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Examining the Role of Perceived Religious Privilege

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Examining the Role of Perceived Religious Privilege in Employees' Reactions to Organizational Justice

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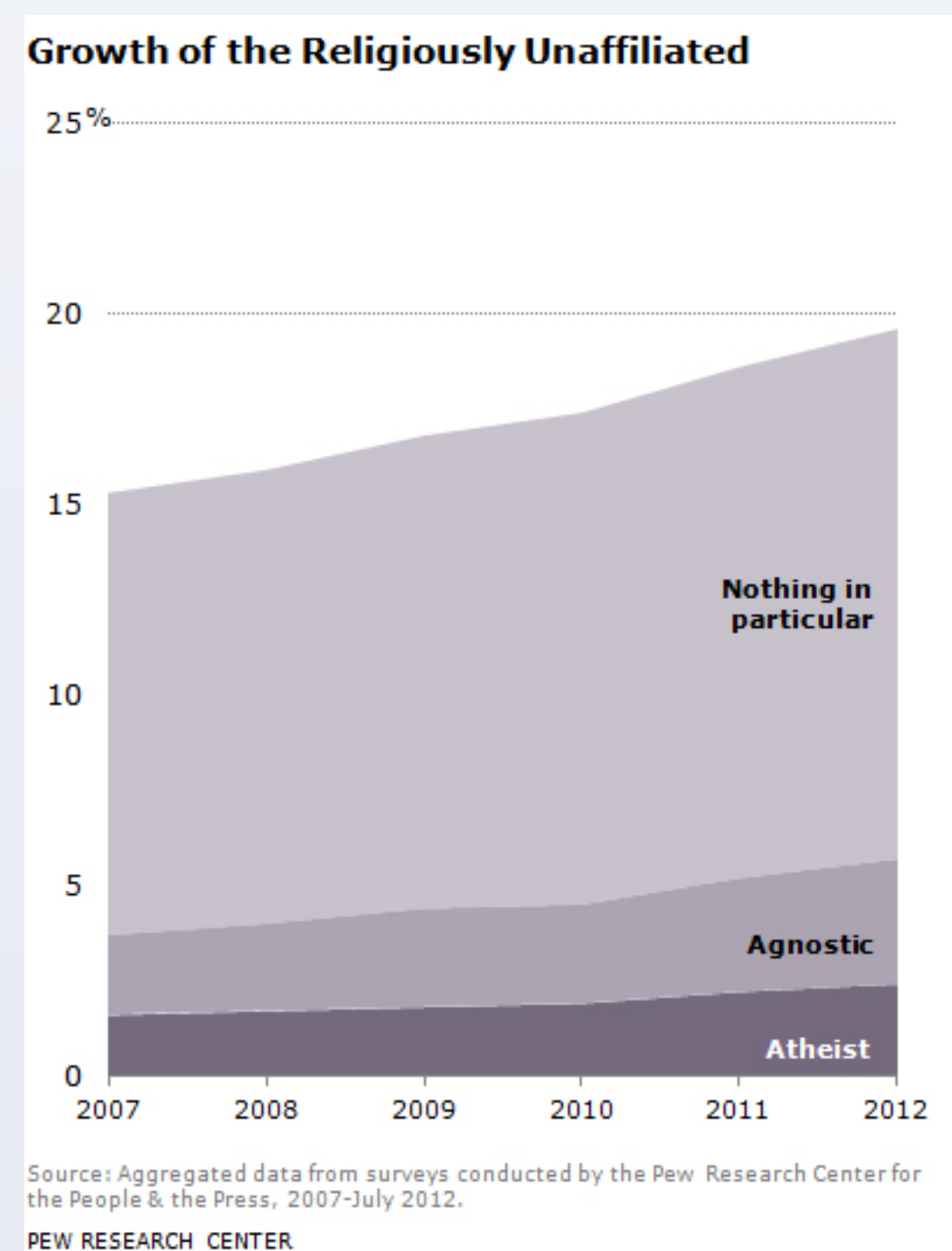
ABSTRACT

"Does perceived privilege surrounding religious affiliation in the workplace affect employees' reactions to organizational justice?"

