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**IS BELIEF IN GOD A MATTER OF PUBLIC CONCERN IN CONTEMPORARY
WALES? AN EMPIRICAL ENQUIRY CONCERNING RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY
AMONG 13- TO 15-YEAR-OLD MALES**

Leslie J Francis, Tania ap Siôn and Gemma Penny

ABSTRACT

This study traces the changing face of religious diversity in Wales from the conceptualisation of diversity in denominational attendance, in the exercise undertaken alongside the 1851 census, to the conceptualisation of diversity in self-assigned religious affiliation included in the 2001 census. An alternative conceptualisation of religious diversity is proposed in terms of belief rather than in terms of attendance or affiliation. This alternative conceptualisation is tested among a survey of 1,124 male students (13- to 15-years of age) attending state-maintained schools in Wales. The data demonstrate significant differences between the worldviews of young theists and the worldviews of young atheists. The young theists espouse a more positive view of pluralism in contemporary Wales, including both cultural diversity and religious diversity. The conclusion is drawn that religious belief promotes, rather than detracts from, social cohesion. In this sense, religious belief may be construed as a matter of public concern in contemporary Wales.

INTRODUCTION

Religious Diversity

Wales has long been a nation that embraces religious diversity. The classic count of public church attendance conducted alongside the national census in 1851 drew public attention to the comparative strengths of the different Christian denominations. At that time the Established Church of England did not rate highly at the top of the list (see Jones and Williams, 1976). In the 1850s religious diversity was measured in terms of denominational identity and experienced in terms of denominational rivalries and competition. Matters of geography, social class, and linguistic background (Welsh as first language) all contributed to the rich tapestry of denominational difference.

Inclusion of the religious question in the national census for England and Wales for the first time in 2001 (see Aspinall, 2000; Francis, 2003; Weller, 2004; Sherif, 2011) provided an objective opportunity to profile religious diversity in Wales from a different conceptual framework. The Census White Paper (1999) which proposed the religious question to Parliament rejected the opportunity to raise a statistical enquiry into denominational affiliation, and offered, instead, a conceptual framework designed to establish the strengths of what were reportedly the six largest religious groups in England and Wales offered as: Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh, preceded by 'none', and followed by 'other (please write in)'. In the 2001 census religious diversity in Wales was measured in terms of religious-group affiliation and located in the census form closely alongside the question concerning ethnic identity. Still, however, matters of geography, social

class, and linguistic background (now languages other than Welsh as first language) contributed to the rich tapestry of religious-group differences.

Across England and Wales, the religious question in the 2001 census found that 72 per cent of the population could be defined as Christian, 3 per cent as Muslim, 1 per cent as Hindu, and under 1 per cent as Buddhist, Jewish, or Sikh; 15 per cent could be defined as having no religious affiliation and 8 per cent chose not to answer the optional question on religion. There were, however, some clear differences in the levels of religious diversity recorded in England and Wales. For example, in both England and Wales around 72 per cent of the population could be classified as Christian. In England around 6 per cent were classified as affiliated with one of the other five listed religions, but in Wales this proportion fell to 2 per cent. In Wales the largest religious group after Christians at 72 per cent were Muslims at 1 per cent, accounting for 22,000 individuals. The Muslim population was concentrated in major cities, including Wrexham in north east Wales, and Swansea and Cardiff in south Wales, with the highest density in Cardiff at 4 per cent.

After considerable debate regarding ways of modifying the 2001 census question on religious affiliation during the process of shaping the 2011 census, the decision was made to re-run the same question a decade later. The clear advantage of this decision is that it becomes possible to assess how responses to the same question change over time. The headline reading from the 2011 census was that in Wales the proportion of endorsement of the Christian category reduced from 71.9% to 57.6%, with consequent increase in the proportion claiming no religious affiliation from 18.5% to 32.1%.

