

Religious Preferences, Church Attendance and Life Satisfaction among Immigrants in USA

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Abstract

In the growing literature on church attendance, little attention has been given to the impact on satisfaction with life among immigrants. Using The Pilot for the New Immigrant Survey (NIS-P), a nationally representative sample of new legal immigrants to the United States (U.S.), this paper empirically investigates the connection between religious involvement and the degree of satisfaction with life among immigrants. First, we examine whether immigrants from different religious affiliations differ in their reported degree of satisfaction with life. We then investigate the impact of regular religious service attendance on their degree of satisfaction with life in the U.S. Our results indicate that immigrants with different religious affiliations differ in their degree of satisfaction with life in the U.S. However, attending religious services regularly is not significant in affecting the degree of satisfaction with life in the U.S. among immigrants.

Key Words: life satisfaction, religious preferences, religious service attendance, immigration

JEL Classification: O15, Z12, J10

1. Introduction

It has been reported that between 1990 and 2000, the foreign-born population increased by 57 percent, from 19.8 million to 31.1 million (U.S. Census, 2003). Because of the increase in the immigrant population, their

adaptation and well-being has become an important issue, both for researchers and the public (Harker, 2001). While most studies concerning immigrants are focused on adaptation in terms of language, educational achievements and performance in the labor market of the host country (Rumbaut, 1999; Borjas, 1994; Grenier, 1984), little attention has been given to their degree of satisfaction with life in the host country. One reason for this is the lack of relevant data based on probability samples of immigrants drawn from well-defined populations. This limitation is remedied by a new data set drawn from The Pilot for the New Immigrant Survey (NIS-P), a nationally representative sample of new legal immigrants admitted to the United States (U.S.) in 1996.

Using the NIS-P, Massey and Akresh (2006) examine the connection between objective circumstances and satisfaction with life in the U.S. However, general life satisfaction has been suggested to be associated more with social relations and health (Hutchinson et al., 2004). Hence, our paper contributes to the literature by investigating the connection between social relations and the degree of satisfaction with life in the U.S. among immigrants. Specifically, this paper uses NIS-P and empirically examines the relationship between religious preferences, church attendance and the degree of satisfaction with life among immigrants residing in the U.S.

A significant portion of immigrants are religious, more than eighty percent identify with a religious preference (Jasso et al., 2003) and approximately forty five percent attend religious services nearly every week or more (Smith Kelly and Solomon, 2009). The literature on religion consists of a number of studies that have documented the correlation between religiosity and various social and political behaviors. In particular, attending church has been linked to higher voter turnout (Gerber, Gruber, and Hungerman 2008), and better health outcomes (Ellison, 1991 and Arredondo et al., 2005). It has also been shown that attending church is not related to self-reported health (Arredondo et al., 2005) and the decision to remit among immigrants (Smith Kelly and Solomon, 2009).

A considerable body of empirical research has also investigated religious determinants of well-being throughout the life course; see for example Hirshman (2004). These studies find a positive relationship between religious involvement and well-being among immigrants, as well as natives. They also support the importance of religion for the cultural continuity and the psychological benefits of religious faith following the trauma of immigration. Churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques also provide refuge from hostility and discrimination from society and help their

members feel more at home and adapt in a strange land (see Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Hirshman, 2004).

Due to the importance of religion in affecting immigrants' degree of satisfaction with life, this paper focuses on two related questions. The first question is; do immigrants from different religious affiliations differ in their reported degree of satisfaction with life? The second question asks; does regular religious service attendance influence their satisfaction of life in the U.S.? Results from logistic regression analyses show that immigrants from different religious affiliations differ in their reported degree of satisfaction with life in the U.S. Catholics are more likely to be completely or very satisfied with their life in the U.S. than Jews, Orthodox and individuals with Other Religion. This result is statistically significant and robust across model specifications. The results also indicate that regular religious service attendance is not significant in affecting the degree of satisfaction with life in the U.S. among immigrants.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the data. Section 3 presents the empirical results and Section 4 provides concluding remarks.

