

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 19 – April 2017

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OPINION POLLS

Lenten abstinence and Easter activities

Just under one-fifth (18%) of a sample of 1,552 Britons claimed to have given something up for Lent this year, when questioned online by BMG Research between 31 March and 4 April 2017. The proportion was greatest for professing Christians (24%) and people who regarded religion as important to them (36%) but it was also curiously high among non-Christians (23%); it was lowest for religious nones (10%). Of those who abstained, the most common forfeits were chocolate (17%), alcohol (12%), and takeaways (10%).

One-third of respondents did not celebrate Easter at all, including 38% of religious nones and 55% of non-Christians. Of the remainder, its religious aspect was only the third most significant part of the festival (12%), way behind spending time with friends and family (58%) and also surpassed by being off work (13%). Even for Christians, the religious dimension was no more than 22% and for those considering religion important 34%. One in ten (11%) observers of Easter anticipated attending church on the day, disproportionately women (13%), over-65s (15%), Christians (22%), and persons for whom religion was of importance (34%). Full data tables are available at:

<http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/eat-easter-eggs-attend-church-weekend/>

Easter associations

A majority (55%) of 2,670 adult Britons interviewed by YouGov via mobile phone app on 13 April 2017 associated Jesus Christ with Easter, rising to two-thirds among over-50s and Conservative and Liberal Democrat voters. Nevertheless, rather more respondents identified Easter with chocolate eggs (76%), a bank holiday (67%), and hot cross buns (62%). Least associated with Easter was Simnel cake (14%), the festival's traditional speciality, although it still held fond memories for 26% of over-65s. Full data tables can be accessed via the link in the blog at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/04/13/only-55-brits-associate-jesus-christ-easter/>

Eastertide beliefs

One-half the whole population and two-thirds of under-25s do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, according to a poll commissioned by BBC local radio and released on Palm Sunday, for which 2,010 Britons were interviewed by telephone by ComRes on 2-12 February 2017. These disbelievers included 23% of professing Christians and 5% of active (regular churchgoing) Christians. Believers numbered 44%, among them 9% of religious nones, and peaking at 59% of over-65s; the majority of them did not subscribe to the literal Biblical account of the Resurrection.

Belief in life after death stood at 46% and has been remarkably stable since Gallup first enquired into the subject in 1939; it was highest for Christians (61%), non-Christians (69%), and active Christians (85%). Asked about the nature of the afterlife, 65% selected another life where your soul lives on (such as heaven or hell) and 32% reincarnation. Disbelief in life after death also stood at 46% overall, reaching 73% with religious nones.

Other topics covered were religious affiliation (51% Christian, 9% non-Christian, and 37% none) and claimed attendance at religious services other than for rites of passage (20% weekly, 11% monthly, 31% less often, and 37% never). Full data tables are available at:

<http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/BBC-Religion-and-Ethics-Survey-Data-Tables-1.pdf>

There is a BBC press release at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-39153121>

Easter tide traditions

Almost one-third of Britons do not know the origins of Easter, including 10% who think it commemorates the birth (rather than the death and resurrection) of Jesus Christ, according to a poll of 2,000 adults commissioned by the cleaning brand Oven Pride. Just 12% claim to attend church over the festival while 23% believe its date is set by the government and 9% by the European Union. One-third cannot explain the significance of Ash Wednesday, although 21% say they have given up alcohol during Lent and 6% social media. Easter continues to be valued as a secular break, with 66% planning to spend the bank holiday weekend with family, friends, and good food. A traditional roast dinner on Easter Sunday is enjoyed by 70%, even if Simnel cake will only be consumed by 3%. Oven Pride has failed to respond to enquiries about the poll, so the principal public domain report of the survey is a somewhat garbled article in the *Daily Mail* at:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4410656/EU-sets-date-Easter-say-one-ten-Britons.html>

Easter eggs

Prime Minister Theresa May, a practising Anglican and member of the National Trust, waded into the public row about the omission of the word Easter from advertising for an Easter egg hunt sponsored by chocolate manufacturer Cadbury and held on National Trust properties. She criticized the decision as ‘absolutely ridiculous’. The event had previously been branded as an Easter egg trail. A plurality (43%) of 2,866 Britons interviewed online by YouGov on 5 April 2017 considered it appropriate for May to have commented on this sort of issue, peaking at 59% of over-60s and 69% of UKIP supporters. But 39% disagreed with her intervention, including majorities of Labour, Liberal Democrat, and Scottish National Party voters. The remaining 18% had no clear view on the matter. Full results are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/9db0fe70-19ef-11e7-b82a-4e47a0d22bac>

