

Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism

EDITED BY
THOMAS BANCHOFF

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Contributors

Thomas Banchoff is associate professor in the Department of Government and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and director of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University.

Peter Berger is emeritus professor of sociology at Boston University and director of its Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs.

José Casanova is professor of sociology and a member of the graduate faculty of political and social science at the New School for Social Research.

Sam Cherribi is senior lecturer in sociology at Emory University.

Grace Davie is a professor in the sociology of religion at Exeter University.

Diana L. Eck is professor of comparative religion and Indian studies and a member of the faculty of divinity at Harvard University.

John L. Esposito is university professor and founding director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University.

Stanley Hauerwas is the Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics at the Divinity School of Duke University.

Danièle Hervieu-Léger is professor of sociology and president of the Écoles des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

X CONTRIBUTORS

Ronald Inglehart is professor of political science and program director at the Center for Political Studies at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

Pippa Norris is the McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Martha C. Nussbaum is the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics in Philosophy, Law, and Divinity at the University of Chicago.

Yossi Shain is professor in the Department of Government, Georgetown University, and the Department of Political Science, Tel Aviv University.

Miroslav Volf is Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School and director of Yale's Center for Faith and Culture.

Robert Wuthnow is Gerhard R. Andlinger Professor of Sociology and director of the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University.

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Uneven Secularization in the United States and Western Europe

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart

After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and their aftermath in Afghanistan and Iraq, public interest in religious pluralism has grown tremendously on both sides of the Atlantic. Religious diversity has become more visible, and religious issues have grown more salient. Centuries-old differences among Protestant and Catholic churches, Orthodox Christians, and long-established Jewish groups have combined with growing multiculturalism from immigrant populations adhering to Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and other faiths, as well as those adhering to none. New Age spiritualities and the development of more individualized practices outside of organized religion complete a varied picture. Within this new context, some traditional political conflicts between religious communities have become more muted, notably among Protestants and Catholics in northern Ireland. At the same time, new forms of identity politics have become more salient, compounded by events such as the assassination of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands and the bombings by radical Muslim groups in Madrid and London.

In the context of this new religious pluralism, the long-running academic debate about secularization has greater contemporary relevance. Religion has definitely moved up the political agenda in Western Europe, in the United States, and around the world. One should be careful, however, not to confuse the increasing political salience of religion with any overall growth in religiosity. This essay argues that secularization is proceeding apace on both sides of the Atlantic—at different speeds and at different levels. It describes a cultural landscape marked not just by religious diversity but also by the coexistence and interaction of religious and secular beliefs and practices. A structured comparison of the United States and Europe

provides a window on this uneven process of secularization and the underlying social, political, and economic forces that are driving it forward.

The idea of secularization has a long and distinguished history in the social sciences, with many seminal thinkers arguing that religiosity was declining throughout Western societies. Key leaders in the incipient social sciences of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud—generally held that religion would gradually fade in importance and cease to be significant with the advent of industrial society.¹ Their views were not new. Ever since the Enlightenment, leading thinkers in the European tradition have held that theological superstitions, symbolic liturgical rituals, and sacred practices are the product of the past that will be outgrown in the modern era. The death of religion was the conventional wisdom in the social sciences during most of the twentieth century. Many have regarded secularization as *the* master model of sociological inquiry, one closely related to bureaucratization, rationalization, and urbanization as the key historical revolutions transforming medieval agrarian societies into modern industrial nations. “Once the world was filled with the sacred—in thought, practice, and institutional form,” C. Wright Mills argued, echoing the dominant view during the postwar decades. “After the Reformation and the Renaissance, the forces of modernization swept across the globe and secularization, a corollary historical process, loosened the dominance of the sacred.” He concluded: “In due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether except, possibly, in the private realm.”²

Over the past decade this thesis of the slow and steady death of religion has come under growing criticism. Indeed, secularization theory is currently experiencing the most sustained challenge in its long history. Critics point to multiple indicators of religious health and vitality today, ranging from the continued popularity of churchgoing in the United States to the emergence of New Age spirituality in Western Europe, the growth in fundamentalist³ movements and religious parties in the Muslim world, the evangelical revival sweeping through Latin America, and the upsurge of ethnoreligious conflict in international affairs. After reviewing these developments, Peter L. Berger, one of the foremost advocates of secularization during the 1960s, recanted his earlier claims. “The world today, with some exceptions, . . . is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever,” Berger argued in the late 1990s; “this means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled ‘secularization theory’ is essentially mistaken.”⁴ Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, leading critics of the secularization thesis, reach a similar conclusion: “After nearly three centuries of utterly failed prophecies and misrepresentations of both present and past, it seems time to carry the secularization doctrine to the graveyard of failed theories.”⁵

Were Comte, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx completely misled in their beliefs about religious decline in industrialized societies? Was the predominant sociological view during the twentieth century totally misguided? Has the debate been settled? We think not. Talk of burying the secularization theory is

premature. The critique relies too heavily on selected anomalies and focuses too heavily on the United States (which happens to be a striking deviant case) rather than comparing systematic evidence across a broad range of rich and poor societies.⁶ We need to move beyond studies of Catholic and Protestant church attendance in Europe (where attendance is falling) and the United States (where attendance remains stable) if we are to understand broader trends in religious vitality in a diverse religious landscape populated by churches, mosques, shrines, synagogues, and temples. Evidence indicates that the overall trend in the United States and Western Europe remains one of an increasing secularization of beliefs and practices—a process that has unfolded unevenly in different countries, but broadly in the same direction.⁷

This study is divided into three parts. Part one describes systematic and consistent evidence establishing the variations in religiosity among postindustrial nations, in particular, contrasts between America and Western Europe. The analysis focuses upon similar postindustrial nations, all affluent countries and established democracies, most (but not all) sharing a cultural heritage of Christendom, even as they confront greater religious diversity. Against the backdrop of this structural similarity, our essay examines whether the United States is indeed exceptional among rich nations in the vitality of its spiritual life, as conventional wisdom has long suggested, or whether, as Berger proposes, Western Europe is exceptional in its secularization.⁸ The evidence suggests different levels of religious belief and engagement—a more religious America and a more secular Europe—but highlights the overall trend toward secularization on both sides of the Atlantic.

Parts two and three compare and contrast two alternative explanations for transatlantic differences. *Religious market theory* postulates a link between levels of religious competition and levels of religious observance. It draws causal linkages between the patterns of religious supply (the number of denominations competing for adherents and kinds of state regulation) and religious demand (strength of belief and practice). The theory provides one possible explanation for exceptionally high levels of religious observance in the United States, linking it back to the plural and competitive religious landscape. But it is plagued by both conceptual and empirical problems.

Part three puts forward an alternative theory of *secure secularization*—the view that levels of societal modernization, human development, and economic inequality drive levels of religious belief and activity. The theory of secure secularization builds on key elements of traditional sociological accounts while revising others. We argue that feelings of vulnerability to physical, societal, and personal risks are a key factor driving religiosity, and we demonstrate that the process of secularization—a systematic erosion of religious practices, values, and beliefs—has occurred most clearly among the most prosperous social sectors living in affluent and secure postindustrial nations. We believe that the importance of religiosity persists most strongly among vulnerable populations, especially those living in poorer nations, facing personal survival-threatening risks. Variation between the United States and Western Europe, from this

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perspective, is partly a function of different levels of social protection and economic inequality on both sides of the Atlantic. In combination with other historical and institutional factors, greater economic and social insecurity accounts for greater overall religiosity within the United States and for much of the variation of belief and practice within the country.

Comparing Religiosity in Postindustrial Nations

We can start by considering the cross-national evidence of religiosity in postindustrial nations. Figure 3.1 shows different patterns of religious behavior, highlighting the substantial contrasts between the cluster of countries which prove by far the most religious in this comparison, including the United States, Ireland, and Italy. At the other extreme, the most secular nations include France, Denmark, and Britain. There is a fairly similar pattern across both indicators of religious behavior—attendance at religious services and prayer—suggesting that both collective and individual forms of participation are fairly consistent in each society. Although religion in the United States is distinctive among rich nations, it would still be misleading to refer to American “exceptionalism,” as so many emphasize, as though it were a deviant case from *all* other postindustrial nations. Ireland and Italy also fall outside the mainstream.

