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All in the mind? Psychological, social and religious predictors of civic volunteerism
among churchgoers in England

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All in the mind? Psychological, social and religious predictors of civic volunteerism among churchgoers in England

Abstract

A number of studies have shown links between volunteerism and a range of sociological and religious variables, mostly based on work from the USA. This study of volunteering among 5220 lay Anglicans in England tested the idea that individual differences in personality could predict civic participation even after allowing for the effects of socio-demographic and religious variables on civic participation.

Extraversion significantly increased the probability of civic participation, and the number of different areas of activity among those who did participate. Emotional stability (Neuroticism scale) also significantly increased the chances of volunteering, but not the number of areas of activity among participants. Tender- versus tough-mindedness (Psychoticism scale) had no influence on civic participation in what was a generally tender-minded sample. The results suggest that while socio-demographic factors may affect the *opportunities* for civic participation, personality and theological orientation may affect the *propensity* of individuals to participate.

Keywords: civic participation; volunteerism; religion; personality; Eysenck Personality Questionnaire

Introduction

Sociologists have been studying the extent, causes and consequences of voluntary civic participation for several decades. Interest was intensified and expanded in no small part by Robert Putnam's bestselling book *Bowling alone – the collapse and revival of American community* (Putnam, 2000), in which he draws on the notion of 'social capital' developed by earlier writers such as Loury (1977), Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988). The term is not easily defined, and used in different ways by different writers, but the underlying idea is that individuals who invest time and energy in social networks, relationships and associations create some sort of long-term benefit for themselves or their community (Coleman, 1990: 311-313; Field, 2003; Portes, 1998; Smidt, 2003: 4-5). Social capital includes trust between people, the norms by which they operate (Putnam, 2000: 19) and the networks they create. Putnam argued, among other things, that associations that might create social capital, which include those considered as civic participation, are declining in the USA, partly at least due to the rise of television and individually-based forms of entertainment. This idea has been challenged by some (see Field, 2003: 37-39), and this may go some way to explain the growth in interest in volunteering in the USA and elsewhere. Furthermore, Putnam and others have identified churches as key institutions in fostering social networks, and this link has led to an increasing interest in the links between religiosity, volunteering and social capital (see, for example, Smidt, 2003).

Putnam also identified different kinds of social capital: bonding capital, which is built up in interactions within a social group, and bridging capital, which is built up in interactions between groups. Part of the long-standing interest in the relationship between religious and civic participation follows from the suggestion by Lenski (1963), Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) and others that churches operate as 'training grounds' by developing social skills and communication networks that can then be employed beyond church contexts. In other words, bonding capital might be spent in developing bridging capital. Although the positive correlation between religious and civic participation suggests that this may indeed be what happens, it has also been suggested that some churches can suppress the development of bridging capital by an over-concentration on bonding capital (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006). This is a sociological way of describing a phenomenon well-known to churchgoers: some congregations seem to be more inward-looking and self-obsessed than others.

Many of the empirical studies of religion and civic participation have been in the USA, which may be unusual in the extent to which church life is involved in fostering volunteering. Americans are generally more civically active than people from other Western countries, but this may be due in large part to the high levels of church membership. When the latter is factored out, involvement in non-church voluntary associations is still high, but on a par with levels of activity in other countries (Curtis, Grabb, & Baer, 1992). In the USA, civic participation seems to be particularly important in fostering political activity, and this may explain why it has been of such interest to sociologists. Religious activity seems to increase political engagement indirectly though its general effect on civic participation (Smidt, Green, Guth, & Kellstedt, 2003).

Most of the empirical studies on social capital and religion have used survey data to look at correlations between some sort of index of civic involvement or voluntary activity and a range of demographic, social and religious factors that might predict or explain why some people are more likely to work as volunteers than others (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006; Campbell & Yonish, 2003; Ecklund & Park, 2007; Loveland, Sikkink, Myers, & Radcliff, 2005; Schwadel, 2005; Smidt et al., 2003). Results from the USA suggest that predictors of volunteering fall into a number of categories that operate at an individual, congregational or community level. In each case, some factors relate to general social demographics, and some to specifically religious beliefs or practices. A wide range of social and demographic factors predict civic involvement, with age, sex and education being the most frequently cited (Curtis, 1971; Curtis et al., 1992; Cutler & Hendricks, 2000; Smith, 1975, 1994). In general, volunteering tends to peak between thirty-five and fifty-years of age (Smith, 1994), though this pattern may depend on employment status (Curtis et al., 1992: 147) and may sometimes be a side-effect of cross-sectional studies (Cutler & Hendricks, 2000). The link with sex is more complicated and may vary between cultures and over time (Smith, 1994: 248). Curtis, Grabb and Baer (1992) in a study across 15 countries found that men were slightly more likely to be involved than women. However, some studies have found no difference (Hodgkinson, Weitzman, Noga, & Gorski, 1992), and others that women tend to be more involved than men (Loveland et al., 2005; Smidt et al., 2003). The greater participation among those with higher levels of education seems to be a widespread finding (Smith, 1994) and may indicate an increased ability for educated people to organise or take part in social networks. Other

socio-economic factors that have been shown to be related to higher civic participation in some populations include higher income, being married, having children at home, being white rather than a racial minority and being employed rather than unemployed (Smith, 1994).