Religion and identity

Ethnic minorities remain more likely than white Britons to select religion as the principal component of their identity, according to an Opinion Research report on *Multicultural Britain in the 21st Century: What People Think, Feel, and Do*, written by James Crouch and Priya Minhas, and based upon online fieldwork undertaken since the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union (EU). However, even for the 616 ethnic minority persons in the sample, religion was a lesser aspect of their identity (19%) than ethnicity (36%) or nationality (30%), and it was accorded a still lower priority (16%) by the second and subsequent generations born in the UK. This is partially explained by the fact that 29% of ethnic minorities declared they had no religion. For the 1,762 white Britons interviewed, religion was the main element of identity for just 7%, compared with 59% choosing nationality, 15% local community, and 7% ethnicity. Other topics in the survey included attitudes to toleration and integration in the UK, with the replies from ethnic minorities disaggregated by religious group. Muslims were especially likely (59%) to feel Britain had become less tolerant since the EU referendum. Data tables have not been released, but the report can be found at:

<http://opinium.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Multicultural-Britain-2017-v6.pdf>

Brexit and identity

Trevor Phillips had an interesting article ('To Understand Leavers, Look to Anglicans') in the *Daily Telegraph* for 14 April 2017 (p. 20). It reported an analysis he had conducted with Richard Webber of a new opinion poll by YouGov among 6,000 voters living in England and focusing on their attitudes to the European Union (EU). In terms of voting at the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, the sample divided between Leavers on 53% and Remainers on 47%, reflecting the actual outcome of the referendum. But there were some notable differences according to religious affiliation. The two extremes were religious nones, who opted to remain by 52% to 48%, and Anglicans, who overwhelmingly wanted to leave (62% versus 38%). Further investigation revealed that the Anglican predisposition to leave the EU could only be partially explained by the fact that many of them were also Conservatives, three-fifths of the latter being Leavers. Another key variable appeared to be Englishness, with Anglicans identifying as English rather than British by a margin of 28% (compared with, for example, only 9% for Catholics). In their voting at the referendum, therefore, Anglicans seemingly exemplified the desire for a reassertion of English national identity. As Phillips concluded, 'Attitudes to the EU are driven at least as much by identity – including religious affiliation – as by economics.' There is no public domain version of the article, but it can be accessed via a paywall at:

<https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-daily-telegraph/20170414/282050506932951>

Religious affiliation

The latest large-scale political poll commissioned by Lord Ashcroft, and conducted online among 10,153 electors on 21-28 March 2017, included the standard background question about religion: 'which of the following religious groups do you consider yourself to be a member of?' It revealed that the religious profile of Britain is currently 50% Christian, 6% non-Christian, 41% no religion, and 2% prefer not to say. The proportion of professing Christians was greatest among over-55s (68%). It has fallen to just 27% of under-25s, 57% of whom are religious nones and 12% non-Christians (more than half of them Muslims). Differences by

social grade and region were much less marked than for age but there was some correlation between religion and voting in the 2015 general election and the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, albeit these effects were also at least partly the function of age. Conservative and UKIP voters in 2015 and 'leavers' in the referendum were most likely to be Christian, with the majority of Scottish National Party and Green voters claiming no religion. More details can be found in table 100 at:

<http://lordashcroftpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/New-Landscape-Full-data-tables-March-2017.pdf>

Religious freedom

The Pew Research Center's latest annual report about global restrictions on religion revealed that, across the 198 countries surveyed, government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion increased in 2015 for the first time in three years, including particularly in Europe. The report is available at:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/11/global-restrictions-on-religion-rise-modestly-in-2015-reversing-downward-trend/>

Pew's research prompted YouGov to ask 2,670 adult Britons via mobile phone app on 13 April 2017 whether, in the UK context, they would prefer to see fewer or greater government restrictions on religion in terms of laws, policies, and other actions. One-third of the sample was unable to answer, but there was more support (28%) for greater restrictions than for fewer restrictions (16%), with 23% wishing to see no change. Men (34%) and UKIP voters (38%) were the groups most endorsing greater restrictions while 18-24s (27%) were most inclined to favour fewer. Full data tables are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/dd6357c0-202a-11e7-b833-9af33598e109>

