



**THE RELIGIOUS, SPIRITUAL, SECULAR AND
SOCIAL LANDSCAPES OF THE PACIFIC
NORTHWEST – PART 1**

Report authored by
Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme

1st September 2017



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

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This report stems from the SSHRC funded research project *Religion, Spirituality, Secularity and Society in the Pacific Northwest*, led by principal investigator Paul Bramadat in partnership with the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria, Trinity Western University and the University of Waterloo. Dr. Wilkins-Laflamme conducted secondary statistical analyses with existing survey data from British Columbia as well as the US states of Washington and Oregon (and at times the entire US Pacific Census and West regions out of necessity) in order to begin addressing key topics of the research project. These topics include transformations of the religious and spiritual landscapes, secularity and non-religion, inclusivity for minorities and faith groups, as well as social issues such as environmentalism and civic engagement. All estimates have been weighted to be representative of adult populations.

Survey data sources:

American National Election Study, 2012: <http://www.electionstudies.org/>

Canadian Election Studies, 2011-2015: <http://ces-ecr.arts.ubc.ca/>

General Social Survey (Canada), 1990-2014:

<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=4504>

General Social Survey (USA), 1990-2016: <http://gss.norc.org/>

National Household Survey (Canada), 2011:

<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5178>

PEW Religious Landscape Study (USA), 2014: <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>

A PDF copy of this report is available at: <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/12218>

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Section 1: Religion and Spirituality

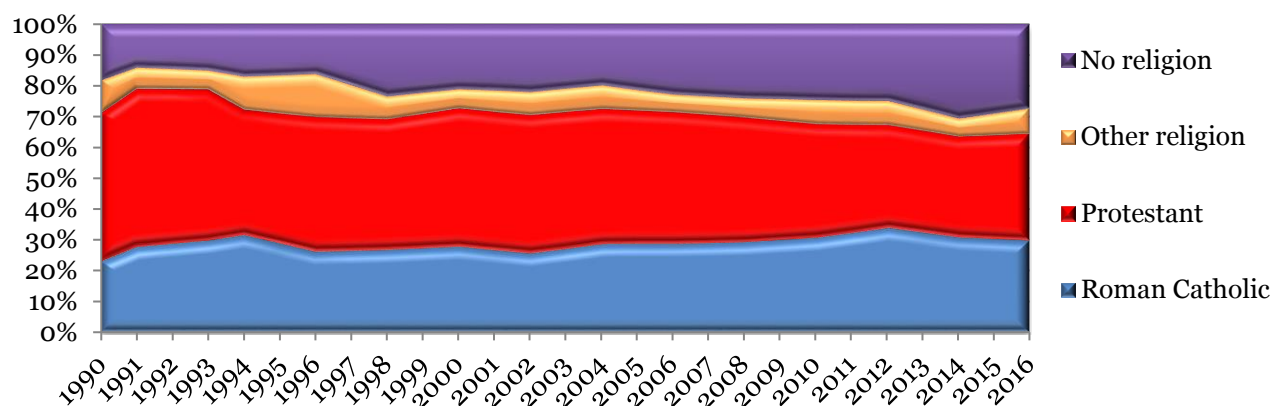
Table 1: Religious affiliation (in %)

	British Columbia (2011)	Washington and Oregon (2014)
Anglican (+ Episcopalian in USA)	5.0	1.3
Baptist	2.1	6.4
Christian Orthodox	0.9	0.8
Lutheran	1.5	3.8
Methodist	---	1.4
Mormon	---	3.5
Pentecostal	1.2	5.2
Presbyterian	1.0	2.2
Roman Catholic	15.0	15.0
United Church	5.1	---
Other Christian	12.9	22.3
Aboriginal/Native American spiritualities	0.2	0.2
Buddhist	2.1	0.7
Hindu	1.0	0.6
Jewish	0.5	1.2
Muslim	1.8	0.6
Sikh	4.7	0.0
Other non-Christian	0.8	2.8
No religion	44.3	32.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Sources: 1) 2011 NHS; N BC = 116,750. 2) 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study; N Washington and Oregon = 1,130. --- indicates that data was not provided for the group in question: affiliates for these groups can be found in the "other Christian" category.

We begin with the wide diversity of religious affiliations, or in other words religions people say they belong to when asked in surveys, which can be found in British Columbia and the US states of Washington and Oregon. Table 1 contains the estimated proportions of the population by religious group or tradition on both sides of the border in the Pacific Northwest. Key results include a higher rate of non-Christian religions overall in British Columbia (11%), especially Sikhism which represented an estimated 5% of the BC population in 2011, compared with Washington and Oregon (6% non-Christian affiliations in 2014). There is also a higher rate of individuals not identifying with any religion in British Columbia at 44% in 2011, compared with Washington and Oregon at 32% in 2014, although the West coast on both sides of the border does have the highest rates of religious "nones" in North America. These are individuals who say they have no religion because they either do not identify with a religious group or tradition, or conventional Western religion labels do not apply well to them (which is especially the case for some Indigenous and Asian groups).

Figure 1: Religious affiliation, by year, US Pacific region

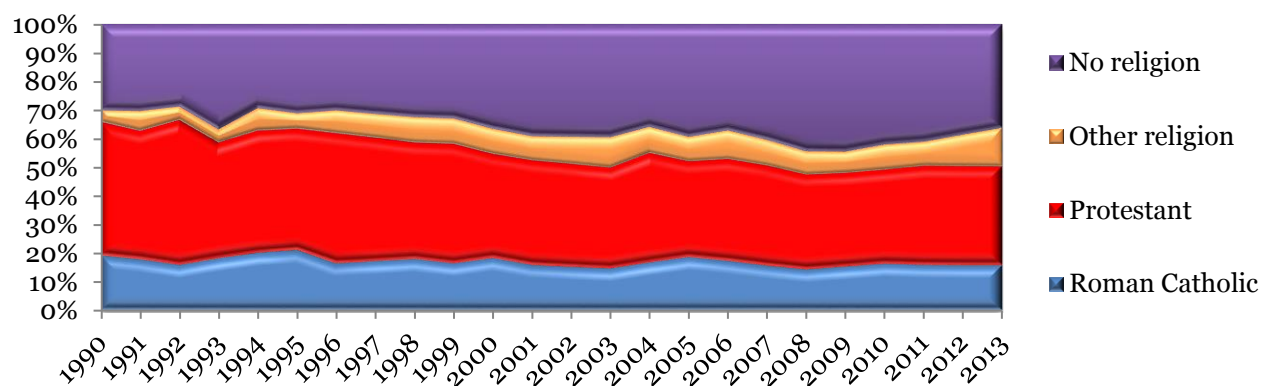


Source: 1990-2016 US GSS; N Pacific = 5,268; Data points missing for 1992, and then every odd year after 1994: replaced with the mean from the years before and after.

For the period of 1990-2016 observed in Figure 1, the proportion of Roman Catholics in the entire US Pacific region has been on the rise to reach a peak of 34% in 2012, due most notably to Hispanic immigration. In Figure 2, this same group has remained relatively stable in proportional size in British Columbia at around 17%. The regional trend is reversed for non-Christian religions and Eastern Orthodoxy: relatively stable in proportional size in the US Pacific region, and an increase over the period at study in British Columbia.

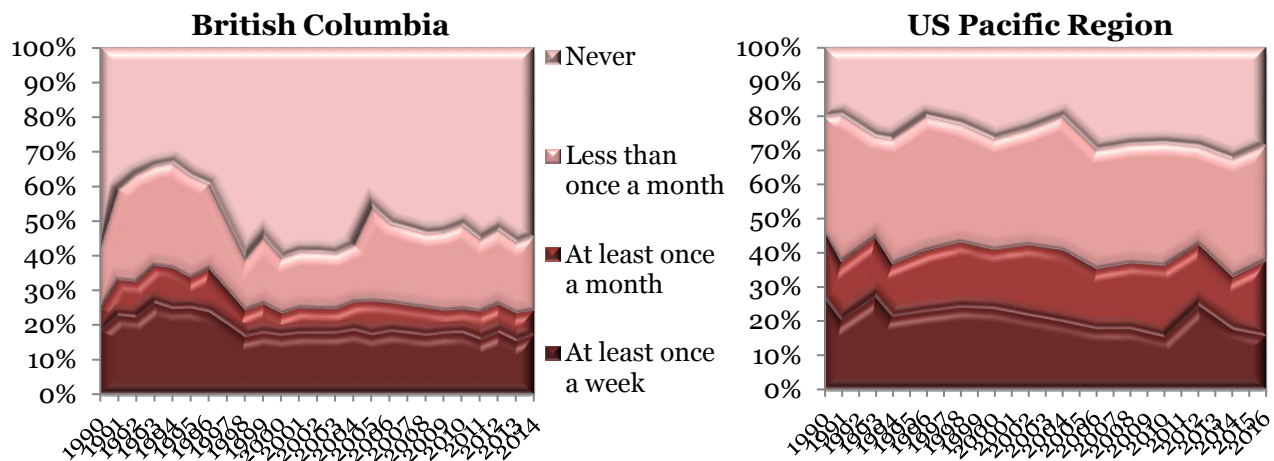
In turn, both regions have seen a steady increase in their proportions of no religion between the 1990s and the mid-2010s, similar to trends across North America and most of Europe. Both regions have also seen shrinkages of their proportions of Protestants (for the purposes of Figures 1 and 2 defined as all Christian groups other than Catholics and Eastern Orthodox), losses coming especially from the more mainline denominations such as the Anglican and United Churches in British Columbia and the United Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches in the US Pacific region.

Figure 2: Religious affiliation, by year, British Columbia



Source: 1990-2013 CND GSS; N BC = 118,409; Data points for 1997, 2002, 2007 and 2012 missing and replaced with the mean from the years before and after.

