

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources

Number 51 – December 2019

© Clive D. Field, 2019

OPINION POLLS

Who doesn't like Christmas? Some religious correlates from YouGov Profiles

What kind of person does not like Christmas? YouGov has endeavoured to answer the question via a snapshot of 240,000 YouGov Profiles variables, the background information kept on its panellists, taken in November 2019. The 15% of the population who actively dislike Christmas disproportionately professed no religion (58% compared with the mean of 50% for society at large). Christmas-haters were also more likely than average not to celebrate other religious holidays and to agree with the statement that 'across history, religion has done more bad than good'. A blog about the study can be found at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/consumer/articles-reports/2019/12/18/what-kind-person-doesnt-christmas>

Attitudes to Jews and Muslims: ICM Unlimited polling for Avaaz

On behalf of the campaigning organization Avaaz, ICM Unlimited surveyed the attitudes of 2,011 adult Britons towards Jews and Muslims online from 6 to 9 December 2019. Almost half (47%) of the sample adopted a positive perspective towards Jews but fewer (32%) did so towards Muslims; negative opinions were held by, respectively, 7% and 26%. Given a list of five anti-Semitic tropes, agreement ranged between 14% ('anti-Semitism in Britain is a response to the everyday behaviour of Jews') to 24% ('Jews are more loyal to Israel than Britain'). Endorsement of five statements with Islamophobic overtones was significantly higher, from 26% ('Islamic terrorism reflects the views of the Muslim community in Britain') to 45% ('Islam threatens the British way of life'). Negativity towards Muslims was more pronounced among Conservative voters at the 2017 general election than with Labour voters. Data tables can be accessed via the link at:

<https://www.icmunlimited.com/our-work/avaaz-islamophobia-anti-semitism-poll/>

Attitudes to Israel and the Middle East conflict: annual Populus/BICOM survey, 2019

Populus has released the full results of its latest annual survey of public attitudes to Israel and the Middle East conflict, conducted on behalf of the British Israel Communications and Research Centre (BICOM) through online interviews with 2,026 British adults on 1–3 November 2019. Results for all questions were disaggregated by religious affiliation. Additionally, some questions had a specifically religious focus. Asked to identify the root causes of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, 23% of respondents viewed it as primarily a religious struggle between Muslims and Jews, compared with 62% who saw it as mostly a row over disputed territory between two nations, and 15% who deemed it part of the War on Terror being waged between democracies and Islamic extremists like ISIS. ISIS itself was considered a threat to the UK's security by 84%. Three-fifths (61%) supported Israel's right to exist as a

majority Jewish state, but two in three of these made their backing conditional on Israel reaching agreement with the Palestinians for a two-state solution to the conflict; 8% did not endorse Israel's right to exist as a majority Jewish state, while 31% were undecided. A slender majority (52%) agreed that criticizing Israel is not anti-Semitic, just 12% dissenting. The 73 tables, extending to 186 pages, can be found at:

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

An analysis of the survey for the *Jewish News*, by James Sorene (BICOM's CEO), is at:

<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/what-does-the-great-british-public-think-about-israel/>

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club's fanbase consultation on the use of the Y-word

The word Yid has its origins in the Middle High German word for Jew. It has frequently been used by Jews themselves as a slang form but has also been used pejoratively by some non-Jews and, in these contexts, is thus now considered anti-Semitic. Tottenham Hotspur Football Club has strong Jewish associations and, back in the 1970s and 1980s, many of its fans defensively adopted Yid or Yiddo as a badge of pride and portrayed themselves as the Yid Army, in order to deflect anti-Semitic abuse. Given contemporary concerns about anti-Semitism, the continuing use of the Y-word, whether by the Club's own supporters or, more offensively, by those of rival teams, has been called into question. The Club has just released the results of an online consultation on the subject that it launched among its supporter base in August 2019, to which it received over 23,000 replies, 11% from self-identifying Jews. Three-quarters of these fans regularly (33%) or occasionally (41%) used the Y-word in a footballing context, with just 12% using it outside such a context. However, 94% of respondents acknowledged that Yid can be considered a racist term against a Jewish person, and almost half preferred to see the Club's fans chanting it less often (23%) or to stop using it altogether (22%). The Club's press release can be found at:

<https://www.tottenhamhotspur.com/news/2019/december/y-word-consultation-update/>

Autumn 2019 Eurobarometer: what value do we place on religion?

