

Political Science

Religious Fervor and Democracy: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

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Introduction

“Yoda and Darth Vader both worshipped the same religion.”

-Rabbi Eric Linder from the Congregational Children of Israel Synagogue

This paper will examine religion and democracy and how they coexist with each other. The paper will examine if religious fervor can either enhance or negatively affect democratic and communal participation. It will examine how religious fervor can have a positive and negative effect on democratic participation and communal participation. Democratic participation and communal participation will be represented by a series of variables ranging from voting participation to volunteer rankings.

Literature Review

Can religion be a driving internal factor for democracy? Most countries are full of a variety of religions and have their own internal struggles involving them. “In a great many countries-notably, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Philippines, South Korea, Poland, Haiti, South Africa, and Kenya-religious institutions (especially the Catholic Church) played prominent roles in the movements to oppose, denounce, frustrate, and remove authoritarian regimes” (Diamond 2008, 104). Religious denominations are part of the civil society that is integral for the sustainment and success of a democracy. Religion can also serve as a detriment to a developing democracy as exemplified in Pakistan during the 1990s. The polarization of religion within the country and extremist religious groups led to “violence and thuggery”. (Diamond 2008, 58) Different Muslim subgroups, constantly feuding and being in disagreements, didn’t help with political stability (Diamond 2008, 58). America has struggled in Iraq connecting all the religious dots and examples such as Pakistan show how difficult the Muslim religion can make forming a democracy. Diamond discusses Asia and how the continent

seems to be tied to the idea of being resistant to democracy, and China being the Communist elephant in the room when it comes to a democratic transition. China actually suppressed a religious movement in 1999 that was led by Falun Gong which featured over 70 million adherents. (Diamond 2008, 236) This movement was a highly anti-communist movement that was bonded by the Buddhist religion (Diamond 2008, 236).

Christianity is also booming in China, approaching 100 million members, which dwarfs the 70 million official members of the Communist Party (Diamond 2008, 236). So what does this have to do with the possible democratic transition of China? Well first of all the members of the communist party have lost their faith or religious fervor, while Christianity and other religions are serving as a “moral vacuum” (Diamond 2008, 236). This becomes relevant because as Diamond states, “Few systems of belief have the power to motivate and unite people in common cause as religion does”(Diamond 2008, 236). This supports the theory that “democracy itself, which can be quite compatible with, and even stimulated by, religion” (Diamond 2008, 236).

Marc D. Stern, who is general counsel of the American Jewish Congress and a contributor to a forthcoming book, “Same-sex Marriage and Religious Liberty.”, provides some insight on religion and its effect on democracy within his essay *Is Religion Compatible with Liberal Democracy?* He states,

“Advocates of a private role for religion insist that for a liberal democracy to function there must be the possibility of shared “political” and social conversations. That is, discussions of public policies must be accessible to all. An argument in a democracy about which of two flatly contradictory things God said cannot be resolved. What God said cannot be debated in a meaningful way in a secular legislative body or by a pluralistic community acting in corporate fashion. Unless we are to allow ourselves to dissolve into separate faith communities, held together by only God knows what, we must forge a common ground where a common language can be employed and common values can be implemented. Moreover, religious views often cannot easily be compromised, for religious arguments, reflecting absolute truths revealed (in Western religious thought) by God himself, do not lend themselves to resolution, debate, or compromise. But (moral) compromise is both essential to a functional democracy and quite difficult for many religions to accept. Again, consider the intractable abortion debate. In over 25 years since *Roe v. Wade*, we are about where we were the day after the decision was handed down. Relief is not on the horizon. The Republic can withstand one or two debates on the scale of the abortion debate, but it could not survive many such debates. It certainly could not survive if most contested issues were contested primarily on theological grounds. Abortion raises fundamental issues of morality, of

the role and place of women, and the permissible role and scope of government. In a democracy, liberal or otherwise, I know of no way to exclude such issues from public debate. And, as Professor Greenawalt of Columbia has argued persuasively, the arguments for choice are no more subject to scientific verification than those in opposition. But even as to abortion, it would be good for the well-being of the Republic if the arguments were, to the extent possible, cast in secular terms, accessible to all, and subject to the constraints applicable to more ordinary debates." (Stern 2012)

Stern makes the great point of showing that religion can cause divide within a society but also within a government. This is a contrasting belief considering Diamond's take on religion and democracy and the interaction of the two. It points to the idea that religious fervor can be a productive or unproductive part of democracy. Religion also can affect levels of social capital which is a driving force behind any efficient democracy.

