centered for use in multivariate analyses (see Table 2.1).

Recent evidence suggests that individuals have a better evaluation of their local police than of police nationally (Pew Research Center, 2014). Notably, most of the indicators included in the dependent variables either explicitly specify local police or infer attitudes about police they might encounter in their communities. Trans-local processes related to politics, religion, and media consumption should have stronger

effects on global attitudes about the police as a national institution rather than local police, since it is likely that the highly-publicized events have not occurred in the local communities of respondents in a national survey. Tests on these measures should therefore render conservative estimates of trans-local processes.

Table 2.1

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean or %	SD	Min	Max
<i>Outcomes</i>					
Confidence in police	1077	-.07	.85	-2.88	1.05
Fear of police brutality	1086	.03	.97	-.47	3.85
<i>Predictors</i>					
Age	1106	2.69	1.05	1	4
Male	1106	.48		0	1
Married	1106	.59		0	1
Children 12 and under	1106	.31	.69	0	4
South	1106	.34		0	1
Income	1106	12.50	4.16	1	19
Education	1106	10.33	1.95	1	14
Neighborhood cohesion	1093	-.17	3.19	-13.69	5.31
Neighborhood disorder	1094	.06	1.63	-1.58	6.42
Political liberalism	1088	.05	1.47	-2.64	3.36
Religious attendance	1104	-.09	2.41	-2.92	4.08
Religious salience	1100	-.03	1.00	-1.5636	1.4363636
Catholic	1102	.20		0	1
Protestant & other Christian	1102	.47		0	1
Other religion	1102	.10		0	1
No religion	1102	.23		0	1
FOX News Channel	1090	-.08	1.61	-1.66	3.34
CNN	1089	-.05	1.37	-1.32	3.68
MSNBC	1083	-.04	1.22	-1.00	4.00
Local & network news	1093	-.12	1.60	-2.68	2.32
Other TV news (PBS, BBC, etc.)	1082	-.05	1.39	-1.40	3.60

Notes: Non-imputed data. All values are weighted.

Source: Social Reality Index (2015)

Independent Variables

Primary independent variables of interest include those associated with political ideology, religiosity, and media consumption. Political liberalism was measured on a seven-point ordinal scale ranging from 1="extremely conservative" to 7="extremely

liberal.” The average political ideology of white respondents was 3.70, or between moderate and leaning conservative. The measure was mean-centered for statistical analyses (see Table 2.1).

Since religiosity is multidimensional (Norris & Inglehart, 2011; Putnam & Campbell, 2010), multiple measures were included to operationalize religious commitment and involvement. First, religious attendance was measured by asking respondents “How often to you attend religious services at a church, mosque, synagogue or other place of worship?” with responses ranging from 1=“never” to 8=“several times a week.” Average attendance for white respondents was 3.83, or between once or twice a year and several times a year. Second, religious salience was measured by asking “How religious do you consider yourself to be?” Responses ranged from 1=“Not at all religious” to 4=“Very religious,” with an average value of 2.53 among white respondents. Responses for both religious attendance and religious salience were mean-centered for use in multivariate analyses. Finally, I controlled for religious tradition, which was measured as a system of dichotomous variables consisting of Catholic (21% of white respondents), Protestant and other (non-Catholic) Christian (48%), other religion (10%), and no religion (21%). No religion was suppressed in multivariate analyses as the reference category.

Media usage was measured by asking respondents how often they read, watch, or listen to various media outlets on a scale ranging from 1=“never” to 6=“every day.” Due to political polarization, three measures for cable news outlets representing viewership of FOX News Channel, CNN, and MSNBC were used. Mean-centered responses for measures representing local news and network news were averaged for a composite

measure of non-cable television news ($\alpha=.67$). A measure for other television news represents programming on PBS, BBC, etc. All media consumption variables were mean-centered for use in multivariate analyses.

Neighborhood cohesion is a composite measure with five indicators ($\alpha=.85$): (1) “People in my neighborhood can be trusted;” (2) “People in my neighborhood generally get along with each other;” (3) “I have neighbors who would help me if I had an emergency;” (4) “People in my neighborhood look out for each other;” (5) “I feel safe being out alone in my neighborhood during the night.” Neighborhood disorder is comprised of two indicators ($\alpha=.66$): (1) “People often get mugged, robbed or attacked in my neighborhood;” and (2) “People sell or use drugs in my neighborhood.” Each indicator for both composite variables was measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1=“strongly disagree” to 5=“strongly agree.”

Several demographic controls were also included. Respondent age was constructed as an ordinal measure with values ranging from (1) 18 to 29 to (4) 60 and older (originally represented as a system of dummies). Dummy variables also represented gender (male=1), marital status (married=1), and region (South=1). Number of children 12 and under was also controlled, as was income (1=“Less than \$5,000” to 19=“\$175,000 or more”), and education (1=“No formal education” to 14=“Professional or Doctorate degree”).

Analytical Method

Hypotheses were tested by estimating ordinary least squares regressions models for both outcomes.¹ Baseline models estimated the effects of demographic and neighborhood characteristics. Models 2 through 4 added political ideology, religion variables, and media consumption variables, respectively, to the baseline model. A full model included all predictors. Multiple imputation was used to account for potential bias due to missing data (Acock 2005), as missing data otherwise would have accounted for about 9 percent of the sample. Regression analyses were based on five imputed data sets created using Markov chain Monte Carlo simulations (Rubin 1987); results were similar to those obtained using list-wise deletion.

Results

Consistent with prior research (Cao et al., 1996; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sampson & Jeglum-Bartusch, 1998, 1998; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004), confidence in police was structurally related to neighborhood characteristics among the sample of white Americans. Specifically, bivariate analyses (see Table 2.2) indicate that confidence was positively related to neighborhood cohesion ($r=.37$) and negatively related to neighborhood disorder ($-.23$). With increasing trust in neighbors and decreasing perception of crime, white residents have greater confidence that police provide good service and share their senses of fairness. The effect of neighborhood cohesion (.08) proved to be robust in multivariate regressions (Table 2.3) while that of neighborhood

¹ While fear of police brutality was measured on a four-point Likert-type scale, the imputation procedure generates values between the four categories. Ordinary least squares regressions were therefore performed rather than ordered logistic regressions, as it allows for easier interpretation and avoids the problematic proportional odds assumption.

disorder did not. Also significant in the baseline OLS model predicting confidence in police was age (.14), education (.05), and gender; controlling for demographics and neighborhood characteristics, males on average had a confidence score .11 lower than females.

Table 2.2
Zero-Order Correlation Coefficients

Variable	Confidence in police	Fear of police brutality
<i>Outcomes</i>		
Confidence in police		-.49***
Fear of police brutality	-.49***	
<i>Predictors</i>		
Age	.24***	-.11***
Male	-.03	.00
Married	.18***	-.14***
Children 12 and under	-.07*	.03
South	.01	-.02
Income	.18***	-.13***
Education	.16***	-.10**
Neighborhood cohesion	.37***	-.17***
Neighborhood disorder	-.23***	.15***
Political liberalism	-.20***	.13***
Religious attendance	.19***	-.10**
Religious salience	.11***	-.08**
Catholic	.03	.05
Protestant & other Christian	.13***	-.12***
Other religion	-.06	.05
No religion	-.13***	.06
FOX News Channel	.15***	-.01
CNN	.03	.05
MSNBC	.02	.12***
Local & network news	.14***	.00
Other TV news (PBS, BBC, etc.)	-.03	.10***

Notes: Based on pairwise deletion using non-imputed data. All values are weighted.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 2.3

OLS Coefficients and Standard Errors Predicting Confidence in the Police

Independent variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.	
Intercept	-1.02	.17	***	-.96	.17	***	-.96	.18	***	-1.03	.17	***	-.94	.18	***
Age	.14	.03	***	.13	.03	***	.13	.03	***	.12	.03	***	.13	.03	***
Male	-.11	.05	*	-.14	.05	**	-.11	.05	*	-.12	.05	*	-.15	.05	**
Married	.05	.06		-.01	.06		.03	.06		.02	.06		-.02	.06	
Children 12 and under	-.05	.04		-.05	.04		-.06	.04		-.04	.04		-.06	.04	
South	-.01	.05		-.02	.05		-.04	.05		-.03	.05		-.04	.05	
Income	.01	.01		.01	.01		.01	.01		.01	.01		.01	.01	
Education	.05	.01	***	.05	.01	***	.04	.01	**	.06	.01	***	.05	.01	***
Neighborhood cohesion	.08	.01	***	.07	.01	***	.07	.01	***	.07	.01	***	.07	.01	***
Neighborhood disorder	-.03	.02		-.03	.02		-.03	.02	*	-.03	.02		-.03	.02	
Political liberalism				-.09	.02	***							-.07	.02	***
Religious attendance							.06	.02	***				.05	.01	***
Religious salience							-.10	.04	*				-.13	.04	***
Catholic							-.02	.09					-.06	.09	
Protestant & other Christian							.11	.08					.07	.08	
Other religion							-.05	.10					-.04	.10	
FOX News Channel										.06	.02	***	.04	.02	*
CNN										-.02	.03		-.01	.03	
MSNBC										.01	.03		.02	.03	
Local & network news										.01	.02		.01	.02	
Other TV news (PBS, BBC, etc.)										-.06	.02	**	-.05	.02	**
Adjusted R-Squared ^a	.19			.21			.21			.21			.23		

Notes: $N=1,106$. All values are weighted. * $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$ *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed tests)

^aR-Squared values averaged from five regressions performed by imputation.

Political ideology also correlated with confidence in police, albeit weakly (.20), in bivariate analysis (Table 2.2). Further, the relationship was robust when controlling for demographic and neighborhood characteristics in multivariate regression (Table 2.3, Model 2). Specifically, for each incremental increase in political liberalism, confidence in police decreased by .09. The variable remained significant in the full model (Model 5), which also controlled for religion and media consumption.

Religiosity variables were also weakly correlated with confidence in police (Table 2.2). Religious attendance (.19) and religious salience (.11) were both positively correlated with confidence in police, as was Protestant & other Christian (.13), while non-affiliation was negatively related to confidence (-.13). Affiliation variables lost significance in multivariate analyses (Table 2.3, Model 3) while religious attendance (.06) remained significant. Religious salience was also significant, though the direction of relationship changed when controlling for demographic characteristics and other religion variables. Specifically, for every incremental increase in religious salience, confidence in police declined by .10. Each of these relationships was robust in the full model.

Among the media consumption variables, two had significant zero-order correlations with confidence in the police, namely FOX News Channel (.15) and local & networks news (.14), each of which was positively related to the outcome (Table 2.2). FOX News Channel (.06) remained significant in multivariate regression analysis (Table 2.3, Model 4), but local & network news did not. Also significant in the OLS regression was other TV news (PBS, BBC, etc.), which was negatively related to confidence in police (-.06). Both the effects of FOX News Channel and other TV news remained significant in the full model (Model 5) as well.

Turning to fear of police brutality, neighborhood characteristics were again significantly associated with the outcome, though correlations were not as strong (Table 2.2). Namely, neighborhood cohesion was inversely related to fear of police brutality (-.17) while neighborhood disorder was directly related to it (.15). In multivariate regressions, however, both remained significant, and in the expected directions (Table 2.4). Namely, for each incremental increase in neighborhood cohesion and disorder, fear of police brutality decreased by .03 and increased by .04, respectively (Model 1). A respondent's number of children 12 and under also had a negative relationship with fear of police brutality in the baseline model, though this relationship was not robust when controlling for political, religious, or media consumption variables.

As with the first outcome, political ideology had a weak relationship with fear of police brutality (.13) in bivariate analysis (Table 2.2), and again, the relationship remained significant when controlling for demographic and neighborhood characteristics (Table 2.4). Namely, as political liberalism increased, fear of police brutality increased by .06 (Model 2). Here, however, the effect was not robust in the final model, losing significance when controlling for religion and media consumption variables (Model 5).

Bivariate relationships between religion variables and fear of police brutality were similar to those for confidence in police (Table 2.2). Namely, religious attendance (-.10), religious salience (-.08) and Protestant & other Christian (-.12) were each negatively related to the outcome. In multivariate regressions, however, religion variables each lost significance (Table 2.4, Models 3 and 5).

Relationships between media consumption variables and fear of police brutality diverged from those for confidence. While zero-order correlations between fear of police

Table 2.4

OLS Coefficients and Standard Errors Predicting Fear of Police Brutality

Independent variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.	
Intercept	.68	.24	**	.64	.23	*	.66	.24	*	.79	.23	**	.74	.24	**
Age	-.05	.03		-.04	.03		-.05	.03		-.08	.03	*	-.08	.04	*
Male	.05	.06		.07	.06		.04	.06		.06	.06		.07	.06	
Married	-.16	.07	*	-.12	.08		-.14	.07		-.13	.07		-.10	.07	
Children 12 and under	.05	.05		.06	.05		.07	.05		.06	.05		.07	.05	
South	-.03	.06		-.03	.06		.01	.07		-.03	.06		.00	.07	
Income	-.01	.01		-.01	.01		-.01	.01		-.01	.01		-.01	.01	
Education	-.03	.02		-.04	.02		-.03	.02		-.04	.02		-.03	.02	
Neighborhood cohesion	-.03	.01	**	-.03	.01	**	-.03	.01	*	-.03	.01	**	-.02	.01	*
Neighborhood disorder	.04	.02	*	.04	.02	*	.04	.02	*	.05	.02	*	.04	.02	*
Political liberalism				.06	.02	**							.05	.02	
Religious attendance							-.01	.02					-.01	.02	
Religious salience							.00	.05					.03	.05	
Catholic							.15	.11					.14	.11	
Protestant & other Christian							-.10	.10					-.08	.10	
Other religion							.12	.12					.09	.12	
FOX News Channel										-.01	.02		.01	.02	
CNN										-.04	.03		-.04	.03	
MSNBC										.11	.03	***	.10	.03	**
Local & network news										.01	.02		.01	.02	
Other TV news (PBS, BBC, etc.)										.06	.02	*	.06	.02	*
Adjusted R-Squared ^a	.05			.06			.06			.08			.08		

Notes: $N=1,106$. All values are weighted. * $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$ *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed tests)

^aR-Squared values averaged from five regressions performed by imputation.

brutality and both FOX News Channel and local & network news were not significant, MSNBC (.12) and other TV news (.10) both had positive associations with the outcome (Table 2.2). These relationships remained significant when controlling for demographic and neighborhood characteristics (Table 2.4, Model 4). Namely, for each incremental increase in consumption of MSNBC and other TV news, fear of police brutality increased by .11 and .06, respectively. Notably, media consumption variables remained significant in the full model (Model 5), even as political and religious effects were non-significant.

Discussion

The current study sought to explore how apparently race-neutral and trans-local processes related to politics, religion, and media consumption affect evaluation of police among white Americans in a period when discourse about police-minority violence had gained traction in the national news media. Testing two measures of citizen attitudes about police, hypotheses received mixed support. Confidence in police was inversely related to political liberalism, religious salience, and frequency of consumption of other TV news (PBS, BBC, etc.), and it was positively related to religious attendance and frequency of viewing FOX News Channel. Fear of police brutality, on the other hand, was unrelated to political ideology and religious variables in the full model, and it was positively associated with the frequency of viewing both MSNBC and other TV news.

Have we reached a tipping point for the call for police reform because of repeated exposure to police-involved deaths of minority citizens as Weitzer (2015) suggests? If we have, these findings suggest it may be localized in already-sympathetic ideologies. As Goldsmith (2010) argues, repeated exposures may have diminishing returns, with individuals retreating to the safety of their own worldviews. Based on a dispositional

style of behavioral attribution, white political conservatives and religious traditionalists have the tools to deny broad, systemic problems that result in racialized patterns of law enforcement and instead insist on the moral culpability of the individuals involved – whether the lack of legal compliance by the victim, the mishandling of the situation by the officer, or both. Against demands for state expenditures including body cameras, minority recruitment, and additional police training from their political opponents, these tools provide conservatives a reliable defense.

That said, the effects of religion are complex. Notably, the effect of religious attendance remained significant in the full model predicting confidence in the police. While religious and political conservatism have converged since the late 1970s (Gold & Russell, 2007; Kellstedt et al., 1994; Putnam & Campbell, 2010), frequent attenders apparently have greater confidence of police independent of political ideology and media consumption patterns. This finding is consistent with an explanation from social capital theory (Putnam, 2000); among white respondents, church attendance generates social trust and feelings of connection to the local community (Strømsnes, 2008; Walker, 2011), which translates into greater trust of police (c.f. Macdonald & Stokes, 2006).

