

# Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 17 – February 2017

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## OPINION POLLS

### Places of worship

The overwhelming majority (87%) of Britons, including 86% of non-Christians and 79% of religious nones, perceive that the UK's 42,000 churches, chapels, and meeting houses bring important benefits to the country, according to a survey by ComRes on behalf of the National Churches Trust, for which 2,048 adults were interviewed online on 15-18 December 2016. The greatest benefits were seen as their value as places of worship (52%), examples of beautiful architecture (51%), and as an aspect of local identity (42%). A similarly high proportion agreed that churches, chapels, and meeting houses are important as part of the UK's heritage and history (83%) and as spaces for community activities (80%), with 74% endorsing their future use as community centres. Somewhat fewer (57% on both issues) supported Government financial aid to protect them for future generations or said it would have a negative impact on the community if their local place of worship was to close. Asked whether they had visited a church, chapel, or meeting house during the past year, 57% replied in the affirmative and 43% in the negative, the latter figure peaking in Wales (54%) and among religious nones (61%). Breaking down the purpose of the visit, 37% of the whole sample claimed to have attended a religious service, 16% a non-religious activity, and 24% to have come as a tourist. One-quarter also reported they had made a donation to a church, chapel, or meeting house within the previous twelve months, over-65s (37%), Christians (41%), and visitors to churches (44%) being most likely to have done so. Full data tables are available at:

[http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/National-Churches-Trust\\_Churches-Poll\\_Data-Tables.pdf](http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/National-Churches-Trust_Churches-Poll_Data-Tables.pdf)

### St Valentine's Day

St Valentine's Day, celebrated annually on 14 February, originated as a Western Christian liturgical feast honouring two early saints Valentinus. However, the customary association of the day with courtship seems to be connected with either the pagan festival of Lupercalia or the natural season, rather than with the saints Valentinus. In contemporary times, its religious associations have been all but lost and St Valentine's Day has become more of a cultural and retail event. One-quarter of 2,051 UK adults interviewed online by YouGov on 10-13 February 2017 said that they hated or disliked St Valentine's Day, more than the 19% who liked or loved it (peaking at 23% for women and 24% for under-35s), with 53% neutral. Two-fifths felt pressured to do something romantic on St Valentine's Day, one-half disagreed that it was a beautiful tradition, while 87% judged it too commercial. Asked about their own intentions for the day, 18-24s were the group most likely to be planning something romantic with their partner (42%), double the national average (20%), and also already to have a definite date for the day (16%). Results tables are accessible via the link in the blog post at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/02/14/most-brits-have-told-three-or-fewer-people-i-love-/>

For headline findings from another online poll, by Opinium Research for PwC in January 2017, and focusing on Valentine's Day spending patterns, see:

[http://pwc.blogs.com/press\\_room/2017/02/over-half-of-uk-adults-dont-expect-to-spend-on-valentines-day-but-is-less-amore.html](http://pwc.blogs.com/press_room/2017/02/over-half-of-uk-adults-dont-expect-to-spend-on-valentines-day-but-is-less-amore.html)

## **Lent**

YouGov marked Ash Wednesday by asking 6,742 of its panellists on 28 February 2017 whether they were planning to give up, or cut down on, anything during Lent. The overwhelming majority (69%) said they would not be making any Lenten sacrifices, rising to 75% of over-60s and 77% of UKIP voters. Almost one Briton in eight (13%) had not made up their minds, leaving 18% intending to observe Lent in some way, including 21% of women, 23% of Londoners, and 25% of 18-24s. Given a list of eight potential forfeits, the most popular was forsaking or cutting back on certain items of food or drink, selected by 8% of the whole sample. If previous years are anything to go by, the number of Lenten observers will be rather less than aspirations. Poll results can be found at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/21834fe0-fd9f-11e6-b7de-4e47a0d22bac>