Figure 3: Frequency of religious service attendance, by year



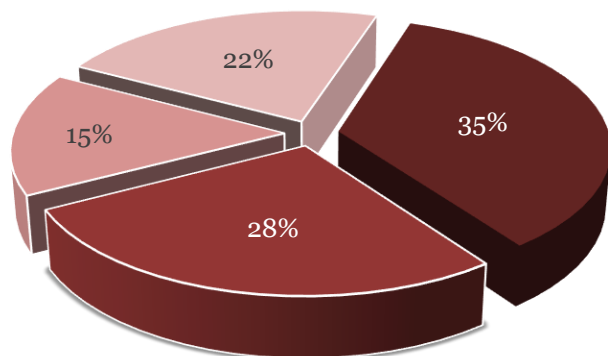
Sources: 1) 1990-2014 CND GSS; N BC = 53,958; Data points for 1997, 2002 and 2007 missing and replaced with the mean from the years before and after. Prior to 2006, frequency of religious service attendance was not asked of religious "nones". Consequently, for years 1990-2005, individuals who said they had no religion were assumed never to attend. 2) 1990-2016 US GSS; N Pacific = 5,229; Data points missing for 1992, and then every odd year after 1994: replaced with the mean from the years before and after.

Regarding indicators of religious practice in British Columbia, although lower than in the first half of the 20th century, rates of regular religious service attendance have stabilized since the late 1990s at around 17% for weekly attendance and another 8% to include monthly attenders. Nevertheless, in 2014 over half (55%) of the BC population said they never attend religious activities, meetings or services, and another 21% said they only attend once or a few times a year.

This compared with higher declared rates of religious service attendance for the entire US Pacific region, with an estimated 16% of the population saying they attend on average at least once a week in 2016, another 22% at least once a month, another 34% once or a few times a year, and 28% saying they never attend religious services. For the states of Washington and Oregon more specifically, in the 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study 30% of respondents said they attend religious services at least once a week, 12% said once or twice a month, 40% said they attend less than once a month, and 18% said they never attend.

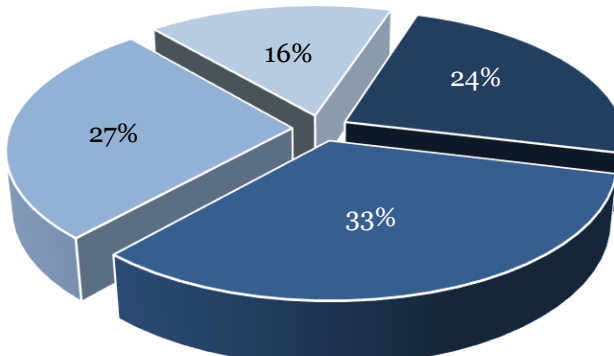
Differences in rates of regular religious service attendance between populations in British Columbia and the US Pacific region may be due to actual differences in levels of practice, but also may at least partially be due to stronger social desirability surrounding religious service attendance in the US. Regular religious service attendance is still often seen as socially desirable for many Americans, and some survey respondents may feel pressured into saying they attend regularly, or may like to think of themselves as attending regularly, when in fact they do not.

Figure 4: Importance of religious or spiritual beliefs in life, British Columbia, 2010



■ Very important ■ Somewhat important
■ Not very important ■ Not at all important

Figure 5: Try to carry beliefs into other dealings, US Pacific region, 2010



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree
■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Source: 2010 CND GSS. N BC = 2,126.

Source: 2010 US GSS. N Pacific = 294.

Populations on both sides of the border show a roughly 60/40 split regarding the role their beliefs play in other aspects of their lives. In British Columbia in 2010, an estimated 63% of the population said that their religious or spiritual beliefs are very or somewhat important to the way they lead their lives, compared with 37% who said their beliefs are not very or not at all important.

For the entire US Pacific region in 2010, an estimated 57% of the population strongly agreed or agreed that they try to carry their beliefs into other dealings in their lives, compared with 43% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Regarding belief in God or a higher power more specifically, in the US states of Washington and Oregon 14% of respondents said they did not believe in God or a universal spirit when asked in the 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. Although the Canadian General Social Survey has never contained questions on the content of respondents' religious or spiritual beliefs, some recent opinion poll data exists on the topic for BC. Angus Reid categorizes 27% of the British Columbian population as non-believers according to a 2017 survey they conducted on faith in Canada (http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017.04.12_Faith_Wave_1_Part_1.pdf).

Figure 6: Frequency of religious or spiritual activities on one's own, British Columbia, 2014

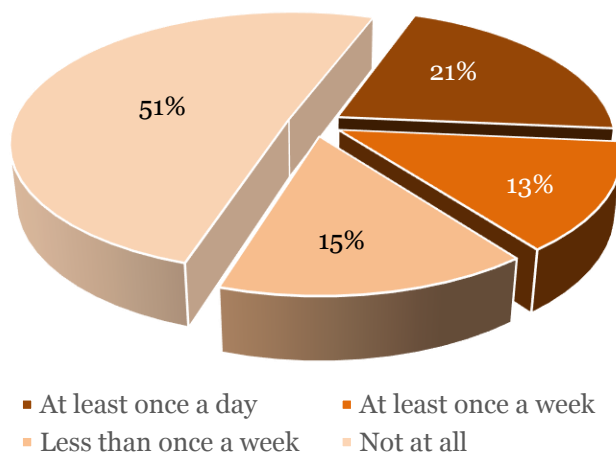
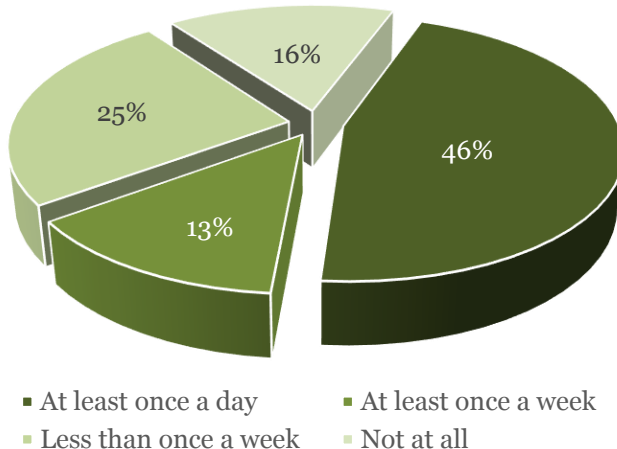


Figure 7: Frequency of prayer, US states of Washington and Oregon, 2014



Source: 2014 CND GSS; N BC = 3,407.

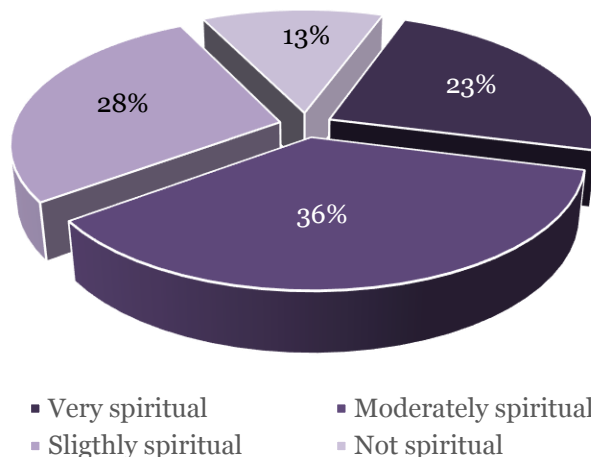
Source: 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study; N Washington and Oregon = 1,125.

In British Columbia in 2014, an estimated 51% of the population said they never practice lone religious or spiritual activities, such as prayer or meditation. This represents the highest rate in Canada.

Another 21% in BC said they did practice lone religious or spiritual activities at least once a day, and 28% said they did so but less regularly. In Washington and Oregon, an estimated 59% of the population said they prayed at least once a week. By contrast, 16% said they did not pray at all. This is one of the highest rates found in the US for never praying, only behind those in the states of Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont.

For the entire US Pacific region, an estimated 59% of the population defined itself as either very or moderately spiritual, and 13% not spiritual at all. This makes the US Pacific region third in the US overall for lack of spiritual identity, after New England and the Middle Atlantic regions where respectively 14% and 16% of residents say they are not at all spiritual.

Figure 8: Do you consider yourself a spiritual person, US Pacific region, averages for 2012-2016



Source: 2012-2016 US GSS (averages); N Pacific = 1,055.

Section 2: Religion and Demographics

Table 2: Sociodemographic characteristics among religious traditions, British Columbia, 2011

	% under 35 years old	% female	% foreign born	% university educated	% CMA Vancouver
Anglican	19.1	56.6	21.9	22.9	40.7
Baptist	34.4	54.0	24.7	22.3	47.1
Christian Orthodox	36.3	54.0	63.4	31.9	83.6
Lutheran	21.7	55.0	27.9	15.7	39.4
Pentecostal	41.2	55.3	19.4	14.6	43.7
Presbyterian	21.7	52.1	36.4	26.3	52.3
Roman Catholic	35.4	53.9	35.4	22.3	57.8
United Church	18.2	56.8	8.4	19.5	40.5
Other Christian	43.6	52.8	25.1	21.6	46.6
Buddhist	33.8	55.7	73.8	25.0	87.8
Hindu	51.7	47.8	69.5	26.5	89.8
Jewish	37.4	52.3	34.4	52.4	87.3
Muslim	54.7	50.5	75.2	35.3	95.0
Sikh	53.5	49.5	59.8	17.8	77.6
Other non-Christian religions	41.9	55.8	22.0	24.8	42.2
No religion	47.9	47.2	21.9	21.5	49.5
<i>Total population</i>	<i>41.4</i>	<i>50.8</i>	<i>28.6</i>	<i>22.0</i>	<i>53.0</i>

Source: 2011 NHS Public Use Microdata File. N BC = 117,592.

