

The non-religious: Setting the scene in numbers

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Outline

- Definitional issues
- A profile of the non-religious
 - Ethnicity
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Education
- What proportion of the population?
- Life after death without God

What does it mean to be religious or non-religious?

- Attendance at services, prayer, rites of passage
- Belief in God or religious doctrines
- Identity with, or accept affiliation to, religion
- Attitudes: Hostility – indifference – support

A profile of the non-religious

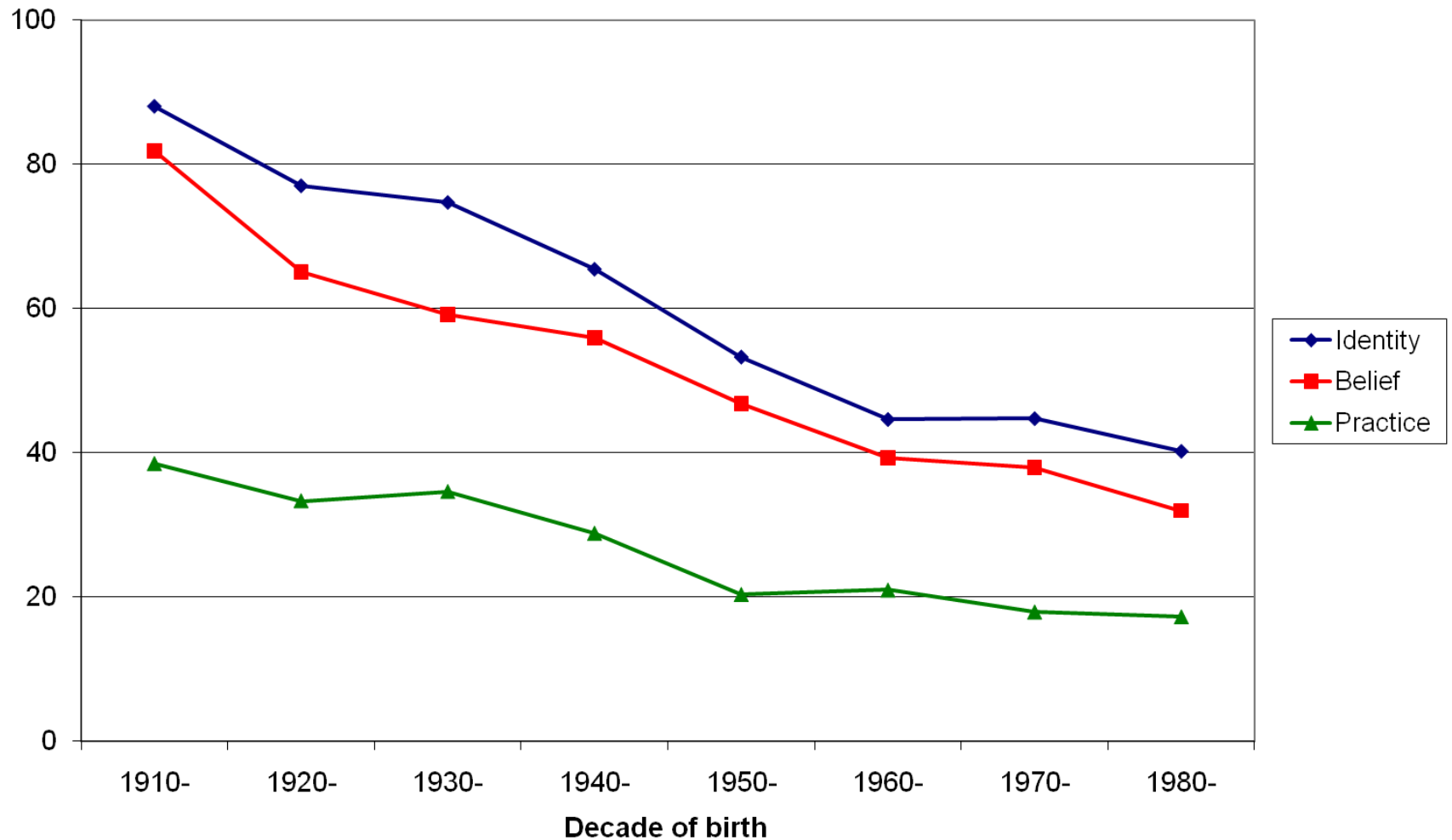
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Gender
- These three variables are so important that we need to control for them when looking at other characteristics

Ethnicity and no religion

(England & Wales, 2001 census)

Ethnic group	%
Chinese	53
White British	15
Black Caribbean	11
Black African	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0

Religious identity, belief in God and monthly attendance by decade of birth (whites only)



