

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 40 – January 2019

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OPINION POLLS

Brexit: religious voting patterns in any second referendum

At the time of writing, it is impossible to predict how the Brexit saga will be resolved. But the possibility of running a second referendum on the UK exiting the European Union (EU) still cannot be entirely ruled out of the reckoning. To assess the public mood about this option, the *Sunday Telegraph* commissioned ORB International to survey a representative sample of 2,083 UK adults online on 16-17 January 2019. Overall, 48% of electors said they would vote to remain in the EU, in the event of another referendum being held ‘tomorrow’, while 42% would choose to leave and 10% were undecided or would not vote. There was a majority or plurality in favour of remaining in the three principal religious groups, the proportion being greatest among non-Christians (61%) and lowest among Christians (40%), with religious nones on 54%. This pattern is largely explicable by the correlation of anti-EU sentiments with age, Christians having a significantly older age profile than non-Christians or religious nones. Results can be found in table 33 at:

<https://www.orb-international.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Brexit-Results.pdf>

Disestablishment: monarchy and the Church of England

The National Secular Society (NSS), which has campaigned for disestablishment ever since its foundation in 1866, began the New Year by issuing a press release about a new survey of public attitudes towards legislative links between the monarchy and the Church of England. The study, conducted by Censuswide among an online sample of 2,000 UK adults on 12-14 December 2018, found only minority support for the status quo on this particular aspect of establishment. Asked about future British monarchs, just 34% of respondents wanted them to retain the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England; 34% to be required to be members of the Church of England; and 35% to be required to swear a religious oath to maintain the Church of England as the state Church. On each of these three questions, the plurality answered in the negative, with approximately one-quarter being undecided. Under one-fifth of Scots replied in the affirmative. The press release is available at:

<https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/01/just-a-third-of-public-supports-royal-ties-with-coe-nss-poll-finds1>

Global opinions of Pope Francis

As part of the latest Gallup International End of Year Survey, publics in 45 countries worldwide were once again (as in 2017) asked their opinion of global leaders, mostly political but also including Pope Francis. In the UK, where 1,001 adults aged 18 and over were interviewed online by ORB International between 7 and 10 December 2018, 53% of respondents claimed

to have a favourable opinion of the Pope, 26% unfavourable, with 20% undecided. This was slightly above the global favourability mean of 51% but rather less than the European Union average of 62% and the US figure of 55%. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given his nationality, Pope Francis was regionally viewed most favourably in Latin America (73%), although his highest individual country rating was in Italy (88%). National toplines are available via the link at:

https://www.orb-international.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/GIA-EoY-2018_EoY_Global-Leaders.pdf

Attitudes to Common Era dating

The BBC has been accused of political correctness during its Christmas edition of the quiz show *University Challenge*, when the host, Jeremy Paxman, used the designation CE (Common Era) instead of the more traditional Christian form of AD (Anno Domini) in a question about Christianity. The row prompted YouGov to ask a representative sample of 6,991 British adults via mobile app on 9 January 2019 whether they would prefer to use CE or AD when talking about the year 1019. In reply, 73% opted for 1019 AD and only 4% for 1019 CE, with 23% undecided. Among the different demographic sub-groups, Londoners (7%) and persons aged 18-24 (8%) were most likely to favour CE. Full results are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/b5585ed9-13fa-11e9-85b1-9b01daa9c3eb>

Perceptions of anti-Semitism in the European Union

Special Eurobarometer 484 Report: Perceptions of Antisemitism presents the findings of Standard Eurobarometer Wave 90.4, undertaken in all 28 member states of the European Union (EU) at the behest of the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers. UK fieldwork was conducted by Kantar UK with 1,066 adults aged 15 and over on 5-19 December 2018. Within the UK, 62% considered that anti-Semitism was a very or fairly important problem (EU average 50%) and 44% that it had increased over the past five years (EU average 36%). One-quarter of UK citizens (26%, two points more than in the EU as a whole) deemed anti-Semitism to be a very or fairly important problem in each of nine situations, with majorities in the UK saying so with regard to: political life (56%); the internet (53%); Holocaust denial (53%); and expressions of hostility and threats towards Jewish people in public places (51%). Conflicts in the Middle East were judged to have an influence (definitely or to some extent) on the ways Jewish people were perceived by 66% of adults in the UK and 54% in the EU. The report is available, together with a four-page UK factsheet which includes some disaggregation of results by age, terminal education age, and left-right political scale position, at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm>

