

Macro Roundup Article

Headline: Religious Worship Attendance in America: Evidence from Cellphone Data

Article Link: <https://www.nber.org/papers/w32334>

Author(s)	Devin Pope
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Tweet: Geolocation data from cell phones shows that less than 5% of Americans attend weekly religious services, versus 22% who report they do. @Devin_G_Pope

Summary: I provide a descriptive analysis of religious worship attendance using geodata from smartphones for over 2 million Americans in 2019. I establish several key findings. First, 73% of people step into a religious place of worship at least once during the year on the primary day of worship. However, only 5% of Americans attend services “weekly”, far fewer than the ~22% who report to do so in surveys. The number of occasional vs. frequent attenders varies substantially by religion. I estimate that approximately 45M Americans attend worship services in a typical week of the year, but with large changes around Holidays (e.g. Easter). The intensity of religious observance correlates with a host of other activities. For example, relative to non-attenders and infrequent attenders, frequent religious attenders are less likely to go to strip clubs, liquor stores, and casinos. Related: Most U.S. Parents Pass Along Their Religion and Politics to Their Children and Religious ‘Nones’ in America: Who They Are and What They Believe and Opiates of the Masses? Deaths of Despair and the Decline of American Religion

Primary Topic: Family/Marriage

Topics: Academic paper, Database, Family/Marriage, Politics, Workforce

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