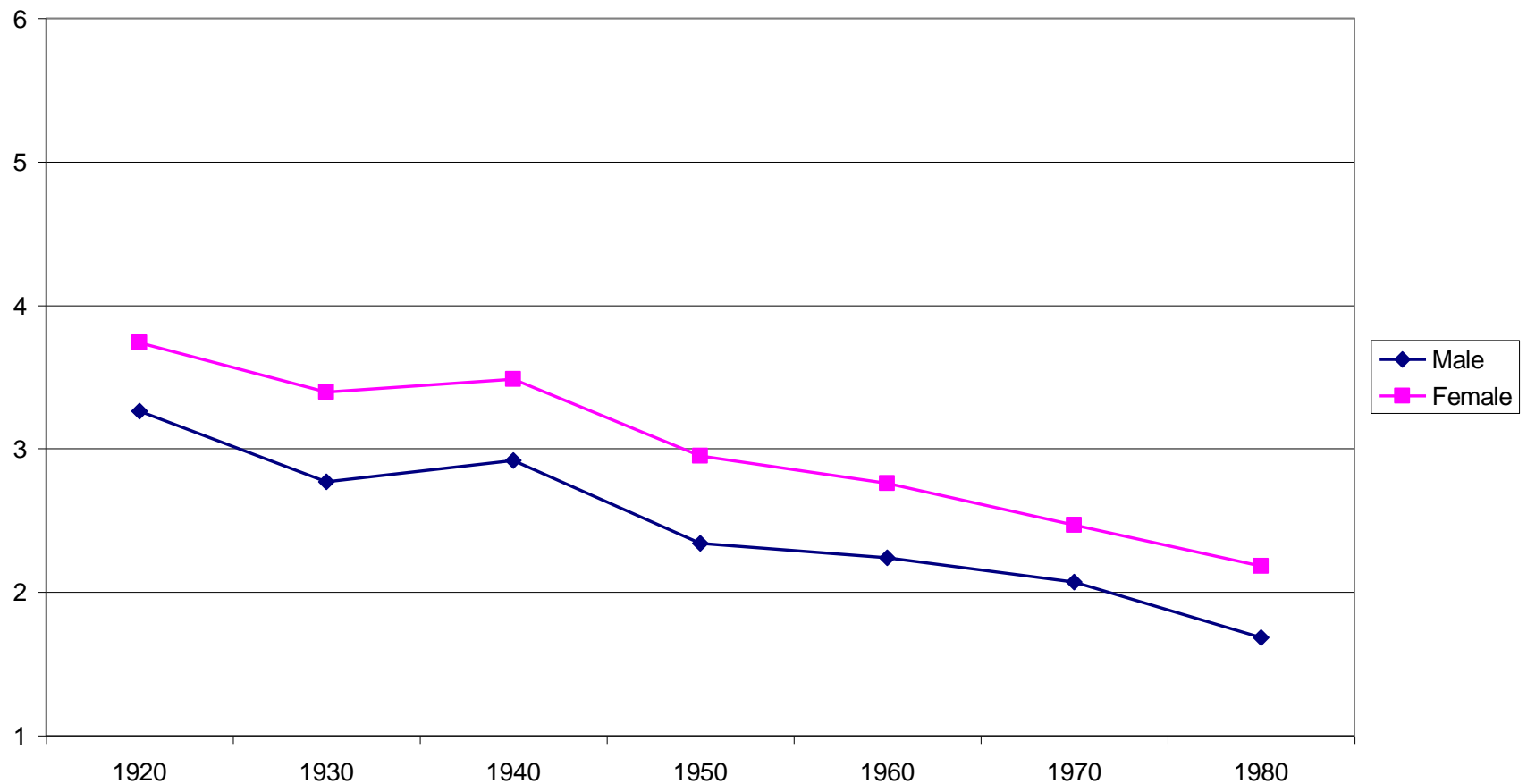
The gender gap in non-religion

- subjective religiosity
- affiliation
- attendance
- belief in God
- constant or narrowing?

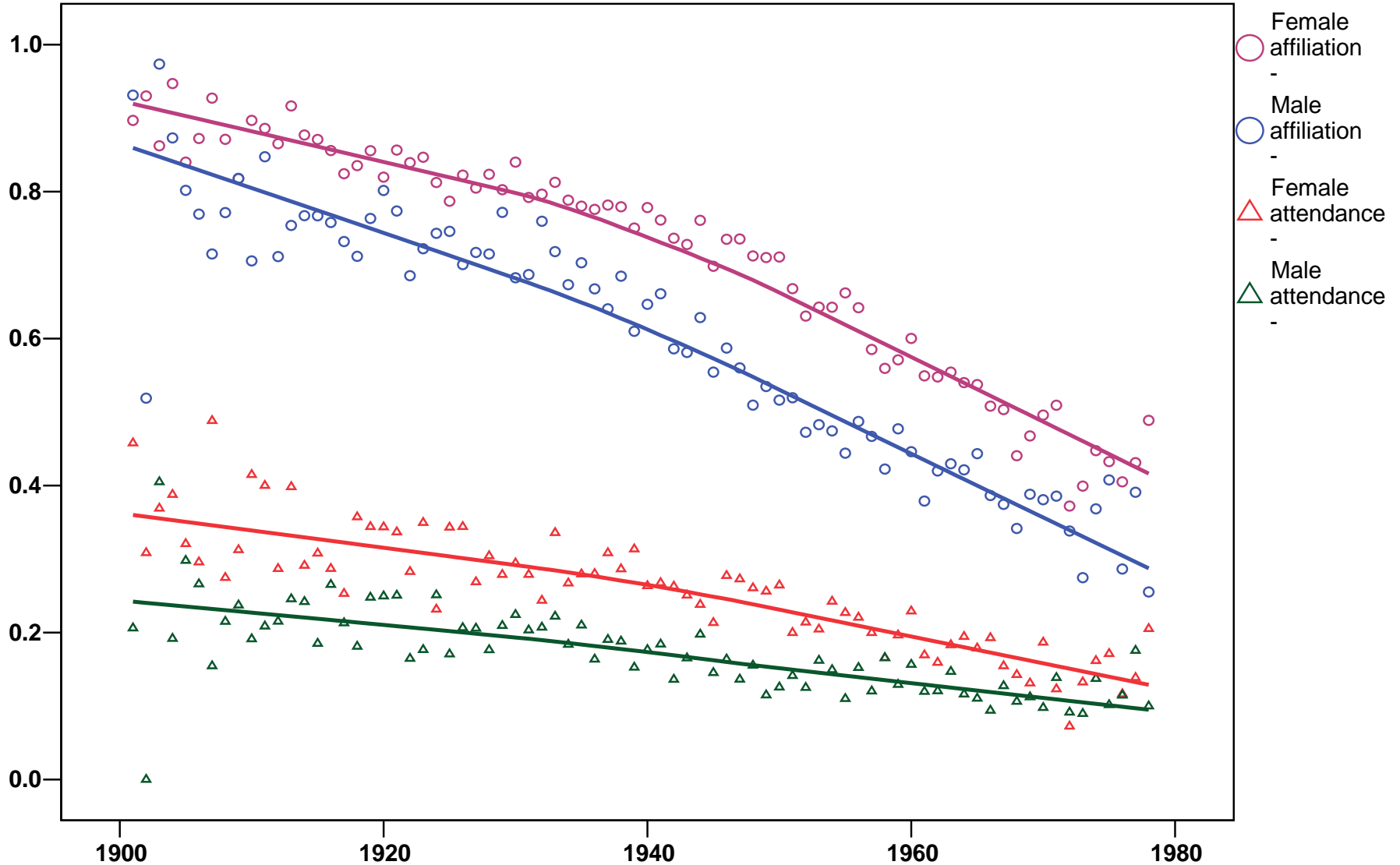
Self-rated religiosity by sex and birth decade