The existing evidence in Western Europe consistently and unequivocally shows two things: traditional religious beliefs and involvement in institutionalized religion (1) vary considerably from one country to another and (2) have steadily declined throughout Western Europe, particularly since the 1960s. Studies have often reported that many Western Europeans have ceased to be regular churchgoers today outside of special occasions such as Christmas and Easter, weddings and funerals, a pattern especially evident among the young.⁹ One important study compared the proportion of regular (weekly) churchgoers in seven European countries from 1970 to 1991, based on the Eurobarometer surveys, and documented a dramatic fall in congregations during this period in countries with large Catholic populations (Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and West Germany). Overall levels of church disengagement had advanced furthest in France, Britain, and the Netherlands: “Although the timing and pace differ from one country to the next,” the authors concluded, echoing many colleagues, “the general tendency is quite stable: in the long run, the percentage of unaffiliated is increasing.”¹⁰

Figure 3.2 illustrates other evidence for the erosion of regular church attendance that has occurred throughout Western Europe since the early 1970s. The fall is steepest and most significant in many Catholic societies, notably Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. To conclude, as Andrew Greeley does, that religion is “still relatively unchanged” in the traditional Catholic nations of Europe seems a triumph of hope over experience and sharply at odds with the evidence.¹¹ Marked contrasts in the strength of churchgoing habits remain clear, say, between contemporary rates of religious participation in Ireland and Denmark. Nevertheless all the

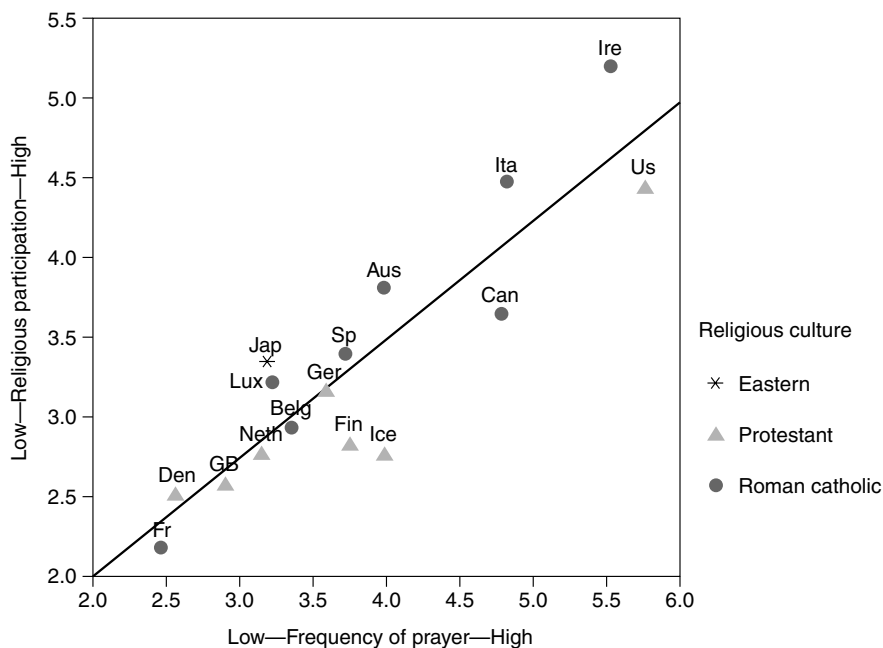


FIGURE 3.1 Religious Behavior in Cross-national Perspective

Notes: Religious participation, Question 185: "Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days? More than once a week, once a week, once a month, only on special holy days, once a year, less often, never or practically never" (number = mean frequency of attendance at religious services). Frequency of prayer, Question 199: "How often do you pray to God outside of religious services? Would you say . . . Every day (7), more than once a week (6), once a week (5), at least once a month (4), several times a year (3), less often (2), never (1)" (number = mean frequency per society).

Source: World Values Survey, pooled 1981–2001.

trends point consistently downward. Moreover the erosion of religiosity is not exclusive to Western European nations. Regular churchgoing also dropped during the last two decades in affluent English-speaking nations such as Canada and Australia.¹²

An interpretation of these patterns that resists the concept of secularization is the view that religiosity has evolved and reinvented itself today as diverse forms of personal "spirituality." In the American context, Wade Clark Roof and other observers suggest that collective engagement with religion in public life has eroded in America among the younger generation. Reasons for this are thought to include the declining status and authority of traditional church institutions and clergy, the individualization of the quest for spirituality, and the rise of multiple New Age movements concerned with "lived religion."¹³ These developments are exemplified by a revival of alternative spiritual practices such as astrology, meditation, and atypical therapies, involving a diverse bricolage of personal beliefs. If similar developments are also evident in Europe, public engagement with churches could have been replaced by a "private" or "personal"

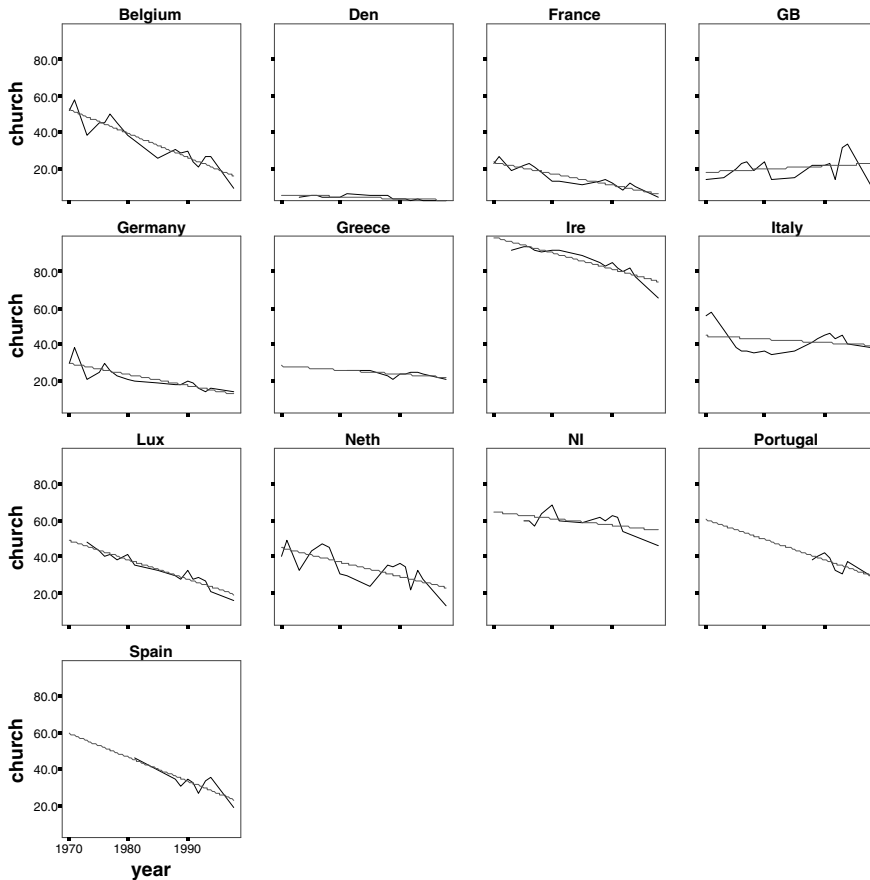


FIGURE 3.2 Religious Participation in Western Europe, 1970–2000

Notes: Number = the percentage of population who said they attended a religious service “at least once a week” and the regression line of the trend.

Source: Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1970–99.

search for spirituality and meaning in life, making the practices, beliefs, and symbols of religiosity less visible.¹⁴ Along these lines, Greeley suggests that indicators of subjective beliefs in Europe, exemplified by faith in God or in life after death, display a mixed picture during the last two decades, rather than a simple uniform decline.¹⁵

This objection to the secularization thesis does not hold up well, however. Evidence suggests that one reason for the decline in religious participation during the late twentieth century actually lies in the gradual erosion of common spiritual belief. Greeley’s results are based primarily upon analysis of the International Social Survey Program, which conducted opinion polls on religion in 1991 and 1998. Unfortunately this provides too limited a time period to detect

long-term change. Instead, here we monitor trends in religious beliefs in God and in life after death during the last fifty years by matching survey data in the Gallup polls starting in 1947 to the more recent data, where the same questions were replicated in the World Values Surveys.

