

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 5 – February 2016

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OPINION POLLS

Prayer

Two-fifths (42%) of 2,023 Britons answered in the affirmative when asked by YouGov ‘do you ever pray?’ in an online poll on 2-3 July 2015. Of those who claimed to pray, 26% said they did so once a day or more. This information appears on the website of Prayersonthemove, an initiative coordinated by SPCK, which in February 2016 posted 3,000 prayer advertisements on the London Underground and 500 on buses in Tyne and Wear, with more advertisements to follow on buses in Birmingham later in the year. Meanwhile, the website can be found at:

<http://prayersonthemove.com/>

Upon enquiry, data tables are available from SPCK upon request, subject to uncontentious conditions. They reveal that, besides the basic information about the frequency of prayer, reasons for praying or not praying were also sought. Those who prayed were additionally asked the subjects of their prayers and whether they believed that prayer can be answered. SPCK also commissioned a separate survey of the incidence of prayer among an online sample of 1,027 Londoners on 17-19 September 2015.

Lent (1)

Three-quarters of people in the UK did not plan to give up anything for Lent this year, according to an online poll of 2,075 adults by YouGov for Homepride Flour on 13-14 January 2016. The remaining 25% aimed to give up something, although not all knew what, at the time of interview. Chocolate was the top forfeit, to be forsaken by 10% of the population, followed by sweets (6%), and alcohol and fizzy drinks (5% each). Those keenest on Lenten abstinence were: 25-34-year-olds (34%), residents of the North-West (32%), 18-24-year-olds (31%), and women (30%). The least observant were: residents of Yorkshire and the Humber (16%) and Wales (18%), men (20%), over-55s (20%), and residents of Eastern England (20%). Since fieldwork was conducted approximately four weeks before the start of Lent on 10 February, it is possible that good intentions never became a reality in some instances. Also, as with New Year’s resolutions, many folk may not have persisted in their abstinence. One-half the sample anticipated that they would be celebrating Pancake Day on 9 February, with 28% recognizing it as the start of giving something up for Lent and 15% as an important religious occasion. Full data tables are available at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/ic5oyo75fe/Results-for-Homepride-Flour-Pancake-Day-010216.pdf

Lent (2)

So much for the good intentions of the previous poll. In a second online survey by YouGov, undertaken on 10 February 2016 (the first day of Lent) and completed by 5,022 Britons, it transpired that just 9 per cent actually planned to give something up for Lent (about one-third of the aspirational 25% of a month before), with a further 8 per cent still undecided. If the figures are taken at face value, the most abstaining group this year were 18-24-year-olds (16%), followed by women and Liberal Democrat voters (12% each). Results can be found at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/6dd75d10-cfe1-11e5-a405-005056900127>

Church buildings

Almost three-fifths (57%) of the British public report that they have visited a church building in the past year, either for a religious service (37%), to attend a non-religious activity (18%), or as a tourist (23%). This is according to a survey conducted by ComRes for the National Churches Trust, for which 2,038 adults were interviewed online on 16 and 17 December 2015. Asked what would most encourage them to visit churches in the future, 43% replied a friendly welcome, 34% the provision of toilets, 32% a café or refreshment area, 29% comfortable seating, 28% access to useful visitor information, and 26% heating. There was overwhelming recognition (by 84% of the whole sample and 91% of over-65s) that Christian places of worship constitute an important part of the UK's heritage and history, with 60% (including 68% of women) favouring Government funding in order to preserve this heritage asset for future generations. Their social value, as community space, was acknowledged by 83%. Full data tables, including breaks by standard demographics and religious affiliation, are available at:

http://www.comres.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/National-Churches-Trust_Perceptions-of-Churches.pdf

Pope versus Trump

During his return flight to the Vatican after his recent trip to Mexico, Pope Francis took on Donald Trump, front-runner as US Republican presidential candidate, suggesting the latter was 'not Christian' because of his wish to build a wall on the American-Mexican border when, to the Pope's mind, Christians should be building bridges. According to an online poll of 6,245 British YouGov panellists on 19 February 2016, 47% of adults thought the Pope's comments were appropriate, including 60% of 18-24s and 63% of Liberal Democrats. Just over one-quarter (28%) judged the Pope had been out of order, especially over-60s (37%), Conservatives (39%), and UKIP voters (60%), while 25% were undecided. Data can be found at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/d6912da0-d6ed-11e5-a405-005056900127>

