

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

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OPINION POLLS

Trust in clergy and priests

Clergy and priests are ranked 11th out of 24 professions and groups in terms of their perceived truthfulness, according to the latest annual Ipsos MORI Veracity Index, based on face-to-face interviews with 1,001 Britons on 12-21 October 2018. Just over three-fifths (62%) of respondents said they generally trusted clergy and priests to tell the truth against 33% who distrusted them (peaking at 43% of persons aged 55-64). As in previous years, nurses (96%), doctors (92%), and teachers (89%) were most trusted. Slides and data tables are available via links in the press release at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/advertising-execs-rank-below-politicians-britains-least-trusted-profession>

Trust in religious leaders and other matters

A separate survey, by YouGov for YouGov@Cambridge among an online sample of 2,171 Britons on 30-31 August 2018, posed a not dissimilar question to Ipsos MORI's, about trust in religious leaders and 11 other groups to tell the truth. This time, however, a much higher proportion (64%) of respondents said they did not trust the veracity of religious leaders much or at all, compared with 27% who trusted them a great deal or a fair amount. One can only surmise that the difference between the two studies may have partially arisen from the fact that the term 'religious leaders' was widely interpreted to mean *national* religious leaders, whereas the clergy and priests referred to by Ipsos MORI were regarded by its interviewees as *local* ministers. Another explanation must have been the very different profile of the comparator groups in the two polls.

The YouGov investigation also asked several other questions which will be of interest to BRIN readers. Membership of a church or religious organization during the past five years was claimed by 8%. Little more than one-third (36%) agreed that everything (7%), most (8%), or some (21%) of what happened in their lives was caused by a higher force, such as God, fate, or destiny, while 41% said none of their lives was so affected and 22% gave another answer or were undecided. On conspiracy theories, 18% subscribed to the notion that 'Muslim immigration to this country is part of a bigger plan to make Muslims a majority of this country's population'; 8% believed that 'humans have made contact with aliens and this fact has been deliberately hidden from the public'; and just 2% thought 'the official account of the Nazi Holocaust is a lie and the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II has been exaggerated on purpose'. The British data tables (the study was also undertaken in eight other countries – France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, and United States) can be found at:

[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/5j57dtwlc0/YGC%20Conspiracy%20Theories%20\(GB\).pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/5j57dtwlc0/YGC%20Conspiracy%20Theories%20(GB).pdf)

Clergy as lawmakers

In a (presumably) veiled reference to reform of the House of Lords, and on behalf of the Constitutional Commission, Panelbase asked an online sample of 2,016 adult Britons on 2-7 November 2018 whether clerics, priests, and clergy should make laws. The overwhelming majority of respondents (78%) disagreed that they should be so involved, peaking at 85% of Conservative voters and 89% of over-55s, while only 10% agreed, with 13% uncertain. Panel members were also questioned about the importance which they attached to a Bill of Rights, including guarantees of freedom of religion and free speech; four-fifths said that it was either very important (40%) or important (41%) to them. Detailed tables, separately for Britain and Scotland, are available at:

<https://www.drg.global/wp-content/uploads/W12994-Constitution-Full-Tables-for-publication-191118-1.pdf>

Child sexual abuse

On 26-30 September 2018, Populus undertook an online survey of 2,065 adult Britons on behalf of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. One of the questions concerned where respondents thought child sexual abuse was most likely to take place. They were given a list of nine options and asked to select up to three. One of the locations was religious institutions, which was chosen by 35%, disproportionately by men, over-55s, people of the lowest (DE) social grade, and residents of Wales. Religious institutions were ranked fourth, after the family home (59%), the internet (50%), and a welfare institution (41%). Full details can be found in table 11 of the data pack at:

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

Religion and sex

A poll by Comres, conducted on 7-8 November 2018 among an online sample of 2,066 adults on behalf of BBC Radio 5 Live, included a question about the types of people with whom respondents might contemplate having a sexual relationship (imagining that they were still single, if already in a relationship). More than half (53%) replied that they would consider having a sexual relationship with someone of a different religion or belief system, rising to 60% for men, 62% in the top (AB) social grade, and 63% in Scotland. Overall, this was a lower proportion than would consider having sex with someone from a different country (69%), of a different social class (67%), of a different ethnicity or race (62%), with different political views (59%), but more than would have sex with someone who was over 10 years older (45%), more than 10 years younger (42%), of the same gender (15%), or who was transgender (7%). Full data tables are available at:

<http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Updated-BBC-Radio-5-Live-Sex-Poll-Results.pdf>

Church social action

Another poll by ComRes, undertaken on 26-28 October 2018 among an online sample of 2,031 adults on behalf of Theos, revealed a degree of public ambivalence about church-based social action in post-Brexit Britain. Indeed, on two of the five statements put to respondents, a majority assumed a position of neutrality, neither agreeing nor disagreeing, perhaps indicative of ignorance or indifference: 56% could not say whether local churches were already active in supporting people get through hard times nor 53% whether it was more important for local churches to help with short-term emergency needs than long-term assistance. But 40% did reject the suggestion that churches should focus on spiritual aid rather than practical needs (with 21% in agreement), and 43% agreed (albeit mostly not strongly) they would like to see churches and religious organizations provide some of the services which local authorities could no longer afford (with 17% disagreeing). Just 18% endorsed church campaigns for political change, 47% being opposed. Full data tables are available at:

<http://www.comresglobal.com/polls/theos-brexit-and-churches-research/>

Christmas traditions

Mail Online has reported the results of a survey of Christmas traditions undertaken on behalf of the Ideal Home Show Christmas among 2,000 Britons. The emphasis was on traditions which are dying out, said to include Christmas carols, with only 6% going carol singing and 11% attending a carol service on Christmas Eve. The report is at:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-6414063/Brits-snob-Christmas-traditions-including-carol-singing.html>

Religion in Europe

The Pew Research Center has combined results from two previously published surveys of Central and Eastern Europe (undertaken between June 2015 and July 2016) and Western Europe (April-August 2017, including in Great Britain, and already featured on BRIN) to produce a composite report on attitudes to religion and values in 34 nations, entitled *Eastern and Western Europeans Differ on Importance of Religion, Views of Minorities, and Key Social Issues*. It can be found at:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues/#>

Anti-Semitism

On behalf of CNN, ComRes has undertaken an extensive study of public attitudes to Jews, Israel, and the Holocaust in seven European nations: Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden. In Britain, online interviews were conducted with 1,010 adults aged 18 and over between 7 and 20 September 2018. Just 4% of them correctly estimated that Jews account for less than 1% of the country's population, a staggering 69% guessing at a larger proportion, including 8% saying more than 20%. About half the sample (51%) were aware of having actively socialized with a Jew themselves. Overall favourability towards Jews stood at 46% (only 6% being unfavourable), compared with 57% towards Christians, 51% towards non-religious people, and 33% towards Muslims. Two-fifths of respondents agreed

that anti-Semitism was a growing problem in Britain and that Jews were at risk of hate speech (41%) and of racist violence (38%). However, minorities still subscribed to traditional tropes, that Jews have too much influence in the country (13% believing this to be the case in political affairs, 14% in the media, and 16% in finance and business); that they are segregated from wider society (23%); and that they use the Holocaust to advance their position or achieve certain goals (21%). Full data tables are available at:

<http://www.comresglobal.com/polls/cnn-anti-semitism-in-europe-poll-2018/>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Christians making a difference

Relationships between faith and attitudes and responses to poverty are explored in Aly Hawkins and Sarah Salisbury, *Christians Who Make a Difference: The Unexpected Connections between Spiritual Growth and Caring for People in Poverty* ([London]: Barna Group, 2018, 80pp., ISBN: 9781945269288, £25, paperback). The book reports on online research commissioned by Tearfund and undertaken by Barna Group on 10-20 April 2018 among 1,958 UK and 2,220 US adults. Based on their answers to the questionnaire, interviewees were profiled into three groups: non-activist churchgoers (people who have attended a church within the past month but have not responded to poverty in all five dimensions - financial giving, personal responsibility, political advocacy, consumer lifestyle changes, and prayer); whole-life responders (people who have attended a church within the past month and have also responded to poverty in all five dimensions); and unchurched activists (people who have not attended church within the past month but who have responded to poverty in the five dimensions or in all except prayer). Some illustrative findings are cited in Tearfund's press release, which concludes: 'Not all Christians help people in poverty, and not all those who help people in poverty are Christians. But the data examined strongly indicates that, for a significant proportion of those who intentionally care for disadvantaged people, charitable action is motivated by a desire to follow Christ.' This press release, with an embedded link for anybody wishing to buy a copy of the full report, can be found at:

https://www.tearfund.org/en/media/press_releases/four_out_of_five_christians_have_taken_action_on_poverty_this_year/

