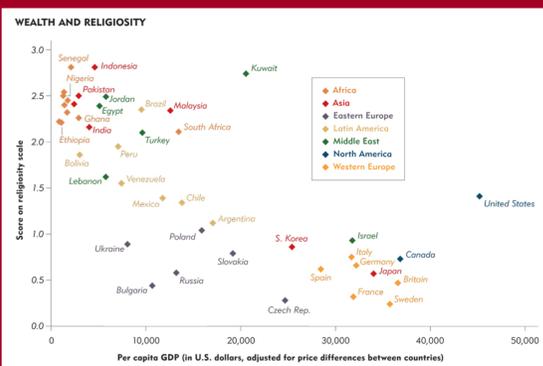


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Objective

- Why is the United States so religious in comparison to countries of similar economic status and wealth?
- What is the relationship between wealth and religiosity among the American population?
- Break down wealth into three income categories and examine theories behind religiosity for each of the three



Source: *The Atlantic*

Literature

Social Capital

- How different income groups utilize religious institutions for social capital and networks (Maselko et al. 2011; Mirola, 2016)

Political System

- Moral and religious issues have become embedded in American political rhetoric and party system (Wald, 2014)

Psychological Impact

- Deprivation Theory of Religion (Christopher et al. 1971)
- Relative Power Theory (Keister, 2007; Solt et al. 2011)
- System Justification (Jost, 2010)

Immigration

- The United States attracts religious immigrants who use religion in order to assimilate to American society (Massey, 2011)

Middle Class Dilemma

- Declining economic stability of middle class Americans has led to reduction in their religious attendance (Wilcox et al. 2012)

Theory

Relative Power Theory (Keister, 2007; Solt et al. 2011)

- Rich promote religious adherence in order to retain their position on top of the social hierarchy
- Poor are encouraged to look toward religious faith for spiritual reward in place of material equality
- Middle class falls outside parameters of this theory and rely less on religion
- Theoretical framework for why the United States remains highly religious despite being very wealthy overall (both lower and upper classes are more religious)
- Implication of Theory:
 - Upper class Americans able to preserve wealth while diverting lower class away from redistributive political processes that would improve their social standing
 - Solidifies disparity between upper and lower class in the United States (rampant inequality)



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Hypothesis

- H1: Lower class Americans are more likely to be religious (as expected based on cross-national analysis)
- H2: Upper class Americans report similarly high levels of religiosity as low income Americans
- H3: Middle class Americans are the least religious among all three income categories

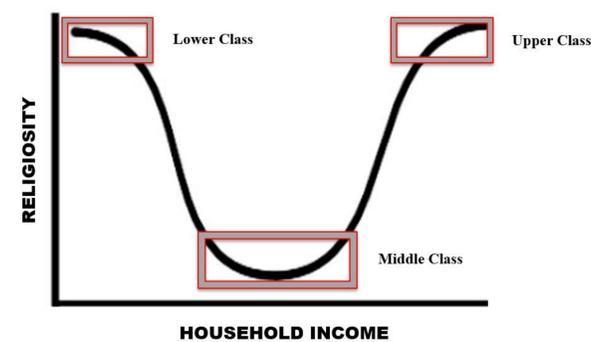


Figure 1. Rough visual estimate for distribution of American population based on income and religiosity from lower, middle, to upper class

Research Design

Data

- National Study of Youth and Religion (2003)
- Telephone survey of 3,370 American families
- Dependent Variable = Religiosity
 - In the past twelve months, how often have you been attending religious services, not including weddings, baptisms, and funerals? (0 = Never, 1 = Weekly, 2 = Monthly, 3 = Yearly)
- Independent Variable = Household Income
 - Lower Class (<\$40K), Middle Class (\$40K - \$100K), Upper Class (\$100K<)
- Independent Samples T-Test on SPSS
 - Comparing mean religiosities between each social class
- Bivariate Correlations Test on SPSS
 - Correlations between household income and religiosity

Crosstabulation

Household income broken down * How often have you been attending religious services, not including weddings, baptisms, and funerals in the last 12 months? Crosstabulation

Household income broken down	How often have you been attending religious services, not including weddings, baptisms, and funerals in the last 12 months?				Total
	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	
Lower Class	198	237	284	465	1184
Middle Class	221	249	383	721	1574
Upper Class	71	69	107	157	404
Total	490	555	774	1343	3162

Figure 2. Snapshot of religious attendance frequencies across each social class

Data Results

T-Tests

- Middle class actually displays the highest mean religiosity
- Lower and upper class still have similar mean religiosities (no statistically significant difference)
- Mean religiosities of lower and upper class are significantly different from mean religiosity of middle class

Group Statistics		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
How often have you been attending religious services, not including weddings, baptisms, and funerals in the last 12 months?	Household income broken down				
Lower Class	1184	1.8581	1.11478	.03240	
Middle Class	1574	2.0191	1.08548	.02736	

Group Statistics		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
How often have you been attending religious services, not including weddings, baptisms, and funerals in the last 12 months?	Household income broken down				
Upper Class	404	1.8663	1.11696	.05557	
Middle Class	1574	2.0191	1.08548	.02736	

Group Statistics		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
How often have you been attending religious services, not including weddings, baptisms, and funerals in the last 12 months?	Household income broken down				
Lower Class	1184	1.8581	1.11478	.03240	
Upper Class	404	1.8663	1.11696	.05557	

Bivariate Correlations

- Significant negative correlation between household income and religiosity for lower class
- Significant positive correlation between household income and religiosity for middle class
- Slight negative correlation between household income and religiosity for upper class but not significant

Religiosity	Religiosity - LowerClass	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
	1	.057*
		.001
	N	3366
LowerClass	Pearson Correlation	-.057*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	3162

Religiosity	Religiosity - MiddleClass	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
	1	.072*
		.000
	N	3366
MiddleClass	Pearson Correlation	.072*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	3162

Discussion & Conclusion

- There is a relationship between wealth and religiosity
- Falling into a particular income class is indicative of how frequently Americans attend religious service on average
- Data results for middle class go against hypothesis, but possible explanation involves sample size and diversification

Future Research

- Implement research design that controls for race of respondent, education level, occupation, and type of religion