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Client and Audience Cults in America

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Abstract

Several sources of good information about client cults and audience cults are analyzed geographically. Data are taken from six directories, *Fate* magazine, Transcendental Meditation initiation records, classified telephone directories, and the Gallup Poll. The geographic distribution

found in an earlier study of cult movements is replicated: the Pacific and Mountain regions have very high rates, while the East South Central region is very low. Rates for client cults show distributions reflecting that of cult movements, while audience cults show a much flatter distribution. The distributions result both from differential receptivity to religious deviance and variation in degree of deviance among the measures. Departures from the main trends are analyzed, and prospects for future quantitative research are judged to be quite good. An empirical outgrowth of the attempt to develop a general theory of religion, the research reported here supports key concepts and certain propositions derived from the theory.

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