2. Data

The data for this study comes from the NIS-P, a panel survey of a nationally representative sample of new legal immigrants to the U.S. This stratified random sample of U.S. immigrants who became permanent residents in July and August of 1996 was drawn from the administrative records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (Jasso et al., 2000c). The sample of new legal immigrants consists of both new-arrival immigrants and adjustee immigrants¹. In this survey, adults and children were sampled and the sample was stratified to over-sample employment-based immigrants and under-sample children². However, we restrict our analysis to the adult sample, specifically; we focus on respondents age 18 and older at admission to permanent residence. All data analyses are adjusted using sampling weights.

The NIS-P survey conducted baseline interviews and interviews after six and twelve months. All these interviews were conducted by

¹ New-arrival immigrants are immigrants arriving in the U.S. with immigrant documents acquired abroad. On the other hand, adjustee immigrants are immigrants who are already in the U.S. with a temporary nonimmigrant visa (or in some cases are in the U.S. illegally) and adjust to lawful permanent residence (Jasso et al., 2005).

² Employment-based immigrants are immigrants who obtain an immigrant visa on the basis of their occupational skills.

telephone and in several languages. Baseline interviews were conducted with 1,127 adult immigrants in October 1996 and had a completion rate of 62 percent. The completion rates for the six-month and twelve-month surveys were 92 percent and 95 percent respectively. For more information on response rates, sampling design and sampling weights, see Jasso et al. (2000a, 2000b, 2000c). In the twelve-month survey, 985 adult immigrants were interviewed. In this survey month, information about religious preference, religious service attendance and life satisfaction in the U.S. were gathered.

The question on life satisfaction in the U.S. asked, “How satisfied are you now with life in the U.S.? Are you completely satisfied, very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied?” From the responses, approximately 56 percent of the immigrants were either completely or very satisfied with life in the U.S. and approximately 43 percent were either somewhat satisfied or dissatisfied.

The question about religious preferences relevant for our analysis is, “What is your religious preference? Is it Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, some other religion, and no religion?” Table 1 reports the religious preference among adult new immigrants at admission to permanent residence and shows that approximately 65 percent expressed a preference for a Christian religion (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant), a majority of which are Catholics, and about 15 percent of the sample reported a preference for no religion.

Table 1. Religious Preference, Full Sample

Religious Preference	Percentage
Catholic	41.9
Protestant	18.4
Muslim	7.9
Jewish	2.6
Buddhist	4.0
Hindu	3.3
Orthodox	4.2
Other Religion	1.7
No Religion	14.8
No Response	1.2

Notes: New Immigrant Survey-Pilot, 12 month survey, N=976; weighted data.

After deleting observations for which information was missing on any variable used in our analyses, a sample of 846 immigrants remained. Descriptive statistics and definitions are depicted in Table 2. The dependent variable is a dummy variable that takes on a value of one if the respondent is either completely or very satisfied with his or her life in the U.S. and zero otherwise. It is referred to as “completely or very satisfied” and is consistent with the definition used in the literature (Massey and Akresh, 2006). Approximately 59 percent of the respondents were either completely or very satisfied with his or her life in the U.S.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Definition

Variables	Mean	S.E. ¹	Definition
Life Satisfaction in U.S.			
Completely or Very Satisfied	0.589	0.019	1 if completely or very satisfied, 0 otherwise
Somewhat satisfied or dissatisfied	0.411	0.019	1 if somewhat satisfied or dissatisfied, 0 otherwise
Gender			
Male	0.438	0.019	1 if male, 0 otherwise
Female	0.562	0.019	1 if female, 0 otherwise
Age			
18 to 24	0.209	0.016	1 if 24 <= age <= 18, 0 otherwise
25 to 34	0.346	0.018	1 if 34 <= age <= 25, 0 otherwise
35 to 44	0.223	0.015	1 if 44 <= age <= 35, 0 otherwise
45 to 54	0.109	0.012	1 if 54 <= age <= 45, 0 otherwise
55 to 64	0.057	0.009	1 if 64 <= age <= 55, 0 otherwise
At least 65	0.057	0.009	1 if at least 65, 0 otherwise
Marital Status			
Married/Cohabiting	0.725	0.017	1 if married or cohabiting, 0 otherwise
Single/Never Married	0.198	0.015	1 if single or never married, 0 otherwise
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	0.077	0.010	1 if divorced, separated or widow, 0 otherwise
Education			
Less than 12 years	0.325	0.018	1 if less than high school, 0 otherwise
12 years	0.148	0.014	1 if high school graduate only, 0 otherwise
13 – 15 years	0.241	0.016	1 if some college, 0 otherwise
16 years	0.088	0.011	1 if college graduate only, 0 otherwise
Greater than 16 years	0.198	0.014	1 if more than undergraduate degree, 0 otherwise
Region of residence			
Northeast	0.340	0.018	1 if reside in Northeast, 0 otherwise
Midwest	0.107	0.012	1 if reside in Midwest, 0 otherwise
South	0.273	0.017	1 if reside in South, 0 otherwise
West	0.280	0.017	1 if reside in West, 0 otherwise
Connections to U.S.			
Children in U.S.	0.417	0.019	1 if children living in U.S., 0 otherwise
Spouse in U.S.	0.711	0.017	1 if spouse present, 0 otherwise
Owns property in U.S.	0.198	0.014	1 if owns U.S. property, 0 otherwise