Alongside social demographics, an individual's religious behavior, beliefs or affiliation are also strong predictors of voluntary activity. Attendance at services predicts involvement with non-church activities, but the relationship is not always straightforward. While higher civic involvement has been linked to more frequent attendance in many studies (e.g. Campbell & Yonish, 2003; Smidt et al., 2003), some have shown no relationship (Loveland et al., 2005) or a negative correlation with frequency of attendance (Schwadel, 2005). Involvement in church groups seems to foster civil participation, and this may be a more important predictor than attendance per se (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006).

It has long been suspected that the nature of belief may affect engagement with the world beyond the church community. Nancy Ammerman (1987) suggested that fundamentalist Christians perceived their faith to be at odds with 'the world', and several studies have suggested lower civic participation among conservative or evangelical Christians (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Iannaccone, 1988; Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Wuthnow, 1988). Researchers in the USA commonly use questions about biblical literalism as an indicator of more general conservative belief, and literalism is usually found to be inversely correlated with civic participation (e.g. Schwadel, 2005). Beliefs are likely to be related to religious practice, though practice may predict civic participation independently from conservative belief. Loveland et al. (2005) analysed data from the 1996 God and Society in North America survey and, after controlling for a range of social and religious factors, found that high frequency of individual prayer predicted high levels of civic involvement.

Schwadel (2005) pointed out that the civic engagement of individuals takes place within a particular congregational context, and this context may shape involvement over and above factors operating in the lives of particular individuals. By including congregational factors in a multilevel multivariate analysis, he showed that civic involvement was generally depressed in congregations that reported high average levels of biblical literalism and intra-congregational friendships. Similar results have been reported in other studies from the USA that had access to individual

and congregational data. The effects of congregations are important, but they may be small relative to individual effects: Schwadel found in his dataset that 92% of variation in civic participation was explained by factors operating at the individual level, compared with only 8% at the congregational level.

Congregations themselves exist in a wider social and ethnic matrix, and this too may shape prevailing levels of civic participation. Trans-national studies suggest that civic participation is highest in countries with a range of Christian traditions, especially Protestantism, with a long history of institutional democracy and with good economic development (Curtis, Baer, & Grabb, 2001). The fact that most studies on civic participation to date have been from the USA, which may be an unusual case, suggests that there is a need for more studies of from other countries.

Opportunity and propensity for civic participation

There have been a number of different ways in which predominantly sociological approaches to civic participation have sought to explain the variation between individuals, groups or societies (see, for example, Bekkers, 2005; Smith, 1994; Warburton & Stirling, 2007). Social capital models view voluntary activity as both the cause and product of social networks and the trust they engender. Those who are linked to others through their work, social status or religious affiliation are more likely to be drawn into volunteering because of these networks. Participation in turn increases social capital by strengthening networks of volunteers. In this view, religious activity is primarily about social association, rather than beliefs leading to altruistic behavior (Ellison & George, 1994; Warburton & Stirling, 2007). Others have stressed the fact that volunteering requires resources and have viewed socio-economic factors in terms of how they equip individuals to participate (Herzog & Morgan, 1993; Wilson & Musick, 1997). In this view, education, income and health are examples of assets that some people have that enable them to be volunteers. These assets are unevenly distributed, and this explains why some people are more likely to volunteer than others. These models are not mutually exclusive, and social capital can be thought of as a resource that promotes volunteering. Bekkers (2005: 440), for example, refers to socio-demographic factors as indicators of resources that may be financial, human or social capital, and which promote civic engagement.

Social factors related to civic participation form a matrix that defines an individual's 'location' in terms of their ethnicity, gender, social roles, stage of life,

and group associations. A particular social location may be associated with particular levels of social capital and social resources that promote volunteering, but also with social factors that obstruct volunteering. For example, people with high levels of social networks, education and income may be prevented from volunteering if they are too busy working to find the time. In broad terms, social location may be correlated with civic participation because it is an index of *opportunity* to take part in such activity.

Other variables may predict civic involvement because they are indices of a *propensity* to engage in such activity. For example, individual or group religious beliefs may indicate individual propensity to engage in civic activities. In the USA, conservative Protestants tend to spend their free time serving specifically religious rather than secular goals (Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Wuthnow, 1999). This does not seem to be because of a lack of opportunity to engage with civil networks, but rather because of theological understandings of the nature and value of such engagement. This effect may operate at an individual level, but may also reflect the general expectation and norms of particular congregations, which may reduce the propensity of members to join secular organisations (Schwadel, 2005).

Psychological approaches to volunteering stress the key role of individual differences in propensity, rather than social location. Volunteering is seen as evidence of a wider tendency to prosocial behavior, which has been studied in a variety of ways (Bierhoff, 2001). A number of studies have used personality or other psychological models to examine volunteering or prosocial behavior (Allen & Rushton, 1983; Bekkers, 2005; Carlo, Allen, & Buhman, 1999; Cohen, Vigoda, & Samorly, 2001; Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006; Erez, Mikulincer, van Ijzendoorn, & Kroonenberg, 2008; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). A common personality model used in these studies is the Big Five personality inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1985). Bekkers (2005), for example, found greater civic participation in political organisations in the Netherlands among those who scored high on a scale of empathetic concern and low on the Big Five scale of conscientiousness. The relationship with empathy was in line with a number of similar studies, and confirms theoretical expectations of the greater likelihood of prosocial behavior among those who relate well to others. Results for some of the other traits, such as extraversion, were not as strong or as clear cut as might be expected, possibly because different traits predicted different sorts of engagement.