The negative effect of religious salience on confidence in police, however, was surprising. The finding contradicts that of Cao and Stack (2005), who found a positive relationship between an index of religiosity that included a similar measure and a single-item measure of confidence in police among a combined American and Japanese sample. Modeling, of course, is a critical difference; religious attendance and religious salience were strongly correlated in the sample used herein ($r=.75$), and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for these variables were marginal, though not critical (VIFs between 2 and 3

for both religious attendance and religious salience). That said, both were nevertheless found to be significant predictors of confidence, and the sign reversal for salience between bivariate and multivariate analyses is an indication that independent modeling is more appropriate.

Given the temporal context of data collection, the opposite signs between religious attendance and religious salience suggest different processes related to intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Early evidence suggested that differences in religious motivation correlated to differences in racial prejudice; those who see religion as an end in itself express less prejudice while those who use religion as a means to other ends (e.g., comfort, community, status) expressed higher levels of prejudice (Allport & Ross, 1967; Batson, Naifeh, & Pate, 1978). Extrinsic religiosity, according to Allport and Ross (1967, p. 434), is “instrumental and utilitarian” and leads to ethnocentrism and nominal affirmation of creeds while individuals with an intrinsic religiosity earnestly seek to embody religious creeds, including those that encourage others-centeredness. Similarly, Perkins (1992) found that both strong religious commitment and being non-religious correlated with increased humanitarianism and reduced racial prejudice compared to those with a nominal or moderate level of religiosity. Because it is modeled independently from religious attendance, the measure of religious salience used herein can be interpreted as a measure of intrinsic religiosity. It is possible, therefore, that the prominence of police-minority violence in public discourse has had the effect of eroding the confidence of those who consider themselves to be very religious because of its impact on marginalized communities, independent of their level of church attendance and even as frequent attendance has the opposite effect.

Consistent with prior research on police attitudes (Lasley, 1994; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997; Weitzer, 2002), findings reported herein also confirm the importance of media coverage of police-minority violence, even among whites. Congruent with the literature on partisan selectivity (Slater, 2014; Stroud, 2010), attitudes about police were patterned predictably in accordance with political biases of cable news networks; that is, viewership of FOX News Channel was associated with increased confidence while viewership of MSNBC was associated with increased fear of police brutality.

Strikingly, media consumption variables were particularly salient to the latter outcome. Not only did their inclusion increase explained variance by 60% from the baseline model (increase of R-Squared from .05 to .08), but they rendered the effects of political ideology non-significant. To be sure, MSNBC has a liberal bent (Feldman et al., 2012) and cable news programming, generally, is often characterized by the blurring of journalism and punditry, as well as other rhetorical devices intended to stir powerful emotions among viewers (Coe et al., 2008; Sobieraj & Berry, 2011). Also, PBS and BBC are among the most trusted television news sources among consistent liberals but not among consistent conservatives (Mitchell, Gottfried, Kiley, & Matsa, 2014). That said, *PBS NewsHour* (for example) was among the most centrist of media outlets in one study on media bias (Groseclose & Milyo, 2005), and a 2009 study determined that BBC's coverage of the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict was mostly impartial (Gaber, Seymour, & Thomas, 2009). The apparent neutrality of "other TV news" sources suggests that the *effects* of their consumption are independent of political ideology. Importantly, fear is considered to be a primary emotion representing a visceral response to stimulus perceived as threatening (J. H. Turner & Stets, 2005). Presumably, then, and again considering the

temporal context of data collection, even the mere reporting of incidents of police-minority violence – free of politicized commentary – seems to have triggered anti-police attitudes at a deep, emotional level. Remarkably, this effect was observed among a sample of white Americans, who are ostensibly privileged in terms of racial profiling, though it is consistent with Haidt’s (2012) suggestion that an aversion to harm of others is common to conservatives and liberals alike.

Conclusions

Findings reported herein demonstrate that, even while white Americans generally have more positive evaluations of police than African Americans and Hispanics, their attitudes do vary predictably. Given their relative privilege from the emotional effects of racial profiling, polarized responses were expected among whites due to the politicization of recent highly publicized incidents of police-minority violence. And indeed, confidence in police was found to correlate with political ideology, religiosity, and media consumption, each independent of one another. Fear of police brutality, on the other hand, appeared to be a function primarily of media consumption among American whites.

Importantly, while increased support for agents of law enforcement is related to explicit concerns for racial dominance among white nationalists (Walters, 2003), the logic of dispositional attribution underlying political conservatism and religious traditionalism provides for apparently race-neutral justification of aggressive policing in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Even as such practices have been shown empirically to disproportionately affect racial minorities (Alexander, 2010) and to be counter-productive to the goal of reducing long-term violence (Corsaro et al., 2015; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003), the stated support for “law and order” and “tough-on-

crime” policy by the GOP provides for the practical convergence of the interests of white supremacists and otherwise well-meaning white conservatives.

While the data used for this paper have several strengths, in that the study surveyed a large national sample on multiple measures of police evaluation at a time in which the issue of police-minority violence was nationally salient, some limitations should also be considered. Additional covariates with attitudes about the police that could not be controlled but have been established in literature include contact with the police, personal familiarity with officers, and negative encounters with police (Corsaro et al., 2015; Lurigio, Greenleaf, & Flexon, 2009; Skogan, 2006). The cross-sectional nature of the data also limits conclusions of causality and change over time. Questions related to attitudinal rebound, for instance, remain open. Further study is needed to discern whether political ideology, religious behavior, or partisan selectivity of media coverage moderate rate or magnitude of rebound. The changing modes of media consumption are also beyond the scope of the current study. While television remains the dominant platform by which Americans consume news, online media consumption is quickly emerging as an important venue as well (Geiger, 2016).

Finally, conclusions regarding the effect of religiosity on attitudes about the police among racial minorities were also limited by the data. Specifically, the typology of religious traditions does not allow for distinguishing between evangelicalism and mainline Protestantism, a distinction that is expected to have salient implications for social attitudes (see Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Wellman, 2008). Further, while the cultural tools that predominate white evangelicalism, including free-will individualism, anti-structuralism, and relativism (Emerson & Smith, 2000), are compatible with a

dispositional attribution style, increased attendance of a Black Protestant church might result in more critical attitudes of the police. Given the distinct history of the Black Church in the context of racial oppression, its rhetoric tends to be both priestly and prophetic, emphasizing both personal righteousness and social justice (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Shelton & Emerson, 2012). As the sample used herein was designed to be representative of the US population, it did not include an oversample of racial minorities, which would have been necessary to test for the moderating effects of race.

CHAPTER THREE

Religion in Civil Society: The Spatial Effects of Black Protestant Affiliation Rate on Crime in the South

Introduction

Research from the civil society perspective has demonstrated the ability of locally-oriented institutions to facilitate thriving in terms of civic participation (T. Blanchard & Matthews, 2006), indicators of socioeconomic well-being such as income, poverty rates, and unemployment rates (Tolbert, Lyson, & Irwin, 1998), mortality rates (T. C. Blanchard, Tolbert, & Mencken, 2011), and patterns of migration (Irwin, Blanchard, Tolbert, Nucci, & Lyson, 2004). Even in the context of a globalizing economy, these studies generally suggest that community businesses, civic organizations, and voluntary organization promote the welfare of community in ways that transnational and transregional corporations do not precisely because they are locally-oriented. According to Putnam (2000), the social capital resulting from involvement in local organizations facilitates mutual trust and solidarity that can be mobilized into community action and problem-solving. In this study, I investigate how the Black Protestant church serves as just such a community institution in the South, where affiliation rates tend to be higher than other regions of the nation. How and to what degree do Black Protestant churches influence crime and arrest rates in a community? Do resources available through the Black Church help to buffer the negative effects of social and economic predictors of crime rates?

Religion, Community, and Crime

Whether personal religious faith, generally speaking, has any effect on deviance has been a matter of some debate among criminologists. Though religion is, as Ulmer (2012:168) suggests, a “fundamental and nearly ubiquitous cultural institution” that permeates practically every facet of social life, it has been virtually neglected by most of the micro- and macro-level theories of crime. This neglect may be partly due to the infamous null finding in Hirschi and Stark’s (1969) landmark “hellfire” study, wherein church attendance was not found to be predictive of either moral values or attitudes regarding the law (both of which were predictive of delinquency), and partly to the preference of criminologists for structural, rather than cultural, explanations of crime (Cullen 2011). That said, Baier and Wright (2001) found that religion does have a moderate but significant effect on crime in their meta-analysis of 60 criminological studies that include religious predictors, and Johnson and Jang (2011) found that 90 percent of the 270 studies they systematically reviewed reported pro-social effects of religiosity on crime and delinquency.

Due to the ubiquity of the influence of religion on social life, Johnson and Jang (2011) suggest that religious individuals are less likely to commit crime than nonreligious individuals for several reasons related to highly-cited micro-theories of crime. In terms of social bonding theory (Hirschi, 1969), religious affiliation tends to strengthen conventional attachments, commitment to conventional goals, and pro-social beliefs while increasing involvement in conventional activities. Religious upbringing also tends to foster self-control (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Consistent with social learning theory (Akers, 1985, 2009), religious involvement alters differential association and

differential reinforcement schedules, increasing the intimacy and frequency of contact with conventional peers and positive role models. And in terms of General Strain Theory (Agnew, 2006), religion provides resources for coping with negative emotions from strain.

That said, the insight of the civil society perspective is that churches should not only have an effect on crime at the individual-level, but also at the community level. One critique of the initial null findings of the “hellfire” study is that it was conducted in an area of the country where religiosity was relatively uncommon (Western Contra Costa County, California). Higgins and Albrecht (1977) found that, when a similar study was conducted on youths in Atlanta, Georgia, church attendance was indeed negatively related to delinquent behavior. Stark (1996) thus proposed that religiosity is not simply an individual property but also a group property, and that religion is most efficacious in reducing delinquency where it is most prevalent. Regnerus (2003) elaborated this “moral communities” thesis by suggesting that it is not an ecology marked simply by high levels of religiosity that reduces crime, but specifically one marked by conservative religious homogeneity that most effectively facilitates social control and thus reduces deviance.

That crime rates are dependent on spatial predictors has a strong theoretical and empirical tradition in the social disorganization literature, which often focuses on the distinct context of “disadvantaged neighborhoods.” Warner (2003), for instance, argues that conventional norms can be attenuated as a result of cultural disorganization, which can inhibit a community’s ability to realize collective goals. She found, for instance, that while residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods tended to hold conventional beliefs related to family, education, honesty, and substance use, they also tended to

underestimate the degree to which their neighborhoods also held conventional beliefs, a condition that undermined the practice of informal social control. Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) refer to this spatial phenomenon as collective efficacy, or a sense of cohesion and shared expectations for social control among residents. Researchers have identified a number of structural covariates to the sort of cultural attenuation described by Warner, including concentrated disadvantage, or communities with high rates of poverty, unemployment, and female-headed households (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999; Warner, 2003), social isolation (Sampson & Wilson, 1995), and mixed land use (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999).

The Black Protestant Church

How and to what degree, then, does the Black Protestant Church serve as an agent of civil society in the South, not only by serving as a source of social and psychological resources for individual-level coping, but also by facilitating collective efficacy among members and the communities in which they live? To approach this question, it is first critical to note that the historic Black Church in the United States was born of slavery and domination (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Shelton & Emerson, 2012). Converting slaves to Christianity served the double-purpose of not only providing slave-owners moral justification for their authority and the practice of slavery, but the explicit biblical dictates for slaves to obey their masters were used to discourage unrest. Nevertheless, the themes of liberation found in the Exodus narrative and the ministry of Jesus were appealing to black slaves in the American South. Faith in the imminence of a God of the oppressed was a source of great hope and comfort, and they would often hold

their own religious services in secret "hush harbors," blending the Christian narratives with expressive forms of worship adapted from their indigenous practices.

After the Civil War, the Black Church constituted an institution that was independent from white institutions, where blacks otherwise faced barriers for full participation, and distinctly so (A. Morris, 1996). They not only provided the civil rights movement a cadre of stable, committed, and well-trained leaders but also a ready-built network of social connections that facilitated the efficient diffusion of information and resources for fundraising. They also, however, were hubs of accountability for their members, engendering both a strong work ethic and a group identity.

Black Protestant churches today contrast most notably with white evangelicalism, the latter of which tends to emphasize cultural tools related to free-will individualism, anti-structuralism, and relativism (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Collectively these tools result in an ethos that emphasizes the efficacy of the individual to determine their own worldly destiny while denying the existence or power of social forces beyond the control of the individual. They also emphasize spiritual rather than material salvation; the state of the soul, rather than economic or political justice, is what matters.

Despite having common origins in the Great Awakening (Shelton & Emerson, 2012), however, the Black Church tends to have a different ethos because of the distinct history of race relations in the United States, and because of the Church's historic emergence in the context of systemic oppression. While they share with white evangelicalism an emphasis on piety and moral righteousness, black religious communities are decidedly more oriented toward social justice (Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Shelton & Emerson, 2012). Among the "building blocks" of the Black Church,

according to Shelton and Emerson (2012), are both tools for individual survival, such as mechanisms for the coping with daily struggle, and social justice, or a desire for the equality of all. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) describe black churches as being in continuous tension, dialectically balancing discourses from both priestly and prophetic religious traditions, other-worldly and this-worldly focuses, and communal and private dimensions, among other others. Black churches tend to be oriented both towards worship and piety as well as social and political engagement. They are concerned both with the aspects of the individual lives of their members as well as the communal life of their communities.

There is thus a dual nature to religious rhetoric of Black Protestant churches. They emphasize both the individual and the collective, a tension that has implications both for individual orientations and group action. At the individual level, Hinojosa and Park (2004) found that black Protestants were less likely than non-affiliates to affirm that racial inequality is due to a lack of educational opportunities for African Americans, though in general, blacks were more likely than whites to affirm this explanation. They speculate this is due to the “competing dialectic” in the black church and its historic ties to black colleges and universities. Similarly, Edgell and Tranby (2007) found that those who were most religiously involved, regardless of religious subculture, were less likely to believe that African Americans need much economic help and were more likely to believe individuals are largely responsible for their own outcomes. To be sure, African Americans with orthodox religious views were more sympathetic to bias in laws and social institutions and lack of access to good schools and social connections as explanations for racial inequality, but they were more likely to favor charity-based

solutions and also more likely to identify family upbringing as an explanation for African American disadvantage.

Others have demonstrated the ability of African American congregations in achieving collective goals. Pattillo-McCoy (1998) found that, in addition to social networks and material resources, black churches provide a “cultural blueprint” for organizational efforts in black communities for not only social and political activism, as was the case during the Civil Rights Movement, for example, but also *civic* activism. Using a social constructionist framework, she describes the use of prayer, call-and-response interaction, and Christian imagery of an actively involved God to both enact and invoke a collectivist orientation that can be mobilized to accomplish social goals such as shutting down known drug houses and encouraging community members to vote. Similarly, Liu et al. (2009, p. 589) found that religious participation is “the only form of social capital that enhances the political participation of African Americans,” arguing that it functions to promote civic participation by developing bonding social capital.

Hypotheses

In sum, then, historically Black Churches are expected to serve as agents of civil society by reducing criminal deviance in their communities. While black Protestant churches tend to have a strong emphasis on the social gospel similar to mainline Protestant churches, they share with white evangelical churches a strong emphasis on personal piety as well (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). At the individual level, then, religious involvement is expected to reduce crime rates by (1) fostering attachment to conventional others and encouraging piety and self-control, (2) providing social and psychological resources for coping with negative life events (Bradshaw & Ellison, 2010;

Jang & Johnson, 2003), and (3) providing material resources for alleviating financial distress (Ellison, Musick, & Henderson, 2008). But Black Churches are also likely to have pro-social effects at the community level because they often provide social services to community members who may not be associated with congregations (Koch & Beckley, 2006), and they also provide stable and interested leadership, networks for the diffusion of information, and both a “cultural blueprint” and material resources to mobilize political community action (Ammerman, 1996; A. Morris, 1996; Pattillo-McCoy, 1998). Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

H1: County-level arrest rates are negatively associated with black Protestant affiliation rates in the South.

H2: Black Protestant affiliation buffers the negative effect of social and economic predictors of crime.