Well what exactly is social capital? *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam addresses social capital at great lengths. For any of it to make sense, Putnam defines the term at great lengths. Essentially he describes it as the analogy of physical and human capital, which are both things that "enhance individual productivity" (Putnam 2000, 18). The social capital theory is the same idea except that social networks have value towards the success of a society, individuals, or groups (Putnam 2000, 19). Putnam describes social capital as "connections among individuals-social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (Putnam 2000, 19). The importance of social capital is not necessarily the civic virtue aspect. Civic virtue is very important to social capital but, "civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations." (Putnam 2000, 19) Good social capital is dependent on well-connected individuals and well-connected society (Putnam 2000, 20). The two aspects of social capital are what are necessary for social capital to deliver its positive effects. This doesn't mean that one can't exist without the other. Well-connected individuals can exist in a poorly connected community just as a well-connected society may have a few poorly connected individuals (Putnam 2000, 20).

So what exactly comprises good social capital? Putnam points out that there many shapes and sizes of social capital. Examples of what make up social capital range from an extended family, Sunday school class, a poker club, college roommates, civic organizations, internet chat groups, professional acquaintances, church attendance, and even bowling leagues (Putnam 2000, 21). All of these are parts of a society that can assist in building connections between individuals which in turn can create a well-connected community. Putnam describes how during the during the 1950s and 1960s civic life in America was booming (Putnam

2000, 18). Churches were filled every Sunday and civic organization membership was also on the rise (Putnam 2000, 17-20). Putnam quotes one of America's most acute social observers who prophesied that, "Participatory democracy has all along been the political style of the American middle and upper class. It will become a more widespread style as more persons enter into those classes. Never in our history had the future of civic life looked brighter" (Putnam 2000, 18).

Putnam's book focuses on the past several decades where the brightness of America's civic future seems to have been dimmed a bit. *Bowling Alone* the title encompasses the problem of there now being a decline in bowling leagues but individual bowling numbers are up (Putnam 2000). This is obviously a small and simple aspect of social capital but Putnam offers many qualitative statistics that show that American's civic fervor has been on the decline. *Bowling Alone* is a haven of statistics that cover aspects of civic life such as church attendance, political participation, volunteer rates, union membership, number of bars and restaurants in America, and even the number of hosted card games (Putnam 2000). Putnam examines religious participation as well in great detail with quantitative statistics. Religion has to be an important part of America's civic society because as one scholar Putnam quotes says, "the United States has been the most God-believing and religion-adhering, fundamentalist, and religiously traditional country in Christendom" and "the most religiously fecund country where more new religions have been born... than in any other society" (Putnam 2000, 65).

Larry Diamond writes in *The Spirit of Democracy* that social capital is integral in the development and success of a democracy (Diamond 2008). Religion is always going to be a large part of social capital as well as a large part of America's society. "Virtually all Americans say they believe in God." (Putnam 2000, 69), and year 2012 Gallup Poll showed that the national average for people who considered themselves "very religious" (religion is important in their life and they attend church every week or weekly) was at forty percent (Gallup 2012). So how does religion affect social capital? Putnam describes churches as being an "important incubator for civic skills, civic norms, community interests, and civic recruitment (Putnam 2000, 66). People who say that religion is very important to them are more likely than other people to visit friends, to entertain at home, to attend club meetings, and to belong to sports groups; professional and academic societies; school service groups; youth groups; service clubs; hobby or garden clubs; literary, art, discussion, and study groups; school fraternities and sororities; farm organization; political clubs; nationality groups; and other miscellaneous groups (Putnam 2000, 67). A survey featuring twenty- two different types of voluntary associations showed that religion was most closely related with other forms of civic involvement "like voting, jury service, community projects, talking with neighbors, and giving to charity (Putnam 2000, 67)". Putnam continues with the statistics stating

that “75-80 percent of church members give to charity, as compared with 55-60 percent of nonmembers, and 50-60 percent of church members volunteers, while only 30-35 percent of nonmembers do (Putnam 2000, 67).” In 1998 nearly 60 percent of all congregations reported contributing to social services or community and neighborhood groups (Putnam 2000, 68).

It is apparent that church involvement can be a driving force behind good social capital. This can be concerning because trends in church attendance have been on the slight decline up until the year 2000 according to Putnam (Putnam 2000, 71). Involvement in Sunday schools, Bible study groups, and “church socials” have also been on a trickling decline (Putnam 2000, 71). What may be the most concerning is where the decline is occurring? “Between the 1970s and the 1990s, church attendance among people under sixty dropped by roughly 10-20 percent, whereas among people sixty and over church attendance increased slightly (Putnam 2000, 73).” This is concerning because the early generation is not advancing in terms of religion participation to keep up with the previous religious participation. Acts of democracy such as protests have also suffered. Protest demonstrations for those under the age of thirty have declined about 10 percent from 1980 to 2000 (Putnam 2000, 165). Grassroots protests, such as gay and lesbian activists and proliferators, were very relevant in the 1990s, but as Putnam points out this hasn’t been enough to keep up with the other decline of political participation.