In British Columbia in 2011, some of the religious traditions at study had a substantially higher proportion of younger affiliates (under the age of 35) than found among the total BC population: these include notably Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and no religion. Hinduism, Sikhism and no religion also contain slightly higher proportions of men than the BC population average.

A number of faith traditions can still be considered immigrant religions in BC, in that a majority of their affiliates were born outside of Canada: these include Christian Orthodoxy, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. A vast majority of affiliates of these immigrant religious traditions, along with those identifying with Judaism, reside in the greater Vancouver area. Many of the immigrant religions along with a few other traditions are also characterised by higher rates of university education among their affiliates, compared with the BC population average: these include Christian Orthodoxy, Presbyterianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and other non-Christian religions; but not the no religion group, contrary to trends observed elsewhere in North America.

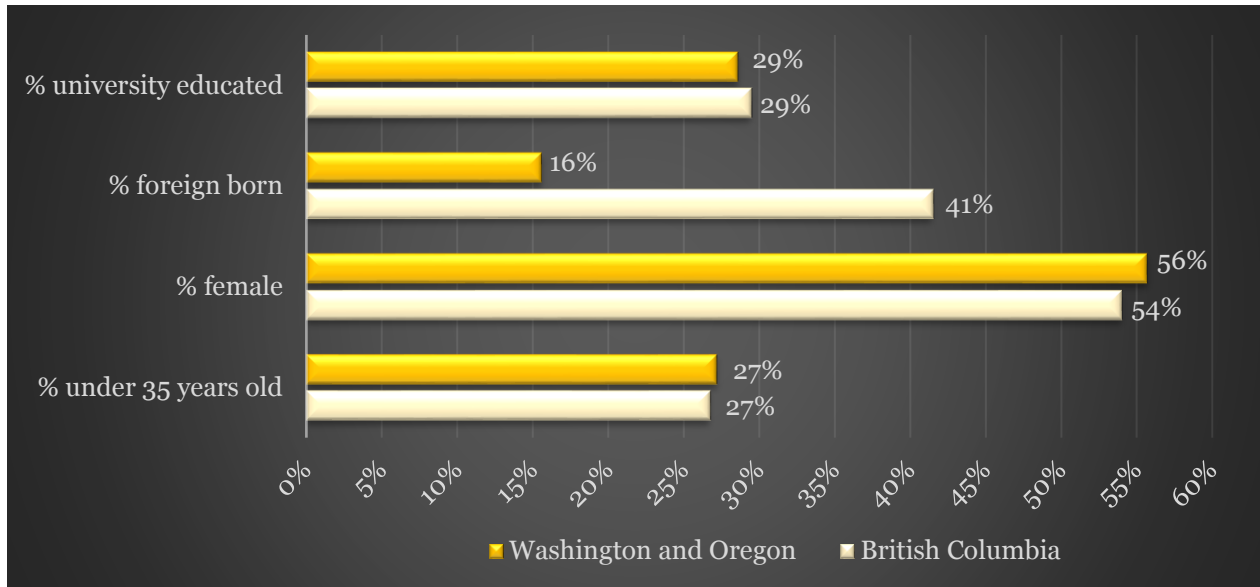
Table 3: Sociodemographic characteristics among religious traditions, US states of Washington and Oregon, 2014

	% under 35 years old	% female	% foreign born	% university educated
Evangelical Protestant	26.3	57.0	8.8	19.5
Mainline Protestant	19.2	53.3	6.7	37.5
Roman Catholic	26.5	47.2	26.6	25.9
Mormon	24.7	49.8	1.6	27.6
Other Christian	18.7	43.3	12.3	15.4
Non-Christian religions	41.4	56.7	23.6	41.1
No religion	36.0	46.7	7.1	35.5
<i>Total adult population</i>	<i>29.3</i>	<i>50.7</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>29.3</i>

Source: 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 1,133.

In the states of Washington and Oregon, where a broader breakdown of religious traditions is necessary in Table 3 due to smaller sample size, it is non-Christian traditions as well as no religion that have a higher proportion of under 35s. Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, other Christian traditions and no religion have a lower proportion of female affiliates. Roman Catholicism, other Christian religions and non-Christian traditions have higher rates of foreign-born affiliates. Finally, mainline Protestantism, non-Christian traditions and no religion have a higher proportion of university educated than the other traditions and the region's adult population overall.

Figure 9: Sociodemographic characteristics among monthly or more frequent religious service attenders, 2014

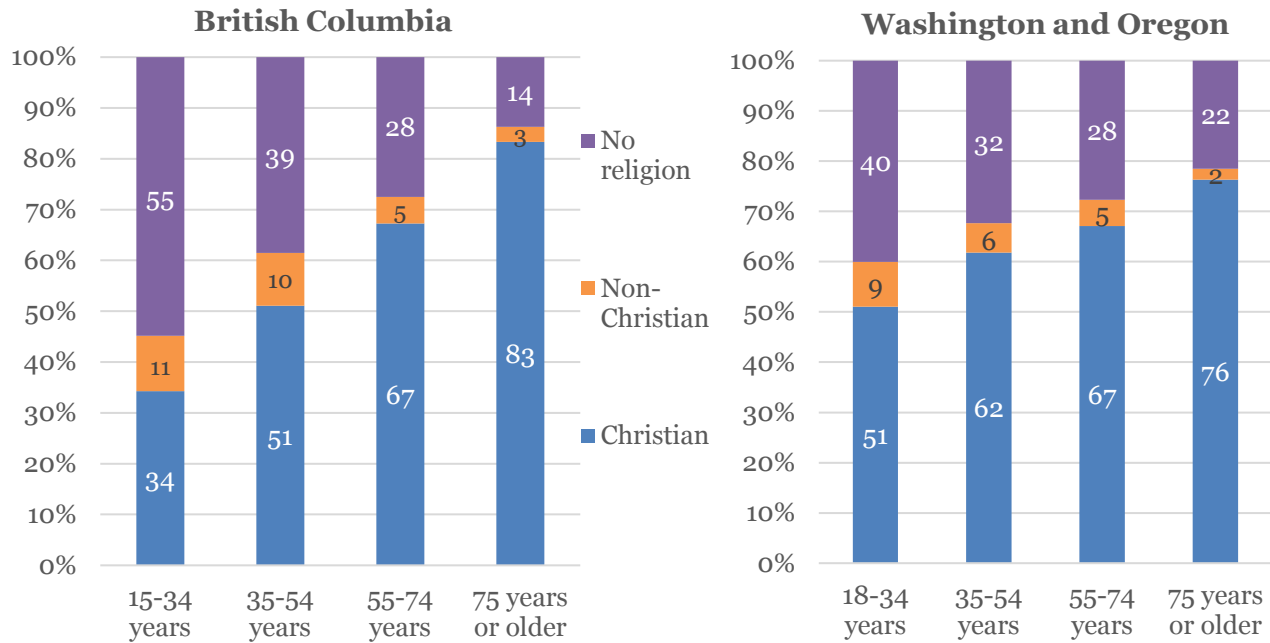


Sources: 1) 2014 CND GSS. N BC = 866. 2) 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 468.

For sociodemographics among monthly or more frequent religious service attenders of all traditions (Figure 9), the more actively religious are on average older than the regional populations in both BC and the states of Washington and Oregon (with lower proportions of under 35s). There are proportionally more women among frequent attenders on both sides of the border. There are also proportionally more immigrants among frequent attenders, especially in BC. Finally, there is a slightly higher proportion of university educated among the actively religious in BC compared with the region’s total adult population (29% vs. 27%), whereas this proportion is about the same in Washington and Oregon between their frequent attenders and their total adult population (29%).

Section 3: Trends across Age Groups

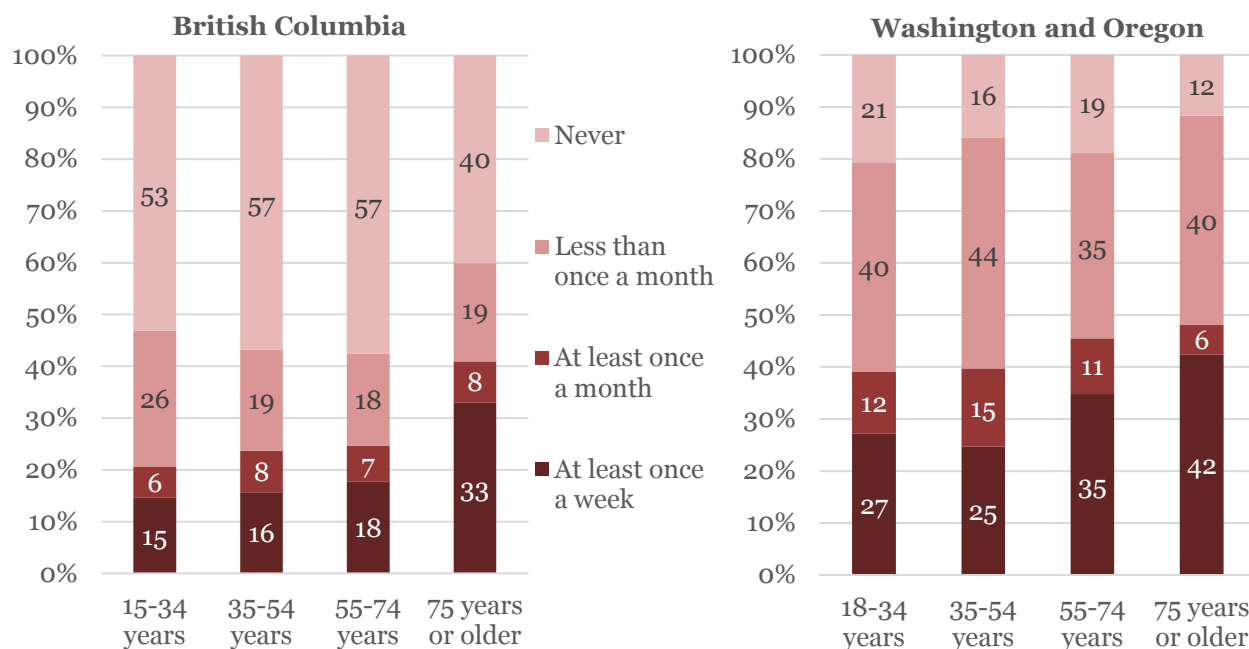
Figure 10: Religious affiliation, by age group, 2014



Sources: 1) 2014 CND GSS. N BC = 3,374. 2) 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 1,111.