1. S.E. is the abbreviation for standard errors.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Definition continued

Variables	Mean	S.E.	Definition
Prior U.S. Experience			
In U.S. before green card	0.560	0.019	1 if ever in US before green card, 0 otherwise
Connections Abroad			
Children abroad	0.205	0.016	1 if children living outside U.S., 0 otherwise
Owens property abroad	0.200	0.015	1 if owns property outside U.S., 0 otherwise
English Ability			
Speaks well or very well	0.413	0.018	1 if speaks well or very well, 0 otherwise
Employment Status			
Not currently working for pay	0.333	0.018	1 if not currently working for pay, 0 otherwise
Work less than 40 hours	0.173	0.014	1 if work less than 40 hours, 0 otherwise
Work 40 hours or more	0.494	0.019	1 if work 40 hours or more, 0 otherwise
Year came to U.S. to stay			
Before 1990	0.152	0.013	1 if came before 1990, 0 otherwise
From 1990 to 1995	0.378	0.018	1 if came from 1990 to 1995, 0 otherwise
1996 and after	0.470	0.019	1 if came 1996 and after, 0 otherwise
Region of Last Residence			
Canada	0.025	0.005	1 if Canada, 0 otherwise
Mexico	0.138	0.013	1 if Mexico, 0 otherwise
Caribbean	0.100	0.012	1 if Caribbean, 0 otherwise
Central America	0.045	0.008	1 if Central America, 0 otherwise
South America	0.086	0.011	1 if South America, 0 otherwise
Western Europe	0.058	0.008	1 if Western Europe, 0 otherwise
Eastern Europe	0.181	0.015	1 if Eastern Europe, 0 otherwise
Africa	0.052	0.008	1 if Africa, 0 otherwise
Middle East	0.037	0.007	1 if Middle East, 0 otherwise
South Asia and Pacific	0.183	0.015	1 if South Asia and Pacific, 0 otherwise
East Asia	0.097	0.010	1 if East Asia, 0 otherwise
General Health			
Excellent	0.325	0.017	1 if Excellent, 0 otherwise
Very good or good	0.538	0.019	1 if Very good or good, 0 otherwise
Fair or poor	0.136	0.013	1 if Fair or poor, 0 otherwise

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Definition continued

Variables	Mean	S.E.	Definition
Religious preference			
Catholic	0.422	0.019	1 if Catholic, 0 otherwise
Protestant	0.176	0.014	1 if Protestant, 0 otherwise
Muslim	0.078	0.010	1 if Muslim, 0 otherwise
Jewish	0.030	0.006	1 if Jewish, 0 otherwise
Buddhist	0.038	0.007	1 if Buddhist, 0 otherwise
Hindu	0.037	0.007	1 if Hindu, 0 otherwise
Orthodox	0.046	0.008	1 if Orthodox, 0 otherwise
Other	0.020	0.005	1 if Other, 0 otherwise
No Religion	0.153	0.013	1 if No religion, 0 otherwise
N	846		
Religious service attendance			
Never	0.104	0.013	1 if never attend, 0 otherwise
Less than once a year	0.015	0.005	1 if attend less than once a year, 0 otherwise
Once or twice a year	0.105	0.013	1 if attend once or twice a year, 0 otherwise
Several times a year	0.132	0.014	1 if attend several times a year, 0 otherwise
Once a month	0.105	0.013	1 if attend once a month, 0 otherwise
2 to 3 times a month	0.083	0.012	1 if attend 2 to 3 times a month, 0 otherwise
Nearly every week	0.055	0.009	1 if attend nearly every week, 0 otherwise
Every week	0.302	0.019	1 if attend every week, 0 otherwise
Several times a week	0.057	0.009	1 if attend several times a week, 0 otherwise
Every day	0.042	0.009	1 if attend every day, 0 otherwise
Regular attenders	0.457	0.021	1 if attend nearly every week or more, 0 otherwise
N ⁺	684		

