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Attitude toward political rights and religious affiliation, experience, saliency and openness:

An empirical enquiry among students in England and Wales

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**Abstract**

This study explores the association between attitude toward political rights, self-assigned religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, and unaffiliated), religious experience, religious saliency and interreligious openness among a sample of 1,058 students between the ages of 14 and 18 years in England and Wales, after taking into account personal factors, psychological factors, and home environment factors. While religious saliency and interreligious openness both predicted a more positive attitude toward political rights, after taking these attitudinal factors into account self-assigned religious affiliation (both Christian and Muslim) predicted a *less* positive attitude toward political rights. Before taking religious saliency and interreligious openness into account self-assigned religious affiliation as Muslim showed a positive effect and self-assigned religious affiliation as Christian showed no effect. This finding highlights the fallacy of discussing self-assigned religious affiliation independently of distinguishing the religious saliency and style of such affiliation.

*Keywords:* Religion, human rights, adolescents, personality

## **Introduction**

The objective of the present study is to draw on the data generated among young people in England and Wales by the International Empirical Research Programme in Religion and Human Rights 1.0 in order to explore empirically the connection between religion and attitude to political rights, and more specifically to test the adequacy of self-reported religious affiliation to explore this connection. The context for this empirical study is set by a discussion of the following areas: the definition and nature of political rights within the broader field of human rights; the problematic interface between the principles enshrined within political rights and the implementation of these principles in England and Wales; the problematic connection between religion and political rights; the problematic nature of self-assigned religious affiliation within social science research; and the added insights into the complexity of assessing adolescent religiosity offered by the International Empirical Research Programme in Religion and Human Rights 1.0.

### **Political rights**

Political rights are those rights under which individuals can live in freedom and liberty and which allow them to participate in the civil and political life of society without discrimination or repression. According to Conte and Burchill (2009, 3) political rights are closely associated with civil rights.

Political rights are those which ensure that individuals are able to participate fully in civil society. Such rights include rights of democratic participation, such as the right to vote and to participate in the public life of the State, freedom of expression and assembly, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. (Conte & Burchill, 2009, 3-4)

The 53 Articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) can also be found in Conte and Burchill (2009, 319-335) and Nickel (2007, 213-231). Part three

of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, Articles 6 – 27) lists the rights. Those relevant to discussion of civil and political rights include three main areas.

The first area concerns individual liberty and security of the person, in the form of freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention (Article 9) and the right when deprived of such liberty to be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the person (Article 10). This complements Article 7 which prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment or the subjection to medical or scientific experimentation without consent. Article 17, the right to privacy, provides that no person shall be subject to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy. Such privacy of the person has arisen as an issue in the context of stop and search, and the conditions of arrest and detention. Individual liberty also allows for the freedom of movement (Article 12), thought, conscience and religion (Article 18), and freedom of expression (Article 19) whether orally, in writing or in art forms.

The second area concerns procedural fairness in law, in the form of rights to due process, a fair and impartial trial, the presumption of innocence (Article 15), and the right to be recognised as a person before the law (Article 16). In particular, as detailed by Conte and Burchill (2009, 155), Article 14 lays down principles applying to the judicial process overall and to this end upholds a series of individual rights such as equality before the courts and tribunals, and the right to a fair and public hearing. Also, as part of this article, an accused person must be tried without undue delay and is entitled to defend himself or herself in person or through legal counsel of their own choosing, and have legal assistance assigned and without payment where she or he does not have the means to pay for it.

The third area concerns freedom of assembly (Article 21) and association, including the right to form and join trade unions (Article 22). The right to freedom of assembly and association relates not only to the right to form an association, but also guarantees the right of such an association freely to carry out its activities.

Thus, for Conte and Burchill (2009, 85-86) freedom to engage in political activity (individually or through political parties and other organizations), to debate public affairs, to hold peaceful demonstrations and meetings, to criticize and oppose, to publish political material, to campaign for election and to advertise political ideas are vital to the valid exercise of electoral rights and democratic participation, including being able openly to criticize or evaluate their governments without fear of interference or punishment (guaranteed under Article 25). In this context, the right to vote is the most fundamental of political rights that connects the individual to the state.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights does, however, contain a derogation provision (Article 4(2)) which allows states to suspend temporarily the application of certain rights 'in times of public emergency that threaten the life of the nation'. These include: the right to recognition as a person before the law (Article 16) and freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 18). However, as Conte and Burchill (2009, 42) clarify, this listing does not remove the permissible limitations upon the right expressed, for example, within Article 18 (3) itself. That is, limitations as are prescribed by law that are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. Thus, a non-derogable treaty right may be capable of limitation depending upon its particular expression.

