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Source: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Dec., 2008, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Dec., 2008), pp. 753-766

Published by: Wiley on behalf of Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20486967>

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“Out of the Broom Closet”: The Social Ecology of American Wicca

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The fastest growing form of religious identification, spirituality, or “new” religious movement in American society over the last decade is Wicca and related forms of “Neo-Paganism.” However, with no national organization and minimal local organization, little is known about its distribution across a privatized religious landscape nor about the features of state social and cultural environments that are receptive or contrary to its spread. This study uses Internet data to create estimates of the comparative strength of Wiccan-Pagan identification across the 50 states and conducts multivariate analyses of the ability of variables suggested in prior research to explain its distribution. Not only are the findings consistent with expectations, but differences in correlates of Wicca using the Internet data in contrast to existing measures of “New Age” spirituality highlight the empirical importance of maintaining distinctions between the two.

INTRODUCTION

Recent theory and research dealing with the effect of religious competition on religious participation has inspired new interest in both the “ecologies” of religion (see Chaves and Giesel 2001:261–81; Chaves and Gorski 2001:261–81) and the “economies” of religion (see Montgomery 2003:782–809) with lively debates over the nature of markets, supply and demand, product differentiation, and other characteristics of spatially defined territories. To this point in time, such debates have focused on relatively well-established religious markets in which existing organized religious faiths or firms are viewed as competing for members and/or resources.

However, there is also a growing interest in the emergence and spread of phenomena encompassed under the rubric of “alternative spiritualities” or “new religious movements” (see Lewis 2004). Both terms are used because there is considerable variation in the degree to which some “new religions” take on the properties of a social movement. Some alternatives are relatively well organized and publicly visible movements (e.g., the Unification Church) while others are instances of what Olav Hammer (2001:31) calls a “privatized spiritual market place.” Indeed, some alternatives are more appropriately described as alternative religious or spiritual “identities” linked to alternative spiritual “belief systems.”

One of the fastest growing alternative spiritualities within that privatized marketplace is modern Wicca and Neo-Paganism. In the surveys between 1990 and 2000, the number of people identifying themselves as Wiccan or Pagan grew faster than any other religious category studied in the American Religious Identification Surveys (Mayer, Kosnin, and Keysar 2001). Despite that growth, there is little systematic information that would allow an assessment of its distribution across the United States, let alone any systematic examination of its location in a religious ecology. There were only nine respondents in the “Pagan/Witch/Druid” category out of all of the General Social Surveys between 1973 and 1996 (Sherkat 1999:554). The American Religious

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Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion (2008) 47(4):753–766

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Identification Survey in 2000 encompassed 50,000 respondents and estimated that there were 134,000 Wiccans in the United States, but that estimate was derived from too few actual respondents to allow any meaningful analysis.

The difficulty in compiling data on new religious movements has led some researchers to use organizational indicators to map variations in the state or regional distribution of such groups, but some of these maps are badly misleading. For example, in their effort to discern the “religious economy” of the United States, Stark and Bainbridge (1985:198) used headquarters by state to “perform a reconnaissance in space.” They report on combined categories of “Pagans” with “Magic, Witches, Satanists” in their descriptive data, noting that the small number of cases limits them to an analysis of broad regional variations. Consequently, their reconnaissance reveals very little about the most hospitable state environments for the formation of such groups. Moreover, they combined categories that share little or no heritage in common, other than the common stigmatization as socially disapproved religious groups (Satanists, Pagans, and Witches). Lumping all sorts of religious groups together, the only pattern identified by Stark and Bainbridge is a tendency for cults to flourish in the West and to be rare in the Old South (Stark and Bainbridge 1985:206).

Other researchers have used the state locations of publications and organizations as measures of the ecological distribution of Wicca and related Neo-Pagan religious movements. Kelly (1992) examined the list of Neo-Pagan journals and organizations listed by Adler (1997) and found that 65 percent of the journals and 62 percent of the organizations listed were located in the “Boswash” strip, around the Great Lakes, and in California (which corresponds with the distribution of the general population). He states that the rest of the journals and organizations are spread relatively evenly across the United States.

In *Never Again the Burning Times*, Orion (1995) reports the number of Neo-Pagan newsletters by state. California ranked first with 31 newsletters, followed by New York with 16, Wisconsin with 11, Texas with 10, and Massachusetts and Washington with 6 newsletters each. Orion also administered a questionnaire at Neo-Pagan and Wiccan meetings and festivals. She reports that the greatest number of Wiccans is from the northeastern and the north central regions (which includes Wisconsin, Illinois, and Ohio) of the United States. Southeastern states ranked third and there were no respondents from the Plains states.