(European Social Survey, 2002)

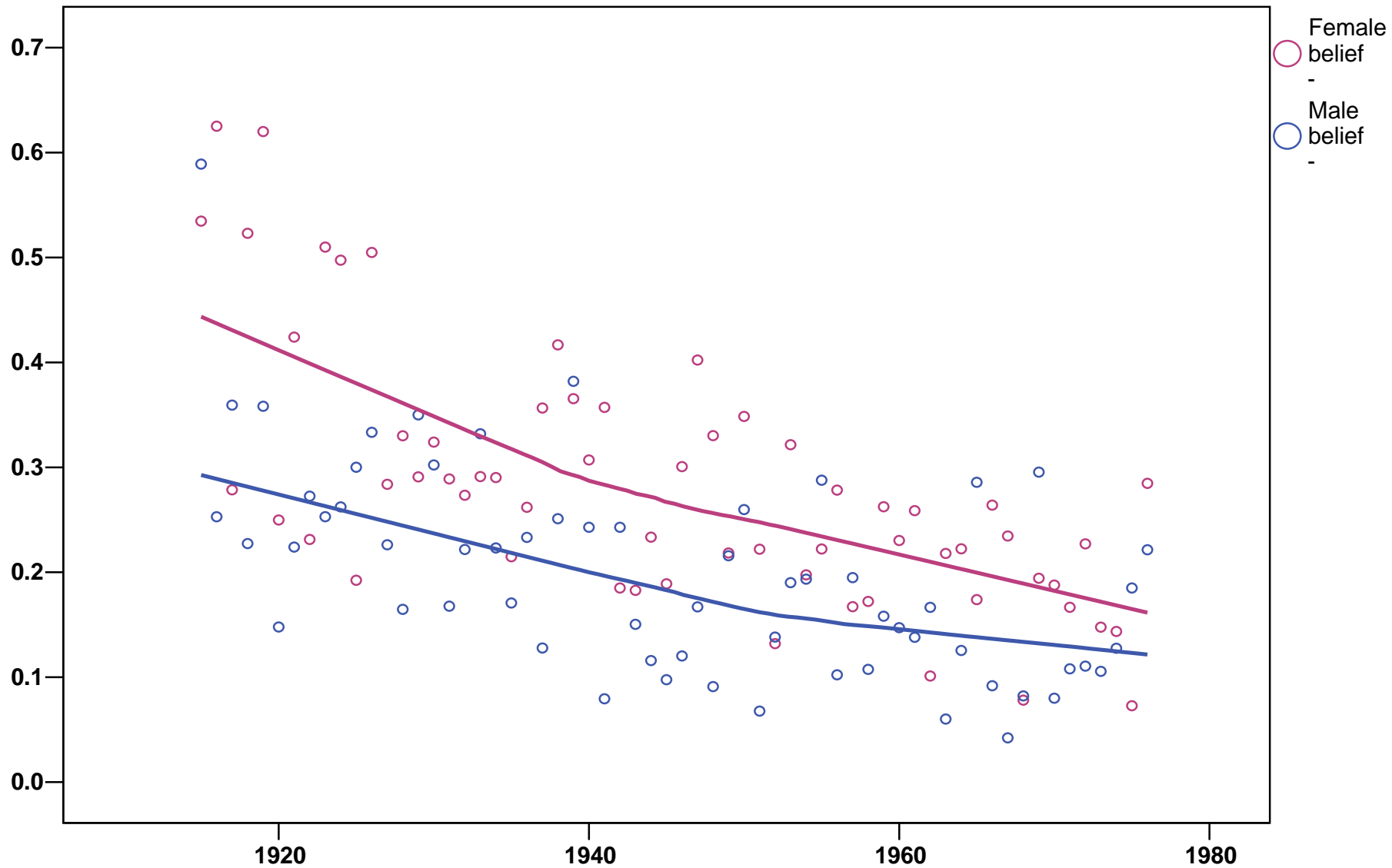
How religious are you? (UK)