Robert D. Putnam wrote *Bowling Alone* to emphasize how disconnected the United States is beginning to become as a country, society, and community. The book provides a pretty grim outlook on our social capital levels across the country and provides numerous quantitative examples of how things such as church attendance, bowling leagues, book clubs, and PTA meeting attendance have gone down (R. D. Putnam 2000).

As Putnam states the United States has always been a thriving nest for religious growth and practice. It has also had its dark and ugly moment where religion was turned into a shameful force. The times of slavery across the south and most of America provide some of these unfortunate instances. Frederick Douglass describes how religion in the south served as a support system for slavery within a lecture he delivers in London.

“But you will ask me, can these things be possible in a land professing Christianity? Yes, they are so; and this is not the worst. No, a darker feature is yet to be presented than the mere existence of these facts. I have to inform you that the religion of the southern states, at this time, is the great supporter, the greater sanctioned of the bloody atrocities to which I have referred. While America is printing tracts and Bibles; sending missionaries abroad to convert the heathen; expending her money in various ways for the promotion of the Gospel in foreign

lands, the slave not only lies forgotten—uncared for, but is trampled underfoot by the very churches of the land. What have we in America? Why we have slavery made part of the religion of the land. Yes, the pulpit there stands up as the great defender of this cursed *institution*, as it is called. Ministers of religion come forward, and torture the hallowed pages of inspired wisdom to sanction the bloody deed. They stand forth as the foremost, the strongest defenders of this “institution.” As a proof of this, I need not do more than state the general fact, that slavery has existed under the droppings of the sanctuary of the south, for the last 200 years, and there has not been any war between the *religion* and the *slavery* of the south. (Douglass 1846)”

Douglass continues stating,

“This I conceive to be the darkest feature of slavery, and the most difficult to attack, because it is identified with religion, and exposes those who denounce it to the charge of infidelity. Yes, those with whom I have been laboring, namely, the old organization Anti-Slavery Society of America, have been again and again stigmatized as infidels, and for what reason? Why, solely in consequence of the faithfulness of their attacks upon the slaveholding religion of the southern states, and the northern religion that sympathizes with it. (Douglass 1846)”

Frederick Douglass provides a glimpse of how religious fervor can direct passion in the wrong direction. *Better Together*, a book by Robert Putnam and Lewis Feldstein, provides the light to the dark that Frederick Douglass casts over acts of religious fervor. Putnam and Feldstein share real life success stories of how social capital through religious fervor can be such a successful tool in a society. One example is the concept of relational organizing. This type of social capital is practiced through a program called Valley Interfaith (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 11). The book cites the example of when an elementary school in Pharr, Texas began to work with Valley Interfaith (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 11). This school is located in a very poor area that is made up of “unincorporated communities of mainly Mexican Americans and Mexican Immigrants” (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 11). This was one of the poorest regions in the United States at the time (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 11).

Valley Interfaith is a coalition of church and school groups and they work to get into the homes of those children who are a part of the struggling school system in this area (Putnam and Feldstein 2003). The teachers would visit the schools to see firsthand how the children were living and to speak with parents about how they could all work together to improve the situation for the children and the community (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 12). This part of the process would help gather a group of parents and teachers who care enough to do something about the dire education system in their area. This is what creates

the “house meetings” (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 13). These meetings allow for parents to meet and relate stories and decide how they can improve their communities’ situation (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 13). This is relational organizing. Relational organizing revolves around the idea of one-on-one meetings and building relationships aka social capital (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 13). These relationships that were built created money for the schools but most importantly they created relationships between the school and community that put people together that care about improvement (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 18).

Organizations such as Valley Interfaith utilize religious congregations to help build the interconnected relationships within a community. This was utilized by a man named Ernesto Cortes Jr. who brought the idea of taking citizens of poor and neglected communities and organizing them to let them exert their own power to Texas in the 1970s (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 14). To help implement this type of program he leaned on religious congregations of the area. As Putnam and Feldstein wrote, “Cortes worked closely with church congregations, rooting his organization in the network and values of those institutions-an innovation that made it possible to tap into well-established ties of trust and mutual interest, as well as shared religious beliefs that supported justice and social action” (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 15). This shows how important religious interaction can be when it comes to social capital. This being said the involvement in religion across the country has slumped (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 120). “Between 1960 and 2000 church membership, church attendance, and involvement in church-related groups such as Sunday schools, “church socials,’ and the like declined by perhaps one third nationwide (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 120).”