We analyze what role, if any, religious diversity plays in the workplace; specifically what effects this diversity may have on employees' feelings and behaviors. We examine responses of 35 working adults attending Franklin University using a non-probability online questionnaire. The data show that religion is mentioned during interpersonal interactions, people do perceive that co-workers receive immunities based on their religion, and people are treated differently and worse because of their religious preference. The results, while a small dataset, show that religious diversity does have an effect on a workplace environment and with further investigation we would have more of an understanding of how this diversity impacts employees and the workplace as a whole.

PROJECT

I explored how often people notice religion mentioned in the workplace; whether people encountered uncomfortable situations at work based on religion; if they perceive that co-workers receive immunities because of their religious preference; and if they feel they have been treated differently because of their religious preference.



Source: Aggregated data from surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2007-July 2012.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Fig. 1. The number of the religiously unaffiliated is on the rise, which makes understanding religious diversity more relevant.

DEMOGRAPHICS

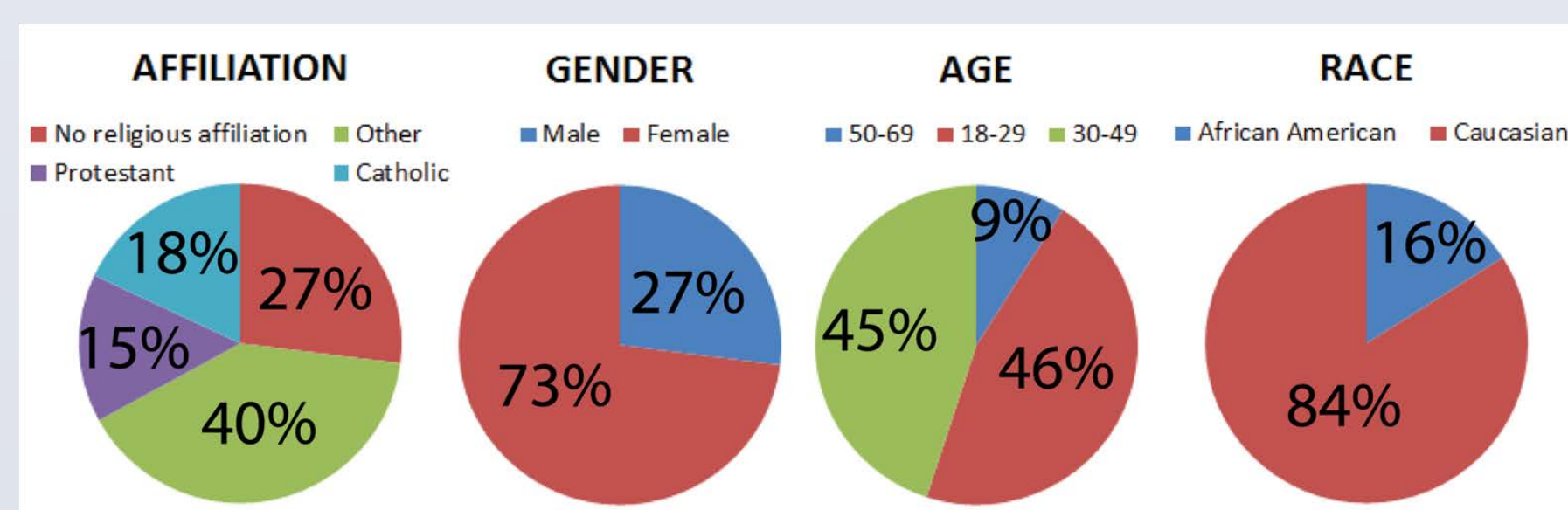


Fig. 2. Demographics of 29-item online questionnaire, 35 participants who are working adults.