Gender gap in affiliation and attendance



Gender gap in belief in God

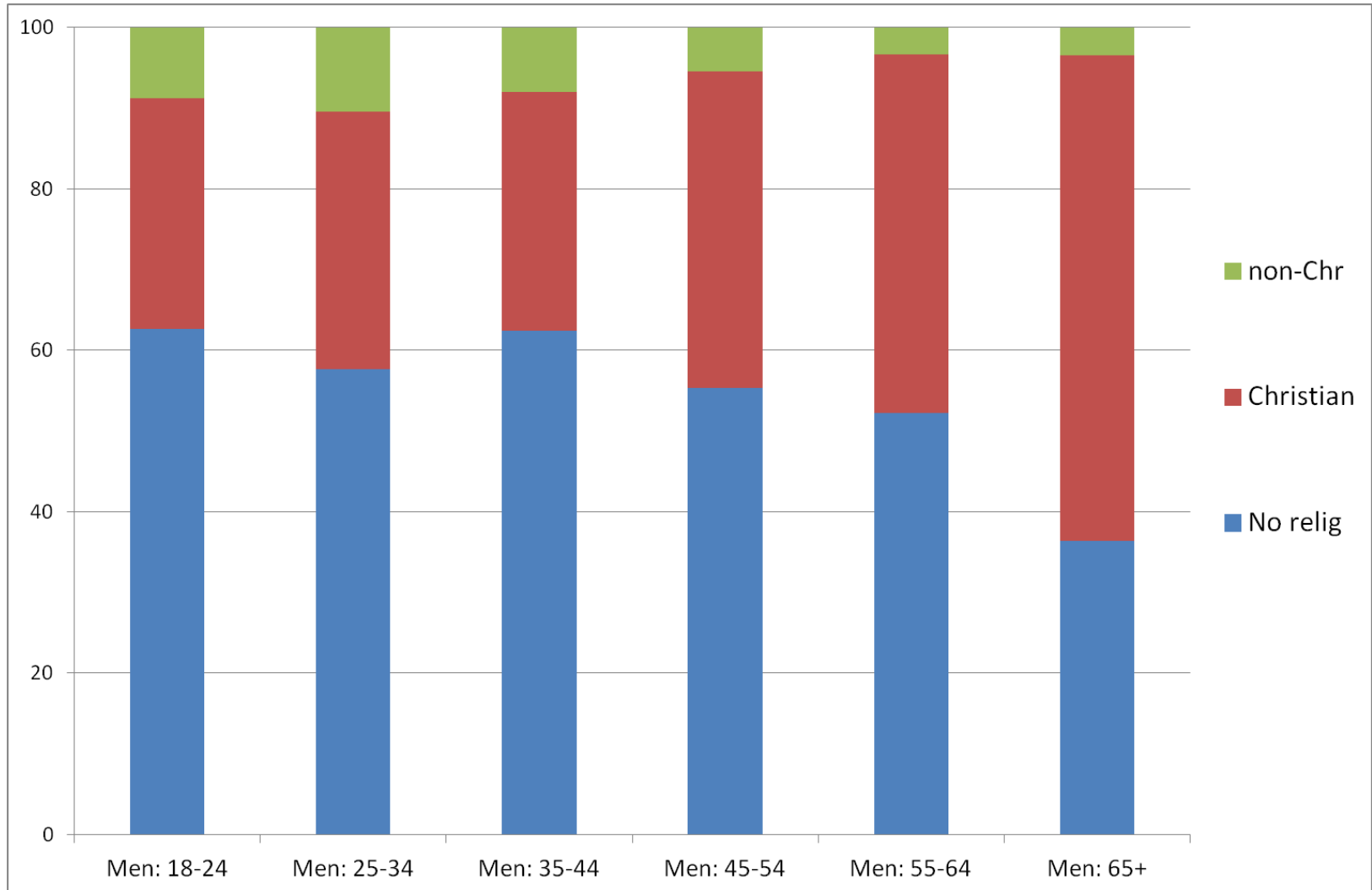


What about education?

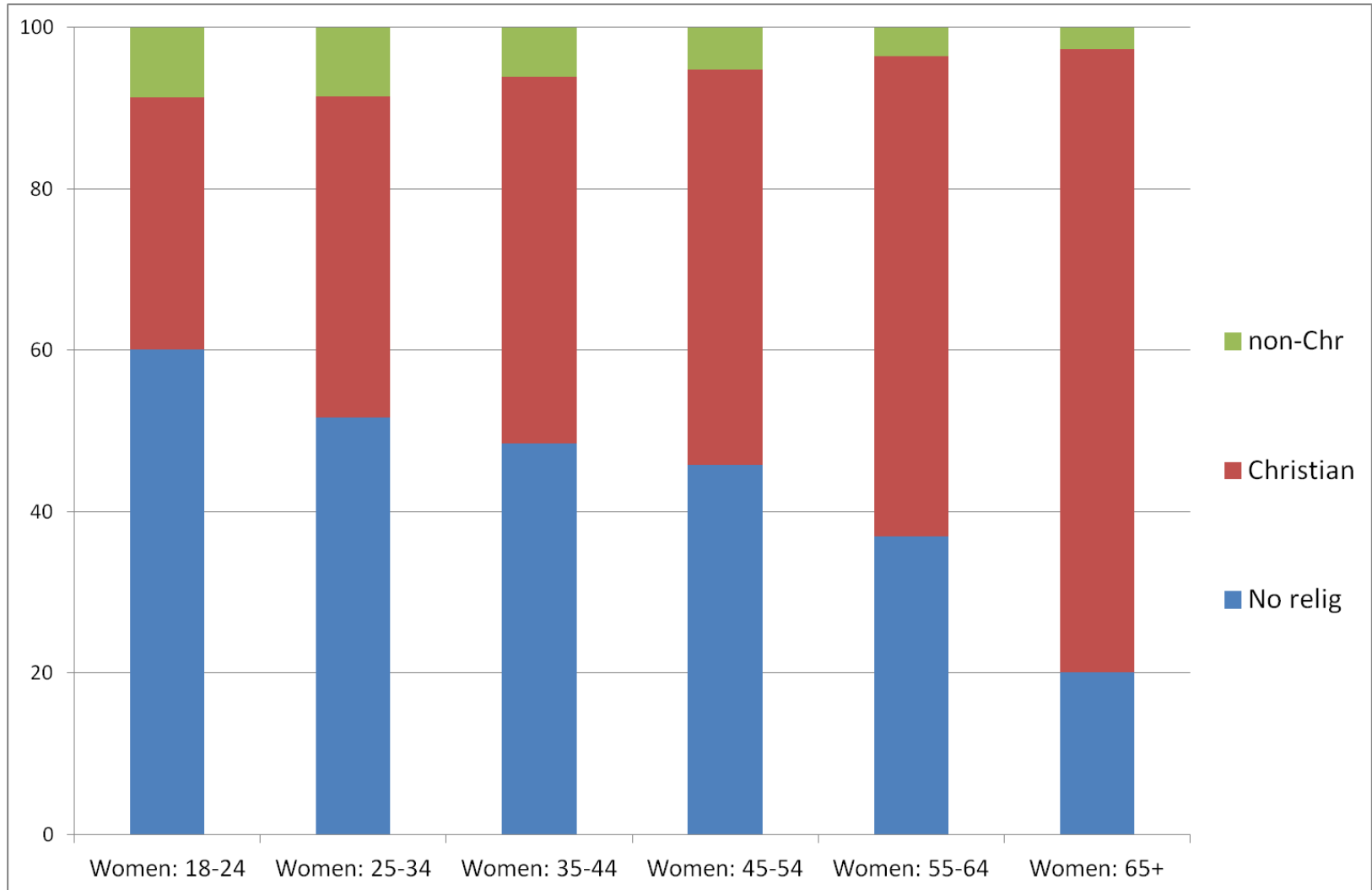
Conflicting factors:

- High levels of education often produce scepticism about religion and the self-confidence to be overtly unreligious
- Higher education is also associated with middle class values, civic participation, suburban living and other characteristics conducive to churchgoing

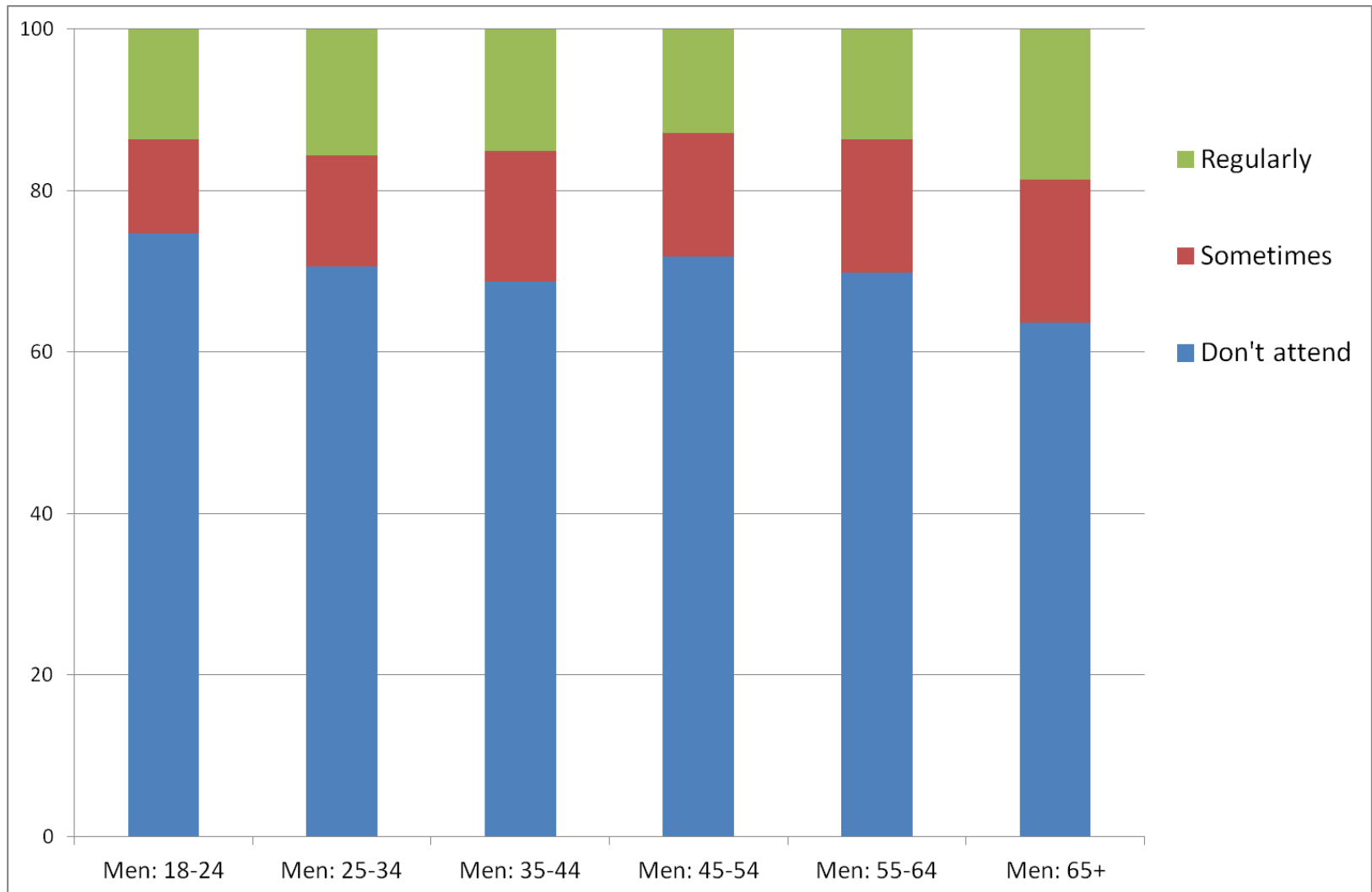
Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion? [Men]