Because Orion collected her data at gatherings in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Georgia, the information that she obtained on the dispersion of witches and related Neo-Pagan groups is not likely to represent the actual distribution in the United States. Moreover, both Kelly and Orion report on the number of respondents, which may merely reflect the population of states. California is the most populace state in the nation and yields the greatest number of journals or newsletters. Indeed, when population is taken into account, California drops from first to ninth in newsletters per million residents, New York drops from second to 12th, and Texas drops from third to 19th. With no attempt to take the size of the state population into account, these attempts to provide some descriptive information on state variations tell little about the distribution of Wicca or Neo-Paganism in the American religious landscape.

The most ambitious attempt to study the characteristics of contemporary Pagans is Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, *Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo-Pagans in the United States* (2003). Data from over 2,000 respondents were used to document the characteristics of Pagans with some General Social Survey items included to allow comparisons with the general population. The survey drew heavily on responses from the readership of newsletters and was distributed at festivals as well, leading the authors to warn that it was a nonrandom survey. Some states may have a sizeable population of self-identifiers, yet fail to provide an attractive location for festivals or for publishing newsletters.

In short, very little is known about the social ecology of Wiccan-Pagan identifiers in the United States, and traditional means of compiling representative data through social surveys of random samples are not feasible. This article reports on a new approach that promises to yield

reliable and valid data on certain aspects of American Wicca and Neo-Paganism—information reported to websites representing the interests of Wiccans and Pagans.

A NEW APPROACH

In “Social Implications of the Internet,” DiMaggio et al. (2001:318) note that “[t]here is much anecdotal evidence that the Internet provides significant benefits to people with unusual identities or concerns” such as “rare medical conditions.” This observation might be extended to people with unusual religious or spiritual identities as well. People who identify themselves as Wiccan or Pagan may “practice” their faith alone, in small groups or covens, and some may attend regional gatherings, but, as Orion observes (Orion 1995:254), Wiccan and Pagan identifiers practice a relatively unorganized “living room” religion with minimal state, national, or international organization.

Yet, the scarce research that has been conducted suggests that people attracted to these religions come from sociodemographic categories that are high in Internet use. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA 2000) has reported that whites, people with college degrees, and people under 55 years of age are most likely to use the Internet. Since these are the same characteristics that appear to predominate in surveys and qualitative studies of Wicca (see Orion 1995), the Internet may be an ideal source for estimating aggregate rates of adherents to new religious faiths among states.

Two websites have attempted to compile estimates of the number of Wiccans and/or Pagans using two different methods. In 1999 “The Covenant of the Goddess,” an incorporated, nonprofit religious organization, conducted an Internet poll through its website, www.cog.org. The organization designed a short survey that was placed on its website in July 1999, asking the respondents aged 18 years and above to report their identity as Pagan or Witch-Wiccan, state of residence, age, gender, military service, and voter registration. It received a total of 32,854 responses over a span of 12 months, including a small number (1.1 percent) of mailed-in responses. The results are posted on the site; including the number of respondents by state and more detailed information (e.g., Wicca vs. Pagan identifiers) are available through the site manager.

A second Internet site, Americanwicca.com, encourages people who identify themselves as Wiccan or Pagan to register at the site. The website includes the number of adults, teens, and military personnel who registered at the site as Wiccan or Pagan. A total of about 21,000 adults (including military personnel) and 4,000 teenagers were registered at the site by 2002. The numbers are lower when identifiers are measured by registration at a site as opposed to anonymous responses.

The Internet sites used in this study do not make a major distinction between the two identities, despite the fact that their web names, “Covenant of the Goddess” and “American Wicca,” imply predominately Wiccan versions of Paganism. Several authors have suggested that the main distinction between Neo-Pagans and witches is the degree to which the individual or group has embraced the identity of “witch.” Berger (1999) quotes Andras Corban Arthen to distinguish between witches and Neo-Pagans: “Neo-Pagans are just witches who haven’t come out of the broom closet yet” (quoted in Berger 1999:11).

The estimates based on these two independent sites using two different methods of compiling numbers are very highly correlated. The correlation is +0.954 between the state numbers for Cog.org and Americanwicca.com. Such a strong correspondence suggests that it is safe to conclude that the two different methods are yielding comparable information about the relative distribution of Wiccan-Pagan identifiers across the 50 states.

