

Religion-Market Theory: A Qualitative Theory Testing

Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society,
2023, Vol. 5 (1), 24-35

© The Journal, 2023

DOI : 10.36256/ijrs.v5i1.295

www.journal.lasigo.org/index.php/LJRS

Lasigo Journal

Article History

Received : January 8th, 2023

Revised : June 18th, 2023

Accepted : June 20th, 2023

Nouha Khelfa

Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII), Indonesia

nkhelfa95@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Despite industrialization and modernization, religion still has a significant impact on society and politics. Many theories compete to answer questions about religion, yet this paper argues that religion-market theory has superiority in explaining the failure of secularization to diminish religion even in the most developed nations such as the United States, while it succeeded in others. Relying on Mill's method of difference, this study qualitatively compares the two cases of the United States and the United Kingdom, relying on the history of religion and the economic structures of religious institutions. This study proves that Americans are far more religious than the British because since the foundation of the republic, the U.S. has not adopted any state religion while the UK has Christianity as the religion of the state since the English Reformation. Hence, religion-market theory that links between state's regulations of religion and religiosity proves its superiority again.

Keywords: *Religion-market Theory; United States; United Kingdom; Religious Revivals; Mill's Method of Difference*

1. Introduction

Today, religion, surprisingly, still plays an important role in politics and society. Weber's pessimistic expectations that religion will eventually die after the long process of modernization proves to be wrong; religion today is still all alive and even stronger, not just in developing countries, but in the most developed ones. Modernization has not only failed to make people less religious, but it has also failed to make many states abandon what they call "state religion" and "official religion". According to data from the Pew Research Center, nearly two thirds of Christians in the United States (68%) pray every day, compared to a median of only 18% of Christians in 15 European countries, including 6% in the United Kingdom, 9% in Germany, 12% in Denmark, and 38% in the Netherlands (Evans, 2018). This sort of data raises the question: why are Americans more religious than the rest of Western Europeans?

Significant research has been done on religion and religiosity; however, it did not effectively investigate the current state of religion in the world. Broadly, the question of religion has been shadowed by the secularization theory that stipulates that "religion is a "traditional" phenomenon, which will eventually be marginalized by the modernization process, including industrialization, urbanization, and mass education," (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Security Theory links security with religious values. They argue that "the emergence of high levels of existential security tends to diminish anxiety and stress, promoting a feeling of psychological well-being—which in turn, reduces the importance of religious values in people's lives," (Pickel, 2016, p.246). Hence, "economic growth, socioeconomic equality, and human

Corresponding Author

Name : Nouha Khelfa

Email : nkhelfa95@gmail.com

development result in long-term changes in existential security, leading to the erosion of religious values, beliefs, and practices,” (Kuru, 2009, p. 1).

However, a number of critics have revealed significant deficiency in modernization theories. Rodney Stark and Laurence Iannaccone argue that the religious community's dynamics indicates that religiosity has not necessarily reduced. As a result, Rodney Stark and Roger Finke base their argument on the idea that modernization hasn't diminished the value of religion. Instead, they advocate for a new model that emphasizes religious observance and religious economy. In contrast to the secularization theory, they admit the inadequacy of scientific knowledge to disprove spiritual belief, as human rationality and atheism have long been a part of the debate surrounding religion (Stark & Finke, 2000). As a result, modern development cannot diminish religiosity or religious authority.

Norris and Inglehart state that “rich societies are becoming more secular but the world as a whole is becoming more religious,” (Pickel, 2016). RLS (2021) surveyed more than 35,000 Americans from all the 50 states about their religious affiliation and reported that 70.6% are Christians while only 22.8% have no religion at all. Only 14% of the overall population is unaffiliated while a majority of 38% is Evangelical in 2014. More than half of American adults (55%) say they pray daily (Pew Research Center, 2014). The United States seems to be one of the anomalies investigated by Norris and Inglehart, i.e., a highly developed country with high rates of religiosity.

Meanwhile, YouGov has reported that “A quarter of Britons say they believe in ‘a god’. Four in ten neither believe in ‘a god’ nor in a ‘higher power’. Moreover, “Over half (55%) of Britons say they do not belong to any particular religion”, and “only 20% regard themselves affiliated to the Church of England/ Anglican Church. In terms of behaving only 9% go to church on Christmas”, (Dinic, 2020). Therefore, the UK seems to be as unequal as the USA, yet it falls under the paradigm of the developed countries, where religion seems to be fading away. Both the United Kingdom and the United States are developed Western countries, yet secularization succeeded in the first and failed in the latter. This study will investigate the alternative reason that makes the British less religious than Americans.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Hypothesis

This paper will test “religion-market theory”, which is inspired by a largely forgotten chapter of Adams Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, in which he compares state-funded religions and competitive religious markets (Iannaccone, 1991). Smith discusses how established religion can decrease the fervor and influence of the clergy on people, “the teachers of new religions have always had a considerable advantage in attacking those antient and established systems of which the clergy, reposing themselves upon their benefices, had neglected to keep up the fervor of faith and devotion in the great body of the people,” (Smith, 2018). Smith attributes state’s regulations of religion to the loss of clerical influence on people and hence the decrease of religiosity in society.