### **From theory to practice**

That human rights mechanisms exist does not mean that it is easy to translate the stated requirements into concrete and positive action or, indeed, that UK legislation and international legislation are compatible. A gap can exist between the promise of such human rights and the reality of a society in which fulfilment of those rights can be curtailed in various ways. In the UK it was the Human Rights Act (1998) that was designed to strengthen the rights of the individual and sought to allow European Convention rights to be enforced in

British law. Yet Ewing (2010, 283) illustrates how domestic legislation can be in tension with European and International standards. For example, the UK House of Lords has upheld stop and search powers in the Terrorism Act (2000). As reported more recently, police have used powers under this same act to seize a BBC Newsnight journalist's laptop. The reporter had produced reports on British-born Jihadis. The move has alarmed freedom of speech campaigners (Burrell, 2015). Similarly, Metcalf (2012, 160) details how the Human Rights Act (1998) made it unlawful for public bodies and government ministers to act in a manner incompatible with Convention rights but it also gave the courts the power to interpret Acts of Parliament compatibly with Convention rights and, where this was not possible, to declare them incompatible.

Thus, as Ewing (2010, 12-14) points out, the Human Rights Act (1998) does not require the courts to refuse to apply legislation which is inconsistent with Convention rights. Ultimately, it is for the courts to decide the scope of application of the Human Rights Act, both in terms of the substance of the rights and to whom they apply. Likewise, Ewing (2010, 97) details a catalogue of breaches of personal liberty and infringements of human rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights with regard to freedom of assembly and the right of public protest with examples provided of formal and informal restraints placed on protesters during the G2 protests in 2009 and protests in London against the war in Iraq in 2003. Ewing (2010) concludes that the British Human Rights Act (1998) has resulted in more rights but less liberty.

Article 28 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes the Human Rights Committee to supervise compliance with the obligations under the Covenant. As Conte and Burchill (2009, 8-9) state, when the Committee pronounces upon the content or the meaning of a right contained within the Covenant it does so with undeniable authority. However, the Human Rights Committee is not a judicial institution and its findings are not

legally binding. Moreover, appeal through court systems can lead to different and sometimes opposing outcomes and judgements. Thus, UK domestic law may decide to find in one way, but the international court may find in another way. As highlighted by Evans (2012, 104) ‘in many cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights matters remain both unclear and contentious’. As an example of this Conte and Burchill (2009, 94) detail how of significance to the application of Article 21 is the distinction to be made between the peaceful assembly of more than one person and non-peaceful demonstrations. A Human Rights Committee decision found that a requirement to notify the police of an intended meeting in a public place before its commencement might be compatible with the permitted limitations laid down in Article 21.

It has been claimed that the language of human rights is being transformed and distorted to serve as an instrument for the protection of the rights of the majority. In the context of heightened security concerns, following events of 11 September 2001 in the USA and 7 July 2005 in London, encroachments on international legal standards and civil liberties are being justified in the name of security. Thus, according to Fredman (2008, vii) powerful rhetoric about the right to life and security of ordinary people in the face of terrorism is marshalled in support of removing rights to a fair trial and to freedom from torture. Likewise for Dumper and Reed (2012, 3) measures such as ‘stop-and-search’ police operations and demographic profiling are being used to infringe the rights of the minority and the marginalised. Further discussion and detailed examples of the scope and breaches of political and civil rights can be found in numerous publications (Feldman, 2002; Fenwick, 2007; Conte & Burchill, 2009; Ewing, 2010; Reed & Dumper, 2012).

### **Religion and political rights**

Where issues involving religious values and practices are concerned the nature of making claims under international legislation can be further complicated. Discussion of

human rights and its relationship to religion and how religions appropriate the language of human rights and issues of interpretation can be found in Langer (2014, 316-380), Cumper and Lewis (2012), van den Brink and Loenen (2012, 30-37), Richardson and Lykes (2012, 315-321) and Evans (2012, 93-103). In particular, the contributors to Cumper and Lewis (2012) set out to explore some of the problems, challenges and opportunities facing law-makers and policy-makers in having to balance a myriad of Christian, secular and multi-faith values in a number of European states. For Cumper and Lewis:

There exists a kaleidoscope of diversity on the status of religion in European societies, and the methods/means by which religious freedom (for both individuals and groups) can be most appropriately secured. So deeply engrained is this view that the European Court of Human Rights has consistently used it to justify the granting of a wide margin of appreciation to states in cases involving religion, belief and secular values. (Cumper & Lewis, 2012, 5)

Van den Brink and Loenen (2012, 35-36) detail the case of a religious (orthodox Christian) political party (SGP) in the Netherlands that cited faith as the basis for excluding women from standing for election. The SGP proceedings resulted in two diametrically opposed judgements by the highest administrative court in the Netherlands, on the one hand, and by the highest civil court (Supreme Court), on the other hand. The Supreme Court gave priority to the equal rights of women over the right to freedom of religion and association. The European Court, on the basis of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, came to the same conclusion as the Supreme Court in favouring gender equality.