Among younger age groups in both BC and the US states of Washington and Oregon, there are considerably lower rates of Christian affiliation, slightly higher proportions of non-Christian faiths, and markedly higher rates of not identifying with any religion. Among the 15-34 year old age group specifically in BC in 2014, 34% said they belonged to a Christian tradition, 11% to a non-Christian faith, and 55% said they had no religion. In Washington and Oregon in 2014, 51% of the 18-34 year olds said they belonged to a Christian tradition, 9% to a non-Christian faith, and 40% said they had no religion.

Figure 11: Frequency of religious service attendance, by age group, 2014



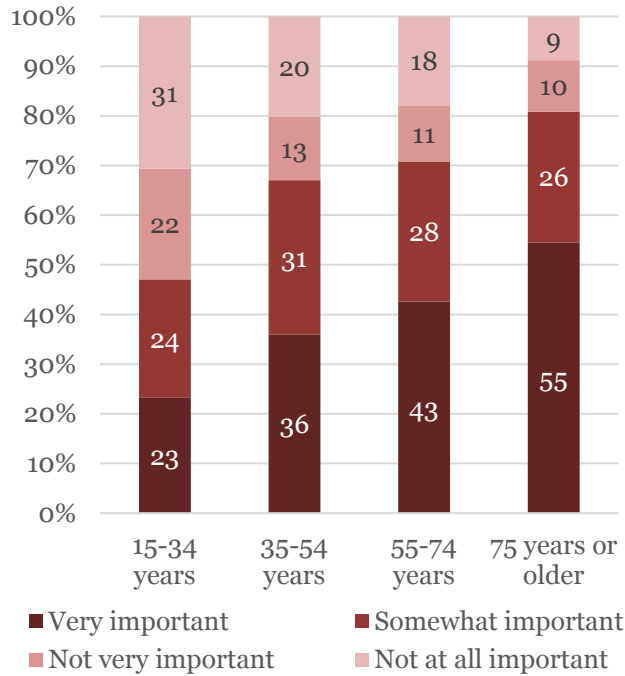
Sources: 1) 2014 CND GSS. N BC = 3,428. 2) 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 1,112.

In British Columbia in 2014, levels of religious service attendance are remarkably similar across the 15-34, 35-54 and 55-74 year old age groups, much more so than levels of religious service attendance between birth cohorts elsewhere in North America. In BC, it is only respondents aged 75 years or older who show significantly higher levels of weekly attendance on average, and lower levels of never attending.

In Washington and Oregon, the split is much more between the 18-54 year olds on the one hand and the 55 and older respondents on the other: the two younger age groups have lower average levels of weekly religious service attendance, and notably higher levels of infrequent attendance. Like in BC though, it is the oldest age group of respondents 75 years or older who show the highest levels of frequent religious service attendance.

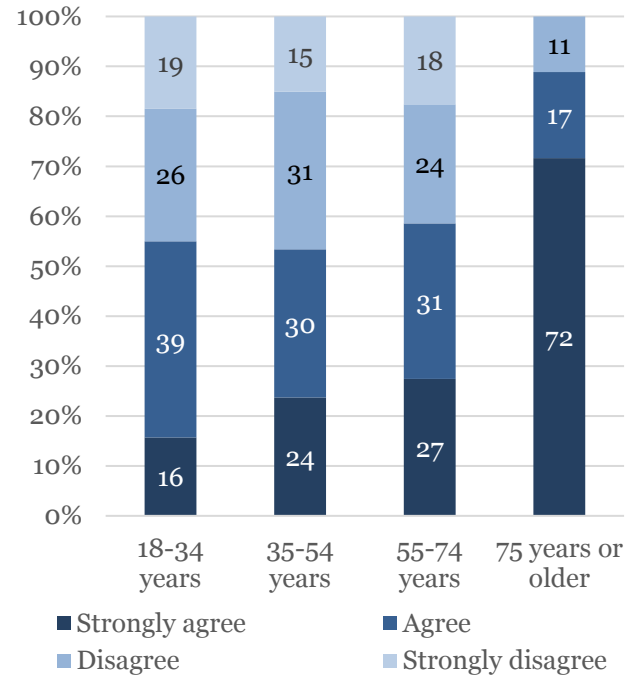
These relationships between respondents' age and their frequency of religious service attendance can be due to age effects, meaning life events and circumstances may impact an individual's decision to attend throughout their lifetime. This being said, more permanent generational effects are also at play, with members of younger generations growing up in contexts where not attending religious services is much more socially acceptable than in the past.

Figure 12: Importance of religious or spiritual beliefs in life, by age group, British Columbia, 2010



Source: 2010 CND GSS. N BC = 2,126.

Figure 13: Try to carry beliefs into other dealings, by age group, US Pacific region, 2010

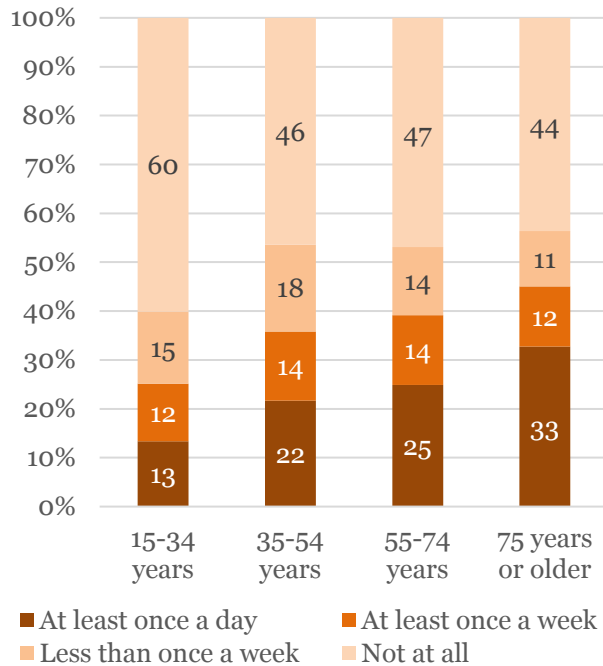


Source: 2010 US GSS. N Pacific = 294.

In Figure 12, we can see a much steadier decline of the importance respondents attribute to religious and/or spiritual beliefs in their lives across age groups in BC: members of younger age groups are less likely to assign such importance. For the entire US Pacific region, the differences are especially stark between respondents 75 years or older and all others: these older respondents agreeing more strongly on average that they do try to carry their beliefs into other dealings in their lives.

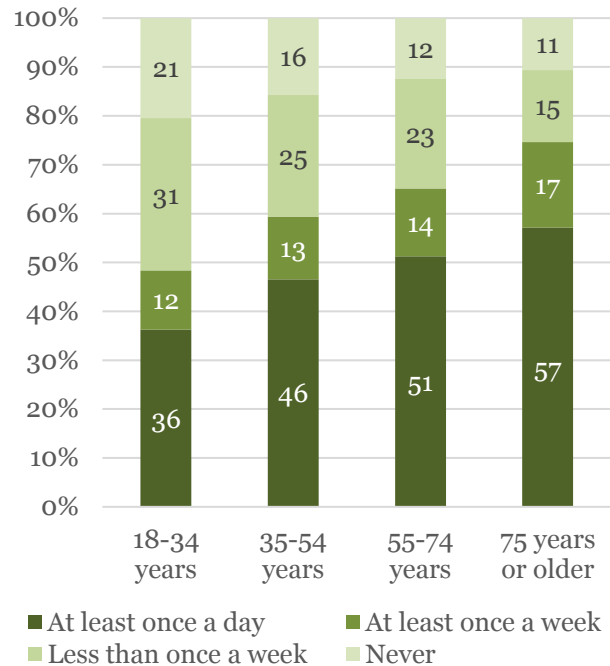
According to the 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study, in Washington and Oregon rates of belief in God or a universal spirit range from 79% among 18-34 year olds to 90% among respondents aged 75 years or older.

Figure 14: Frequency of religious or spiritual activities on one's own, by age group, British Columbia, 2014



Source: 2014 CND GSS. N BC = 3,407.