Another YouGov poll on the same subject, reported on 13 April 2017, used slightly different question-wording, which had the effect of polarizing opinion more sharply. In this survey, 38% opted for 'more control over religions' in the UK and 12% for 'more religious freedom', with 39% wanting no change and 11% undecided. These topline results, which seem to add credence to Linda Woodhead's claim that religion is becoming a toxic concept, are at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/04/13/religious-freedom-uk-boris-johnson-and-uk-foreign-/>

General election issues (1): Tim Farron on homosexuality

The unexpected 2017 UK general election campaign had hardly begun before religion reared its head, in the guise of the initial refusal of Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron (a practising Evangelical Christian) to say whether he believed that homosexuality is a sin.

The controversy prompted YouGov to ask 3,800 adult Britons via mobile phone app on 19 April 2017 whether they preferred politicians to be open about their religious views or to keep them private. The public was divided on the subject, 36% wanting politicians to be transparent about their religious opinions and 44% to keep them to themselves. The remaining fifth of voters was undecided. There were few major differences by demographic groups apart from

53% of Liberal Democrat and Scottish National Party supporters and 52% of over-65s preferring politicians to keep their religious views private. Full data tables are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/52964620-24da-11e7-b0e0-d2249ae0b02d>

YouGov returned to the topic on 25-26 April 2017, when it interviewed online a more conventional sample of 1,590 adults on behalf of *The Times*. By this stage, after several further evasions, Farron had clarified that he did not regard gay sex as sinful. A plurality of Britons (41%) thought he had the right to keep his personal religious views private, the proportion reaching 51% among professing Christians and 65% of Liberal Democrat voters. One-third (34%) replied that Farron ought to have answered the question about gay sex sooner, since his religious views were relevant to his political opinions; religious nones (43%) were especially of this mind. The remaining one-quarter of adults was uncertain what to think. More generally, just 12% of respondents believed that gay sex is sinful, and no more than 16% even of Christians; 74% of all Britons were emphatic it is not a sin, among them 87% of religious nones. For this second YouGov poll, see page 12 of the data tables which can be accessed via the link in the blog at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/04/26/voting-intention-conservatives-45-labour-29-25-26/>

The Christian Institute entered the fray from a different perspective, arguing that Farron had been bullied in public for holding traditional views about homosexuality. The Institute commissioned ComRes to undertake a telephone poll of 1,001 Britons between 20 and 24 April 2017, asking whether a politician who believes gay sex to be a sin should be free to express such an opinion. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents upheld that freedom, peaking at 71% of skilled manual workers and 73% of men, with 32% denying a politician the liberty to proclaim the sinfulness of gay sex. A similar proportion (67%) agreed that a politician believing gay sex to be sinful but keeping that view private should still be allowed to hold office, 25% dissenting and 8% uncertain. Full data tables are available at:

http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/tab_short_pr.pdf

General election issues (2): UKIP and the burka

Early on in the general election campaign, Paul Nuttall, leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), indicated he would be pushing for a ban on the burka and Sharia courts, while denying he was trying to reinvent UKIP as an anti-Islam party.

On behalf of *The Observer*, Opinium Research asked an online sample of 2,007 UK adults on 25-28 April 2017 whether they had heard of a policy proposal to ban the burka in public places and, if so, with which party they associated that plan. Three-fifths of interviewees were aware of the policy (and not many more, 65%, among UKIP voters), of whom four in five correctly identified it as a UKIP proposal. The remaining 40% either had definitely not heard of the mooted burka ban (18%) or were unsure whether they had done so (22%). The full data can be accessed via the link in the blog at:

<http://opinium.co.uk/political-polling-25th-april-2017/>

The matter was also addressed in YouGov's second poll on the Farron affair, noted above, which fielded on 25-26 April 2017. YouGov, however, was more interested in knowing what

the public actually thought about a legal ban on the wearing of burkas and niqabs (in other words, a full body and face veil). Almost half the electorate (48%) favoured such a ban, the number being particularly high for Christians (56%), manual workers (58%), Conservatives (63%), over-65s (68%), Leave voters in the 2016 EU referendum (70%), and UKIP followers (85%). Slightly fewer, 42%, held that people should be free to decide for themselves what to wear, including a majority of Londoners (54%), under-25s (60%), Labourites (61%), Remain voters in the EU Referendum (62%), and Liberal Democrats (67%). YouGov's blog on the issue, containing a link to the full data, is at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/04/27/about-half-brits-support-burqa-ban/>

The same YouGov survey likewise tested general election voting intentions, which showed that the Conservative Party had a strong lead over Labour among Christians at that point, 55% versus 20%, while religious nones divided 36% to 34%, respectively.