In both 1851 and 2001 religious diversity in Wales was captured in terms of affiliation, although both the method of capture and the definition of affiliation differed on these two occasions. For heads to be counted in 1851 attendance at a denominational place of worship was essential (and with the inevitable problem that the same head could be counted

more than once). For heads to be counted in 2001 recording on the census form by the head of household was essential (and with the inevitable consequences that some could be assigned to religious affiliation without their personal awareness or consent).

Although not without controversy, inclusion of the question about religious affiliation within the national census is deemed acceptable because affiliation concerns an external face of religion that belongs to the public domain. In this way it may be seen as a matter of public concern. In the public debate, religious affiliation functions like sex or ethnicity as a proper aspect of social contextualisation. It is this external face of religion that is both the strength and the weakness of employing religious affiliation as the key marker of religious diversity. This point is well made by Voas and Bruce (2004) who challenge interpretation of the 72 per cent identified as Christian in the 2001 census as an effective indicator of religiosity. Voas and Bruce (2004) argue that religious affiliation serves better as an indicator of culture than as an indicator of religion.

The complexity of measuring and operationalising the notion of religion is well-rehearsed within the social scientific study of religion. The sociology of religion routinely distinguishes between such dimensions as religious affiliation, public religious practice (attendance), personal religious practice (prayer), and religious belief. The psychology of religion may go further and distinguish between different stages and styles of faith (Fowler, 1981) and different religious orientations (Allport and Ross, 1967). The problem is that religious affiliation, as captured by the national census, is a poor predictor of public practice (attendance), personal practice (prayer), belief, stages and styles of faith, or religious orientation. Nevertheless, while religious affiliation may be seen as public and consequently accessible to the public scrutiny of the national census, matters like religious practice and religious belief are seen as private and are properly protected from the public scrutiny of the national census.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Against this background, the aim of the present study is to reconceptualise religious diversity in Wales in terms of religious belief rather than in terms of religious affiliation. The research question concerns exploring the social consequences of belief in God for life in a plural Wales, in which differences have already been visibly drawn in terms of religious affiliation. Unlike the public nature of religious affiliation, belief in God is considered to be a private reflection of an individual's faith which may only be accessed through direct and probing questioning. The social sciences provide techniques to explore an individual's belief in God through qualitative or quantitative research methods. As part of the Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity project at the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, religious diversity was conceptualised in a variety of ways, including concern with religious belief. The present paper draws on data provided by the Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity project in Wales in order to address three key research questions. First, in contemporary Wales today, how does the worldview of young people who believe in God differ from the worldview of those who do not believe in God? Second, does personal belief in God help young people to make sense of life in a religiously diverse society? Third, does belief in God intensify suspicions and competition between different religious groups?

As sex differences are known to be of considerable significance in the social scientific study of religion (see Argyle, 1958, Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997), the following analysis will explore belief in God among young males to ensure that the findings are not contaminated by sex differences.

METHOD

As part of a large multi-method project on religious diversity designed to examine the experiences and attitudes of young people living in multi-cultural and multi-faith contexts throughout the UK, classes of year-nine and year-ten students in Wales (13- to 15-years of age) were invited to complete a questionnaire survey. These quantitative data were gathered between 2011 and 2012. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity, and were given the choice not to participate. The level of interest shown in the project meant that very few students decided not to take part in the survey. The sampling frame set out to compare data from at least 2,000 students (1,000 males and 1,000 females) from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and London (as a special case), with half of the students attending schools with a religious character within the state-maintained sector (Anglican, Catholic, and joint Anglican and Catholic) and half of the students attending schools without a religious foundation within the state-maintained sector. Within Wales schools were selected to represent both the North and the South, both urban and rural locations. The survey was conducted through the medium of English, and with the intention of extending to the medium of Welsh in the future.