Computation of the average for regions using rates of Wiccan-Pagan identifiers per 100,000 population yielded some anticipated patterns and some differences. There were 19.9 identifiers per 100,000 for the Northwest, 19.2 for the New England states, and about 16.4 in the Rocky

Mountain region. The lowest rates are found for the Mid Atlantic (10.1), East South Central (11.1), East North Central (11.7), and South Atlantic (12.4) regions. Using Bainbridge and Stark's broad regional categories the regional patterns are fairly similar to their claims, with low rates in the South (12.0) and Central (12.8) states and high rates in the West (17.0). However, this observation would be misleading in that California actually has one of the lowest rates (10.7) in the United States. Moreover, the eastern states would also score high (16.2) due to the very high rates in New England. Although California and the "West" in general are viewed as fertile grounds for religious cults, new religious movements, and alternative spiritualities, these data suggest that this image is more a product of the size of the state population than of a high rate of Wicca-Pagan identifiers relative to state population. Of course, when using a new method to study religious movements, it is always possible that these data are misrepresenting the state distribution of Wiccan-Pagan identifiers (See Appendix A for averages by state).

However, one means of assessing the validity of this new measure is to test a variety of hypotheses about the relationship between state distribution of Wiccan-Pagan identifiers and other state characteristics. If the results of analyses are reasonably consistent with a set of hypotheses derived from existing observational and qualitative research, then confidence that the Internet sources of information yield valid and reliable estimates of the social ecology of Wicca-Pagan identifiers should be enhanced. At any rate, the analysis will push beyond the crude observations reported in prior attempts to map the religious landscape.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND DATA SOURCES

Findings based on the study of convenience samples of Wiccan and Pagans do not lead automatically to hypotheses about the "hospitality" or "hostility" of states to the spread of such belief systems. Just as findings at the ecological level do not allow definitive statements about variations among individuals, findings among individuals do not allow definitive statements about ecological variations. Stark and Bainbridge state that "there will be regular, intelligible geographic variations in the popularity of cults because cults exist in varying tension with the surrounding sociocultural environment. The degree of tension is a product of how alien the cult is and how intolerant the environment" (1985:208). However, it makes sense to argue that certain types of state environments may be structurally or culturally conducive or structurally and culturally resistant to the prevalence and growth of innovative religious identities and belief systems.

Internet Use

There is little precedent for the task undertaken here and, as noted above, prior ecological research provides very few guidelines for constructing hypotheses about the features of state social and cultural environments that impede or facilitate the spread of relatively privatized alternative spiritualities. One hypothesis, however, is rather obvious. Given the fact that the estimates of Wicca-Pagan identifiers are based on Internet sites, the first hypothesis is that among the states, there should be a positive relationship between access to and use of the Internet and Wiccan-Pagan identifiers relative to population.

Because the measures of the prevalence of Wicca-Pagan identifiers are derived from the Internet, the link between access and state estimates has to be addressed as a possible source of spurious relationships. However, Internet access may be a meaningful correlate in a more "causal" sense as well. Wiccans and Neo-Pagans are reputed to be highly "networked." Hence, "high tech" state environments should be conducive to the formation and spread of these new religious identities (see Cowan and Hadden 2004). This hypothesis will be tested using available estimates of web use by state.¹

Conventional Religion

In *The Future of Religion* (1985), Stark and Bainbridge state several propositions about cults and religious movements, and Stark has elaborated them further in his work on *The Rise of Christianity* (1996). For example, Stark proposes that “[n]ew religious movements mainly draw their converts from the ranks of the religiously inactive and discontented, and those affiliated with the most accommodated (worldly) religious communities” (1996:19) and that “[n]ew religious movements do best in places where there is the greatest amount of apparent secularization—for example, places with low rates of church membership such as the west coasts of the United States” (1996:54). These arguments clearly imply a negative relationship between church membership and the prevalence of new religious movements.