Academic research

ComRes have completed a major study for Research Councils UK and the Natural Environment Research Council, interviewing online and by telephone (between 20 and 31 January 2017) a sample of 3,000 adult Britons on their engagement with publicly-funded research into science and other academic subjects. The data tables, which run to 604 pages, include breaks for every question by a range of background variables, one of which concerned active membership of a religious group ('active' being defined as 'regularly' reading/listening to a religious text, praying, or attending religious services other than for rites of passage). According to this definition, 50% of the population self-classified as active members (42% Christian and 8% non-Christian) and 49% as not (comprising 39% with no religion and 10% who considered themselves religious but not active members of a religious group). In general, active membership of a religious group (or not) only had a marginal impact on the answers to the mainstream questions about academic research. For instance, active members were 4% more supportive of publicly-funded research than inactive members and religious nones and 5% more likely to have engaged with four or more research areas during the month prior to interview. At the same time, active members of a religious group were 7% less comfortable with the pace of change in the world and they were 6% less civically engaged although they were 12% more likely to have donated money to charity within the past half-year. The data tables are at:

<http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RCUK-NERC-Public-Insight-Survey-Data-Tables.pdf>

Syrian refugees

The UK Government has been accused, by former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey, of being institutionally biased against Christian refugees from Syria, who are underrepresented among those being moved to the UK under a flagship resettlement scheme. However, a majority (54%) of Britons surveyed by YouGov, in an app-based poll reported on 18 April 2017, thought religion should not be a criterion for the UK accepting refugees. One-third favoured taking a greater number of Christian refugees or only Christian refugees, while a hardline 11% opposed accepting any refugees at all. Topline results only are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/04/18/christian-refugees-syria-comparing-crimes-nazi-cri/>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Scottish church census, 2016

The number of Scots attending church on an average weekend has slumped from 853,700 in 1984 to 389,500 in 2016, falling – relative to population – from 16.6% to 7.2% over the same period. This is the headline finding from the initial report on the fourth (2016) Scottish church census which appears as a special eight-page edition (No. 50, April 2017) of *FutureFirst*, the bimonthly magazine of Brierley Consultancy. The census was undertaken by Peter Brierley, at the behest of a consortium of Scottish Churches and Christian organizations, by means of postal and online returns of attendance on 7-8 May 2016. Of Scotland's 3,689 congregations, 40% responded, missing data being estimated, taking account of variations by denomination, churchmanship, and area. Decline was experienced across most denominations, the Pentecostals alone significantly bucking the trend, albeit many immigrant churches and so-called Messy Churches had also been started. Three-fifths of worshippers were women and 42% were aged 65 and over (double the national average), peaking at 56% in the Church of Scotland. East Lothian had the lowest churchgoing rate (4%) and the Western Isles the highest (45%). Aberdeenshire was the only area to register absolute growth between 2002 (when the third church census was held) and 2016, largely attributed to the establishment of 25 new Roman Catholic congregations for Poles working in the oil industry. Despite claims of greater irregularity in attendance, as many as 80% of weekend churchgoers were recorded as attending weekly, 9% going fortnightly, 7% monthly, and 4% less often. Mid-week activities attracted an additional 234,500 people, 58% of whom did not frequent church at the weekend, giving a total reach by the Churches of 10% of the Scottish population at some stage during the week. A full report on the census, provisionally entitled *Growth Amidst Decline*, will be released by ADBC Publishers towards the middle of 2017; meanwhile, various outputs from the census (including the special edition of *FutureFirst*) are being assembled at:

<http://www.brierleyconsultancy.com/scottish-church-census/>

Brierley also wrote a full-page article about the census, entitled 'Church Life in Scotland', for the *Church of England Newspaper* (21 April 2017, p. 8).