The *Religious Diversity and Young People* survey was designed for self-completion, using mainly multiple-choice questions and Likert scaling on five-points: agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly. In the present analysis 12 groups of items were identified from the instrument to map the following areas: religious belief, belief in transcendence, belief in science, evolution and creation, personal wellbeing, cultural diversity, living with cultural diversity, respect for religion, accepting religious clothing, accepting social proximity, influences on views about religion, and studying religion in school. Religious belief was accessed by the item 'I believe in God', rated on a five-point

Likert scale: agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly. In Wales completed questionnaires were submitted by 1,124 males, 520 attending schools with a religious character and 604 attending schools without a religious foundation. The data were analysed by means of SPSS, employing Chi square in 2 x 2 contingency tables.

FINDINGS

Belief in God

An overall profile of belief in God among male students in Wales is drawn from responses to the item 'I believe in God' which were utilised to create three groups. 'Agree strongly' and 'agree' responses were combined and conceptualised as defining *young theists*; 'not certain responses' were conceptualised as defining *young agnostics*; and 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' responses were combined and conceptualised as defining *young atheists*. The proportions of pupils assigned to each of these three belief categories varied significantly between the two types of schools. In the schools with a religious character, 51 per cent were theists, 25 per cent agnostics, and 24 per cent atheists. In the schools without a religious foundation, 21 per cent were theists, 31 per cent agnostics, and 48 per cent atheists. Drawing these two groups together produced 394 theists (35 per cent), 313 agnostics (28 per cent), and 417 atheists (37 per cent). For clarity of presentation the following analyses will explore the differences between the 394 theists and 417 atheists, omitting the agnostics from the analyses.

Religious belief

Profession of belief in God does not necessarily carry with it acceptance of all the classic beliefs associated with religious faith. To what extent, then, do young theists and young atheists differ in respect of their views regarding classic religious beliefs? Table 1 demonstrates that there are indeed considerable differences between the worldviews of young theists and young atheists. Young theists inhabit a world in which 81 per cent believe in heaven and 69 per cent believe in hell. Two thirds of them have been shaped by belief in the God of mercy and think of God as loving (69 per cent), while a third of them have been shaped by belief in the God of justice and think of God as strict (36 per cent). These may prove to be by no means trivial beliefs in shaping a wider outlook on the world.

[Temporary Note – Table 1 – about here]

Belief in transcendence

The kind of God in whom young theists believe may not have been shaped or well-informed by traditional religious teaching. To what extent, then, are they likely to be forming their own creed that draws upon a range of sources? Table 2 demonstrates that two thirds of young theists live in a world that takes for granted guardian angels and spirits (40 per cent). One third believes that magic can be used for good (34 per cent) and over one quarter believes that it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead (28 per cent). These kinds of beliefs, however, are shared by some of the young atheists. Thus, 26 per cent of young atheists believe that magic can be used for good, 18 per cent believe that it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead, and 14 per cent believe that everyone has a guardian angel or spirit. A significant minority of those who do not believe in God nonetheless hold a worldview that accepts aspects of transcendence.

[Temporary Note – Table 2 – about here]

Belief in science

Belief in God is often thought to influence attitudes toward science (Astley and Francis, 2010). To what extent, then, do young theists hold a different view of science compared with that of young atheists? Table 3 demonstrates that young theists hold a more cautious view of science in comparison with young atheists. While 59 per cent of young atheists accept that theories in science can be proved to be definitely true, the proportion falls to 46 per cent among young theists. While 44 per cent of young atheists believe that science will eventually give us complete control over the world, the proportion falls to 26 per cent among young theists. While 44 per cent of young atheists believe that science can give us absolute truth, the proportion falls to 28 per cent among young theists. Similar proportions of young atheists (24 per cent) and young theists (22 per cent) feel that they cannot trust both science and religion. It is here that significant differences emerge between the worldview of young atheists and the worldview of young theists.