Table 3.1 shows that in 1947 eight out of ten people believed in God, with the highest levels of belief expressed in Australia, Canada, the United States, and Brazil. Over subsequent decades, belief in God fell significantly in all but

TABLE 3.1. Belief in God, 1947–2001

| Nation | 1947 | 1968 | 1975 | 1981 | 1990 | 1995 | 2001 | Change |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Sweden | 80 | 60 | | 52 | 38 | 48 | 46 | –34 |
| Netherlands | 80 | 79 | | 64 | 61 | | 58 | –22 |
| Australia | 95 | | 80 | 79 | | 75 | 75 | –20 |
| Norway | 84 | 73 | | 68 | 58 | 65 | | –19 |
| Denmark | 80 | | | 53 | 59 | | 62 | –18 |
| Britain | | 77 | 76 | 73 | 72 | | 61 | –16 |
| Greece | | 96 | | | | | 84 | –12 |
| West Germany | | 81 | 72 | 68 | 63 | 71 | 69 | –12 |
| Belgium | | | 78 | 76 | 65 | | 67 | –11 |
| Finland | 83 | 83 | | | 61 | 73 | 72 | –11 |
| France | 66 | 73 | 72 | 59 | 57 | | 56 | –10 |
| Canada | 95 | | 89 | 91 | 85 | | 88 | –7 |
| Switzerland | | 84 | | | 77 | 77 | | –7 |
| India | | | 98 | | 93 | 94 | | –4 |
| Japan | | | 38 | 39 | 37 | 44 | 35 | –3 |
| Austria | | 85 | | | 78 | | 83 | –2 |
| Italy | | | 88 | 82 | 82 | | 88 | 0 |
| United States | 94 | 98 | 94 | 96 | 93 | 94 | 94 | 0 |
| Brazil | 96 | | | | 98 | 99 | | +3 |
| Average 1947–2001 | 85 | | | | | | 72 | –13 |

Notes: The percentage of the public who express belief in God in nineteen societies, listed in order of decreasing change in belief between 1947 and 2001. Numbers represent the percentage of respondents who answered “yes.” “Change” is the percentage difference between the first and last observation in the series. “Average 1947–2001” indicates the average for the eight nations with observations in both 1947 and 2001. Percentages based on the following questions and answers:

| Year | Source | Question | Possible Answers |
|-----------|--|--|-------------------|
| 1947 | Gallup Opinion Index | Do you, personally, believe in God? | yes/no/don't know |
| 1968 | Gallup Opinion Index | Do you believe in God? | yes/no/don't know |
| 1975 | Gallup Opinion Index | Do you believe in God or a universal spirit? | yes/no/don't know |
| 1981–2001 | World Values Survey/European Values Survey | Do you believe in God? | yes/no/don't know |

Source for Gallup polls: Lee Sigelman, “Review of the Polls: Multination Surveys of Religious Beliefs,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 16.3 (1977): 289–94.

two countries, the United States and Brazil. The decline proved sharpest in the Scandinavian nations, the Netherlands, Australia, and Britain. Table 3.2 illustrates very similar patterns for belief in life after death, where an erosion of subjective religiosity occurred in thirteen of the nineteen countries where evidence is available. The greatest falls during the last fifty years took place in northern Europe, Canada, and Brazil, and the only exceptions to this pattern were the United States, Japan, and Italy. These results show that declines in church attendance went hand in hand with a decline in certain core spiritual beliefs. One cannot separate the public and private dimensions of religiosity.

In the light of these European patterns, many have regarded the United States as the religious exception, although in fact the evidence remains somewhat ambiguous. At least until the late 1980s, analysis of trends in church

TABLE 3.2. Belief in Life after Death, 1947–2001

| Country | 1947 | 1968 | 1975 | 1981 | 1990 | 2001 | Change |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Norway | 71 | 54 | | 41 | 36 | | –35 |
| Finland | 69 | 55 | | | 44 | 44 | –25 |
| Denmark | 55 | | | 25 | 29 | 32 | –23 |
| Netherlands | 68 | 50 | | 41 | 39 | 47 | –21 |
| France | 58 | 35 | 39 | 35 | 38 | 39 | –19 |
| Australia | 63 | | 48 | 49 | | | –14 |
| Canada | 78 | | 54 | 61 | 61 | 67 | –11 |
| Sweden | 49 | 38 | | 28 | 31 | 39 | –10 |
| Greece | | 57 | | | | 47 | –10 |
| Brazil | 78 | | | | 70 | | –8 |
| Belgium | | | 48 | 36 | 37 | 40 | –8 |
| Britain | 49 | 38 | 43 | 46 | 44 | 45 | –4 |
| West Germany | | 41 | 33 | 36 | 38 | 38 | –3 |
| Switzerland | | 50 | | | 52 | | +2 |
| United States | 68 | 73 | 69 | 70 | 70 | 76 | +8 |
| Japan | | | 18 | 33 | 30 | 32 | +14 |
| Italy | | | 46 | 46 | 53 | 61 | +15 |
| Average 1947–2001 | 68 | | | | | 46 | –22 |

Notes: The percentage of the public who express belief in life after death in seventeen societies, listed in order of decreasing change in belief between 1947 and 2001. Numbers represent the percentage of respondents who answered “yes.” “Change” is the percentage difference between the first and last observation in the series. “Average 1947–2001” indicates the average for the eight nations with observations in both 1947 and 2001. Percentages based on the following questions and answers:

| Year | Source | Question | Possible Answers |
|-----------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1947–75 | Gallup Opinion Index | Do you believe in life after death? | yes/no/don't know |
| 1981–2001 | World Values Survey/European Values Survey | Do you believe in life after death? | yes/no/don't know |

Source for Gallup polls: Lee Sigelman, “Review of the Polls: Multination Surveys of Religious Beliefs,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 16.3 (1977): 289–94.

attendance derived from historical records and from representative surveys commonly reported that the size of congregations in the United States had remained stable over decades. Protestant church attendance had not declined significantly, and Catholic attendance, while falling rapidly from 1968 to 1975, did not erode further in subsequent years.¹⁶ The first benchmark from the Gallup organization measuring religiosity found that in March 1939 40% of American adults reported attending church the previous week, exactly the same figure given by Gallup more than sixty years later in 2003.¹⁷

Yet there are serious difficulties in obtaining reliable estimates of churchgoing from survey data. Studies suggest that the Gallup organization's procedures may systematically exaggerate attendance rates; some respondents claim to go to church because of the perceived social expectation that they should do so.¹⁸ Other data confirm that these estimates may be inflated. The American National Election Survey, conducted every two years since the late 1950s, suggests that weekly church attendance never rises much about 25% in the United States. Moreover, when the National Election Survey modified the question sequence to reduce any perception that attendance might be the norm, the proportion reporting that they never attend church jumped from 12% to 33% and has stayed at that level in subsequent surveys.¹⁹ The U.S. General Social Survey, conducted annually by the National Opinion Research Center during the last three decades, also indicates that weekly church attendance in America hovers around the 25%–30% range, with a significant fall in church attendance occurring during the last decade. According to the General Social Survey, the proportion of Americans reporting that they attended church at least weekly fell to one quarter in the most recent poll, while at the same time the proportion saying that they never attended church doubled to one fifth of all Americans (see figure 3.3).²⁰

