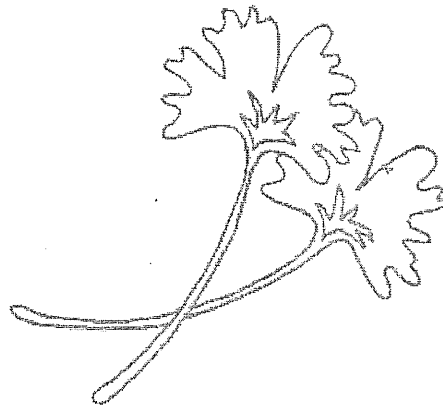


Appendix L: Sample Research Paper

On the following pages, you will find a sample research paper written in APA style. The article is reproduced proportionally to the page.



Glad Tidings in Hard Times: Religiosity in Recessions

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Abstract

Levels of national religiosity are not immune to the dictates of the market. Research suggests that adherents of certain faiths participate in their religion more frequently during recessions while others do so less frequently in the same period. Macroeconomic conditions, therefore, may have a part to play in determining national levels of religious participation.

Keywords: religiosity, macroeconomic conditions, recessions

Glad Tidings in Hard Times: Religiosity in Recessions

While many of us today can comfortably agree that religion has little effect on our lives, we cannot afford to lose sight of how it has affected so many before us, and how it still continues to impact people in many parts of the world today. Why then, do some societies become less religious over time, while others remain fervent believers regardless of the state of their lives? There are a myriad of factors that may explain such trends. We can, however, examine how national religiosity changes over time, and compare those fluctuations with those found in the economy. This paper examines the causes of differing levels of religiosity in various macroeconomic climates.

In "Praying for a recession: the business cycle and Protestant religiosity in the United States," Beckworth (2009) examines how the state of the economy influences levels of religiosity, focusing mainly on mainline Protestants and evangelical Protestants. Using his material as a starting point, I examine other faiths as well.

In "Household allocation of time and church attendance," Azzi and Ehrenberg (1975) empirically analyse how households allocate their resources on religious participation. I compare and contrast their analyses with those of Beckworth (2009).

Beckworth (2009) puts forth three ways the state of the economy affects religious participation. The first reason he finds is that religious adherents stand to gain social capital through attendance. As he puts it, "[i]ndividuals that

participate in a religious organization may find future payoffs in the form of social support and networking opportunities” (p. 5). Indeed, Luhmann (2013) states that “[a] study . . . found that frequent churchgoers had larger social networks . . . and more kinds of social support from [other churchgoers] than their unchurched counterparts” (para. 2). This not only applies to Christianity; for instance, in many mosques social interaction is encouraged, to uphold the principles of the *ummah* (the Muslim community as a whole). Other religions are known for holding social gatherings outside regular worship times as well.

The second motivation Beckworth (2009) finds for the connection between macroeconomic climates and religious participation deals with consumption smoothing. “During an economic downturn individuals may become unemployed . . . [and] they may turn to their faith community for both real consumption needs . . . as well as intangible consumption needs” (pp. 6-7). Many religious organisations made their sermons more relevant after the 2008 financial crisis to better serve their congregation. Vitello (2008) found that pastors began to hold sermons on financial matters (para. 6) and that Jehovah’s Witnesses were able to begin proselytising during daylight hours, as more people were unemployed and at home (para. 8). Practices of other faiths seem to have more relevance during economic downturns; for example, the Sikh practice of *langar* involves distributing food to the hungry masses, regardless of faith.

The third motivation concerns the opportunity cost of religious participation, given different macroeconomic conditions. Azzi and Ehrenberg

(1975) state that “as real wages grow over time we should expect individuals to shift toward less time-intensive forms of religious activities” (p. 51). Beckworth (2009) explores this idea further by distinguishing between the characteristics and behaviours of mainline and evangelical Protestants. Harris and Medcalfe (n.d.) explain that evangelical Protestants are more likely to earn hourly wages, and mainline Protestants are wealthier and more likely to earn salaries (p. 5). They refer to Beckworth, who states that “religious participation by evangelical Protestants should have a countercyclical component while mainline Protestants should have a procyclical component” (p. 5). Beckworth concludes by stating that “during recessions for the years 1968-2004 evangelical denominations grew on average 1.52 percent annually, a significant pick up from the 0.98 percent growth rate in non-recession years” (p. 26).

A Pew Forum analysis in *Figure 1* shows that while the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted, religious attendance rates did not rise significantly. We can look at this information optimistically and, referencing Beckworth’s (2009) analysis, we can explain this through a rise in evangelical membership and a fall in mainline membership during a recession cancelling one another out.

It would be difficult to apply these measures to other faiths, as income classes within other religions rarely fall into the same neat income distinctions as those found between Christian denominations. During recessions people seek solace and comfort, and may seek such support in their community, in which

their religious institutions may play a large part. If a large enough amount of people turn to their religious institutions during recessions, one would see the benefits in being able to access government aid in places of worship.

Armed with firsthand knowledge of their community and a readily available stream of volunteers, religious institutions could work hand-in-hand with the state to distribute government aid. McCleary and Barro (2006) conducted surveys to gauge levels of religious participation across countries; those with the highest levels included Nigeria, Pakistan and Poland. Monthly religious participation levels were measured at 95%, 91% and 78% of the population respectively (p. 65).

Mass collection of government aid in a central location may not be ideal, as crowds build up and unnecessary time is spent waiting and working through seemingly endless bureaucracy. One must also take commuting costs into account, as well as the opportunity cost of not being able to work for the time spent collecting handouts. Community religious institutions can instead be used as neighbourhood distribution and collection centres, and families can access handouts in the comfort and safety of their community. The primary breadwinner need not take precious time off work to do so. Some argue that governmental secularism should be a priority for developing countries, but this is not a matter of principle. This is a way to get aid to those who need it the most in the most efficient way. Providing extra funding for a church's food bank is not tantamount to tearing down the barrier between church and state.

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Appendix

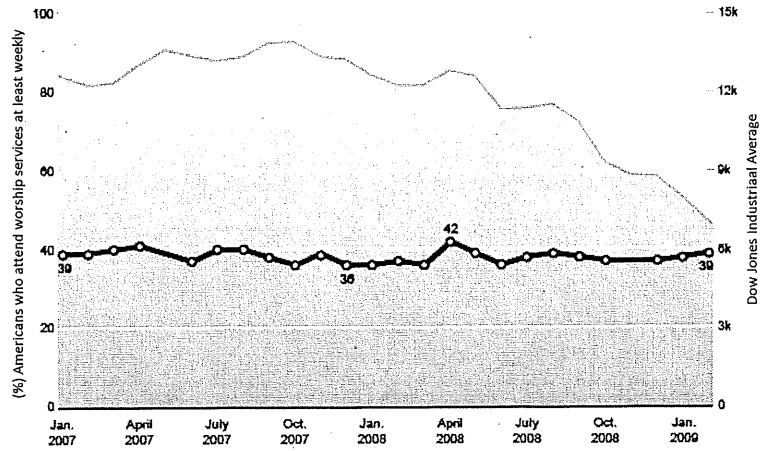


Figure 1: Dow Jones Industrial Average / Percentage of churchgoing Americans

Source: Pew Forum (2009)