The Church of Scotland has issued a press release about the census results at:

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/recent/green_shoots_of_growth_as_390,000_christians_regularly_attend_church

Family faith

Newly published by the two Christian charities Hope and Care for the Family is *Faith in Our Families: How Do Parents Nurture Their Children's Faith at Home? What Does the Church Do to Support and Equip Them in This? A Research Report*. It is based upon an online qualitative and quantitative study undertaken with the help of 9dot-research, the statistical component comprising a UK-wide survey of 983 parents (all practising Christians with at least one child aged 3-11 and committed to nurturing faith in the home), 175 church leaders, and 479 church children's workers recruited via the Care for the Family database or Facebook. As the report itself acknowledges, the methodology adopted inevitably resulted in a skewed sample, 'a snapshot of the more motivated and engaged parents and churches', with, for instance, 84% of respondents being women and just 3% Roman Catholics. However, even

among these active religious parents, 95% of whom conceded it was largely their responsibility to teach their children about Christianity, 92% admitted they should be doing more, with only 37% always or often looking for opportunities to nurture their child's faith. The degree of parental confidence about passing on their faith had a significant effect on what they currently did at home to do so. Lack of time was seen as the principal barrier to the transmission of faith in the family, followed by lack of knowledge. Just 12% of leaders felt their church put a lot of effort into supporting parents to nurture faith in the home, very much less than for six other church activities, and 94% agreed they should be helping more in this regard. The 32-page report is available at:

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Faith-in-our-Families-Research-booklet.pdf>

Church of England attendance

Mark Hart wrote about 'The C of E's Unsung Success Story' in the *Church Times* for 31 March 2017 (p. 13). Revisiting the Church's attendance statistics on the basis of various (potentially contestable) assumptions, he tentatively identified a significant, but hidden, area of growth – among the over-65s, notwithstanding rising Anglican death rates and absolute and relative decline in churchgoing levels. His article can be read at:

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2017/31-march/comment/opinion/the-c-of-e-s-unsung-success-story>

Hart's article drew a response from BRIN's co-director, David Voas, in the next issue of *Church Times* (7 April 2017, p. 18). In a letter to its editor, Voas pointed out that the missing factor in Hart's calculations was almost certainly immigration, with a net annual inflow of a quarter of a million people for more than a decade, the majority from Christian countries, from which the Church of England has presumably benefited to some extent. There is no public domain version of this letter.

Faith in Research

The Church of England's next annual Faith in Research conference takes place at the Novotel, Broad Street, Birmingham on Wednesday, 17 May 2017 and will be chaired by the Bishop of Manchester, David Walker. The plenary speakers include Clive Field from BRIN, who will give a brief presentation on 'Has the Church of England Lost the English People? Some Quantitative Tests', based on his recent article in *Theology*. Programme and registration details can be found at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats/research-statistics/faith-in-research-conferences/faith-in-research-2017.aspx>

Methodist Statistics for Mission

At its latest quarterly meeting, on 1-3 April 2017, the Methodist Council received an update on the compilation of the full Statistics for Mission Report, 2017, which will be presented to the Methodist Conference in the summer. Methodist membership in Britain on 31 October 2016 was returned as 188,400 (excluding ministers), representing a decline of 3.3% on 2015, 9.7% on 2013, an annual average of 3.6% over the triennium 2013-16, and an annual average of

3.5% over the preceding decade (2006-16). Methodist membership now stands at just 22% of its peak at the beginning of the twentieth century. The mean number of weekly attendances at worship services was 202,100 in October 2016, an average decrease of 3.4% annually both over the triennium and the decade. In addition, an estimated 500,000 attendances are registered weekly at non-worship activities and events, attracting a wide spread of ages, in marked contrast to the heavy skew towards an older demographic which characterizes both members and worshippers. The paper, which also moots several changes in statistics gathering and reporting, is available at:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/2547829/counc-MC17-51-Statistics%20for%20Mission-april-2017.pdf>

The *Methodist Recorder* found the update to Methodist Council so salutary yet so depressing that it ran a full-column comment, entitled ‘Confronting the Realities of Decline’, in its edition of 21 April 2017 (p. 6). The editorial warned that there was a real prospect of the Methodist Church in Great Britain ‘ceasing to meet’ (to borrow the Methodist parlance), at least in its present form, and urged its leadership to contemplate, and develop a strategy to manage, such a possibility.