Smith’s idea would be developed into “religion-market model” by “Finke and Stark (1992), Iannaccone (1991), and Fink and Innaccone (1993)”. According to this theory, religious market offers a variety of religious items that compete to satisfy the demands of religious consumers. What state regulations do, according to Smith, is hindering religious competition, and eventually, religious consumers will lose interest in religious products. Hence, the degrees of freedom of the religious market are positively proportional with the index of religiosity.

Hence, this paper will test the strength of religion-market theory in explaining the failure of modernization to contain religiosity in Western countries. Second, it aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the status of religion and secularization in the United States as the only exception in the Western World where religion, surprisingly, continues to boom. Hence, states’ financial control of religion hinders religious revivalism and maintains more traditional forms of religion, leading to less religiosity:

2.2. Literature Review

Significant quantitative research has been conducted to test religion-market theory. North and Gwin examined the impact of state religion and of constitutional protection of religion on the rates of religiosity within a country by using a cross-section of 59 countries. The criterion of religiosity is the percentage of the people “who attend religious services at least once a week”. As “the existence of a state religion reduces attendance by 14.6-16.7% of the total population, whereas each decade of constitutional protection increases attendance by approximately 1.2%

of the population,”(Fox & Tabory, 2008).The results of the study show that the effects of the two variables are significant and opposed, this study provides rigorous statistical evidence of the impact of state religion on the decrease of religiosity in all countries.

A similar study was conducted across a larger country sample of 81 , and the findings of this study show that countries characterized by greater degrees of separation between religion and state tend to have higher levels of religiosity when one measures religiosity by attendance at religious services or self -identification (Fox & Tabory, 2008). Again, this study confirms, statistically, that the freer the religious market is, the higher is religiosity rate, but it gives no clear explanation of the causal mechanism that links state religion and the decline of religiosity.

Previous quantitative studies have already contributed in testing religion-market theory, yet no qualitative analysis has been done to test the same theory. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research lacuna. Moreover, little has been done to explore the case of the United States despite its status as the exceptional case in the Western World that brought the long-dominated secularization theory into question.

3. Methods

3.1. Case Selection

The focus of this study is on American megachurches because they are currently the largest and most successful models of religious investment in the United States. Moreover, the Church of England is the first church to be independent from the Roman Catholic papacy after the English Reformation, and thus the first to be officially controlled by the state (King Henry VIII).

3.2. Data Collection and Processing

This study relies primarily on archival and literature review. To prove that there is a negative causal relationship between state’s financial control of religion and the decline of religious revivalism, The author employs historical accounts to trace back the progress of the relationship between state and religion and the history of religious revivalism in both countries. The author uses governmental reports and statistics, experts’ economic reports, and a literature review to study the economic structure of megachurches and the Church of England.

3.3. Methodology

First, the author employs a comparative genealogical methodology to trace back the history of religious revivalism in both the UK and the United States. In the Case of the U.S., this study begins with the drafting of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in 1791 until today. In the Case of the United Kingdom, the study begins with the English Reformation in 1531, up to Britain’s last revival of the 1950s and beyond.

Second, the author employs structural analysis to compare the economic structure of American megachurches and the Church of England. The author mainly adopts “Simple Model of Optimal Religious investment” in the case of megachurches, and “Morris’s financial taxonomy” of the Church of England. Finally, the author uses Mill’s method of difference to draw the conclusion. Accordingly, “if an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance in common save one , that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause, of the phenomenon,”(Berg-Schlosser, 2016).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Religious revivals in the United States

Lowe defines religious revivals as periods of rapid growth in religious enthusiasm, often accompanied by mass conversion (Lowe, 2020) . Although rare, revivals play an important role in the history of religion in many countries, especially the United States where a series of "Great Awakenings" has brought about widespread social reforms. Lowe states that “during the two-year Welsh Revival of 1904 to 1905, roughly 90,000 people converted to Christianity, accounting for around 6% of the population above the age of 11,” (Lowe, 2020). It is clear that revivals are a direct cause of the increase of religiosity in any society. However, the question is what might hinder the occurrence of revivals? The hypothesis has already anticipated that

state religion does so, and through examining the history of revivals in both the U.S. and the UK, this study aims to prove that the UK witnessed less revivals because of the establishment of state religion since the English Reformation, while revivalism was a substantial part of American history especially with official separation between the state and religion with the drafting of the Constitution.

In the United States, the transformations that have occurred to Christianity between the past and the present can be summarized in two points. First, there has been a gradual growth in religious affiliation here, until today more Americans attend churches or other places of worship than ever before. Second, there has been a change in the qualitative character of religion in this country, from an earlier, fervent transcendental belief to the more secularized "social" church-going of which we hear about so much today (Lipset, 1959).