Although there is a growing body of work that indicates the predictive power of personality on civic participation or volunteerism, the number of studies is still small. Smith (1994) pointed out some years ago that there were few studies of volunteerism that included psychological variables, and even fewer that assessed volunteerism simultaneously from a sociological and psychological perspective. Lodi-Smith and Roberts (2007) in a recent meta-analysis of social investment and personality cite only seven studies related to volunteerism, and too few to allow them to assess psychological and demographic determinants simultaneously. Clearly there is still a need for studies that compare the relative effects of sociological, religious and psychological variables on civic participation, especially in populations outside the USA.

This study tests the ability of one particular model of personality, the Eysenck three-dimensional model, to predict civic volunteerism in a sample of committed churchgoers from the Anglican Church in England. The sample is drawn from the readers of the *Church Times*, the main newspaper of the Church of England, who were asked to complete an extensive questionnaire in 2001 (Francis, Robbins, & Astley, 2005). The aim is to assess the predictive power of personality variables on civic involvement among lay Anglicans alongside religious and socio-demographic variables.

The Eysenck three-dimensional model of personality

The Eysenck model of personality was developed over a number of years (Eysenck, 1960; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1976), and is founded on the notion of three independent traits that together provide the most efficient and economical description of personality. The three traits relate to different aspects of personality and are usually named by the high-scoring ends of each scale: extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. Eysenck postulated that the traits that made up these dimensions varied continuously in any given population. In the case of the neuroticism and psychoticism, there was no qualitative difference between 'normal' and 'abnormal' personalities, but those whose behavior fell at the extreme end of these scales were generally recognized as having personality disorders.

The extraversion scale is a measure of sociability and impulsiveness. Those with high scores tend to be sociable individuals who frequently interact with others, have many friends and who prefer being in groups rather than being alone. Extraverts

are also likely to be risk-takers who act spontaneously and who are carefree and easy-going. Those with low scores are considered to be more introverted, and will tend to demonstrate the opposite characteristics.

According to Eysenck's theory, neurotic disorders are located at the extreme end of a continuum concerned with normal personality. People who record high scores on the neuroticism scale are likely to be anxious, depressed, tense, irrational, shy, moody, and emotional. They may also be prone to feeling guilty and to having low self-esteem. Those with low scores are likely to be more emotionally stable, less anxious, feel less guilty and have higher self-esteem.

According to Eysenck's theory, psychotic disorders are located at the extreme end of a second continuum concerned with normal personality. People who record high scores on the psychoticism scale are characterised as being impersonal, hostile, unable to show sympathy or to empathize with others, lacking in trust, unemotional and unresponsive to other people. This is sometimes referred to a being 'tough-minded'. Those with low psychoticism scores are considered to be 'tender-minded', and are likely to be empathetic, unselfish, altruistic and peaceable.

It follows from the definition of the extraversion scale that extraverts may be more likely than introverts to engage in activities that involve joining groups and interacting with others. Positive relationships between volunteering and extraversion were evident in early studies of volunteerism (Allen & Rushton, 1983; Smith & Nelson, 1975) and in a few recent studies that have used the Big Five model of personality, though the effects were sometimes weak (Bekkers, 2005), and may have been mediated by variables related to how strongly motivated subjects were to engage in prosocial behavior (Carlo, Okun, Knight, & Guzman, 2005). We predict from theory and previous research a positive correlation between the extraversion scale and civic participation.

It follows from the definition of the neuroticism scale that people with high scores may be less likely than those with low scores to engage in civic activities, given the tendency for high scorers to minimize exposure to stress-inducing situations. If civic participation makes stressful emotional demands, then those with high neuroticism scores are likely to avoid such interactions because they find it difficult to cope with emotional stress. Positive relationships between volunteering and emotional stability have been shown in some studies (Musick & Wilson, 2003), but not in others (Bekkers, 2005; Carlo et al., 2005; Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007). We predict from

theory and from some previous research a negative correlation between the neuroticism scale and civic participation.