## **National identity**

Religion is not a major determinant of national identity in Britain according to the latest release of results from the Spring 2016 wave of the Pew Global Attitudes Project. Asked about the importance of being Christian in order to be truly British, 18% of all adults replied that this was a very important attribute. This was far fewer than made the comparable claim about the dominant religion and national identity in Greece (54%), Poland (34%), the United States (32%), Italy (30%), and Hungary (29%), albeit it was more than in Canada (15%), Australia (13%), Germany (11%), France (10%), Spain (9%), The Netherlands (8%), and Sweden (7%). In Britain the proportion fell to just 7% among the under-35s but rose to 26% for the over-50s. A further 19% of all Britons assessed being Christian as somewhat important for being truly British while 24% rated it as not very important and 38% as not at all important. The total for very or somewhat important was thus 37%, which compared with 98% saying the same about being able to speak English in order to be truly British, 87% about sharing British customs and traditions, and 56% about being born in Britain. Pew's report and topline data can be found at:

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/02/01/what-it-takes-to-truly-be-one-of-us/>

## **Muslim integration**

The majority (54%) of Britons think that most Muslims living in the country want to be distinct from the wider society, according to the latest release of data from the Spring 2016 wave of the Pew Global Attitudes Project. This is a similar number to 2011 (52%) albeit lower than in 2006 (64%) and 2005 (61%) when the question was about Muslims coming to, as opposed to already living in, Britain. It is also comparable with the 2016 statistics for Sweden (50%), France (52%), and The Netherlands (53%), five other European nations recording higher figures: Germany (61%), Italy (61%), Spain (68%), Hungary (76%), and Greece (78%). Of the 12 countries surveyed on this particular topic, only in three did those believing that most Muslims want to be distinct fail to reach a majority, and then not by that much: United States (43%), Poland (45%), and Australia (46%). Just under one-third (31%) of Britons in 2016

acknowledged that most Muslims did want to adopt British customs and way of life, a steady improvement over time since 2005 (19%). The remaining 15% of Britons expressed no clear view on the matter. Topline data are available through the link in the blog post at:

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/06/diversity-welcomed-in-australia-u-s-despite-uncertainty-over-muslim-integration/>

### **‘Muslim’ travel ban (1)**

Notwithstanding its almost immediate suspension, following intervention by the US judiciary, President Donald Trump’s executive order on immigration of 27 January 2017 continues to divide public opinion, both in his own country and abroad. The order banned for three months travel to the USA by citizens of seven Muslim majority nations, the admission of refugees from Syria, and the admission of any refugees for four months.

In Britain, according to an online YouGov poll of 1,705 adults for *The Times* on 30-31 January 2017, half the population thought Trump’s immigration policy to be a ‘bad idea’. Especially critical were Liberal Democrats (83%), ‘remainers’ in the 2016 European Union (EU) referendum (78%), Labourites (73%), and 18-24s (69%). Just under one-third (29%) deemed the policy a ‘good idea’, rising to 50% of ‘leavers’ in the EU referendum and 73% of UKIP voters. One-fifth of interviewees did not know what to think.

Not dissimilar results were obtained in another, separately reported, YouGov survey among a much larger sample of 6,926 Britons, also conducted on 30-31 January 2017. This enquired how respondents would feel if Prime Minister Theresa May adopted for the UK a similar policy of barring Syrian refugees, together with temporary bans on other refugees and immigrants from some Muslim countries. One-third (32%) said they would be appalled, 17% disappointed, 13% pleased, and 15% delighted, with 24% neutral or undecided.

Detailed tables for both investigations, whose fieldwork preceded the suspension of the executive order, can be found on the YouGov website at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/02/01/almost-half-brits-think-trump-state-visit-should-g/>

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/qpe8e6s0j9/TimesResults\\_170131\\_Trump\\_W.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/qpe8e6s0j9/TimesResults_170131_Trump_W.pdf)