Yet church commentator Lyle Schaller notes that 1 percent of Protestant congregations in the United States attracted 12 percent of all worshipers on a typical weekend in 1998 (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 120). This is due to the rise of mega churches. One of these churches is Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 119-120). Thousands of people attend this church every weekend when church attendance and involvement is supposed to be on the decline. The church pastor would explain that it’s the contemporary style of the church that attracts so many members (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 120-130). These members are mostly people who were non-members before joining (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 120). So is the growth of these sometime maligned mega churches a good thing for social capital? Putnam and Feldstein cite the small interconnected groups that can be formed by the much larger mega church such as a group of parents letting their kids play while they discuss religion (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 120-132). Essentially these large groups are a collection of small groups that are all interconnected. This does nothing but boost social capital. Saddleback church also holds conferences to connect other churches

to theirs (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 132).

So are mega churches the future of religion? That's not necessarily the case. Putnam and Feldstein cite All Saints Church in Pasadena whose membership had doubled since 1980 up to 2000 (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 135). This church isn't even a tenth of the size of Saddleback (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 135). All Saints Church, like Saddleback, encourages small group gatherings of its members and is very active within the community (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 138-140). They also have a liberal outlook on things such as gay marriage and abortion being pro-choice and hosting same sex marriages (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 138). All Saints Church brings together a diverse group of members and connects across miles of California. "All Saints' unusual mix of social activism and satisfying ritual, along with the quality of preaching and music at the church, succeeds in attracting people who seek that combination and cannot find it elsewhere, and so the church avoids the pitfall of pluralism" (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 141). *Better Together* describes how America is making the right steps toward enhancing its social capital and examines how religion, a major aspect of social capital, can also thrive and contribute to the communities in America.

Mega churches aren't also spreading the love and bring people together. Tim Tebow was scheduled to make an appearance at the mega church First Baptist Church of Dallas on April 28, 2013 (Johnson 2013). This appearance was cancelled due to the pastor Robert Jeffress a television evangelist who has criticized gays and other faiths, such as Islam and Mormonism (Johnson 2013). This just goes to show that even in the year 2013 religious fervor cannot always lead to positive consequences.

Theory and Hypothesis

Larry Diamond, Robert Putnam and Lewis Feldstein all discuss in their own way how religion has a lasting effect on society as well as democratic participation. Robert Putnam wrote *Bowling Alone* in 2000 about thirteen years ago. Robert Putnam warns that the decline in religious participation across America is going to have ill effects on the democratic participation and social capital involvement across America (Putnam 2000). Should we all be so worried that not as many people are going to church? According to a Gallup Poll for the year 2012 the poll found that 40.1 percent of America consider themselves Very Religious meaning that they attend church every week or nearly every week and consider religion very important in their lives (Gallup 2012). The same poll also found that 31.1 percent of Americans consider themselves Non-Religious meaning that they don't attend church regularly and don't consider religion important in their lives (Gallup 2012). The United States very nearly has an even number of Non-Religious and Very Religious citizens within it which supports Putnam's claim that religious par-

ticipation is down in America. This is an undeniable truth. The religious landscape has changed across America and it may never revert back to being the same. But religion is and should be more than just “going to church and considering religion important in your life.” When it comes to Putnam’s social capital it’s the religious fervor that drives production within a society. How does religious fervor affect a democracy and the social capital aspects within it? Putnam makes many claims that religion can be a driving force behind social capital and democratic participation. Does religion affect aspects of democratic participation and social capital? How could this be tested? Alan D. Monroe defines a theory in his book *Essentials of Political Research* as “a set of empirical generalizations about a topic (Monroe 2000, 18).” The theory that has been developed is that religious fervor can have both a positive and negative effect on democratic participation and communal participation. This theory will not only classify religious fervor as attending church but in ways that involve stepping outside of the confines of alters and pews. Fervor is defined as intense and passionate feelings (Dictionary.com 2013). Religion definitely creates intense and passionate feelings that should translate over into democratic participation and social capital, right? Religious fervor will be defined by Gallup as Very Religious meaning that they attend church every week or nearly every week and consider religion very important in their lives (Gallup 2012). A variable is an “empirical property that can take on two or more different values (Monroe 2000, 19).” Democratic participation and communal participation will include social capital rankings that will be represented by a livability ranking. This ranking does not serve as a social capital ranking but it correlates with the much of what is social capital. They will also include volunteer rates, charitable rankings and hate groups across America. Democratic participation will be defined through voting participation and political participation. The hypothesis or “empirical statement derived from a theory” is that if religious fervor increases democratic participation and communal participation then it is positive. If religious fervor decreases democratic participation and communal participation then it is negative (Monroe 2000, 18). The two main variables that will be examined are religious fervor and democratic and communal participation. The independent variable within the study is religious fervor and the dependent variable is democratic participation and communal participation. The independent variable in a study is the variable that is presumed to be the cause, and the dependent variables are the effects or consequences (Monroe 2000, 20).