It follows from the definition of the psychoticism scale that people with high scores may be less likely than those with low scores to engage in civic participation, which probably requires the tender-minded empathy associated with low psychoticism scores. Agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness are traits in the Big Five personality model that correspond most closely to the Eysenck psychoticism scale (Carlo et al., 2005; Draycott & Kline, 1995; McKenzie, Tindell, & French, 1997; Scholte & Bruyn, 2004). Agreeableness and openness have been shown to be positively correlated with volunteering in some studies (Carlo et al., 2005; Smith & Nelson, 1975), but not in others (Bekkers, 2005). Conscientiousness may also have a complex relationship to volunteering: Carlo et al. (2005) found a positive bivariate relationship, which disappeared when gender and the remaining Big Five traits were added to a multivariate model. Bekkers (2005) found an unexpected negative relationship with the probability of volunteering, but no effect on the level of volunteering. The Eysenck model is more parsimonious than the Big Five, and items focus on the tough- versus tender-mindedness that is the central characteristic of this trait. There is some evidence that the different scales of the Big Five are not clearly differentiated, and collapse onto the Eysenck psychoticism scale when they are factored together (Scholte & Bruyn, 2004). The Eysenck psychoticism scale would seem to have a clearer theoretical basis as a predictor of volunteering than the three scales of the Big Five, and therefore be more useful in these sorts of study. We predict from theory and previous research a negative correlation between psychoticism scores and civic participation.

The Eysenck personality dimensions have undergone a number of different operationalizations, culminating in the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (EPQR: Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985). The EPQR was simultaneously produced in a shortened form by the same authors (EPQR-S) and has since been further abbreviated (EPQR-A: Francis, Brown, & Philipchalk, 1992). The family of instruments have been applied across a range of cultures and in specific sub-populations, including religious denominations and clergy. There is a well-established sex difference in scores, with women generally recording higher neuroticism scores, and lower psychoticism scores, than men (Francis, 1993, 1997; Shevlin, Bailey, & Adamson, 2002). Age effects have also been frequently reported, with older people

generally showing lower scores on all scales (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975; Haapasalo, 1990; Loehlin & Martin, 2001; Viken, Rose, Kaprio, & Koskenvuo, 1994). Numerous studies have indicated that religiosity is widely associated with tender-mindedness (i.e. low psychoticism scores), but not with the extraversion or neuroticism scales (Argyle, 2000; Francis, 2005: 35-37). By restricting our sample to frequent church attendees who read a religious newspaper, we hoped to partial out the effects of religiosity on civic participation and test for correlations with personality scores that were independent of general religious inclination.

Method

Sample

The *Church Times* is the main newspaper of the Church of England, with a circulation of around 33,000. In 2001 it published a four-page questionnaire in two editions of the paper spanning the end of March and beginning of April. The questionnaire was designed to assess a wide range of opinions, attitudes and beliefs for a cross section of English Anglicans, and the main results have been reported by Francis, Robbins and Astley (2005). This study uses responses from 5220 lay people (i.e. excluding those who were ordained) who lived in England and who attended an Anglican church at least twice a month. *Church Times* readers cover a very wide range of opinions, and a broad spectrum of traditions from across the denomination are represented in the sample.

Dependent variable

Answers to a range of yes/no items in the *Church Times* survey were used to create a measure of civic participation. Respondents were asked 'For which of the following non-church organisations, if any, are you currently doing unpaid work?' and asked to tick as many of the 13 items in Table 1 as was appropriate. Count data of this nature typically show a negative binary distribution, with a high proportion of the sample scoring zero. In this sample, 41% did not participate in any areas, and the mean number of areas was 1.12 with a variance of 1.73. This suggests that a key difference between respondents was whether or not they participated in civic activities, so a binary variable, the Civic Participation Index (CPI), was used to indicate those who were involved in at least one activity and those who were not (0 = no involvement, 1 = involved in at least one area of activity).

[Table 1 about here]

Independent variables

Independent variables were placed into four groups for analysis:

Intrinsic variables were those related to personality, sex and age. The EPQ-A consists of six yes/no items measuring each of the three dimensions extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism, giving three scores ranging from zero to six. Psychoticism tends to be low in normal populations leading to negative skew in EQP psychoticism scores (Ferrando 2003; Francis 1992), so these were recoded on a scale of 0-2, with 2 representing all scores greater than one. Variables indicating age and sex were included with personality scores because both these variables are known to be related to at least one of the dimensions. Respondents were asked to give their sex (0 = male, 1 = female) and age. Age was categorized by decade with 1 = < 40, 2 = 40s, 3 = 50s, 4 = 60s, 5 = 70s and 6 = > 79. Age-squared was also added as a quadratic term in the model, to allow for the fall off in participation among those over 79 years old.

Socio-economic variables included education (1 = degree, 0 = no degree), employment (1 = full time work, 0 = other), retirement (1 = retired, 0 = not retired), household income (categorized 0– 9, with 0 = < £5000 per annum and 9 = > £99,999 per annum), household status (1 = living with spouse or partner, 0 = living alone) and children at home (1 = yes, 0 = no). There was also an item asking for location (rural, suburban or urban), and responses to this were recoded into two dummy variables rural (1 = rural, 0 = other) and urban (1 = urban, 0 = other).