[Temporary Note – Table 3 – about here]

Evolution and creation

The conversation between science and religion may become particularly contentious in terms of the controversy between evolution and science (Village and Baker, 2013a, 2013b). To what extent, then, do the worldview of young theists and the worldview of young atheists differ in respect of their beliefs about evolution? Table 4 demonstrates that there are some significant differences in this area. Young atheists are more inclined to believe that science and the theory of evolution pose an ultimate challenge to religion. Thus, only 22 per cent of

young atheists take the view that it is possible to believe in evolution and in God, compared with 57 per cent of young theists. Similarly, 46 per cent of young atheists argue that science disproves the biblical account of creation, compared with 28 per cent of young theists. The majority of young theists do not support the contradiction between evolution and religious faith. Nonetheless, a third of the young theists accept the view that God made the world in six days of 24 hours (36 per cent) and around one in ten (11 per cent) accept the view that the earth is only a few thousand years old. Young theists are less likely than young atheists to accept the view that evolution created everything over millions of years (43 per cent compared with 65 per cent).

[Temporary Note – Table 4 – about here]

Personal wellbeing

A recent body of theoretical and empirical research has connected religious faith with positive psychology and personal well-being (Francis, Hills, Schludermann & Schludermann, 2008). Do young theists, then, really hold a more positive view of life in comparison with young atheists? Table 5 demonstrates that young theists enjoy a higher level of positive affect, compared with young atheists, but that young theists do not differ from young atheists in terms of negative affect. While 37 per cent of young atheists feel that their life has a sense of purpose, the proportion rises to 67 per cent among young theists. While 60 per cent of young atheists find life really worth living, the proportion rises to 78 per cent among young theists. In terms of negative affect, however, young theists are not significantly less likely than young atheists to feel depressed (26 per cent and 22 per cent) or to have sometimes considered taking their own lives (17 per cent and 16 per cent).

[Temporary Note – Table 5 – about here]

Cultural diversity

Since the 1950s the psychology of religion has been concerned to explore the connection between religious faith and xenophobia. Do young theists, then, hold a more open or a more closed attitude toward cultural diversity compared to that of young atheists? Table 6 demonstrates that, compared with young atheists, young theists hold a more open attitude not only to cultural diversity, but to religious diversity as well. In terms of cultural diversity, 51 per cent of young theists agree that people who come from different countries make their school or college an interesting place, compared with 25 per cent of young atheists; 44 per cent of young theists agree that people who come from different countries make where they live an interesting place, compared with 28 per cent of young atheists. In terms of religious diversity, 56 per cent of young theists agree that people from different religious backgrounds make their school or college an interesting place, compared with 31 per cent of young atheists; 40 per cent of young theists agree that people from different religious backgrounds make where they live an interesting place, compared with 25 per cent of young atheists.

[Temporary Note – Table 6 – about here]

Living with cultural diversity

The previous section has demonstrated that young theists hold a more positive attitude toward religious diversity. To what extent, then, does this positive attitude impact upon young theist's perceptions of the society around them, and how do their perceptions differ from those of young atheists? Table 7 demonstrates that the young theists hold a more positive view of the impact of cultural and religious pluralism on their local community. Thus, 58 per

cent of young theists agree that, where they live, people who come from different countries get on well together, compared with 42 per cent of young atheists; and 55 per cent of young theists agree that, where they live, people from different religious backgrounds get on well together compared with 37 per cent of young atheists. Similarly, 50 per cent of young theists agree that where they live people respect religious differences, compared with 32 per cent of young atheists.

[Temporary Note – Table 7 – about here]

Respect for religion

The more positive attitude of young theists to religious and cultural diversity could be explained by believers' enhanced understanding of and empathy for a religious worldview. Do young theists, then, genuinely hold acceptance of religions other than their own, and how do their views differ from those of young atheists? Table 8 demonstrates that young theists are more supportive of religious pluralism than young atheists. Thus, 77 per cent of young theists maintain that we must respect all religions, compared with 49 per cent of young atheists. Similarly, 66 per cent of young theists maintain that all religious groups in Britain should have equal rights, compared with 48 per cent of young atheists. On the other hand, young theists are not significantly less critical than young atheists of the negative effects of religion on society. Thus, 56 per cent of young atheists criticise religion for bringing more conflict than peace, as do 51 per cent of young theists. Similarly, 38 per cent of young atheists criticise religious people as often intolerant of others, as do 34 per cent of young theists.