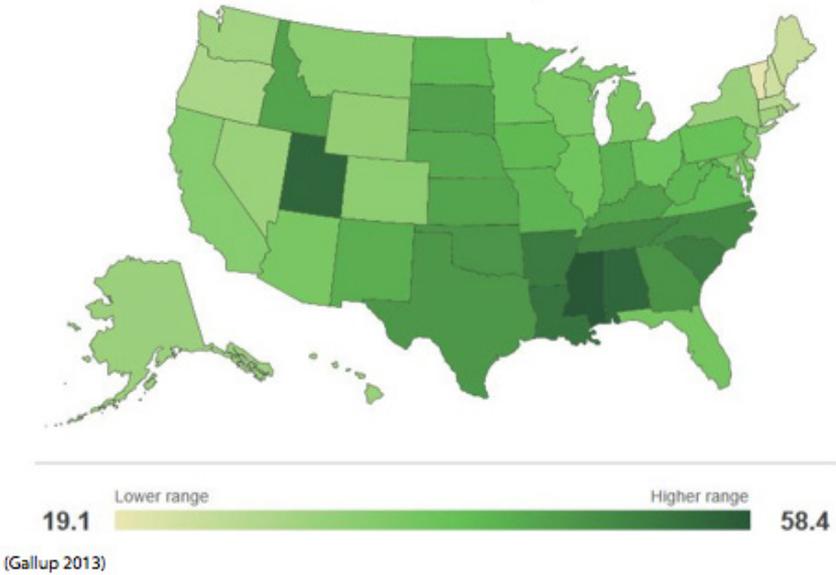
Research Design

With the variables being established the research required up to date rankings and data for all fifty states across America. For the variable of religious participation Gallup.com provided a ranking of religiosity for the year 2012. Three levels of religiosity were featured ranging from Very Religious to Non-Religious

(Gallup 2013). Within this study the ranking for of all fifty Very Religious states was used. Gallup defined Very religious as “The percentage of state residents who say religion is important in their lives and say they attend church weekly or nearly weekly.(Gallup 2013)”

Figure 1 ReligiosityAcross America

Figure 1 ReligiosityAcross America



(Gallup 2013)

The variable of volunteer rankings for all fifty states was derived from the site *Volunteering and Civic Life in America*. This ranking featured all fifty states ranked by the percentage of residents that volunteer within that state (*Volunteering and Civic Life in America* 2012). The most up to date volunteer ranking that could be found was for the year 2011.

The variable for charitable giving rates comes from the website *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. This ranking featured all fifty states ranked for the year 2012. The ranking done by *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* is “based on itemized charitable contributions as a share of income after excluding taxes, housing, and other necessities. Information is taken from tax returns of people who earned at least \$50,000 in 2008. Percentages are rounded” (*The Chronicle of Philanthropy* 2012).

The variable that is used to represent social capital is a livability ranking of

all 50 states. The *Congressional Quarterly Press* did this ranking for all 50 states and the most recent full set of data is from 2008. This ranking is “based on 44 factors ranging from median household income to crime rate, sunny days to infant mortality rate (Congressional Quarterly 2008).” They went on to say, “To determine a state’s “livability rating” the 44 categories were divided into two groups: those that are “negative” for which a high ranking would be considered bad for a state, and those that are positive for which a high ranking would be considered good for a state. Since a high livability rating is best, the rankings for the “positive factors” were inverted. Thus the state with the highest median income would rank 50th (Congressional Quarterly 2008). “Unique among the various rankings of states, our Most Livable State Award does not focus on any one category of data. Instead it takes into account a broad range of economic, educational, health-oriented, public safety, and environmental statistics (Congressional Quarterly 2008).”

The variable featuring hates groups across the states was borrowed from the *Southern Poverty Law Center*. “The Southern Poverty Law Center counted 1,007 active hate groups in the United States in 2012. Only organizations and their chapters known to be active during 2012 are included” within their data (Southern Poverty Law Center 2012). Their data included “Hate group activities such as criminal acts, marches, rallies, speeches, meetings, leafleting or publishing” (Southern Poverty Law Center 2012). “Websites appearing to be merely the work of a single individual, rather than the publication of a group, are not included (Southern Poverty Law Center 2012).”

The variable of voting participation was a list of voting percentages per states from the *United States Election Project*. This featured the voting rates for all fifty states and their voting eligible population. The voting percentages for each state were also from the votes for highest office. “The Vote for Highest Office is the traditional reported number of people who voted in a given election. In presidential election years, the vote for highest office is simply the presidential vote. In a non-presidential election year the vote for highest office is the largest vote total for a statewide office such as governor or US Senator (United States Election Project 2013).” This being from the year 2012 the voting percentage obviously represents the presidential vote. The percentages used were of the voting eligible population, and the *United States Election Project* claims, “the most valid turnout rates over time and across states are calculated using voting-eligible population (United States Election Project 2013).”