This first transformation is an increase in the number of religious people, and the second metamorphosis is a change in the nature of religiosity, from transcendentalist to secularized (a mixture of worldly and heavenly affairs) religion. These two changes are interrelated; the second has caused the first. The evidence for this claim can be found in the historical development of Christianity in the United States.

When the British colonists came to North America, they brought with them the concept of the "Manifest Destiny" that Historian Frederick Merk describes as, "a sense of mission to redeem the Old World by high example(...) generated by the potentialities of a new earth for building a new heaven," (Merk & Merk, 1995). This mission of the redemption of the old is both political and religious in nature, a kind of a plan of change that would be followed by a construction of a new Republic and a new religion. The Manifest Destiny was actually an informal separation between religion and the state, as early immigrants who came to North America were looking for a haven to practice their religion according to the fashion they desire.

Understanding the Manifest Destiny is essential to understand the relationship between state and religion in the United States. Two crucial revolutionary events happened: *the foundation of the Episcopal Church* and *the drafting of the First Amendment*. These two events that broke ties between religion and the state would be followed by a flow of religious revivalism that would continue until today.

To illustrate this previous claim, The author goes through a historical chronology of religious revivals from the 18th to the 21st Century, especially after the official separation between religion and the state, and the rejection of state religion with the drafting of the constitution.

Since the drafting of First Amendment of the Constitution, in 1791, the United States has been constitutionally protecting religion without adopting any official religion, as the First Amendment guarantees that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" ("U.S. Constitution - First Amendment | Resources | Constitution Annotated | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress," n.d.). The drafting of the First Amendment is the first official written formal decision of the total separation between the state and the church. This would be followed by the *Treaty of Tripoli*, which was signed by President Adams on June 10, 1797. It famously stipulates that the United States is not based on Christianity (Crane, 2020).

Benjamin Franklin, a skeptic of the Gospel, was contented with the Great Awakening, saying "it was wonderful to see the Change soon made in the Manners of our Inhabitants; from being thoughtless or indifferent about Religion, it seem'd as if all the World were growing," he adds, "it seem'd as if all the World were growing Religious; so that one could not walk thro' the Town in an Evening without Hearing Psalms sung in different Families of every Street," (Franklin, 1976). This description of the Awakening links between individual change that is brought to religion, free from state's intervention, and increase of the numbers of religious people. Hence, Franklin somehow links between free religion, revivalism and religiosity.

Wilber explains that Great Awakenings were a series of large-scale revivals that saw enormous numbers of individuals convert from unchurched to church. Revivals were most actively sponsored by Methodists and Baptists. From 58,000 members in 1790 to 258,000 in 1820 and 1,661,000 in 1860, the Methodist church surged in size. Methodist membership expanded by a factor of 28.6 over 70 years, despite the fact that the whole national population grew by a factor of eight (Wilber, 1961).

The Second Great Awakening had a significant impact on religious history in the United States. By 1859, evangelicalism had established itself, spontaneously, as a form of national

religion, and it had become the most consuming issue in American religious life (Mathews, 1969). The second Great Awakening would lead to the development of Afro-Christianity and also the emergence of African American churches (a totally new religious revival).

Fogel states that from the late 1850s through the early 1900s, the Third Great Awakening was an era of religious activism in American history. It had a strong sense of social activism and affected pietistic Protestant churches. It drew strength from post millennial theology, which holds that Christ's Second Coming will occur after mankind has reformed the entire globe. The Awakening gave birth to the Social Gospel Movement, as well as the worldwide missionary movement. New movements arose, such as the Holiness and Nazarene movements, as well as Christian Science (Fogel, 2000).

Further, Burlingame states that during the first part of the nineteenth century, benevolent organizations were a relatively new addition to the American scene. Initially dedicated to persuading nonbelievers, they later shifted their focus to the eradication of all social ills. The extraordinary energies generated by the evangelical movement—specifically, the "activism" that resulted from conversion—were the direct result of benevolent societies (Varg, 1980). In other terms, these missionaries are free, individual crusaders, who show clearly that revivals do not only improve religiosity at an individual level, but they also urge to spread it to the whole nation.

Furthermore, revivals went beyond the national borders, and spread overseas. With so much attention focused on the anti-Western Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901), American Protestants prioritized missions to China. In 1890, they supported 500 missionaries, more than 2000 in 1914, and 8300 in 1920. By 1927, they had established 16 universities in China, six medical schools, four theological schools, 265 middle schools, and a large number of elementary schools. The number of converts was small, but the educational impact was significant and long-lasting (Varg, 1980).