Data and Measures

Religious Affiliation Rate

The key independent variable of interest is the county-level Black Protestant affiliation rate, or the number of Black Protestant adherents per 1,000 population, values for which were obtained from the 2010 U.S. Religious Census: Religious Congregations and Membership Study (Grammich et al., 2012). Data for the religious census was collected by the Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center in Lenexa, Kansas, during a period spanning from 2009 to 2011. In total, data was collected for 236 religious groups in the United States, including 344,894 congregations and more than 150 million adherents, representing about 49 percent of the total U.S. population. To isolate the

effects of Black Protestant affiliation, multivariate analyses also control for the total county-level affiliation rates of all religions included in the study.

Researchers used mailing lists and online church locators to contact congregations from the eight largest historically African-American denominations, including the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the Church of God in Christ; the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., the National Missionary Baptist Convention, Inc., and the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. After applying a formula to account for children, a total of nearly 4.9 million black Protestant adherents were identified, though undercounts are still likely, as the number of reporting congregations was lower than expected based on the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 2010*. While the county-level affiliations may therefore be higher than reported, there is currently no indication that the undercounts are systematically biased at the county level. Further, controls for county population, population density, percent urban, and metropolitan status are applied (see below) to ameliorate the effect of any disproportionate missingness associated with population size.

A choropleth map of county-level Black Protestant affiliation rates in the United States is provided in Figure 3.1. Given the historic roots of Black Protestantism in the South, it is not surprising that adherents identified by the study are concentrated mainly in the South, while data is not available for wide swaths of the Northeast, Midwest, and West regions. For pragmatic reasons, then, analyses herein are restricted to the Southern states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, though this restriction has theoretical

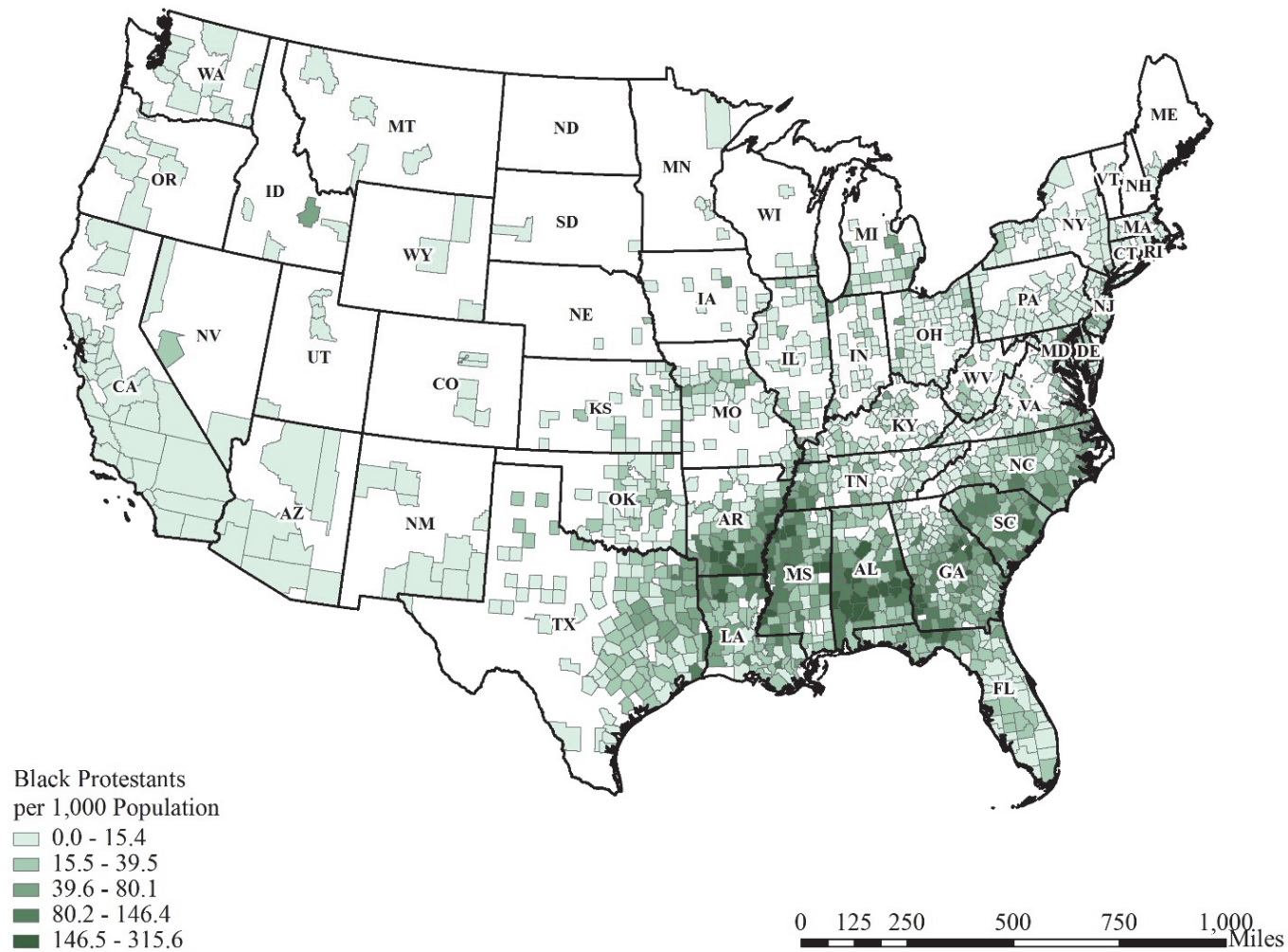


Figure 3.1. Black Protestant affiliation rate by county, 2010. Data source: Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States (2010).

basis as well. Specifically, religiosity among the general public tends to be higher in the South than other regions of the United States (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Given the moral communities thesis that religion is most efficacious in reducing deviance where conservative adherents are most concentrated (Regnerus, 2003; Stark, 1996), if Black Protestant churches serve as agents of civil society by reducing criminal deviance, this effect is most likely to be evident in the South (Higgins & Albrecht, 1977).

Data on Black Protestant affiliation is available for most counties in the South, and non-reporting counties tend to be clustered in western Texas, northern Arkansas, and central Virginia. Using listwise deletion, counties for which Black Protestant affiliation rates are unavailable were excluded, as were all counties in the state of Florida, for which county-level arrest data was not available through the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (see below). In total, 799 of the 1143 southern counties (70%) were included in analyses (see Figure 3.2).

Population and Socioeconomic Controls

Multivariate analyses controlled for a number of population and socioeconomic variables (for descriptive statistics, see Table 3.1) that might influence crime rates from several publicly available datasets. From the short form of the 2010 U.S. Census, county-level population, population density (population per square mile), percent urban, percent high school graduates, percent aged 15 to 24, percent Hispanic, and percent female-headed households were included. From United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service, a dummy variable for metropolitan status (metro = 1, nonmetro = 0) was constructed from the 2013 rural-urban continuum codes. And from the 2010 American Community Survey (5-year data), county-level values representing

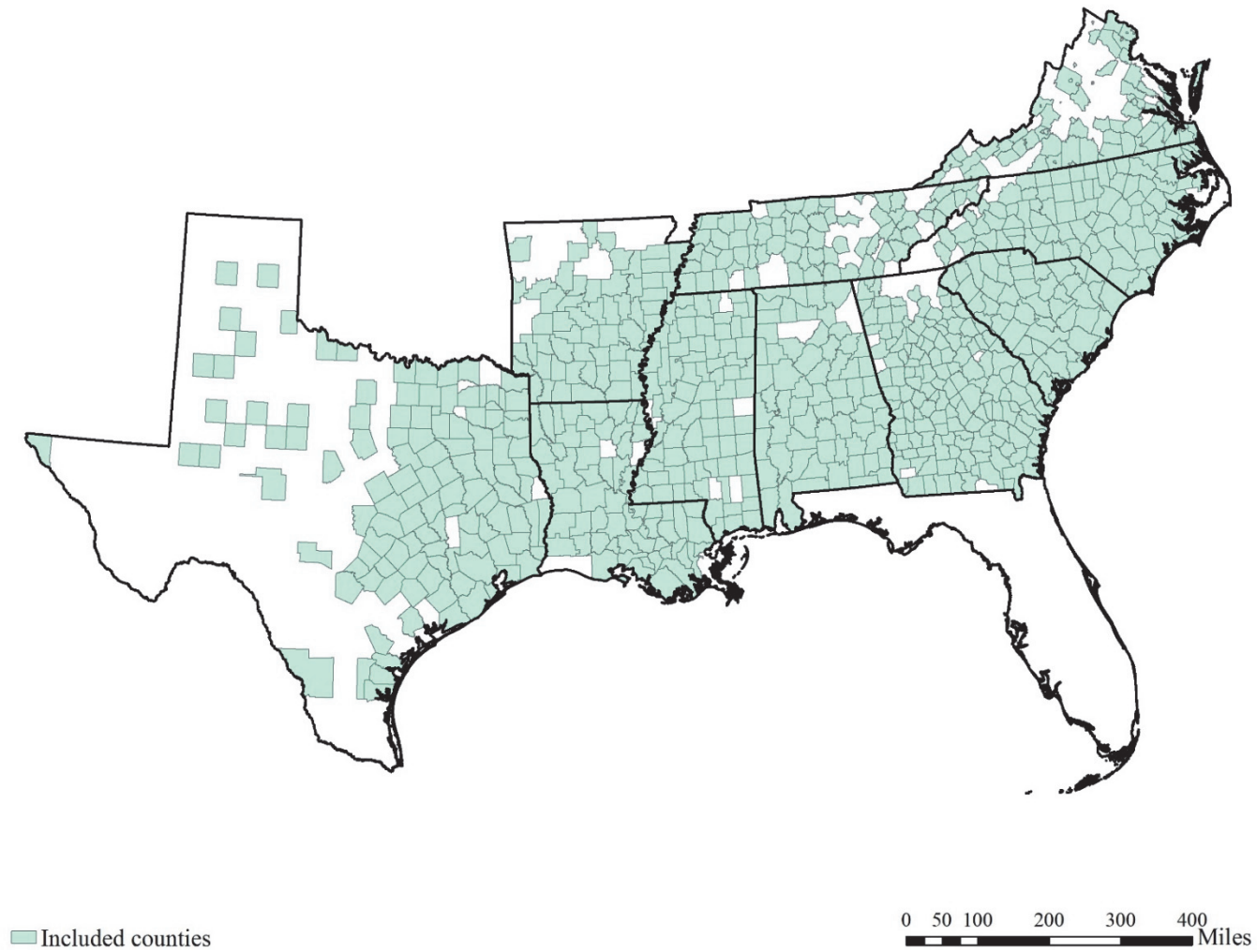


Figure 3.2. Counties included in spatial analyses.

Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Crime rates (arrests per 10,000 population)</i>		
Property crime arrest rate 2010	39.75	24.41
Property crime arrest rate 2005	41.28	19.67
Violent crime arrest rate 2010	18.87	10.89
Violent crime arrest rate 2005	31.39	15.16
<i>Religious affiliation rate (adherents per 1000 population)</i>		
Black Protestant (BP) affiliation rate	46.83	50.05
Total affiliation rate	535.61	154.17
<i>Control Variables</i>		
Population	83561.48	217594.94
Population density (population per square mile)	251.92	666.30
Metropolitan (metro = 1, nonmetro = 0)	.47	.50
Percent urban	.43	.30
Percent high school (HS) graduates	78.58	6.10
Percent aged 15 to 24	13.79	3.75
Percent Hispanic	7.42	10.49
Median household income	40681.63	11416.55
<i>Socioeconomic Indicators</i>		
Gini coefficient	.45	.04
Unemployment rate	8.23	3.00
Poverty rate	18.93	6.41
Percent female-headed households	15.33	4.34
<i>Composite Index</i>		
Resource disadvantage	.00	2.64

Notes: $N = 799$.

Data Sources: FBI Uniform Crime Reports; 2010 U.S. Religious Census: Religious Congregations & Membership Study; 2010 U.S. Census Short Form; 2010 American Community Survey (5-year); USDA Economic Research Service.

Gini coefficients for income inequality, unemployment rates, poverty rates, median household incomes, and percent high school graduates were also included.

To minimize multicollinearity, most variables (including Black Protestant affiliation rates but not county population and metropolitan status) were standardized into z-scores, and exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine patterns of covariance for the potential construction of composite indices. In the final analysis, four

variables were found to both load onto a common factor and be positively correlated to one another, including Gini coefficients ($\lambda=.69$), unemployment rate ($\lambda=.78$), poverty rate ($\lambda=.91$), and percent female-headed households ($\lambda=.85$).¹ A composite variable, conceptualized as *resource disadvantage*, was created by summing z-scores for these four variables ($\alpha=.82$), each weighted by its respective factor loading.

Crime Rates

Two outcome measures were considered in this study, including county-level arrest rates for both property crimes and violent crimes as provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reports. Property crime arrest rates and violent crime arrest rates were constructed by dividing the total number of arrests for each index by the total county population of agencies reporting arrests, and reported herein as arrests per 10,000 in county population. As rates in rural counties may be especially sensitive to anomalies from high rates of arrests in any given year, arrest rates for 2010 are obtained by averaging the arrest rates from 2009 to 2011. Notably, data for Alabama were only available for 2009 and 2010, and data for Florida were not available through the Uniform Crime Reports. Multivariate regression analyses also control for past crime rates using a lag measure of arrest rates averaged over the period 2004 to 2006. While reliability of the data is somewhat compromised by the data collection method, given that reporting by law enforcement agencies is voluntary and standards of classification may vary by agency, county, or state to some degree, publicly available data is imputed by the FBI to account for incomplete reporting.

¹ A fifth variable, median household income, also loaded onto the common factor, but it was negatively correlated with the other variables, and was therefore retained as an independent measure.

Property crimes are likely to be suppressed somewhat due to hierarchical reporting procedures, whereby persons arrested for committing both property and violent crimes are usually categorized only as violent crime offenders. As with undercounts for Black Protestant affiliation rates, the controlling of variables such as population, population density, percent urban, and metropolitan status should buffer any bias due to undercount related to population size and density.

Analytical Method

County-level spatial regression analyses were conducted using GeoDaSpace™ version 1.0 (Anselin & Rey, 2014). Because crime rates from neighboring political units can influence crime rates of a given unit, data smoothing was accomplished using spatial weights based on a queen matrix, where outcome values for a county are weighted by the values of its neighbors, including both those sharing a full border and those that share only a corner. In accordance with the recommendations by Anselin and Rey (2014), an initial model was estimated for each outcome using ordinary least squares regression. For both outcome variables, neither of the Lagrange Multiplier statistics (error and lag) were significant, so results for ordinary least squares regression estimates were used and are reported herein.

For each outcome, the first hypothesis was tested by regressing property and violent crime arrest rates in 2010 on Black Protestant affiliation rates in Model 1, controlling for total religious affiliation rates, population controls, and socioeconomic controls. To test the second hypothesis, Models 2 and 3 added interaction terms between Black Protestant affiliation rate and (a) median household income (b) resource disadvantage, respectfully. Robustness of findings to criminal inertia was tested by

adding a lag term representing 2005 arrest rates to each of the first three models in Models 4 through 6. Since crime represented by the lag term is polygenetic and expected to account for much of the variance otherwise measured by interaction terms, interaction between Black Protestant affiliation rate and the lag term was estimated in Model 7.

Results

Bivariate analyses yielded both expected and unexpected results (see Table 3.2). As expected, the strongest predictor of each type of arrest rate was each's respective lag term (.73 and .63 for property crime and violent crime, respectively). County-level resource disadvantage was weakly correlated to property crime arrest rates in 2010 (.17) and moderately correlated to violent crime arrest rates in 2010 (.37). Percent urban was also moderately predictive of property crime arrest rates (.40) and weakly correlated to violent crime arrest rates (.14). Median household income was also weakly correlated to violent crime arrest rates (-.21), both in the expected direction. Unexpectedly, Black Protestant affiliation rates were not correlated with property crime arrest rates, and counter to H1, they were positively (albeit weakly) correlated to violent crime arrest rates (.18). Total affiliation rate, conversely, was positively related to property crime arrest rates (.17) and unrelated to violent crime arrest rates. To control for confounding factors, however, multivariate analyses are needed.