Sunday trading

The Government has tabled amendments to the Enterprise Bill to incorporate its long-held ambition to further liberalize Sunday shopping hours in England and Wales, which are currently limited to a maximum of six for large stores. At the heart of its plans is the proposal to devolve to local authorities and elected mayors decisions for extending the hours large shops could trade on Sundays. YouGov has recently tested public reaction to the Government's policy through an online poll of 1,896 residents in England and Wales, a plurality of whom (48%)

supported the idea of shops being open for longer on Sundays, with 33% against and 19% undecided. This result is perhaps unsurprising, given that 56% admitted that they already regularly shop on Sundays, with 21% anticipating they would do even more shopping on Sundays, in the event of hours being extended. Opinion was more finely balanced about local authorities having the final say, with 39% in favour and 34% not, while 58% agreed that smaller, local shops would lose out from more liberalization and 63% expected confusion to arise from different areas having different hours. Topline results only are available at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/jsnx2yhl1n/YG-Archive-160209-SundayTradingHours.pdf

Meanwhile, in its response to the Government's amendments, USDAW (Union of Shop, Distributive, and Allied Workers) issued a press release drawing renewed attention to the survey of 10,536 USDAW members working in retail conducted by Telsolutions in September 2015. This revealed '35% of staff in large stores currently want to work less hours on Sundays, 58% say they are already under pressure to work Sundays when they don't want to, and more than a third of staff were "not usually" or "never" allowed a Sunday off.' The full report on the survey, entitled *Is Sunday Working Working for Retail Staff?*, is still available to download at:

<http://www.usdaw.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=e401039e-75f9-4675-8216-56fa579b65b0>

Holocaust Memorial Day

Christian Research has filed the following report on its website, based on online interviews with practising Christians and church leaders in membership of its self-selecting Resonate panel: 'Nearly 90% of Christians believe it is important to have a day to commemorate the Holocaust – however, nearly 65% of those surveyed felt not enough attention is given to other groups that suffered under the Nazis. In a questionnaire we launched in the lead up to Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January, the majority of respondents also believed there should be a commemorative day for all the genocides of the past 100 years, such as Armenia, Cambodia, and Rwanda.' Members of Christian Research can access additional results from this survey by logging on via the link at:

<http://www.christian-research.org/reports/holocaust-memorial-day-and-ramadan-exam-changes-survey/>

Islam and British values

The majority (51%) of adults think there is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society, according to a YouGov poll for YouGov@Cambridge among an online sample of 1,729 on 13-14 January 2016. The proportion rose to 61% among Conservative voters, 63% of over-60s, and 81% of UKIP supporters. One-quarter disagreed with the proposition, saying instead that Islam is generally compatible with British values, this view being especially popular with Liberal Democrats (42%) and 18-24s (44%). An additional quarter were neutral or undecided. Results were comparable with a previous YouGov@Cambridge study in March 2015 which found 55% taking the fundamental clash option. The data table is available at:

http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/mkhhbqsl0y4/1.JAN_GB_16_Pat10.pdf

Mosque in *EastEnders*

The BBC is reported to be including a mosque on the new set of its long-running television soap *EastEnders*, in order better to reflect the East End of London and to increase the potential for storylines. The proposed development is regarded as ‘a good thing’ by 23% of the British public, and particularly by 18-24s (37%) and Liberal Democrats (40%). It is opposed by 24%, especially by Conservatives (30%) and UKIP voters (57%). The remainder are neutral (37%) or do not know what to think (16%). The survey was conducted by YouGov among 4,750 members of its online panel on 23 February 2016, and the results are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/0f2353d0-da15-11e5-a405-005056900127>

Islamic State (1)

Islamic State (IS) is regarded as the second most important issue facing Britain at the moment, selected by 40% of 1,694 adults interviewed online by YouGov on 20-21 January 2016. It is the number one concern for 18-24-year-old Britons (38%), who are far less exercised than others about the overall top issue of immigration and asylum (17% versus 49% nationally). Above-average anxiety about IS is recorded by Conservatives (51%), UKIP voters (47%), and over-60s (46%). Preoccupation with IS stands slightly lower in Britain than in France (42%), where IS occupies first place in the list of problems. In Germany, by contrast, IS is selected as an important issue only by 28%, Germans being focused much more on the European refugee crisis (59%) and immigration and asylum (52%). IS also drops down the domestic agendas in Baltic countries, scoring 28% in Denmark, 27% in Norway, 22% in Sweden, and 13% in Finland. International topline results from this latest Eurotrack survey can be found at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/7vc25691sq/Eurotrack_January_Trackers_Immigration_Website.pdf

Data for Britain alone, with breaks by demographics, are at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/gy8vfbc62s/Eurotrack_GB_Full_Website.pdf

Islamic State (2)