Individual religious variables measured theological orientation, church involvement and frequency of prayer. Church attendance was assessed on a seven-point scale and only those who scored 5 (twice a month) or higher were included in the sample. Studies in the USA have often used a single item on biblical literalism to assess degree of conservatism, which is considered to be the main theological indicator related to civic participation. Assessing theological orientation for Anglicans in the Church of England requires a combination of scales that reflect the different historical and theological traditions in the denomination (Randall, 2005). The Anglican Church in England has evolved through a complex history so that it now embraces a wide range of theological stances (Hylson-Smith 1989, 1993; Randall 2005; Scotland 2003). The Anglo-catholic wing arose from the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century,

and stresses the ritualistic and sacramental nature of church life. Evangelicals, on the other hand, stress the importance of the bible and preaching, and are less concerned with ritual. Between these two wings of the church are congregations sometimes referred to as 'broad church' or 'traditional Anglican', whose worship and practice shows some elements of the other two traditions. In more recent times, a number of congregations have been influenced by the Charismatic Movement (Hocken 1997; Scotland 2003), which stresses the activity of the Holy Spirit in gifting and guiding the church. Although the Charismatic Movement has been most prominent among evangelical Anglicanism, it is by no means exclusively associated with this tradition. Operating alongside these traditions is a distinction between those who are generally more conservative and those who are generally more liberal in terms of doctrinal and moral beliefs. Although liberalism has been associated with a number of distinct movements within the Church of England, notably with Anglo-catholicism, liberals and conservatives can be found in all the various traditions in the Church of England.

To locate a respondent's theological orientation therefore required three independent but related measures: liberal versus conservative, Anglo-catholic versus evangelical, and the extent of charismaticism. Respondents were asked to locate their personal orientation using three separate seven-point semantic differential scales where the poles were anchored by liberal versus conservative, catholic versus evangelical, and not charismatic versus charismatic. The liberal-conservative and catholic-evangelical scores were recoded into five-point scales by combining the two extreme scores in each case. Results for the charismatic scale suggested all scores on the 'not charismatic' end of the scale referred to the same thing, so this scale was reduced to a three-point scale with 1 = lowest charismatic ratings (1-3), 2 = intermediate charismatic ratings (4-5) and 3 = highest charismatic ratings (6-7). These three scales are referred to by their high-score indicators: conservative, evangelical and charismatic, and were used to indicate the nature of the congregation attended.

Previous studies suggest that whether or not individuals participate in civic activities may also be influenced by the extent to which they participate in congregational activities (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006). To control for this, respondents were asked to indicate involvement in a range of church activities and these were subsequently grouped into four categories: church governance, helping with young people, fellowship groups and helping with music or drama. The church activity index

was the sum of the number of different areas of involvement, ranging from zero to four. Frequency of prayer is another variable related to individual religiosity that has been shown to influence civic participation (Loveland et al., 2005), and this was scored on a five-point scale (1 = 'never', 5 = 'nearly every day').

Congregational variables were based on respondents' reports of the congregations they attended. Previous studies from the USA have used data based on congregational surveys, where blocks of questionnaires could be assigned to particular congregations (e.g. Schwadel, 2005). This allows congregational norms to be assessed using average scores for all respondents from a given congregation. The nature of the sampling in this study meant that it was unlikely to draw multiple responses from people attending the same congregation, so instead respondents were asked to rate the theological stance of their church congregation using the same three scales as for individual theological orientation. In some cases, scores on the conservative, evangelical and charismatic scales were identical between individual and congregation, indicating that individuals attended congregations that matched their own theological orientation. In other cases there was some disparity, suggesting that individuals perceived that their own position differed from the norm of their congregation. Respondents who rated themselves liberal or very liberal were particularly likely to attend a church that was more conservative than their own stance, but the converse was not true for conservatives.

Some studies have shown that civic participation may be affected by the extent of social attachments within a congregation (Schwadel, 2005), so this was assessed by a Likert scale consisting of four items: 'My church is important for my social life'; 'I feel a strong sense of belonging to my church'; 'I turn to fellow members of my church when I need help' and 'Members of my church care deeply for one another'. Each item was scored 1-5, with high score indicating the importance of relationships. The items had an acceptably high internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .74) and the sum of score was used as an index of the strength of relationships in the congregation. Size of congregation was also rated on a nine point scale with 1 = < 10 and 9 = > 300.

Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS 17.0 (SPSS, 2008). Hierarchical binary logistical regression analysis was used to partial out the effects of different groups of variables that might influence the CPI. The various groups of variables were added successively,

starting with the intrinsic variables related to personality, as these were considered to be stable and fundamental predictors of individual differences. This resulted in four different models:

Model 1: intrinsic variables of personality, sex and age;

Model 2: intrinsic variables plus measures of individual socio-economic status;

Model 3: intrinsic and socio-economic variables plus measures of individual religiosity;

Model 4: all variables, including measures related to congregations.

The fit of models was tested using the Hosmer-Lemeshow test and the improvement of models by the addition of predictor variables was tested using changes in omnibus chi-squared test supplied with the SPSS software. The proportion of variance explained by the models was indicated approximately by the Cox & Snell or Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 values. The significance level for considering a variable a significant predictor was set at $p < .001$ to allow for the high sample size.

Results

Socio-demography of the sample

Church Times readers are not a random cross section of the Church of England, but they do represent a broad cross section of the denomination. Survey respondents most frequently rated their churches as conservative, Anglo-catholic and not charismatic, and 64% had university degrees (Table 2). Men comprised 44% of the sample, which is probably slightly more than the church as a whole (Brierley, 2000). The median age category was 4, (= 60s); 50% were retired; 25% were in full time employment and median household income was 4 (= £20k - £29k). Most respondents were living with a spouse or partner (66%), but only 17% had children living at home. Respondents from rural areas comprised 37% of the sample, compared with 38% from suburban areas and 25% from inner urban areas. These results indicate a sample of people who probably had a relatively high degree of capacity (in terms of resources and social capital) to be involved in civic activities, which is probably typical of the Church of England in general.