As such, Table 3.3 reports unstandardized coefficients from ordinary least squares spatial regression analyses predicting 2010 property crime arrest rates. In Model 1, percent urban (14.35) and resource disadvantage (1.36) had significant positive relationships with property crime arrest rates, while percent aged 15 to 24 (-2.69), percent Hispanic (-3.35) and median household income (-7.51) were negatively associated with

Table 3.2

Correlation Coefficients between Predictor Variables and Arrest Rates

Independent Variable	Property crime arrest rate 2010	Violent crime arrest rate 2010
Property crime arrest rate 2005	.73***	.53***
Violent crime arrest rate 2005	.65***	.63***
BP affiliation rate	-.04	.18***
Total affiliation rate	.17***	.05
Resource disadvantage	.16***	.37***
Population	.09*	.02
Population density	.11**	.01
Metropolitan	.09**	.01
Percent urban	.40***	.14***
Percent HS graduates	.08*	-.11***
Percent aged 15 to 24	.13***	.06†
Percent Hispanic	-.02	-.06†
Median household income	-.06†	-.21***

Notes: $N = 799$. Data are unweighted.† $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

the outcome. In contrast with bivariate results but consistent with H1, Black Protestant affiliation rate was negatively associated with property crime arrest rates in 2010 (-4.25). In Model 2, Black Protestant affiliation rate is only marginally significant (-2.16), though the interaction term with median income is significant (3.43). And in Model 3, both the main effect for Black Protestant affiliation rate (-2.58) and its interaction with resource disadvantage (-.77) are significant. When the 2005 property crime lag term is added, coefficients for Black Protestant affiliation rate diminish in magnitude but remain significant while its interaction terms with median income and resource disadvantage become non-significant. The interaction between Black Protestant affiliation rate and the lag term itself in Model 7, however, is significant (-1.95).

Turning now to violent crime arrest rates (Table 3.4), results from Model 1 indicate that metropolitan (1.98), percent urban (2.85) and resource disadvantage (1.70)

Table 3.3

Unstandardized Ordinary Least Squares Spatial Regression Coefficients Predicting Average Property Crime Arrests per 10,000 Population, 2009-2011

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	39.57*** (1.17)	41.15*** (1.27)	40.90*** (.99)	40.12*** (.92)	39.92*** (1.01)	39.85*** (.99)	40.22*** (.92)
Population	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Population density	-1.15 (.90)	-1.46 (.90)	-1.37 (.90)	-.31 (.71)	-.26 (.72)	-.26 (.72)	-.35 (.71)
Metropolitan	.81 (1.87)	.34 (1.86)	.66 (1.86)	-.64 (1.48)	-.58 (1.48)	-.62 (1.48)	-.80 (1.47)
Percent HS graduates	1.89 (1.26)	1.47 (1.26)	1.68 (1.26)	.15 (1.00)	.20 (1.00)	.18 (1.00)	.19 (.99)
Percent aged 15 to 24	-2.69** (.87)	-2.63** (.87)	-2.74** (.87)	-.11 (.70)	-.10 (.70)	-.08 (.70)	-.08 (.69)
Percent Hispanic	-3.35*** (.88)	-3.25*** (.88)	-3.28*** (.88)	-2.35*** (.70)	-2.36*** (.70)	-2.36** (.70)	-2.45*** (.69)
Percent urban	14.35*** (1.19)	14.18*** (1.19)	14.37*** (1.19)	4.73*** (1.04)	4.71*** (1.04)	4.65*** (1.05)	4.71*** (1.04)
Median household income	-7.51*** (1.52)	-4.51* (1.10)	-6.21*** (1.57)	-2.83* (1.22)	-3.20* (1.42)	-3.06** (1.26)	-2.56* (1.22)
Resource disadvantage	1.36* (.54)	1.83** (.56)	1.77** (.56)	-.21 (.44)	-.28 (.46)	-.30 (.45)	-.16 (.43)
Total affiliation rate	1.13 (.83)	1.02 (.82)	.95 (.82)	.99 (.65)	1.00 (.65)	1.02 (.65)	.95 (.65)
BP affiliation rate	-4.25*** (1.00)	-2.16† (1.20)	-2.58* (1.14)	-1.87* (.80)	-2.13* (.95)	-2.19* (.91)	-2.25** (.81)
BP affiliation rate X median income		3.43** (1.10)			-.44 (.89)		
BP affiliation rate X resource disadvantage			-.77** (.25)			.15 (.21)	
Property crime arrest rate 2005				15.58*** (.72)	15.65*** (.73)	15.69*** (.73)	15.53*** (.71)
BP affiliation rate X prop. crime arrest rate 2005							-1.95** (.68)
Adjusted R ²	.27	.28	.28	.55	.55	.55	.55
Multicollinearity Condition Number	5.03	5.98	5.28	5.07	6.00	5.29	5.10

Notes: $N = 799$. Standard errors in parentheses. Queen weighting matrix applied to all models.

† $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 3.4

Unstandardized Ordinary Least Squares Spatial Regression Coefficients Predicting Average Violent Crime Arrests per 10,000 Population, 2009-2011

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	18.01*** (.55)	18.97*** (.60)	18.85*** (.59)	18.40*** (.46)	18.60*** (.50)	18.57*** (.49)	18.34*** (.46)
Population	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Population density	-.34 (.43)	-.53 (.43)	-.48 (.43)	.02 (.36)	-.02 (.36)	-.01 (.36)	.04 (.35)
Metropolitan	1.98* (.88)	1.70† (.88)	1.89* (.88)	1.00 (.74)	.95 (.74)	.99 (.74)	1.03 (.73)
Percent HS graduates	.26 (.60)	.00 (.59)	.12 (.59)	-.25 (.50)	-.29 (.50)	-.27 (.50)	-.26 (.49)
Percent aged 15 to 24	-1.15** (.41)	-1.12** (.41)	-1.18** (.41)	-.10 (.35)	-.10 (.35)	-.11 (.35)	-.10 (.35)
Percent Hispanic	-.46 (.42)	-.40 (.41)	-.42 (.41)	-.03 (.35)	-.02 (.35)	-.03 (.35)	-.01 (.35)
Percent urban	2.85*** (.57)	2.74*** (.56)	2.86*** (.56)	-.84† (.51)	-.82 (.51)	-.80 (.51)	-.80 (.51)
Median household income	-1.10 (.72)	.72 (.85)	-.28 (.74)	.45 (.60)	.81 (.71)	.60 (.62)	.33 (.60)
Resource disadvantage	1.70*** (.26)	1.98*** (.27)	1.96*** (.26)	.95*** (.22)	1.01*** (.23)	1.01*** (.23)	.93*** (.22)
Total affiliation rate	-.48 (.39)	-.55 (.39)	-.60 (.39)	-.42 (.32)	-.43 (.33)	-.44 (.33)	-.40 (.32)
BP affiliation rate	-.53 (.47)	.74 (.57)	.53 (.54)	.24 (.40)	.50 (.47)	.45 (.45)	.33 (.40)
BP affiliation rate X median income		2.08*** (.52)			.43 (.44)		
BP affiliation rate X resource disadvantage			-.48*** (.12)			-.10 (.10)	
Violent crime arrest rate 2005				6.54*** (.35)	6.47*** (.35)	6.47*** (.35)	6.52*** (.34)
BP affiliation rate X viol. crime arrest rate 2005							.86** (.32)
Adjusted R ²	.18	.20	.20	.44	.44	.44	.44
Multicollinearity Condition Number	5.03	5.98	5.28	5.04	6.00	5.28	5.07

Notes: $N = 799$. Standard errors in parentheses. Queen weighting matrix applied to all models.

† $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

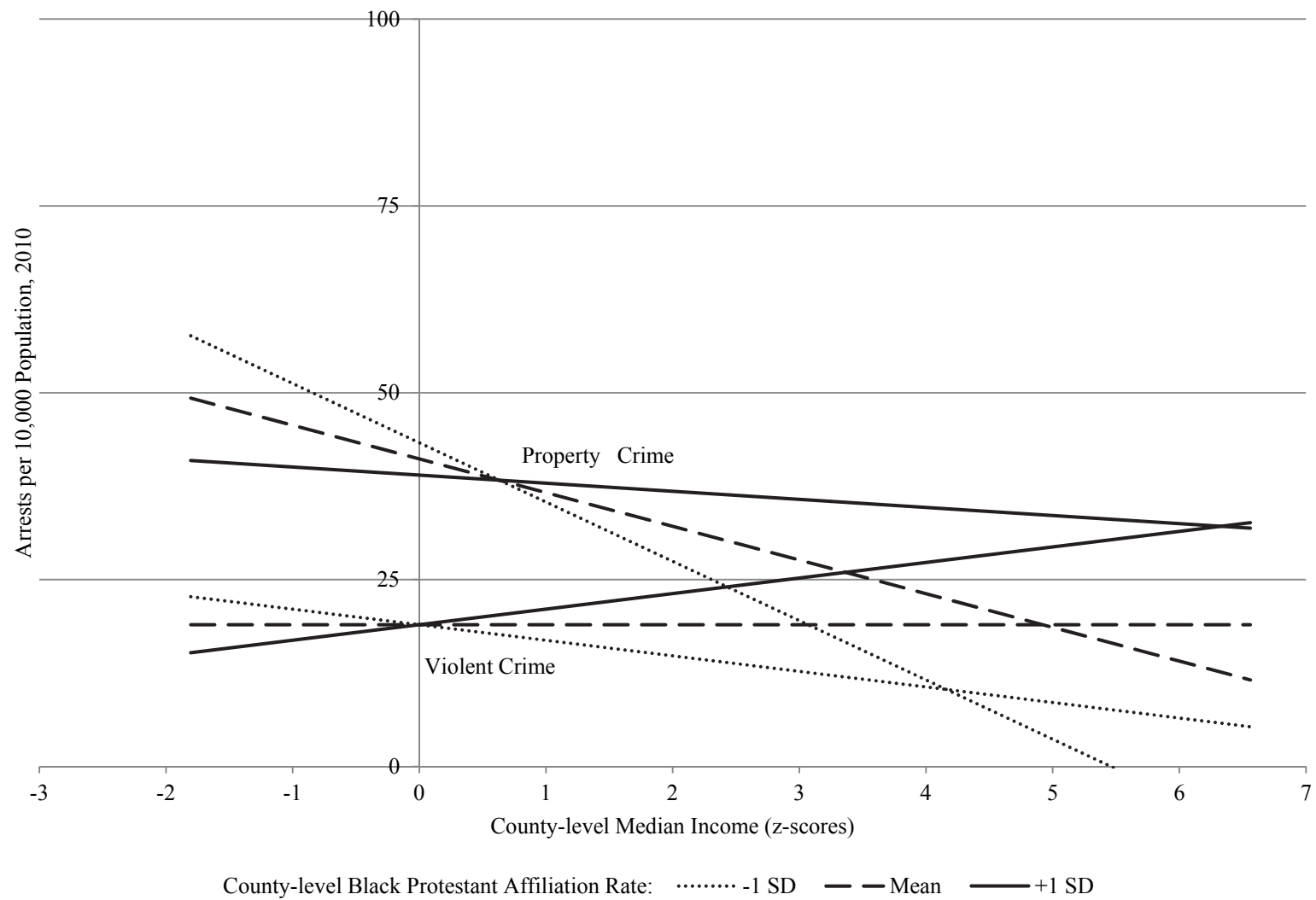


Figure 3.3. Median income and estimated county-level arrest rates in 2010 by Black Protestant affiliation rate.

are positively related to the outcome while percent aged 15 to 24 (-1.15) is negatively associated with it. And while the zero-order correlation between Black Protestant affiliation rate and 2010 violent crime arrest rates was positive and significant, its coefficient is non-significant when controlling for population and socioeconomic county characteristics. Controlling for interaction terms, Black Protestant affiliation rate significantly interacted with both median income (2.08) and resource disadvantage (-.48) in Models 2 and 3, respectively. Adding the 2005 violent crime lag term rendered both interactions non-significant in Models 5 and 6, respectively, but the interaction between Black Protestant affiliation rate and the lag term (.86) was significant in Model 7.

The interactive effects of median income and Black Protestant affiliation rate on both property and violent crime arrest rates are illustrated in Figure 3.3. In multivariate analyses, median income is negatively associated with property crime arrest rates but generally unrelated to violent crime arrest rates. The negative association between median income and property crime arrest rates is strongest among counties with the lowest Black Protestant affiliation rates. These counties have the highest arrest rates where median income is lowest, and the lowest rates where median income is highest. Conversely, counties with the highest Black Protestant affiliation rates have the highest arrest rates where median income is lowest, and the highest rates where median income is highest. A similar pattern is observed for violent crime arrest rates, but because the main effects were significant, the effect for median income is negative among counties with the lowest affiliation rates and positive among those with the highest. The general pattern, then, is that Black Protestant affiliation rates are protective against both property and violent crime arrest rates in low income counties, but not in high income counties.

Black Protestant affiliation rate interacts similarly with the effect of resource disadvantage on both property and violent crime arrest rates (Figure 3.4). The effect of county-level resource disadvantage is generally positive; the higher the level of disadvantage, the higher the rates of both property and violent crime arrests. Black Protestant affiliation rates serve to buffer this effect, such that the higher the county-level affiliation rate, the weaker the effect of resource disadvantage. In other words, Black Protestant affiliation rates are most protective in counties where resource disadvantage is greatest.

As expected, controlling for historical patterns of arrest by including arrest rate lag terms to multivariate models accounted for much of the variance explained by these interactions. But a significant interaction between Black Protestant affiliation rate and the property crime lag term suggests that affiliation rates are increasingly protective against crime where crime is increasingly prevalent. As depicted in Figure 3.5, the relationship between property crime arrest rates in 2005 and property crime arrest rates in 2010 was strongest in counties with low affiliation rates, but the effect weakened as affiliation rates increased.

Affiliation rates also significantly interacted with the lagged violent crime arrest rate, but its effect was positive rather than negative. While Black Protestant affiliation rates was negatively related to 2010 violent crime rates in counties with below-average violent crime rates in 2005, its effect was increasingly positive as 2005 arrest rates increase above the mean (Figure 3.6).

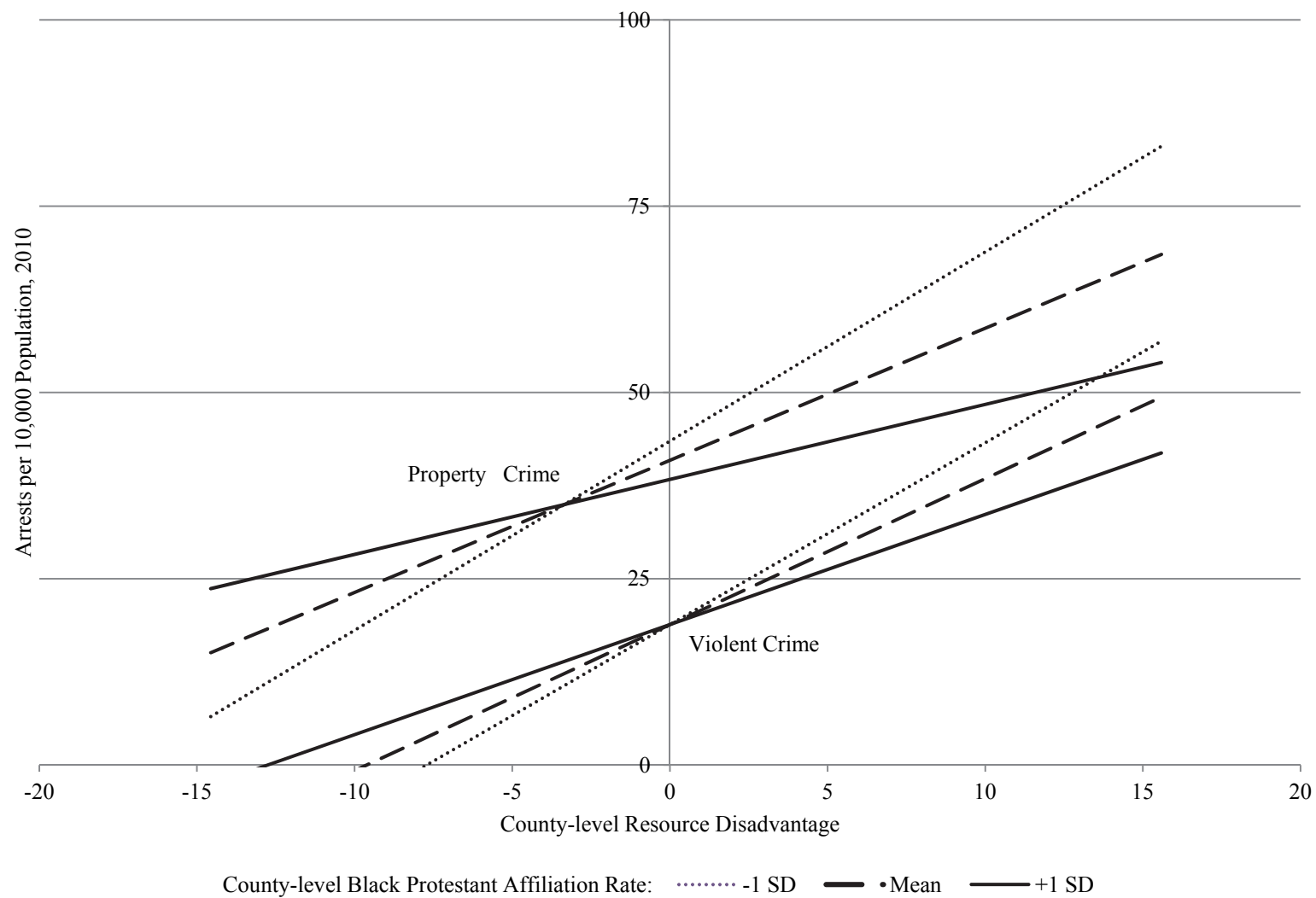


Figure 3.4. Resource disadvantage and estimated county-level arrest rates in 2010 by Black Protestant affiliation rate.

