

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

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OPINION POLLS

Hope not Hate post-Brexit poll

On behalf of Hope not Hate, Populus conducted an extensive online survey among 4,032 adults in England between 30 June and 4 July 2016, principally to test the social impact of the vote to leave the European Union in the referendum on 23 June. Results were disaggregated by a range of demographics, including religious affiliation, albeit they are only statistically meaningful for Christians, non-Christians, and religious nones. Tables 247-352 present the data for the module on the European Union, showing how particular groups voted, and why; what they thought of the Remain and Leave campaigns; and how they perceived Brexit would impact the nation. The voting figures (summarized below) confirm what we already know from previous studies, that Christians were disproportionately leavers and non-Christians remainers.

% down	All	Christians	Non-Christians	Nones
Remain	38	33	51	42
Leave	45	50	35	41
Did not vote	17	17	14	17

The poll also replicated questions exploring attitudes to religious groups which had been included in Hope not Hate's pre-Brexit poll, undertaken on 1-8 February 2016. This is interesting, given the frequent claims that the Brexit vote has increased public hostility toward immigrants and other outsiders. In fact, even for Muslims, who have the most negative ratings of all five religions featured in the study, the number of adults suggesting they created major problems in both the UK and the world actually fell in the period between the pre- and post-Brexit fieldwork. There were also modest reductions in those with negative views toward other religions, held by only tiny minorities.

% choosing 4-5 on 5-point scale	Pre-Brexit	Post-Brexit
<i>Groups creating problems in UK</i>		
Jews	6	6
Muslims	45	36
Christians	9	9
Hindus	6	5
Sikhs	6	5
<i>Groups creating problems in world</i>		
Jews	16	13
Muslims	59	52
Christians	17	15
Hindus	9	7
Sikhs	8	6

All the data tables from this poll can be found, in two separate files, at:

<http://www.populus.co.uk/polls/>

Perceptions of Muslims (1)

Another pre-Brexit study also revealed that a significant minority of Britons (28%) continued to entertain an unfavourable opinion of Muslims in the country. This was nine points more than in 2015, albeit at a similar level as 2009 and 2014. Unfavourable attitudes to Muslims were especially likely to be held by those on the ideological right (33%) rather than left-leaners (18%) and peaked at 54% among UKIP supporters. People regarding Muslims unfavourably were twice as inclined as those viewing them in a favourable light to perceive refugees as a major threat and as heightening the risk of terrorism. Just under one-fifth of Britons (17%) agreed that most or many Muslims in the country already back Islamic State. Notwithstanding, negativity toward Muslims remained far lower in Britain than in nine other European countries surveyed, the proportion surpassing two-thirds in Greece, Poland, Italy, and Hungary.

With regard to integration, a majority of Britons (54%) still considered most Muslims in the country want to be distinct from the wider society, although this was ten points fewer than in 2006, in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings the previous summer. The proportion rose to 65% on the ideological right and 80% of UKIP voters. Overall, 31% thought Muslims wanted to adopt national customs and way of life, a steady improvement from the 19% recorded in Britain in 2005, but below the 43% currently achieved in France and Sweden. All the findings are contained in the latest release of data from the Spring 2016 wave of the Pew Global Attitudes Project, for which 1,460 Britons aged 18 and over were interviewed by TNS BMRB by telephone between 4 April and 1 May 2016. Other questions covered attitudes to Jews and the importance of being Christian to national identity. The report is available at:

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/europeans-fear-wave-of-refugees-will-mean-more-terrorism-fewer-jobs/>

Perceptions of Muslims (2)

In his column in *The Sun* on 18 July 2016, Kelvin MacKenzie questioned whether it had been appropriate for Channel 4 News to co-present its report on the recent and deadly Islamist truck attack in Nice with a Muslim journalist (Fatima Manji) wearing a hijab. His article prompted a flood of complaints to the Independent Press Standards Organisation. The pollster YouGov took up the matter on 21 July when it ran one of its instant app-based surveys. Just 29% of respondents thought MacKenzie had been right to make his remark against 64% who deemed him in the wrong. About half (48%) also argued that *The Sun* should not have printed the remark. Topline results are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/07/21/too-old-highest-office-kevin-mackenzie-and-comment/>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Bible stories

The Bible Society has recently published *The Nation's Favourite Bible Stories* (ISBN 978-0-5640-4407-8, 144pp., paperback, £7.99), reproducing 70 of them. The 70 emerged from an online survey conducted by ComRes on behalf of the Society among a sample of 2,051 Britons aged 18 and over on 22-23 April 2015. Respondents to this poll were asked to list, unprompted, their top three Bible stories or passages. ComRes subsequently tested the top 20 unprompted mentions with a separate online sample of 2,252 UK adults between 4 and 6 September 2015. The final top 10, in order of popularity, were:

1. The birth of Jesus
2. Noah's ark
3. The Good Samaritan
4. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus
5. The Exodus
6. David and Goliath
7. The Ten Commandments
8. Jesus feeding the five thousand
9. Jesus turning water into wine
10. The Sermon on the Mount