Likewise, Evans (2012, 93) cites a case in which the European Court of Human Rights endorsed the Turkish government's decision to abolish a major political party whose platform included the introduction of elements of shari'a law into Turkey. The European Court's ruling contained some strong language concerning Islam, leading to claims that the

Court was exhibiting a bias towards secularism and neutrality with the effect of favouring traditional Christian values whilst denigrating Islam. Other writers also claim that a pro-Christian bias might exist in the jurisprudence of the Court, and suggest that the bias might work against Islam and New Religious Movements (NRM) being treated fairly by the Court. Relevant evidence of an anti-Muslim, anti-NRM bias is presented from an examination of selected cases from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia and Poland (see Richardson & Lykes, 2012, 315-321).

More specifically, two recent cases concerned with the implication of defamation of religious and religious offence and human rights are detailed by Langer (2014) to illustrate anti-Islamic bias and conflicts that can arise between the rights-based morality of Western societies and the duty-based morality of Islam; the Danish cartoon controversy in 2005 where cartoons of the prophet Mohammed were published in a Danish newspaper and the *Satanic Verses* affair of 1988 where the publishing of a book by Salman Rushdie caused outrage and led to threats on his life. In the case of the Danish Cartoon controversy of 2005 judicial proceedings came to nothing on the international level. There was no conviction or censure of cartoonists or of the editors responsible for the publication of the drawings. Muslim states and regional organisations saw the Danish cartoons as a confirmation that appropriate legal protection for religions was lacking on the international level (Langer, 2014, 6).

In dealing with the Rushdie affair, the British High Court finding that the law of blasphemy only applied to the Christian faith led to claims that the law was obviously biased in favour of Christianity. As Langer (2014, 60-61) clarifies, unfair discrimination toward Islam would be a violation of Articles 9, 10 and 14 of the European Court of Human Rights (protecting freedom of religion and freedom of speech and prohibiting discrimination). The British High Court argued that the European Court of Human Rights had not been violated, as

the freedoms it protected were not absolute, and as punishing Rushdie and his publisher would in turn violate Articles 7 and 10 of the Convention.

While some religious groups feel that they are treated less favourably than Christianity, Christianity itself feels unfairly treated when its values are in tension with those of secularism. Cumper and Lewis (2012, 2) detail the concerns of some prominent religious leaders that Christianity is increasingly under threat from secular values. They cite comments from the former Archbishop of Canterbury (1991-2002), Lord Cury, who has accused the UK judiciary of having a ‘disparaging attitude to the Christian faith and its values’. These examples clearly show that questions regarding freedom of religion and its limits present some challenges in a society that is increasingly religiously, ethnically and culturally diverse.

### **Religious affiliation and social scientific research**

Self-assigned religious affiliation is a well-established measure included within many national census forms, including England and Wales since 2001 (see Francis, 2003; Sherif, 2011), as well as being used in social surveys to map the connection between religion and social values. There are good conceptual and empirical roots for this approach.

Conceptually, the role of self-assigned religious affiliation in predicting individual differences in personal and social values has been clarified by Fane (1999) and discussed in the light of sociological theories of religious identification developed and tested by Bouma (1992) in Australia and by Bibby (1985, 1987) in Canada. For example, Bibby’s theory of ‘encasement’ argues that Canadian Christians are ‘encased’ within the Christian tradition. In other words, the tradition has a strong influential hold over both its active and latent members from which affiliates find it extremely difficult to extricate themselves. Contrary to the claims of secularised theorists that low levels of church attendance are indicative of the erosion of the social significance of religion, Bibby argues that this trend is a manifestation of the re-

packaging of religion in the context of late twentieth century consumer-orientated society.

The debate has been continued by studies like Voas and Bruce (2004).

Empirically, the role of self-assigned religious affiliation in predicting individual differences in personal and social values has been clarified in a sequence of analyses reported on the Teenage Religion and Values Survey (see Francis, 2001a, 2001b, 2008a, 2008b).

Also, within the recent literature on the connection between religion and human rights, self-assigned religious affiliation has been constructively employed in a variety of ways by van der Ven (2010), Ziebertz and Reindl (2012), van der Tuin and Fumbo (2012), Webb, Ziebertz, Curran, and Reindl (2012), Sjöborg (2012), van der Ven (2012), Anthony (2013), van der Ven (2013), Ziebertz and Reindl (2013), Francis and Robbins (2013), Unser, Döhnert, and Ziebertz (2016), Sterkens and Hadiwitanto (2016), Gennerich and Ziebertz (2016), and van der Ven (2016). Many of these studies have also had the benefit of drawing on a range of other indices of religiosity which have been able to argue and to qualify the connection between human rights and self-assigned religious affiliation.