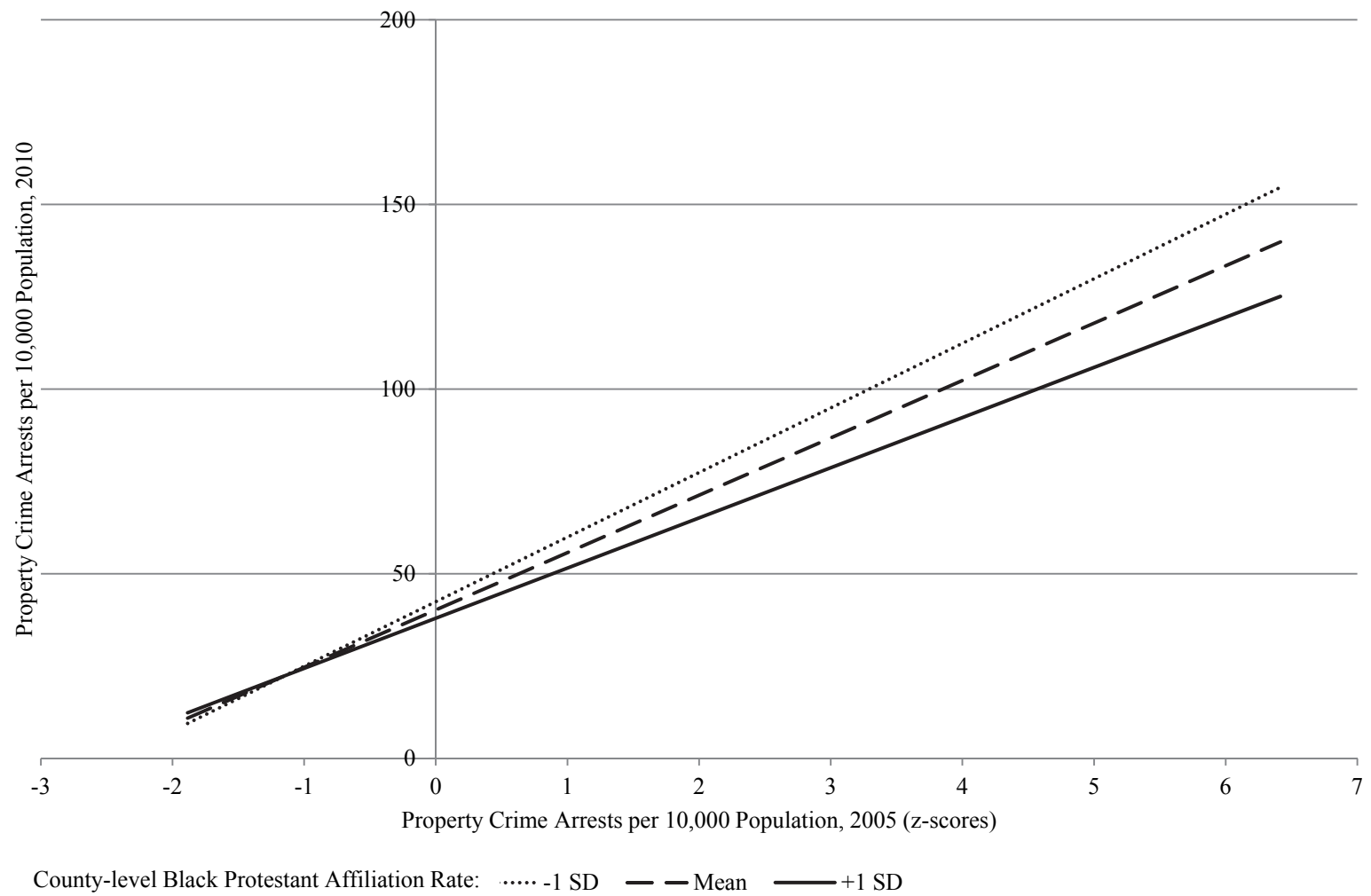


Figure 3.5. County-level property crime arrest rates in 2010 predicted by the interaction between Black Protestant affiliation rates and property crime arrest rates in 2005.

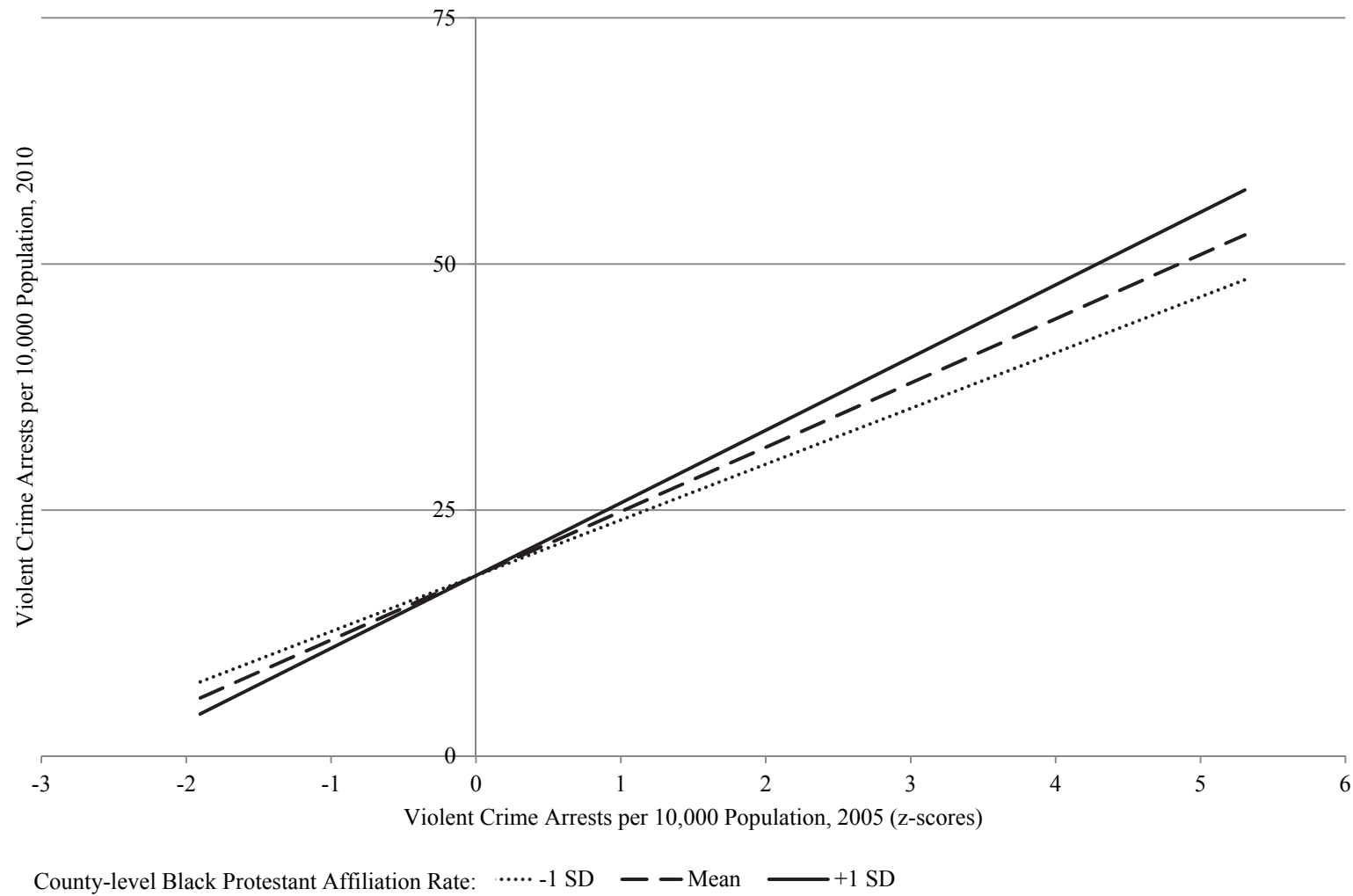


Figure 3.6. County-level violent crime arrest rates in 2010 predicted by the interaction between Black Protestant affiliation rates and violent crime arrest rates in 2005.

Discussion and Conclusions

Conceptualizing the Black Church as an agent for civil society, I tested hypotheses that county-level affiliation rates were negatively associated with county-level arrest rates, and that affiliation rates buffered the effects of socioeconomic predictors of crime. When transitioning from bivariate to multivariate analyses, the non-significant zero-order correlation between Black Protestant affiliation rate and property crime arrest rates became significant and negative when controlling for population and socioeconomic characteristics, while the unexpected positive zero-order correlation between affiliation rates and violent crime arrest rates became non-significant. Findings thus generally supported H1, though controlling for confounding factors was found to be especially important in this case.

Furthermore, affiliation rates for Black Protestant churches buffered the effects of median income and resource disadvantage, thus partially supporting H2. In short, Black Protestant affiliation rates were most protective of both property and violent crime arrest rates in counties with the lowest median incomes and the highest levels of resource disadvantage. Further, Black Protestant affiliation rates were protective against historical crime rates; where affiliation rates were highest, the effects of past crime were lowest. These quantitative findings are thus consistent with the ethnographic picture provided by Pattillo-McCoy (1998) that the Black Church provides not only leadership, social networks, and financial resources but also a “cultural blueprint” to accomplish local social goals such as shutting down known drug houses and reducing juvenile loitering. Importantly, the null relationship of total affiliation rate suggests that the Black Church

specifically is providing cultural resources for the protection of crime that religious organizations more generally are not.

That said, Black Protestant affiliation rates apparently had the opposite effect in high-income counties and those with low levels of resource disadvantage. One cause for elevated arrest rates in these areas may be increased racial profiling in predominantly white middle class suburbs (Meehan & Ponder, 2002).

Also, results for the interaction between Black Protestant affiliation rates and past violent crime arrest rates were not consistent with expectations. While the positive zero-order correlation between affiliation rates and violent crime arrest rates did become non-significant in multivariate spatial regression analyses, its main effect was nonetheless nonsignificant, and the sign of its interaction with the lag term for arrest rates was positive rather than negative. Affiliation rates had negative effects on arrest rates for violent crimes in 2010 only in counties with below average violent crime arrest rates in 2005, while it had positive effects where 2005 arrest rates were higher than average.

Differences between the interactions of past property and violent crime arrest rates and Black Protestant affiliation rates suggest that substantially different processes are governing these two types of crimes, consistent with prior research (e.g., Kelly, 2000). They also point to the unique challenges of curbing violent crimes such as retaliatory homicide, which are more prevalent in communities where mistrust of police is high as a result of negative experiences with law enforcement, either personally or vicariously (Brunson, 2007; Corsaro et al., 2015; Flexon et al., 2009; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). I speculate, therefore, that the coincidence of high violent crime rates and high affiliation rates, where it occurs, is potentially a sign

of mistrust of the legal system where community members employ polarizing strategies for individual survival – sanctuary-seeking in the Black Church, and self-policing, often with violent means.

That the outcome measures represent total arrest rates in a county is a key limitation of the data. Because the resources and buffering effect of Black Protestant affiliation density is expected to specifically impact African Americans, analyzing its effect on total arrest rates that include all races is a very conservative test. Further, the use of arrest rates rather than offense rates is also conservative, as arrest rates among African Americans may be elevated due to racial profiling (Harris, 1999; Lundman & Kaufman, 2003; Stuntz, 1998; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002). Had the outcomes included only African Americans who had been convicted of crimes, it is possible that both main effects and the non-significant interaction effects could have been significant.

CHAPTER FOUR

Buffering the Stigma: Race, Incarceration, Religion, and Health

Introduction

Americans are stratified by race in terms of both health outcomes (Ferraro & Farmer, 1996; Geronimus, 1996; Williams & Collins, 1995; Williams & Sternthal, 2010) and incarceration rates (Bonczar, 2003), and an emerging literature has begun to consider the relationship between these outcomes (London & Myers, 2006; Massoglia, 2008b; Schnittker, Massoglia, & Uggen, 2011). Specifically, African Americans have higher rates of infant mortality (Williams & Collins, 1995), greater incidence of low birth weight (LBW) and very low birth weight (VLBW) (Geronimus, 1996), and they have higher levels of both morbidity and mortality throughout the life course (Ferraro & Farmer, 1996). Because the meteoric rise in incarceration rates in the U.S. since the 1970's has disproportionately affected African American communities (Bonczar, 2003; Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009), some have argued that it has become an important factor in the life-course of African Americans, contributing to negative health outcomes relative to Whites. Incarceration itself has been identified as an independent risk factor for infectious disease, stress-related illness, and premature mortality (Massoglia, 2008a; Massoglia, Pare, Schnittker, & Gagnon, 2014)(Massoglia et al., 2014). In addition to the direct effects of incarceration on health, other possible pathways include deleterious effects on employment, wages, and marital status (Lopoo & Western, 2005; D. S. Nagin & Paternoster, 1993; Western, 2002).

On the basis of cumulative inequality theory (Ferraro & Shippee, 2009), I consider the possible roles of religion in the processes that connect race, incarceration, and health. While some have argued that religion has a “dark side” for health outcomes (see George, Ellison, & Larson, 2002; Hill, Burdette, & Idler, 2012), other evidence suggests that religious involvement is generally beneficial for both mental and physical health because of its influence on health behaviors and its provision of both social and psychological resources (Bradshaw & Ellison, 2010; Burdette, Weeks, Hill, & Eberstein, 2012; Ferraro & Kim, 2014; George et al., 2002; Hill et al., 2012; Strawbridge, Shema, Cohen, & Kaplan, 2001). Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79), I test whether religion buffers the health risk of incarceration. In what follows, I first review literature related to the effects of both race and incarceration on health, as well as the emerging literature connecting them. I then explicate the possible roles that religion plays in these processes and develop hypotheses based on CI theory.

Race and Health

That health outcome are unequally distributed by race has been well documented. The racial gap in life expectancy, though it has diminished somewhat since the middle of the twentieth century, is “large and persistent over time” (Williams & Sternthal, 2010, p. 51). Specifically, African American men in 2006 lived six years less than White men, while African American women lived four years less than White women. Using longitudinal data from a 15-year national survey of adults, Ferraro and Farmer (1996) found that African Americans were less likely to survive to old age, supporting a thesis of persistent inequality. Further, Geronimus (1996) found that increased health risks were trans-generational. As mothers’ ages increased from the teens to young adulthood, she

found that the risk of LBW and VLBW increased for African American women, especially those of low socioeconomic status, but the same relationship was not observed among white women.

Attempts to explain differences in health outcomes by race have illuminated difficulties in conceptualizing the concept of race itself. While some have argued from a biological perspective that racial groups based on genetic differences are meaningful (see Risch, Burchard, Ziv, & Tang, 2002), others have argued that such an approach is flawed, given not only that genetic variation is greater within racial groups than between them, but also that genetically-linked diseases account for only a small part of the observed variance in health by race (see Williams & Collins, 1995). Alternatively, researchers have turned to social systems of stratification as explanations for racial disparities in health (Brown, 2003; Geronimus, 1996; Williams & Collins, 1995; Williams & Sternthal, 2010). Residential segregation, for instance, has resulted in the disproportionate concentration of poverty, social disorder, and social isolation among African Americans, which has resulted in systematically differentiated levels of environmental exposure to health risks. The relative disadvantage of African Americans in terms of socioeconomic status (SES) differentially exposes them to hazardous work conditions and highly routinized jobs that allow for little autonomy, and African American communities are at highest risk to be located near hazardous waste sites. Furthermore, the repeated experience of racism and discrimination is a source of chronic stress that accumulates over the life-course, a phenomenon that has come to be known as the “weathering hypothesis” (Geronimus, 1996). Turner and Avison (2003), for instance, found that

African Americans experienced more social stress than non-Hispanic whites, a finding that attributed to chronic stressors independent of recent life events.