Figure 15: Frequency of prayer, by age group, US states of Washington and Oregon, 2014

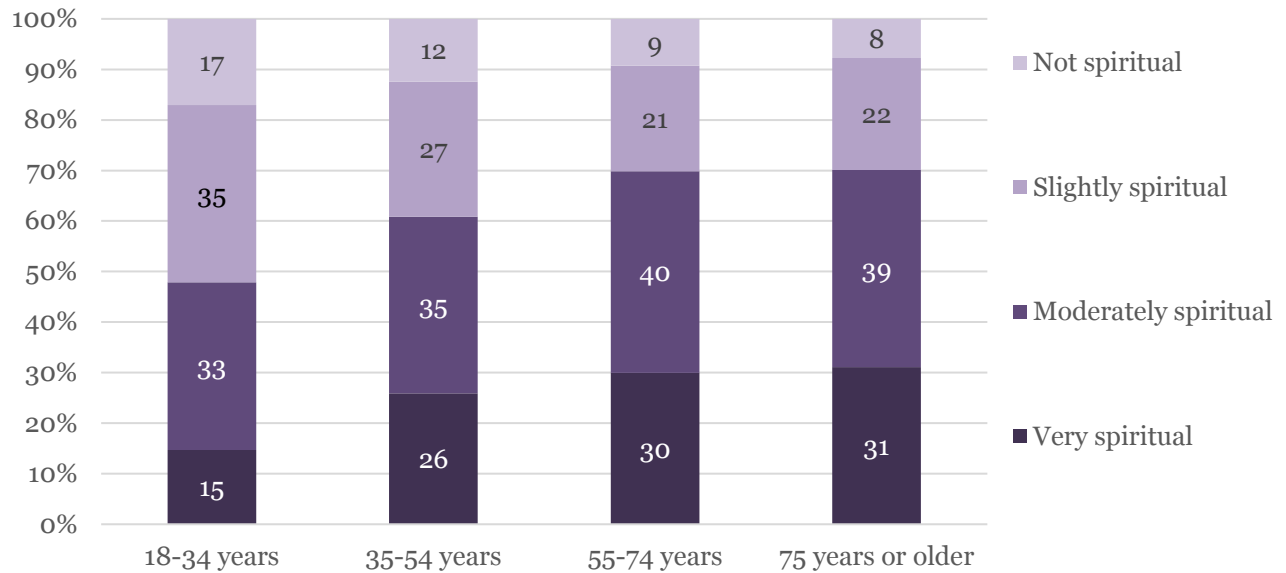


Source: 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 1125.

In BC, the 15-34 year olds stand out as having a higher rate of respondents who never practice lone religious or spiritual activities, such as prayer and meditation; and respondents 75 years or older stand out for their higher rate of daily practice in this regard.

In Washington and Oregon, the decline of levels of prayer is more gradual across age groups: younger age groups are less likely to pray daily and more likely to pray only infrequently or not at all.

Figure 16: Do you consider yourself a spiritual person, by age group, US Pacific region, averages for 2012-2016

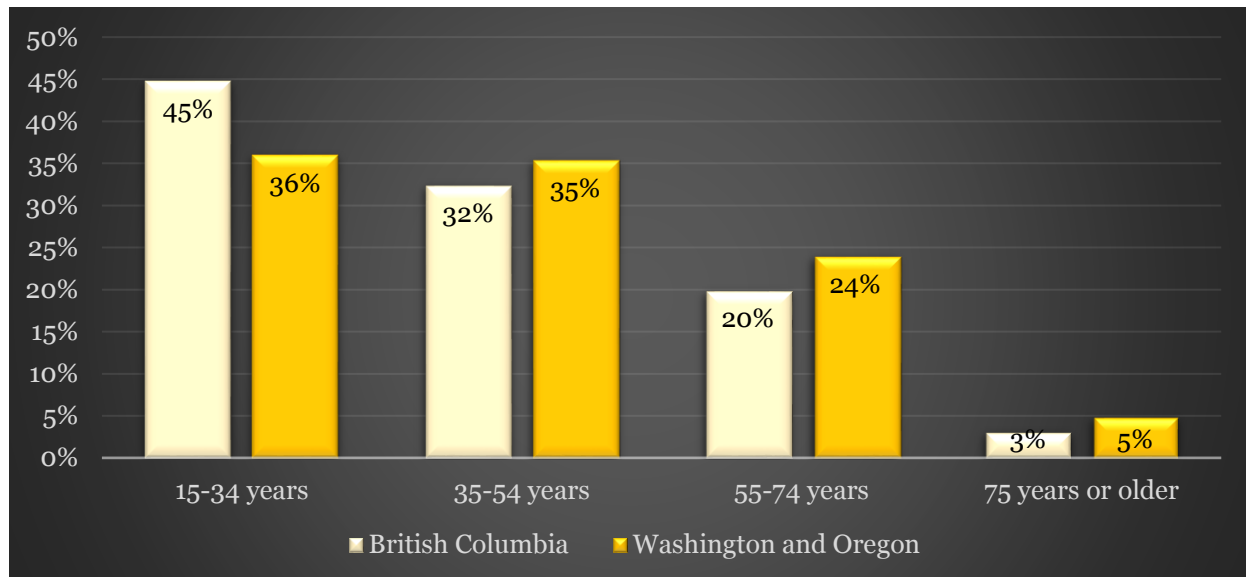


Source: 2012-2016 US GSS (averages); N Pacific = 1,055.

As with the other indicators seen in this section, defining oneself as very spiritual has declined somewhat across age groups in the entire US Pacific region, especially among the 18-34 and 35-54 year olds. Among the 18-34 year age group, 17% say they are not spiritual, and another 35% only slightly spiritual; compared with 8% and 22% respectively among respondents 75 years or older.

Section 4: Non-Religion

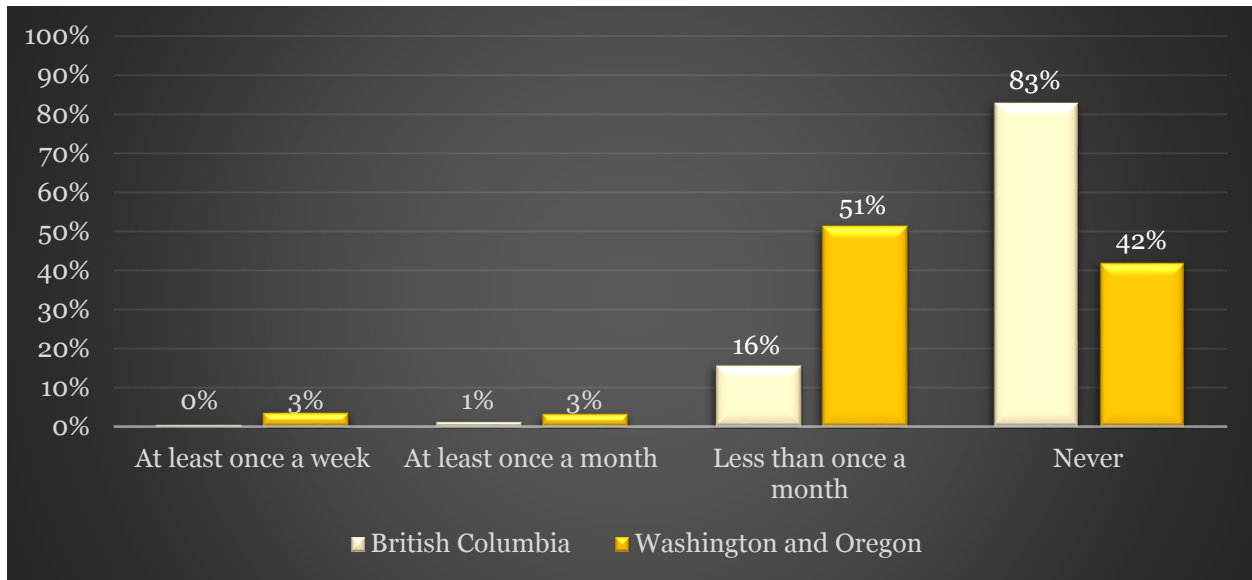
Figure 17: Age groups among respondents who say they have no religion, 2014



Sources: 1) 2014 CND GSS. N BC = 1,178. 2) 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 367.

As we saw in Tables 2 and 3 and in Figure 10, individuals who say they have no religion are found disproportionately more among younger birth cohorts. In Figure 17, we see that an estimated 45% of all adults who say they have no religion in British Columbia in 2014 were between the ages of 15 and 34 years old. In Washington and Oregon in 2014, the religious none adult population is a bit older on average, with 36% of unaffiliated respondents being from the 18-34 age group.

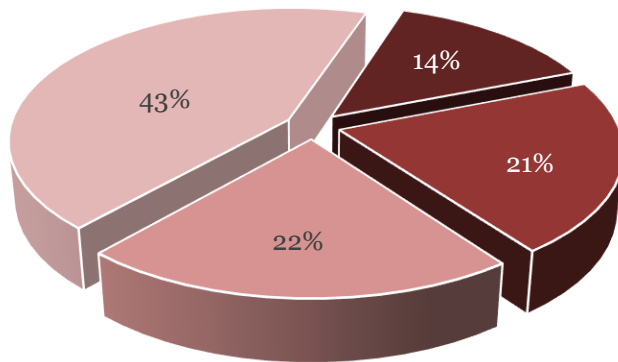
Figure 18: Frequency of religious service attendance, among respondents who say they have no religion, 2014



Sources: 1) 2014 CND GSS. N BC = 1,176. 2) 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 366.

In Figure 18, we see that very few religious nones attend religious services with any regularity in both British Columbia and Washington and Oregon. However, 16% of religious nones in BC and 51% in Washington and Oregon do say they attend religious services infrequently (less than once a month). This being said, the vast majority of religious nones in BC say they never attend religious services, whereas in Washington and Oregon this proportion stands at 42%. These numbers exclude attending for special events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals (which are not counted here).

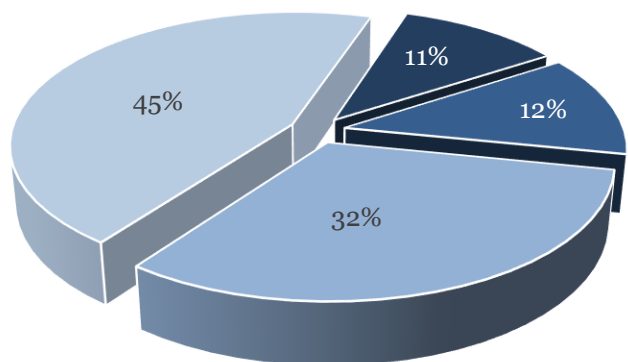
Figure 19: Importance of religious or spiritual beliefs in life, among respondents who say they have no religion, British Columbia, 2010



- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

Source: 2010 CND GSS. N BC = 788.