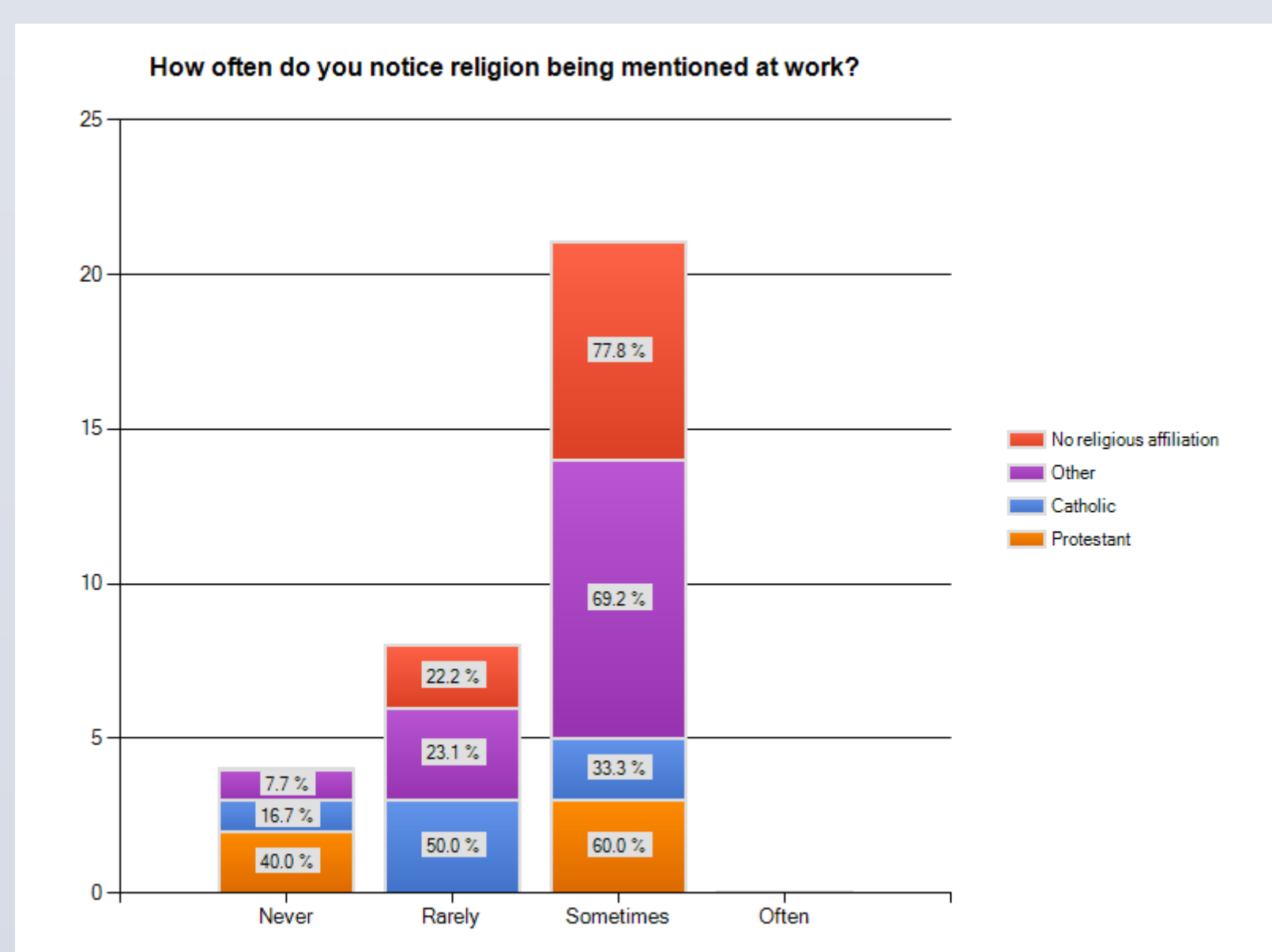


Fig. 3. Questionnaire "How often do you notice religion being mentioned at work?" The majority states that they notice it mentioned at work.