Holocaust knowledge and attitudes

One in 20 of 2,006 UK adults surveyed online by Opinion Matters on behalf of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust on 23-26 November 2018 did not believe that the Holocaust really happened, and one in twelve said that its scale had been exaggerated. Almost two-thirds (64%) did not know how many Jews were murdered in the Holocaust (45% or grossly underestimated the number (19% suggesting fewer than two million when the total is usually reckoned to be six million). Notwithstanding, the vast majority (84%) agreed that 'we can all learn lessons for

today from what happened in the Holocaust’, 83% that ‘it is important to know about the Holocaust in today’s world’, and 76% that ‘more needs to be done to educate people about what happened during the Holocaust’, while 75% disagreed that ‘the Holocaust is irrelevant now’. Full results are available via the links at:

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/news/about-our-research-to-mark-holocaust-memorial-day/>

Supernatural predictions for 2019

The latest Ipsos Global Advisor survey, undertaken between 21 December 2018 and 9 January 2019 among online samples of adults aged 16/18-64 in 30 countries around the world (including 1,000 in Great Britain), was devoted to predictions for 2019. Two concerned supernatural possibilities for the New Year, the likelihood that we will discover that ghosts really exist and that aliens will visit the earth. Global publics were pretty sceptical that either would happen in 2019, only 16% on average (including 13% of Britons) thinking that the existence of ghosts would be demonstrated and 13% (12% of Britons) that aliens would make a terrestrial appearance. National topline are available at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/global-predictions-whats-store-2019>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Anti-Semitic Google searches in the UK

An average of 170,000 Google searches with anti-Semitic content are made each year in the UK, approximately 10% of which involve violent language or intentions. This is according to an analysis by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz of UK Google searches since 2004, published on 11 January 2019 by the Community Security Trust and Antisemitism Policy Trust: *Hidden Hate: What Google Searches Tell Us about Antisemitism Today*. The most common searches were found to be for jokes mocking Jews (47%), with a further 23% involving racial epithets and 20% negative stereotypes (most typically that Jews are ‘evil’ and ‘racist’). Several specific or generic spikes in anti-Semitic searches were discovered, for example a 79% increase in April 2018, most of which occurred on the day after Jewish community representatives met Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn about allegations of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. Searches for ‘Holocaust hoax’ were 30% above the mean on Holocaust Memorial Day, while anti-Semitic searches rose by the same order of magnitude during the days following Israel’s victory in the 2018 Eurovision Song Contest. Anti-Semitic searches were higher in Wales than in any other part of the UK. The 19-page report can be downloaded via the link at:

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2019/01/11/hidden-hate-what-google-searches-tell-us-about-antisemitism-today>

Hostility towards Israel

The Community Security Trust (CST) has also collaborated with the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) in publishing the 14-page paper *The Apartheid Contention and Calls for a Boycott: Examining Hostility towards Israel in Great Britain*, by David Graham and Jonathan Boyd. It revisits data from a nationally representative sample of 4,005 adult Britons interviewed face-to-face and online by Ipsos MORI between October 2016 and February 2017, on behalf

of JPR and part-funded by CST. Respondents to the survey were presented with a list of twelve randomly ordered statements about Israel and Israelis, some of which were designed to represent anti-Semitic tropes. Among the replies, 21% agreed and 19% disagreed with the statement that Israel was an apartheid state, while 10% supported and 46% opposed a boycott of Israeli goods and services. After briefly examining the large number of don't knows, the paper mainly focuses upon the differences between those who agreed or disagreed with these two statements, with analysis by demographics, religion, and a scale of anti-Jewish sentiment. It concludes: 'Agreement with the idea of an Israel boycott is a stronger marker and predictor of underlying antisemitism than is agreement with the apartheid contention, but both positively correlate with anti-Jewish sentiment.' The paper can be downloaded from:

https://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR_2019_Apartheid_briefing_paper.pdf

Number of Jewish students at Jewish schools

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) has additionally published the 12-page *Numbers of Jewish Children in Jewish Schools: Statistical Bulletin for 2015/16 to 2017/18* by Jonathan Boyd. The study, commissioned by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, is based on school census data gathered by the Department for Education in England and the Scottish Government in Scotland. It revealed that, during the academic year 2017/18, there were 34,547 Jewish children attending Jewish schools, an increase of 12% over the figure for 2014/15. Three-quarters of them were at schools in the Greater London area or south Hertfordshire, while 61% of pupils were at primary and 39% at secondary stage. The majority of the students, 58%, were being educated in strictly Orthodox Jewish schools and 42% in 'mainstream' Jewish schools, representing a shift from the position of parity which had existed between the two sectors *circa* 2005. The report is available at:

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=16763>

ACADEMIC STUDIES

British Political Facts

The eminent political scientist David Butler first produced his *British Political Facts*, with Jennie Freeman, in 1963, including a section on religion. The latest (eleventh) edition, *Butler's British Political Facts*, edited by Roger Mortimore and Andrew Blick (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, viii + 883pp., ISBN: 978-1-137-56708-6, £35, paperback) likewise incorporates a chapter on religion (pp. 585-92). It comprises a miscellany of statistics and listings, which have not been entirely updated from previous editions, although the results of the 2001 and 2011 census religious affiliation questions are reproduced for all four UK home nations. The book's webpage is at:

<https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9781137567086>

Beliefs and attitudes of clergy and laity in the Church of England

In *The Church of England in the First Decade of the 21st Century: Findings from the Church Times Surveys* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, xvii + 263pp., ISBN: 978-3-030-04527-2, £69.99, hardback), Andrew Village draws upon the results of surveys of convenience (self-

selecting and thus potentially unrepresentative) samples of clerical and lay readers of the *Church Times* in 2001 (n = 9,000) and, more particularly, 2013 (n = 5,000). Data are mostly reported graphically rather than in tabular format, alongside textual commentary, with an emphasis on changes over time and differences between various groups in the Church of England. Apart from the introduction and conclusion, and an account of methodology, the chapters are arranged along topical lines, dealing with: basic beliefs; marriage and divorce; women in leadership; sexual orientation; confidence in leadership; discipleship; belonging and serving; and church schools. The book's webpage is available at:

<https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9783030045272>

Methodist leadership and psychological type

In 'Profiling Methodist Leadership', Leslie Francis and Adam Stevenson explore the similarities and dissimilarities between the psychological type and temperament profiles of British Methodist local (i.e. lay) preachers and ordained circuit ministers. New data provided by 142 local preachers were compared with the profiles of 1,004 ministers in a study published in 2010. The most important difference between the two groups was found to be the higher proportions among both male and female local preachers of the Epimethean (SJ) Temperament, the attribute which brings a more conservative and conserving approach to ministry. The article is published in *Holiness: The Journal of Wesley House, Cambridge*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2018, pp. 7-26. It is available on an open access basis at:

<https://www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/02-Francis-Stevenson.pdf>

Political behaviour and civic engagement of British Muslims

Among British Muslims, mosque attendance is associated with increased electoral and non-electoral political participation, higher levels of civic engagement, and the rejection of politically motivated violence. So conclude Kassra Oskooii and Karam Dana from an analysis, using logistic regression models, of the British Election Study Ethnic Minority Survey (EMBES), 2010: 'Muslims in Great Britain: The Impact of Mosque Attendance on Political Behaviour and Civic Engagement', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 9, 2018, pp. 1479-1505. On some measures, mosque-attending Muslims were found to be more engaged than ethnic minority churchgoers. Accordingly, it is suggested, 'scholars and policymakers should . . . view mosques as social capital enhancing and civic-building institutions rather than places where "terrorists are being homegrown"'. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1330652>

Victimization of Muslim adolescents

One-quarter of the 335 self-identifying UK Muslim students aged 13-15 who participated in the Young People's Attitudes toward Religious Diversity Project (2011-12) claimed to have experienced bullying on account of their religion, more than did so because of their race or colour (23%) or because their family came from another country (17%). Male and female Muslim adolescents were equally liable to victimization. Psychological and religious variables were found to predict individual differences in vulnerability to victimization. The research is reported by Leslie Francis and Ursula McKenna, 'The Experience of Victimization among

Muslim Adolescents in the UK: The Effect of Psychological and Religious Factors', *Religions*, Vol. 9, No. 8, 2018, article 243, which is available on an open access basis at:

<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/9/8/243>

Adolescent attitudes towards abortion and euthanasia

In *Euthanasia, Abortion, Death Penalty, and Religion: The Right to Life and Its Limitations – International Empirical Research* (Cham: Springer, 2019, ISBN: 978-3-319-98772-9, £89.99, hardback), Hans-Georg Ziebertz and Francesco Zaccaria have edited a collection of seven national and three comparative case studies. The British interest is provided by Chapter 6 (pp. 139-59): Leslie Francis, Ursula McKenna, and Abdullah Sahin, 'Religion, Human Rights, and Matters of Life and Death: Exploring Attitude toward Abortion and Euthanasia among Adolescents in England and Wales'. Presenting data for 966 Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, and non-religious students aged 14-18 years, and taking personal and psychological profiles into account, the authors demonstrate that religiously inclined respondents (defined in terms of religious affiliation, personal prayer, and worship attendance) were less accepting of abortion and euthanasia, prayer frequency being the most critical factor. Muslims and Catholics were less accepting of abortion and euthanasia than Protestants and non-religious students. The book's webpage is available at:

<https://www.springer.com/gb/book/9783319987729>

Religiosity of academic scientists in the UK

Elaine Howard Ecklund, Christopher Scheitle, and Jared Peifer report on 'The Religiosity of Academic Scientists in the United Kingdom: Assessing the Role of Discipline and Department Status', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 57, No. 4, December 2018, pp. 743-57. The sample comprised 1,525 biologists and physicists who were interviewed online in September-October 2013 as part of the Templeton World Charity Foundation-funded Religion among Scientists in International Context study. Of these, 68.2% said they never attended religious services and 64.5% did not belong to a religion, with 45.3% disbelieving in God and 38.7% finding very little truth in religion. Biologists were more likely than physicists to say they never attended services, as were scientists in 'elite' departments compared with those in 'non-elite' departments. No significant differences between disciplines or status types were detected for more private measures of religion. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jssr.12552>

Missionary origins of religious quantification

The spread of statistical methods and accounting techniques among British and American Protestant missionary societies is charted by Martin Petzke, 'The Global "Bookkeeping" of Souls: Quantification and Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Missions', *Social Science History*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Summer 2018, pp. 183-211. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/social-science-history/article/global-bookkeeping-of-souls-quantification-and-nineteenthcentury-evangelical-missions/627C05700B0CA07F005CD1693409A733#>

Eighteenth-century English Quaker numbers

The size of the eighteenth-century English Quaker community, initially calculated by John Stephenson Rowntree in 1857, has been revisited by Andrew Fincham, through an analysis of birth, marriage, and death records for the London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends between 1650 and 1809, detailing over 33,000 individuals. Fincham has built a new mathematical model of Quaker demographic change and made fresh decennial projections of Quaker statistics, with an indication of flows as well as stocks. ‘Faith in Numbers: Re-Quantifying the English Quaker Population during the Long Eighteenth Century’ is published, on open access, in *Religions*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2019, article 83 at:

<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/10/2/83>

Local censuses of church attendance, 1881-82

A government census of religious accommodation and attendance was conducted in connection with the 1851 census of population, but the experiment was never repeated. Researchers looking for evidence of churchgoing patterns in the later nineteenth century are therefore dependent upon counts of attendance in particular places, mostly organized by local newspapers. A major cluster of these exists for 1881-82, comprising 111 in England, 8 in Wales, and 60 in Scotland, an inventory of which has been compiled by Clive Field, ‘Religion at the *fin de siècle*: A Checklist of Local Newspaper Censuses of Church Attendance, October 1881-March 1882’, *Local Historian*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January 2019, pp. 57-72. In addition to a brief description of each local census, including published source information, the article contains introductory and contextual material. A fuller exploration of the results of these censuses will appear in chapter 4 of the same author’s forthcoming book *Periodizing Secularization: Religious Allegiance and Attendance in Britain, 1880-1945*.

NEW DATASETS

UK Data Service, SN 8398: Scottish Health Survey, 2017

The Scottish Health Survey, 2017 is the thirteenth in a series initiated in 1995. It was conducted by ScotCen Social Research on behalf of the Scottish Government, 5,300 persons living in private households throughout Scotland being interviewed face-to-face between January 2017 and January 2018. A belonging form of question about religious affiliation was asked of all adult respondents, which can be used as a variable for analysing answers to all other questions, whether health-related or not (including questions about the experience of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religion). A catalogue description of the dataset, with links to documentation, is available at:

<https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8398>

UK Data Service, SN 8418: British Election Study, 2017 Face-to-Face Post-Election Survey

The survey was conducted by GfK via face-to-face interviews with 2,194 British voters between 26 June and 1 October 2017, achieving a 46% response. It covered the usual spread of political questions, answers to which can be analysed by demographic variables, including

religious affiliation and, for all apart from religious nones, frequency of attendance at religious services. A catalogue entry for the dataset, with links to documentation, is available at:

<https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8418>