The politically active variable was derived from the website *The Daily Beast*. *The Daily Beast* is a website and it ranked the top twenty politically active states leading up to the 2012 election. “The Daily Beast combed the U.S. Census Bureau statistics on last year’s elections. They then ranked states based on the percentage

of citizens who were registered to vote, and the percentage who actually voted. They also considered the average amount of individual donation (\$200+) per citizen for the 2010 election cycle, according to the contribution tally maintained by OpenSecrets.org, and each state's citizen population. For this list, exercising the right to vote was deemed the most potent form of engagement. Thus, the average percentage of voter turnout was weighted twice as much as the average percentage of voter registration, and four times as much as individual donations (The Daily Beast 2012)."

Once all of the data was gathered and sorted for all fifty states the next step was to run correlation coefficients for the above variables. The statistical significance was cross tested for all of the variables. A Pearson Correlation test was ran on all of the variables. Alan D. Monroe beautifully defines a Pearson correlation or Pearson's r. "Pearson's r assumes that there are two interval variables. Its range is from -1 to +1. It is a measure of association, that is, of the strength of the relationship. Essentially, it measures how closely the case points cluster around the regression line. In this sense, it is a measure of how good a predictor one variable is of the other. As was the case with, is equal to the proportion of variance in one variable explained by the other (Monroe 2000, 144)." For the purpose of the study the variables cross correlated with the religiosity variable showed to be the most telling and relevant.

Results

The first two variables that will be discussed are the variable of religiosity and volunteer participation across the fifty states. This graphic (Table 1) below shows the results of the test.

Correlations

Table 1		Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Volunteer Rates (Volunteering and Civic life in America) 1-51 scale (1=Highest Volunteer Rate)
Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Pearson Correlation	1	.119
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.404
	N	51	51
Volunteer Rates (Volunteering and Civic life in America) 1-51 scale (1=Highest Volunteer Rate)	Pearson Correlation	.119	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.404	
	N	51	51

So what does this fancy little box full of statistical terms and numbers mean exactly? In the case of the variables of religiosity and volunteer participation a state's religiosity is unrelated to a state's rank for volunteering. Within the table this can be seen where the Sig. or significance level does not exist in between .01 or .05 which is required for the correlation to be deemed significant. This slightly surprising finding will be discussed within the analysis portion of this paper.

The variable of most charitable state was also cross correlated with the variable of religiosity. The graphic (Table 2) below provides the results:

Correlations

Table 2		Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Most Charitable States 1-50 (The Chronicle of Philanthropy) 1= Most Charitable
Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 51	-.763** 50
Most Charitable States 1-50 (The Chronicle of Philanthropy) 1= Most Charitable	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.763** 50	1 50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This table shows that as a state's religiosity increases the state's rank for most charitable state will increase. The two asterisks next to -.763 are there to flag a significant negative correlation between religiosity and most charitable state rank, but a negative does not always signify bad. This shows that as a state religiosity increases there rank for most charitable becomes closer to one or first.

Cross correlating the variables of religiosity and number of hate groups per states produced the results shown in table 3 below:

Table 3		Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Active Hate Groups in State (Southern Poverty Law Center) 2012
Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 51	.265 51
Active Hate Groups in State (Southern Poverty Law Center) 2012	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.265 51	1 51

This table shows that there is a weakly significant correlation between a state's religiosity and the number of active hate groups within a state. This table does not flag the two variables as being significant but because the correlation has a significance level of .06 it is worth noting. This isn't a strong correlation by any means but could be considered, as mentioned, a weakly significant correlation.

A cross correlation was run for the variable religiosity and the variable of livability, and table 4 below contains the results:

Correlations

Table 4		Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Livability Rating (CQ Press) 1-50 scale (1 = Most Livable)
Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 51	.498** .000 50
Livability Rating (CQ Press) 1-50 scale (1 = Most Livable)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.498** .000 50	1 1 50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This table shows that as religious participation within a state goes up the livability ranking becomes worse. The table can be confusing because it shows a flagged positive correlation of .498 with a .000 significance level between the variable of religiosity and the variable of livability. This means that as a state's religiosity goes up a state's rank for livability becomes higher and closer to fifty which isn't exactly "positive".

The next variable that was tested alongside religiosity for a significant correlation was the variable voting participation. The results are in table 5 below:

Table 5		Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Voting Participation (percentage of eligible voters)
Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 51	-.322* .021 51
Voting Participation (percentage of eligible voters)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.322* .021 51	1 1 51

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This table shows that as a state's religiosity increases the states voting participation decreases. A negative Pearson correlation of $-.322$ is flagged showing that there is a negative correlation between a states religiosity and voting participation percentages.