Moreover, it is a kind of devotion to stand against the teaching of Darwinism in schools, attempting to pass acts for that purpose. However, Fundamentalists had failed, as they were "publicly humiliated at the 1925 Scopes trial, and after a brief flurry of uncoordinated political agitation," (Warf & Winsberg, 2010). This fate has two implications: 1) the attempt to mix between religion and state through imposing acts on schools had failed which shows separation is deeply embedded in the USA, and 2) in the UK, where religion is established, Liturgical and Ecumenical Movements took place, as it will be discussed in the following sections, that exactly opposed the core of American Fundamentalism; they spread Darwinism and satirized Christian beliefs that contradicted it.

Finally, Megachurches are the newest revived churches in the United States that have been witnessing extraordinary success. Warf and Morton state that "the most rapidly growing element of the American religious landscape is the megachurch, commonly taken to mean religious establishments with 2,000 or more attendees. Typically Protestant in affiliation, although many are non-denominational, megachurches have grown explosively in the US," (Warf & Winsberg, 2010).

Megachurches are the peak of religious revivalism, as "there is an inseparable reciprocal relationship between contemporary megachurches and the tradition of Christian revivalism," (Hunt, 2019). The success of these megachurches is partially related to "enduring and constant revival," (Hunt, 2019). The other factor of their success is their economic independence, and this will be explained in the coming sections. It can be concluded that this combination of revivalism and financial autonomy results from the absence of state religion in the USA. Eventually, these unordinary vital churches could and continue to attract attendees, cement Christian beliefs and encourage affiliation. Through examining the history of revivalism in the USA since independence, it seems that Christianity has never reached a state of inertia; it is rather moving in an accelerated rate following a continuous flow of revivals.

4.2. Religious revivals in the United Kingdom:

In contrast, revivalism in Britain is historically rare, following the English Reformation that led to attributing the title of the Supreme Head of the Church of England to the Monarch in 1531, establishing Christianity as the state religion, until it would completely disappear in the 1980s, coinciding with a drastic decadence of Christian faith and the rise of the nones, irreligiosity and atheism.

According to McDowall, King Henry VIII was looking for new sources of money, inspired by his father who generated his power from looting noblemen's land, decided to absorb the power

of the church and the monasteries. The Church was a giant landowner while the monasteries were no longer significant to economic and social progress; they had even become unpopular because they preferred living a hedonistic life rather than pursuing a fulfilling religious mission (McDowall, 1989).

For the King “passed several Acts of Parliament between 1532 and 1536” (McDowall, 1989), turning England into a Protestant country (politically). Henry between “1536 and 1539 closed 560 monasteries and other religious houses” (McDowall, 1989). English Reformation would impact the state-church relations in Britain thereafter, as it blurred the line between them, producing the established state religion.

Further, according to Briggs, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the evangelical movement grew in prominence both within and beyond the Church of England. The movement questioned traditional religious sensibilities, which emphasized a code of honor for the upper class and proper behavior for everyone else, as well as ritual practice. John Wesley (1703–1791) and his disciples taught revivalism, attempting to persuade people to a personal relationship with Jesus through Bible reading, daily prayer, and, most importantly, the revival experience. Wesley worked within the Church of England all of his life, but after his death, it established independent organizations that eventually formed the Methodist Church. It coexisted with the typical nonconformist of the time (Briggs, 2014).

However, according to Duval, the Church of England remained the most powerful, but there was a growing evangelical, revivalist group inside it known as the “Low Church.” Its goal was not political reform, but rather to save souls by political action. Hence, evangelicals did not confront English society’s hierarchical system (Duval, 1993).

Similar to the United States, the UK had conducted missionaries as a form of religious revivals; however, their nature and geography were totally different. Porter explains that Anglican and Methodist missionaries were active in the 13 American colonies during the heyday of the First British Empire in the 18th century. The Methodists, led by George Whitefield, were the most successful, and after the revolution, a separate American Methodist organization arose, which eventually became the largest Protestant religion in the new United States (Porter, 1999). The efforts of these missionaries were not in England obviously, but in its colonies in North America. Later, Britain would lose the Americas, and the importance of these revivals concern solely Independent United States.

The Liturgical and Ecumenical Movements are very important revivals to compare to Anti-Darwinism in the UK, in order to show how the nature of revivals differs significantly between the two nations. As I cannot cover the movements in details, I will concentrate only on the character of Ernest Barnes (1874–1953), who was the Anglican Bishop of Birmingham, and was a well-known modernist who criticized Anglo-Catholic rites and ceremonies. He promoted Darwinism and mocked numerous Christian beliefs, including the ritual of Holy Communion and Christ’s physical Resurrection. This prompted calls for him to resign as a bishop; he declined, but in an open letter, Davidson made a delicate attack on Barnes (Dark, 1929). It seems clear that the type of such movements was more of a naturalist revival that fuels anti-Christian spirit, rather than positively reviving religion and promoting Christian Beliefs.