+ Of the 846 individuals in the sample 684 express their frequency at religious services, weighted data

The independent variables include gender, age, marital status, education, region of residence, English ability, connections to U.S., prior U.S. experience, connections abroad, year came to U.S. to stay, region of last residence, employment status, reported general health status and the variables of interest, religious preferences and religious service attendance. The majority of the immigrants in our sample were between 18 and 44 years of age and 56 percent of the sample was female. Hutchinson et al. (2004) emphasize the importance of marital status in life satisfaction and we include dummy variables indicating whether the immigrant is married or cohabiting and divorced, separated or widowed (the reference is single or never married). Approximately 73 percent of the sample was married and of the married couples 71 percent had their spouse residing in the U.S.

Education is expected to proxy the income of immigrants, with more educated immigrants more likely to be satisfied with life in the U.S. Immigrants with less than 12 years of schooling accounted for 33 percent of the sample, while immigrants with greater than 16 years of schooling accounted for approximately 20 percent of the sample. Most immigrants reside in the northeast region of the U.S. and 49 percent of the immigrants worked 40 hours or more.

More than 80 percent of the sample have been living in the U.S. since 1990, 56 percent were in the U.S. before receiving their green card and 41 percent spoke English well or very well. The same proportion of immigrants owned property abroad and property in the U.S. (approximately 20 percent) and the ratio of children abroad to children in the U.S. was approximately 1 to 2. South Asia and Pacific, and Eastern Europe were the two top emigrating regions, both regions accounted for 36 percent of the new immigrants. Mexico was the largest emigrating country, accounting for 14 percent of the new immigrants. The health of the immigrant is self-reported and only 14 percent of the sample reported having fair or poor health.

The majority of the immigrants are Catholic, approximately 42 percent, followed by Protestant, at approximately 18 percent. Immigrants reporting other religion are the smallest group, accounting for 2 percent of the sample and approximately 15 percent indicate that they had no religion. Respondents who identified a religious preference were then asked; "How often do you attend religious services?" The answer pick list had options ranging from never to every day. Of the 846 individuals in the sample, 684 expressed a religious preference and hence, were asked about their frequency of attendance at religious services. Among the 684 respondents who identified their frequency of attendance at religious services, 46 percent reported attending religious services nearly every week or more, 18.8 percent once, twice or three times a month, 23.7 percent once, twice or several times a year, 1.5 percent less than once a year and 10.4 percent reported never attending.

To examine the relationship between immigrants' regular religious service attendance and their level of life satisfaction in the U.S., we follow Cadge and Ecklund (2006) and define respondents who attend religious services nearly every week or more as "regular attenders" and those who

attend less frequently as “non-regular attenders”³. Approximately 46 percent of the sample attends religious services nearly every week or more.

3. Empirical Estimation and Results

Logistic regressions are used to examine whether immigrants from different religious affiliations differ in how satisfied they are with their life in the U.S. To examine whether immigrants from different religious affiliations differ in their reporting of life satisfaction in the U.S., we examined a regression model in which the dependent variable “completely or very satisfied with life in the U.S.” is regressed on religious preferences, demographic, family, migration, health and employment factors. This model is referred to as model 1 and the odds ratios are reported in Table 3 column 1. An odds ratio greater than one implies that the group is more satisfied with life in the U.S. than the omitted group and an odds ratio less than one implies that the group is less satisfied with life in the U.S. than the omitted group.

³ This is the standard definition used in the literature on religious service attendance.