### **‘Muslim’ travel ban (2)**

On 7 February 2017, Chatham House released the headline findings of a multinational poll carried out on its behalf by Kantar Public between 12 December 2016 and 11 January 2017, before President Trump’s inauguration and executive order. The fieldwork period coincided with several instances of Islamist terrorism, notably the attack on a Berlin Christmas market on 20 December which claimed the lives of twelve people. Online surveys were conducted with approximately 1,000 adults aged 18 and over in ten European nations.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement that ‘all further migration from mainly Muslim countries should be stopped’. Majorities in eight of the ten nations investigated agreed with the proposition, the two exceptions being the UK and Spain. In the UK, 47% agreed that migration from mainly Muslim countries should be halted, eight points

less than the European average, while 23% disagreed and 30% were neutral. Agreement was highest in Poland (71%), Austria (65%), Hungary (64%), Belgium (64%), and France (61%). Across the continent, endorsement of migration controls peaked among the over-60s whereas under-30s and degree holders were less supportive. Chatham House's press release about the poll can be found at:

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/what-do-europeans-think-about-muslim-immigration>

### **'Muslim' travel ban (3)**

A ComRes poll for *The Independent* and *Sunday Mirror*, undertaken online among 2,021 Britons on 8-10 February 2017, asked whether the UK should follow the US lead and introduce its own 'travel ban' on immigrants from Muslim majority countries. Overall agreement with the proposition had by then reduced to 29%, with relatively little variation by demographics, except for a peak of 75% endorsement from UKIP voters. The majority (55%) disagreed with a UK ban, Liberal Democrats (86%) and 18-24s (74%) being especially opposed. One in six (16%) was undecided about the desirability of a UK ban. Comparable results were obtained from an earlier question about whether President Trump had been right to try and halt temporarily immigration to the US from Muslim majority countries, 33% judging he had been, 52% that he had not, and 14% unsure. Detailed data tables are available at:

[http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Independent-Sunday-Mirror-VI-poll\\_11.02.2017\\_69847231.pdf](http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Independent-Sunday-Mirror-VI-poll_11.02.2017_69847231.pdf)

### **Muslims and President Trump's state visit**

The debate about President Trump's attempted Muslim travel ban has become increasingly linked, in the minds of the British public, with his state visit to the UK during 2017, following the invitation extended to him by Prime Minister Theresa May. This has prompted Ipsos MORI, in its latest political monitor (undertaken by telephone interview among 1,044 adults on 10-14 February 2017), to ask whether 'The Donald' should do various things in the course of his visit. One of the possible activities suggested by the pollster was for him to visit a London mosque or Muslim community group. A plurality of respondents (47%) thought he should not do that but 44% believed he should, including small majorities of men, persons aged 35-54, the top (AB) social group, Liberal Democrats, and Greater Londoners. The remaining 10% were undecided. Full data tables can be accessed via the link in the news post at:

<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3841/Europe-still-seen-as-most-important-relationship-for-Britain.aspx>

### **Islam and British values**

A plurality (46%) of the public continues to think there is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society, according to the latest YouGov@Cambridge tracker, for which 2,052 adults were interviewed online on 12-13 February 2017. Over-65s (63%), those who had voted to leave the European Union (EU) in the 2016 referendum (68%), and UKIP supporters (78%) were the groups most likely to hold this opinion. Just one-quarter said that Islam was generally compatible with British values, remain voters in the EU referendum being

most optimistic (41%). The residual 29% failed to choose between the two options. Data tables can be found at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/9u1mmsq0we/YGC%20Tracker%20GB%20Feb%202017.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/9u1mmsq0we/YGC%20Tracker%20GB%20Feb%202017.pdf)

This is the sixteenth occasion over the past two years YouGov@Cambridge has asked this question. All the data can be accessed via the links at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/02/19/tracker-islam-and-british-values/>