Then, Britain would witness its Last Religious Revival during the 1950s. Callum Brown “has suggested that the 1950s in Britain witnessed ‘something of a religious boom’, exemplified in ‘one of the most concerted periods of church growth since the middle of the nineteenth century’, (C. Field, 2015). However, “pooled British Social Attitudes Surveys, has demonstrated, religious decline in twentieth century Britain has been overwhelmingly generational, with each birth cohort less religious than the one before. This diminution in religious socialization is already evident in the 1950s,” (C. Field, 2015). Field adds that “the 1950s appear to have been a decade of decline for most of the historic Free Churches, while growth in the Church of England,” (C. Field, 2015). Hence, the 1950s had not only hosted the last hope of revival, but it ended the few liberated churches.

Not only that, Field reports that, “for evangelical “revivalist” crusades’, in the sense that large numbers attended (in particular) the Billy Graham missions of 1954–55” (C. Field, 2015). Yet, they “made no real numerical difference to the religious landscape, other than a slight and very temporary improvement in the membership recruitment rates of the Baptist Church and the Church of Scotland and in Protestant church attendance in Glasgow,” (C. Field, 2015). Apparently, these revivals seem to be the last sighs of religious feelings in the Kingdom.

Finally, the *last revival would* be followed by secularization in the Long 1960s and 1970s and religious inertia. Field illustrates how secularization in Britain has taken a gradual rate of expansion during the 1960s and the 1970s. Christianity in Britain at this point reached

inertia, a state of staticity with no attempt of revival that could change its direction. Field describes it in terms of belonging, behaving and believing.

Field reports that belonging to religion “ was remarkably stable during the 1960s and 1970s”, he adds,” The Anglican market share remained at three-fifths, the Free Churches lost some ground, the Roman Catholics gained some, and the proportion of religious nones stayed at well under one-tenth, not rising above it until the late 1980s,” (C. D. Field, 2017). Hence, it seems that free religion, after declining in the 1950s, has completely vanished in the 1970s, while the Anglican Church is in a state of *inertia*.

Robin Gill reports that “attendances relative to population had been decreasing in the Church of England and Congregationalism continuously from the 1850s,” (C. D. Field, 2017). Therefore, in the 1850s, the total disappearance of revivals led to decline in religiosity, not only in terms of free religion, but also desertion of the state religion.

Field demonstrates that,” while the number of disbelievers grew in the 1970s, many seem to have come across from the ranks of ‘don’t knows’ rather than believers, and disbelievers still constituted under one-fifth of adults by 1980. However, support for the concept of a personal God did diminish, with a plurality endorsing the notion of a life force by 1980,”(C. D. Field, 2017). Thus, disbelieving, not only in Christian dogma, but the concept of a deity had been gradually attacked since the 1970s. The United Kingdom, therefore, has known only one significant religious revival which is the 18th Century Evangelical revivalism after the English Reformation. It is absolutely not a coincidence that the decline of revivals in Great Britain since the English Reformation overlaps with religious inertia and religious decadence. It is also not an accident that establishing a state religion during the reformation intersects with the decline of revivalism.

The author has traced back the development of religious revivalism in both the U.S. and the UK, starting from the formal separation between state and religion after independence in the U.S., and the establishment of state religion with the English Reformation. This is to establish a link between the absence/presence of established religion and the rate of revivalism.

Since the separation from the Church of England and the drafting of the First Amendment that formally declared separation, the United States has been hosting a flow of religious revivals, accompanied with an increase in Christian denominations, from the Great Awakenings to the drastic expansion of megachurches today. This is partial evidence of the link between free religion and revivalism. While American Christian revivalism has been augmenting, degrees of religiosity have been taken the same direction, until its peak with the predomination of megachurches.

Using Mill’s method of difference, one can conclude that the presence/absence of the state religion determines the presence/ absence of religious revivalism and hence religiosity:

Table 1. Mill’s Method of Difference to Show How Revivalism Intervenes to Increase Religiosity

Case Study	Religious revivalism	Established Religion	Religiosity
U.S.	Yes	No	Yes
UK	No	Yes	No

This causal relationship (Table 1) is discussed by Adams Smith. The teachers [of religion], in the same manner as other teachers, may either depend altogether for their subsistence upon the voluntary contributions of their hearers; or they may derive it from some other fund to which the law of their country may entitle them; such as a landed estate, a tythe or land tax, an established salary or stipend. Their exertion, their zeal and industry, are likely to be much greater in the former situation (Smith, 2018).

Thus, Smith relates state religion to the loss of religious fervor of the clergy, who will bring no revivalism to the people, leading to religious inertia and eventually irreligiosity. However, one might ask in what way does the state religion diminish the clerical fervor? The hypothesis attributes this to their dependency on the financial support of the state. The following section will prove this point by comparing the economic structure of megachurches in the USA and of the Church of England in the UK.

4.3. Ecclesiastical Sources of Income In the United States

The focus will be solely on megachurches as the most modern churches. Overall, according to 2020 megachurch survey by Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Evangelical Council for

Financial Accountability (ECFA), and Leadership Network, one American megachurch had a budget of \$ 5.3 million in 2019 only 96% of the megachurch income comes from the contributions of its attendees while 78% has financial statements audited by external/independent CPA, with no trace of any governmental contributions (Bird, 2020). Thus, megachurches are economically autonomous. But how could megachurches achieve this autonomy? And how does it relate to the huge numbers of attendees?

