

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

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OPINION POLLS

Pew Global Attitudes Survey, Spring 2019: religion questions

The Pew Research Center has released a substantial chunk of the findings from the Spring 2019 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, undertaken in 32 countries, including in Great Britain, where 1,031 adults aged 18 and over were interviewed by Gallup via telephone between 4 June and 20 July 2019. Four religion-related questions were featured in this release, each of which had been asked in previous surveys in the series. Answers to the self-rated importance of religion in the respondent's life are shown in Table 1, the proportion claiming that religion was unimportant to them having risen slightly, from 57% in 2018 to 60% in 2019. Notwithstanding, 75% of Britons said that it was very important (against 68% in 2015) and a further 18% somewhat important (22% four years before) that people can practice their religion freely. Favourability to Jews and Muslims is exhibited in Table 2, with favourability towards Jews up from 85% in 2016 to 90% in 2019, and towards Muslims from 63% to 78%. Pew's report and topline data can be found at:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/15/european-public-opinion-three-decades-after-the-fall-of-communism/>

Table 1: Importance of religion in respondent's life, Great Britain, 2010-19 (% across)

Year	N =	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	Don't know/refused
2010	750	17	25	23	34	1
2011	1,000	17	21	21	40	1
2015	999	21	23	20	34	2
2016	1,460	16	23	26	34	1
2017	1,841	10	30	26	34	0
2018	1,005	21	20	23	34	1
2019	1,031	20	19	21	39	1

Table 2: Favourability towards Jews and Muslims in Great Britain, 2010-19 (% across)

Year	N =	Very favourable	Somewhat favourable	Somewhat unfavourable	Very unfavourable	Don't know/refused
<i>Jews</i>						
2010	750	23	47	5	1	24
2011	1,000	27	49	4	3	17
2014	1,000	29	54	5	2	10
2015	999	36	50	5	2	7
2016	1,460	33	52	5	2	8
2019	1,031	50	40	3	3	4
<i>Muslims</i>						
2010	750	13	47	13	7	20
2011	1,000	16	48	14	8	14
2014	1,000	17	47	16	10	9
2015	999	22	50	11	8	9
2016	1,460	15	48	17	11	8
2019	1,031	33	45	11	7	4

Religious discrimination in the European Union: a Eurobarometer restudy

Special Eurobarometer 493 is the sixth in a series of studies inaugurated in 2006 about discrimination in the European Union (EU), including on the basis of religion or beliefs. It was conducted in all 28 member states of the EU as part of wave 91.4 of Eurobarometer, the UK fieldwork by Kantar Group UK through face-to-face interviews with 1,022 adults aged 15 and over between 9 and 20 May 2019. A majority of respondents considered that discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief was very (22%) or fairly (39%) widespread in the UK (amounting to 61%, the third highest figure of any EU country, and 14 points above the EU mean of 47%), most of the remainder judging it to be fairly (24%) or very (10%) rare. One-quarter thought that the expression of a religious belief or the wearing of a visible religious symbol might disadvantage a candidate at a job interview. At the same time, no more than 3% of UK informants reported that they personally had been discriminated against or experienced harassment on account of their religion or beliefs during the previous 12 months. Likewise, the extent of religious prejudice exhibited by the sample was relatively low, measured in terms of the professed degree of comfort felt at the prospect of having a member of specific religious groups as a work colleague or the love partner of one of their children (Table 3). Mean favourability scores on these indicators were higher for all groups in the UK than in the EU as a whole, perhaps reflecting that more UK (87%) than EU (68%) citizens had friends or acquaintances of a different religion or with different beliefs. The UK similarly topped the EU national rankings with the largest proportion (93%) willing to contemplate a person with a different religion than the majority occupying the highest elected political position in the land. The Special Eurobarometer report is at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/>

Table 3: Favourability towards members of religious groups as work colleagues and partners for children, UK and EU, 2019 (mean score on 1-10 scale)

	As work colleague UK	As child's partner UK	As work colleague EU	As child's partner EU
Jew	9.7	9.2	8.7	7.9
Muslim	9.6	8.8	8.0	6.6
Buddhist	9.7	9.0	8.5	7.6
Christian	9.8	9.6	9.3	9.1
Atheist	9.7	9.2	8.9	8.4