### **General opinions of Islam and Muslims**

‘Britons continue to hold quite mixed and sometimes contradictory views on Muslims and Islam’, according to an analysis by Nick Lowles of an online poll by YouGov for Hope Not Hate, for which 1,679 adults were interviewed on 16-19 December 2016. On the one hand, 50% of the public think Islam poses a serious threat to Western civilization, rising to 60% of Conservative and 75% of UKIP voters; only 22% of the nation disagree. Moreover, 67% believe that Muslim communities need to respond more strongly to the threat of Islamic extremism. On the other hand, 69% think it wrong to blame an entire religion for the actions of a few extremists, 52% concede that discrimination is a serious problem facing Muslims in Britain, and 40% criticize the media for being too negative towards Muslims. These questions formed part of a broader investigation into ‘the state of the nation’, in which attitudes to immigration and post-Brexit issues loomed large. However, space was also found for a question about trust in groups, revealing that 61% of Britons distrust religious leaders (against just 29% who trust them). Full data tables have yet to be released but the article by Lowles can be found on pp. 12-15 of the January-February 2017 edition of *Hope Not Hate* at:

<http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/blog/nick/archive/2/2017>

### **Islamic State**

A majority (61%) of the British public is either very worried (14%) or fairly worried (47%) that Islamic State (IS) may attempt a terrorist attack in Britain. This is a lower proportion than in France (76%) and Germany (74%), both of which were on the receiving end of deadly IS outrages in 2016. But it is lower than in Scandinavian countries, anxiety about an IS attack standing at 53% in Sweden, 51% in Denmark, 45% in Norway, and 44% in Finland. The results come from the latest six-nation Eurotrack study, undertaken online by YouGov between 19 and 24 January 2017, with 1,569 interviewees in Britain. The topline findings are available via the link in the blog post at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/02/08/most-brits-think-eu-needs-uk-least-much-uk-needs-e/>

### **Fake news**

Fake news has received much media coverage recently, prompting Channel 4 to commission YouGov to run an online poll on the subject among 1,684 Britons on 29-30 January 2017. Respondents were given a list of six stories that had genuinely appeared in the media during recent times and asked whether they had previously seen or heard the particular story and if it was true or false.

One of the stories concerned an enforced name change for the Essex villages of High Easter and Good Easter, following complaints that they were offensive. This story emanated from the so-called Southend News Network which had reported in March 2016 that Essex County Council had resolved to require the villages to change their names from the beginning of 2017, in order to avoid falling foul of European Union guidance that the inclusion of a specifically religious term in a place name might offend people of other faiths or none. Despite being widely believed on the internet, this story was entirely fabricated, and Southend News Network is actually an avowedly spoof website.

Although just 2% of the YouGov sample had previously seen this particular story, as many as 22% thought that it was definitely or probably true, rising to 34% of under-25s and 31% of Snapchat users. A slight majority (51%) correctly recognized the story as fake news and 26% could not make up their minds whether it was true or not. Full data tables are available at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/g9yhnt6pqu/Channel4Results\\_170130\\_FakeNews\\_W.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/g9yhnt6pqu/Channel4Results_170130_FakeNews_W.pdf)

## **Generation Z**

Insights into the values and attitudes of young people aged 15-21 have been gained from a global citizenship survey undertaken by Populus on behalf of the Varkey Foundation, a not-for-profit organization committed to improving standards of education for underprivileged children throughout the world. Online interviews were conducted with randomly drawn samples of young adults in 20 nations between 19 September and 26 October 2016, including 1,031 in the UK. The other countries were: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, and the United States.

Several questions probed the importance and influence of faith, revealing that, relative to the global mean, religion is accorded lower significance by young people in the UK. Just 4% in the UK agreed with a battery of four statements about the personal saliency of faith and only 3% concurred that a greater role for religion in society would make the greatest difference in uniting people. No more than one-quarter regarded their faith as contributing to their overall happiness. A majority (58%) endorsed the right to non-violent free speech even if it was offensive to a religion. Full data tables are not yet available, but a variety of research outputs can be downloaded from the sponsor's website at:

<https://www.varkeyfoundation.org/generation-z-global-citizenship-survey>

## FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

### **The Church and LGB mental health**

The Church's typically negative stance to same-sex relationships has had a 'hugely distressing impact' on large numbers of lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) people, according to the latest report from the Oasis Foundation: Steve Chalke, Ian Sansbury, and Gareth Streeter, *In the Name of Love: The Church, Exclusion, and LGB Mental Health Issues*. This negativity is viewed by the authors as a significant contributory factor to the greater prevalence of poor mental health among LGB individuals than for heterosexuals. In support of their claim, brief

reference is made to British Social Attitudes Survey and YouGov data concerning views about same-sex relationships among religious populations. It is also noted that: 74% of signatories on the website of the Coalition for Marriage, which opposed the legalization of same-sex marriage (SSM), are identifiable Christians; 54% of the MPs who voted against SSM self-identified as Christian; and 91% of negative comments in a sample of national media articles about SSM were made by Christians. The 16-page report can be found at:

[https://oasis.foundation/sites/foundation.dd/files/In%20the%20Name%20of%20Love%20-%20FINAL\\_1.pdf](https://oasis.foundation/sites/foundation.dd/files/In%20the%20Name%20of%20Love%20-%20FINAL_1.pdf)

### **Women and the Church**

The Church of England still has ‘a significant way to travel before women have any degree of equality’, with a continuing ‘high disparity between the opportunity and prospects of male and female clergy’. This is according to WATCH (Women and the Church), which has just published *A Report on the Developments in Women’s Ministry in 2016*. Data are presented on the gender balance at various levels of ordained and lay ministry for 2015 and immediately preceding years. WATCH highlights the fact that, although the number of men and women being ordained is now roughly equal, a significantly higher and increasing proportion of men are ordained to stipendiary posts, with around half ordained females receiving no financial support from the Church for their ministry. Only 27% of women clergy are currently vicars or in more senior roles. The report is available through the link in the press release at:

<http://womenandthechurch.org/news/watch-launches-report-developments-womens-ministry-2016/>

### **Living ministry research**

On 31 January 2017, the Church of England launched its ‘Living Ministry’ research project, exploring the factors which help clergy flourish in their ministry with a particular focus on wellbeing and outcomes (effectiveness). It will be a longitudinal panel study, tracking (by means of an online survey every two years over an initial ten-year period) the progress of four cohorts, those ordained as deacons in 2006, 2011, and 2015 and ordinands who started training in 2016. These cohorts comprise 1,600 individuals. The foundation survey runs until 7 March 2017. Qualitative research will also be undertaken. Further information is available at:

<http://www.ministrydevelopment.org.uk/living-ministry-research>

‘Living Ministry’ builds upon the ‘Experiences of Ministry’ project which surveyed a representative sample of Church of England clergy in 2011, 2013, and 2015. It was undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Management, King’s College London and is due to wind up in 2017. Further information is available at:

<http://www.ministrydevelopment.org.uk/experiences-of-ministry-project>

### **Anti-Semitic incidents**

There was a ‘record’ number (1,309) of anti-Semitic incidents in the UK in 2016, 36% more than in 2015, according to the latest annual report of the Community Security Trust (CST). The incidents were spread relatively uniformly throughout 2016 with more than 100 each month

between May and December. The CST is currently recording, on average, more than double the number of monthly incidents it did four years ago. Over three-quarters of the incidents took place in Greater London and Greater Manchester, areas with the country's two largest Jewish communities. Abusive behaviour (mostly verbal) accounted for 77% of incidents, but there were also 107 violent assaults, 100 cases of threat, and 81 instances of damage and desecration to Jewish property. No single trigger event explained the rise in incidents, as had happened in 2009 and 2014; rather, the CST cited 'the cumulative effect of a series of relatively lengthy events and factors', including 'high profile allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party' and 'a perceived climate of increased racism and xenophobia . . . following the EU referendum'. In addition to the 1,309 logged incidents, the CST received 791 notifications of potential incidents which, upon investigation, did not evidence anti-Semitic motivation, targeting, or content. On the basis of survey data, the CST believes there is a likely significant under-reporting of anti-Semitic incidents to both itself and the police. The 36-page *Antisemitic Incidents Report, 2016* is available at:

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/c/4/Incidents%20Report%202016%20Web.pdf>