Jewish students

The National Union of Students (NUS) has published a 50-page internal research report on *The Experience of Jewish Students in 2016-17*, as revealed by an online survey of 485 self-defining Jewish students (out of a total universe of 8,500 Jewish students in higher education in the country) between 28 November 2016 and 10 February 2017. The vast majority of respondents were in full-time education, aged 17-24, studying at undergraduate level, and UK citizens. Significant numbers expressed disquiet about the provision of specific facilities and services by their institutions (such as affordable kosher food and timetabling of classes and events in relation to the Sabbath); about the attitudes of academics and other students to issues relating to Jews, Judaism, and Israel/Palestine; and about their confidence in engaging with the NUS and individual student unions, and their faith in the ability of the national and local unions to represent the interests of Jewish students. Their experience or fear of being victims of harassment, abuse, and hatred was also recorded. Sundry recommendations were made to address these concerns, principally directed to the NUS itself but some to the wider higher education sector and campus student unions. The report is available at:

<http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/The-experience-of-Jewish-students-in-2016-17>

ACADEMIC STUDIES

God and Mammon

Individuals are less likely to attend religious services regularly if their income rises, according to a paper delivered by Ingrid Storm at the recent British Sociological Association (BSA) annual conference in Manchester. Analysing longitudinal data from the British and UK Household Panel Surveys for 1991-2012, she found that a rise in income of about £10,000 a year reduced by 6% the likelihood of attending religious services monthly. However, a fall in income had no effect on worship patterns. Storm hypothesized that adults turned away from religious services when their income increased because they had less need for the social support

found in religious communities. ‘Religious participation is most appealing to people who have available time, but less available financial resources ... when their income rose, the extra money could increase access to other forms of social activities and entertainment, and these take up time and attention that could otherwise have been spent on religious practice.’ BSA’s press release is at:

<https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2017/april/people-are-less-likely-to-attend-religious-services-regularly-if-their-income-rises-research-shows/>

Changing religious landscape

There were 450,000 fewer births than deaths among the UK Christian population between 2010 and 2015, according to the Pew Research Center’s latest projections of the global religious landscape. By contrast, the natural increase in the UK Muslim population over the same period was 340,000 and among the religiously unaffiliated it was 880,000, reflecting (in both cases) their younger age profiles (and thus greater fertility) than Christians. A similar pattern was found across Europe as a whole. Globally, Muslim births are predicted to outnumber Christian ones by 2035. Estimates were derived from a range of census and sample survey data. The full report is available at:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/>

Secularization in Scotland

Principally drawing upon the series of Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) Surveys for 1999-2014, augmented by the Scottish Election Surveys of 1992 and 1997, Ben Clements has investigated ‘Religious Change and Secularisation in Scotland: An Analysis of Affiliation and Attendance’, *Scottish Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 2, May 2017, pp. 133-62. Over-time decline was charted on both these religious indicators, with the Church of Scotland suffering heavy losses in terms of adherence. Approximately half the Scottish population now profess no religion and three-fifths never attend religious services. Comparisons with British Social Attitudes Surveys revealed a converging pattern of secularity in both Scotland and England. In-depth examination of the socio-demographic correlates of religious affiliation and attendance in the 2014 SSA highlighted the importance of gender and, most notably, age differences and substantiated Steve Bruce’s characterization of older women as one of the primary carriers of religion in Scotland. The article is currently available on an open access basis at:

<http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/scot.2017.0175>

Clements has also written a blog summarizing the article at:

<https://eupublishingblog.com/2017/04/25/secularisation-scotland/>

As is customary with sample surveys, there is a significant mismatch between claimed attendance at religious services in SSA and actual attendance on an average Saturday/Sunday as recorded by the 2016 Scottish church census (reported above).