One in nine Britons claim to have communicated with somebody beyond the grave

One in nine (11%) of the 2,067 adult Britons interviewed online by YouGov on 9 October 2019 claimed to have spoken to, or otherwise communicated with, somebody who was beyond the grave, i.e. a dead person. The proportion was highest among women (14%), manual workers (14%), and those aged 50-65 (16%). It was lowest among men and the under-25s (both on 7%). Four-fifths of respondents (peaking at 87% of over-65s) did not believe they had been in contact with the dead, while the remaining 9% said they did not know. Full results are at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/opi/surveys/results#/survey/1b707a75-ea75-11e9-85c4-154058a019b4>

Claimed use of Ouija boards

Ouija boards provide one mechanism to help people believe that they are talking to the dead, but they have become associated with the occult. In an online YouGov poll of 1,838 adults on 24 October 2019, 23% claimed to have used a Ouija board, the proportion rising steadily with age, from 10% of under-25s to 33% of over-60s. Women (28%) were also more likely to have used them than men (18%). Full data tables are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/philosophy/survey-results/daily/2019/10/24/bdf0f/3>

How children cope with the death of people and pets: Legal and General research

Legal and General Group surveyed 1,000 British parents of children aged 3-16 in November 2018 to investigate how these children understood, experienced, and coped with the death of pets, friends, and family members. One question explored how many children believed that the deceased person had gone to heaven. The proportion was found to reduce with age, from 69% of those aged 3-6 to 60% of those aged 7-10 to 47% of those aged 11-16. But the figure was still higher among all groups than the 29% of parents who claimed to believe in an afterlife. A blog about the research can be found at:

<https://www.legalandgeneral.com/life-cover/life-insurance/lessons-on-life-and-loss/>

Religious attitudes towards adoption: ComRes poll for Home for Good

On behalf of Home for Good, ComRes polled an online sample of 8,108 British adults between 30 September and 8 October 2019 in order to gauge their attitudes towards adoption. Respondents were shown a list of 11 statements about adoption and asked to tick those which applied to them. ComRes computed the two extremes of opinion from the answers, those who had considered or were considering adoption and those who would not explore or consider adoption, and these are given in Table 4, below, with breaks by religious affiliation and church attendance (the latter asked only of Christians). It will be seen that: (a) professing Christians were less likely than non-Christians or religious nones to have considered or to be considering adoption (perhaps because of the older age profile of Christians); and (b) among Christians, the willingness to contemplate adoption correlated with frequency of churchgoing. The detailed tables can be found at:

<https://www.comresglobal.com/polls/home-for-good-adoption-poll/>

Table 4: Attitudes towards adoption in Great Britain, 2019 (%)

	N =	I have considered/am considering adoption	I would not explore/consider adoption
Whole sample	8,108	10	48
Professing Christians	3,748	8	51
Regular (monthly or more) churchgoers	708	15	40
Occasional churchgoers	1,200	10	45
Non-churchgoers	1,733	5	59
Professing non-Christians	543	16	36
Professing religious nones	3,672	12	48

Focus of Remembrance Sunday: new polling by Populus

Remembrance Sunday falls on 10 November this year and will be marked by the usual range of religious and military commemorations. In anticipation, Populus asked 2,094 UK adults online on 11-13 October 2019 what the focus of remembrance should be. Overwhelmingly, respondents agreed with all three statements that were presented to them: ‘all people who have died in war, including civilians’ (86%); ‘people of all nationalities who have died in war’ (83%); and ‘Remembrance Sunday should primarily have a message of peace’ (85%). Data tables can be found at:

<https://www.populus.co.uk/poll/remembrance-sunday-survey/>

Public knowledge of complaints of anti-Semitism against members of the Labour Party

Somewhat belatedly, Survation has released the tables from an online poll it conducted for Gregory Philo among 1,009 UK adults on 15 March 2019. It appertained to the public and internal row, still ongoing, about allegations of anti-Semitism made against members of the Labour Party. Two questions were asked in the survey, the first concerning the extent to which respondents had seen or heard anything about the accusations; 62% said that they had, 30% that they had not, with 9% unsure. For the second question, those who had answered the first question affirmatively were invited to estimate the percentage of Labour Party members against whom complaints of anti-Semitism had been lodged; there was a wide spread of guesses, from 14% suggesting 9% or fewer members were involved to 5% thinking the figure was 80% or more, the mean being 34%. The tables can be found at:

<https://www.surveation.com/archive/2019-2/>

Jewish political engagement (and disengagement): Survation poll

The depth of Jewish disengagement from Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party was exemplified in a poll that Survation conducted, on behalf of two Jewish clients, among a sample of 766 self-identifying British Jews (including secular and non-practising) aged 18 and over, interviewed, mainly by telephone, between 19 September and 14 October 2019. Full data tables (two separate sets) are available at:

<https://www.surveation.com/archive/2019-2/>

The first set of questions (just two) was posed for the *Jewish Chronicle* and reported in its columns on 25 October 2019. Asked whether they would consider voting for the Labour Party, 48% of this sample of British Jews replied ‘never’, while a further 42% would be prepared to vote for the party only without Jeremy Corbyn as its leader. Just 7% were willing to contemplate voting for Labour with Corbyn at the helm. In the other question, given a two-way choice, 78% of Jews preferred the UK leaving the European Union without a deal to the prospect of Corbyn becoming Prime Minister (which no more than 12% were open to support).

The second set of questions (19 of them) was commissioned by the Jewish Leadership Council and reported in the *Jewish News* of 1 November 2019. Among the Jewish respondents who declared their voting intentions, the Conservatives were well ahead, on 64% (compared with 67% at the 2017 general election), followed by the Liberal Democrats on 24% (surging by 18% since 2017), with Labour on 6% (down by 5% from 2017), the Brexit Party on 3%, and other

parties on 3%. The single most important issue for Jewish voters was Brexit (31%), anti-Semitism (19%), and the economy (9%). The degree to which party leaders were perceived as anti-Semitic was: Corbyn (87%), Nigel Farage (Brexit Party, 32%), Boris Johnson (Conservative, 5%), and Jo Swinson (Liberal Democrat, 5%). Nearly half (47%) said they would 'seriously consider' emigrating if Corbyn became Prime Minister.

Ethnic minorities in Scotland and their experiences of, and attitudes to, discrimination

On behalf of Nasar Meer (University of Edinburgh), Survation carried out a telephone (landline and mobile) survey of 501 black and minority ethnic adults aged 18 and over in Scotland between 8 July and 11 September 2019, to ascertain their experiences of (during the past two years) and attitudes to discrimination. A question on religious affiliation was asked as a background variable, the largest groups being Muslims (311) and not religious (89), and this was used to analyse answers to all other questions in the survey. Almost 27% of the whole sample claimed to have experienced discrimination on the grounds of religion, but the proportion among Muslims was slightly higher (30%). Full data tables are available at:

<https://www.survation.com/archive/2019-2/>

Perceived threat posed by Islamic extremist and other terror groups

Interviewed online by YouGov on 22-23 September 2019, before the Turkish invasion of Syria, 55% of 1,642 adult Britons perceived Islamic extremist terror groups to be a big threat, compared with 14% who said the same about Irish republican terror groups and 33% about far right terror groups. A further 27% deemed Islamic extremist terror groups a moderate threat and 9% a minor threat, while just 2% thought they posed no threat at all. The proportion considering Islamic extremist terror groups to constitute a big threat peaked among over-65s (75%), Conservative Party voters (75%), and Brexit Party voters (79%). The data table is available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2019/10/14/one-three-britons-see-far-right-terror-groups-big->

Changing British moral attitudes: Ipsos MORI polling from 1989 and 2019 compared

Although there appear to be no breaks by religion, some BRIN readers may be interested in reading the new report on Britain's changing moral attitudes that has been prepared by the Policy Institute at King's College London. It is based on Ipsos MORI polling in 2019 that replicated questions asked 30 years earlier for the book *We British*, by Eric Jacobs and Robert Worcester. In general, the public is shown to have become far more liberal during these three decades, partly because the population as a whole has become more liberal (a period effect) and partly because of generational replacement (with a different sort of older group today replacing their equivalents in 1989). The report can be found at:

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute/assets/British-moral-attitudes.pdf>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Charitable and church giving by Christian television viewers: Christian Opinion Panel

The Christian Opinion Panel, an initiative of TMH Media and Marketing, has published its third biennial report into charitable and church giving by UK Christian television viewers. The sample comprised 854 viewers, surveyed online in June 2019, 88% of whom watched up to ten hours of Christian television each week and 12% ten hours or more. Respondents were mostly female (79%), aged 45-64 (80%), and white British (77%). Overwhelmingly (91%), they donated to charity (85.5% of them at least monthly), with charities benefiting religion and children or young people especially popular. Monthly or more giving to their church was claimed by 85%, with 27% giving less than £10 per donation, 37% between £10 and £50, and 27% more than £50; 39% tithed their salary. The report can be downloaded from:

<https://www.christianopinionpanel.com/>

Competitive car insurance premiums for the clergy: quotezone.co.uk survey

Ministers of religion can obtain highly competitive car insurance, according to an analysis by quotezone.co.uk (a price comparison website) of over 60,000 personal car insurance quotes obtained by members of 15 professions in the UK during August 2019. The median quote for members of the clergy was £751, better than for accountants, lawyers, dentists, doctors, and financial advisers; police officers fared best, with £499, while professionals in the building and construction industry were quoted the highest average premium of £1,186. Although all the quotes were for personal car insurance policies, rather than commercial ones, a driver's occupation is still one of the factors taken into consideration when assessing their risk and thus their premium. There is no news release on the quotezone.co.uk website, but BRIN has found the following coverage of the story:

<https://www.keepthefaith.co.uk/2019/09/30/ministers-of-religion-blessed-with-competitive-car-insurance/>

Church of England *Statistics for Mission, 2018*

The Church of England has published its *Statistics for Mission, 2018* report, in 52 pages and with 31 tables and figures. It provides full details of the Church's membership, attendance at worship services, and participation in occasional offices, with statistics disaggregated to diocesan level and trends for the past few years. This basket of performance indicators confirms the Church's continued steady decline in absolute terms, as illustrated in Tables 5 and 6, below. Relative to the English population, it achieves its greatest reach in terms of Christmas attendance (4.3%), with average weekly attendance on 1.5%, and usual Sunday attendance on 1.2%. The report is available to download at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/2018StatisticsForMission.pdf>

Table 5: Attendance in the Church of England, 2011-18

Year	Usual Sunday	Average Sunday	Average weekly	Worshipping community	Easter	Christmas
2011	805,300	858,400	1,050,300		1,378,200	2,641,500
2012	788,800	864,200	1,048,700	1,082,300	1,353,600	2,444,700
2013	783,100	844,600	993,600	1,088,400	1,275,500	2,379,800
2014	766,800	830,200	975,300	1,143,000	1,307,000	2,407,600
2015	755,800	814,000	959,900	1,147,200	1,288,300	2,540,500
2016	738,900	779,400	921,700	1,137,000	1,223,400	2,595,600
2017	722,900	756,400	893,900	1,134,900	1,253,400	2,688,700
2018	702,800	729,700	870,900	1,120,800	1,209,400	2,416,000

Table 6: Membership and occasional offices in the Church of England, 2011-18

Year	Electoral roll	Easter communicants	Christmas communicants	Infant baptisms	Child baptisms	Confirmations	Funerals church	Funerals crematoria
2011	1,206,000	994,100	1,022,500	83,850	45,260	22,242	86,050	75,070
2012	1,187,200	960,200	916,100	82,460	44,400	22,540	85,340	73,550
2013	1,085,600	898,000	879,400	79,420	42,610	19,883	86,030	72,320
2014	1,044,800	925,100	884,800	73,120	40,890	18,028	80,580	65,130
2015	1,033,100	911,800	898,500	70,660	38,240	16,723	83,640	64,290
2016	1,047,900	865,800	890,900	65,860	35,930	15,917	79,160	58,770
2017	1,053,000	890,800	934,100	60,560	32,310	15,255	78,280	54,380
2018	1,039,700	855,600	810,500	55,230	30,020	14,475	77,280	50,270