In his 'The View from the Data' column in the *Jewish Chronicle* for 17 February 2017 (p. 37), Jonathan Boyd of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research cautioned against labelling the 2016 anti-Semitic incidents statistics as 'the worst year on record' (as the newspaper's own headline had claimed). He identified several 'interfering factors' which inhibited use of the CST's reporting back to 1983 as a true time series. For instance, the CST figures now include incidents reported to both the police and CST, whereas prior to 2011 they incorporated notifications to the CST alone. The column is at:

<https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/was-2016-really-the-worst-year-1.432877>

### **Jewish learning disabilities**

The latest report from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR), commissioned by Langdon, estimates that 7.4% of the UK Jewish population have some kind of learning disability, affecting 9.6% of Jewish males and 5.1% of females. The extent of learning disability varies greatly, from severe at one end of the spectrum (7% of cases) to light at the other (54%). Detailed figures for each region are contained in an appendix, differentiating by gender, age, and, where applicable, between mainstream and strictly orthodox Jews. The estimates are derived from multiple sources, both British and international, including JPR's 2013 National Jewish Community Survey and the 2011 Scottish census of population (the corresponding census in England and Wales did not collect data about learning disabilities). Daniel Staetsky's 27-page *Learning Disabilities: Understanding Their Prevalence in the British Jewish Community* is available at:

[http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR.2017.Learning\\_disabilities.pdf](http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR.2017.Learning_disabilities.pdf)

## OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

### **Census of population**

Roger Hutchinson offers a vivid and readable census-based self-portrait of the British Isles in his *The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestick-Maker: The Story of Britain through its Census*



*since 1801* (London: Little, Brown, 2017, 352pp., ISBN 9781408707012, £20, hardback). It traces the often contested development of the official decennial population census from 1801 to 2011 while simultaneously providing a wealth of human illustrative detail. There are some references – necessarily insubstantial in such a generalist work – to the religious dimension of the census. This was only realized in Britain itself (Ireland and the British Empire and Commonwealth followed a different path) through enumerations of religious accommodation and worship in 1851 and of religious profession in 2001 and 2011 (albeit religion questions were also proposed and hotly debated for several other years). The book's webpage is at:

<https://www.littlebrown.co.uk/books/detail.page?isbn=9781408707012>

### **1851 religious census**

Of mainly local interest is John Crummett's *Mothering Sunday, 30th March 1851: A Window into Church-Going in Northern Derbyshire* (New Mills Local History Society, Occasional Publications, 95, New Mills: the Society, 2016, [4] + ii + 35pp., £2). The author explains the ecclesiastical background to the government religious census and reproduces the results for the Hayfield and Glossop sub-districts. He also highlights the criticisms of the census made by two local Anglican clergymen, John Rigg and Samuel Wasse, and provides biographical information about them in one of the appendices. The pamphlet can be ordered from the publisher at:

<http://www.newmillshistory.org.uk/publications.html>

### **Youth social action**

Research has sometimes found a positive correlation between social capital and religious faith. However, the latest *National Youth Social Action Survey, 2016*, written up by Julia Pye and Olivia Michelmores, reports that participation in meaningful social action during the preceding year is now actually higher among youngsters aged 10-20 without religion than for those with faith. The difference was not huge, 44% versus 41%, but was statistically significant compared with 2014, when the reverse applied. Places of worship were relatively unimportant locations for the involvement of youngsters in social action. The study was undertaken by Ipsos MORI, on behalf of the Office for Civil Society (part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) and Step Up to Serve, by means of 2,082 face-to-face interviews throughout the UK on 2-16 September 2016. The report is available at:

<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Publications/sri-youth-social-action-in-uk-2016.pdf>

## ACADEMIC STUDIES

### **Secularization in the 'long' 1960s**

In the ongoing debate about secularization, historians and sociologists are increasingly turning their attention to changes in the religious landscape during the 'long' 1960s, in Britain and elsewhere in the West. A heavily statistical spotlight on this period is now shone in Clive Field's *Secularization in the Long 1960s: Numerating Religion in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, xvii + 269pp., including 61 tables, ISBN: 978-0-19-879947-4, £65, hardback). In most cases, to permit sufficient contextualization, data are presented for the years

1955-80, with particular attention to the methodological and other challenges posed by each source type.

