



Religions and Money

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Money (1)

- Humans have been using money as a means of storing value to facilitate the exchange of goods and services for at least 5000 years.
- Money may have originally been a sacred device created by religious authorities to help the exchange of necessities in society.
 - The exchange of money may have signified loyalty between people.
 - The purpose of money is to unite individual human beings in service to the Highest. Thus, money facilitates relations between people and God.
 - Money today is often used to isolate people from each other.
- All major religions have a lot to say about money.
 - Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Buddhism proscribe “excessive” wealth. One of the richest men in history, however, was King Solomon, who is honored in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Roman Currency



Bare head and bare bust



Bare head, drapery on left shoulder



Laureate head and cuirassed bust



Laureate head, draped and cuirassed bust



Laureate head, cuirassed bust with aegis on left shoulder



Laureate head, cuirassed bust with aegis in the mid of cuirass, drapery on the left shoulder



Radiate head, cuirassed bust



Head with pearl diadem, draped and cuirassed bust



Head with diadem composed of rosette and pearls, draped and cuirassed bust



Head with rostral crown, bare bust



Bare head, draped bust



Head with diadem, draped bust, laid on crescent



head with the hair wrapped and tied on top of the head with double bands of pearls, draped bust



Head with pearl diadem draped bust with pearl necklace

Money (2)

- Money was originally made of gold, silver, seashells, precious stones, or some other material that did not degrade over time.
- Money was backed by specie (like above) or grain, iron, tobacco, or some other valuable physical item.
- Money today is physically worthless paper, or even less, numbers (symbols) on a computer. Money has no more value than what people in a society think it has.

Judaism

- Wealth is a blessing from God and should be used for good.
- Charity, helping those in need, is required.
 - Hebrews were required to leave a portion of their fields unharvested to provide food for the poor (Leviticus 19, Ruth)
 - During the jubilee year (every 50th year), land was returned to its original owner.
- Greed, the love of money, is dangerous and should be avoided.
- Giving to others is a good deed and pleases God
- Unlike Muslims and Christians, Hebrews are not restricted in moneylending. Hence the world has characters like Shylock.
 - Jews were not allowed to charge interest to other Jews, but permitted to charge interest to those outside the Jewish faith (Exodus 22).
- In antiquity, Judaism was largely a religion of traders and financiers

Money in Ancient Israel



Hinduism

- Hinduism promotes three attainments in human life.
 - Kama – pleasure and enjoyment.
 - Dharma – righteousness, good deeds, and duty
 - Artha – material wealth and prosperity
- Thus the pursuit of money is good, provided it does not result in the loss of Kama and especially of dharma.
- Charity is a path to good karma and a better rebirth in the next life. However, depending upon one's motives, it may or may not move a Hindu towards moksha.

Hindu gods
on Indian
currency



Buddhism

- Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) called Buddhism the “middle way” between ascetism and luxury.
- The focus of Buddhism is to eliminate desire. Having money is not bad but having the desire for money is bad.
 - Transcending earthly desires is better than fulfilling earthly desires.
- The Buddha discouraged excessive consumption and debt. He did, however, court the favor (and the resources) of kings.
- Charity given to the monastic community (Sangha) will earn merit in a future life, but again, may not result in moksha.

Buddhism and Money



Islam (1)

- Islamic thought is heavily influenced by, and some would say an Arabized outgrowth of, Judaism and Christianity. Therefore, its views are similar to the other Abrahamic religions.
- Wealth is a blessing from God and should be used for good.
- Charity (*zakat*), helping those in need, is one of the five pillars of Islam. *Zakat* is supposed to be 2.5% of a Muslim's wealth.
- Another source of funding for Muslim governments as required by Sharia is *jizya*, which is a tax charged to non-Muslims under a Muslim government. *Jizya* can be any amount.
- Greed, the love of money, is dangerous.
- Giving to others is a good deed and pleases God. It will contribute to attaining eternal paradise.



Islam (2)

- Definition of money - a unit of account and a medium of exchange for goods and services should be aligned with the intrinsic value and not easily recreated, thus ensuring stability.