[Table 2 about here]

Levels of civic participation

Despite the apparently high capacity to be involved, civic participation was generally low. Overall, 41% of respondents reported no civic participation, 29% were involved in one area, 16% in two areas and 14% in more than two areas. The most frequently reported specific areas of participation were education (15%), culture (14%) and local community action (13%); the least frequent included world development (5%), human rights (4%) and trade unions (1%).

Multiple logistic regression analysis of the CPI

The Hosmer-Lemeshow tests indicated that in all four models the estimates fitted the data at an acceptable level, even though the amount of variation explained was small judged by the pseudo R^2 tests. In model 1 (Table 3) both high extraversion and low neuroticism scores were highly significant predictors of civic participation, after allowing for sex and age. The age effect was strongly curvilinear, with the percentage of participating respondents increasing from 48% among the under forties to 65% among those in their sixties and declining to 45% among those over 80. There was no significant difference in civic participation between men and women (59% of 2943 women versus 58% of 2277 men, $\chi^2 = 0.7$, $df = 1$, NS).

Adding socio-economic variables improved the model, with education and employment status being the significant predictors. Among those who had degrees, 62% were civic participants, compared with 53% of those without degrees. People in full time employment were less likely to be participants (50%) than those who were employed on a part-time basis or retired (61%). This seemed to be mainly to the higher participation by those in part-time employment.

The addition of individual religious variables also improved the model, mainly due to the effects of conservative belief (which significantly reduced the chances of participation) and involvement with church activities (which significantly increased the chances of participation). Although this was a religiously affiliated sample that had generally high church attendance, there was some variation, and the probability of civic participation was slightly higher ($p < .05$) among those who attended church twice a month compared with those who attended more often. The addition of congregational variables only marginally improved the model due to the fact that

people who belonged to evangelical congregations were slightly less likely ($p < .05$) to participate in civic activities than those from broad or Anglo-catholic congregations. There was no correlation between chances of civic participation and either congregation size or the index of congregational relationships.

Overall, the explanatory power of the models was rather poor, and adding the variables in the full model improved the chances of correctly identifying participants from 58.6% to 63.0%. The chi-squared and pseudo R^2 values for successive models suggested that intrinsic and individual religious variables accounted for more of the variance than either socio-economic or congregational variables.

[Table 3 about here]

Multiple participation and personality

The binary logistic analysis of the CPI showed that extraversion and emotional stability were linked independently to the probability of a person being participant or not. When non-participants were excluded from the sample, extraversion remained significantly correlated with the number of different areas of involvement ($r = .12$, $df = 3058$, $p < .001$) but neuroticism did not ($r = -.02$, $df = 3058$, NS).

Discussion

In general, the types of variables most likely to predict civic participation in this sample were related to individual intrinsic variables (personality and age), and individual religious belief and behavior (especially liberal-conservative belief and involvement in church activities). Socio-economic variables (especially education and employment) were also important, but no measures at the congregational level seemed to significantly influence participation.

Opportunity for volunteering

The correlations among the socio-demographic variables are mostly in line with previous studies, and seem to support the idea that these factors may predict civic participation because they relate to opportunity or capacity to engage. The age effect mirrors that found in other studies, and probably represents increases in networking during the middle stages of working life, an increase in availability linked with early

retirement, and a decrease in old age linked with capacity. The higher participation of those with university degrees is in line with the widely reported higher civic participation of those with more educational experience. This is usually interpreted as a measure 'human resource' that gives people greater ability and confidence to take part in civic activities (Bekkers, 2005; Warburton & Stirling, 2007). Graduates may also have earned more, but income was not a significant predictor of participation in this sample if education was factored into the model. The lower participation of those in full-time employment also mirrors results from elsewhere where participation was defined as voluntary work (Curtis 1992) and probably reflects a lack of time to offer such help for those who work a full week. The highest levels of participation were among part-time workers, who may have had both the advantage of joining social networks through work and the time to volunteer.

Participation was slightly greater in both rural and urban areas compared with those living in suburbs ($p < 0.05$). In rural areas this probably reflects the greater opportunities for social networking in small, tight-knit communities and/or a greater demand for help, because there are fewer people available to be involved. In urban areas there may be more chances to be involved and more demand if this includes areas of social deprivation. Location does seem to have some influence on civic participation, but this may be an indirect effect on the level of social capital available that might encourage volunteering (Warburton & Stirling, 2007: 39).

Propensity for volunteering

Two main sorts of variables may have been linked to propensity to volunteer rather than opportunity: religious variables and personality variables. The effect of religious variables agrees with the reduction in civic participation among conservative Protestants observed in studies in the USA. In this study in the Church of England, the reduction was mainly associated with individual conservative beliefs rather than congregational tradition. Congregational effects were more closely linked to the catholic-evangelical scale. This might reflect the fact that catholic versus evangelical is a more familiar way describing congregations in the Church of England while liberal versus conservative is a more familiar way to describe individuals. Whatever the particular source, theological orientation was likely to have been a measure of religious propensity to participate in civic activities. The effect of liberal-conservative

belief was quite marked, with those at the conservative end of the scale being 0.59 times less likely to participate than those at the liberal end of the scale.