### **Assessing adolescent religiosity**

The International Empirical Research Programme in Religion and Human Rights 1.0 offered opportunities to the collaborative research community to develop a range of measures of adolescent religiosity, alongside which the strengths and weaknesses of the standard index of self-assigned religious affiliation could be assessed. Three of these measures may be of interest to the present study and will be introduced in turn: the Mystical Experience Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2014); the Religious Saliency Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2016); and the Interreligious Openness Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2016).

The three-item Mystical Experience Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2014) drew together three items from the International Empirical Research Project in Religion and

Human Rights 1.0 that tapped aspects of mystical experience in ways that were not tied to explicit religious traditions and consequently appropriate for use among Christian, Muslim, and religiously unaffiliated students. Drawing on Stace's (1960) analysis of mystical experience, the items were designed to address both introvertive and extrovertive mysticism. This scale was subsequently employed by Francis, Ziebertz, Robbins, and Reindl (2015).

The four-item Religious Saliency Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2016) was developed from the three-item measure originally employed by Ok and Eren (2013), by Ziebertz and Reindl (2013), and by Unser, Döhnert, and Ziebertz (2016). Although not consciously building on the early work of Allport (1966) and Allport and Ross (1967), this measure captures the flavour of their definition of intrinsic religious orientation in contrast to their definition of extrinsic religious orientation. Allport defines extrinsic religious orientation in the following terms.

While there are several varieties of extrinsic religious orientation, we may say they all point to a type of religion that is strictly utilitarian: useful for the self in granting safety, social standing, solace, and endorsement for one's chosen way of life. (Allport, 1966, p. 455)

Regarding the nature of intrinsic orientation, Allport (1966, 455) made the following case.

The intrinsic form of the religious sentiment regards faith as a supreme value in its own right . . . . A religious sentiment of this sort floods the whole life with motivations and meaning. Religion is no longer limited to single segments of self-interest.

The four-item Religious Saliency Scale was also used by Francis, Robbins, and McKenna (2016).

The Interreligious Openness Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2016) employed the same basic items as those proposed by Ok and Eren (2013), but using a somewhat

different translation of their original items. The translation employed emphasised the perspective within the theology of religions that focused on the truth claims of religions. The six-item Interreligious Openness Scale was also used by Francis, Robbins, and McKenna (2016).

### **Research question**

Against this background the aims of the present study drew on data generated in England and Wales by the International Empirical Research Programme in Religion and Human Rights 1.0 in order to construct and to test an index of attitude toward political rights and to test the general hypothesis that religiosity functions as a significant predictor among young people in terms of individual differences in attitude toward political rights. Within this general hypothesis, the study is designed to test the adequacy of self-assigned religious affiliation to predict individual differences in attitude toward political rights.

In this context religiosity has been conceptualised in terms of self-assigned religious affiliation and three other religious factors. Two of the religious factors included are the measure of religious saliency and the measure of interreligious openness. Both measures were shown by Francis and Robbins (2016) to be correlated with human rights attitudes. The third religious factor included is the Mystical Experience Scale developed by Francis and Robbins (2014).

This simple hypothesis, however, needs to be set within a wider theoretical framework that in turn hypothesises that individual differences in religiosity may be contaminated by a range of other factors. In particular three groups of factors may contaminate the apparent effect of religiosity on social attitude, namely personal factors, psychological factors, and home environment factors. In the present study these three factors are taken into account in the following way and for the following reasons. In the analysis each of the three factors will be operationalised as a set of independent variables.

The first set of independent variables concerns *personal factors*. The two personal factors included are sex and age, since both factors are recognised as key predictors of individual differences in adolescent religiosity. Research tends to show that females record higher levels of religiosity than males (Francis & Penny, 2013) and that levels of religiosity decline during adolescence (Kay & Francis, 1996).

The second set of independent variables concerns *home environment factors*. Two home environment factors were included in order to explore the educational level of father and mother, and the extent to which political matters and religious matters are spoken about at home. Earlier studies have shown that such factors are related to the attitude of young people both to religion and to human rights (see Francis, Robbins, & McKenna, 2016).

The third set of independent variables concerns *psychological factors*. The three psychological factors included were measures of psychoticism, neuroticism and extraversion as proposed by the Eysenckian three dimensional model of personality (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991). Empirical studies within the psychology of religion employing this model of personality have consistently shown an inverse association between psychoticism scores and religiosity, as crystallised by Francis (1992) and confirmed by more recent studies, including Francis, Robbins, ap Siôn, Lewis, and Barnes (2007); Francis, Robbins, Santosh, and Bhanot (2008); and Francis and Hermans (2009).

## **Method**

### **Procedure**

The survey was conducted within selected schools in England and Wales where there was a good mix of Christian, Muslim and religiously-unaffiliated students. Within participating schools complete classes of year 10, year 11, year 12 and year 13 students (14- to 18-year-olds) were invited to take part in the survey. Students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Although all pupils were given the choice not to participate,

very few decided not to take part in the survey, probably in the light of the interest of the subject matter.