Other indicators also suggest that traditional religious participation may have eroded in the United States, parallel to the long-term trends experienced throughout Europe. For example, Gallup polls registered a modest decline in the proportion of Americans who are *members* of a church or synagogue, down from about three-quarters (73%) of the population in 1937 to about two-thirds (65%) in 2001. The General Social Survey monitored religious identities annually during the last three decades. It found that the proportion of Americans who are secularists, reporting that they have *no* religious preference or identity, climbed steadily from 5% in 1972 to just under 15% thirty years later. During these decades, the main erosion occurred among American Protestants at a time when patterns of adherence were changing within that community. Many studies report that congregations for newer evangelical churches have expanded their membership at the expense of mainline Protestant denominations such as the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, in part due to changes in the American population and also patterns of immigration from Latin America and Asia. Meanwhile, the proportion of Catholics in the population has remained fairly steady, in part due to a substantial influx of Hispanic immigrants with large families. The picture is one of greater religious diversity within the Christian fold and still high levels of identification and participation—even if the overall trend has been slightly downward.²¹

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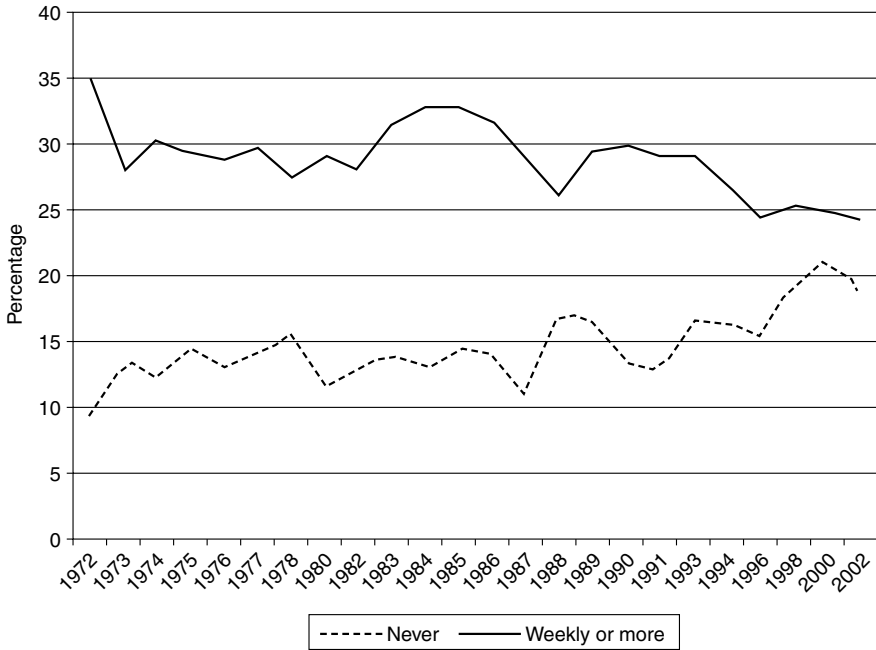


FIGURE 3.3 Religious Participation in the United States, 1972–2002

Notes: Question: “How often do you attend religious services?” Answers: never/at least once a week or more often.

Source: U.S. General Social Survey, 1972–2002 N.43, 204.

We can conclude that the United States remains one of the most religious in the club of rich countries, alongside Ireland and Italy, and indeed as observed earlier this makes America one of the most religious countries in the world. The pervasive importance of these religious values is apparent in many American practices, especially in public life—even prior to the Bush administration and 9/11—despite the strict division of church and state that characterizes much of the legal system. Nevertheless the accumulated evidence suggests that that secular tendencies in the United States may have strengthened, at least during the last decade, narrowing the gap with the less religious societies that dominate Western Europe. Public displays of religiosity by politicians and the salience of religious issues in an increasingly diverse population should not be confused with a broad-based religious revival within society. There is little evidence of the latter.

Explaining Variations in Religiosity: The Religious Market Model

What explains the cross-national variations in religiosity particularly evident in the transatlantic context? Religious market theory suggests that supply-side

factors, notably denominational competition and state regulation of religious institutions, shape levels of religious participation in the United States and Europe and beyond. During the last decade many American commentators have enthusiastically advanced this account, and the principle proponents include Roger Finke, Rodney Stark, Lawrence R. Iannaccone, William Sims Bainbridge, and R. Stephen Warner.²² Market-based theories in the sociology of religion assume that the demand for religious products is relatively constant, based on the otherworldly rewards of life after death promised by most (although not all) faiths.²³ Dissimilar levels of spiritual behavior evident in various countries are believed to result less from “bottom up” demand than from variance in “top down” religious supply. Religious groups compete for congregations with different degrees of vigor. Established churches are thought to be complacent monopolies taking their congregations for granted, with a fixed market share due to state regulation and subsidy for one particular faith that enjoys special status and privileges. By contrast, where a free religious marketplace exists, energetic competition between churches expands the supply of religious “products,” thereby mobilizing religious activism among the public.

The theory claims to be a universal generalization applicable to all faiths, although the evidence to support this argument is drawn largely from the United States and Western Europe. The proliferation of diverse churches in the United States, such as Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian mainline churches, as well as the Southern Baptist Convention, the Assemblies of God, Pentecostal, and Holiness churches among conservative denominations, is claimed to have maximized choice and competition among faiths, thereby mobilizing the American public. American churches are subject to market forces. Their survival and success depends upon their ability to attract clergy and volunteers, as well as the financial resources from their membership. Competition is thought to generate certain benefits, producing diversity, stimulating innovation, and compelling churches to actively recruit congregations by responding to public demands. For example, the National Congregations Study found that American churches commonly seek to attract new adherents by offering multiple social activities beyond worship, including religious education, cultural and arts groups, engagement in community politics, and welfare services such as soup kitchens.²⁴

Proponents of religious market theory point to very different conditions in Europe. Stark and Finke argue that many European countries sustain what they term “a *socialized* religious economy,” with state subsidies for established churches restricting the free competition that creates more religious demand in the U.S. context. Religious monopolies are believed to be less innovative, responsive, and efficient. Where clergy enjoy secure incomes and tenure regardless of their performance, such as in Germany and Sweden, priests and ministers are thought to grow complacent, slothful, and lax. “When people have little need or motive to work, they tend not to work,” Stark and Finke argue. “Subsidized churches will therefore be lazy.”²⁵ If the “supply” of churches were expanded in Europe through disestablishment and deregulation, they suggest, and if clerics just made more effort, a resurgence of religious behavior among

the public might take place. "To the extent that organizations work harder," they conclude, "they are more successful. What could be more obvious?"²⁶

What indeed? Yet, after considerable debate during the last decade, the evidence that religious competition provides a plausible explanation of religious participation remains controversial.²⁷ Criticisms have been both theoretical and empirical. Conceptually Joseph Bryant questions the appropriateness of the cost-benefit model and the use of metaphors such as "markets," "products," "commodities," and "capital" in the analysis of religion.²⁸ In terms of the evidence, commentators note serious flaws with the measures commonly used to gauge the degree of religious competition. Mark Chaves and Philip Gorski conducted a thorough metareview of the literature by examining the results of 193 tests of the evidence, drawn from different geographical and historical settings, from a series of twenty-six articles published on this subject. They conclude that the theory lacked consistent support, as some studies found a significant correlation between religious pluralism and religious participation, while others failed to confirm any linkage.²⁹ The most critical analysis by David Voas, Daniel Olson, and Alasdair Crockett concludes that any observed relationships are spurious and that a purely mathematical association between the leading pluralism index and religious participation rates can explain any positive or negative correlations. The study concludes that there is no compelling evidence from *any* of the existing studies that religious pluralism influences church participation rates.³⁰

The appropriate geographic unit of analysis is also problematic. The original supply-side theory conceived of religious competition as rivalry between different churches within a particular local community, typified by the role of Baptist, Episcopalian, and Catholic churches in the United States. Once we extend the comparison more broadly cross-nationally, however, it becomes unclear how competition should be gauged, for example, whether the key comparison should be competition among different denominations and sects, or whether we should focus on rivalry between and among multiple churches, temples, mosques, synagogues, and shrines representing all the major world religions. There is still no compelling way to extend a theory grounded in the U.S. experience in an international direction.