Table 3. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions

Dependent Variable – Life Satisfaction	Column 1 ⁺ - Model 1		Column 2 ⁺⁺ - Model 2	
Independent Variables	Odds Ratio	Standard Errors	Odds Ratio	Standard Errors
Demographics				
Female	1.497*	0.279	1.494**	0.324
Age 25 to 34	1.055	0.325	1.024	0.343
Age 35 to 44	1.393	0.493	1.629	0.646
Age 45 to 54	0.945	0.391	1.152	0.543
Age 55 to 64	4.187*	2.232	3.540*	2.052
Age at least 65	5.197*	3.003	5.529*	3.649
12 years of schooling	1.106	0.304	1.255	0.384
13 – 15 years of schooling	0.796	0.210	0.764	0.229
16 years of schooling	0.374*	0.135	0.305*	0.123
Greater than 16 years of schooling	0.506*	0.144	0.447*	0.149
Midwest	1.080	0.338	1.110	0.424
South	1.285	0.307	1.325	0.354
West	1.235	0.291	1.278	0.354
Married/Cohabiting	1.055	0.501	0.880	0.493
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	0.865	0.369	0.698	0.343
Speaks well or very well	1.325	0.288	1.608*	0.398
Work less than 40 hours	0.874	0.243	0.790	0.251
Work 40 hours or more	0.764	0.170	0.739	0.188
Connections to U.S.A.				
Children in U.S.A.	0.501*	0.130	0.623	0.182
Spouse in U.S.A.	1.592	0.653	1.721	0.858
Owns property in U.S.A.	1.446	0.363	1.275	0.359
Connections Abroad				
Children abroad	0.315*	0.105	0.355*	0.135
Owns property abroad	0.674**	0.150	0.651**	0.155
Year came to U.S. to stay				
From 1990 to 1995	0.607**	0.168	0.716	0.210
1996 and after	0.709	0.196	0.784	0.224

+ New Immigrant Survey-Pilot, N=846; weighted data.

++ New Immigrant Survey-Pilot, N=684; weighted data.

* 5 percent level of significance; ** 10 percent level of significance

Table 3. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions

Dependent Variable – Life Satisfaction	Column 1 ⁺ - Model 1		Column 2 ⁺⁺ - Model 2	
Independent Variables	Odds Ratio	Standard Errors	Odds Ratios	Standard Errors
Prior U.S. Experience				
In U.S. before green card	1.309	0.263	1.595*	0.349
Region of Last Residence				
Canada	3.656**	2.652	4.027	3.430
Caribbean	1.470	0.567	1.522	0.627
Central America	2.677**	1.402	4.877*	3.011
South America	1.324	0.552	1.327	0.571
Western Europe	1.740	0.824	1.617	0.850
Eastern Europe	1.547	0.565	2.097**	0.861
Africa	1.133	0.604	1.049	0.584
Middle East	1.977	1.206	2.517	1.664
South Asia and Pacific	0.808	0.286	0.899	0.334
East Asia	1.376	0.553	1.878	0.994
General Health				
Excellent	2.907*	0.939	2.690*	1.020
Very good or good	1.903*	0.543	1.865**	0.644
Religious preference				
Protestant	0.747	0.189	0.943	0.372
Muslim	1.368	0.588	1.305	0.725
Jewish	0.392**	0.209	0.180*	0.126
Buddhist	2.073	0.986	2.161	1.201
Hindu	1.371	0.667	2.222	1.238
Orthodox	0.331*	0.150	0.214*	0.120
Other	0.185*	0.131	0.114*	0.117
No Religion	0.460*	0.126		
Regular attenders			1.220	0.344
Regular attenders X Protestant			0.582	0.295
Regular attenders X Muslim			1.205	0.910
Regular attenders X Jewish			2.915	2.777
Regular attenders X Buddhist			0.505	0.574
Regular attenders X Hindu			0.193	0.237
Regular attenders X Orthodox			4.082	4.957
Regular attenders X Other			3.650	6.094

+ New Immigrant Survey-Pilot, N=846; weighted data.

++ New Immigrant Survey-Pilot, N=684; weighted data.

* 5 percent level of significance; ** 10 percent level of significance

Among religious preferences, Catholic is the omitted group. The results show that immigrants from different religious affiliations differ in their reported life satisfaction in the U.S. The odds ratios for Jews, Orthodox, and individuals with Other and No Religion are statistically significant and less than one, indicating that Catholics are more likely to be completely or very satisfied with their life in the U.S. than Jews, Orthodox, and individuals with Other and No Religion. The results also indicate that Catholics are not more or less likely to be completely or very satisfied with their life in the U.S. than Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Protestants. One possible explanation for these results is that Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Orthodox and individuals with Other and No Religion have different histories in the U.S. and confront diverse reactions from the U.S. population. These differences can contribute to the differences in their satisfaction.