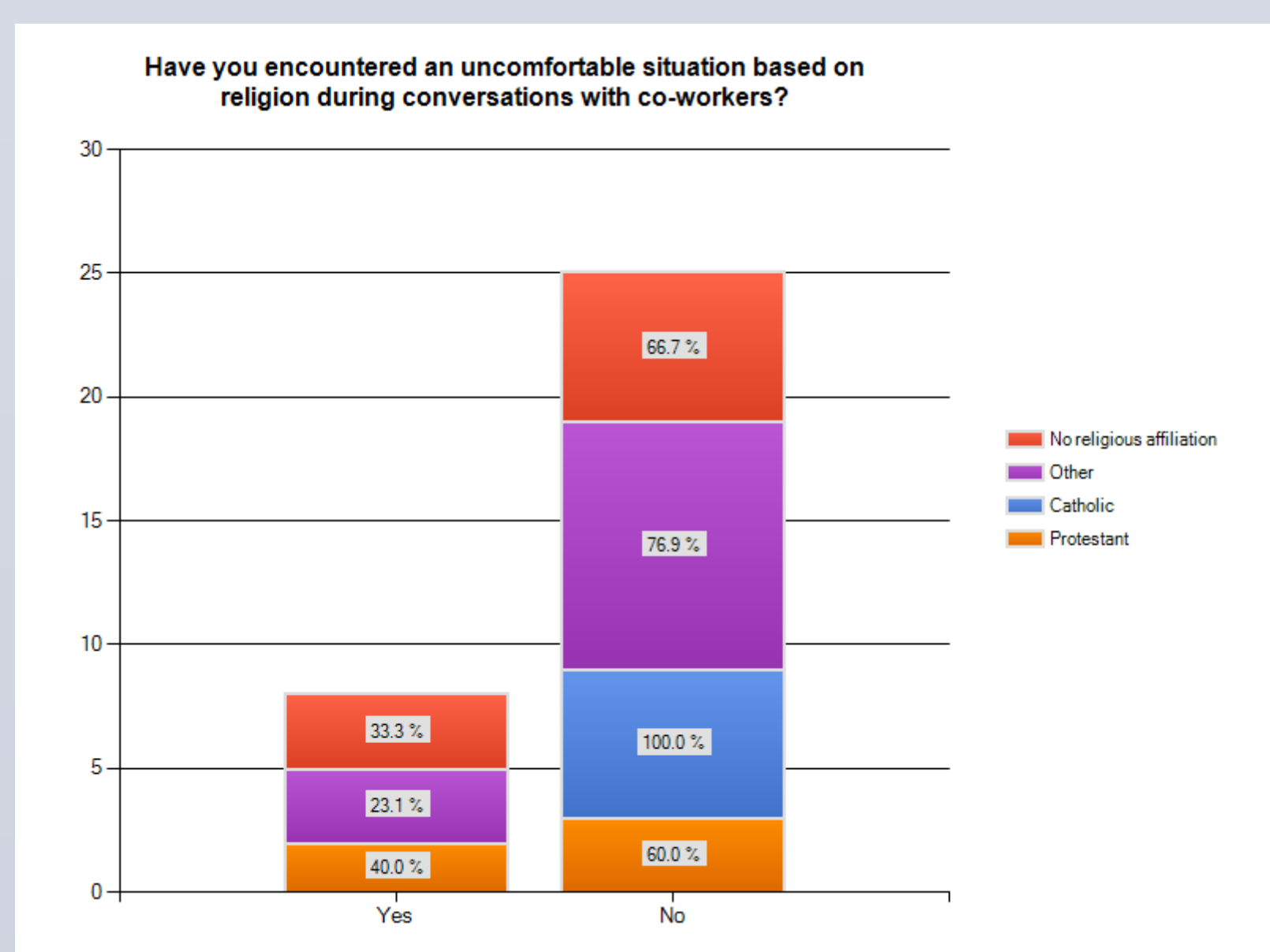


Fig. 4. Questionnaire "Have you encountered an uncomfortable situation based on religion during conversations with co-workers?" While the majority stated "no", there is still a small subset that answered "yes".

DEMOGRAPHICS (continued)