Figure 20: Try to carry beliefs into other dealings, among respondents who say they have no religion, US Pacific region, 2010



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Source: 2010 US GSS. N Pacific = 72.

Always among those respondents who say they have no religious affiliation, 65% in BC in 2010 stated that they do not consider their religious or spiritual beliefs to be important in the way they lead their lives, whereas 21% said they are somewhat important and 14% said they are very important.

In the entire US Pacific region in 2010, 77% of religious nones disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they try to carry their beliefs into other dealings in their lives, whereas 23% said they agreed or strongly agreed.

Among religious nones in the states of Washington and Oregon, 40% said they did not believe in God or a universal spirit in the 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study, and 69% said they did not believe in Heaven.

Figure 21: Frequency of religious or spiritual activities on one's own, among respondents who say they have no religion, British Columbia, 2014

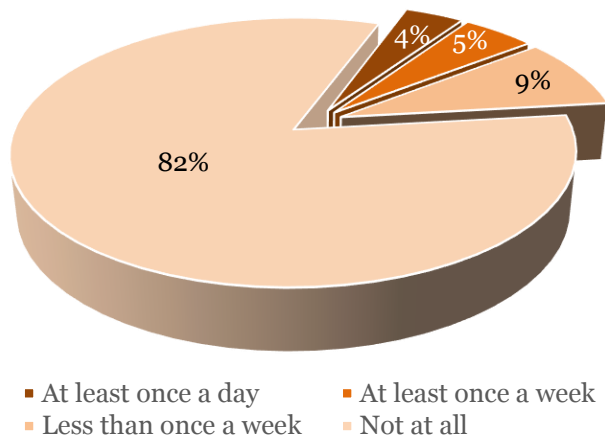
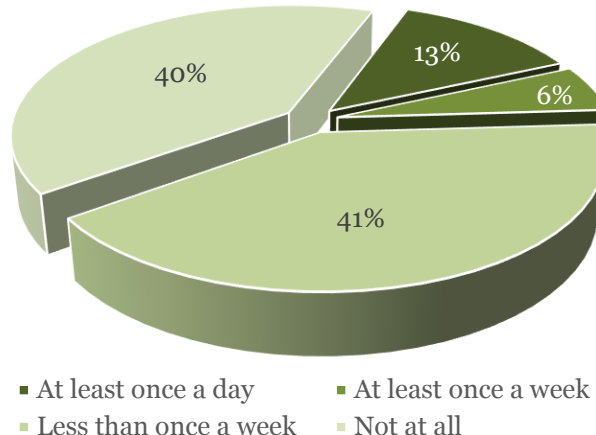


Figure 22: Frequency of prayer, among respondents who say they have no religion, US states of Washington and Oregon, 2014



Source: 2014 CND GSS. N BC = 1,173.

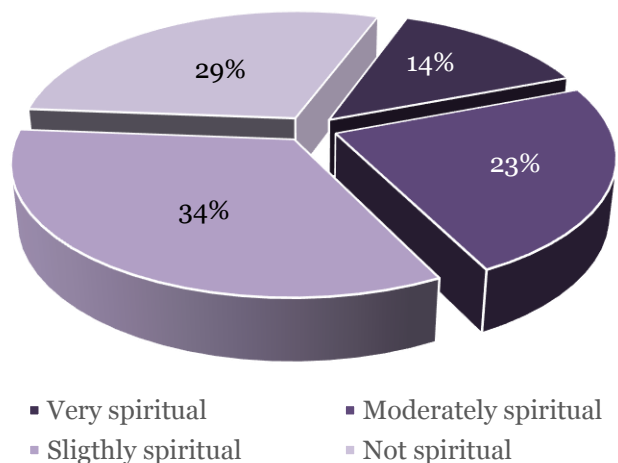
Source: 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 368.

More than three quarters of religious nones in BC say they do not practice personal religious or spiritual activities (prayer, meditation, etc.). 4% though say they do so on their own at least once a day, and another 14% less frequently.

In Washington and Oregon, 40% of religious nones say they never pray, whereas 13% say they do at least once a day, another 6% at least once a week, and 41% less frequently.

For the entire US Pacific region, 14% of religious nones say they consider themselves a very spiritual person, 23% a moderately spiritual person, 34% a slightly spiritual person and 29% not a spiritual person.

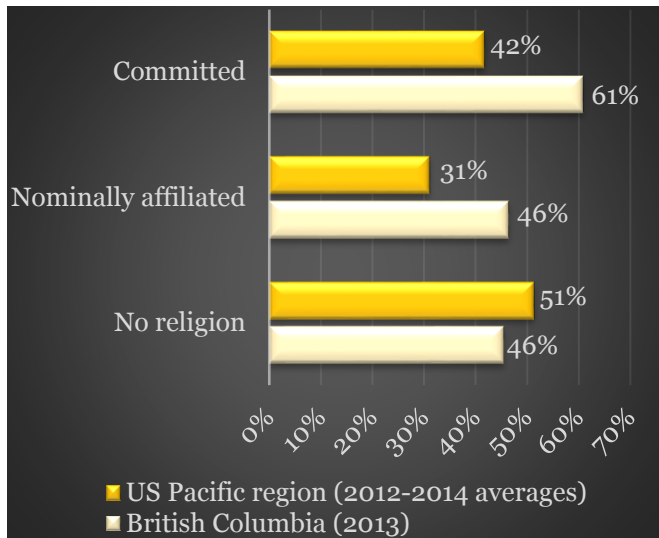
Figure 23: Do you consider yourself a spiritual person, among respondents who say they have no religion, US Pacific region, averages for 2012-2016



Source: 2012-2016 US GSS (averages); N Pacific = 314.

Section 5: Civic Engagement

Figure 24: Volunteered for a non-profit organization at least once in the last year



Sources: 1) 2013 CND GSS; N BC = 1,656. 2) 2012-2014 US GSS (averages); N Pacific = 374.

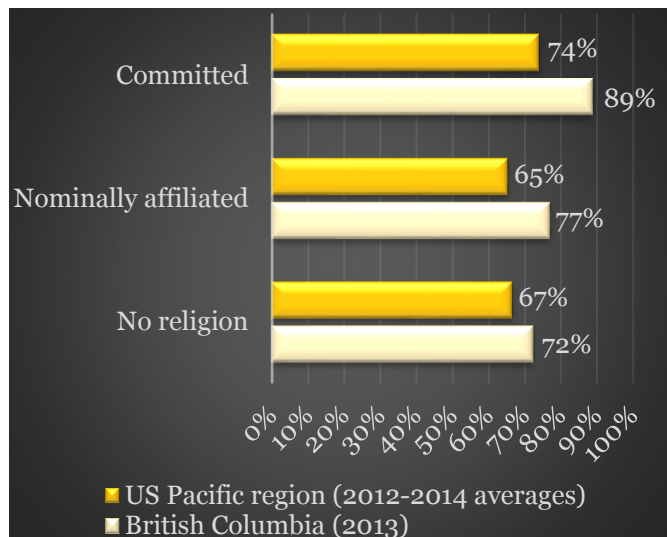
Among religiously committed respondents from BC in 2013, defined here as respondents who have a religious affiliation and who attend religious services at least once a month, 61% said they formally volunteered at least once in the year prior to the survey, and 89% said they gave to charity at least once over the same period.

Among nominally affiliated respondents from BC in 2013, defined here as respondents with a religious affiliation but who attend religious services less than once a month, 46% said they formally volunteered at least once in 2012, and 77% said they gave to charity.

Among BC respondents who said they have no religion in 2013, 46% also said they formally volunteered in 2012, and 72% said they gave to charity.

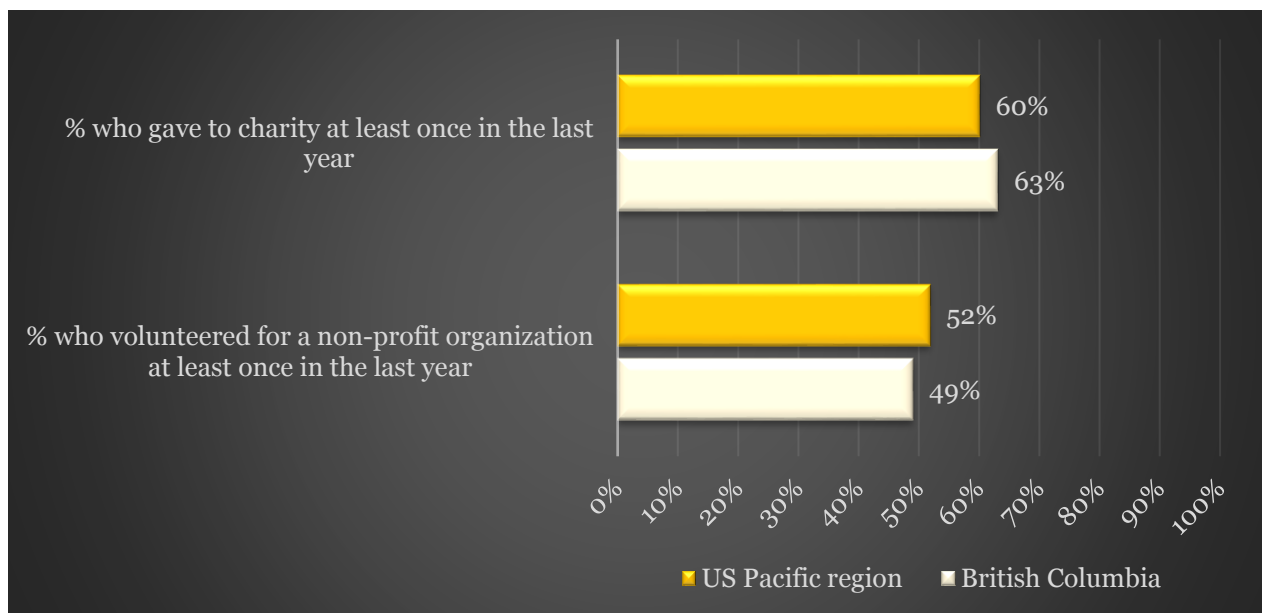
Among religiously committed respondents from the US Pacific region between 2012 and 2014, 42% were formal volunteers in the year prior to the survey, and 74% said they gave at least once to charity; among nominally affiliated respondents, the numbers are 31% and 65% respectively; and among religious nones, 51% and 67% respectively.