The last variable that was cross correlated alongside the variable religiosity was the variable of most politically active state. It should be noted that because the politically active ranking only featured the top twenty states the rest of the states were ranked as 21 for the sake of the correlation test.

Correlations

Table 6		Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Top 20 politically active states (The Daily Beast)
Religious Participation (% of People = Very Religious) Gallup	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.340*
	N	51	51
Top 20 politically active states (The Daily Beast)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.340*	1
	N	51	51

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows that as a state's religiosity increases in a state the state's political activity worsens within that state. This is represented by the positive Pearson correlation of $.340$ at a significance level of $.015$.

The next portion of testing will examine cross correlating the variables representing religious fervor with voting participation and political activity. This table below shows the results for voting participation:

Table 7		Voting Participation (percentage of eligible voters)	Livability Rating (CQ Press) 1-50 scale (1 = Most Livable)	Volunteer Rates (Volunteering and Civic life in America) 1-51 scale (1=Highest Volunteer Rate)	Active Hate Groups in State (Southern Poverty Law Center) 2012	Top 20 politically active states (The Daily Beast)	Most Charitable States 1-50 (The Chronicle of Philanthropy) 1= Most Charitable
Voting Participation (percentage of eligible voters)	Pearson Correlation	1	-.439**	-.498**	-.157	-.476**	.399**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.000	.273	.000	.004
	N	51	50	51	51	51	50
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows that voting participation has a significant negative Pearson correlation of $-.439$ at a $.001$ significance level with the variable of livability rankings. This shows that as voting participation percentages go up the state's livability ranking increases. There is also a significant negative Pearson correlation of $-.498$ at a significance level of $.000$ between voting participation and volunteer rates. This meaning that as voting participation increases for a state their volunteer ranking increases. There is not a significant correlation between voting participation and the number of hate groups within a state. There is a significant correlation between voting participation and political activity but this should be expected considering voting participation is a component of the variable political activity. Voting participation has a significant positive Pearson correlation of $.399$ at a significance level of $.004$. This shows that as voting participation levels go up for a state the state's most charitable ranking becomes worse.

Correlations

Table 8		Top 20 politically active states (The Daily Beast)	Livability Rating (CQ Press) 1-50 scale (1 = Most Livable)	Volunteer Rates (Volunteering and Civic life in America) 1-51 scale (1=Highest Volunteer Rate)	Active Hate Groups in State (Southern Poverty Law Center) 2012	Most Charitable States 1-50 (The Chronicle of Philanthropy) 1= Most Charitable
Top 20 politically active states (The Daily Beast)	Pearson Correlation	1	.314*	.457**	.376**	-.423**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026	.001	.007	.002
	N	51	50	51	51	50

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

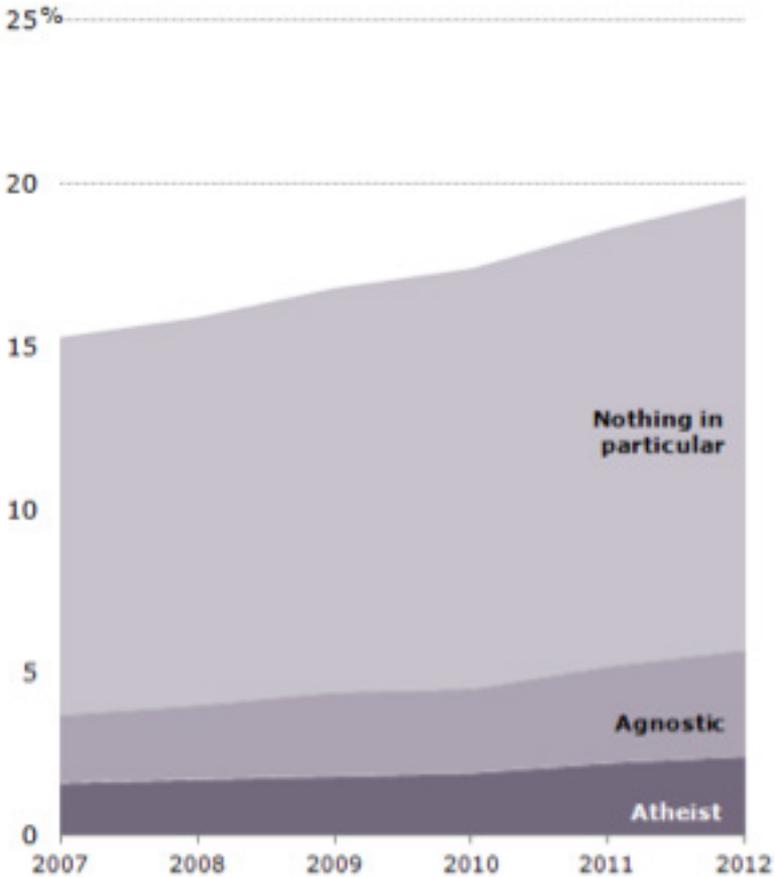
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 shows the results of the correlation test for the top 20 most politically active states. It shows a significant positive Pearson correlation of $.314$ at a significance level of $.026$ between politically active states and their livability ranking. This meaning that as a state ranks higher for political activity they will rank higher for livability. There is also a significant positive correlation of $.457$ at a significance level of $.001$ between politically active states and volunteer rankings. This showing that as a state ranks higher for political activity they have a higher volunteer rate ranking. Top politically active states also have a significant Pearson positive correlation of $.376$ at a significance level of $.007$ with hate groups within a state. There is a significant negative correlation of $-.423$ at a significance level of $.002$ between politically active states and a state's most charitable ranking. This meaning that as a state becomes more politically active then their charitable ranking becomes worse.