Jewish marriages

The latest report from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) is David Graham's *Jews in Couples: Marriage, Intermarriage, Cohabitation, and Divorce in Britain*, derived from the 2001 and 2011 censuses of population (including many tables specially commissioned by JPR from the Office for National Statistics) and the JPR's 2013 National Jewish Community Survey. Three-fifths of adult Jews live as couples, more than for any other religious or ethnic group, in part due to their older than average age profile. The majority of couples (89%) is married but 11% cohabit. Among married Jews, 78% are in endogamous marriages (i.e., they are married to another Jew) but 22% are in exogamous relationships, generally wed to a Christian or religious none. Marital endogamy for Jews has declined in Britain since at least the late 1960s but the rate of decrease has tailed off recently, being only 2% between the two censuses; moreover, marital endogamy here is still much higher than for Jews in the United States. On the other hand, intermarried Jews have fewer dependent children than their in-married counterparts. Among the rapidly growing contingent of cohabiters, the proportion of exogamous partnerships reaches 68%, negatively impacting Jewish fertility. Exogamous Jews, whether married or not, exhibit far weaker levels of Jewish attachment and engagement than endogamous Jews. Exogamy also increases the chances of a Jewish marriage ending in divorce, although the divorce rate among Jews is lower than in society as a whole. *Jews in Couples* is available at:

http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR_2016.Jews_in_couples.Marriage_intermarriage_cohabitation_and_divorce_in_Britain.July_2016.pdf

FutureFirst

The lead article in the August 2016 issue of *FutureFirst*, the bimonthly subscription magazine of Brierley Consultancy, is contributed by Phil Topham and considers recent statistics of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (based on a report discussed in the May 2016 edition of *Counting Religion in Britain*). The remaining content is written by Peter Brierley, including two articles inspired by British Social Attitudes Survey religion data, an analysis of rural churches in East Anglia, and a piece on the growing number of active retired clergy in the Church of England (who will soon exceed stipendiary clergy). Brierley Consultancy can be contacted at:

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OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Religious hate crimes

The Crown Prosecution Service completed 737 prosecutions for religiously aggravated offences in England and Wales in 2015/16, a 10% increase on the previous year. The total represented 5% of all hate crime prosecutions in 2015/16. Of these religion-related prosecutions, 79% resulted in convictions (five points less than in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and four points less than the average for all hate crimes in 2015/16) and the remainder were unsuccessful, mostly because of acquittal after trial or of victim issues. Just over two-thirds of convictions involved guilty pleas. The Religiously Aggravated and Antisemitic Crime Action Plan was developed and implemented during 2015/16, and the Hate Crime Assurance Scheme was extended to cover racially and religiously aggravated cases, so it is possible that prosecutions may increase in future years. Further details are contained in *Hate Crime Report, 2014/15 and 2015/16*, which is available at:

http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_hate_crime_report_2016.pdf

Sex crimes

There have been 725 reported sex crimes in places of worship in the UK during the past three years, according to data obtained from police forces by *The Mail on Sunday* under the Freedom of Information Act. The number has risen by one-fifth during the past twelve months, partly, it is believed, as a result of the 'Jimmy Savile effect'. Half of the cases (368) involved child abuse. Although most cases related to churches, some occurred at mosques and gurdwaras. One expert, Graham Wilmer, of The Lantern Project (which supports child sex abuse victims), suggested that, given the well-documented tendency to underreport crime, the true number of cases could be up to ten times the reported figure. See the newspaper's coverage at:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3705042/Five-new-sex-offences-week-Reports-abuse-UK-churches-mosques-Sikh-temples-risen-20-cent-past-year-half-involve-children.html>

Religion of prisoners

Prison Population Statistics by Grahame Allen and Noel Dempsey (House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No. SN/SG/04334) includes tables summarizing the religious profession of prisoners in England and Wales (Table 7, annually from 2002 to 2016) and Scotland (Table 14, for 2005, 2010, and 2013 only). Of the 85,441 prisoners in England and Wales in March 2016, 49% were Christian (nine points fewer than in 2002), 15% were Muslim (seven points up on 14 years before), and 31% were religious nones (unchanged from 2002). In Scotland in June 2013 (the latest date available), 54% of the 7,883 prisoners were Christian, 3% Muslim, and 42% nones (albeit 57% for female prisoners alone). Muslims are overrepresented in the prison population in both England and Wales and Scotland. *Prison Population Statistics* can be downloaded from:

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN04334/SN04334.pdf>

Meanwhile, the British Religion in Numbers website has recently updated its own coverage of the religion of prisoners in England and Wales, its series (now extending from 1975 to 2015) being available at:

<http://www.brin.ac.uk/figures/religion-in-prison-1991-2015/>

ACADEMIC STUDIES

State of the Church of England

Two of the country's leading writers on religious affairs, journalist Andrew Brown and sociologist of religion Linda Woodhead, have teamed up to write *That Was the Church, that Was: How the Church of England Lost the English People* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016, [8] + 255pp., ISBN 978-1-4729-2164-2, £16.99, hardback, also available in ePDF and ePub editions). It tells the story of how, since the 1980s, the Church of England has not merely declined in a numerical sense (a process which had obviously started long before) but has progressively disappeared from the centre of public life and become alienated from (and unaccountable to) its host society. While, it is suggested, the Church has largely stood still over these three decades (with the notable exception of the ordination of women, achieved under duress), becoming more inward-looking and immersed in 'managerial voodoo', the nation has been transformed, generally embracing social liberalism and, in some measure, spirituality as an alternative to religion (which has become a 'toxic' brand). The limited trust and allegiance which the English now exhibit toward their Established Church is depicted as in stark contrast to the higher levels of support enjoyed by 'its closest historical cousins', the Scandinavian state Churches.

Since the work seems primarily addressed to a general readership, rather than an exclusively academic audience, the argument is not unreasonably built up primarily through description and analysis of key episodes and personalities in the life of the Church, often enlivened by the direct personal experiences of the authors. Some of the judgments on individuals may seem harsh and are likely to ruffle a few feathers, not least among allies of two former (and still living) Archbishops of Canterbury, George Carey and Rowan Williams, who come in for a fair amount of overt or implied criticism. Indeed, *That Was the Church, that Was* is already proving controversial (the first edition was withdrawn following legal challenge) and has received

several unflattering reviews. Some British Religion in Numbers users may also be disappointed by the comparatively limited use made of statistics to substantiate the central claim that the Church of England ‘lost’ the English people during the period in question. Although some reference is made in the text and, more especially, the endnotes to Church and sample survey data, including research commissioned by Woodhead in recent years, their treatment is far from systematic. A possible solution might have been the inclusion of a short appendix where the relevant quantitative evidence could have been assembled for scrutiny. The publisher’s webpage for the volume can be found at:

<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/that-was-the-church-that-was-9781472921642/>

Religious nones

In a recent post on the LSE’s Religion and the Public Sphere blog, Ben Clements collates evidence from sample surveys and opinion polls to illuminate the growth of no religionism in Britain since the Second World War and the extent to which it is driven by avowed atheism or agnosticism. He highlights variability in the findings arising from fluctuations in methodology and question-wording. The post can be found at:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionpublicsphere/2016/07/26/who-are-the-religious-nones-in-britain-atheists-agnostics-or-something-else/>

Historical Quaker statistics

A reasonably full history and analysis of national-level statistics relating to the Religious Society of Friends in Britain is offered by James William Croan Chadkirk, ‘Patterns of Membership and Participation among British Quakers, 1823-2012’ (MPhil thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015, xx + 261 + xxxivpp., with 72 figures and 55 tables). It covers three broad areas: membership (both before and after the inauguration of the ‘Tabular Statement’ in 1861); attendance at meetings for worship (commencing with the Government’s 1851 religious census and with an especially good overview of the national Quaker censuses in 1904, 1909, and 1914); and various *ad hoc* studies conducted in recent years, including the longitudinal ‘Present and Prevented’ surveys undertaken by Chadkirk and Ben Pink Dandelion in 2006, 2008, and 2010 (considered at length in chapters 5 and 10). There is no substantive discussion of the British Quaker Survey, 2014 but some preliminary findings are given in footnotes. The conclusion draws brief quantitative comparisons with the experience of other Churches and denominations but emphasizes the distinctiveness of Quakerism and rejects generalized secularization theory as an explanation of Quaker decline. The thesis can be downloaded from:

<http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/5787/1/Chadkirk15MPhil.pdf>

Religion and higher education

James Lewis, Sean Currie, and Michael Oman-Reagan have utilized the population censuses of Australia (2006), New Zealand (2006), Canada (2011), and England and Wales (2011) to establish a positive relationship between higher educational attainment and affiliation to new religious movements (NRMs). They also contend that, apart from New Zealand, irreligion and higher education are similarly correlated. In the case of England and Wales, as the authors note, data on NRMs were only available for those individuals who ticked ‘other’ religion and chose to write in their specific religion on the census schedule. ‘The Religion of the Educated Classes

Revisited: New Religions, the Nonreligious, and Educational Levels' is published in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 55, No. 1, March 2016, pp. 91-104, and access options are outlined at:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jssr.12246/abstract>

Collective worship in schools

Imran Mogra surveyed 125 primary school trainee teachers (preponderantly female) at an English university to investigate their knowledge and understanding of, and attitudes toward, collective worship in schools. A large majority of the students thought such worship should be retained and that it makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual development of pupils. 'Perceptions of the Value of Collective Worship amongst Trainee Teachers in England' is published in *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, Vol. 37, no. 2, 2016, pp. 172-85, and access options are outlined at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13617672.2016.1185227>