Figure 25: Given to charity at least once in the last year



Sources: 1) 2013 CND GSS; N BC = 1,656. 2) 2012-2014 US GSS (averages); N Pacific = 374.

Figure 26: Civic engagement among Millennials

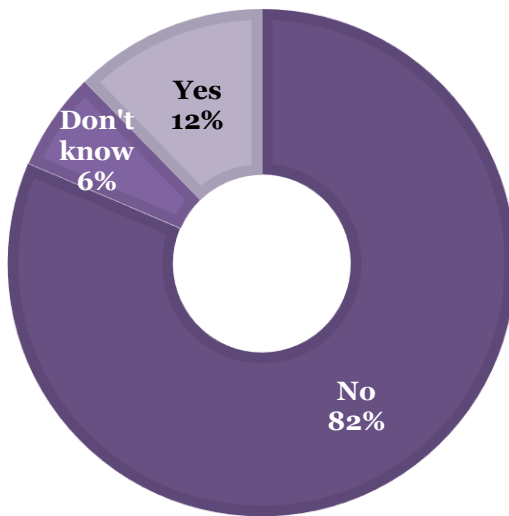


Sources: 1) 2013 CND GSS; N BC = 92. 2) 2012-2014 US GSS (averages); N Pacific = 61.

Among Millennials, defined here as respondents born between 1987 and 1996, 63% in BC said they volunteered in 2012, and 49% said they gave to charity in that same calendar year. The proportions are very similar in the entire US Pacific region, with 60% of Millennials saying they volunteered at least once for a non-profit organization in the year prior to the survey, and 52% saying they gave to charity over that same period.

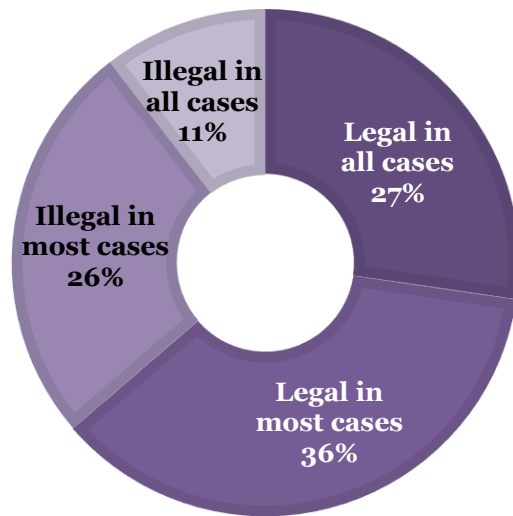
Section 6: Social Values

Figure 27: Should abortion be banned? British Columbia, 2011



Source: 2011 CES; N BC = 304.

Figure 28: Attitudes on abortion, US states of Washington and Oregon, 2014

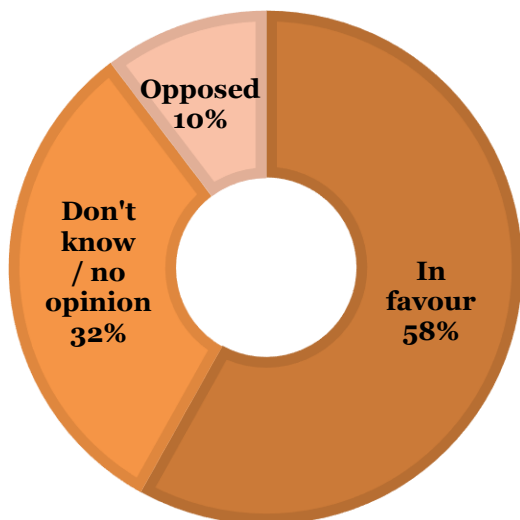


Source: 2012 GSS; N Pacific = 1,086.

Residents of the Pacific Northwest are known to be some of the most progressive in their views on reproductive rights, sexuality and environmental protection. This is reflected in recent opinion poll data from BC and the states of Washington and Oregon on the issues of abortion, same-sex marriage and the environment. Based on data from the 2011 Canadian Election Study, in BC the vast majority of respondents (82%) did not want to see a ban on abortion implemented, and only 12% said that they do want to see such a ban. Across Canada, the BC rate of respondents who did not want to ban abortion is only second to Quebec's which stood at 88% in 2011.

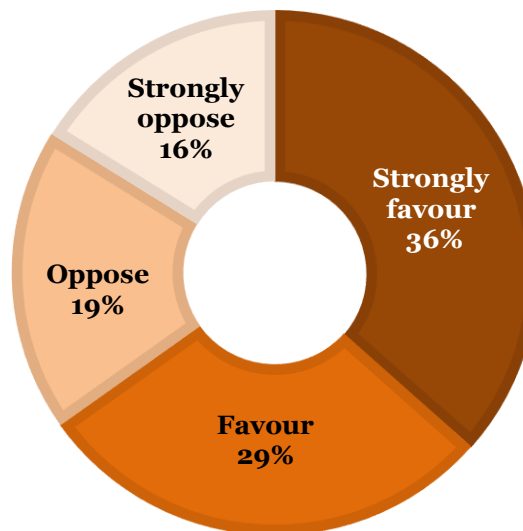
In Washington and Oregon, an estimated 63% of the population in 2014 said that abortion should be legal in most or all cases; and 37% said that it should be illegal in most or all cases. The proportion of respondents in Washington and Oregon who think that abortion should be legal in all cases is one of the highest in America, only behind those in the states of Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Figure 29: Attitude towards same-sex marriage, British Columbia, 2015



Source: 2015 CES. N BC = 406.

Figure 30: Attitudes about allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally, US states of Washington and Oregon, 2014

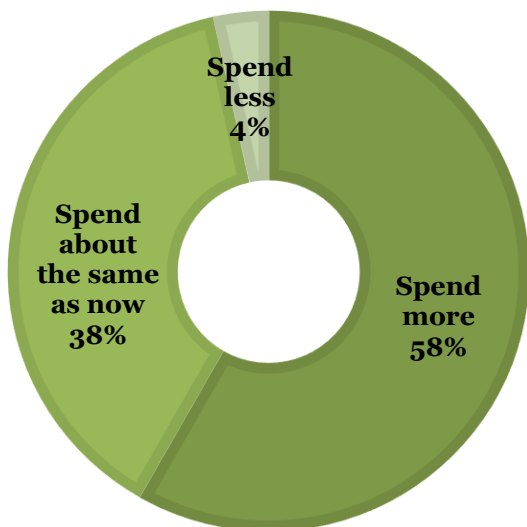


Source: 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 1,062.

According to the 2015 Canadian Election Study and the 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study, a majority of respondents in BC, Washington and Oregon are in favour of same-sex marriage, with Washington and Oregon characterized by the slightly higher proportion of 65% compared with 58% in BC. This being said, Washington and Oregon also have a higher rate of respondents against same-sex marriage at 35%, compared with only 10% in BC with proportionally more BC respondents not having an opinion on the matter (32%).

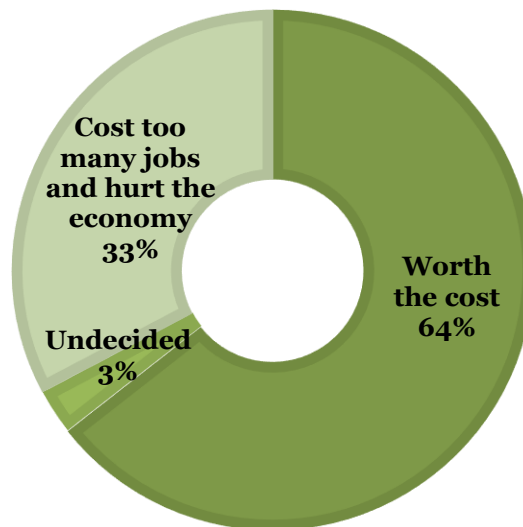
The rate of respondents in Washington and Oregon who are strongly in favour of same-sex marriage is fifth in size in the USA, behind the District of Columbia and the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. In the 2015 Canadian Election Study, BC's rate of respondents in favour of same-sex marriage was once again only second to Quebec's (64%).

Figure 31: Government spending on the environment, British Columbia, 2011



Source: 2011 CES; N BC = 385.

Figure 32: Attitudes on stricter environmental laws and regulations, US states of Washington and Oregon, 2014



Source: 2014 PEW Religious Landscape Study. N Washington and Oregon = 1,099.