Megachurches are a form of business in the United States. According to the Hartford Institute, “More than a third of the nation’s megachurches are nondenominational,” which “means they can keep the money that they raise at home, using it for programming, production and ministries, rather than sending portions of their collections to a hierarchical church bureaucracy elsewhere (Greenblatt & Powell, 2007). Therefore, megachurches invest in their own money to finance themselves, and they keep it for themselves without any state’s fingerprints. Duke sociologist Chaves states that “economics has a lot to do with megachurch growth”(Greenblatt & Powell, 2007). It is astonishing that pastors in megachurches have to know business as well, not just theology, as “Megachurch pastors are certainly experts at marketing, spreading their messages to thousands in their sanctuaries, the Internet and broadcasting,”(Greenblatt & Powell, 2007). These megachurches’ economic example conveys that religion is not something that stands apart from the concerns of this world and daily life,” (Greenblatt & Powell, 2007). And this combination has succeeded to attract an abundance of membership that contributes to their autonomous funding.

Evidence proves that “megachurches employ groups to help subsidize individuals’ religious investment, and that the resulting religious capital rises among members of megachurches relative to members of non-megachurches”(Von Der Ruhr & Daniels, 2008). They study the secret behind the success of megachurches in attracting more than 2000 attendees a week, despite their non-traditional approach.

They then interestingly propose the “model of optimal religious investment” to describe how megachurches have grown and why they are successful in today’s religious market” (Von Der Ruhr & Daniels, 2008). This model shows how megachurches attract members to invest in religious capital by using “the groups which increase members’ participation in church activities,” (Von Der Ruhr & Daniels, 2008). Megachurches apply a “*Simple Model of Optimal Religious Investment*” (Von Der Ruhr & Daniels, 2008) to attract more membership.

They explain *Simple Model of Optimal Religious Investment* that megachurches adopt to auto-fund on one hand and to attract attendees on the other hand. This model is based on the idea of individuals who invest in their religious capital to make religious participation easier (cheaper), but the returns are declining. In other words, the more committed one is to their church, the easier it becomes to participate in church-related activities on a regular basis. As a result, as the individual’s religious investment grows the cost of participation decreases, but at a slower rate.

The megachurch’s strategy derives from its “individual-oriented focus via groups that may serve as a share in religious investment, which in turn reduces the cost of membership, thereby increasing the devotion of the members to an optimal level,” (Von Der Ruhr & Daniels, 2008). Eventually, the cost of membership decreases while the megachurch continues to expand its capital, benefiting from the sum of the huge numbers joining its activities. Megachurches’ Secular Activities, as explained in the section of revivalism, are the latest form of religious revival which help the clergy as many attendees as possible to make independent funding possible. It is this transition from the most transcendental forms of religiosity to the most secular ones that could prevent religious inertia from happening in the United States.

Roozen compares data about the type of group activities dominating both megachurches and traditional churches. The result is that “The top three groups” ,which are Parenting/Marriage Enrichment, Fitness Activities, and Self-help, “reflect nearly a 60% difference, and are all related to non-directly religious activities” while “the proportion of megachurches that offer both religious- and secular-based groups is much larger than the proportion of non-megachurches that do,” (Von Der Ruhr & Daniels, 2008). One can infer that megachurches are place where one can invest in heaven and earth combined, which might explain how megachurches would invest from attendees’ membership to stand economically independent.

4.4. Ecclesiastical Sources of Income In the United Kingdom

Although the Church of England receives a large financial income from donations, it relies heavily on governmental support. In 2005, the Church reported an outgoing of about £900

million (“Support for Churches and Cathedrals across the UK Announced by Chancellor,” 2015). In 2012, the Church of alterations and repairs to its 12,500 listed buildings, providing an additional £30 million per year on top of the £12 million already granted to the Church of England through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS). Further, “Churches and Cathedrals across the UK receive government funding to ensure they are maintained for generations to come,” adding that “Overall, 55 Anglican and Catholic Cathedrals across England have benefitted from the £20 million fund, which will ensure that these valuable national monuments remain in a good and safe state of repair in order welcome the public as the centre of events commemorating the First World War” (“Support for Churches and Cathedrals across the UK Announced by Chancellor,” 2015). These huge amounts of money designated for the Church are only a percentage of it actually receives. Morris divides the state’s financial support if the Church into “direct” and “indirect” funding (R. M. Morris, 2009).