What other empirical evidence could be mustered to support the argument that greater religious competition leads to more churchgoing in the United States than in Western Europe? Stark and Finke provide numerous examples of specific limitations experienced by particular denominations and faiths in Western European countries. They include incidents of limited religious freedoms, such as harassment experienced by Jehovah's Witnesses in Portugal, Germany, and France, and legal regulations such as tax-free status with positive fiscal benefits for established churches.³¹ Yet this approach, centered on particular examples, is unsystematic, and bias may arise from the particular selection of cases. It is true that the United States displays a diverse range of churches and temples and relatively high rates of churchgoing and subjective religiosity. This fits the theory. But clear anomalies to this relationship also

exist, most notably high levels of churchgoing evident in Ireland and Italy, despite the fact that the Catholic Church predominates as a virtual monopoly in these nations.³²

More systematic cross-national evidence is provided in a study by Lawrence Iannaccone comparing church attendance in eight Western European nations (excluding six predominantly Catholic cultures) plus four Anglo-American democracies. Regression analysis found a significant and very strong relationship between the degree of denominational pluralism in these countries and levels of religious participation (rates of weekly church attendance).³³ It remains unclear, however, why the six predominantly Catholic cultures in southern and western Europe are excluded from this comparison—countries with dominant churches and relatively high participation. Their incorporation would have challenged the model. Ian Smith, John Sawkins, and Paul Seaman compared eighteen societies based on the 1991 International Social Survey Program religion survey and reported that religious pluralism was significantly related to regular religious participation.³⁴ Other cross-national studies have reported results inconsistent with the supply-side thesis. For example, Johan Verweij, Peter Ester, and Rein Nauta conducted a cross-national comparison using the 1990 European Values Survey in sixteen countries. They found that irrespective of the model specification, religious pluralism in any particular country was an insignificant predictor of levels of religious participation, whether measured against rates of church attendance or church membership. By contrast, the degree of state regulation was important, along with the predominant religious culture and the overall level of societal modernization.³⁵ Research by Steve Bruce, comparing religiosity in the Nordic and Baltic states, also concludes that trends in religious observance contradicted a number of core supply-side propositions.³⁶ The empirical evidence supporting the supply-side thesis has come under serious attack, as the conclusions of most of the studies by Stark and Finke were contaminated by a coding error and the index most often used to measure religious pluralism was flawed in certain respects.³⁷

In defense of the religious market approach, it should be noted that it is a viable theory that is open to testing. It should not be dismissed because of methodological and measurement problems that have arisen. When the best available methods and data are applied, however, it ultimately fails to demonstrate a link between religious competition and religious behavior. If the supply-side theory is correct, both religious pluralism and state regulation of religion should be important in predicting rates of churchgoing in postindustrial societies. In particular, countries with great competition among multiple pluralist religious churches, denominations, and faiths should have the highest religious participation.³⁸

Contrary to the predictions of supply-side theory, the correlation between religious pluralism and religious behavior all prove insignificant in postindustrial societies. The results *lend no support to the claim of a significant link between religious pluralism and participation*, and this is true irrespective of

whether the comparison focuses on frequency of attendance at services of worship or the frequency of prayer.³⁹ Among postindustrial societies, the United States is exception in its combination of high rates of religious pluralism *and* participation: the theory does indeed fit the American case, but the problem is that it fails to work elsewhere. Other English-speaking nations share similar levels of religious pluralism. In these countries, however, far fewer people regularly attend church. Moreover, in Catholic postindustrial societies the relationship is actually *reversed*, with the highest participation evident in Ireland and Italy, where the church enjoys a virtual religious monopoly, compared with more pluralist Netherlands and France, where churchgoing habits are far weaker. Nor is this merely due to the comparison of postindustrial societies: the global comparison in all nations confirms that there is no significant relationship between participation and pluralism across the broader distribution of societies worldwide.⁴⁰

Of course, the theory might be revived by arguing that what matters is less competition among the major faiths, since people rarely convert directly, but rather competition among or within specific denominations, since people are more likely to switch particular churches within closely related families. This proposition would require testing at community level with other forms of data, at a finer level of denominational detail than is available in most social surveys, and indeed even in most census data. It should be recalled, though, that if the claims of the original theory were modified in this direction, its applicability for cross-national research would become limited outside the U.S. context, with its denominational configuration. If one looks at major religious communities, not their subdivisions, and at a range of different countries, religious market theory centered on levels of religious competition does not hold up well at all.

An alternative version of religious market theory predicts that participation will also be maximized where there is a strong constitutional division between church and state, protecting religious freedom of worship and toleration of different denominations, without hindrance to particular sects and faiths. This is one of the explanations for American exceptionalism advanced by Seymour Martin Lipset, who argues that the long-standing separation of church and state in the United States has given the churches greater autonomy and allowed varied opportunities for people to participate in religion.⁴¹ Three indicators have been deployed to analyze this relationship: (1) A six-point scale measuring levels of state regulation of religion developed by Mark Chaves and David E. Cann in the context of eighteen postindustrial nations; (2) the Norris and Inglehart Freedom of Religion Index constructed by coding twenty indicators such as the role of the state in subsidizing churches, constitutional recognition of freedom of religion, and restrictions of certain denominations, cults, or sects; and (3) the summary analysis of religious freedom generated every year by a leading nongovernmental organization, Freedom House.⁴²

Contrary to the expectations of religious market theory, the results of the simple correlations using these data sources suggest that no significant relationship exists between any of these indicators of religious freedom and levels of religious behavior. This is true in a comparison of postindustrial nations that

encompasses the United States and Europe, as well as in the global comparison of all countries where data were available.⁴³ There are many reasons why one might imagine that the spread of greater tolerance and freedom of worship, by facilitating religious competition, might prove conducive to greater religious activity among the public. But so far the range of evidence using multiple indicators fails to support the supply-side claims.

Religious market theory therefore provides only limited insights into the diversity of religious participation found in rich nations. In postindustrial nations no empirical support that we examined could explain the puzzle why some rich nations are far more religious than others, and there is no significant link between patterns of religious behavior and the indicators of religious pluralism, religious freedom, and state-church relations. But, of course, this still leaves us with the question posed at the outset: Why are some societies such as the United States more religious in their habits and beliefs than most comparable Western nations sharing a Christian cultural heritage?

Secure Secularization Thesis

Our answer to this question centers on patterns of human security and, in particular, conditions of socioeconomic inequality. Where there is less societal vulnerability, insecurity, and risk, we argue that people generally have less recourse to religion. Historically, the growth of the welfare state in industrialized nations has insured large sectors of the public against the worst risks of ill health and old age, penury, and destitution. The work of nonprofit charitable foundations, private insurance, and financial institutions have also increased human security in postindustrial nations. These developments, taken together, have reduced the vital role of religion in people's lives, both as a source of comfort and meaning and as a reservoir of community support. Of course, affluent nations have multiple pockets of long-term poverty, whether afflicting unemployed African Americans living in the inner cities of Los Angeles and Detroit; farm laborers in Sicily; or Bangladesh, Pakistani, and Indian émigrés in Leicester and Birmingham. Populations typically most at risk in industrialized nations, capable of falling through the welfare safety net, include the elderly and children; single-parent female-headed households; the long-term disabled, homeless, and unemployed; and ethnic minorities. If we are correct that feelings of vulnerability are key drivers of religiosity, even in rich nations, one should be able to discern patterns linking levels of economic inequality across societies with levels of religious belief and engagement.

