

Introduction

Faith is among the world's most contemporary, controversial subjects, dividing and uniting people as its impact on governance, the social climate and a 'global community' becomes increasingly contentious in a post-modern world. Considering both arguments, we may perceive how religion is transforming to match the progression of modern societies, and therefore must consider the direction in which religion is going. Recent centuries have seen cultures, some completely disparate from each other, adopt more secular, free-thinking societies - societies damaging to religion's continuation. By considering different strands of thought and applying personal experience to evaluate religion's influence on human interaction and mental health, and with the help of a national survey that focuses on the world's largest superpower - United States - I will debate the significance of religions and their practices on general mental well being and tribalism.

The term superpower refers simply to 'a very powerful and influential nation', with considerable influence on neighbouring countries and a recognised impact on global politics and economies. It is therefore crucial to understand the significance of using America as a study. Especially as globalisation is diminishing national individuality and diffusing cultures and beliefs across the world, America has spread its values and morals across the globe. Therefore, its relationship with mental health must be considered to evaluate the impression that religion may or may not have on how we think, act and do - as American culture is probably the most holistic image of the global climate.

Where social cohesion is concerned, religion can have hitherto unprecedented benefits on the social climate. The community developed is paramount to improving mental health, although religion's critics have spoken out against its ostracisation of minority characteristics ever prominent in today's 'global village', like sexuality and political beliefs, and further argues that religion enforce tribalism through a mono-religious state, by which one dominant faith has an overbearing influence on an area, as the above excerpt from the Koran would suggest. Religion can act, therefore, as a catalyst for conflict in areas where multiple cultures are prevalent. Thus, its impact on the social climate mirrors how important it is to people. However, one must keep in mind that religion, irrespective of a participant's individual bias, is not one wholly positive or negative factor in shaping its corresponding society; this applies to all faiths. I am incorporating all religions and thus societies - which can differ so greatly in cultural values - regardless of geographical location or its political regime. No functioning society is exempt from religion, meaning that tangible links between dissimilar cultures can be consistently formulated. For instance, Sikhism, formed in Asia in 1469, condones carrying daggers for self-defence because their Holy Text allows it. In the Christian tale of 2 Kings 2:23-24, forty-two boys were mauled by bears for insulting Elisha, for which he cursed them in God's name. Both faiths advocate peace, harmony and benevolence - whilst permitting violence if necessary. One may question the extent of religion's sphere of influence at this point, and the extent it should be allowed to have. This project sets out to ascertain knowledge regarding the social welfare of developed nations, and to consider to what degree does religion help, or hinder, these unique climates.

As ever with the coupling of religion and society, the situation is rarely a transparent subject. Demystification concerning religion is necessary to offer social commentary on the costs and benefits of faiths. To do this, the project includes a survey taken in the US. This is to discover more about how a developed superpower with an at-times faith-centric outlook can be plagued by gender inequality, murder, extreme fascism and a troubled history of race relations. Compared with secondary findings, I will form a weighted conclusion on the

significance, positive or negative, of religion on this super-economy, specifically regarding the social climate. Though extensive research has probed this, I believe too little has been done to analyse young people. There is potential for research which analyses how religion has become more, or possibly less, important as America ascertains a greater cultural mix, shaping its ideologies and individuals' beliefs.

I have also attached the source table, so that any interesting graphs come up you can add them if you want.