

# Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 29 – February 2018

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## OPINION POLLS

### Female suffrage anniversary

To commemorate the then impending centenary of the partial extension of the franchise to women in Britain, BBC Radio 5 Live commissioned ComRes to undertake an online survey of 4,086 adults on 15-20 December 2017, asking whether being able to vote or the advent of the contraceptive pill represented the more important advance for women in the past hundred years. In addition to breaks by standard demographics, results were disaggregated by religious affiliation, as summarized in the table, below (don't knows not shown). In all three faith communities, women accorded a higher priority than men to the pill over the vote, but a majority of non-Christian females still prioritized the vote over the pill. Notwithstanding, a slightly lower proportion of female non-Christians than the norm (67% against 70% for all women and 74% for all adults) said that they always voted in general elections, with Christian women on 74% and female nones on 67%. Female non-Christians who never voted or did not usually vote gave a variety of reasons for failing to do so. Data tables are at:

<http://www.comresglobal.com/polls/bbc-radio-5-live-female-suffrage-anniversary-polling/>

% down	All	Christians	Non-Christians	Nones
<i>Women</i>				
Vote	45	45	51	45
Pill	46	48	35	46
<i>Men</i>				
Vote	55	50	62	59
Pill	36	40	23	33
<i>Combined</i>				
Vote	50	47	57	52
Pill	41	44	30	39

### National Health Service

The public services think tank Reform commissioned Populus to survey an online sample of 2,106 Britons on 15-16 January 2018 about their attitudes to the future funding of the National Health Service (NHS). Respondents were asked six questions and the results were disaggregated by religious affiliation as well as by standard demographics. Non-Christians were less likely than Christians or religious nones to be willing to pay higher income tax in order to fund the NHS. Religious nones were less likely than Christians or non-Christians to agree that 'the NHS needs reform more than it needs extra money'. Full data tables are at:

<http://www.reform.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Reform-Populus-NHS-poll-2018.pdf>

## Homosexuality

A row recently broke out over the hiring of a cinema screen at Vue Piccadilly in London by the Core Issues Trust, a Christian group, for a private showing of the documentary film *Voices of the Silenced*, telling the story of 15 people emerging from homosexual lifestyles. The film was interpreted by its critics as advocacy for a ‘gay cure’ and, in the light of the outcry, the cinema cancelled the booking. Asked on 8 February 2018, 64% of 3,967 adult Britons interviewed in a YouGov app-based poll thought that Vue had been right to cancel the screening, including a disproportionate number of women (73%) and Labour voters (75%). About one-fifth (19%) of respondents judged that Vue should not have cancelled, among them 28% of men and Conservatives, with 17% undecided. Data tables are at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/411ad2b6-0cb9-11e8-a9a2-b5aff7f584c7>

## Religious studies

A majority (55%) of the public does not consider it important to teach religious studies (RS) at secondary school, making it the fourth perceived least useful of the 18 subjects covered in the survey by YouGov, after Latin (82%), drama (61%), and classics (58%). RS was felt to be especially insignificant among men (64%) and Scots (61%). It was considered important by 41% of the sample, including 48% of women and 46% of under-25s. Voting patterns in the 2016 referendum on the UK’s membership of the European Union (EU) had a big effect on preferences, with remainers 14 points more likely than leavers to deem RS important and leavers 13 points more likely than remainers to judge it unimportant. The poll was conducted online on 18-19 December 2017 among a sample of 1,648 Britons. Full data tables are at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2018/02/15/english-maths-science-and-computing-are-most-impor/>

## Hate speech

One-quarter (27%) of UK adults claim to have witnessed, in person or online, one or more incidents of hate speech during the past year, and one-quarter of these think that the incident was mostly based on someone’s religion or faith. This is according to an online survey of 2,111 YouGov panellists on 1-4 December 2017, on behalf of Amazon. Data tables are at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/nlnmzt9jyd/YG%20-%20Archive%20-%2020011217%20-%20Amazon%20PR.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/nlnmzt9jyd/YG%20-%20Archive%20-%2020011217%20-%20Amazon%20PR.pdf)

## Religious figures

Prompted by the recent death of veteran American evangelist Billy Graham, YouGov asked 3,456 British panellists, via mobile app on 22 February 2018, what their feelings were about religious figures who amassed a large public following. A slim majority (52%) said they were suspicious of such individuals, peaking at 64% of Liberal Democrats and 61% of those aged 50-65. Just 10% said they admired them, the greatest number among UKIP supporters (20%) and over-65s (15%). The remainder (38%) gave other replies or expressed no opinion. Results, including breaks by standard demographics, can be found at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/91be5a65-17b9-11e8-84a4-c78276ac04de>