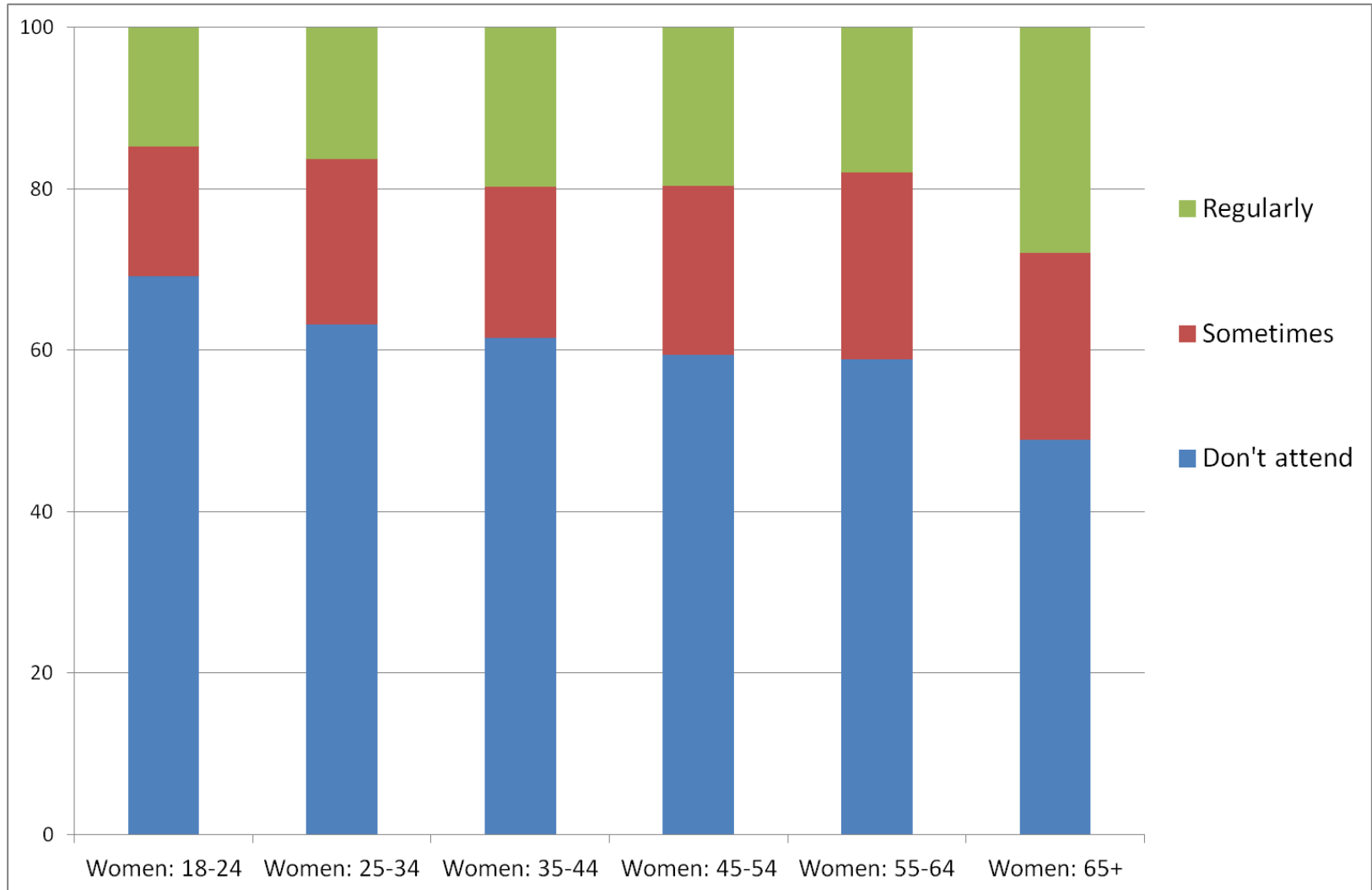
Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion? [Women]



Apart from such special occasions as weddings, funerals and baptisms, how often nowadays do you attend services or meetings connected with your religion? [Men]



