

Abstract

Research Paper: The effect of Religion on happiness and educational attainment after controlling for community engagement

Student: Eric Ballenger

Degree: Master of Science

College: Teachers College

Date: December, 2019

Pages: 16

An important environmental factor that often permeates large parts of an individual's life is their religious affiliation and practice. While the number of Americans claiming membership in formal religion has dropped slightly from 77% identifying as Christian in 2012 to roughly 74% claiming a Christian identity in 2016 (Newport, 2012; Newport, 2016), religious faith is still prevalent to some degree in the majority of American lives. While the number claiming a Christian identity has dipped slightly in recent years, the number claiming no religious identity is still only 20% of the American population (Newport, 2016).

This project contains two studies: The first utilizes the World Values Survey (WVS) data, this will chiefly look at religiosity, community engagement, and well-being. The WVS data indicates that once community engagement is controlled for, religious practice no longer has a significant effect on the outcome variables. The second study analyzes the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) data, this study will look at religiosity, community engagement, and academic achievement. The ECLS data did not lose statistical significance after controlling for community engagement, though the effect size was greatly reduced.