## Lent

At the beginning of Lent, on 16 February 2018, YouGov asked 5,005 of its British panellists, via mobile app, whether they normally gave up or took up something for Lent. The overwhelming majority (84%) said that they did not. Observance of the festival was reported by 11%, of whom 6% said they gave up or took up something and stuck to it and 5% (rising to 9% of under-25s) initially did so but that it tended not to last. Results, including breaks by standard demographics, can be found at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/93365b95-1304-11e8-95b2-316e99338ce6>

## Attitudes to Muslims

Voting patterns in the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU are a good predictor of opinions towards Muslims in the UK, according to a YouGov poll for the Muslim Council of Britain among an online sample of 1,629 adults on 31 January and 1 February 2018. Asked to indicate their view of Muslims on a scale running from 0 (very negative) to 10 (very positive), the national mean score was 5.7, with the range from 4.7 (those who voted leave in 2016) to 6.7 (for remainers). Under-25s likewise achieved the highest figure of 6.7. Respondents were additionally asked about: the number of Muslims they currently knew as friends, neighbours, or work colleagues (27% said none); any visits within the past five years to a place of worship not of their own faith; and their interest in visiting a mosque in the future (of the 88% who had not visited a mosque within the past five years, only one-quarter were so interested) The survey was commissioned to promote Visit My Mosque Day on 18 February 2018. Data tables, including breaks by religious affiliation, are at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/2krlub0i0a/MCB\\_Results\\_180201\\_w.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/2krlub0i0a/MCB_Results_180201_w.pdf)

Another module of the same poll was commissioned by *Prospect* and included a question about which groups people were most likely to talk about in a disrespectful or offensive way. Respondents were permitted to select up to three groups from a list of twelve. Muslims topped the chart (on 50%), followed by gypsies and travellers (43%). Christians, the only other religious group mentioned, were judged to be disrespected by 7%. The data table is at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/yxuwigew60/Prospect\\_Results\\_180201.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/yxuwigew60/Prospect_Results_180201.pdf)

## FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

### Church-based social action

*Church in Action: A National Survey*, written by Tom Sefton and Heather Buckingham, is the third in a series of studies of the scale and nature of the social engagement of Anglican churches in England, undertaken by the Church of England and Church Urban Fund. It is based on online interviews with 1,094 incumbent status clergy from a cross-section of parishes in September-October 2017, being a response rate of 22%. The survey found that 70% of churches were running three or more organized activities for the benefit of local communities, those in more deprived areas being most active. Loneliness (76%) and mental health issues (60%) were said

to be the commonest major or significant social problems in parishes. The report, which also draws some comparisons with the 2011 and 2014 studies, is available at:

<https://www.cuf.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=4b9d6d82-7754-4561-a3ef-951f38559bb3>

### **Ministerial reading habits**

Paul Beasley-Murray reports on ‘Ministers’ Reading Habits’ in *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 49. No. 1, 2018, pp. 23-44, based on shorter and longer online surveys completed by, respectively, opt-in samples of 309 and 175 British Baptist ministers in 2017. Sundry generalizations are made, for example: most ministers enjoy reading; women ministers read less than men; more experienced ministers read the most; most ministers prefer to read print books to digital (particularly when preparing sermons); many ministers spend time reading non-ministry related books; very few ministers read the Bible in its original Hebrew and Greek; most ministers consult multiple Bible commentaries, and so on. Various encouragements, concerns, and recommendations are identified with regard to the reading-related aspects of continuing ministerial development. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0005576X.2017.1384225>

A fuller (and free) analysis of the surveys is also available at:

<https://www.paulbeasleymurray.com/articles/ministers-reading-habits/>

### **Anti-Semitic incidents**

The Community Security Trust (CST) recorded 1,382 anti-Semitic incidents in the UK during 2017, 3% more than in 2016 and the highest annual total since monitoring began in 1984. Three-quarters took place in Greater London and Greater Manchester, home to the two largest Jewish communities. CST considers there is likely to be a ‘significant under-reporting’ of incidents to both itself and the police. *Antisemitic Incidents Report, 2017* is available at:

<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/a/b/IR17.1517308734.pdf>

## OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

### **Marriages in England and Wales, 2015**

The proportion of marriages between opposite-sex couples in England and Wales solemnized in religious ceremonies continues to slide, according to 2015 figures released by the Office for National Statistics on 28 February 2018. In that year, it had fallen to 26%, with four in five of the couples concerned cohabiting before marriage (only nine points less than those marrying in civil ceremonies). The lion’s share of religious marriages was conducted by the Church of England or Church in Wales (73%), 11% by the Roman Catholic Church, 11% by other Christian denominations, and 4% by non-Christian faiths. Under 1% of couples entering into a same-sex marriage had their wedding celebrated religiously. A report and data are available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/marriagesinenglandandwales2015>