We can analyze the distribution of economic resources in postindustrial societies by comparing the extent to which the distribution of income among households within a society deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. It turns out that the level of economic inequality proves strongly and significantly related to both attendance at religious services and prayer, and the latter in particular. Figure 3.4 illustrates this relationship. The United States is exceptionally high in religiosity in large part, we believe, because it is also one of

the most unequal postindustrial societies under comparison. Despite private affluence for the well-off, many American families, even in the professional middle classes, face serious risks of loss of paid work by the main breadwinner, the dangers of sudden ill health without adequate private medical insurance, vulnerability to becoming a victim of crime, as well as the problems of paying for long-term care of the elderly. Americans face greater anxieties than citizens in other advanced industrialized countries about whether they will be covered by medical insurance, whether they will be fired arbitrarily, or whether they will be forced to choose between losing their job and devoting themselves to their newborn child.⁴⁴ The entrepreneurial culture and the emphasis on personal responsibility has generated conditions of individual freedom and delivered considerable societal affluence, and yet one trade-off is that the United States has greater income inequality than any other advanced industrial democracy.⁴⁵ By comparison, despite recent pressures on restructuring, the secular Scandinavian and Western European states remain some of the most egalitarian societies, with relatively high levels of personal taxation, but also an expansive array of welfare services in the public sector, including comprehensive health care, social services, and pensions.⁴⁶

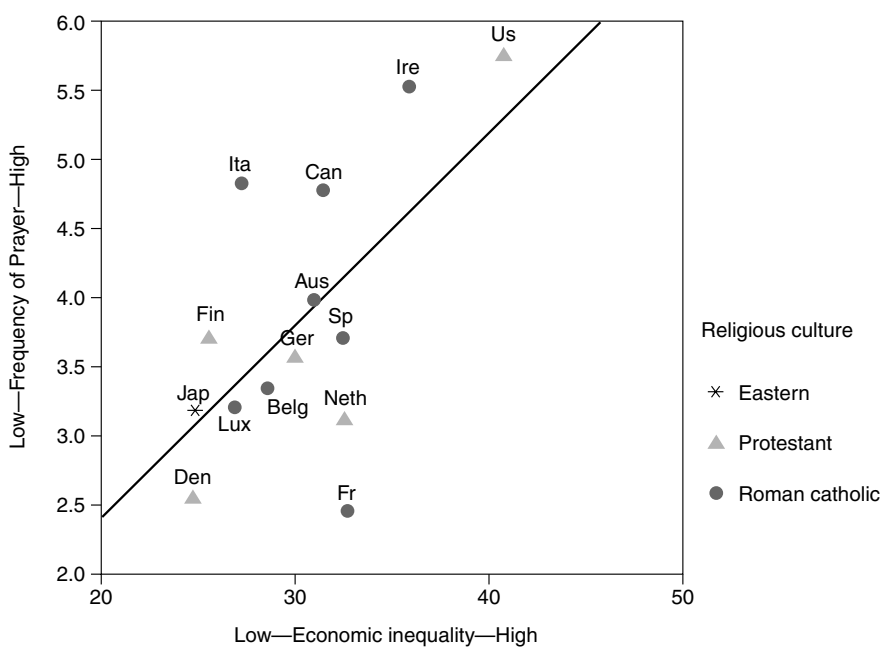


FIGURE 3.4 Religiosity and Economic Inequality

Notes: Question 199: "How often do you pray to God outside of religious services? Would you say . . . Every day (7), more than once a week (6), once a week (5), at least once a month (4), several times a year (3), less often (2), never (1)" (number = mean frequency per society). Economic inequality is gauged by the Gini coefficient (latest year: World Bank, 2002).

Source: World Values Survey, pooled 1981–2001.

If this argument rested only on the cross-national comparisons then, of course, it would be too limited, as multiple other characteristics distinguish Western Europe and the United States. But evidence can also be examined at the individual level by looking at how far the distribution of income relates to religious behavior. The patterns in figure 3.5 show that religiosity is systematically related at the individual level to the distribution of income groups in postindustrial societies. Generally speaking, *the poor are almost twice as religious as the rich*. Similar patterns can be found in the United States (see figure 3.6). For example, two-thirds (66%) of the least well-off income group pray daily, compared with 47% of the highest income group.

The range of evidence presented here in postindustrial societies serves to confirm a broader pattern. Secularization is not a deterministic process but it is still one that is largely predictable, based on knowing just a few facts about levels of human development and socioeconomic equality in each country. Growing up in societies in which survival is uncertain is conducive to a strong emphasis on religion; conversely, experiencing high levels of existential security throughout one's formative years reduces the subjective importance of religion in people's lives. The religious market assumption that demand for religion is constant does not hold in practice. Globally, the evidence suggests that as a society moves past the early stages of industrialization and life becomes less nasty, less brutish, and longer, people tend to become more secular in their orientations. The most crucial explanatory variables are those that differentiate between vulnerable societies and societies in which human security is so robust so as to be taken for granted by most of the population.

If the levels of societal and individual security in any society seem to provide the most persuasive and parsimonious explanation for variations in religiosity, a number of other possible explanatory factors could be brought into the picture as well—from institutional structures to state restrictions on freedom of worship, the historical role of church-state relations, and patterns of denominational and church competition. Although rising levels of existential security are conducive to secularization, cultural change is path dependent: the historically predominant religious tradition of a given society tends to leave a lasting impact on religious beliefs and other social norms, ranging from approval of divorce to gender roles, tolerance of homosexuality, and work orientations. Where a society started from continues to influence where it is at later points in time, so that the citizens of historically Protestant societies continue to show values that are distinct from those prevailing in historically Catholic or Hindu or Orthodox or Confucian societies. These cross-national differences do not reflect the influence of the religious authorities today—they persist even in societies where the vast majority no longer attends church. They reflect historical influences that shaped given national cultures and today affect the entire population. Within the Netherlands, for example, those who have left the church tend to share a common national value system that is very distinctive in global perspective.

A society's historical heritage leaves a lasting imprint, but the process of secularization tends to bring systematic cultural changes that move in a predictable direction, diminishing the importance of religion in people's lives and

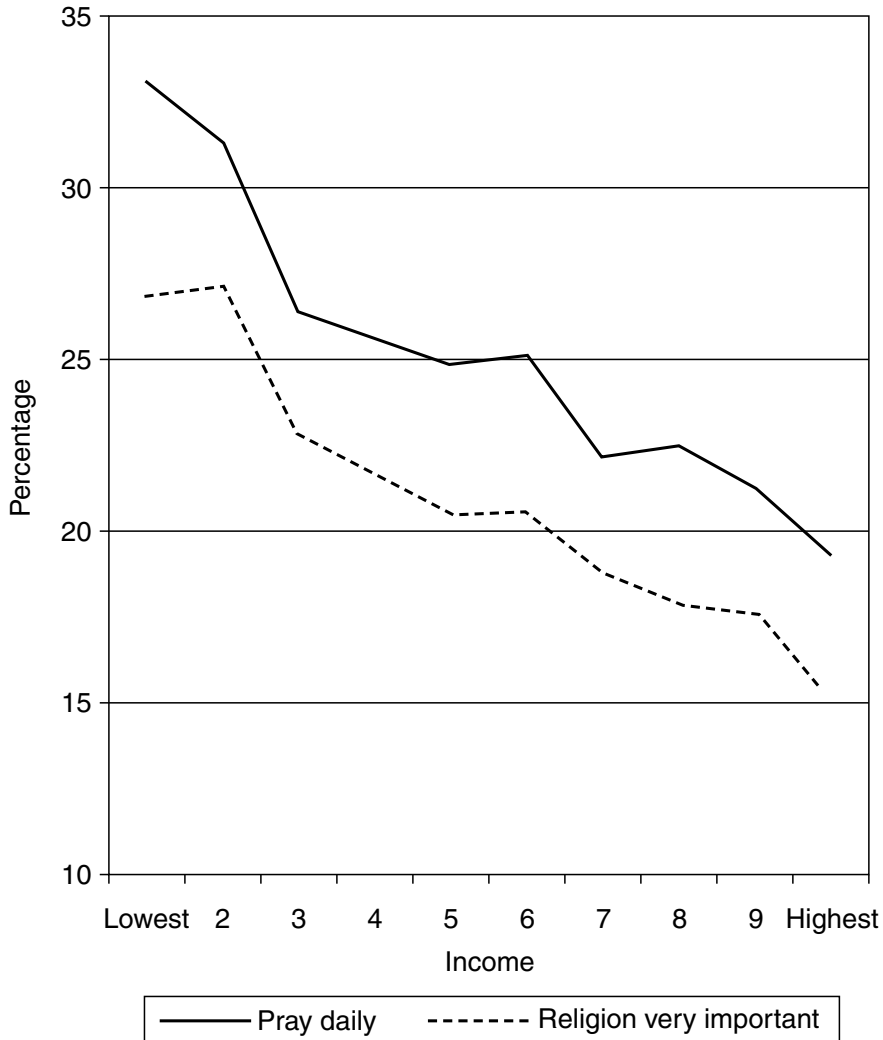


FIGURE 3.5 Religiosity by Income in Postindustrial Societies

Notes: The percentage of the public who pray daily and who regard religion as very important by decile household income group (counting all wages, salaries, pensions, and other incomes, before taxes and other deduction) in postindustrial societies.