### **Measures**

*Attitude toward political rights* was assessed by a newly constructed scale comprising the following ten items: minority groups should be free to use the town/village hall to hold protest meetings; police searches of private homes without a search warrant should be prohibited; imposing inhuman mental treatment on people accused of mass murder should be forbidden; a cabinet minister should allow his striking officials to meet in a ministerial building; the police should only be allowed to inspect people's cars under strict judicial conditions; inflicting severe physical suffering on potential terrorists should be prohibited; the police should not use force against political demonstrators; the government should not pass a law forbidding all forms of public protest; guaranteeing terrorists access to a lawyer is necessary to protect their individual rights; a mass murderer should be informed of his/her right to keep silent before the court. Each item was rated on a five-point scale: agree strongly (5), agree (4), not certain (3), disagree (2), and disagree strongly (1).

*Personal factors* were assessed by two variables: sex, male (1) and female (2); and school year, year 10 (1), year 11 (2), year 12 (3), and year 13 (4).

*Home factors* were assessed by two variables: educational level of father (foster/step father) and mother (foster/step mother), each rated, primary school (1), secondary school (2), and college university (3); and political matters and religious matters spoken about at home, each rated, never (1), sometimes (2), and often (3).

*Psychological factors* were assessed by the abbreviated form of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (EPQR-A) as developed by Francis, Brown, and Philipchalk (1992) and further modified by Francis, Robbins, Loudon, and Haley (2001). This

instrument comprised three six-item measures for extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. Each item is rated on a two-point scale: yes (1), and no (0).

*Religious factors* were assessed by three scales. The four-item Religious Saliency Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2016) is concerned with the personal importance of religion and the impact of religion on daily life. The six-item Interreligious Openness Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2016) is concerned with openness to the conversation between religious traditions and the benefits of such conversation for personal life. The three-item Mystical Experience Scale proposed by Francis and Robbins (2014) is concerned with both introvertive and extrovertive mysticism. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale: agree strongly (5), agree (4), not certain (3), disagree (2), and disagree strongly (1).

*Religious affiliation* was assessed by a checklist of predetermined options, including both Christian and Muslim denominations.

### **Sample**

The analyses were conducted on the 1,058 students who self-assigned as Christian, as Muslim, or as religiously unaffiliated, excluding from analyses those who identified with other religious traditions.

### **Results and discussion**

The first step in data analysis explored the characteristics of the sample in terms of sex, age, and self-assigned religious affiliation. There was good balance between the sexes (52% male and 48% female), a good spread of ages (13% aged fourteen, 37% aged fifteen, 31% aged sixteen, 15% aged seventeen, and 5% aged eighteen), and sufficient representation of the three religious groups included in the analyses (19% Muslim, 45% Christian, and 36% none).

The second step in data analysis explored the two home environment characteristics in terms of the educational level of father and mother, and the extent to which political matters

and religious matters are spoken about at home. The data showed that the majority of students came from homes where the parents had received some post-secondary education (58% of fathers and 62% of mothers), and that religious matters and political matters were often discussed at homes occupied by less than a quarter of the students (23% often discussed religious matters and 16% often discussed political matters).

- insert table 1 about here -

The third step in data analysis takes an overview of the psychometric properties of the six scales employed in the study in terms of means, standard deviations and the alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951). The data in table 2 demonstrate that the ten-item scale concerned with attitude toward political and civil rights, the three scales concerned with religious factors (religious saliency, interreligious openness, and mystical experience) and two of the three scales concerned with psychological factors (extraversion and neuroticism) recorded internal consistency reliability in terms of alpha coefficients meeting the threshold of .65 threshold commended by DeVellis (2003). The lower alpha coefficient recorded by the psychoticism scale is consistent with the known operational difficulties incurred in measuring this dimension of personality (Francis, Brown, & Philipchalk, 1992).

- insert tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 about here -

Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 provide more details about the scale of political rights and its three scales concerned with religiosity in terms of the correlations between each item and the sum of the other items comprising that scale and in terms of the item endorsement across the whole sample expressed as the sum of the agree strongly and agree responses. The item rest-of-scale correlations demonstrate that each item is contributing usefully to the scale of which it is part.

- insert table 6 about here -

The fourth step in data analysis explores the bivariate correlations between attitude toward political and civil rights, the two personal factors (age and sex), the two home environment factors (parental education level, and discussion of religion and politics), the three psychological factors (psychoticism, neuroticism, and extraversion), the three religious factors (religious saliency, interreligious openness, and mystical experience) and self-assigned religious affiliation. Three aspects of the correlations presented in table 6 merit commentary. In view of the number of correlations tested concurrently the commentary has been set on correlations that reached the one percent probability level.