## ACADEMIC STUDIES

### Religion and immigration

‘Do the religious feel differently about immigration and immigrants?’ That is the question posed by Wing Chan, Harry Drake, Lucy Moor, Tom Owton, Silvia Sim, and Siobhan McAndrew in their *Faith and Welcoming*, a report by students and staff of the University of Bristol. They endeavour to answer it by undertaking bivariate and multivariate analysis on a range of data sources: British Social Attitudes Surveys (2010-16); European Social Survey (2014); Ethnic Minority British Election Study (2010); and British Election Study Online Panel (2015-17). They conclude that: ‘for those who identify with a religion and who do not attend a place of worship regularly, attitudes to immigrants tend to be more hostile, perhaps because a religious identity is chosen to signal ethnic or national heritage. But for those who practice what they preach, at least in terms of regular attendance, their attitudes on average tend to be more welcoming than those of the unreligious and “religious in name only” alike.’ The full (76-page) report can be found at:

<http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/assets/Faith-and-Welcoming-Report-Public-Spirit-University-of-Bristol-February-2018.pdf>

A 16-page executive summary is also available at:

<http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/assets/Faith-and-Welcoming-Report-Public-Spirit-Executive-Summary.pdf>

and a blog post at:

<http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/faith-and-welcoming-do-the-religious-feel-differently-about-immigration-and-immigrants/>

### Spiritual development

*Lessons in Spiritual Development: Insights from Christian Ethos Schools* by Ann Casson, Trevor Cooling, and Leslie Francis (London: Church House Publishing, 2017, xiv + 101pp., ISBN: 978-1-7814-0034-0, £25, paperback) presents the findings of a mixed methods research project into the spiritual development of pupils at ten leading Christian-ethos secondary schools (mostly Anglican) in England and Wales. The project was a joint initiative between the National Institute for Christian Education Research at Canterbury Christ Church University and the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick. The quantitative strand of the research was led by Francis and Ursula McKenna, each of the schools completing a survey which included the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity in both 2015 (for years 9 and 10 pupils, n = 2,942) and 2016 (for years 7-11 pupils, n = 6,538). Tasters of the results are given in the ten chapters devoted to each school in turn and a fuller description of the aggregate data is provided in an appendix (pp. 95-101). The book’s webpage is at:

<https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9781781400340/lessons-in-spiritual-development>

### **Leslie Francis scales**

The continuing robustness and applicability of two sets of scales devised by Leslie Francis, and extensively used by him and other scholars in the psychology of religion and related disciplines, are demonstrated in two articles in the latest issue (Vol. 20, No. 9, 2017) of *Mental Health, Religion, and Culture*: Leslie Francis, David Lankshear, and Emma Eccles, 'The Internal Consistency Reliability and Construct Validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 8- to 11-Year-Old Students in Wales' (pp. 922-9); and Leslie Francis, Patrick Laycock, and Christine Brewster, 'Exploring the Factor Structure of the Francis Psychological Type Scales among a Sample of Anglican Clergy in England' (pp. 930-41). Access options are outlined at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cmhr20/20/9?nav=tocList>

### NEW DATASETS

#### **UK Data Service SN 7215: Wealth and Assets Survey, waves 1-5, 2006-2016**

A new edition of the Wealth and Assets Survey, a longitudinal study of financial and economic well-being conducted by the Office for National Statistics, has been released, incorporating data for wave 5 (July 2014-June 2016). For this wave, 42,832 adults aged 16 and over resident in private households in Great Britain were interviewed face-to-face, 'what is your religion?' being included as one of the background questions. A catalogue description of the dataset is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=7215&type=Data%20catalogue>

#### **UK Data Service SN 8321: Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2016-2017**

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 2016-17 survey was conducted by Kantar Public (previously known as TNS BMRB) for the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, and Office for National Statistics and achieved 35,420 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=8321&type=Data%20catalogue>

#### **UK Data Service SN 8323: Public opinion and the Syrian crisis in three democracies: surveys of French, British, and American samples, 2014**

This dataset is based on multinational online interviews conducted by YouGov between February and September 2014 on behalf of a consortium of three universities (Strathclyde, Essex, and Texas). There were three waves of interviews in Britain, the first in March 2014 and the second and third in May 2014 (before and after the elections to the European

Parliament). The topics covered are broader than the title of the dataset might imply. For example, the second British survey included attitude statements on: Islam as a danger to Western civilization; the threat to public safety posed by British Muslims who had fought in Syria on their return to Britain; and banning the burka in public places in the UK. The third wave asked respondents whether the Church of England should retain its status as the established Church in England. A catalogue description of the dataset is available at:

<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8323&type=Data%20catalogue>