However, elsewhere Bainbridge (1989:289) notes: “One might argue that there should be either a positive or negative correlation between the church member rate and the rate of deviant cults. If cults are a mere fringe phenomenon of conventional religion, then they should be found exactly where the conventional denominations are. These areas will be less secularized than other places, and thus they will have relatively large pools of potential converts to religions of any kind, both normal and deviant. However, cults could represent religious innovations arising in response to the weakness of conventional religion, and thus would show a negative association with church membership.” Bainbridge reiterates the fringe hypothesis in a more recent work, stating that: “Conventional religion encourages unconventional para-religion by promulgating supernatural assumptions about the nature of humanity and the universe” (2004:381). Other researchers state that Neo-Pagans and Wiccans are disenchanted with the confining nature of organized religions, but were likely to have been raised in organized religion (Adler 1997; Bloch 1998a, 1998b; Hartman 1976; Kirkpatrick 1986).

Hence, two competing hypotheses about the strength of conventional religion and rates of Wiccan-Pagan identification can be proposed. The “fringe” argument implies that, when all other variables are controlled, measures of conventional religiosity (as indicators of “spirituality” or “religious inclination” in a state) will be positively correlated with state rates of Wiccan-Pagan identification. On the other hand, the “weakness” argument implies that, when all other variables are controlled, the relationship should be negative. These two hypotheses can be tested using data on religious affiliation among the states.²

Demographic Correlates

Much of the research on Wicca has used participant observation, snow-ball sampling, and convenience sampling to obtain information on this religious group. Although such techniques do not allow definitive comparative statements about differences among people who identify with that religion or the ecological distribution among territories, this research has yielded a few “clues” that can serve as a guide for exploratory research. For example, Orion’s observations suggest a special appeal of this alternative spirituality to a relatively well-educated, white, clientele of English, Scottish, Irish, or “Anglo” ancestry. Census data can be used to measure such demographic characteristics, including ancestry. If prior observations are correct, rates of Wiccan-Pagan identifiers should be negatively related to percent black among states, but positively related to educational attainment and percent with Anglo ancestry. Moreover, because recent immigration tends to be from Hispanic cultures where Wiccan-Pagan beliefs are relatively unknown, the immigration rate in a state is likely to be a negative correlate as well. Of course, there is no research precedent to speculate on whether any of these relationships will endure separately in a multivariate analysis.³

Female Political Empowerment

In *A Community of Witches* (1999), Helen Berger suggests a complicated perspective on the political dimensions of Wicca. Noting that “[w]itches vary in their political commitment,” Berger proposes that “witches view their political commitment as an extension of their spirituality” (1999:78). She deems Anthony Giddens’s (1991) conception of “life politics” as distinct from “emancipatory politics” as “an important component of the Wiccan community.” Rather than directly pursuing change in power relationships through organized or collective action, the daily “living” of their religion is considered by Berger to be a form of politics. However, regardless of its categorization as a form of politics, it can be argued to be a spiritual alternative to overt “emancipatory action.” Stark and Bainbridge propose that “People who find satisfaction in religious compensators tend not to be moved to embrace political movements” (1985:524), and Kirkpatrick (1986) asserts that most Neo-Pagans “have rejected politics narrowly defined except for anti-nuclear and environmental causes, and feminism” (1986:37).

Female empowerment has been measured in social movement research by Van Dyke and Soule (2002) and Freilich and Pridemore (2005) using the percent of representatives to the U.S. Congress who are women. Such legislative representation has been used to measure women’s political empowerment among nations as well (see Lopez-Claros and Zahidi 2005). If the argument about alternative forms of empowerment is correct, then a reasonable hypothesis would be that the female political empowerment of a state will be a negative correlate of the rate of Wiccan-Pagan identification when all other variables are controlled.⁴

Green Culture

This study uses a relatively untapped source of data to measure some features of state cultural and political environments as well. The Audit Bureau of Circulation compiles data on magazines sold and subscriptions by state for hundreds of periodicals.⁵ Two magazines that should reflect the magnitude of environmental concerns in a state are *Mother Jones* and *Mother Earth News*. These two magazines stress environmental, or “green culture,” issues. Using sales and subscriptions of such magazines avoids the organizational commitments reflected in other forms of environmentalism. The Wiccan-Pagan movement involves minimal organizational commitments and does not draw on the same clientele as these organizational alternatives.

As a cautionary note, this exploratory research does not establish causation in that the popularity of such magazines may reflect the prevalence of Wicca-Pagan identifiers in a state. On the other hand, these magazines would not likely survive on the basis of the Wiccan-Pagan readership alone. It makes sense to view it as tapping a more general environmental audience in a state, a property of the state population that would be conducive to this new religious movement.