Church of England digital report, 2019

The Church of England’s digital team, a strand of the Renewal and Reform programme, was only established three years ago but has already established a strong reputation for digital evangelism and discipleship. Its recent impact is summarized in *A Year in Numbers: 2019 Digital Report*. Each year, there are more than 5,000,000 accesses of the Church’s apps. Each month, its social media content is seen more than 3,600,000 times. The 2018 ‘#followthestar’ Advent and Christmas social media reach was 7,940,000, while ‘#LentPilgrim’ and ‘EasterPilgrim’ content in 2019 was seen 6,900,000 times on social media. Last year, ‘A church near you’ locator service received more than 38,500,000 page views. Since its launch in 2018, the Church’s Alexa skill has been asked over 100,000 questions. Visitors to the Church’s website are overwhelmingly (88%) new. The report is available via the press release at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/church-engages-millions-through-apps-and-social-media>

Fresh Expressions of Church in the Anglican Diocese of Leicester

The Church of England Diocese of Leicester has partnered with the Church Army’s Research Unit to produce the 15-page report *God at Work: Learning about Fresh Expressions of Church and other Pioneering Missional Activities within the Diocese of Leicester*. The Diocese began investing in Fresh Expressions of Church (fxC) in 2011, and in 2019 there were 4,378 people in the 99 worshipping communities surveyed, 17% of whom were classified as dechurched (whose last regular experience of traditional church was more than a year ago) and 37% as non-churched (with no regular experience of traditional church whatsoever). One in four of those who attend worship in the diocese now do so at a fxC. Each fxC has an average of four core leaders, 85% of them unpaid and 66% women. These and other facts and figures can be found in the report at:

<https://www.leicester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/1570031069.pdf>

‘The God who speaks’: Roman Catholics and scripture – a new initiative

The Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales is partnering with the Bible Society on a new project to encourage the faithful to engage with scripture. Ahead of the launch of the initiative, which will run for 15 months, from October 2019 and throughout 2020 (the 1,600th anniversary of the death of St Jerome, regarded as the Church’s most significant biblical scholar), the Bishops released the results of a survey among 1,600 Catholics (methodological details not given). Just 34% of respondents judged the Bible ‘extremely important’ to the Catholic faith, and 41% said they were unsure where to begin with the Bible. Almost half (45%) claimed not to have enough time to read the Bible, while 84% encountered the Bible most often when hearing it in church. Despite this, 53% stated that they read the Bible daily. BRIN has not yet traced the official press release about the survey, but there are reports in the online Catholic media at:

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/38006>

<https://www.thecatholicuniverse.com/catholic-church-in-england-and-wales-starts-a-scripture-revolution-37664>

<http://www.catholictimes.co.uk/catholic-church-in-england-and-wales-starts-a-scripture-revolution-18272>

OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Religious hate crime in England and Wales recorded by the police, 2018/19

The Home Office has published a 22-page report on *Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018/19*. Of the 103,379 hate crimes recorded by the police in that year, 8,566 were categorized as religious hate crimes, an increase of 3% on 2017/18. They were sub-divided as follows: public order offences (50%), violence against the person (23%), stalking and harassment (13%), criminal damage and arson (10%), and other offences (4%). The perceived religion of the victims was: Muslims (46%), Jews (17%), other non-Christians (11%), Christians (7%), no religion (3%), and unknown (16%). The report and tables are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

Religious affiliation of prisoners in England and Wales, 30 September 2019

A breakdown of the prison population of England and Wales by religion and sex as at 30 September 2019 is to be found in Table 1.5 of the latest quarterly edition of offender management statistics at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2019>

NEW DATASET

First release of European Social Survey, Round 9, 2018

Edition 1.0 of the main data and documentation for round 9 (2018) of the European Social Survey is now available, covering 19 of the 30 participating countries, including the UK (where face-to-face interviews were conducted by NatCen Social Research with 2,204 adults aged 15 and over between 31 August 2018 and 22 February 2019). The standard religion questions were asked: self-assessed religiosity, current/former religious affiliation, attendance at religious services, private prayer, and experience of religious discrimination. Further information is available at:

<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>