Christianity

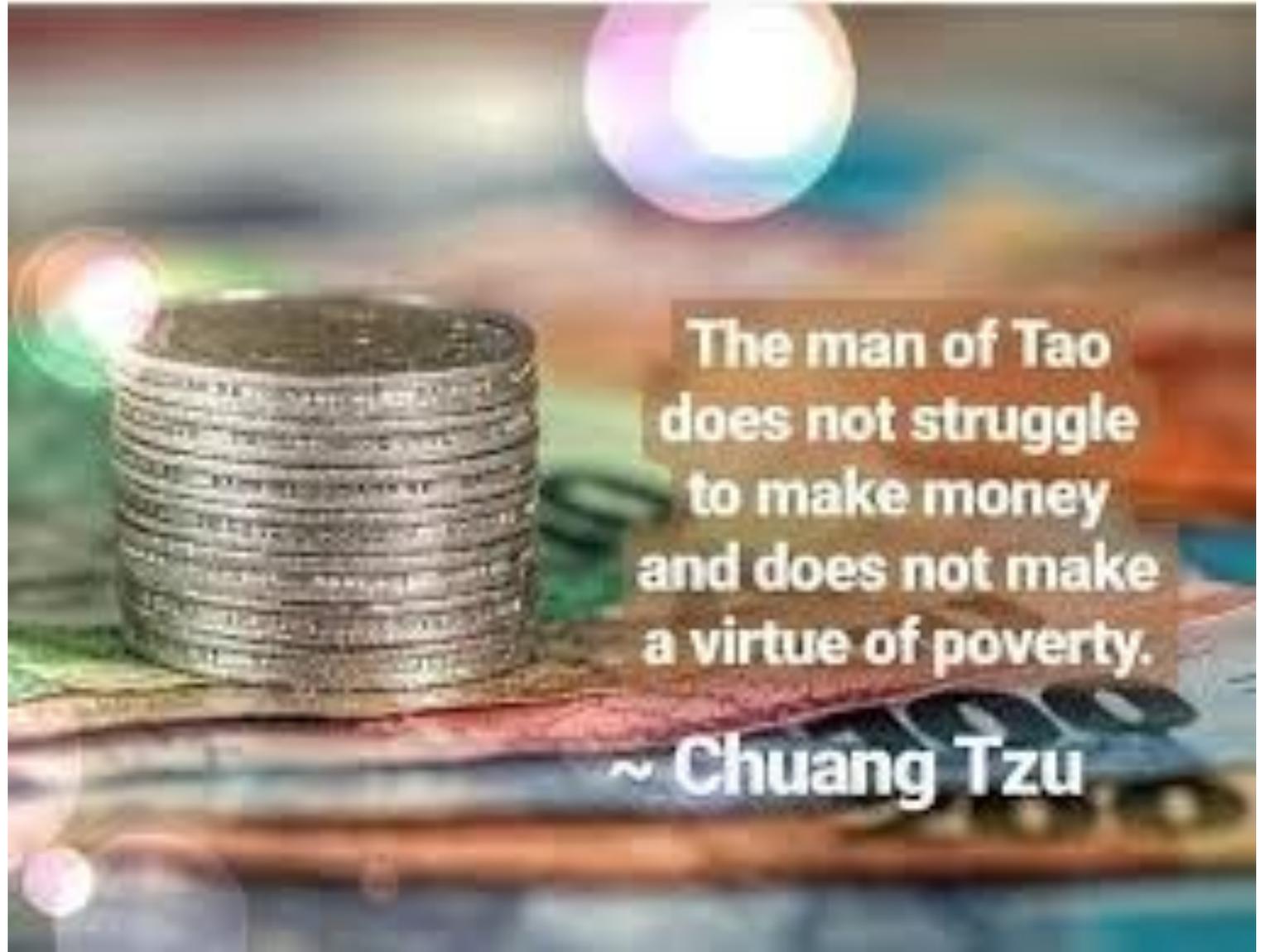
- Wealth is a blessing from God and should be used for good.
- Charity is encouraged but not required for salvation.
 - Christianity, unlike other major religions, requires not only that people give but that they are cheerful about it (2 Cor 9:7)
- Believers are commanded to be stewards of the world around them.
- Money is a continual reminder that no human is self-sufficient.
- Greed, the love of money, is dangerous and should be avoided (1 Tim 6:10).
 - Do not store up treasures on earth but store up treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19-20)
 - You cannot serve God and mammon
 - It is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God (Matt 19:24).
- Christians give, not to attain salvation by works, but because they already have salvation in Christ.