[Temporary Note – Table 8 – about here]

Accepting religious clothing

One of the more controversial and socially problematic aspects of religious diversity concerns the presence of religious symbols and religious clothing within neutral public spaces, such as schools. How, then, do the views of young theists and young atheists differ in respect of such issues? Table 9 demonstrates that young theists are significantly more accepting of wearing religious symbols and religious clothing in schools than young atheists across the religious traditions. For example, 66 per cent of young theists agree that Christians should be allowed to wear crosses in school, compared with 40 per cent of atheists; 50 per cent of young theists agree that Muslims should be allowed to wear the Burka in school, compared with 34 per cent of young atheists; 57 per cent of young theists agree that Sikhs should be allowed to wear the Turban in school, compared with 38 per cent of young atheists; 53 per cent of young theists agree that Jews should be allowed to wear the Kippah or Yarmulke in school, compared with 38 per cent of young atheists; and 55 per cent of young theists agree that Hindus should be allowed to wear the Bindi in school, compared with 37 per cent of young atheists.

[Temporary Note – Table 9 – about here]

Accepting social proximity

Indices of social proximity have been employed as measures of prejudice or openness to others of difference within social psychology since the early work of Bogardas (1928, 1959). A real test of the acceptance of religious diversity among young people concerns their willingness to engage in close personal relationships with those from a different religious background. To what extent, then, do young theists and young atheists differ over these matters? Table 10 demonstrates that, on measures of social proximity, young theists show greater openness to religious diversity than young atheists. Thus, 53 per cent of young theists would be happy to go out with someone from a different faith, compared with 40 per cent of

young atheists; and 58 per cent of young theists would be happy about a close relative marrying someone from a different faith, compared with 46 per cent of atheists.

[Temporary Note – Table 10 – about here]

Influences on views about religion

The preceding sections have demonstrated significant differences between young theists and young atheists in terms both of their general worldview and their attitudes toward religious diversity. These findings raise a question about which factors have shaped these young people's views on religion. Table 11 demonstrates that, overall, young theists are more conscious than young atheists of the sources that have influenced their views on religion. For both theists and atheists the most important influence is identified as studying religion in school: 74 per cent of young theists and 41 per cent of young atheists say that studying religion at school has shaped their views about religion. For young theists, after school, the most important influences are mother (55 per cent), television (43 per cent), and father (37 per cent); while the internet (31 per cent), and friends (31 per cent) are of lower importance. For young atheists, after school, the most important influences are television (21 per cent), mother (17 per cent), father (15 per cent), internet (15 per cent), and friends (13 per cent).

[Temporary Note – Table 11 – about here]

Studying religion in school

Given the importance that young people attribute to school in shaping their views on religion, there is value in examining in greater depth the contribution made by schools to shaping their students' views on religion. Examining the six main religions identified within the 2001

census for England and Wales in turn then, do students' perceive differences in the influence exerted by schools, and does differentiation in the views of atheists and theists remain across all six religious groups? Table 12 demonstrates that the difference between theists and atheists persists across all six religions. Young theists affirm that studying religion at school shaped their views about religion in the following descending order: Christians (68 per cent), Jews (55 per cent), Muslims (52 per cent), Hindus (47 per cent), Buddhists (42 per cent), and Sikhs (37 per cent). By way of comparison, young atheists affirm that studying religion at school shaped their views about religions in the following descending order: Christians (37 per cent), Jews (30 per cent), Hindus (30 per cent), Muslims (25 per cent), Buddhists (25 per cent), and Sikhs (22 per cent).