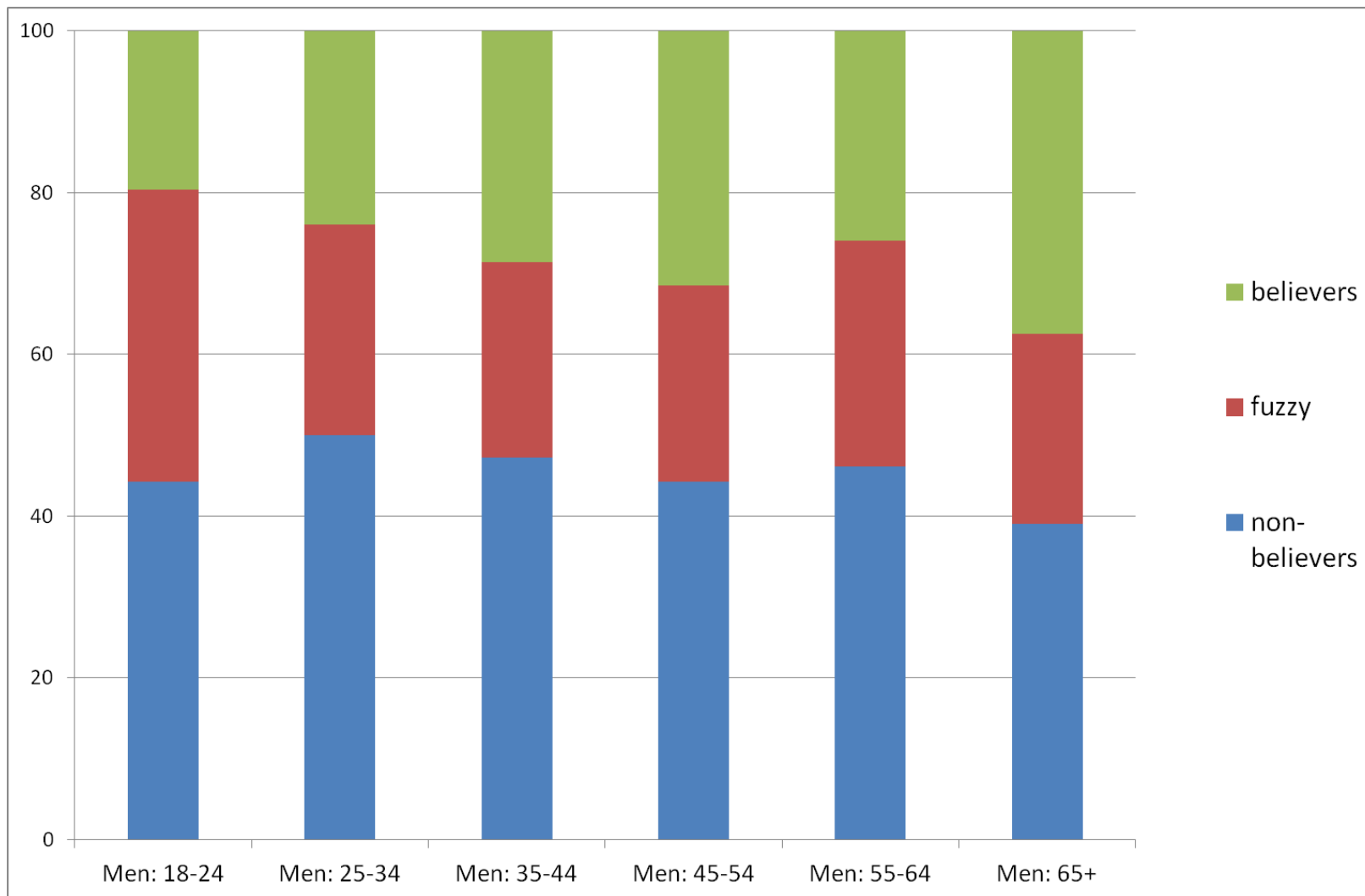
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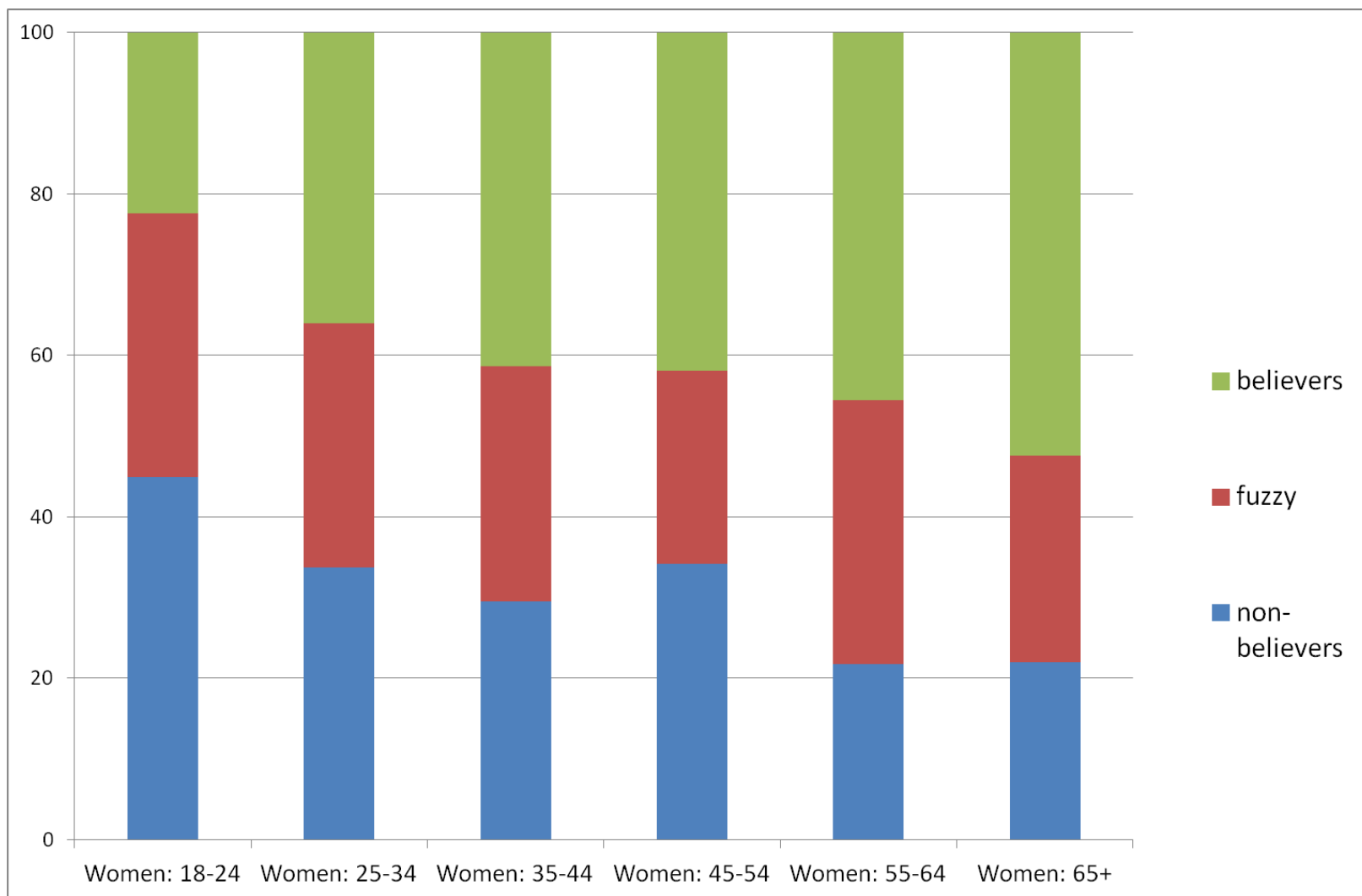
Belief in God (%)