Gun and Hunting Culture

At the philosophical core of green culture is a belief in so-called deep ecology (see Botkin 1990; Drengson and Inoue 1995; Sessions 1995), which accords rights to ecosystems and animals in addition to humans, a philosophy shared by Wiccans and Pagans. While the green culture tapped by the *Mother Earth* and *Mother Jones* magazine, should be receptive to the development of Wicca-Paganism, a feature of state environments that should hinder its spread would be the strength of a gun and hunting culture. The greater the strength of a gun-hunting culture in a state, the less hospitable a state should be to be to Wiccan-Pagan development.

Criminologists have used subscriptions to gun magazines as a measure of the strength of gun culture among states (see Duggan 2001) and Jensen (2005) has developed a measure that incorporates NRA membership, gun shows, hunting licenses, retail gun stores, and Internet advertisements of “big game” hunting opportunities. These five indicators are used to generate

TABLE 1
MULTIPLE-REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR WICCA-PAGAN IDENTIFIER RATE
(50 STATES)

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient b(i)	Standard Error Sb(i)	t-Value to t-Test H0:B(i) = 0	Prob Level	Reject H0 at 5%?
Science	0.7180	0.1493	4.810	0.0000	Yes
Religion	0.2448	0.0905	2.706	0.0101	Yes
Green culture	0.3993	0.1395	2.862	0.0067	Yes
Anglo-Celtic ancestry	0.3973	0.0729	5.448	0.0000	Yes
Female political power	-0.1438	0.0564	-2.551	0.0148	Yes
Gun-hunting culture	-0.2696	0.1029	-2.619	0.0125	Yes
Recent immigrants	-0.2115	0.0796	-2.656	0.0114	Yes
% Black	-0.1082	0.0692	-1.564	0.1259	No
% College graduates	-0.0597	0.0752	-0.794	0.4318	No
Web use	-0.0972	0.1025	-0.949	0.3487	No
Adjusted R ² = 0.91					

*Ridge and robust regression analyses support the same model. Multicollinearity tests were not significant.

a factor score for the relative strength of a gun or firearms hunting culture in the United States. When other variables are controlled, this measure should be a negative correlate of the rate of Wiccan-Pagan identification.

Popular Science

In a recent review of literature on “Science and Religion in the New Religions,” Mikael Rothstein (2004:99–118) hypothesizes that there may be a greater harmony between some of the new religions and science than between religions that emerged when religious institutions were the dominant source of authoritative knowledge. He states that “most new religions consider themselves scientifically based and it has become commonplace to include science in the mythological stew” (2004:102). Similarly, Lorne Dawson (2004:68–98) contrasts James Davison Hunter’s view that such movements are “protests against modernity” with Roy Wallis’s distinction between “world rejecting” and “world affirming” movements (Wallis 1982, 1984) and proposes that “new forms of religiosity favored in modernity tend to be this-worldly and parascientific in character” (2004:92).⁶ Hence, a state environment where science is “popular” should be more conducive to the spread of Wiccan-Pagan believers than environments where science is unpopular. The strength of popular science is measured using subscriptions per 1,000 to *Popular Science*, *Scientific American*, *Science*, *Astronomy*, and *Science Fiction* magazines.⁷

FINDINGS

Table 1 summarizes the results of a multiple regression analysis with all variables in the model. Using 10 variables, the multiple R² is very high at 0.91. In short, the relative rates of Wiccan-Pagan identification among states can be predicted with very little error. Moreover, when all variables are entered into the analysis, the relation between Wiccan-Pagan identification and the measure of the strength of conventional religion switches direction as implied by Bainbridge’s religious fringe hypothesis. Rather than inhibiting the spread of this growing religious identity, Wiccan-Pagan identification is stronger in environments where the state environment is high

in religious affiliation. That finding supports the view that states high in conventional religious affiliation are characterized by an inclination toward “spirituality” whether organized in firms or not.

This finding is quite consistent with qualitative research suggesting that Wiccans and Pagans tend to have prior religious backgrounds (Orion 1995). Moreover, the receptivity of states with religious or “spiritual” environments to this new religion occurs in the context of a positive relationship between receptivity to “science” and the Wicca-Pagan identification rate. This pattern is exactly as predicted by scholars who argue that this new religious movement attempts to blend spirituality with postmodern science.