Sectarian disadvantage in Scotland (1)

The extent to which sectarian disadvantage persists in Scotland has been a hotly contested topic over the years, and the public and academic debate may well be reignited by a large-scale

longitudinal study reported in the May 2017 ‘in progress’ volume of *Health & Place*: David Wright, Michael Rosato, Gillian Raab, Chris Dibben, Paul Boyle, and Dermot O’Reilly, ‘Does Equality Legislation Reduce Intergroup Differences? Religious Affiliation, Socio-Economic Status, and Mortality in Scotland and Northern Ireland: A Cohort Study of 400,000 People’. The authors conclude that Catholics in Scotland remained at greater socio-economic disadvantage relative to Protestants than in Northern Ireland and were also at a mortality disadvantage (which Northern Irish Catholics were not). It is suggested that this differential may be due to the lack in Scotland of the raft of explicit equality legislation which has diminished religion-based inequality in Northern Ireland during recent decades. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829216303501>

Sectarian disadvantage in Scotland (2)

Coincidental with the appearance of the preceding item, and similarly drawing upon a very large dataset, Steve Bruce and Tony Glendinning offer a far more optimistic assessment of sectarian disadvantage in Scotland: ‘Sectarianism in the Scottish Labour Market: What the 2011 Census Shows’, *Scottish Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 2, May 2017, pp. 163-75. Analysing census data on religion, social class, education, gender, and region for persons who were born in Scotland, and estimating the likelihood of Scots of different backgrounds attaining middle class occupations given their educational qualifications, the authors found no sectarian association between religion and social class among people at the peak age (35-54 years) of their labour market involvement. Indeed, the class profile for Roman Catholics was pretty much the same as for other Christians, thereby implying a lack of sectarian discrimination against Catholics, for which Bruce and Glendinning suggest possible explanations. The two clear outliers in the study were both from the ‘other religions’ group, ill-educated other religion men doing better than expected in reaching a middle class occupation and well-educated other religion women achieving less well. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/scot.2017.0176>

Catholic schools

The relative inclusivity of Catholic schools in England and Wales is often questioned on the basis of statistics of pupil eligibility for free school meals (FSM). In *The Take-Up of Free School Meals in Catholic Schools in England and Wales* (Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society, St Mary’s University Twickenham, 2017, 17pp.), Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society, Francesca Montemaggi, Stephen Bullivant, and Maureen Glackin challenge over-dependence on FSM data as an indicator of socio-economic deprivation. They make four substantive points: there is a widespread tendency to conflate receipt of FSM with eligibility, thereby ignoring eligible families who may not take up their entitlement; other Government measures suggest Catholic schools disproportionately recruit from the lowest socio-economic brackets and ethnic minorities; FSM uptake is affected by cultural and demographic factors, with the ethnic profile of Catholic schools resulting in low FSM uptake; and FSM ineligibility does not imply that families are affluent. These conclusions, informed by a literature review and fresh empirical research (in the form of small-scale surveys, interviews, and focus groups), will naturally prove convenient for Catholic interests but a Department for Education spokesperson (quoted in *The Tablet* for 8 April 2017, p. 29)

defended its use of FSM figures, stating that being eligible for and claiming FSM is a suitable proxy for deprivation. The Benedict XVI Centre's report is at:

<https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/benedict-xvi/docs/free-school-meal-report.pdf>

Young British Muslims

The statistical content of *Young British Muslims: Between Rhetoric and Realities*, edited by Sadek Hamid (London: Routledge, 2017, ix + 180pp., ISBN: 978-1-4724-7555-8, £95, hardback) is minimal and mainly contextual. The volume comprises nine theoretically-informed and qualitative case studies which cumulatively challenge the dominant negative external representation of British Muslim youth by focusing on their everyday lived experiences. This is an important alternative perspective, enriching our knowledge of contemporary Muslims. The editorial introduction (p. 3) estimates that approximately four-fifths of these young people are, in reality, 'cultural Muslims', practising their faith in a limited way. This is a point which would have been worth addressing more systematically and comparatively (in relation, say, to 'cultural Christians' or 'ethnic Jews'), as well as underpinning by some quantitative evidence. The book's webpage is at:

<https://www.routledge.com/Young-British-Muslims-Between-Rhetoric-and-Realities/Hamid/p/book/9781472475558>

Social correlates of non-religion

An online YouGov poll from February 2015 has been used by Ben Clements for the purposes of 'Examining Non-Religious Groups in Britain: Theistic Belief and Social Correlates', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 32, No. 2, May 2017, pp. 315-24. Three non-religious groups were separately investigated (atheists, agnostics, and other non-religion) in comparison with those professing a religious affiliation. Multivariate analysis demonstrated that age and ethnicity were the strongest differentiators between religion and non-religion, but gender had less than the expected impact (except in relation to atheism) while educational attainment, social grade, and region had negligible significance as variables. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13537903.2017.1298910>