The recent suggestion made by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn that the British government should seek ‘back channel’ talks with Islamic State has been rejected by a majority (57%) of 1,511 UK adults in an online poll by BMG Research for the *Evening Standard* on 21-25 January 2016. Most dismissive of the idea were over-55s, Conservative and UKIP voters, self-assigned right-wingers, people wanting the UK to leave the European Union, and those for whom immigration/asylum was the top political issue. Self-described religious persons were slightly more against a dialogue (60%) than the non-religious (54%). Just 22% of all UK residents were in favour, particularly Labour supporters, left-wingers, and Londoners. One-fifth (21%) were undecided. A short article about the survey appeared in the *Evening Standard* on 12 February and full data tables are available at:

<http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/CONFIDENTIAL-BMG-Poll-for-Evening-Standard-120216.pdf>

Astrology

The majority (56%) of the British public do not believe in astrology and star signs, and this is especially true of men (72%). Just under one-third (31%) think there is definitely or possibly some truth in astrology and star signs, and these are disproportionately women (42%) and Londoners (40%). Don't knows number 13%. The poll was conducted by YouGov among 5,569 members of its online panel on 26 February 2016, and the results are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/0b115dc0-dc75-11e5-a405-005056900127>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Christian conferences

The overall proportion of female speakers at 21 UK national Christian conferences edged up by 1% in 2015, to 36%, according to the third annual analysis by Natalie Collins for Project 3:28. The figure varied enormously by individual conference, from 10% to 62%. The report can be found at:

http://media.wix.com/ugd/7c3a0c_9c7c6ce00b4f4fd58bb690df6414b7b5.pdf

Methodist Statistics for Mission

A downbeat report on 'Methodist Statistics for Mission, 2015' was received at the recent quarterly meeting of the Methodist Council. It anticipated that Methodist membership is likely to fall below 200,000 in 2015/16, for the first time in almost two centuries. Four-fifths of Methodist churches did not make any new members during the course of the previous year. The need is flagged to review reporting measures and processes in the light of 'challenging circumstances', including a reappraisal of the Methodist community roll, first introduced in 1969 as an indicator of those in pastoral contact with the Church. Little information is available about the age, gender, and ethnicity of members, but the hope is expressed that a mooted ecumenical church census in England and Wales in 2016 might fill the gap. The report is available at:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1938012/coun-MC16-15-Statistics-for-Mission-january-2016.pdf>

Anti-Semitic incidents

In 2015 the Community Security Trust logged 924 anti-Semitic incidents in the UK, a fall of 22% from 2014 but still the third highest annual total recorded by the Trust since figures were first collected in 1984, notwithstanding the absence of any major trigger event during the year related to the situation in Israel and Gaza. Three-quarters of all incidents in 2015 occurred in Greater London and Greater Manchester, home to the UK's two largest Jewish communities. Three-quarters took the form of abusive behaviour, while 9% involved violence. The Trust

continues to believe that there is significant under-reporting of incidents both to itself and to the police. The 44-page *Antisemitic Incidents Report, 2015* is available at:

https://cst.org.uk/data/file/1/9/Incidents_Report_2015.1454417905.pdf

Jewish Year Book

The *Jewish Year Book*, a major source of UK Jewish statistics (and much other information about UK Jewry) since it first appeared in 1896, is to cease publication with immediate effect – there will be no 2016 edition. Vallentine Mitchell, the title's publishers since 1994, have said that it is no longer economic in the light of falling library and other institutional sales. It was Joseph Jacobs, the inaugural editor of the *Jewish Year Book* and author of *Studies in Jewish Statistics* (1891), who pioneered the inclusion of a statistical section, in the 1896-97 edition (pp. 27-33). The centenary edition in 1996 also contained an important retrospective essay (pp. ix-xvii) by Marlena Schmool, 'A Hundred Years of British Jewish Statistics'. The 2015 edition is still available, priced £37.50, at:

<http://www.vmbooksuk.com/collections/newly-published/products/9780853039785>

OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Hospital chaplains

Recent data from the Health and Social Care Information Centre reveal that the number of chaplains working in the National Health Service in England has declined by 17% between 2010 and 2015, from 1,107 to 916. The proportion of female chaplains has increased from 32% to 37% over the same period. The Excel file 'Number of Chaplains Employed by the NHS, 2010-2015' can be found by searching:

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk>

Personal wellbeing

The Office for National Statistics has published measures of personal wellbeing in the UK for the three years from April 2012 to March 2015, derived from approximately half a million interviews on the Annual Population Survey. The four indicators are: 'how anxious did you feel yesterday?'; 'how happy did you feel yesterday?'; 'how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?'; and 'to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?' These were measured on a scale running from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely). The Excel tables of results contain breaks by personal characteristics, including religion, mean scores for which are tabulated below.