Source: World Values Study, pooled 1981–2001.

weakening allegiance to traditional cultural norms, making people more tolerant of divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and cultural change in general. It may seem paradoxical to claim that economic development brings systematic changes *and* that a society's cultural heritage continues to have an impact, but it is not. If every society in the world were moving in the same direction, at the

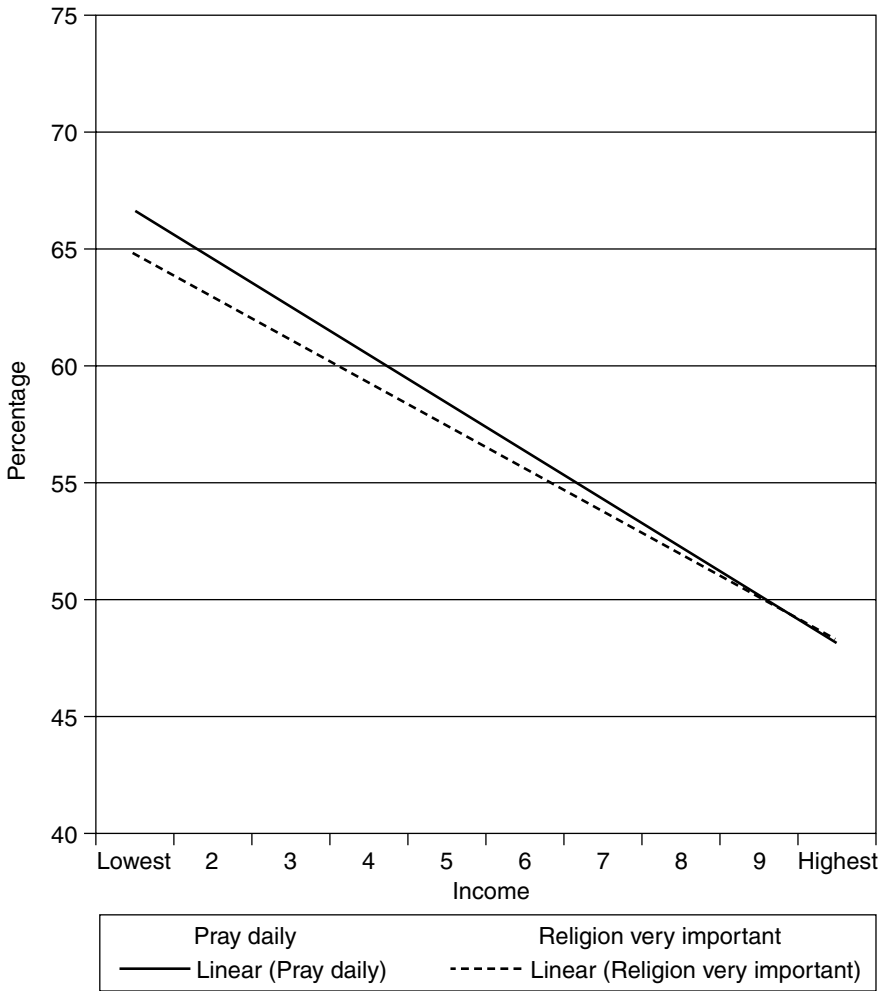


FIGURE 3.6 Religiosity by Income in the United States

Notes: Linear trends in the percentage of the American public who pray daily and who regard religion as very important by decile household income group (counting all wages, salaries, pensions, and other incomes, before taxes and other deduction).

Source: World Values Study, pooled 1981–2001.

same speed, they would remain as far apart as ever and would never converge. The reality is not that simple. Secularization started earliest and has moved farthest in the most economically developed countries; and little or no secularization has taken place in the low-income countries. This means that the cultural differences linked with economic development not only are not shrinking, they are growing *larger*. Secularization and the persistence of cultural differences are perfectly compatible.

Conclusions and Implications

This essay addressed the dynamics of religious pluralism, understood both as a diversity of beliefs, values, and practices among communities of different faiths, as well as patterns of competition among religious organizations for adherents. We described the divergent religious landscapes on both sides of the Atlantic—the greater religiosity in the United States compared with most of Western Europe. Against this backdrop we made two claims. The first is that despite the greater visibility of religion in the public sphere, particularly evident since 9/11, the overall trend at the societal level is toward greater secularization. No single indicator is ever sufficient by itself to confirm or refute the secularization thesis, since the specific choice of measures and concepts always remain open to question. Studies use alternative time periods and cross-national comparative frameworks, and often we lack good long-term evidence. The most persuasive evidence about secularization in rich nations concerns values and behavior. The critical test is what people say is important to their lives and what they actually *do*. During the twentieth century in nearly all postindustrial nations—ranging from Canada and Sweden to France, Britain, and Australia—official church records report that where once the public flocked to worship services, the pews are now almost deserted. The surveys monitoring European church-going during the last fifty years confirm this phenomenon.

The United States remains exceptional. The strongest challenge to secularization theory arises from American observers who commonly point out that claims of steadily diminishing congregations in Western Europe are sharply at odds with U.S. trends, at least until the early 1990s.⁴⁷ In fact, the evidence is very mixed. The best data suggest that religious identification and behavior have declined considerably in the United States, if not as precipitously as Europe. The United States should not be excluded from any consideration of the dynamics of secularization in today's world. A vibrant religious pluralism now encompassing a greater diversity of faith traditions characterizes the country, and religious issues find their way into the media and politics with great frequency. But the salience of religion should not be confused with its resurgence at a societal level. Transatlantic differences in levels of religiosity are stark and important, but should not be exaggerated beyond their actual extent.

The second part of the essay presented and critiqued one major effort to explain these transatlantic differences—religious market theory. The view that the religious supply creates its own demand—that competition among churches is what explains the general higher level of religiosity in the United States—does not survive analytical scrutiny. An alternative approach, based on different levels of existential security, was put forward. Evidence suggests that the more that basic existential economic and social needs are met, the more religiosity declines. One can easily think of striking exceptions, such as Osama bin Laden, someone both extremely rich and fanatically religious. But when we go beyond anecdotal evidence such as this, we find that the overwhelming bulk

of evidence points in the opposite direction: people who experience ego-tropic risks during their formative years (posing direct threats to themselves and their families) or socio-tropic risks (threatening their community) tend to be far more religious than those who grow up under safer, comfortable, and more predictable conditions. In relatively secure societies, the remnants of religion have not died away; in surveys most Europeans still express formal belief in God or identify themselves as Protestants or Catholics on official forms. But in these societies the importance and vitality of religion, its ever-present influence on how people live their daily lives, has gradually eroded. In the United States, with its lower levels of social cohesion and higher levels of existential uncertainty, religious belief and practice are higher. And within the United States, the more secure economically and socially tend to be less religious. There is no question that the traditional secularization thesis needs updating. It is obvious that religion has not disappeared from the world, nor does it seem likely to do so. Nevertheless, the concept of secularization captures an important part of what is going on.

When this argument about Atlantic democracies is placed within a global context, a different picture emerges. Despite trends in secularization occurring in rich nations, the world as a whole has not become less religious. The most recent research supports two broad conclusions: (1) the publics of virtually all advanced industrial societies have been moving toward more secular orientations during the past fifty years; and (2) the world as a whole now has more people with traditional religious views than ever before—and they constitute a growing proportion of the world's population. Though these two propositions may initially seem contradictory, they are not. In fact, that the first proposition is true helps account for the second—because secularization and human development have a powerful negative impact on human fertility rates. Practically all of the countries in which secularization is most advanced show fertility rates far below the replacement level—while societies with traditional religious orientations have fertility rates that are two or three times the replacement level. They contain a growing share of the world's population. This expanding gap between sacred and secular societies around the globe has important consequences for the future of religious pluralism, cultural change, and world politics.