Most coefficients are consistent with hypotheses implied by qualitative work and general theoretical discussions of different responses to patriarchy. For example, the greater the percentage of congressional representatives who are women in a state, the lower the rate of Wiccan-Pagan identifiers. This finding is quite consistent with the view that political and spiritual strategies may compete with one another. The success of emancipatory politics in the form of female political representation either occurs in states that are low in the attraction of spiritual schemes challenging patriarchy, or the two actually interfere with one another. States where emancipatory politics have either failed or been inhibited by other social forces may be those where spiritual alternatives such as Wicca are attractive. Some theorists addressing the issue propose a “tension” between feminists as political activists and forms of spiritual feminism such as Wicca. There does appear to be an inverse relationship worthy of further study.

Both the green culture variable and the gun-hunting variable perform as predicted. The greater the strength of an environmental orientation as measured by subscriptions to *Mother Earth* and *Mother Jones* magazines, the greater the Wicca-Pagan rate. In contrast, the stronger the gun-hunting subculture in a state, the less receptive a state environment is to Wiccan-Pagan identification.

The data support the view that this religious identity is likely to spread or be adopted by people in settings where there are ancestral and geographic ties to England, Scotland, and Ireland. As a belief system that was resurrected and grew in English and Celtic settings, it is not surprising to find that there is still a link between the geographic concentration of people with such ancestry and the prevalence of such identities.

Three relationships drop to statistically insignificance at the 0.05 level in the multivariate analysis. (1) The percentage with a college degree remains a positive correlate of Wiccan-Pagan identification, but is statistically insignificant. (2) Similarly, when other variables are introduced, the effect of web use is no longer significant. This latter finding is important because it challenges any interpretation that would attribute the findings using data from websites as nothing more than a reflection of access to or use of the Internet. Finally, (3) percent black does not have an independent effect on the Wicca-Pagan variable when other variables that correlate with the popularity of this new religious identity in the United States are introduced. It is important to note that while these three variables did not have significant independent effects, they may still be important variables. Their effects may be indirect through other variables or mechanisms that have significant independent effects.⁸

THE WICCA-PAGAN MEASURE VERSUS NEW AGE MEASURES

Another way to enhance confidence in the results and the measures used is to ask whether patterns expected for Wicca-Pagan believers differ in predictable ways from patterns expected for other types of alternative spiritualities. For example, discussions of Wicca differentiate it from so-called New Age spiritualities in ways that can be subjected to empirical test. Wiccans and Neo-Pagans (see Orion 1995) criticize New Age forms of spirituality as an eclectic hodge-podge of beliefs borrowed from a variety of Eastern and native religions that do not accord primacy to

protecting a living earth. Indeed, forms of spirituality that attempt to escape nature or rise above nature violate a central tenet of Wiccan and Neo-Pagan belief systems. Harvey (1997) argues that the two can be distinguished by the Wiccan-Pagan engagement with “nature” as opposed to a New Age “gnostic” inclination to elevate the spirit above nature. Hence, “green culture” should enter into stronger relationships with the Wicca-Pagan rate than measures of New Age practitioners.

There have been two attempts to create such measures: (1) Melton’s estimates of “spiritualist, psychic, and New Age family religious groups” (1993) and (2) Bader’s and Lockhart’s (2006) measures of New Age markets based on business listings in Internet phonebooks. If the argument that New Age and Wicca are distinct is correct, then the green culture variable should enter into stronger relationships with the Wicca measure than the two New Age measures. The correlations between the green culture variable and the Melton and Bader-Lockhart measures were, in fact, statistically insignificant (-0.080 and -0.05 , respectively).

A second hypothesis about unique correlates for different types of spirituality involves the correlations anticipated for the New Age measures and Anglo-Celtic ancestry. The correlation for the Wicca-Pagan measure is $+0.676$ as compared to -0.103 (insignificant) for the Melton measure and $+0.082$ (insignificant) for the Bader-Lockhart measure. Similar patterns can be noted for percent black with a significant and *negative* bivariate correlation for the Wicca-Pagan measure with insignificant correlations for the New Age measures (-0.146 for Melton, 0.025 for Bader and Lockhart).