[Temporary Note – Table 12 – about here]

CONCLUSION

This study traced the changing face of religious diversity in Wales from the conceptualisation of diversity in terms of denominational attendance, in the exercise undertaken alongside the 1851 census, to the conceptualisation of diversity in terms of self-assigned religious affiliation in the 2001 census. An alternative conceptualisation of religious diversity was then proposed in terms of belief rather than in terms of attendance or affiliation. The view that theological beliefs may be influential in shaping attitudes, values and behaviours that are socially and publicly significant is consistent with the broad research agendas shaped by the field of empirical theology (see Van der Ven, 1993; Cartledge, 1999; Francis, Robbins, & Astley, 2009).

The hypothesis that individual differences in belief in God shape a view of religious diversity that may be a matter of public concern in contemporary Wales was tested among a sample of 1,124 male students (13- to 15-years of age) in respect of three main themes, concerning general worldview, concerning attitudes relevant to social cohesion within the context of cultural and religious diversity, and concerning the roles of schools in shaping their views on religious diversity. Three main conclusions emerge from these data.

The first conclusion concerns the extent to which belief in God predicts broader aspects of the young person's worldview. In comparison with young atheists, young theists take more seriously a worldview in which heaven and hell exist and in which a predominantly loving God is supported by guardian angels and spirits involved in the lives of believers. Although not essentially creationist or inimical to scientific research and theories of evolution, the worldview of young theists is less inclined to scientism and to over-reliance on the absolute attainment of scientific truths. Young theists enjoy significantly higher levels of psychological well-being and positive affect. Young theists are significantly more likely to feel that their lives have a sense of purpose. This conclusion emphasises the importance of taking religious belief into account in understanding and interpreting differences in worldviews and well-being among young people.

The second conclusion concerns the extent to which belief in God predicts aspects of the young person's attitudes relevant to social cohesion within the context of cultural and religious diversity. In comparison with young atheists, young theists value more highly the contribution made to their local school and local environment by people from different religious backgrounds and from different countries. Young theists have a more positive view of social cohesion within their neighbourhood. Young theists express greater commitment to

supporting equal rights for all religious groups in Britain. Young theists are more likely to support the rights of members of all religions to wear distinctive religious symbols or distinctive religious clothing in school. Young theists are more open to social proximity with those of different religious backgrounds. This conclusion emphasises the importance of understanding the implications of potential shifts in the profile of religious belief among the people of Wales for predicting future trends in public attitudes toward religious diversity and social cohesion.

The third conclusion concerns the roles of schools in shaping attitudes toward religious diversity and the different levels of influence exerted by schools among young theists and young atheists. The data demonstrated that both theists and atheists identify studying religion in school as the most important factor in shaping their views about religion and religious diversity. For both theists and atheists school is more important in shaping their views than parents, friends and media. Moreover, the importance of school is emphasised more highly by theists than by atheists. This conclusion emphasises the key role played by the Welsh Government in supporting religious education in schools alongside the equality and community cohesion agenda.

In overview the data demonstrated significant differences between the worldviews of young atheists and the worldviews of young theists. The young theists also espouse a more positive view of pluralism in contemporary Wales, including both cultural diversity and religious diversity. In this sense religious belief promotes, rather than detracts from, social cohesion. Accordingly, individual differences in religious belief may be construed as a matter of public concern in contemporary Wales.

The strength of the present study is that it offered a clear focus on one well-defined population, 13- to 15-year-old male students. This strength is also a potential weakness of the study and one that can be addressed by appropriately designed replication and extension studies among other well-defined populations.

Note

Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity Project (AHRC Reference: AH/G014035/1) is a large scale mixed methods research project investigating the attitudes of 13- to 16-year-old students across the United Kingdom. Young people from a variety of socio-economic, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds from different parts of England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, with the addition of London as a special case, are taking part in the study. Professor Robert Jackson is principal investigator and Professor Leslie J Francis is co-investigator. Together they lead a team of qualitative and quantitative researchers based in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, within the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick. The project is part of the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme, and ran from 2009-12.