Following an introductory chapter, which reviews the historiography, introduces the sources, and defines the chronological and other parameters, evidence is provided for all major facets of religious belonging, behaving, and believing, as well as for institutional church measures. The work particularly engages with, and largely refutes, Callum Brown's influential assertion that Britain experienced 'revolutionary' secularization in the 1960s, which was highly gendered in nature, and with 1963 the major tipping-point. Instead, a more nuanced picture emerges with some religious indicators in crisis, others continuing on an existing downward trajectory, and yet others remaining stable. Building on previous research by the author and other scholars, and rejecting recent proponents of counter-secularization, the long 1960s are ultimately located within a longstanding gradualist, and still ongoing, process of secularization in Britain. The book's webpage is at:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/secularization-in-the-long-1960s-9780198799474?cc=gb&lang=en&>

### **Church of England and the people**

One of the more controversial religious books of 2016, and (indeed) of recent years, was *That Was the Church that Was*, by journalist Andrew Brown and sociologist of religion Linda Woodhead, a lively and mainly damning account of developments in the Church of England between 1986 and 2016. The authors argued that, during these decades, the Church became progressively more inward-looking, more obsessed with 'managerial voodoo', evolving from a societal into a congregational church, disappearing from the centre of public life, and becoming alienated from (and unaccountable to) its host community. In presenting this thesis, Brown and Woodhead made relatively little use of numerical data. Their claims that the Church of England has 'lost' the English people since 1986 have now been examined through religious statistics in Clive Field, 'Has the Church of England Lost the English People? Some Quantitative Tests', *Theology*, Vol. 120, No. 2, March-April 2017, pp. 83-92. Both attachment and attitudinal indicators are reviewed, the former showing the decline of the Church has been long-term, the latter that division between Church and nation is not always clear-cut. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0040571X16676668>

### **Homosexuality and the Church of England**

'Half of Anglicans believe there is nothing wrong with same-sex relationships', NatCen Social Research proclaimed on the very day (15 February 2017) that the Church of England General Synod was due to debate a report reaffirming the traditional Christian view of marriage as between a man and a woman. The NatCen press release and associated data tables were based upon secondary analysis of various waves of British Social Attitudes Surveys. In 2014, 47% of professing Anglicans said they agreed with same-sex marriage with just 26% disagreeing. In 2015, 50% of Anglicans described same-sex relationships in general as not wrong at all (three times the number who had said so in 1983), while 27% regarded them as always or mostly wrong; these figures were not that much different than for the electorate as a whole (59% and 22%, respectively). Many of these Anglicans would have been very nominal in their allegiance, and attitudes would doubtless have been less liberal among churchgoers. Affiliates

of non-Christian faiths were found to be least supportive of same-sex relationships and religious nones the most. The press release is at:

<http://natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2017/february/half-of-anglicans-believe-there-is-nothing-wrong-with-same-sex-relationships/>

Meanwhile, one of YouGov's app-based polls reported on 17 February 2017 that, among recent news stories, 39% of Britons had been interested to hear there were to be 'no gay marriages in CofE churches'. However, the topic did not generate quite so much interest as North Korea (62%), Donald Trump (55%), and House of Commons Speaker John Bercow (44%). The poll is posted at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/02/17/political-debate-uk-popular-news-topics/>

### **Young nones**

In a 17-page article in the online first edition of *Journal of Youth Studies*, Nicola Madge and Peter Hemming report on 'Young British Religious "Nones": Findings from the Youth on Religion Study'. This project principally involved online interviews in 2010 with 10,376 13- to 18-year-olds attending secondary schools in three multi-faith locations (Hillingdon and Newham in London and Bradford in Yorkshire), of whom one-fifth self-described as non-religious. As with other investigations into 'nones', their lack of homogeneity was the most striking feature of the research. A wide range of religious identities was in evidence, with different levels of religiosity and considerable fluidity in belief and behaviour, over time and according to setting. In particular, being non-religious did not necessarily imply that religion played no part in these young lives. Science and then family were recorded as the two greatest influences in the formation of their religious views. The article is available on an open access basis at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13676261.2016.1273518?needAccess=true>