Standard Eurobarometer Wave 92.3 included a trio of questions asked fairly regularly by the European Commission about values (including religion) deemed of most importance personally and best representing the European Union (EU), and the factors (including religion) creating a feeling of community among EU citizens. The UK fieldwork was conducted by Kantar UK via face-to-face interviews with 1,010 adults aged 15 and over between 15 and 26 November 2019. The survey was also undertaken in the 27 other member states of the EU, five candidate countries, and the Turkish Cypriot community. In the majority of nations, religion was deemed of very limited significance. Asked to pick the three most important values to them personally, from a list of thirteen possibles, only 5% of UK respondents selected religion, the EU28 average being 6%. This represented no change since the Spring 2019 Eurobarometer poll. Topline results can be found on pp. T150–61 of the annex at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/index#p=1&instruments=STANDARD>

OPINION POLLS–2019 GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN (PART 2)

Religion and party choice: Lord Ashcroft's data on how people actually voted

Lord Ashcroft has released a spreadsheet with the results of his traditional post-vote general election poll, for which 13,128 electors were interviewed online on 11–12 December 2019, after they had actually cast their vote, whether by post or in person at the polling booth. Ten questions were asked about voting and related political issues, and nineteen on the respondent's background, including religion (question 19). Unfortunately, data are only reported as percentages, which rather limits what conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between religion and party choice. What can be said with certainty is that professing Christians (who formed 51% of the sample) were disproportionately likely to have voted Conservative, while religious nones (42% of interviewees) were disproportionately likely to have voted for the Labour Party, the Scottish National Party, and the Green Party. The relatively older age profile of Christians and the younger age profile of the nones does much to explain this pattern. The spreadsheet can be accessed via the blog at:

<https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2019/12/how-britain-voted-and-why-my-2019-general-election-post-vote-poll/#more-16379>

Muslims and the general election: Savanta ComRes poll for Henry Jackson Society

As part of a broader investigation into British Muslim attitudes, on behalf of the Henry Jackson Society, Savanta ComRes has released details of the political party preferences of British Muslims. Fieldwork for the study was conducted during the recent general election campaign, from 25 November to 5 December 2019, when 750 Muslims aged 18 and over were interviewed online. Consistent with the findings from previous surveys, 60% of Muslims signalled an intention to vote for the Labour Party, with Conservatives on 10%, Liberal Democrats on 7%, and other parties on 6%; a further 16% reported that they were undecided, would not vote, or preferred not to say. The data table is at:

https://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Savanta-ComRes_HJS_191219.pdf

Anti-Semitism as a general election issue for the Labour Party

Perceptions of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party were explored in a survey by Deltapoll on behalf of the Jewish Leadership Council, for which 12,147 British adults were interviewed online between 29 November and 2 December 2019. Awareness of accusations of anti-Semitism within the party was high; four-fifths of respondents had seen a lot (37%) or a little (44%) news coverage about the issue during the previous few months. A plurality (47%) considered the party did have a problem with anti-Semitism, and 32% went so far as to characterize the whole party as anti-Semitic. Its leader, Jeremy Corbyn, was even more likely to be seen as anti-Semitic (by 39%), while 59% judged his handling of the allegations to have been incompetent, some adding that it exemplified his poor judgment as a politician (25%) and lack of Prime Ministerial qualities (23%). The large sample size naturally supported multiple cross-tabulations and the posing of supplementary questions to two sub-groups: all those considering voting Labour at the 2019 general election but who thought the party had a problem with anti-Semitism; and all Labour voters at the 2017 general election who were less than

certain to vote Labour in 2019. Unfortunately, inadequate labelling of the PDF version of the full data tables sometimes makes them difficult to follow. They are at:

<http://www.deltapoll.co.uk/polls/jlc>

On behalf of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, Deltapoll also interviewed online, on 5–11 December 2019, 2,095 adults who had voted for the Labour Party at the 2017 general election, only 51% of whom indicated they would be voting the same way at the forthcoming general election on 12 December. Almost half the sample (48%) considered there was a problem with anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, while 33% judged Corbyn himself to be anti-Semitic (19% saying that *both* elements within the party and Corbyn were anti-Semitic). Of the remainder, 21% felt that neither Corbyn nor the wider Labour Party held anti-Semitic views, with 17% undecided. Among those planning to defect from Labour in 2019, the proportions thinking that either elements of the Labour Party or Corbyn particularly were anti-Semitic were even higher, at, respectively, 57% and 42%. Data tables are embedded in the report by Peter Kellner and Patrick Loughran, *Northern Discomfort: Why Labour Lost the General Election*, which can be found at:

<http://www.deltapoll.co.uk/polls/northern-discomfort>

In addition to such national surveys, there were a fair number of constituency polls during the weeks leading up to the general election. One example, of particular interest from a Jewish perspective, was commissioned by the *Jewish Chronicle* from Watermelon Research in the London parliamentary constituency of Finchley and Golders Green, a Labour/Conservative marginal, where 507 adults were interviewed by telephone on 24–28 November 2019. This had the largest Jewish population of any constituency in the UK, heading a list of nine seats identified by Jonathan Boyd (in his monthly column for the *Jewish Chronicle* on 6 December 2019, p. 44) where the Jewish vote was deemed sufficiently large to have the potential to affect the outcome of the general election locally. There were an estimated 23,000 Jews eligible to vote in Finchley and Golders Green. The second point of Jewish interest was that Luciana Berger was the Liberal Democrat candidate in the constituency. She was a former Labour MP (for Liverpool Wavertree) who had been the victim of anti-Semitic abuse and eventually resigned from the Labour Party, before becoming a co-founder of The Independent Group of MPs and later joining the Liberal Democrat Party.

Asked about the most important issues that would affect how they voted, 25% of Finchley and Golders Green electors cited anti-Jewish racism or anti-Semitism, rising to 64% of Jewish voters. Forced to choose, 14% of the whole sample (but 43% for Jews) said that anti-Jewish racism was more important to them than Brexit, compared with 44% who put Brexit before anti-Jewish racism and 30% who said both issues were of equal significance. Almost half (46%) of all respondents agreed that the Labour Party had behaved in a racist way towards the Jewish community, including 85% of Jews. Two-thirds (68%) did not think that Jeremy Corbyn had handled well the row about anti-Semitism in the Labour Party (95% among Jews). The full data tables can be accessed via the news report at:

<https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/conservative-mike-freer-has-fiv-point-lead-over-lib-dem-luciana-berger-in-finchley-and-golders-green-1.493712>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Wellbeing and flourishing among Church of England clergy and ordinands

The Church of England's Ministry Division has published a 59-page report on the findings of panel survey wave 2 (conducted online early in 2019) from its longitudinal and mixed methods Living Ministry Research Project: Louise McFerran with Liz Graveling, *Ministerial Effectiveness and Wellbeing: Exploring the Flourishing of Clergy and Ordinands*. Responses were obtained from 579 clergy ordained deacon in 2006, 2011, or 2015 and from 113 ordinands who had begun training in 2016, both groups being generally positive about their wellbeing. A particular focus of wave 2 was ministerial effectiveness, for which a series of measures was devised (Appendix 2, pp. 55–7). The report can be accessed via the link in the press release at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/new-research-findings-published-clergy-flourishing>

OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

ONS *Research Report on Population Estimates by Ethnic Group and Religion*

The Office for National Statistics has published a 19-page *Research Report on Population Estimates by Ethnic Group and Religion* for England and Wales, together with its underlying dataset. It presents a method for producing such estimates by combining the Annual Population Survey or APS (in this instance, pooled for 2014–16), 2011 census data, and mid-year population estimates. The discussion of religion will be found on pp. 12–18. The report concludes that use of pooled or single-year APS data would generate viable estimates of religious groups at national, regional, and county levels, but that the degree of completeness at local and unitary authority levels does not render it suitable for these geographies. User feedback is invited on the proposals (p. 19). Table B in the dataset offers estimates of religious groups for 2016. The report and dataset can be accessed at:

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

UK Sikhs and the ethnicity question in the 2021 census of population

There has been another twist in the Sikh community's long running campaign to persuade the government to add a Sikh tick box response to the ethnicity question in the 2021 population census in England and Wales. Lawyers acting for the Sikh Federation UK have announced that it will be seeking permission to appeal the judgment handed down by Mrs Justice Lang, in the case of R. (on the application of the Federation) v. The Cabinet Office, in the High Court on 12 December 2019. This judgment had dismissed as 'plainly premature' the Federation's claim for a judicial review of the matter, on the grounds that it would be in breach of Parliamentary privilege (constraining scrutiny of the eventual draft Order in Council setting out the proposed regulations for the census) and the constitutional convention of the separation of powers between legislature and judiciary. A press release from the lawyers, arguing the need to appeal and estimating that there are 700,000–800,000 ethnic Sikhs in the UK, can be found at:

<https://sikhsiyasat.net/2019/12/13/sikh-federation-uk-announces-to-take-census-case-to-court-of-appeal-after-hc-refuses-relief/>

A copy of the full 27-page judgment, including the background to the case, has been posted on the Matrix Chambers website at:

<https://www.matrixlaw.co.uk/judgments/not-for-court-to-rule-on-whether-parliament-should-include-sikh-ethnic-group-tick-box-on-census/>

Religious profession of UK armed forces personnel: biannual update

The religious affiliation of members of the UK's three armed services as at 1 October 2019 can be found in Tables 4 (Regular Forces) and 18 (Future Reserves 2020) of *UK Armed Forces Biannual Diversity Statistics, 1 October 2019* at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-2019>

ACADEMIC STUDIES

Religion and party choice: data from the British Election Study Internet Panel

In anticipation of the recent general election, the latest addition to the figures section of the BRIN website is a post by Siobhan McAndrew on 'Religion and Attitudes to Major Political Parties, 2014–2019'. This reports data from waves 1–16 of the British Election Study Internet Panel, fielded by YouGov between February 2014 and May 2019. There were 30,000 plus respondents for each wave, with 92,000 individuals participating in at least one of the waves. They were asked about their liking for particular political parties, using a scale from 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like), and the mean scores for the major Britain-wide parties (Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green, and UKIP) are presented in a series of slides and associated spreadsheets at:

<http://www.brin.ac.uk/figures/religion-and-attitudes-to-major-political-parties-2014-2019/>

McAndrew also has a related blog on 'Religion and Party Preference in 2019', which derives from the latest available wave (16, conducted in the aftermath of the 2019 elections to the European Parliament) of the British Election Study Internet Panel, with religious affiliation given for 35,628 of the 37,959 respondents. This time, the analysis was based upon replies to the question: 'Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, or what?' Party choices are recorded (in tables, figures, and spreadsheets) for the following groups, first by religious affiliation and then by frequency of attendance at religious services (at least monthly versus less often): no religion, Anglican, Catholic, Church of Scotland, Methodist, Baptist, United Reformed Church, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Evangelical. McAndrew helpfully teases out the implications of the tables and figures and concludes: 'Religion and the legacy of religious upbringing accordingly continue to matter in British politics as a fundamental structuring force.' The post is at:

<http://www.brin.ac.uk/figures/religion-and-party-preference-in-2019/>

Religion and party choice among Roman Catholics in 2017 and 2019

In anticipation of the general election on 12 December last, Stephen Bullivant published on the *Catholic Herald* website a preliminary analysis of the party choice of 1,800 British Roman Catholics, interviewed online by ComRes in October–November 2019 as part of an academic research project (‘Roman Catholics in Britain’) led by Ben Clements. Respondents were asked how they had voted in the 2017 general election and how they would vote in any new general election. Findings are presented for three geographical areas: Northern England and the Midlands, Southern England, and Scotland (there were too few cases in Wales). For each area, voting preferences in 2017 and 2019 are further sub-divided by voting in the 2016 referendum on the UK’s membership of the European Union (EU). Traditionally, Catholics have been inclined to vote Labour, but the Catholic vote now appears to have fragmented. In this survey, the Labour share of the general election vote reduced between 2017 and 2019 in all three areas among both Catholic ‘leavers’ and ‘remainers’ in 2016. In 2019, throughout England, a plurality of Catholic ‘leavers’ inclined to vote for the Conservative Party (which supported Brexit); however, a plurality of ‘remainers’ still favoured Labour (whose position on the EU was more ambivalent), with Conservatives pushed into third place after the Liberal Democrats (who wanted the UK to remain in the EU). In Scotland, the Scottish National Party (which also favoured continuing EU membership) claimed the plurality Catholic vote, but it lost ground between 2017 and 2019, especially among ‘leavers’. Bullivant’s article can be found at:

<https://catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2019/12/11/exclusive-data-how-catholics-are-likely-to-vote-in-the-general-election/>

A website for the ‘Roman Catholics in Britain’ project has now been set up, to which findings from the ComRes poll, as well as other resources, will be incrementally posted, at

<https://catholicsinbritain.le.ac.uk/>

Pew Research Center on religion and living arrangements around the world

The Pew Research Center has released a new report on *Religion and Living Arrangements around the World*, charting how, in 130 countries and territories (representing 91% of the global population), the size and composition (extended, two parent, single parent, and so forth) of households can vary according to religious affiliation. Data derive from a variety of generic and country-specific sources (explained in Appendix B), including, in the case of the UK, the European Social Survey for 2016–17. The report is accompanied by two Excel files containing estimates of individual level experiences of household size and type for each region and country. For the UK, there are breaks within the two principal religious groups (Christians and religiously unaffiliated) by sex and age and for Muslims by gender alone. Documentation can be accessed at:

<https://www.pewforum.org/2019/12/12/religion-and-living-arrangements-around-the-world/>

Religion and parental values: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study

William Baker and Katherin Barg report on ‘Parental Values in the UK’ in *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 70, No. 5, December 2019, pp. 2092–115. Their evidence derives from the Millennium Cohort Study, which is following almost 19,000 children born in the UK in 2000–1, and especially from sweep 2, when the main parent (typically the mother) was asked to select

the top three from a pre-set list of six qualities she would like to instil in her child. One of the qualities was ‘learning religious values’, which was not ranked at all by 91% of parents, with only 3% rating it as the most important. For the qualities as a whole, bivariate and multivariate analysis established that parental values differed strongly according to levels of attendance at religious services and more modestly according to religious affiliation. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-4446.12658>

Muslim perceptions of Western hostility to Islam in 2011 and 2013

Peyman Hekmatpour and Thomas Burns explore the ‘Perception of Western Governments’ Hostility to Islam among European Muslims before and after ISIS: The Important Roles of Residential Segregation and Education’ in *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 70, No. 5, December 2019, pp. 2134–65. The authors draw upon a source hitherto unnoticed by BRIN, the ‘Cross-National Survey of Muslim Attitudes’, conducted by Abt SRBI Inc on behalf of Arizona State University, in two waves, June-August 2011 and March-July 2013. Telephone fieldwork was undertaken in eight countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe, including in the UK, where 400 Muslims were interviewed in each wave. For this paper, the data for the UK, France, and Germany are used in aggregated form. The basic conclusion is that living in segregated neighbourhoods increased the probability of Muslims believing that Western governments were hostile to Islam. However, there was a sharp fall in such belief between the two waves, especially among more educated Muslims, which is attributed to the rise of ISIS and its caliphate in Iraq and Syria during the intervening period. Access options to the article are outlined at:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-4446.12673>

Annual update of BRIN source database for 2019

The annual update of the BRIN source database has just taken place. New entries have been created for 95 sources, mainly sample surveys, 28 of which pre-date 2019 (mainly from 2018) and 67 date from 2019. Anti-Semitism, including its alleged existence in the Labour Party, was easily the most dominant theme in the 2019 sources, with a subsidiary thread relating to perceptions of Islamophobia in the Conservative Party. As of 31 December 2019, the number of records in the database stood at 2,932. In addition, 18 existing entries have been updated, mostly by the addition of new publication references. The database can be accessed at:

<http://www.brin.ac.uk/source-list/>

NEW DATASET

Pew Global Attitudes Survey, Spring 2018

The Pew Research Center has released the dataset for the Spring 2018 Pew Global Attitudes Survey. This was conducted in 27 countries, among them Great Britain, where 1,005 adults were interviewed by Kantar Public UK over the telephone between 24 May and 29 June. The religion-related content comprises: importance of the role of religion in the country compared with 20 years before; international concerns, including about Islamic State; religious affiliation; and importance of religion in the respondent’s life. The dataset can be downloaded from:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/datasets/>