The relationship between race and mental health is more complicated. Despite suffering higher levels of psychological distress due to inequality and inhospitable environments, epidemiological and clinical data have demonstrated that Blacks and Hispanics, overall, paradoxically experience the same or lower rates of most major mental disorders compared to whites (see Jackson, Knight, & Rafferty, 2010). Jackson et al. (2010) found that individuals living in chronically stressful environments tend to cope with stressors by engaging in unhealthy behaviors such as smoking cigarettes, alcohol use and abuse, drug use, and overeating. While these behaviors tend to alleviate depressive symptoms, they also become risk factors for negative physical health outcomes and increased mortality. Further, they found that African Americans who did not engage in unhealthy behaviors were at an increased risk of depression.

Incarceration and Health

Incarceration, too, has been linked with negative health outcomes, though not without nuance (see Massoglia & Pridemore, 2015 for a summary). Schnittker and John (2007), for instance, found that the experience of incarceration was positively related to “severe functional limitation,” defined as health problems that prevent individuals from working. Notably, their findings suggest that any contact with the prison system was more important than the amount of contact, but respondents who were imprisoned for long periods of time were susceptible to health selection risks, including increased vulnerability to subsequent criminal behavior. Massoglia (2008a) found that individuals with a history of incarceration were at increased risk for infectious diseases (i.e., urinary

tract infections, hepatitis, or tuberculosis), some medical diagnoses (i.e., nervous or psychological problems, hypertension, heart problems, and chronic lung disease) and self-reported health problems related to stress (i.e., chest pain/heart problems, depression/excessive worrying, general health problems). Incarceration was unrelated, though, to medical diagnoses (i.e., arthritis, cancer, and diabetes) and self-reported health problems (i.e., epilepsy, skin problems, allergies/frequent colds, tooth or gum problems, thyroid trouble, back problems, anemia, low blood pressure, gallbladder problems) that are indirectly related, unrelated, or weakly related to stress. And Massoglia et al. (2014) found that women with a history of incarceration were more prone to premature mortality, but the relationship for men was not significant.

While health selection effects no doubt explain some of the relationship between incarceration and health “because the causes of illness and crime are so closely intertwined” (Schnittker & John, 2007, p. 116), researchers have nevertheless been able to identify both direct and indirect effects of incarceration on health. First, the experience of imprisonment itself is a “primary stressor” that requires dramatic behavioral adjustment in a short time, including strategies for psychological adjustment that are potentially deleterious to health including hyper vigilance, social withdrawal, and aggression (Massoglia, 2008a; Massoglia et al., 2014). Incarceration also increases the risk for contagion of infectious disease, and it can have long-term effects on physical and mental health, as a history of incarceration tends to be a source of chronic stress after release due both to the social stigma associated with imprisonment and the disruption of social bonds with family and friends (Massoglia & Pridemore, 2015; Schnittker & John, 2007).

The stigma of serving time and disruption of social bonds also contributes indirectly to health outcomes via their effects on employment and wages. Evidence suggests, for instance, that incarceration has a negative effect on employment opportunities (Pager, 2003), job stability (Sampson & Laub, 1993), and wage mobility (Western, 2002). Not only does the stigma of past incarceration signal to employers that an individual is untrustworthy, but the experience of incarceration is also detrimental to the development of both human and social capital (Western, 2002). While serving time, inmates are typically unable to develop job skills or social contacts that can lead to legitimate employment. Ex-cons are thus typically relegated to “spot market” jobs that don’t invest in employees and have flatter wage trajectories than “career jobs” (D. Nagin & Waldfogel, 1998). Importantly, elements of socioeconomic status that are stunted by prison experience, including income, occupation, and education, are also strong predictors of health (Elo, 2009; Mirowsky & Ross, 2003).

Incarceration might also have an indirect effect on health through its effect on marital stability. Lopoo and Western (2005), for instance, found that men in prison were not only less likely to enter into first marriage but also a higher risk of marital dissolution than those who were not. While this effect was relatively small, given the selection effect whereby relatively few men at high risk of incarceration tend to get married, the authors suggest they are nevertheless at a disadvantage for marriage for several reasons. Their separation from the community reduces marriage prospects for unmarried men and strains relationships for married men, the stigma of incarceration limits interested partners, and reduced earnings during and after imprisonment place men at a disadvantage on the marriage market (c.f., Wilson, 1987). Men who have been

incarcerated, then, are less likely to enjoy the health benefits of marriage, which derive from increased economic resources, monitoring of health behaviors, and psychosocial support (D. Carr & Springer, 2010).

Race, Incarceration, and Health

The role of incarceration on health is increasingly a public health concern because of the rapid increase in the rate of imprisonment over the past several decades. Between 1974 and 2001, the number of adults confined in State or Federal prison increased from 216,000 to 1.1 million, and the number of living former prisoners increased from 1.6 million to 2.7 million (Bonczar, 2003). And while about the same number of white and black adults had ever served time as of 2001, the rate of ever having gone to prison among adult black males (16.6%) was more than 6 times higher than the rate for white adult males (2.6%). Over the life course, 1 in 3 black males are expected to serve time, compared to only 1 in 17 white males.

Given the disproportionate representation of African Americans in the U.S. prison system, some researchers have begun to suggest that understanding the link between incarceration and health is critical to understanding the more fundamental link between race and health (London & Myers, 2006; Massoglia, 2008b; Schnittker et al., 2011). To be sure, Schnittker et al. (2011) suggest that prison may be less selective of high health risk among African Americans than Whites, so the effect of incarceration may be weaker for African Americans. However, they also note that incarceration may act as a trigger for disease among African Americans, since they are already at elevated risk for negative health outcomes, and that incarceration exacerbates negative stereotypes against African Americans. Indeed, Massoglia (2008b) found that incarceration explained racial

differences in physical health functioning at midlife, concluding that imprisonment functions as a fundamental system of stratification (c.f., Link & Phelan, 1995). They further found that incarceration effect was partially explained by factors such as poverty status, marital status, education level, and labor force participation.

Finally, while past imprisonment is generally stigmatizing on the job market, Pager (2003) found that African Americans suffer from the stigma more than Whites. In her audit study, she found that black testers received fewer callbacks than white testers, and in fact, Whites with criminal records received more callbacks than Blacks without criminal records. Further, the penalty of having a criminal record was 40% larger for Blacks than for Whites. To the degree that employment inequalities contribute to racial health disparities, then, the disproportionate penalty of a criminal record among African Americans, who are disproportionately imprisoned, is likely to be substantial.

Religion and Health

Recent research has begun to untangle the complex relationship between religion and health. Most studies demonstrate that religion is beneficial to at least one measure of health, according to Ferraro and Kim (2014). They found, for instance, that religious service attendance predicted levels of C-reactive protein (CRP) among African Americans, and having a clergy confidant was associated with lower CRP levels among Whites. Religious involvement has been associated with decreased mortality (Hill et al., 2012; Strawbridge et al., 2001), and among the elderly, religious involvement is beneficial for both mental health outcomes (e.g., anger, depression, anxiety, psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and cognitive functioning) and physical health

outcomes (e.g., self-rated health, functional status, and stroke). Among mothers-to-be, religious attendance is protective against LBW (Burdette et al., 2012).

A number of mechanisms have been identified to explain the effect of religion on health. First, religion can influence health behaviors, as some traditions have strong prescriptive norms prohibiting tobacco, alcohol, and substance use, as well as norms regarding diet, sleep, and sexual behavior (Burdette et al., 2012; George et al., 2002; Hill et al., 2012). For committed religionists, these behavioral norms can be morally powerful because they are often directly related to theological tenets, including the idea that one should take care of your body as a “temple of God.” Lower rates of cigarette smoking, for example, partially explain the effect of religion on improved health outcomes among the elderly (Hill et al., 2012) and expectant mothers (Burdette et al., 2012).

Religious involvement is also a potential source of both social and psychological resources. Berkman et al. (2000) has argued that integration into social networks generally has positive effects on both physical and mental health because of its relationship to social support, social influence, increased engagement and attachment, and access to resources and material goods. Integration into a religious community, specifically, provides many of these same benefits. To wit, George et al. (2002) argue that religious service attendance allows individuals access to social support by facilitating the development of social networks, both in terms of quantity of social ties and quality of relationships. Not only does the social influence and attachment to coreligionists tend to encourage healthy behaviors, but the social capital developed in religious communities can often be activated in times of emergency, whether for emotional or material support.

Finally, evidence suggests that religious involvement is associated with improved self-esteem, self-efficacy, mastery, and optimism, each of which are themselves associated with both improved mental and physical health outcomes, including cardiovascular, neuroendocrine, and immune function (Burdette et al., 2012; Ferraro & Kim, 2014; George et al., 2002). The internalization of religious narratives might contribute to a “sense of coherence,” which is part of a worldview that entails meaning, predictability, and manageability, according to George et al. (2002). These sort of beliefs often function as “resistance resources” whereby stressors are experienced as less threatening and with which individuals are able to cope with strains associated with stressors.

To be sure, the effect of religion on health is not always positive. Some researchers have documented a possible “dark side” of religion whereby religious involvement causes harm to individuals. As summarized by Hill et al. (2012), having religious doubts, feeling abandoned by God, and high levels of extrinsic religiosity are detrimental to the psychological well-being of older adults, as is a combination of strong religious beliefs and low religious attendance. They also note that religiosity may exacerbate mental health problems associated with intimate partner violence and other forms of relational strains. Additionally, George et al. (2002) summarize research suggesting that some religious communities (e.g., Christian Scientists) discourage the seeking of medical care, and that religious coping may be negative if it takes the form of feeling punished or abandoned by God, or believing that illness is the result of sin.

That said, the bulk of evidence suggests not only that religion is generally protective of health, but also of social relationships and marital stability (George et al.,

2002; Strawbridge et al., 2001). Call and Heaton (1997), for example, found that when both spouses attend church regularly, they have the lowest risk of divorce. Furthermore, Bradshaw and Ellison (2010) demonstrated that personal religious faith can buffer the negative effects of financial distress not only because of the integrating effects of organizational involvement, but also for non-organizational reasons. They found that both attendance at religious services and belief in an afterlife moderated the effects of psychological distress from both objective and subjective financial hardship.

Notably, the effect of religion on health might also be moderated by race, as indicated by the aforementioned findings by Ferraro and Kim (2014). White evangelical Protestant churches emphasize cultural tools such as free-will individualism and anti-structuralism (Emerson & Smith, 2000) that encourage grit and self-efficacy. In contrast, discourse in many black churches provides cultural tools for both collective action (“liberation strategy”) and individual action (“survival strategy”) due in part to the historical emergence of these communities in response to systems of oppression (Edgell & Tranby, 2007; Ellison & Sherkat, 1995b; Hinojosa & Park, 2004; Shelton & Emerson, 2012). Indeed, Ellison et al. (2008) found that both religious guidance and religious attendance among African Americans moderated the effects of racism on psychological distress while congregational support partially offset the negative effects of discrimination.

The Current Study

According to cumulative inequality (CI) theory, “life-course trajectories are shaped by the accumulation of risk, available resources, and human agency” (Ferraro & Shippee, 2009, p. 337). Health outcomes, as a consequence, are often products of these

accumulated risks and resources. Applied to the current study, incarceration can be considered a turning point in the life-course that can alter health trajectories. Incarceration has not only direct effects on infectious disease and stress-related illness but also indirect effects on health via unemployment, wage instability, and marriage (Massoglia, 2008a; Massoglia et al., 2014; Massoglia & Pridemore, 2015; Schnittker & John, 2007). Religious involvement, because of its influence on healthy behaviors and the access it provides to social and psychological resources (Burdette et al., 2012; George et al., 2002; Hill et al., 2012; Strawbridge et al., 2001), potentially buffers the direct negative effects of incarceration on health, and it may influence health through the indirect effects of incarceration as well. Specifically, I expect (1) that past incarceration will be negatively related to stress- and infectious disease-related health outcomes; (2) that participation in a religious community behavior buffers the negative effect of incarceration on health; (3) that racial minority status exacerbates the negative effect of incarceration on health; and (4) that religious participation buffers the negative effect of incarceration on health for racial minorities.

Data and Methods

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) has been widely used to study the effects of race and incarceration on health (Harper & McLanahan, 2004; Massoglia, 2008a, 2008b; Massoglia et al., 2014; Schnittker & John, 2007; Western, 2002). Data collection for this longitudinal panel study first began in 1979, when respondents were between ages 14 and 22, and it continues today. Initially, the sample consisted of 12,686 individuals, including a subsample of 5,295 Hispanic or Latino, black, and economically-disadvantaged nonblack/non-Hispanic respondents. Follow up

interviews were conducted annually until 1994, after which they were performed every other year.¹ Beginning in 1998, interviews also included a health questionnaire when respondents turned age 40 (Health at 40). Analyses conducted herein are limited to the 8,400 respondents that completed the Health at 40 module. The NLSY79 dataset is ideal in measuring within-person change in health status (Massoglia & Pridemore, 2015), and it includes measures of religious affiliation and service attendance, making it useful for addressing issues related to race, incarceration, religion, and health. Custom longitudinal weights for respondents who participated in the survey from 1979 to 2002 were also applied to improve generalizability of results.

To test hypotheses, outcome variables consisted of two count measures representing (1) self-reported health problems at age 40 and (2) medically-diagnosed health problems at age 40. Specifically, self-reported health issues include (1) assessment of respondent's general health (measured on a scale from 1="Excellent" to 5="Poor" and recoded dichotomously with 1="Poor" and 0 representing all other responses), (2) chest pain or pressure, palpitation or pounding heart, or heart trouble, (3) depression or excessive worry or nervous trouble of any kind, (4) scarlet fever, rheumatic fever, tuberculosis, jaundice, or hepatitis, (5) frequent or severe headaches, dizziness, or fainting spells, (6) frequent trouble sleeping, and (7) frequent urinary tract infections other than those associated with kidney problems. Medical diagnoses include (1) high blood pressure or hypertension, (2) chronic lung disease such as chronic bronchitis or emphysema, not including asthma, (3) heart attack, coronary heart disease, angina, congestive heart failure, or other heart problems, and (4) emotional, nervous, or

¹ Following the 1990 interview, 1,643 economically-disadvantaged nonblack/non-Hispanic respondents were no longer included.

psychiatric problems. On average, respondents reported about .52 self-reported ailments and .30 medical diagnoses (Table 4.1). While the Health at 40 module included other health issues, the above listed ailments were selected for analysis due to their established link with prior incarceration (Massoglia, 2008a).

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean or %	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
<i>Outcomes</i>					
Self-reported health problems at 40	8400	.52	536.57	0	7
Medically-diagnosed health problems at 40	8400	.30	317.56	0	4
<i>Predictors</i>					
Black	8400	.15		0	1
Hispanic	8400	.07		0	1
White	8400	.78		0	1
Ever incarcerated (1980-1998)	8400	.04		0	1
Non-attender (2000)	7734	.23		0	1
Non-attender (1979)	8387	.19		0	1
Age (1979)	8400	17.78	1295.83	14	22
Female	8400	.51		0	1
Married	7742	.65		0	1
Unemployed	7743	.17		0	1
Prior health problems	8254	.05		0	1
Binge drinking (1985)	7685	.08		0	1
Cigarette smoking (1998)	7477	.27		0	1
Weight	7540	177.97	24460.11	50	600
Vigorous exercise	7740	2.87	872.08	1	5

Notes: Non-imputed data. All values are weighted.

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1979-2002)

Three independent variables were of primary interest. First, incarceration during the period of study was indicated by place of residence as a correctional institution at the time of the survey. The data is limited, then, in that sentences of less than one or two years can be systematically missed because of the data collection process (see Harper & McLanahan, 2004). From 1980 to 1998 (when Health at 40 modules began to be

included), approximately 4 percent of the sample had been incarcerated during at least one wave of interviews (Table 4.1), though the actual figure is likely to be somewhat higher due to this limitation.