First, in terms of personal factors, sex emerged as a significant predictor of Christian affiliation and personality. Females were significantly more likely to self-identify as Christian. The sex differences recorded on the three personality measures were consistent with the wider literature (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991), with women recording higher scores on the extraversion scale and on the neuroticism scale, and with men recording higher scores on the psychoticism scale. Age emerged as a significant predictor of religious affiliation (with older students less likely to report Christian affiliation and more likely to report Muslim affiliation). Older students were also more likely to experience discussion of politics at home.

Second, self-assigned religious affiliation emerged as a significant predictor of individual difference in terms of psychological factors, home factors, and religious factors. In terms of psychological factors, being Muslim was associated with higher psychoticism scores, while being Christian was associated with lower psychoticism scores. In terms of home factors, being Muslim was associated with higher levels of religious discussion at home, while being Christian was associated with lower levels of political discussion at home. In terms of religious factors, being Muslim was associated with higher levels of religious saliency and higher levels of interreligious openness, while being Christian was associated with higher levels of interreligious openness.

Third, in terms of attitude toward political rights, home factors and religious factors demonstrated greater association than personal and psychological factors. Regarding personal factors, neither sex nor age were correlated with attitude toward political rights. Regarding psychological factors, neither psychoticism scores nor neuroticism scores were correlated with attitude toward political and civil rights, although there was a significant negative correlation between extraversion scores and attitude toward political rights. Regarding home factors, both the discussion of religion at home and the discussion of politics at home were positively correlated with a positive attitude toward political rights. On the other hand, attitude toward political rights was correlated with neither paternal nor maternal educational level. Regarding religious factors, higher levels of religious saliency and higher levels of interreligious openness were positively correlated with a positive view of political and civil rights. On the other hand, attitude toward political rights was not correlated with mystical experience scores. Finally, self-assigned religious affiliation was significantly associated with attitude toward political rights in the sense that Muslim students recorded a more positive attitude. On the other hand, attitude toward political rights was not correlated with Christian affiliation, either positively or negatively.

- insert table 7 about here -

The fifth step in data analysis constructs a series of regression models with attitude toward political rights as the dependent variable (see table 7) and with the independent variables built up in the order of introducing personal factors (model 1), adding psychological factors (model 2), adding home environment factors (model 3), adding religious attitude (model 4), and adding self-assigned religious affiliation (model 5). It is the fifth model that is of greatest interest when all the predictor factors are taken into account. In this model, the factors of core importance are the religious factors. The personal factors (age and sex) are of no statistical significance. Of the three psychological factors (psychoticism, extraversion, and

neuroticism) only one is of statistical significance, namely the association between introversion and a more positive attitude toward political rights. Of the four home environment factors (father's education, mother's education, political discussion at home, and religious discussion at home) only one is of statistical significance, namely the association between politics discussed at home and a more positive attitude toward political rights. Religious factors emerge as strong predictors, with both religious saliency and interreligious openness being significantly positively correlated with a more positive attitude toward political rights. However, when these two measures of religious attitude are entered into the equation, self-assigned religious affiliation (both Christian and Muslim) now carry significant negative beta weights. This finding needs to be read alongside the data presented in table 6 where the bivariate correlation coefficients reported no significant association between self-assigned Christian affiliation and attitude toward political rights, and a significant *positive* association between self-assigned Muslim affiliation and attitude toward political rights. The implication is that, after religious salience and interreligious openness have been taken into account, self-assigned religious affiliation apart from these religious attitudes is accompanied by *less* commitment to political rights.

### **Conclusion**

This study drew on data generated in England and Wales by the International Empirical Research Programme in Religion and Human Rights 1.0 in order to test an index of attitude toward political rights, and to test the hypothesis that religiosity functions as a significant predictor among young people in terms of individual differences in attitude toward political rights, while taking into account certain personal factors, psychological factors, and home environment factors. Six main conclusions emerge from this study.

The first conclusion concerns the proposed measure of attitude toward political rights. This ten-item measure achieved a satisfactory alpha coefficient indicating reasonable internal

consistency reliability, while the face validity of the items sampled a fair range of issues relevant to the broad domain of political rights. On these grounds it is reasonable to interpret the correlates of scores recorded on this measure in the present study as properly relating to individual differences in attitude toward political rights, and to commend the scale for use in future research.

The second conclusion concerns the relationship between personal factors and attitude toward political rights. Within the age range covered by the present study (14 to 18 years), neither age nor sex are implicated in predicting attitude toward political rights.