Analysis

Why does any of this matter? The theory stated that religious fervor can have both a positive and negative effect on democratic participation and communal participation. The results show that religious participation or religiosity may not correlate with the variables that would be expected. Out of all the religious fervor variables religiosity only correlated in a positive manner with charitable rankings. There was a significant correlation between a state's religiosity and how high there charity ranking was. Putnam supports this and the results seem obvious enough. The website where the data was provided for the most charitable ranking, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, provides an alternative view on the data. They state that "Religion has a big influence on giving patterns. Regions of the country that are deeply religious are more generous than those that are not. Two of the top nine states—Utah and Idaho—have high numbers of Mormon residents, who have a tradition of tithing at least 10 percent of their income to the church. The remaining states in the top nine are all in the Bible Belt. When religious giving isn't counted, the geography of giving is very different. Some states in the Northeast jump into the top 10 when secular gifts alone are counted. New York would vault from No. 18 to No. 2, and Pennsylvania would climb from No. 40 to No. 4. (Gipple and Gose 2012)" This may cause for a slight skew in the data and the correlation between may not be as strong as the test shows. This being said religiosity does not correlate in a positive manner with volunteer rankings, livability rankings (social capital), active hate groups per state, voting participation, or most politically active states. These findings would be shocking to anyone who would read Robert Putnam, Lewis Feldstein, Larry Diamond, or any other author stating how religious fervor can enhance democracy and social capital. What makes these findings even more intriguing is that the higher the democratic participation ranking of a state (voting participation and top politically active states) the higher volunteer and livability (social capital) ranking the state is likely to have. This shows that the states that volunteer more and are the most livable may end up being the most politically productive within America's democracy. The unfortunate fact is that the states with the highest religiosity are not providing the most democratic participation or social capital according to the data. The most religious states also have a weakly significant correlation with the number of hate groups within each state. So is religious fervor a bad thing? Why are the most religious states not producing the results that Putnam and many others would expect? This table below may help explain some of these surprising findings.

Growth of the Religiously Unaffiliated



Source: Aggregated data from surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2007-July 2012.

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The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life states that “One-fifth of the U.S. public – and a third of adults under 30 – are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling.(Center 2012)” “In the last five years alone, the unaffiliated have increased from just over 15% to just under 20% of all U.S. adults. Their ranks now include more than 13 million self-described

atheists and agnostics (nearly 6% of the U.S. public), as well as nearly 33 million people who say they have no particular religious affiliation (14%)(Center 2012).” The landscape of religion is changing and it is changing rather rapidly. A state’s religiosity is represented by attending church weekly and nearly every week while also considering religion important in your life. It could be stated that this type of religiosity and religious fervor is on the decline within the United States, but it is being replaced with a religiosity and spirituality that can still provide the many positives that religion provides. The hypothesis is that if religious fervor increases democratic participation and communal participation then it is positive, but if religious fervor decreases democratic participation and communal participation then it can be viewed as negative. The results show that religiosity as defined within this study doesn’t necessarily lead to democratic participation but positive acts of fervor do. Again, the findings conclude that religiosity doesn’t always lead to positive acts of fervor.

Conclusion

The theory stated was that religious fervor can have both a positive or negative effect on democratic participation. The hypothesis derived from this theory is that if religious fervor increases democratic participation than it can be viewed as positive, and if religious fervor decreases democratic participation than it can be viewed as negative. The results provided interesting findings that expressed how the religious landscape across America is changing and this changes how religion contributes to democratic participation and communal participation. This study could be improved by including data from over a longer period of time instead of one year periods. A deeper analysis of the variable could also be conducted and different levels of religiosity could be cross correlated with the other variables. This however would have more than likely lead to similar results.

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