The authors have also contributed a summary of the research in a recent post on the Religion and the Public Sphere blog at:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionpublicsphere/2017/02/non-religious-young-people-in-britain-possess-a-range-of-different-identities/>

### **Financing early Methodism**

Ecclesiastical finance is a significantly neglected area of research, albeit a vital one since it is clearly essential to understand the means by which churches and other religious bodies sustained themselves in economic terms. Especially welcome, therefore, is Clive Murray Norris, *The Financing of John Wesley's Methodism, c. 1740-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, 336pp., ISBN 978-0-19-879641-1, £65, hardback). In ten chapters, resting upon an extensive range of archival and other primary sources (described on pp. 9-11), Morris demonstrates the often innovative ways in which the nascent Methodist movement financed itself at every level, from the local society to the connexion, and in every sphere of operation, including the preaching ministry, the acquisition of chapels, its publishing enterprise, its educational and welfare work, and its overseas missionary endeavours. There are also some

references to comparative developments in the Church of England, Calvinistic Methodism, and Dissent. The book's webpage is at:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-financing-of-john-wesleys-methodism-c1740-1800-9780198796411?q=Clive%20Murray%20Norris&lang=en&cc=gb>

## NEW DATASETS AT UK DATA SERVICE

### **SN 7787: Twenty-First Century Evangelicals, 2010-2016**

This is not a new dataset as such but the fourth edition of a dataset originally deposited with UKDS in November 2015, adding data for the most recent surveys among this self-selecting panel of professed UK evangelicals. The latest study (the 24th in the series) was conducted by the Evangelical Alliance in September 2016 on the subject of religions, belief, and unbelief; it elicited 1,562 responses. A catalogue description for this resource, with links to a raft of documentation, is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=7786&type=Data%20catalogue>

The Twenty-First Century Evangelicals project was the responsibility of Greg Smith between 2011 and 2016. He has recently retired from his post of research manager at the Evangelical Alliance and has indicated that 'it is unlikely that any further materials will now be added' to the dataset.

### **SN 8119: Wellcome Science Education Tracker, 2016**

The Science Education Tracker (SET), building upon previous Wellcome Monitor Surveys, is designed to provide evidence on a range of key indicators for science engagement, education, and career aspirations among young people aged 14-18 in England. The 2016 sample comprised 4,081 students in school years 10-13 attending state-funded schools. Fieldwork was conducted, through online self-completion, by Kantar Public between 29 June and 31 August, on behalf of the Wellcome Trust and supported by the Royal Society, the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, and the Department for Education. The questionnaire included three background variables on religion: religious affiliation (with no denominational differentiation within Christianity); attendance at religious services other than for rites of passage; and opinions about the origin and development of life on earth (creationism versus evolution). A catalogue description of the dataset is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8119&type=Data%20catalogue>

### **SN 8140: Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2015-2016**

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (formerly the British Crime Survey) is a face-to-face victimization survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a range of crimes during the 12 months prior to interview as well as about their attitudes to different crime-related issues. The series began in 1982. The 2015-16 survey was conducted by TNS BMRB for the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, and Office for National Statistics and achieved 35,248 interviews with adults. In addition to investigating the incidence of religiously-motivated hate crime, respondents were asked to give their religious

affiliation, which can obviously function as a background variable for analysing replies to any other part of the questionnaire. A catalogue description of the dataset is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8140&type=Data%20catalogue>

**SN 8144: Scottish Surveys Core Questions, 2015**

*Scottish Surveys Core Questions* combines into a single dataset the answers to identical questions asked of an aggregate 21,183 respondents in the annual Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (2014-15), the Scottish Health Survey (2015), and the Scottish Household Survey (2015), all undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Government. Religious affiliation is one of the 19 core questions. A catalogue description of the dataset is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8144&type=Data%20catalogue>