The third conclusion concerns the relationship between psychological factors and attitude toward political rights. The data make it clear that neither psychoticism scores nor neuroticism scores are implicated in predicting attitude toward political rights. There is, however, a significant negative association between extraversion scores and attitude toward political rights. This significant negative association remained constant throughout the four models, confirming that the variance in attitude toward political rights accounted for by extraversion scores is neither affected by nor mediated through other variables in the models. In other words, among these data a somewhat more positive attitude toward political rights is held by introverts than by extraverts. The association is consistent with Eysenck's original hypothesis linking more tenderminded social attitude with introversion, although not with the later Eysenckian theory that shifted the association from low extraversion scores to low psychoticism scores (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1976).

The fourth conclusion concerns the relationship between home environment factors and attitude toward political rights. The data make it clear that, before the students' own religiosity is taken into account, discussing politics at home and discussing religion at home are both associated with more positive attitude toward political rights. However, when the students' own religiosity is taken into account, discussing religion at home ceases to be a

predictor of attitude toward political rights. In other words, the effect of discussing religion at home on attitude toward political rights is entirely mediated through the effect of discussing religion at home on the students' religiosity. Discussing politics at home, however, remains effective after the students' own religiosity is brought into the equation. While what is discussed at home is important in predicting attitude toward political rights, neither father's educational level nor mother's educational level is a significant predictor of attitude toward political rights.

The fifth conclusion concerns the effect of the three religious scales on attitude toward political rights. The three scales were designed to assess religious or mystical experience, religious saliency and interreligious openness. Two of these scales recorded significant association with attitude toward political rights, while the third did not. Moreover, the two effective scales both contributed independently and so need to be considered separately. A more positive attitude toward political rights was associated with greater religious saliency, that is with young people who say that their religion is important to them, has great influence in their daily life and plays a major part in their decision-making. A more positive attitude toward political rights was associated with greater interreligious openness, that is with young people who support conversation among religions and who believe that the way to truth is when religions have dialogue with one another. While religious saliency and interreligious openness predicted individual differences in attitude toward political rights, religious or mystical experience did not.

The sixth conclusion concerns the behaviour of the variable described as self-assigned religious affiliation. The correlation matrix suggested that those who self-identified as Muslim recorded a more positive attitude toward political rights than the religiously unaffiliated, and that those who self-identified as Christian recorded no difference in their attitude compared with the religiously unaffiliated. The regression models, however, told a

different story: after taking religious saliency and interreligious openness into account, self-identification as Christian and self-identification as Muslim were both associated with a less positive attitude toward political and civil rights. This finding is consistent with the classic observations of Allport (1966) and Allport and Ross (1967) who developed and refined the distinctions between intrinsic religious orientation and extrinsic religious orientation. After the measure of religious saliency has been taken into account, those who then claim religious affiliation with low religious saliency are likely to adopt less inclusive and less progressive social attitudes. This finding is consistent with the findings reported by Francis, Robbins, and McKenna (2016) in their study of the connection between religion and women's socio-economic rights and leads to the following two recommendations.

The first recommendation is that it may be misleading to speak of religious *group* differences (Christian, Muslim, and religiously unaffiliated) in attitude toward political rights among students in England and Wales unless religious attitudes (religious saliency and interreligious openness) are also taken into account. This observation is grounded in recognition that religious affiliation by itself is an inadequate and inefficient indicator of religiosity (see Francis, 2009). The conclusion from the regression model is that higher levels of religious saliency and higher levels of interreligious openness are both (independently) predictors of a more positive attitude toward political rights. However, when the effects of these religious attitudes have been taken into account, both self-identification as Muslim and self-identification as Christian are associated with a *less* positive attitude toward political rights. This suggests that the religiously affiliated (both Christian and Muslim) who do not attribute religious saliency to their affiliation may be exercising religious affiliation as an expression of personal conservatism, a position comparable with lower commitment to political rights.

The second recommendation arising from these findings for future research concerning the connection between religion and human rights more generally among young people is as follows. Given the general interest in discussing religious group differences in attitude toward human rights, it would be prudent to build religious attitudes (like saliency and interreligious openness) into the model. This facilitates differentiation between different expressions of self-assigned religious affiliation, where religious affiliation on its own may confuse those for whom religious affiliation may signal personal religious engagement and commitment (intrinsic religious orientation) and those for whom religious affiliation may signal social conservatism (extrinsic religious orientation).

A clear limitation with the present study is that it is based solely on data from young people (self-identified as Christian, as Muslim, and as religiously unaffiliated) within England and Wales. However, given the intention of the International Empirical Research Programme in Religion and Human Rights 1.0 to generate a context for international comparative research, it would be good for the current analyses to be replicated and tested on the comparable data from other countries.