Church of England social action

The full extent of the Church of England's social action and community outreach is revealed for the first time in *Statistics for Mission, 2017: Social Action*. Four-fifths of the 13,000 (out of a total of 16,000) churches which responded to the one-off section in the annual Statistics for Mission survey were involved (either running, hosting, or otherwise supporting) in one or more forms of social action, with more than 33,000 individual projects between them. Unsurprisingly, the number of projects per church increased in line with the size of the congregation. Some of the commonest activities were food banks (60%), parent and toddler groups (32%), lunch clubs (26%), community cafés (22%), and holiday clubs and breakfast clubs (17%). For a press release and link to the report, go to:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/node/21250>

Church of England statistics for mission

The Church of England's 53-page *Statistics for Mission, 2017* includes the usual range of data about church attendance and participation, expressed in 18 tables and 19 figures, supported by commentary and analysis. There have been double-digit declines in all key performance measures over the decade since 2007, except for Christmas attendance, which is up by 1%. The total worshipping community (a relatively new indicator) stood at 1,138,200 in 2017 (equivalent to just 2% of the English population), of whom 20% were aged under 18, 49% were 18-69, and 32% were 70 and over. Average all-age weekly attendance in October 2017 was lower, at 895,300. The best festival attendances were at Easter (1,252,000) and Christmas (2,684,200). Take-up of Anglican rites of passage has fallen particularly steeply, the Church now baptising 10% of live births, conducting 20% of marriages, and officiating at 26% of funerals. The report is available at:

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/2017StatisticsForMission_007_.pdf

Church of England digital report

Statistical advance across a broad online front is noted in the Church of England's *A Year in Numbers: 2018 Digital Report*. Among the highlights: the Church's monthly reach of content on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook more than doubled, from 1.2 million in 2017 to 2.44 million in 2018; the reach of the Church's Advent and Christmas campaign more than quadrupled, from 1.5 million in 2016 to 6.8 million in 2017; the reach of the Church's Lent campaign rose from 2.5 million in 2017 to 3.54 million in 2018; over 2 million new visitors have engaged with the Church's website since its relaunch in November 2017; and traffic to the *A Church Near You* site increased by 50% between December 2016 and December 2017. The report can be found at:

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/CofE_Social%20Media%20Infographics%202018_1-1_WEB.pdf

Church of England gender pay gap

The Church of England has published its gender pay gap report for 2018. It covers only 491 staff in the National Church Institutions (NCIs), together with 31 staff in the investments department of the Church Commissioners who are on performance-related pay. It does not extend to clergy and employees in individual dioceses. The mean pay gap in the NCIs was 21%, unchanged from 2017, and the median pay gap was 24%, representing a 4% improvement on the year before. The Church of England's press release is at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/church-england-national-church-institutions-ncis-publish-gender-pay-data>

Distance to church

In his most recent monthly column in *Church of England Newspaper* (23 November 2018, p. 16), Peter Brierley wrote about 'Getting to Church', examining how far people travel to worship, based on the evidence of three recent church censuses, of London (2012), Grace Baptist churches (2014), and Scotland (2016). The average finding across these three studies

was that 30% of worshippers lived under half a mile away from their church, 46% between half a mile and three miles, and 24% more than three miles. The distance travelled was found to vary by age, denomination, churchmanship, and size of church. A slightly different version of Brierley's article has also appeared in *FutureFirst*, No. 60, December 2018, p. 3.