These findings support the view expressed in this article that contemporary Wicca-Pagan identifiers should not be lumped together under the rubric of New Age. Bainbridge defines New Age as including paganism, the occult, and Asian imports. However, it is clear that the correlates of Wiccan-Paganism as measured by Internet data are capturing a phenomenon that is quite distinct from the patterns found for New Age as measured by Melton and Bader-Lockhart. When measures of related, but distinct, forms of alternative spirituality generate predicated *differences* in patterns for different forms of spirituality, our confidence in the validity of the Internet measure is strengthened.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This article began with the observation that the religious market in modern society includes forms of spirituality that are not represented in firms or organizations and that one of the fastest growing religious belief systems in the United States has few of the organizational properties that allow a designation as a “denomination” or “church.” Although there are sufficient survey data to state that Wiccan and Neo-Pagan identification have grown, it is still too rare to allow any meaningful multivariate analysis of such survey data. In contrast, the analysis summarized above provides very strong support for the argument that data compiled at websites can be used to map new features of a privatized religious landscape. The analysis yielded numerous patterns that were consistent with hypotheses proposed based on both qualitative research and theoretical speculation.

Such findings do not mean that causal relationships have been established, nor do they mean that these relationships will endure further multivariate analysis. Some of the measures of “explanatory” variables may very well be products of that religious landscape rather than facilitating or constraining dimensions of it. For example, the use of magazine subscriptions to tap features of state environments may be tapping the availability of Wiccans and Neo-Pagans as readers. All that can be said at present is that state environments where there is an interest in environmental information tend to be states high in Wiccan-Pagan identifiers. We do not know the temporal mechanics that generated that compatibility. The results can be challenged, but there

are numerous, seemingly meaningful, results to be challenged, which is much more than has been accomplished in prior attempts to map the religious landscape.

The findings are also consistent with Berger's arguments about "life politics" as compared to "emancipatory" politics. It may be that state environments where women are becoming politically empowered do not encourage spiritual or religious forms of empowerment. That argument has been proposed in the literature on Wicca. Political success for a group may discourage the pursuit of forms of religious or spiritual empowerment or vice-versa. The fact that such a finding is consistent with discussions by Berger and others lends credibility to that pattern.

The percent of a state's population that shares the ancestry most closely associated with Wiccan-Pagan spirituality is a strong correlate of the Wiccan-Pagan identification rate. Moreover, the magnitude of recent immigration to a state is a negative correlate, which makes good sense when the characteristics of most recent immigrants are considered. They are likely to come from cultures where Anglo forms of spirituality are virtually absent. Other types of nontraditional forms of spirituality may develop among African Americans and other minorities and may be "imported" through Latin or African networks.

Finally, the analysis of available measures of alternative spiritual phenomena that are often categorized together with Wiccan and Neo-Pagan spirituality suggests that they should not be treated as one nebulous category. Wicca should not be lumped together with the occult and the eclectic hodge-podge called "New Age." The prevalence of Wiccan-Pagan identifiers among the states is patterned quite differently than those discerned in other research using measures of other features of the religious or spiritual landscape.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was facilitated by a Templeton Foundation Metanexis Grant to the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture at Vanderbilt University. The authors are grateful to C. D. Bader and W. H. Lockhart for providing their state data on New Age religion.

NOTES

1. Web use was estimated using percentage of households with access to the Internet as compiled by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for 1998.
2. The estimate of percent of state population with a traditional religious identification is the average of the 1990 and 2000 data from the American Religious Identification Surveys.
3. Anglo ancestry was based on the sum of percentages of the U.S. population with English, Scottish, or Scotch-Irish ancestry based on Census data for 1990 as archived in the Microcase Curriculum Plan Data Archive. Percent black in 1998 and new immigrants in 1997 were based on Statistical Abstracts for the United States as archived by Microcase.
4. Other measures were considered as well, including NOW Chapters per million population and "ERA" scores based on the speed with which a state ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, with a score of zero assigned for those who did not ratify the Amendment. These measures were not significant positive or negative covariates in the analysis.
5. A growing body of empirical research in social movement research and criminology has been using Audit Bureau data to measure features of state environments thought to affect the activity under study or as proxies for those activities. (see Freilich and Pridemore 2005; O'Brien and Haider-Markel 1998 for examples).
6. Dawson's designation fits quite well to writings by Wiccan scholars. For example, Starhawk, arguably the most prominent spokesperson for the Wiccan faith, notes that "[m]odern physics no longer speaks of separate, discrete atoms of dead matter, but waves of energy, probabilities, patterns that change as they are observed; it recognizes what Shamans and Witches have always known: that matter and energy are not separate forces, but different forms of the same thing" (1982:10). Particle-anti-particle pairs are consistent with the "principle of polarity." String theory is consistent with "the principle of vibration." Another Wiccan, Loretta Orion, states that "the quantum leap is an especially inspiring phenomenon for witches. By shifting one's focus to the subatomic level, magicians imagine drastic transformations of configurations in space to be within the realm of possibility" (1995:119). Although Wiccans reject patriarchal social arrangements, including the domination of organized science, general scientific ideas such as quantum weirdness, principles of uncertainty, vibrating strings, and an "elegant" universe (Greene 2003) are quite acceptable in Wiccan cosmology.