There was a slight suggestion that more frequent church attendance on Sundays resulted in reduced chances of civic participation, the difference being mainly due to the greater probability of participation among those attending around twice a month compared with those who attended every week. The lower attendance may be an indication of lower religiosity, but this seems unlikely given that this was a generally religiously-committed sample who attended services at least twice a month, prayed often and who were willing to read a denominational newspaper. It is possible that skipping church once or twice a month allowed some people to engage in non-church civic activities that clashed with services. For example, children's sporting activities are increasingly held on Sunday mornings in England, and adults who help to run these find it difficult to attend church every week.

The significant increase in the chances of civic participation with increasing levels of church involvement argues against the idea that conservatives in evangelical churches were less likely to be involved in civic activities because they spent more time in church activities. In all traditions, those who were involved in more church activities were also involved in more civic activities, and this has been noticed in other studies. In contrast, Smidt et al. (2003) found that, among those who were civic participants, there was negative correlation with church activity, suggesting (as have some other studies) that those who are very active in church may have less time to be active outside the church. However, including civic participants and non-participants in their analysis showed a positive correlation between church and civic involvement. At this level, both church and civic participation may be driven by more fundamental propensity to engage in social activity.

Personality may also be an important factor predicting propensity to civic participation. The results confirmed two of our three hypotheses that high-order personality dimensions operationalized in the EPQ-A can predict civic participation in this sample of English Anglicans. In the full model, an increase in the extraversion score for one point resulted in an increase in the chance of volunteering of 1.10. This may seem a small effect but, when applied across the range of the scale, someone who scored six on the extraversion scale was 1.95 times more likely to engage in civic activity than someone who scored zero (i.e. 1.10^7). The introversion-extraversion dimension is common to several different models of personality, and seems to point to

a fundamental aspect of human nature that is linked to gregarious behavior. Joining civic organisations may be something that extraverts do naturally, while for introverts it is something they may rate as less important and an unnecessary chore. Civic participation is widely seen as a good thing and to be encouraged (Putnam, 2000): it would be interesting to know if such evaluations are unwittingly those of extraverts who may be self-reinforcing their preferred ways of interacting with people around them.

The highly significant negative relationship between civic participation and the neuroticism scale indicates a stronger effect of emotional stability on volunteerism than reported in other studies (Bekkers, 2005; Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007). The effect across the scale was of a similar order to extraversion, with those scoring six on the neuroticism scale being 0.65 times less likely to volunteer than those who scored zero. This result supports the idea that such civic participation may increase levels of emotional or mental stress, and the emotional stability associated with low neuroticism scores allows people with sort this of personality to cope better with such stress. Unlike extraversion, neuroticism did not predict the number of different areas a person might be involved with, only whether or not they were involved at all. This seems to make intuitive sense because increasing neuroticism scores, associated with emotional instability and lack of self confidence, are likely to make people imagine that they could not cope, causing them to avoid any situation that might increase emotional stress. When people do have the psychological strength to volunteer, it is the extraverts who are likely to find this sort of activity most energizing, and who will therefore be able and willing to be involved in multiple areas.

The prediction that civic participation would be inversely correlated with psychoticism was not upheld in this study. This was probably because of the uniformly low psychoticism scores in this sample, which was to be expected because it comprised a group of religious devotees. In samples from the general population, psychoticism is negatively correlated with religiosity (Francis, 2005), so a relatively uniformly-religious population such as this may not have had sufficient variation in levels of psychoticism for this to be a significant predictor of civic participation. It may be that even small differences in the level of this trait are associated with some change in civic participation, but demonstrating such an effect would probably require a longer scale that could more easily discriminate between respondents at the tender-minded end of the psychoticism scale. The Big Five personality model includes

measures of agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness, which are probably the closest to the Eysenck psychoticism scale. The evidence linking these to volunteerism is rather mixed: Bekkers (2005) reported positive correlation with empathy, no correlation with agreeableness and a negative correlation with conscientiousness. Lodi-Smith and Roberts (2007) in their meta analysis found insufficient studies to test agreeableness or empathy and a positive correlation with conscientiousness. Although it seems likely that tough-mindedness does reduce civic participation, there is a need for more thorough testing of this idea.

Conclusion

This study has brought together psychological, religious and sociological factors into a single analysis and indicated that all three may be important in shaping civic participation. Studies on the factors that shape civic participation among religious groups have moved on rapidly in recent years. Not only has the number of socio-demographic or religious variables that have been shown to predict participation increased, but there is also a growth in the sophistication of analysis. Testing for the specific effects of particular variables involves careful control (Loveland et al., 2005), and researchers are also now combining individual and congregational-level predictors (Schwadel, 2005). As information increases, the question moves from how to predict participation to understanding why some people participate more than others. It is at this level that psychological insights become important because they address underlying propensity to participate rather than the opportunities afforded by social capital or socio-economic status. Alongside religious belief, they point to factors that will determine if someone is likely to avail themselves of the opportunities that a particular congregation or social population offers for volunteering. Congregations can make a difference by actively encouraging members to build bridging social capital by volunteering beyond the congregation itself. Whether particular individuals respond to such encouragement may depend more on what sort of person they are than the efforts of those around them.