It will be seen that those without religion have the lowest scores of any faith group on the happiness and worthwhile measures and come near the bottom on life satisfaction; however, they experience lower levels of anxiety than the national average and any other group apart from Sikhs. Religion *per se* may not wholly or even largely explain this pattern, which is likely to be influenced by a range of interconnecting factors. Commenting on the figures to the *Daily Telegraph*, Professor Linda Woodhead suggested that faith was probably only a small element

in generating happiness: ‘You might say if it is “the opium of the people” they need to up the dose.’ The tables can be downloaded at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-429189>

Mean scores	Anxiety	Happiness	Satisfaction	Worthwhile
No religion	2.90	7.22	7.41	7.58
Christian	2.92	7.47	7.60	7.86
Buddhist	3.09	7.41	7.40	7.61
Hindu	3.11	7.57	7.60	7.74
Jewish	3.15	7.37	7.51	7.90
Muslim	3.05	7.33	7.41	7.64
Sikh	2.89	7.45	7.50	7.72
Any other religion	3.19	7.26	7.31	7.70
UK average	2.93	7.38	7.53	7.76

Religious education teachers

The number of people applying to train as religious education (RE) teachers in England and Wales has surged in the first few months of the 2016 recruitment cycle, according to data compiled by the University and College Admissions Service (UCAS) and highlighted in a press release from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education. Applications for RE places as at 18 January 2016 were 31% up on the corresponding figure for 2015 (850 against 650), even though those for all secondary teacher training places were down by 1%. Offers of conditional places for RE had already more than doubled over the corresponding point in 2015. The increase in applications to train to teach RE follows the launch of a campaign by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales to encourage graduates and career changers into the discipline. The press release is at:

<http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/trainee-re-teacher-applications-soar-press-release/>

The UCAS report is available at:

https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/utt_publicstats_application_18jan2016_report_b_1.pd

NEW DATASETS AT UK DATA SERVICE

SN 7871: Scottish Surveys Core Questions, 2013

Scottish Surveys Core Questions, 2013 is the second (but first ‘official’) release of an annual statistical publication of the Scottish Government, gathering into one output responses to identical questions in the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, Scottish Health Survey, and Scottish Household Survey. It provides detailed information on the composition, characteristics, and attitudes of Scottish households and adults across a number of topic areas, including equality characteristics, housing, employment, and perceptions of health and crime. In 2013 there were 21,038 responses to the individual variables, among them religious affiliation (categorized as none, Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, other Christian, Muslim, and other). The official report on the 2013 surveys, to be found with the dataset documentation,

contains tables showing country of birth by religion, ethnic group by religion, and religion by demographics, including sexual orientation). Supplementary tables are available online at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/12/8775/downloads> Nones were the most numerous 'religious' group in 2013 (43%), surpassing adherents of the Church of Scotland (31%). For a full description of the dataset, see the catalogue entry at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=7871&type=Data%20catalogue>

SN 7872: Taking Part, 2014-15

The Year 10 dataset for 'Taking Part: the National Survey of Culture, Leisure, and Sport' has been released. The survey is sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Arts Council England, Sport England, and Historic England. Fieldwork for April 2014-March 2015 was undertaken by TNS-BMRB, through face-to-face interview with a sample of 9,817 adults aged 16 and over living in private households in England. Topics covered were spare-time activities and participation in arts, libraries, archives, museums, heritage, walking, cycling, and sports, as well as barriers to and factors affecting such participation. Demographics included two questions on religion: 'what is your religion?' (according to census categories) and 'are you currently practising this religion?' These can obviously be used as variables to analyse replies to any of the questions on participation in culture, leisure, and sport. For a full description of the dataset and background documentation, see the catalogue entry at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=7872&type=Data%20catalogue>

SN 7889: Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2014-15

The Crime Survey for England and Wales, formerly known as the British Crime Survey (there has been a separate survey in Scotland since 1993), commenced in 1981. It is now conducted annually, on a rolling basis, by TNS-BMRB on behalf of the Office for National Statistics. Fieldwork for April 2014-March 2015 involved face-to-face and self-completion interviews with 33,350 adults aged 16, and over and 2,374 children aged 10-15, resident in private households. Topics covered experience of crime (including perceived religiously-motivated hate crime) during the preceding 12 months, attitudes to a range of crime-related issues, and a basket of demographics (among them religious affiliation). The affiliation question, which did not differentiate between particular Christian denominations, can be used to analyse replies to all the crime-related questions. For a full description of the dataset and background documentation, see the catalogue entry at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=7889&type=Data%20catalogue>

PEOPLE NEWS

David Voas

Professor David Voas, a leading quantitative sociologist of religion and co-director of British Religion in Numbers, became Professor of Social Science and Head of the Department of Social Science at University College London on 1 February 2016. He was formerly Professor of Population Studies at the University of Essex (2011-16) and Simon Professor of Population Studies at the University of Manchester (2007-11).