7. The strength of a pro-science popular orientation in a state was based on a factor analysis of Audit Bureau data for popular science and more professional science magazines commonly found on newsstands. Subscriptions to science and science fiction magazines were highly correlated and could be considered as measuring the same underlying variable.
8. Because this study is the first of its kind, several analyses relevant to questions raised in reviews were conducted. For example, it is reasonable to propose that some of the variables examined are closely related such that separable effects cannot be demonstrated. Because the matrix of correlations in Appendix B legitimately prompts concerns about multicollinearity, tests assessing the magnitude of any such problems were conducted using ridge regression techniques. Multicollinearity is not a problem in the multivariate models. Moreover, not only did such tests indicate that multicollinearity was not a problem, but both ridge regression and robust regression techniques support the same models as ordinary regression (Fox 1997). We also explored specific patterns of relationships emphasized in the literature or reviewer's comments. For example, low rates of Wicca-Pagan identification in the South and high rates in the Northwest and Northeast were found to be products of other mediating mechanisms in the model. Second, one reviewer speculated that gun culture, evangelical Protestantism, and location in the South were likely to be highly correlated, precluding separable effects. Using data provided by Bader and Lockhart (2006) on rates of evangelical Protestantism, together with the gun culture and location in the South, this was not the case. The tests for autocorrelation did not show inseparable associations and the model reported in Table 1 was not affected by the addition of the measure of evangelical Protestantism. Third, the positive relationship involving the Anglo-Celtic ancestry variable persisted regardless of other alternative measures involving ethnicity and race. It appears to be a unique correlate. Fourth, while the percent of women in the national congress was a significant negative correlate of Wicca-Pagan identification (as predicted by literature on Wiccan's life politics), percent of state legislators who are women was also considered. The effect of the later variable was negative, but not significant. Further research will be required to assess the greater relevance of the percent female in national congress.

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APPENDIX A

Average Wicca Rate per 100,000			
Alabama	11.14	Montana	16.01
Alaska	28.24	Nebraska	12.22
Arizona	14.86	Nevada	14.60
Arkansas	12.29	New Hampshire	24.60
California	10.67	New Jersey	10.33
Colorado	21.53	New Mexico	16.73
Connecticut	15.55	New York	8.99
Delaware	16.67	North Carolina	12.18
Florida	11.16	North Dakota	14.84
Georgia	11.24	Ohio	12.35
Hawaii	9.93	Oklahoma	16.66
Idaho	16.08	Oregon	20.84
Illinois	8.70	Pennsylvania	10.89
Indiana	13.90	Rhode Island	15.00
Iowa	12.57	South Carolina	10.36
Kansas	16.29	South Dakota	13.81
Kentucky	13.40	Tennessee	12.05
Louisiana	9.58	Texas	12.33
Maine	22.06	Utah	12.13
Maryland	12.15	Vermont	23.23
Massachusetts	14.72	Virginia	13.84
Michigan	12.18	Washington	20.50
Minnesota	12.60	West Virginia	11.66
Mississippi	7.85	Wisconsin	11.61
Missouri	14.14	Wyoming	18.90

APPENDIX B
CORRELATION MATRIX

	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. Womcong	0.223	0.183	0.010	-0.014	0.135	-0.130	-0.355**	0.126	-0.037	-0.058
2. Immigrant		-0.285*	0.137	0.505**	-0.229	0.028	-0.193	0.269*	-0.425**	-0.211
3. Anglocelt			0.385**	0.006	0.542**	-0.306*	-0.589**	0.373**	0.181	0.677*
4. Web use				0.485**	0.658**	-0.372**	-0.507**	0.855**	0.221	0.703*
5. % College					0.068	-0.120	-0.277*	0.562**	-0.166	0.231
6. Green culture						-0.626**	-0.571**	0.721**	0.582**	0.815**
7. % Black							0.533**	-0.539**	-0.452**	-0.511**
8. Religion								-0.663**	-0.087	-0.546*
9. Science									0.188	0.768**
10. Gun culture										0.286*
11. Wicca										

*Significant at 0.05; **significant at 0.01.