We have shown that two particular facets of personality, extraversion and emotional stability may be central in determining if people do or do not volunteer and, if they do, extraversion may predict how many different groups that participate in. This analysis was based on data from a wide-ranging survey that sampled a cross section of the Church of England. Although the factors identified were highly

statistically significant in their effect, the effects sizes were quite small and the overall model fit rather poor. There is sufficient evidence from this study to suggest the need for more focused investigations that can more thoroughly assess the interaction of social and psychological factors in shaping civic participation among religious devotees.

Table 1 Percentage of the sample engaged in different types of voluntary civic participation

<i>I do unpaid for:</i>	%
education	15.3
children	7.4
youth work	4.6
social welfare service	10.9
health related group	7.7
cultural activities	13.6
local community action	13.4
the environment	5.9
human rights	3.5
world development	4.7
political groups	5.9
trade unions	1.3
other groups	16.4

Note. $N = 5220$

Table 2 Summary of independent variables ($n = 5220$)

	Mean	S.D.	Median	Mode	Min.	Max.
<i>Intrinsic</i>						
Sex (female =1)	0.56	0.50	1	1	0	1
Age (1 = <40, 6 = < 79)	3.61	1.32	4	4	1	6
Extraversion	2.78	2.15	3	0	0	6
Neuroticism	1.96	1.80	2	0	0	6
Psychoticism	0.21	0.47	0	0	0	2
<i>Socio-economic</i>						
Degree (=1)	0.64	0.48	1	1	0	1
Employed full time (=1)	0.25	0.43	0	0	0	1
Retired (=1)	0.50	0.50	0	0	0	1
Income (1 = <£5k, 9 = >£100k)	3.90	1.96	4	4	0	9
Living with another (=1)	0.66	0.47	1	1	0	1
Children at home (=1)	0.17	0.38	0	0	0	1
Rural (=1)	0.37	0.48	0	0	0	1
Urban (=1)	0.25	0.44	0	0	0	1
<i>Individual religious</i>						
Conservative	2.93	1.52	3	1	1	5
Evangelical	2.40	1.47	2	1	1	5
Charismatic	1.22	0.56	1	1	1	3
Church attendance	6.28	0.53	6	6	5	7
Prayer frequency	4.71	0.76	5	5	1	5
Church involvement	1.46	0.96	1	1	0	4
<i>Congregational</i>						
Conservative	3.25	1.37	3	3	1	5
Evangelical	2.49	1.42	2	1	1	5
Charismatic	1.13	0.43	1	1	1	3
Relationships	15.65	2.94	16	17	4	20
Size	4.42	1.75	4	3	1	9

Table 3. Binary logistical regression of the Civic Participation Index

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Intrinsic</i>				
Female	1.00	0.92	0.84	0.84
Age	2.13 ^{***}	2.05 ^{***}	1.86 ^{***}	1.86 ^{***}
Age squared	0.91 ^{***}	0.90 ^{***}	0.92 ^{***}	0.92 ^{***}
Extraversion	1.12 ^{***}	1.11 ^{***}	1.10 ^{***}	1.10 ^{***}
Neuroticism	0.93 ^{***}	0.94 ^{***}	0.94 ^{***}	0.94 ^{***}
Psychoticism	1.01	1.02	1.04	1.03
<i>Socio-economic</i>				
Education		1.43 ^{***}	1.39 ^{***}	1.39 ^{***}
Employed full time		0.61 ^{***}	0.61 ^{***}	0.61 ^{***}
Retired		1.14	1.14	1.15
Income		1.02	1.01	1.01
Living with another		0.94	0.93	0.93
Children at home		1.23	1.18	1.18
Rural		1.19	1.17	1.16
Urban		1.16	1.19	1.18
<i>Individual religious</i>				
Conservative			0.88 ^{***}	0.90 ^{***}
Evangelical			0.96	1.00
Charismatic			0.92	0.91
Church attendance			0.84	0.84
Prayer frequency			1.05	1.05
Church involvement			1.31 ^{***}	1.32 ^{***}

Congregational

	Conservative				0.97
	Evangelical				0.94
	Charismatic				1.03
	Relationships				0.99
	Size				0.99
<hr/>					
	Cox & Snell R ²	0.03	0.05	0.07	0.07
	Nagelkerke R ²	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.09
Chi-squared:	Block (<i>df</i>)	161.6 (6)	92.8 (8)	118.6 (6)	8.3 (5)
	Model (<i>df</i>)	161.6 (6)	254.5 (14)	373.0 (20)	381.3 (25)
<i>P</i> for change in model		***	***	***	NS
<hr/>					

Note: Table shows odds ratios: numbers below 1 indicate a negative relationship; those above 1 indicate a positive relationship. Significance level set to $p < .001$, $n = 5220$. *** $p < .001$, NS = not significant.

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