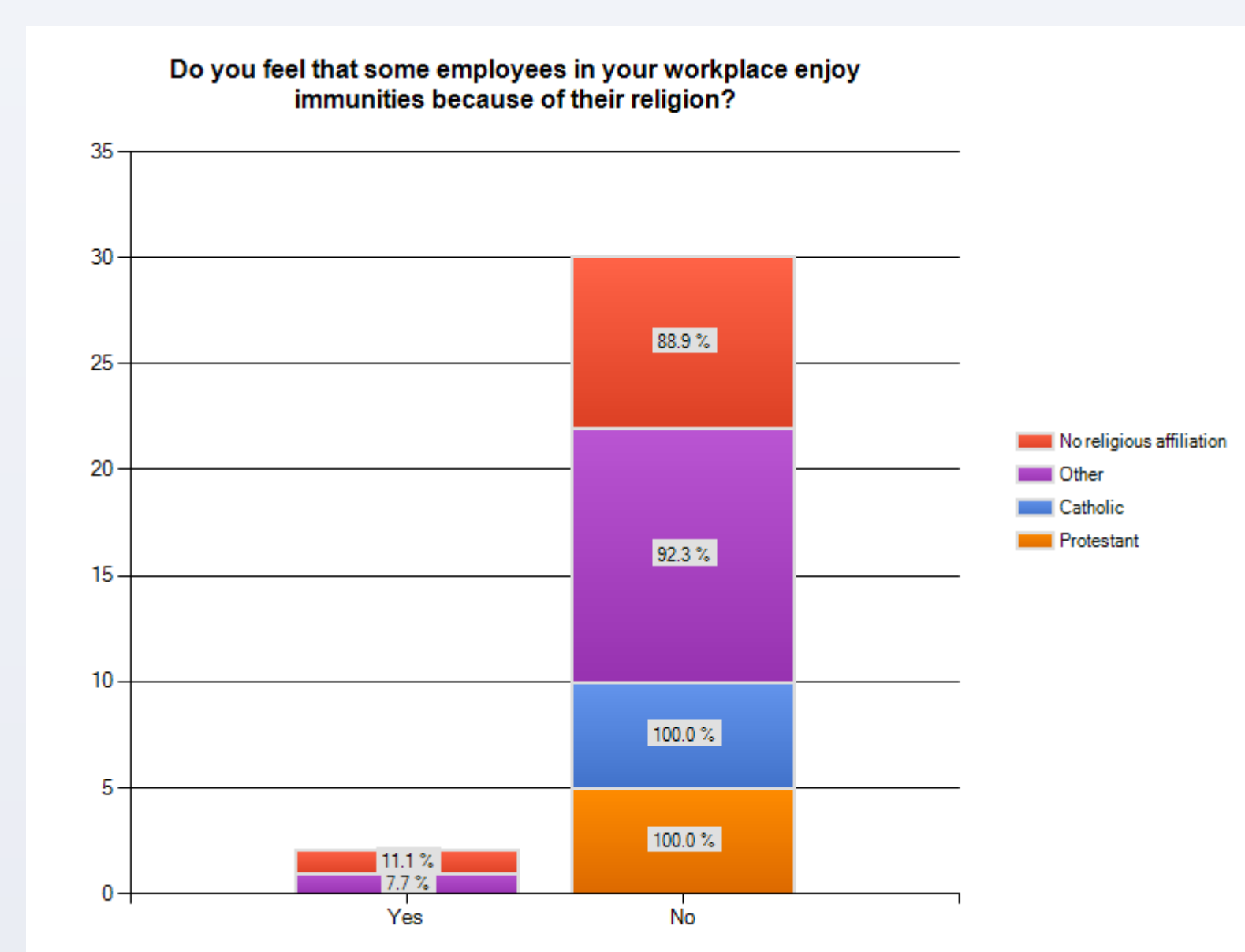


Fig. 5. Questionnaire "Do you feel that some employees in your workplace enjoy immunities because of their religion?" Worth noting that a small subset answered "yes", which were the 'no-religious affiliation or other.'