	Pop.	White
I don't believe in God.	18	19
I don't know whether there is a God and I don't believe there is any way to find out.	19	20
I don't believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a Higher Power of some kind.	14	15
I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at others.	13	14
While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God.	18	19
I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it.	17	14

Belief in God [Men]



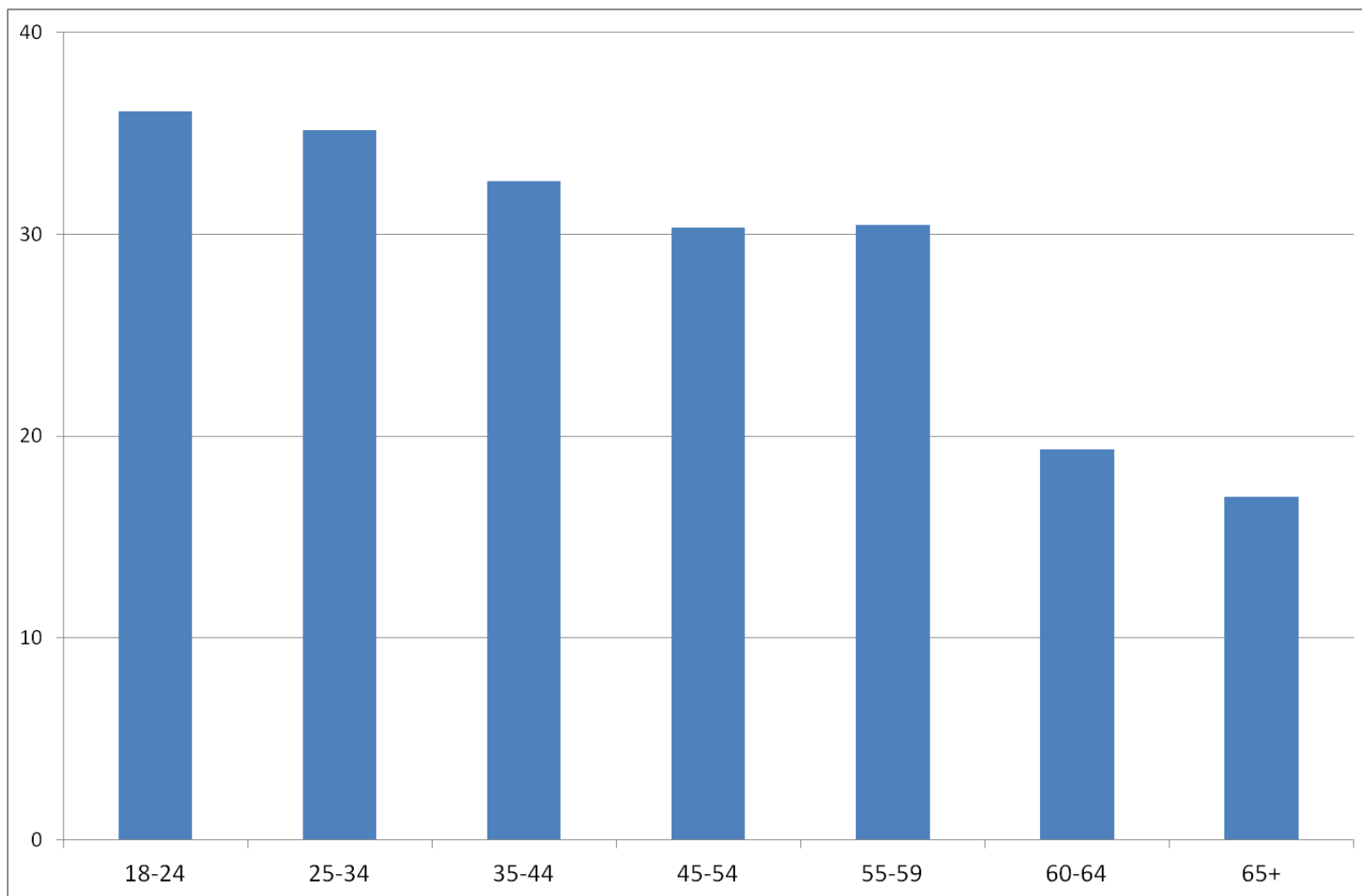
Belief in God [Women]



What fraction of the population is non-religious?

- Define non-religious as follows:
 - Doesn't regard self as belonging to a religion
 - Atheist or agnostic
- On this definition, about 28% of the British population is non-religious
- Among people less than 60 years old, a third are non-religious

Non-religious population by age (%)



So far, so unbelieving ...

But what's going on with life after death?