Direct Funding: it is the money that the Church receives explicitly from the state; it is mainly sources of repair funds. Morris has reported 5 state’s direct funding ways of the church, “there are five current funding streams (the first three competitive) that benefit Church of England buildings. The principal schemes are operated by English Heritage (EH) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under the auspices of the DCMS,” (R. M. Morris, 2009). He precised the sources:

1. “Places of Worship repair grants (operated jointly by EH and HLF since 1996)”
2. “Cathedral grants (EH only)”
3. “Heritage grants (HLF only)”
4. “Churches Conservation Trust”
5. “Refund of Value Added Tax on listed church building repairs”

According to Cooper, state’s contribution to repairing costs is approximately 30% of the total cost. This percentage is “is substantial” (Morris, 2009,p 70), as an equivalent 30% of the clergy’s freedom is absorbed with financial support that can be viewed as a restriction rather than assistance on the long-term (R. M. Morris, 2009).

Another important source of state’s direct funding is the “ecclesiastical exemption” that benefits the Church of England and other five religious’ denominations in England and Wales. Morris indicates that “this is an arrangement which exempts church buildings from many listed building and conservation area control”. He adds that “After consultation in 2004, DCMS agreed that the ‘exemption’ should continue in its existing form for the time being”(R. M. Morris, 2009). Exemption directly benefits the church financially; however, it has a more important long-term effect which is heavy reliance on the state that eventually leads to the creation of more constraints on the freedom of the clergy and the spontaneous expansion of religion.

Indirect funding: Morris distinguishes six sources of state’s funding of the Church of England; the focus is on five:

1. Chaplaincies: Church of England (2006) estimates that “that chaplains in public service of one kind or another amount to 5 per cent of licensed ministries as a whole, and 7 per cent of all stipendiary clergy ,”(R. M. Morris, 2009).
2. Armed services: Morris reports that in only May 2005, the Church of England’s Chaplains in the army constitute about 58% of the total. Ministry of Defense reports that it spent £ 18,000 on these Chaplains. Morris reports that in addition to that “a conservative estimate of the Church of England share of the additional costs of clerical and other support to the chaplaincies throughout the three services would increase the total to £18.5 million,” (R. M. Morris, 2009).
3. Prison Service (England and Wales): Morris states that “there were in 2005–06 a total of 315 chaplains, 184 full time and 131-part times. Of the full time, 147 were Church of England,” (R. M. Morris, 2009).
4. Hospital chaplains: an annual cost at 2005 prices of over £26 million for full-time chaplains (R. M. Morris, 2009)
5. Chaplaincies in Higher Education: “ the annual public expenditure costs would fall into the range of from £1 million to £2 million”, on this kind of Chaplaincies(R. M. Morris, 2009).

Therefore, state provides significant economic support for the Church of England; this is natural for any state religion. This partial dependency of the state has made established Christianity very static. The author has historically tracked the development of revivalism

since the Reformation, and the Kingdom has been witnessing drastic decline of religious revivals, followed by the domination of the none’s and atheism.

Alfred Marshall states that “[M]an’s character has been moulded by his every-day work, and the material resources which he thereby procures, more than by any other influence unless it be that of his religious ideals; and the two great forming agencies of the world’s history have been the religious and the economic,”(Welch & Mueller, 2001). Marshall here relates human character with economic and religious factors. Relating this to this study, the clergy are influenced by economic factors. When the state finances their church, it would create a kind of clerical uncreative religious character, with no spirit of revivalism. This form of static religion would affect negatively the interest of people in the Church.

By applying Mill’s method of difference (Table 2), one can conclude that state funding of the church is another intervening variable, added to revivalism, that links between state religion and religiosity.

Table 2: Mill’s Method of Difference to Show How State Funding of the Church Intervenes in Religiosity Rate

Case	State Funding	State Religion	Religiosity
U.S.	No	No	Yes
UK	Yes	Yes	No

4.5. Mill’s Method of Difference

From Tables 1 and 2 and previous established facts, we can conclude the following:

Table 3: Mill’s Method of Difference to Test Religion-Market Theory

Cases	Western Country	Developed Country	Common Religion	State Religion	State Funding of religion	Religious Revivalism	Religiosity
U.S.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
UK	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table 3 illustrates that development, type of religion and modernization are extravagant variables because they are common between both the U.S. and the UK, which differ in the dependent variable, religiosity rate. State funding of religion and religious revivalism differ among the two countries, which shows their interference in the causal mechanism (intervening variables). Hence, one should conclude that actually the presence/ absence of state religion determines religiosity.

5. Conclusion

Megachurches raise their capital through investing in religion by attracting more attendees, which requires the clergy to revive religious continuously, leading to the rise of secular religion. However, the Church of England relies significantly on the state and donations, which makes the clergy less interested in attracting attendees through revivals, which lead to a religious state of inertia, and eventually less religiosity. Therefore, religion-market theory proves to stand out among the other theories of religion.

This study is limited in two ways. First, it only covers two case studies: megachurches in the U.S. and the Church of England, in the UK. Hence, it will be fruitful if the future research fills this lacuna by study more case studies, and compare other Western countries with the United States. Second, the study is limited in its data collection and processing because it merely relies on secondary data. It is advisable for future researchers to conduct similar studies, using primary data and more complex methods to qualitative research.

6. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank to Prof. Ahmet T. Kuru and Sirojuddin Arif, Ph.D.

7. Funding

This research received no external funding or whatsoever.

8. Conflicts of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

- Berg-Schlosser, D. (2016). Epistemology and approaches: Logic, causation and explanation. In *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Political Science*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Bird, W. (2020). *The Changing Reality in America's Largest Churches*.
- Briggs, A. (2014). *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867*. Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9781315838991
- Crane, J. (2020). Reading American Secularism in the 1797 Treaty of Tripoli. *American Quarterly*, 72(2), 403–422. doi: 10.1353/aq.2020.0024
- Dark. (1929). *Archbishop Davidson and the English church*. William Morrow & co. Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.com/Archbishop-Davidson-English-church-Sidney/dp/B000856H7C>
- Dinic, M. (2020). How religious are British people? Retrieved January 10, 2023, from YouGov website: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2020/12/29/how-religious-are-british-people>
- Duval, G. (1993). John Rule: Albion's People: English Society, 1714-1815. 1992. *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, 25(1), 585–585.
- Evans, J. (2018). U.S. adults are more religious than Western Europeans. Retrieved June 18, 2023, from Pew Research Center website: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/09/05/u-s-adults-are-more-religious-than-western-europeans/>
- Field, C. (2015). *Britain's Last Religious Revival?: Quantifying Belonging, Behaving, and Believing in the Long 1950s*. United States and the United Kingdom: Springer.
- Field, C. D. (2017). *Secularization in the Long 1960s: Numerating Religion in Britain*. Oxford University Press.
- Fogel, R. W. (2000). *The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism*. University of Chicago Press.
- Fox, J., & Tabory, E. (2008). Contemporary evidence regarding the impact of state regulation of religion on religious participation and belief. *Sociology of Religion*, 245–271.
- Franklin, B. (1976). Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania. *The Journal of General Education*, 28(3), 256–261.
- Greenblatt, A., & Powell, T. (2007). Rise of Megachurches. *CQ Researcher*, 17(33), 769–792.
- Hunt, S. (Ed.). (2019). *Handbook of megachurches*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill.
- Iannaccone, L. R. (1991). The Consequences of Religious Market Structure: Adam Smith and the Economics of Religion. *Rationality and Society*, 3(2), 156–177. doi: 10.1177/1043463191003002002
- Kuru, A. T. (2009). *Secularism and state policies toward religion: The United States, France, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lipset, S. M. (1959). Religion in America: What Religious Revival? *Review of Religious Research*, 1(1), 17–24. doi: 10.2307/3510706
- Lowe, M. (2020). *Religious Revival and Social Order*.
- Mathews, D. G. (1969). The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis. *American Quarterly*, 21(1), 23–43. doi: 10.2307/2710771
- McDowall, D. (1989). *An Illustrated History of Britain*. Longman.
- Merk, F., & Merk, L. B. (1995). *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*. Harvard University Press.
- Morris, R. (2009). *Church and State in 21st Century Britain: The future of church establishment*. Springer.
- Morris, R. M. (Ed.). (2009). *Church and State in 21st Century Britain*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. doi: 10.1057/9780230234376
- Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2004). *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511791017
- Pickel, G. (2016). Pippa Norris/Ronald Inglehart: Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, 329 S. In S. Salzborn (Ed.), *Klassiker der Sozialwissenschaften* (pp. 420–423). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. doi: 10.1007/978-3-658-13213-2_98
- Porter, A. (1999). Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire. In A. Porter (Ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century* (pp. 222–246; By W. R. Louis). Oxford University Press. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198205654.003.0011
- Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics | Pew Research

- Center. (n.d.). Retrieved January 9, 2023, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/>
- Smith, A. (2018). *The Wealth of Nations*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Stark, R., & Finke, R. (2000). *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*.
- Support for churches and cathedrals across the UK announced by Chancellor. (2015). Retrieved January 10, 2023, from Gov.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-churches-and-cathedrals-across-the-uk-announced-by-chancellor>
- U.S. Constitution—First Amendment | Resources | Constitution Annotated | Congress.gov | Library of Congress. (n.d.). Retrieved June 18, 2023, from <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/>
- Varg, P. A. (1980). Sino-American Relations Past and Present. *Diplomatic History*, 4(2), 101–111. doi: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24911230>
- Von Der Ruhr, M., & Daniels, J. P. (2008). *A Model of Religious Investment to Explain the Success of “Megachurches.”* Marquette University, Center for Global and Economic Studies and Department
- Warf, B., & Winsberg, M. (2010). Geographies of megachurches in the United States. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 27(1), 33–51. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873631003593216>
- Welch, P. J., & Mueller, J. J. (2001). The relationships of religion to economics. *Review of Social Economy*, 59(2), 185–202. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00346760110035581>
- Wilber, G. L. (1961). US Bureau of the Census: "Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957"(Book Review). *Rural Sociology*, 26(2), 206.