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Table 1

Religious belief

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
I believe in heaven	11	81	397.86	.001
I believe in hell	13	69	272.35	.001
I think of God as loving	8	69	317.36	.001
I think of God as strict	10	36	81.42	.001

Table 2

Belief in transcendence

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
Everyone has a guardian angel/spirit	14	40	69.63	.001
Magic can be used for good	26	34	7.16	.01
It is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	18	28	11.90	.001
I am a spiritual person	8	28	53.69	.001
I am a superstitious person	19	29	11.10	.001

Table 3

Belief in science

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
Theories in science can be proved to be definitely true	59	46	13.85	.001
I cannot trust both science and religion	24	22	.32	NS
Science will eventually give us complete control over the world	44	26	30.39	.001
Science can give us absolute truths	44	28	22.92	.001

Table 4

Evolution and creation

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
The earth is billions of years old	73	68	1.88	NS
Evolution created everything over millions of years	65	43	39.83	.001
Science disproves the biblical account of creation	46	28	27.76	.001
It is possible to believe in evolution and believe in God	22	57	101.57	.001
God made the world in six days of 24 hours	4	36	128.07	.001
The earth is only a few thousand years old	6	11	8.54	.01

Table 5

Personal wellbeing

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	37	67	70.98	.001
I find life really worth living	60	78	32.28	.001
I often feel depressed	22	26	1.85	NS
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	16	17	.03	NS

Table 6

Cultural diversity

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
People who come from different countries make my school/college an interesting place	25	51	58.61	.001
People who come from different countries make where I live an interesting place	28	44	24.26	.001
People from different religious backgrounds makes my school/college an interesting place	31	56	52.28	.001
People from different religious backgrounds make where I live an interesting place.	25	40	19.29	.001

Table 7

Living with cultural diversity

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
Where I live, people who come from different countries get on well together	42	58	20.46	.001
Where I live, people from different religious backgrounds get on well together	37	55	25.42	.001
Where I live, people respect religious differences	32	50	29.04	.001

Table 8

Respect for religion

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
We must respect all religions	49	77	69.02	.001
All religious groups in Britain should have equal rights	48	66	26.21	.001
Religion brings more conflict than peace	56	51	2.13	NS
Religious people are often intolerant of others	38	34	1.34	NS

Table 9

Accepting religious clothing

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
Christians should be allowed to wear crosses in school	40	66	54.60	.001
Muslims should be allowed to wear the headscarf in school	37	54	24.70	.001
Muslims should be allowed to wear the Burka in school	34	50	20.53	.001
Sikhs should be allowed to wear the Turban in school	38	57	30.05	.001
Jews should be allowed to wear the Kippah/Yamulke in school	38	53	20.03	.001
Hindus should be allowed to wear the Bindi in school	37	55	25.42	.001

Table 10

Accepting social proximity

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
I would be happy to go out with someone from a different denomination	42	53	9.11	.01
I would be happy to go out with someone from a different faith	40	53	12.74	.001
I would be happy about a close relative marrying someone from a different denomination	39	53	14.24	.001
I would be happy about a close relative marrying someone from a different faith	46	58	12.28	.001

Table 11

Influences on views about religion

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
My friends have influenced my views about religion	13	31	37.83	.001
The internet has influenced my views about religion	15	31	30.39	.001
Television has influenced my views about religion	21	43	44.38	.001
My father has influenced my views about religion	15	37	46.37	.001
My mother has influenced my views about religion	17	55	127.65	.001
Studying religion at school has shaped my views about religion	41	74	86.52	.001

Table 12

Studying religion in school

	Atheist %	Theist %	χ^2 %	$p <$ %
Studying religion at school has shaped my views about...				
Buddhists	23	42	32.11	.001
Christians	37	68	78.56	.001
Hindus	30	47	25.47	.001
Jews	30	55	53.36	.001
Muslims	25	52	56.13	.001
Sikhs	22	37	19.88	.001