Jewish charity

On behalf of World Jewish Relief, Survation has investigated the charitable giving and motivations of 752 self-identifying British Jews between 12 August and 5 September 2018. Respondents were members of a pre-recruited Jewish panel, and interviews were mostly conducted by telephone. Asked how much they had donated to charities overall during the past year, 7% had given nothing, while 10% estimated less than £50, 24% between £50 and £249, 17% between £250 and £1,000, and 14% more than £1,000. The remaining 29% said they could not remember or preferred not to say. Among those who had made charitable gifts, 37% claimed to have supported from five to ten charities during the course of the year and 12% more than ten. Full data tables are available at:

<https://www.survation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/WJR-2018-Charitable-Giving-Tables.pdf>

OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

National barometer of prejudice

Research Report, No. 119 from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has been prepared by a team from the Centre for the Study of Group Processes, University of Kent and Birkbeck, University of London: Dominic Abrams, Hannah Swift, and Diane Houston, *Developing a National Barometer of Prejudice and Discrimination in Britain* (Manchester: EHRC, 2018, 87pp., ISBN: 978-1-84206-763-5). The report is based upon a survey of 2,853 adults aged 18 and over drawn from the random probability NatCen and ScotCen Panels, which use sequential online and telephone data collection, interviews being conducted between 4 December 2017 and 7 January 2018. This was supplemented by a targeted booster online survey of minority groups (including Muslims) via the non-probability PopulusLive Panel in December 2017. Respondents were asked about their experiences of prejudice and discrimination during the previous 12 months, as well as their attitudes towards different groups, across a range of protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. In religious terms, results contained in the document mainly relate to Muslims. Seven in ten Muslims claimed to have experienced religion-based prejudice in the past year. One-third of all Britons contended that efforts to provide equal opportunities had gone too far in the case of Muslims, while 22% expressed openly negative feelings towards them (against 35% who were positive). Some 18% were uncomfortable about the prospect of having a Muslim as a neighbour and 15% about a Muslim as boss. The report, which is intended as a benchmark for a regular national survey barometer of prejudice and discrimination (yet to be funded), is available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/national-barometer-of-prejudice-and-discrimination-in-britain.pdf>

ACADEMIC STUDIES

Anglican church growth

The story of the first modern church planting scheme in the Church of England, the (ultimately) failed attempt to restructure parish ministry in Chester-le-Street during the 1970s and 1980s, is retold by Philip Lockley in 'Church Planting and the Parish in Durham Diocese, 1970-1990: Church Growth Controversies in Recent Historical Perspective', *Journal of Anglican Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, November 2018, pp. 103-27. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-anglican-studies/article/church-planting-and-the-parish-in-durham-diocese-19701990-church-growth-controversies-in-recent-historical-perspective/5CDC0DD11929D4CE45237AEE21E841B7>

Muslims and education

Nabil Khattab and Tariq Modood have used waves 1-6 of the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, with linked data from the National Pupil Database, to compare the positions of Muslim and Christian white British pupils in England in relation to their school performance at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, GCSE, and the likelihood of attending a university at 18-19 and of getting into a Russell Group university. Their analysis shows that, after taking previous school performance into account, Muslim students perform as well as the majority group, even in attending Russell Group institutions. Access options to 'Accounting for British Muslim's [sic] Educational Attainment: Gender Differences and the Impact of Expectations', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 2018, pp. 242-59 are outlined at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01425692.2017.1304203>

PEOPLE NEWS

Ceri Peach (1939-2018)

Professor Ceri Peach, the social geographer who was the doyen of researchers into contemporary minority ethnic and religious groups in Britain, with particular reference to migration and segregation, died on 2 October 2018, aged 78. His entire academic career was spent at St Catherine's College, Oxford, albeit in retirement he also held a visiting chair at the Institute for Social Change, University of Manchester. In terms of religion, he is perhaps still best remembered for his census-based analysis of British Muslims, which established that they did not constitute a single community but a 'community of communities'. A full-length obituary appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* for 9 November 2018 (p. 33), which can be read (upon registration or subscription) at:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2018/11/09/professor-ceri-peach-social-geographer-studied-ethnic-minority/>

There was also an obituary in the *Oxford Mail* on 11 October 2018 at:

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/16976433.obituary-professor-ceri-peach-oxford-university-emeritus-fellow/>