Tithes and Offerings



Other religions

God of Wealth in Chinese Taoism, who is universally respected by merchants, shows no ethical traits



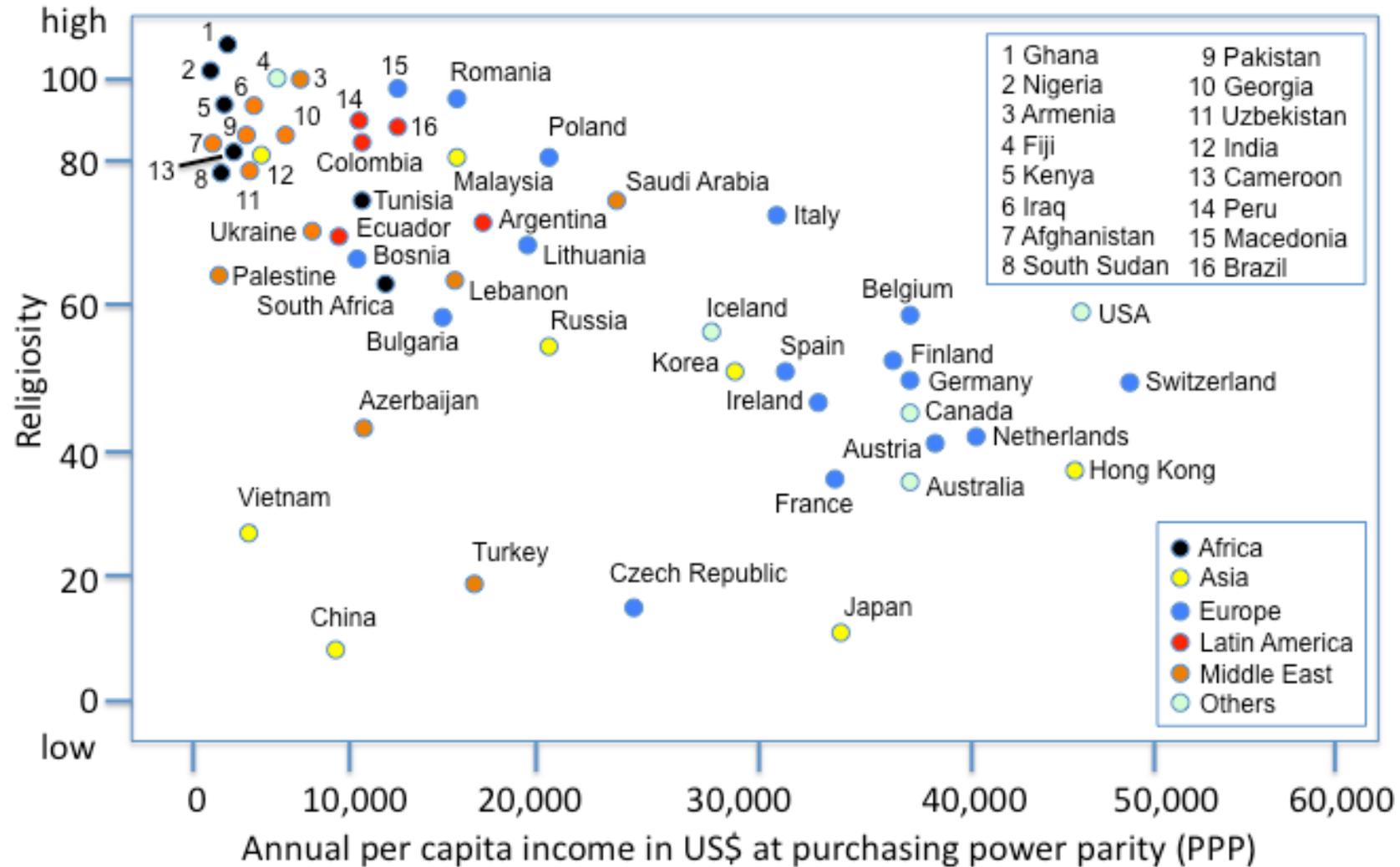
The man of Tao
does not struggle
to make money
and does not make
a virtue of poverty.

~ Chuang Tzu

Does religious adherence contribute to more or less wealth?

- The prosperity gospel suggests that God will materially reward those who give to God through a certain ministry.
- Corporately, higher religious adherence is negatively correlated with per capital income
- Individually, higher religious adherence is positively or neutrally correlated with income.

How does religiosity vary with average income?



Conclusion

- Discussion



References

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