NOTES

1. For a discussion, see Steve Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 170–94; and Alan Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), chap. 4.

2. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 32–33.

3. The term *fundamentalist* is used in a neutral way to refer to those with an absolute conviction in the fundamental principles of their faith to the exclusion of other beliefs.

4. See, for example, Peter L. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 2. Compare this statement with the arguments in idem, *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967).

5. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 79. See also Rodney Stark, "Secularization, RIP," *Sociology of Religion* 60.3 (1990): 270.

6. As Roger Finke puts it, "The vibrancy and growth of American religious institutions presents the most open defiance of the secularization model"; "An Unsecular America," in *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, ed. Steve Bruce (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 148.

7. Further discussion of related issues can be found in Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

8. Berger, *Desecularization of the World*.

9. See, for example, Sabino Samele Acquaviva, *The Decline of the Sacred in Industrial Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979); Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); and idem, *God Is Dead* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). For a challenge to this view, see Rodney Stark and Lawrence Iannaccone, "A Supply-side Reinterpretation of the 'Secularization' of Europe," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33 (1985): 230–52.

10. Wolfgang Jagodzinski and Karel Dobbelaere, "Secularization and Church Religiosity," in *The Impact of Values*, ed. Jan W. van Deth and Elinor Scarbrough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 105.

11. Andrew M. Greeley, *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2003), xi.

12. Reginald W. Bibby, "The State of Collective Religiosity in Canada: An Empirical Analysis," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 16.1 (1979): 105–16; and Ian McAllister, "Religious Change and Secularization: The Transmission of Religious Values in Australia," *Sociological Analysis* 49.3 (1988): 249–63.

13. Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also Robert C. Fuller, *Spiritual, But Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

14. Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); and Danièle Hervieu-Léger, "The Case for a Sociology of 'Multiple Religious Modernities': A Different Approach to the 'Invisible Religion' of European Societies," *Social Compass* 50.3 (2003): 287–95.

15. Greeley, *Religion in Europe*.

16. Andrew M. Greeley, *Religious Change in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

17. The March 1939 Gallup–AIPO poll asked, "Did you happen to go to church last Sunday?" (answers: 40% yes, 60% no). The March 14, 2003, Gallup–CNN/*USA Today* poll asked (with percentages in brackets), "How often do you attend church or synagogue—at least once a week [31%], almost every week [9%], about once a month [16%], seldom [28%], or never [16%]?" Kirk Hadaway points out that self-reported church attendance figures may well contain systematic bias toward overreporting, compared with records of the actual size of congregations; C. Kirk Hadaway, Penny L. Marler, and Mark Chaves, "What the Polls Don't Show: A Closer Look at Church Attendance," *American Sociological Review* 58.6 (1993): 741–52. For more details about

the Gallup organization's time-series tracking religion in America, see D. Michael Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape: Trends in U.S. Beliefs* (New York: Moorhouse, 2000).

18. See, for example, Robert D. Woodberry, "When Surveys Lie and People Tell the Truth: How Surveys Oversample Church Attenders," *American Sociological Review* 63.1 (1998): 119–22.

19. See details of the National Election Survey series at www.umich.edu/~NES.

20. See also C. Kirk Hadaway, Penny L. Marler, and Mark Chaves, "Over-reporting Church Attendance in America: Evidence That Demands the Same Verdict," *American Sociological Review* 63.1 (1998): 122–30.

21. Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); and Michael Hout, Andrew M. Greeley, and Melissa J. Wilde, "The Demographic Imperative in Religious Change in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 107.2 (2001): 468–500.

22. Stark and Iannaccone, "Supply-side Reinterpretation"; Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987); Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Roger Finke and Lawrence R. Iannaccone, "The Illusion of Shifting Demand: Supply-side Explanations for Trends and Change in the American Religious Market Place," *Annals of the American Association of Political and Social Science* 527 (1993): 27–39.

23. Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*, 88. It should be noted that the assumed universal rationality in the supply-side theory has been criticized as inapplicable to religions such as Confucianism and Judaism that do not believe that behavior in this life generates otherworldly rewards in any afterlife. See Mark Chaves and Philip S. Gorski, "Religious Pluralism and Religious Participation," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 261–81; and Stephen Sharot, "Beyond Christianity: A Critique of the Rational Choice Theory of Religion from a Weberian and Comparative Religions Perspective," *Sociology of Religion* 63.4 (2002): 427–54.

24. Mark Chaves, "The National Congregations Study: Background, Methods, and Selected Results," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38.4 (1999): 458–76.

25. Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*, 230.

26. *Ibid.*, 237–38, 257.

27. Chaves and Gorski, "Religious Pluralism and Religious Participation."

28. Joseph M. Bryant, "Cost-benefit Accounting and the Piety Business: Is *Homo Religiosus*, at bottom, a *Homo Economicus*?" *Methods and Theory in the Study of Religion* 12 (2000): 520–48.

29. Chaves and Gorski, "Religious Pluralism and Religious Participation."

30. David Voas, Daniel V. A. Olson, and Alasdair Crockett, "Religious Pluralism and Participation: Why Previous Research Is Wrong," *American Sociological Review* 67.2 (2002): 212–30.

31. See also Stark and Iannaccone, "Supply-side Reinterpretation."

32. For an attempt to explain the Italian case as the result of internal competition within Catholicism, see Luca Diotallevi, "Internal Competition in a National Religious Monopoly: The Catholic Effect and the Italian Case," *Sociology of Religion* 63.2 (2002): 137–55.

33. Lawrence R. Iannaccone, "The Consequences of Religious Market Structure," *Rationality and Society* 3 (1991): 156–77.

34. Ian Smith, John W. Sawkins, and Paul T. Seaman, "The Economics of Religious Participation: A Cross-country Study," *Kyklos* 51.1 (1998): 25–43.

35. Johan Verweij, Peter Ester, and Rein Nauta, "Secularization as an Economic and Cultural Phenomenon: A Cross-national Analysis," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36.2 (1997): 309–24.

36. Steve Bruce, "The Supply-side Model of Religion: The Nordic and Baltic States," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39.1 (2000): 32–46. See also Peter Beyer's related argument that the privatization of religion in Canada led toward greater secularization; "Religious Vitality in Canada: The Complimentarity of Religious Market and Secularization Perspectives," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36.2 (1997): 272–88.

37. Chaves and Gorski, "Religious Pluralism and Religious Participation"; and Voas, Olson, and Crockett, "Religious Pluralism and Participation."

38. This argument finds parallels in the debate about the relative importance of changes in the mass political culture and in society, or in the strength of party organizations, for explaining patterns of social and partisan dealignment. See the discussion in Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

39. It should be noted that the proportion of adherents to the majority religion in each country was also compared as an alternative measure of religious diversity or homogeneity, but this measure also proved an insignificant predictor of religious participation, whether the comparison was restricted to postindustrial societies or broadened to all nations worldwide.

40. Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*.

41. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of Canada and the United States* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

42. Mark Chaves and David E. Cann, "Regulation, Pluralism, and Religious Market Structure," *Rationality and Society* 4 (1992): 272–90; Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*; and Paul Marshall, "Religious Freedom in the World," www.freedomhouse.org.

43. For a full discussion, see Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 99.

44. For a discussion of the comparative evidence, see, for example, Derek Bok, *The State of the Nation: Government and the Quest for a Better Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

45. For example, a recent detailed study comparing the levels of household income after government redistribution through tax and welfare transfers, based on the Luxembourg Income Study database, found that the Gini coefficient for income inequality was greatest in the United States compared with thirteen other advanced industrial democracies. See David Bradley et al., "Distribution and Redistribution in Postindustrial Democracies," *World Politics* 55.1 (2003): 193–228.

46. Katherine McFate, Roger Lawson, and William Julius Wilson, eds., *Poverty, Inequality, and the Future of Social Policy: Western States in the New World Order* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1995); Alexander Hicks, *Social Democracy and Welfare Capitalism: A Century of Income Security Policies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); and Gosta Esping-Andersen, *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

47. Berger, *Desecularization of the World*; and Greeley, *Religion in Europe*.

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