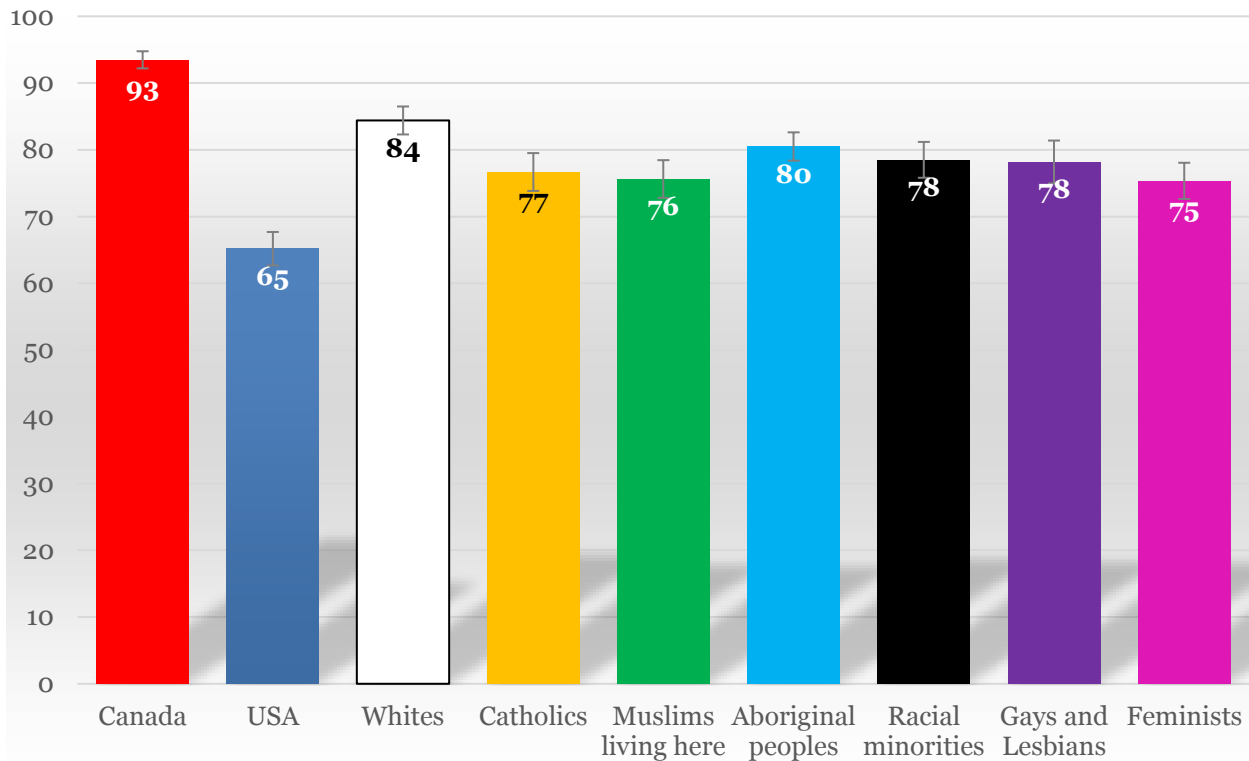
According to the 2011 Canadian Election Study, a majority of respondents in BC (58%) are in favour of increased government spending on the environment, and only 4% think there should be a decrease in spending in this area. Across Canada, Quebec has the highest rate of respondents who think the government should be spending more on the environment (65%), and Alberta has the lowest (39%).

In the same survey, 42% of BC respondents agreed or strongly agreed that protecting the environment is more important than creating jobs (second only to the Atlantic Canadian region at 47%), and 22% said they had been active in an environmental group in the 5 years prior to the survey (the highest rate in Canada in 2011).

In the US states of Washington and Oregon, 64% of respondents said stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost to the economy. Across the USA in 2014, this rate in Washington and Oregon falls behind those found in the District of Columbia, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Section 7: Attitudes towards Social Groups

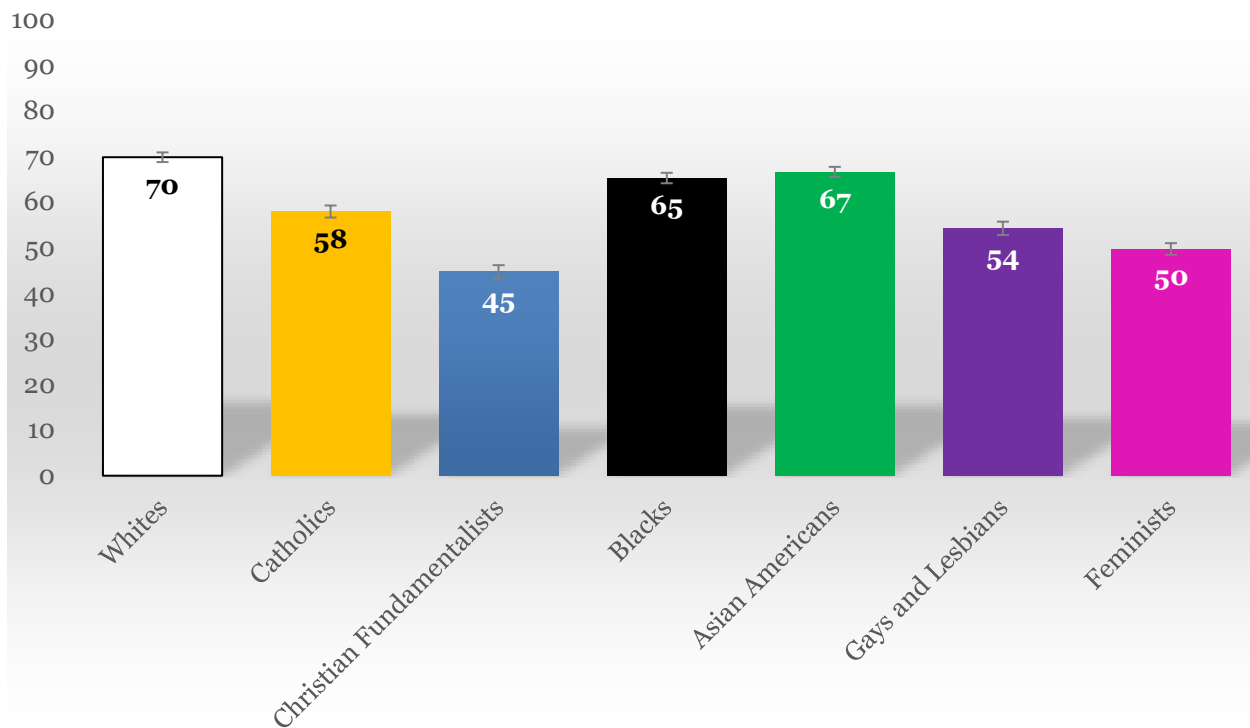
Figure 33: Average feeling thermometer scores for different groups (0 = really dislike; 100 = really like), British Columbia, 2011, with confidence intervals (95%)



Source: 2011 CES; N BC = 287.

In the 2011 Canadian Election Study, respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about members from specific social groups by providing a number between 0 (really dislike) and 100 (really like). Figure 33 contains the BC averages for these values by social group. Minority groups' scores are all quite similar between the lowest at 75 for feminists and the highest at 80 for Aboriginal peoples; all falling within each other's margins of sampling error, or confidence intervals. However, all these minority group scores fall below the score for Whites at 84, and the score for Canada at 93. This means that BC respondents on average have more negative feelings towards members of minority groups than towards those of the majority (Whites). This being said, this gap in BC between average respondents more positive feelings towards Whites and more negative feelings towards members of other minority groups is the smallest in Canada. The score for the USA is the lowest in BC at 65, indicating the most negative feelings are on average reserved for the USA, and this was in 2011 when the Obama administration was still in government.

Figure 34: Average feeling thermometer scores for different groups (0 = really dislike; 100 = really like), US West region, 2012, with confidence intervals (95%)



Source: 2012 ANES; N West = 1,238.

For the entire US West Census region in 2012, Whites scored slightly higher on average than other groups on the feeling thermometers (slightly warmer feelings for Whites on average). Yet, the gap between feelings towards Whites and feelings towards Blacks and Asian Americans is relatively narrow. Catholics, Christian Fundamentalists, Gays, Lesbians and feminists on the other hand score much lower on these scales (receive more negative feelings on average).

Data Collection and Release Plans

The findings in this report are part of the first phase in a multi-year mixed methods data collection and analysis project on religion, spirituality and secularity in the Pacific Northwest. With funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the research team also plans to administer an online survey in fall 2017, as well as collect interview and focus group data from religious leaders and members of the general population in 2018. Findings from this research will be published in reports, books and research articles throughout the course of the study. Additionally, much of the collected data will be made available to researchers and the general public free of charge by 2023 via the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society's website (<http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs/>).

Other Publications by Dr. Wilkins-Laflamme with Regional Data from Canada and the US

Thiessen, Joel and Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme. 2017. "Becoming a Religious None: Irreligious Socialization and Disaffiliation." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 56(1): 64-82.

Wilkins-Laflamme, Sarah. 2017. "Religious-Secular Polarization Compared: The Cases of Quebec and British Columbia." In a special issue of *Studies in Religion*, co-edited with Micheline Milot, 48(2): 166-185.

Wilkins-Laflamme, Sarah. 2016. "Secularization and the Wider Gap in Values and Personal Religiosity between the Religious and Non-Religious." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55(4): 717-736.

Wilkins-Laflamme, Sarah. 2016. "The Changing Religious Cleavage in Canadians' Voting Behaviour." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 499-518.

Wilkins-Laflamme, Sarah. 2016. "Protestant and Catholic Distinctions in Secularization." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 31(2): 165-180.

Wilkins-Laflamme, Sarah. 2015. "How Unreligious are the Religious 'Nones'? Religious Dynamics of the Unaffiliated in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 40(4): 477-500.

Wilkins-Laflamme, Sarah. 2014. "Towards Religious Polarization? Time Effects on Religious Commitment in US, UK and Canadian Regions." *Sociology of Religion* 75(2): 284-308.