The results also indicate that female and older individuals (age 55 and older) are more satisfied with their life in the U.S. The coefficients on these variables are statistically different from zero at the 5 percent level. We find that individuals with more schooling are less satisfied with life in the U.S. Similar to our results, Massey and Akresh (2006) find that individuals with more than 16 years of schooling are less likely to be satisfied with their life in the U.S. Massey and Akresh (2006) discuss one possible reason for the results on education. The authors stated that well educated immigrants are in a privileged position compared with other immigrants and are more likely to have higher expectations about life because they are more likely to feel they have other options besides the U.S. Thus, when they encounter setbacks and barriers in the host country (isolation, prejudice, discrimination, etc.), they are more prone to dissatisfaction (Massey & Akresh, 2006).

Individuals who have children abroad and own property abroad are more inclined toward dissatisfaction. The odds ratios on these variables are statistically different from zero at the 5 and 10 percent level respectively. Similarly, immigrants with children in the U.S. and those who have resided in the U.S. since the early to mid-1990s are also inclined towards dissatisfaction. With Mexico being the omitted category, immigrants from Canada and Central America are more likely to be very or completely satisfied with life in the U.S. Having excellent, very good or good health is an independent predictor for satisfaction with life in the U.S. among immigrants. This result is consistent with the results in the literature on general life satisfaction; see for example Hutchinson et al. (2004).

Logistic regressions are also used to investigate if regular religious service attendance influences immigrants' life satisfaction in the U.S. To investigate the impact of regular religious service attendance on life satisfaction in the U.S. among immigrants, the variable "regular attenders", which equal 1 if respondents attend religious services nearly every week or more and zero otherwise, is added to the model. This model is referred to as model 2 and the results are shown in Table 3 column 2. The odds ratio for the variable "regular attenders" is not statistically significant at standard significance levels. This result implies that immigrants who attend religious service regularly (nearly every week or more) are not more or less likely to be completely or very satisfied with their life in the U.S. than "non regular attenders".

We also examine the interaction between religious affiliations and church attendance. The results indicate that individuals of different religious affiliations who attend church services regularly are not more or less likely to be completely or very satisfied with their life in the U.S. than "non regular attenders". This result strengthens our finding that there is no association between attending church at least once per week and life satisfaction in the U.S.

Most of the results of model 1 are similar to those reported for model 2. The variables representing having children in the U.S., coming to the U.S. to reside in the early to mid 1990s and Canada as the region of last residence significantly affected life satisfaction in the U.S. among immigrants in model 1, however, these variables do not significantly affect life satisfaction in model 2. Although insignificant at standard levels of significance in model 1, the results for immigrants with prior U.S. experience before receiving their green card in model 2 indicate that they are more likely to be completely or very satisfied with their life in the U.S. Results from models 1 and 2 differ with respect to immigrants from Eastern Europe. In model 2, immigrants from Eastern Europe are more likely to be completely or very satisfied with their life in the U.S., while in model 1 there is no statistical relationship between immigrants from Eastern Europe and life satisfaction in the U.S.

4. Concluding Remarks

This paper examines how religious preferences, as well as religiosity, influence the degree of satisfaction with life among immigrants residing in the U.S. Our study focuses on two related questions. The first question is; do immigrants from different religious affiliations differ in their reported level of life satisfaction? The second question asks; does regular religious service attendance influence their satisfaction of life in the U.S.? In order to address these questions we use the NIS-P, a panel survey of a nationally representative sample of new legal immigrants to the U.S. Our results from logistic regression analyses show that immigrants with different religious affiliations differ in their satisfaction of life in the U.S. Catholics are more likely to be completely or very satisfied with their life in the U.S. than Jews, Orthodox and individuals with Other Religion. This result is statistically significant and robust across model specifications. On the other hand, being more religious (as captured by attendance of religious services) is not statistically significant in affecting the satisfaction of life in the U. S. among immigrants.

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