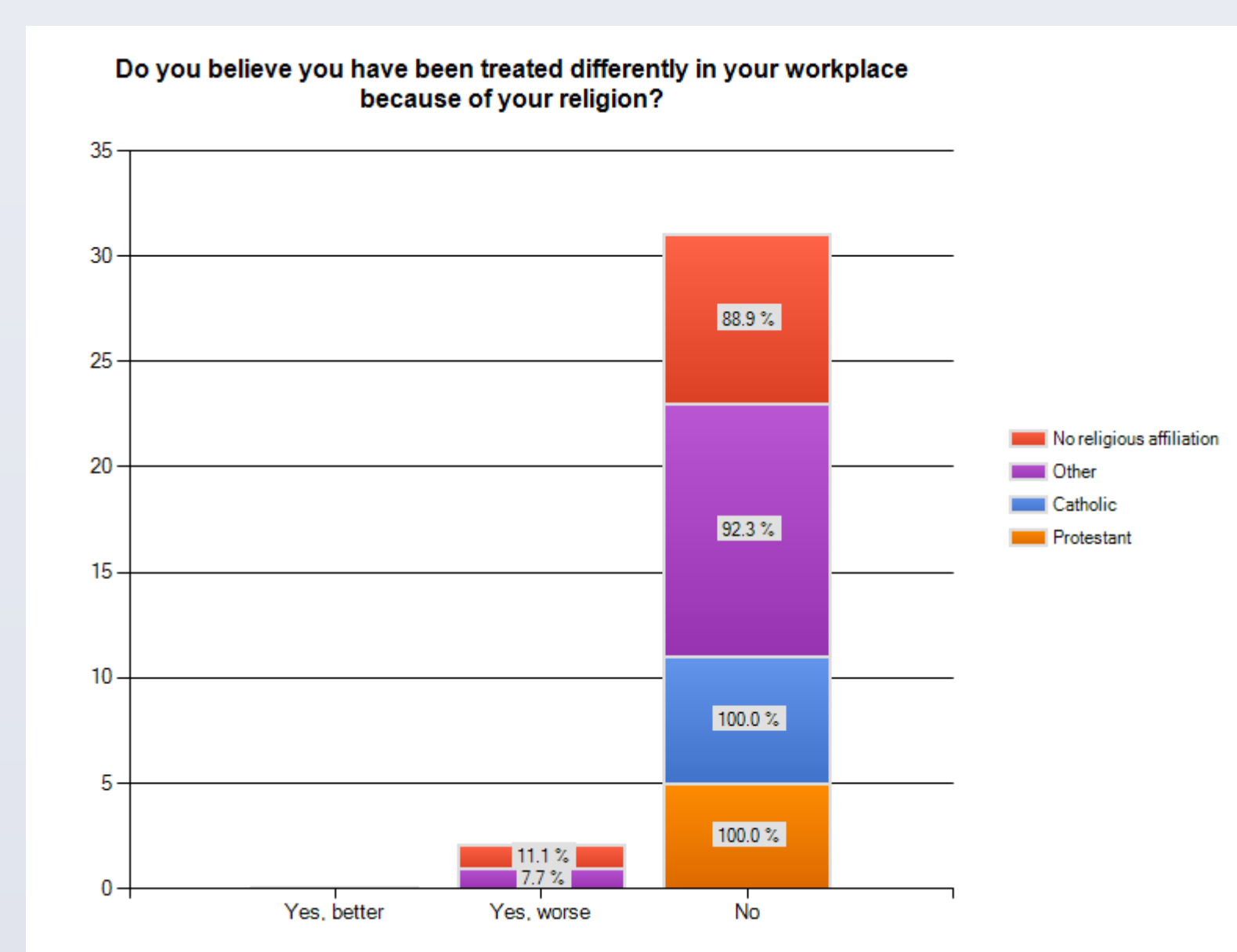


Fig. 6. Questionnaire "Do you believe you have been treated differently in your workplace because of your religion?" Worth noting that a small subset answered "yes", they were treated differently and worse because of their religious preference.'

CONCLUSION

I chose to study religious diversity in the workplace because people do not leave their personal convictions at the door when they arrive at work; it is important that we understand how this diversity may impact the workplace environment. Sensitive topics discussed in the workplace could create a privileged environment, conflicts with co-workers, or uncomfortable situations. Having a cohesive workplace is crucial to a company's long-term success.

Unlike in years past, our society is becoming much more diverse regarding religious views. Research on religious privilege is important because the religious makeup of America is changing. In order to have an inclusive society, free of discrimination, we need to learn more about how privilege and our changing culture affects people in the workplace.

DATA IMPLICATIONS

Our sample size was too low to be able to generalize it to a population, but even with a small number,

- we showed that religion is mentioned in the workplace,
- people have encountered uncomfortable situations based on religion, and
- people perceive that co-workers receive immunities because of their religious beliefs.

REFERENCES

Figure 1. Pew Research: Religion & Life Project - <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>

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