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Table 1

*Scale properties*

	N items	Alpha	Mean	SD
Political and Civil Rights Scale	10	.76	31.86	5.97
Religious Saliency Scale	4	.81	12.47	4.51
Interreligious Openness Scale	6	.79	17.91	4.61
Mystical Experience Scale	3	.68	9.52	2.32
Extraversion Scale	6	.78	4.41	1.80
Neuroticism Scale	6	.74	3.09	1.69
Psychoticism Scale	6	.47	0.80	1.06

Table 2

*Scale of Attitude toward Political and Civil Rights*

	<i>r</i>	yes %
Minority groups should be free to use the town/village hall to hold protest meetings	.42	47
Police searches of private homes without a search warrant should be prohibited	.39	42
Imposing inhuman mental treatment on people accused of mass murder should be forbidden	.44	30
A cabinet minister should allow his striking officials to meet in a ministerial building	.38	25
The police should only be allowed to inspect people's cars under strict judicial conditions	.38	33
Inflicting sever physical suffering on potential terrorists should be prohibited	.44	32
The police should not use force against political demonstrators	.49	33
The government should not pass a law forbidding all forms of public protest	.39	38
Guaranteeing terrorists access to a lawyer is necessary to protect their individual rights	.49	32
A mass murderer should be informed of his/her right to keep silent before the court	.41	45

Note: *r* = correlation between item and sum of other items

Yes% = combined agree strongly and agree responses



Table 3

*Religious Saliency Scale*

	<i>r</i>	yes %
My religion or worldview is important to me	.49	60
My religion/worldview has great influence on my daily life	.80	34
If I have to take important decisions, my religion/worldview plays a major part in it	.82	34
My life would be quite different, had I not my religion/worldview	.77	39

Note: *r* = correlation between item and sum of other items

Yes% = combined agree strongly and agree responses

Table 4

*Interreligious Openness Scale*

	<i>r</i>	yes %
Living life to the full can only be received through conversation between religions or worldviews	.46	20
Religions or worldviews are all equal, they are all directed to the truth	.63	26
Truth can only be found when religions or worldviews communicate with one another	.67	29
All religions or world views are equally valuable; they represent different ways to the truth	.64	33
The way to truth is only to be found when religions or worldviews have dialogue with one another	.70	22
There is no difference between religions or worldviews, they all stem from a longing for truth	.55	27

Note: *r* = correlation between item and sum of other items

Yes% = combined agree strongly and agree responses

Table 5

*Mystical Experience Scale*

	<i>r</i>	yes %
I have had an experience of feeling oneness with myself with all things	.49	34
I have had an experience of feeling everything in the world being a part of the same whole	.59	28
I have had an experience of feeling my own self merging into something greater	.40	35

Note: *r* = correlation between item and sum of other items

Yes% = combined agree strongly and agree responses

Table 6

*Correlation matrix*

	Sex	Age	Psy	Neu	Ext	Father's education	Mother's education	Politics	Religion	Mystical	Saliency	Openness	Christian	Muslim
Political rights	.01	.01	.03	.06	-.11**	.03	.03	.15**	.15**	.07	.24**	.34**	.07	.12**
Muslim	-.03	.09**	.10**	-.04	-.06	-.05	-.16**	.08	.46**	.07	.49**	.19**	-.44**	
Christian	.09**	-.12**	-.17**	.03	.08**	.03	.07	-.08**	-.02	.13**	.06	.11**		
Openness	.07	-.02	-.08	.11**	-.04	-.03	.01	.10**	.16**	.17**	.32**			
Saliency	-.02	.03	-.07	-.02	-.02	.03	-.05	.18**	.56**	.23**				
Mystical experience	-.03	-.06	-.04	-.02	.15**	.00	-.01	-.01	.08**					
Religion discussed	.05	.06	-.02	.01	.03	.05	.01	.32**						
Politics discussed	.00	.09**	-.05	.03	-.03	.14**	.08**							
Mother's education	-.05	-.15**	-.05	-.05	.00	.40**								
Father's education	-.12**	-.09**	-.11**	-.06	-.04									
Extraversion (Ext)	.15**	.03	.01	-.21**										
Neuroticism (Neu)	.18**	.01	-.02											
Psychoticism (Psy)	-.14**	.03												
Age	.17**													

Note: \*\*,  $p < .01$ ;

Table 7

*Regression models on attitude toward political rights with weights ( $\beta$ ) for each variable and total explained variance ( $R^2$ )*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Personal factors</i>					
Sex	.003	.016	.019	.011	.018
Age	.010	.009	-.004	.008	-.002
<i>Psychological factors</i>					
Psychoticism		.033	.042	.071*	.062
Neuroticism		.039	.036	.014	.012
Extraversion		-.100**	-.101**	-.086**	-.082**
<i>Home environment factors</i>					
Father's education			.010	.023	.023
Mother's education			.020	.023	.016
Politics discussed			.104**	.088**	.069*
Religion discussed			.116**	-.004	.024
<i>Religious factors</i>					
Saliency				.137**	.180**
Mystical experience				-.001	.008
Openness				.293**	.311**
<i>Religious factors</i>					
Christian					-.143**
Muslim					-.113**
Total $r^2$	-.002	.009	.038	.149	.161

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$