Second, race and ethnicity was operationalized as a system of dichotomous variables representing white (non-Hispanic), black (non-Hispanic) and Hispanic. The sample consisted of 78 percent white respondents, 15 percent black respondents, and 7 percent Hispanic respondents (Table 4.1). In multivariate analyses, white was suppressed as the reference category. Religiosity was the final independent variable of interest. While affiliation and service attendance measures were both collected, preliminary analysis suggested that attendance was more salient to the outcome than affiliation, so affiliation was dropped from analyses. Religious attendance was measured on a scale ranging from (1) “More than once a week” to (6) “Not at all.”² The variable non-attender was constructed by dichotomizing results such that 1 equals “not at all” and 0 represents all other responses. Twenty-three percent of respondents were identified as non-attenders from the 2000 interview. Since religiosity might also be causally related to the risk of incarceration, baseline religiosity prior to possible incarceration was controlled by including the measure of religious service attendance from the 1979 interview. During the first wave of data collection, 19 percent of the sample did not attend services.

² The codebook available through the online NLS Investigator (<https://www.nlsinfo.org/investigator/pages/login.jsp>) indicated (when accessed on January 20, 2017) that the responses for the measure collected in 2000 were reversed. However, preliminary analysis suggested this may be an error, as religious non-affiliates would have the highest rate of religious attendance. In response to a request for clarification sent by e-mail (usersvc@chrr.osu.edu), S. McClaskie (personal communication, February 14, 2017) of NLS User Services confirmed that the data was anomalous, possibly due to a “reverse labeling’ problem.” Therefore, labeling for the 2000 variable has been assumed to match that for the 1979 measure rather than that which was reported in the NLS Investigator codebook.

Finally, following Massoglia (2008a), a number of controls that are also associated with stress- and infectious-disease-related health outcomes were also included. Health problems reported before risk of incarceration (prior health problems) was controlled as a dichotomous measure indicating whether health problems limited the kind or amount of work respondents could do on a job for pay, measured in 1979. Five percent of the sample affirmed prior health problems (Table 4.1). A measure of binge drinking, or having had five or more drinks in a day within the past month, was collected in 1985 while daily cigarette use was measured in 1998. Other health and health behavior controls include weight (number of pounds) and frequency of vigorous physical exercise or sports such as aerobics, running, swimming, or bicycling, measured on 5-point ordinal scale ranging from (1) “3 times or more each week” to (5) “Never” (reverse-coded). Demographic controls include age (as measured in 1979), gender (female=1), marital status (married=1), and employment status (unemployed=1).

Analytic Strategy

Both outcome variables represent relatively rare events, with distributions that were highly skewed. Namely, self-reported health issues at 40 had a skew value of 2.32, and medically diagnosed health issues at 40 had a skew value of 2.01. Outcome distributions therefore violate the assumptions of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, so negative-binomial estimation was employed using the genmod procedure (log link) in SAS Version 9.4. Preliminary analyses confirmed that full models meet the criteria for over-dispersion.

A baseline model for both outcomes estimates the main effects for incarceration, race, and religious participation, as well demographic and health controls. A second

model for each outcome estimates the interaction between incarceration and religious participation, a third model estimates the interactions between incarceration and race, and a fourth model estimates the interactions between race and religious participation. A final model for each outcome includes all three interactions, as well as a three-way interaction term assessing the moderating effects of incarceration, race, and religion.

Results

Models estimating self-reported health problems at 40 are reported in Table 4.2. Main effects for the three independent variables of interest were first assessed without interactions in Model 1, controlling for demographic and health variables. As expected, having ever been incarcerated had a significant positive effect on the number of self-reported health issues reported at 40. Specifically, the effect of being an ex-con was to increase the expected number of self-reported health issues by 23% [$=\exp(.21)*100\%-100\%$]. Unexpectedly, religious participation had no effect, and race/ethnicity variables were significant and negative. Specifically, the effect of being black and Hispanic was to decrease self-reported health issues by 29 percent and 9 percent, respectively. Two-way interaction effects estimated in Models 2 through 4 were largely non-significant, with one exception. Surprisingly, the interaction between African American status and non-attendance in religious services had a negative effect (Model 4). That is, African Americans who did not participate in religious services self-reported 24 percent fewer health problems than African Americans who did participate in religious services.

When all two-way interactions were estimated simultaneously along with three-way interaction effects between race, incarceration, and religiosity (Model 5), some of the unexpected findings from Models 1 through 4 resolved. First, non-attendance attained

Table 4.2

Negative Binomial Regression of Self-Reported Health Problems at Age 40 on the Interaction of Race/Ethnicity, Religious Attendance, and Prior Incarceration

Independent variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.	
Ex-con	.21	.07	**	.27	.08	***	.32	.11	**	.22	.07	**	.66	.13	***
Non-attender (2000)	.02	.04		.04	.04		.02	.04		.08	.05		.11	.05	*
Ex-con X non-attender (2000)				-.23	.15								-1.02	.28	***
Black	-.34	.04	***	-.34	.04	***	-.32	.04	***	-.29	.04	***	-.26	.04	***
Black X ex-con							-.24	.15					-.66	.18	***
Black X non-attender (2000)										-.27	.11	*	-.37	.12	**
Black X ex-con X non-attender (2000)													1.47	.38	***
Hispanic	-.09	.04	*	-.09	.04	*	-.10	.04	*	-.08	.05	†	-.08	.05	
Hispanic X ex-con							-.01	.16					-.33	.19	†
Hispanic X non-attender (2000)										-.03	.10		-.05	.11	
Hispanic X ex-con X non-attender (2000)													.91	.40	*
<i>Controls</i>															
Age	-.02	.01	**	-.02	.01	**	-.02	.01	**	-.02	.01	**	-.02	.01	*
Female	.57	.04	***	.57	.04	***	.57	.04	***	.56	.04	***	.55	.04	***
Married	-.25	.03	***	-.25	.03	***	-.25	.03	***	-.25	.03	***	-.24	.03	***
Unemployed	.49	.04	***	.49	.04	***	.49	.04	***	.50	.04	***	.50	.04	***
Prior health problems	.39	.06	***	.39	.06	***	.39	.06	***	.39	.06	***	.39	.06	***
Binge drinking	-.03	.07		-.03	.07		-.03	.07		-.03	.07		-.03	.07	
Cigarette smoking	.27	.04	***	.27	.04	***	.27	.04	***	.26	.04	***	.27	.04	***
Weight	.00	.00	***	.00	.00	***	.00	.00	***	.00	.00	***	.00	.00	***
Vigorous exercise	-.12	.01	***	-.12	.01	***	-.12	.01	***	-.12	.01	***	-.12	.01	***
Non-attender (1979)	.15	.04	***	.15	.04	***	.15	.04	***	.15	.04	***	.14	.04	***
Intercept	-.74	.16	***	-.75	.16	***	-.76	.16	***	-.76	.16	***	-.79	.16	***
Log likelihood ^a	-6,646			-6,649			-6,645			-6,642			-6,630		

Notes: *N*=8,400. All values are weighted. †*p*<.10 **p*<.05 ***p*<.01 ****p*<.001 (two-tailed tests)

^aLog likelihood values averaged from five regressions performed by imputation.

a significant positive effect. Those who did not attend religious services self-reported 12 percent more health issues than those who did not. Second, while the main effect for black (-1.02), as well as its interactions with past incarceration (-.26) and non-attendance (-.37), were each negative, the three way interaction was positive (1.47). Similarly, the interaction between Hispanic and past incarceration is marginally significant in a negative direction (-.33), but the three-way interaction between Hispanic status, prior incarceration, and non-attendance was also positive (.91).

The three-way interaction between race, incarceration, and religious participation is illustrated in Figure 4.1. Expected counts of self-reported health issues for each class of respondents were calculated with the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \ln(y) = & a + b_{Ex-con}(Ex - con) + b_{Non-attender}(Non - attender) + b_{Black}(Black) \\
 & + b_{Hispanic}(Hispanic) \\
 & + b_{Ex-con \times Non-attender}(Ex - con)(Non - attender) \\
 & + b_{Black \times Ex-con}(Black)(Ex - con) \\
 & + b_{Black \times Non-attender}(Black)(Non - attender) \\
 & + b_{Black \times Ex-con \times Non-attender}(Black)(Ex - con)(Non - attender) \\
 & + b_{Hispanic \times Ex-con}(Hispanic)(Ex - con) \\
 & + b_{Hispanic \times Non-attender}(Hispanic)(Non - attender) \\
 & + b_{Hispanic \times Ex-con \times Non-attender}(Hispanic)(Ex - con)(Non \\
 & - attender) + \sum b_i \bar{x}_i
 \end{aligned}$$

where y refers to the predicted count, a refers to the intercept value, b refers to each respective coefficient, i refers to the demographic and health control variables, and \bar{x} refers to the average value for demographic and health controls among the sample.

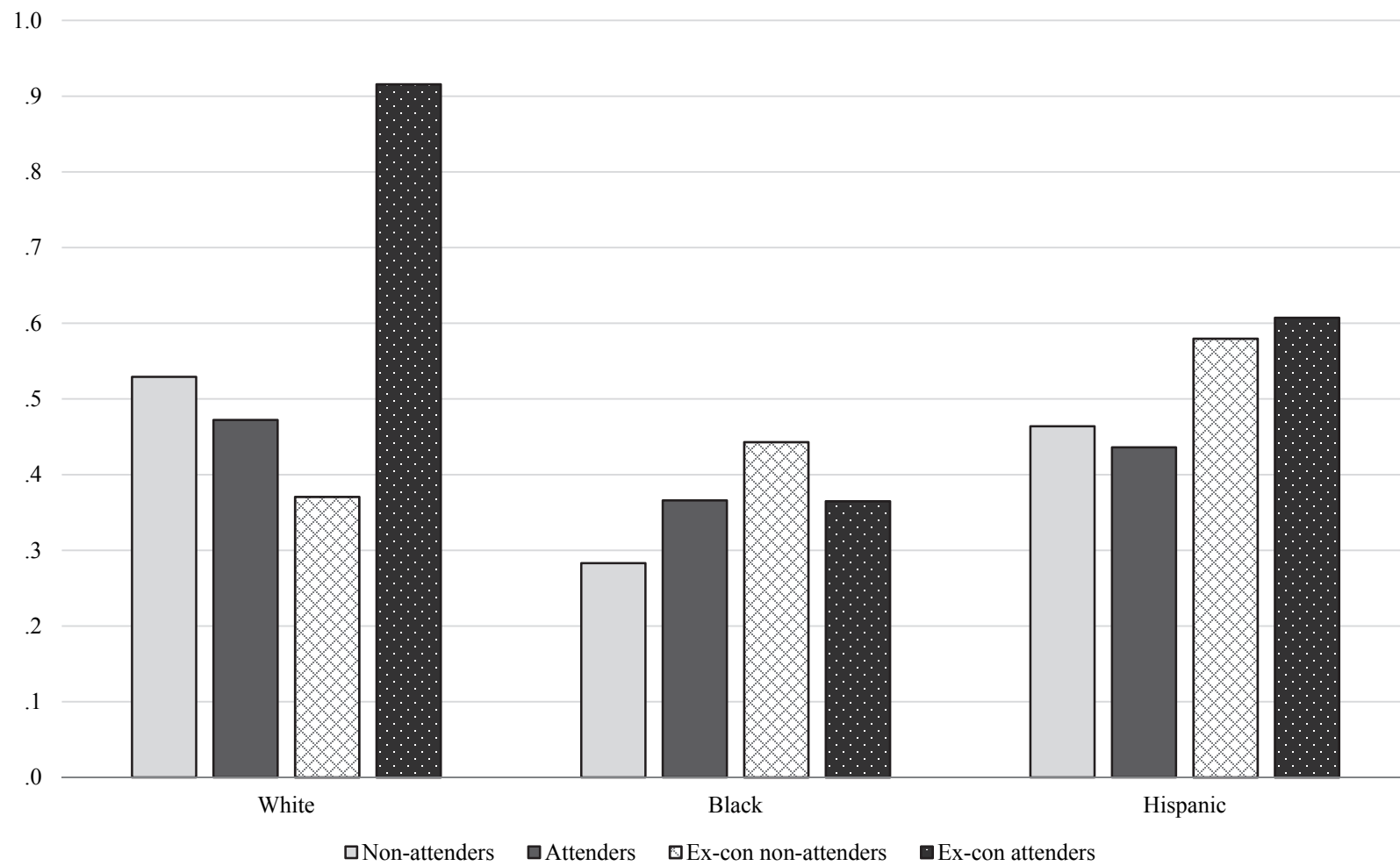


Figure 4.1. Expected counts of self-reported health problems at age 40 by race/ethnicity, religious attendance, and prior incarceration.

Notably, the figure illustrates (1) that incarceration generally increases the risk of self-reported health issues, (2) that whites generally report the highest level of self-reported health issues, (3) that church attendance is protective among non-incarcerated whites and Hispanics and previously incarcerated blacks, though the effect is typically modest, and (4) that attendance is a substantial risk factor for previously incarcerated whites. White ex-cons who attend religious services at least a few times a year had the highest risk of self-reported health issues, having reported more than twice as many health issues on average than white ex-cons who never attend.

Models estimating medically-diagnosed health problem at 40 are reported in Table 4.3. In the baseline model, the main effects for ex-con, non-attender, and black status were each non-significant, and Hispanic status had a negative effect. Namely, the effect of being Hispanic was to decrease the number of medically-diagnosed health issues by 21 percent relative to whites. And similar to the intermediate models estimating self-reported health issues, two-way interactions predicting medically-diagnosed health issues were each non-significant in Models 2 through 4. When controlling for the interaction between race/ethnicity and religious behavior, however, the effect for incarceration was found to be significant and positive. Specifically, the effect of being an ex-con was to increase the number of medically-diagnosed health issues by 36 percent.

The main effect for incarceration was larger still in the final model, which included all two-way and three-way interaction terms (Model 5). Here, ex-cons reported nearly 70 percent more medically-diagnosed health issues than non-ex-cons. Coefficients for the interactions between both black (-.52) and Hispanic (-.63) and incarceration also became significant in the final model. Further, the three-way interactions between

Table 4.3

Negative Binomial Regression of Medically-Diagnosed Health Problems at Age 40 on the Interaction of Race/Ethnicity, Religious Attendance, and Prior Incarceration

Independent variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	<i>b</i>	S.E.	<i>b</i>	S.E.	<i>b</i>	S.E.	<i>b</i>	S.E.	<i>b</i>	S.E.
Ex-con	.11	.08	.11	.10	.31	.15 *	.11	.09	.53	.19 **
Non-attender (2000)	-.06	.06	-.06	.06	-.06	.06	-.03	.07	-.01	.07 †
Ex-con X non-attender (2000)			-.01	.19					-.60	.35
Black	-.08	.05	-.08	.05	-.06	.05	-.05	.05	-.03	.06
Black X ex-con					-.26	.18			-.52	.22 *
Black X non-attender (2000)							-.17	.13	-.23	.14 †
Black X ex-con X non-attender (2000)									.84	.44 †
Hispanic	-.24	.06 ***	-.24	.06 ***	-.23	.06 ***	-.25	.07 ***	-.23	.07 ***
Hispanic X ex-con					-.30	.24			-.63	.29 *
Hispanic X non-attender (2000)							.07	.14	.02	.15
Hispanic X ex-con X non-attender (2000)									.99	.58 †
<i>Controls</i>										
Age	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.01
Female	.30	.05 ***	.30	.05 ***	.29	.05 ***	.29	.05 ***	.29	.05 ***
Married	-.19	.05 ***	-.19	.05 ***	-.19	.05 ***	-.19	.05 ***	-.19	.05 ***
Unemployed	.40	.05 ***	.40	.05 ***	.40	.05 ***	.40	.05 ***	.40	.05 ***
Prior health problems	.29	.08 ***	.29	.08 ***	.29	.08 ***	.29	.08 ***	.29	.08 ***
Binge drinking	-.19	.09 *	-.19	.09 *	-.19	.09 *	-.19	.09 *	-.19	.09 *
Cigarette smoking	.24	.05 ***	.24	.05 ***	.24	.05 ***	.24	.05 ***	.24	.05 ***
Weight	.01	.00 ***	.01	.00 ***	.01	.00 ***	.01	.00 ***	.01	.00 ***
Vigorous exercise	-.09	.01 ***	-.09	.01 ***	-.09	.01 ***	-.09	.01 ***	-.09	.01 ***
Non-attender (1979)	.05	.05	.05	.05	.05	.05	.05	.05	.04	.05
Intercept	-2.26	.20 ***	-2.26	.20 ***	-2.27	.20 ***	-2.27	.20 ***	-2.29	.20 ***
Log likelihood ^a	-5,335		-5,335		-5,333		-5,333		-5,330	

Notes: *N*=8,400. All values are weighted. †*p*<.10 **p*<.05 ***p*<.01 ****p*<.001 (two-tailed tests)

^aLog likelihood values averaged from five regressions performed by imputation.

incarceration, religious participation, and both racial/ethnicity variables were found to be marginally significant. The three-way interactions are illustrated in Figure 4.2. Of note, (1) incarceration generally increased the risk of medical diagnoses, (2) religious attendance was protective for Hispanic ex-cons, and (3) religious attendance was again a substantial risk for white ex-cons. Though not quite as hazardous as it was for self-reported illnesses, white ex-cons who attended services were again the group at highest risk, having reported nearly twice as many medically-diagnosed health problems than white ex-cons who did not attend services.

Discussion

Findings partially supported expectations. First, consistent with prior research, past incarceration was generally found to be a risk factor for both self-reported and medically-diagnosed health problems at age 40. Specifically, the main effect for incarceration was consistently significant for the former outcome, and it was significant in the full model for the latter outcome. Incarceration can be both a direct cause for some infectious diseases and a primary stressor (Massoglia, 2008a; Massoglia et al., 2014). The transition to state custody often requires substantial adjustment to behavior and temperament, which can be arduous and emotionally jarring. Moreover, even a brief incarceration can be stigmatizing in a way that strains employment possibilities and social relationships, according to Schnittker and John (2007). They conclude that, while the prison experience itself stressful, it can also lead to secondary stressors and chronic strains in terms of marital and job instability, violence, and poverty.

Surprisingly, minority status had a consistently negative effect on self-reported health issues, and Hispanics experienced fewer medically-diagnosed health problems

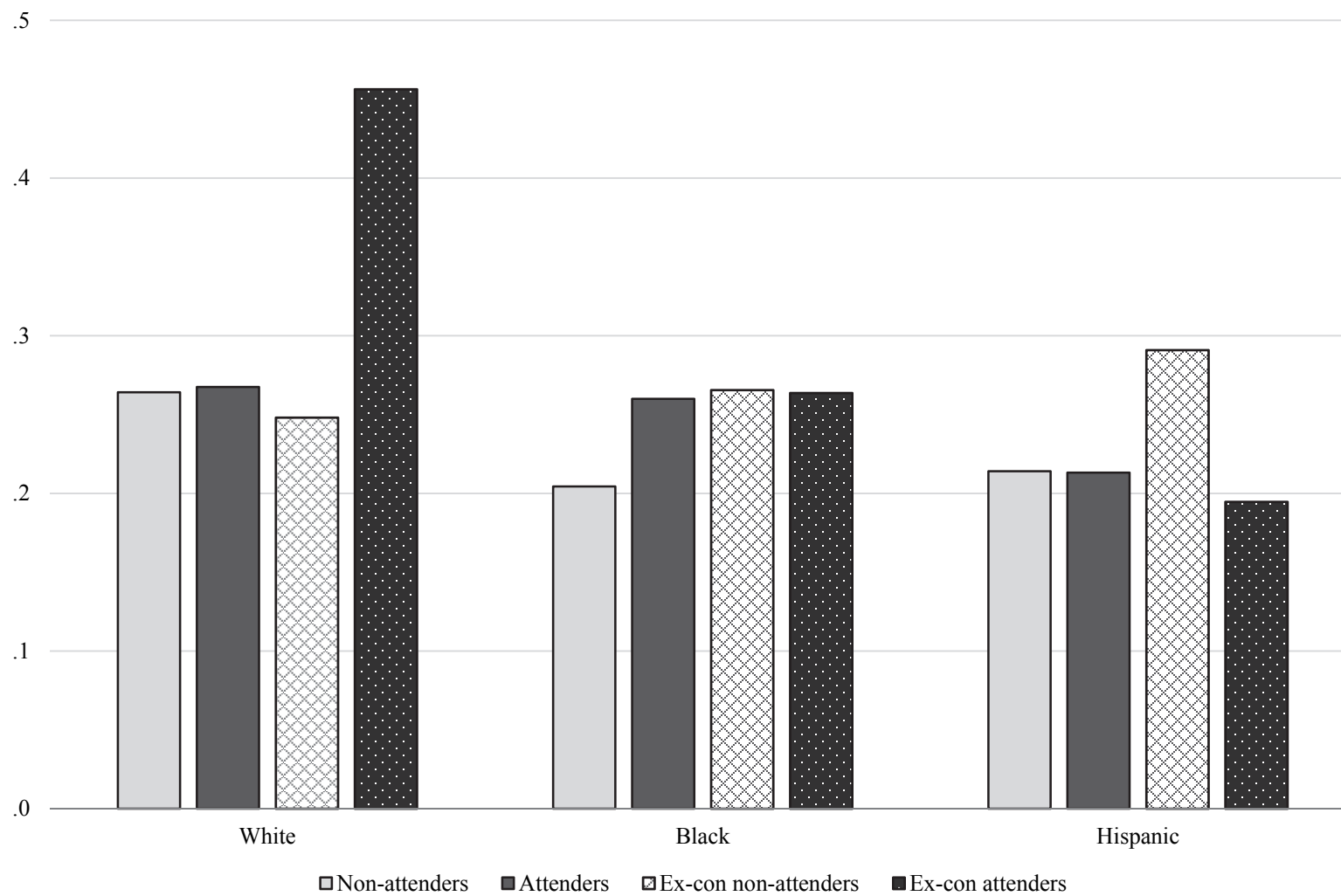


Figure 4.2. Expected counts of medically diagnosed health problems at age 40 by race/ethnicity, religious attendance, and prior incarceration.

than whites. The finding is curious given that racial minorities generally have greater levels of social stress than non-Hispanic whites (R. J. Turner & Avison, 2003), but it is consistent with paradoxical findings that racial minorities often have favorable mental health outcomes relative to whites (Jackson et al., 2010; Markides & Eschbach, 2005). Since unhealthy coping behaviors such as drinking and smoking were controlled in models (see Jackson et al., 2010), one possibility is that the racial effect is due to occupational status. Racial minorities in the United States tend to have lower occupational prestige relative to whites (Xu & Leffler, 1992), and higher-status occupations have been found to correlate with greater levels of job demand, hours of work, and work-to-home conflict (Schieman, Whitestone, & Van Gundy, 2006). Alternatively, Brown (2003) suggests that the standard conceptions of mental health are insensitive to the unique dynamics created by racial stratification, and instead proposes focusing on issues related to nihilistic tendencies, anti-self-issues, suppressed anger expression, delusional denial tendencies, and extreme racial paranoia as more appropriate measures of mental health differences between dominant and subordinate groups. The application of this theoretical approach, unfortunately, is currently limited by available data.

The expectation that religious participation is protective of health issues was also partially supported. Non-attenders generally reported similar counts of health issues than those who did attend religious services to some degree. In the full model, however, non-attendance was associated with more self-reported health issues at age 40, as expected. Religious service attendance promotes the development of social networks (George et al., 2002), and religious beliefs can serve as “emotional compensators” to help mitigate

distress (Bradshaw & Ellison, 2010, p. 11). Notably, two-way interactions between incarceration and religious service attendance were non-significant in intermediate models. On its face, then, the social and psychological resources provided by religious participation did not significantly buffer the strains produced by the stigma of incarceration. And consistent with Schnittker and John (2007), two-way interactions between incarceration and race were also non-significant.

Three-way interactive models, however, revealed that the relationship between incarceration and religion was itself moderated by race. In short, religious service attendance did buffer the effect of incarceration on self-reported health problems among blacks and medical diagnoses among Hispanics, though the effect among racial and ethnic minorities was rather modest. Among whites, however, religious participation was a substantial risk factor among former inmates. Specifically, among whites who have served times, those who participated in religious services to any degree reported about twice as many health problems as those who never attended religious services.

This moderated effect is suggestive of a “dark side of religion” (see Hill et al., 2012) that is particular to white communities. While previously incarcerated whites enjoy privilege relative to African Americans in the economic sphere (Pager, 2003), this seems not to be the case in the religious sphere. The difference between the health outcomes of religious white ex-cons and religious minority ex-cons may be due to critical differences in the culture and discourse in their respective houses of worship. As Emerson and Smith (2000), white evangelical churches, particularly, tend to apply cultural tools related to individualism and anti-structuralism. Such an orientation is consistent with a dispositional attribution style, which understands human behavior to be the product of

rational, free choice rather economic and social determinants (Grasmick & McGill, 1994; Leiber & Woodrick, 1997; M. Lupfer & Wald, 1985). Under such circumstances, the stigma of incarceration may be particularly heightened. Whether overtly or through subtle cues, religious ex-cons may be internalizing feelings of judgment from coreligionists for their past moral failings.

In contrast, Black Protestant churches emerged historically within a system of racialized oppression, and consequently their rhetoric tends to be both priestly and prophetic, emphasizing values related to both personal righteousness and social justice (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Shelton & Emerson, 2012). While maintaining no less of a conservative theology, black churches often work actively in communities to assuage material conditions that impede collective goals (Koch & Beckley, 2006; Liu et al., 2009; Pattillo-McCoy, 1998). Here, prior incarceration may be interpreted less as a result of moral failing and more as a product of an oppressive state.

Conclusions

In this study, I set out to assess the interactive relationships between race, incarceration, and religion on both self-reported and medically-diagnosed health problems at age 40. In brief, results indicated that religious participation buffers the negative effect of incarceration among blacks and Hispanics, but it exacerbates health problems among white ex-cons. In fact, white ex-cons who attend religious services to any degree are at highest risk for either type of negative health outcome, reporting about twice as many ailments as white ex-cons who never attend services. Findings related to racial minorities are likely to be limited by the sensitivity of health-related questions to the unique characteristics of racial inequality. Nevertheless, findings reported herein

provide insight for understanding the relationship between health, race, incarceration, and religion, particularly in elucidating a “dark side of religion” specific to white religious communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The preceding chapters address a void in the literature on differential justice, namely the role of religion – especially religious functioning moderated by collective location within a hierarchy of racial privilege – on both attitudes about and the experience of racialized enforcement of criminal justice. In short, studies found that (1) religiosity, political ideology, and media consumption each independently predict confidence of police among white Americans net of neighborhood characteristics, while media consumption seems to be driving fear of police brutality in this era of “Policing’s New Visibility” (A. J. Goldsmith, 2010), (2) that affiliation rates of Black Protestant churches relate to county-level crime rates in the South, primarily by buffering the negative effect of resource disadvantage, and (3) that religious participation moderates the relationship between race, incarceration, and negative health outcomes.

The substance of these findings allow for comment on two important critiques of religion in society, namely Marx’s (1978 [1844]) suggestion that religion placates activism for material happiness by promising deferred otherworldly reward, and Dawkins’s (2006) assertion that religion is dangerous because unquestioned faith can motivate violence.

Is religion merely an opiate? Not necessarily. Findings presented herein suggest that religion can provide more than illusory happiness; it can also serve as a compensatory material resource for an oppressed minority. Specifically, organized

religion among African Americans demonstrably reduces property crime and buffers the effects of resource disadvantage on both property and violent crime. Further, religious participation assuages the negative health effects of incarceration among Blacks and Hispanics, groups that are disproportionately exposed to formal social control.

Organization around a moral order, then, produces material benefit for racial minorities similar to that experienced by ancient Christians inhabiting pagan Rome (see Stark, 1997). But rather than being a by-product of particular religious virtues, the source of this benefit is a desire for material justice (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Shelton & Emerson, 2012) – indeed, a sentiment Marx himself seems to have shared. And the Black Protestant church is particularly effective at mobilizing these desires into practical, worldly benefit of disadvantaged communities (Koch & Beckley, 2006; Liu et al., 2009; A. Morris, 1996; Pattillo-McCoy, 1998). This efficacy likely derives largely from ritual participation. According to Collins (2004), group solidarity, emotional energy, and a sense of moral rightness naturally emerges when individuals participate in group ritual, especially when it entails bodily co-presence (e.g., a religious service), bounded space (e.g., a house of worship), mutual focus of attention (e.g., a preacher or worship leader), and shared mood (e.g., religious awe). On the religion of the disprivileged, Weber (1993 [1922]) concluded from his observations of lower caste Hindus and ancient Jews in exile that:

...the more depressed the position in which the members of the pariah people found themselves, the more closely did the religion cause them to cling to one another and to the pariah position and the more powerful became the salvation hopes which were connected with the divinely ordained fulfillment of their religious obligations (p. 109).

Like Marx's proletariat, the religion of a Weber's pariah people was expressly related to "just compensation" in terms of otherworldly salvation. But as this study and others have demonstrated, material benefits can also emerge as a function of the oppressed clinging together in moral solidarity. Not only do Black Protestant churches provide structures of leadership and communication channels for mobilization of civic participation (Pattillo-McCoy, 1998), but its members engage in highly emotional rituals of prayer and worship and listen to sermons on liberation and justice, activities that translate into civic activity (Barnes, 2005).

So is religion violent? My findings suggest religion can be associated with violence, but not in the way Dawkins imagines. First, religious participation was found to be a substantial health risk for white ex-cons. Second, religious attendance was found to positively correlate with confidence in police among white Americans at a period when police-minority violence was prominent in national discourse. Contrary to Dawkins's assertion, though, neither finding is an indication of violence in the traditional sense, and certainly not the perpetration of interpersonal violence. Rather, both are more systemic in nature. The former is most likely a sort of harm derived from the internalization of social stigma. Arguably, the latter seems to represent at least a tacit approval of state use of force, consistent with a religion of the privileged who seek to justify – and maintain – their collective status position (Walters, 2003; Weber, 1993 [1922]).

Secondly, neither form of religious violence is related to blind obedience to religious tenants. Rather, both derive at least in part on a fundamental assumption of human nature, one that is not necessarily religious in origin. That is, both the stigma of incarceration and confidence in police derive from a dispositional attribution style (e.g.,

Cullen et al., 1985) that understands humans to be free, moral, rational actors that make choices to maximize benefit and minimize cost. In ignoring the efficacy of social or economic forces to determine or constrain behavior, acts that initiate aggressive police intervention and/or warrant incarceration can be interpreted as deficiencies of personal, moral character. The ex-con presumably internalizes such moral judgment, which translates to an increase in stress-related ailments, and routine or casual interactions among regular attenders can reinforce beliefs about the necessity of tough policing. That said, the effect of religious salience had the opposite effect; the more religious a white respondent, independent of church attendance, the less confident they were in police. This finding, in particular, directly contradicts the argument from Dawkins that religious violence derives from earnest belief and unquestioned faith. Rather, strong belief seemingly leads to disapproval of police-minority violence.

To be sure, findings also suggested that religious affiliation rates correlate with higher levels of violent crime. Specifically, the association between prior violent crime and current violent crime was found to increase with increasing Black Protestant affiliation rates in Southern counties. However, this association of religion with violence is also not consistent with Dawkins's argument for two reasons. First, evidence is lacking that violent crime in the south is *religiously* motivated. Second, caution is necessary in inferring any causal relationship between religious affiliation and violent crime, as it is likely either that the association is spurious or that the causal direction is reversed. As explained in Chapter 3, the exacerbated violence in high-affiliation counties may be related to aggressive policing, which is associated with legal cynicism and long-term patterns of violence, including retaliatory homicide (Corsaro et al., 2015; Kane, 2005;

Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). It may be, then, that increasing violence leads to greater religious affiliation as a coping or survival strategy.

While the findings in these three studies provide some insight about the complexity of the role of religious faith and religious communities in attitudes about and the experience of differential justice, a fuller exploration is limited by the data currently available. Further study is warranted on the effect of religious affiliation and behavior of blacks and Hispanics on attitudes about the police in the United States. In addition to affiliation rates, the spatial relationship between religious participation rates and both property and violent crime would also be edifying, and precision of results would benefit from more comprehensive data collection techniques as well. More study is also needed to determine the precise mechanisms by which religious participation poses health risks to white ex-cons. Finally, intertwining processes related to religion, politics, and media consumption can also be applied to participation in and evaluation of emerging social movements, such as Black Lives Matter, All Lives Matter, and Blue Lives Matter.

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