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The turn toward extraversion: The changing psychological profile of Anglican clergy

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Abstract

Recent research has drawn attention to two features associated with extraversion in Anglican ministry. Extraverts are under-represented among Anglican clergy. Extravert leaders are associated with church growth. The present reanalysis of data collected within the Church Growth Research Programme from 1,372 stipendiary clergy serving in the Church of England who were aged 70 or under demonstrated that in recent decades there has been a slight tendency for the Church of England to ordain more extraverts, a feature that cannot simply be explained by the reduced numbers of Anglo-Catholics (who are more likely to be introverts) or growth in charismatic influence. This slight growth, however, has been insufficient to address what may be interpreted as covert discrimination against extraverts in selection for ordination. It is argued that a commitment to inclusivity in recruiting clergy might need to take account of psychological type characteristics of those presenting for selection as much as monitoring their ethnic background.

Keywords: Anglican clergy, psychological type, extraversion, empirical theology

Introduction

The language of introversion and extraversion offers an anchor of consistency across a range of different theories and models of personality. Extraversion is one of the three major dimensions of personality within the model proposed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975). Extraversion is one of the big five factors of personality in the model proposed by Costa and McCrae (1985). Extraversion is one of the higher order factors emerging from the sixteen personality factor model proposed by Cattell, Eber, and Tatsuoka (1970). Extraversion is also one of the constructs within psychological type theory as originally advanced by Jung (1971) and as operationalised within the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) and within other measures of psychological type, including the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1978) and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017).

Although the language of introversion and extraversion is common across different theories and models of personality, the precise way in which this language is used varies among these models. For example, while in the Eysenckian model the emphasis is on varying levels of sociability, in the Jungian model the emphasis is on the directionality of energy sources. In the present study the Jungian model is the one adopted. Within psychological type theory, introversion and extraversion describe the two preferred orientations of the inner world and the outer world. Introverts prefer to focus their attention on the inner world of ideas and draw their energy from that inner world. When introverts are tired and need energizing they look to the inner world. Extraverts prefer to focus their attention on the outer world of people and things and draw their energy from that outer world. When extraverts are tired and need energizing they look to the outer world.

Introverts like quiet for concentration. They want to be able to shut off the distractions of the outer world and turn inwards. They can work at one solitary project for a long time

without interruption. When they are engaged in a task in the outer world they may become absorbed in the ideas behind that task. Introverts work best alone and may resent distractions and interruptions from other people. They dislike being interrupted by the telephone, tend to think things through before acting, and may spend so long in thought that they miss the opportunity to act. Introverts prefer to learn by reading rather than by talking with others. They may also prefer to communicate with others in writing, rather than face-to-face or over the phone; this is particularly the case if they have something unpleasant to communicate. Introverts are oriented to the inner world. They focus on ideas, concepts and inner understanding. They are reflective, may consider deeply before acting, and they probe inwardly for stimulation.

Extraverts like variety and action. They want to be able to shut off the distractions of the inner world and turn outward. They can become impatient with long, slow jobs. When they are working in the company of other people they may become more interested in how others are doing the job than in the job itself. Extraverts like to have other people around them in the working environment, and enjoy the stimulus of sudden interruptions and telephone calls. Extraverts like to act quickly and decisively, even when it is not totally appropriate to do so. Extraverts prefer to learn a task by talking it through with other people. They prefer to communicate with other people face-to-face or over the phone, rather than in writing. They often find that their own ideas become clarified through communicating them to others. Extraverts are oriented to the outer world. They focus on people and things. They prefer to learn by trial and error and they do so with confidence. They are active people, and they scan the outer environment for stimulation.

In the development of the Payne Index of Ministry Styles, Francis and Payne (2002) argued that preferences between introversion and extraversion could be projected onto different ways of experiencing and expressing Christian ministry. They tested this theory

among a sample of 191 clergymen serving in the Church in Wales. The Payne Index of Ministry Styles captured the essence of the extraverted ministry style in terms of endorsement of the following expressions:

- I gain energy by visiting groups of people
- I am vitalised by parish visiting
- Preaching to a large congregation gives me energy
- I am energised by meeting new people in the parish
- I gain energy by leading large group meetings
- I feel energised by leading worship with large congregations
- I am refreshed by being out and about in the parish

The essence of the introverted ministry style was captured in terms of endorsement of the following expressions:

- I am refreshed by spending time alone in prayer
- I gain energy conducting worship with small groups
- I feel energised by giving time to preparing sermons
- Reading about a theological topic in depth refreshes me
- Reading and writing in my study energises me
- I am energised by a contemplative style of prayer
- I am vitalised by praying for people

The suggestion is not that there is a stark contrast between the ways in which introverts and extraverts understand ministry, but that there is a difference of emphasis between the two types. Introverts will engage professionally in all the areas that energise extraverts, but they may be more drained by such activities and be less equipped to maintain them over long periods of time. Extraverts will engage professionally in all the areas that energise introverts, but they may be more drained by such activities and be less equipped to

maintain them over long periods of time. Both introverts and extraverts exercise valuable ministries within the Anglican Church, but the priorities may appear somewhat different.

The first serious attempt to map the psychological type profile of Anglican clergy in England was reported by Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007). They drew together samples of 626 clergymen and 237 clergywomen in England who had completed the 126-item Form G (Anglicised) of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985), generally in the context of a wide range of personal and professional development programmes, including courses run for curates in the early years of ministry, for mid-career development, and for pre-retirement preparation. Although not all the clergy participating in the project provided information about their ages, the great majority did so. Of the total male Anglican clergy in the sample from whom data on age were available, 6% were under 30, 24% were in their thirties, 34% were in their forties, 26% were in their fifties, and 10% were 60 or older. Of the total female Anglican clergy in the sample from whom data on age were available, 4% were under 30, 19% were in their thirties, 37% were in their forties, 29% were in their fifties, and 11% were 60 or older.

On the basis of this study, Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007) found that 57% of the clergymen and 54% of the clergywomen preferred introversion. The preference for introversion was slightly higher than found in the population as a whole. Reporting norms from the UK, Kendall (1998) found that 53% of men and 48% of women preferred introversion. The proportions were significantly higher for women but not for men. In a first attempt to check these findings, Francis, Robbins, Duncan, and Whinney (2010) reported on a comparable sample of 622 Anglican clergymen in England, and Francis, Robbins, and Whinney (2011) reported on a comparable sample of 83 Anglican clergywomen in England. In this replication study 64% of the clergymen preferred introversion and so did 63% of the clergywomen. Both findings were significantly higher than the population norms.

In a second attempt to check these findings, Village (2011) profiled 529 clergymen and 518 clergywomen ordained in the Anglican Church in the United Kingdom from 2004 to 2007, employing the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005). The majority of these clergy were ordained within the Church of England. In this study 58% of the clergymen and 60% of the clergywomen preferred introversion.

A second set of three studies has profiled the psychological type of Anglican clergymen in Wales. The Church in Wales is much smaller than the Church of England and the number of clergywomen has been much smaller than the number of clergymen. Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001) drew on a sample of 427 clergymen who had completed the 126-item Form G (Anglicised) of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). Of these participants, 13% were in their twenties, 20% were in their thirties, 34% were in their forties, 25% were in their fifties, and 8% were in their sixties. In this study 59% of the clergymen preferred introversion. In the first attempt to check these findings, Francis, Littler, and Robbins (2010) reported on a sample of 231 Anglican clergymen in Wales, using the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005). In this study 69% of the clergymen preferred introversion. In the second attempt to check these findings, Payne and Lewis (2015) reported on a sample of 268 Anglican clergymen in Wales using the Francis Psychological Type Scales. In this study 65% of the clergymen preferred introversion.

A third set of two studies has profiled the psychological type of Anglican clergy serving in Ordained Local Ministry (OLM) in the Church of England. In a study using the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005) among 79 women and 56 men ordained to this form of ministry, Francis and Village (2012) found that 63% of the clergymen and 62% of the clergywomen preferred introversion. In a study using the Francis Psychological Type Scales among 144 women ordained to this form of ministry, Francis, Robbins, and Jones (2012) found that 59% preferred introversion.

Research question

Cumulatively these nine studies (four among Church of England clergy, three among Church in Wales clergy, and two specifically among Ordained Local Ministers) provide a fairly clear picture that the Anglican Church in England and Wales has tended to value an over-representation of introverts within those serving in ordained ministry. Two recent studies, however, may suggest a renewed focus on the place of extraverts within ordained ministry.

In the first of these two studies, Francis, Whinney, and Robbins (2013) reported on the psychological type profile of 168 bishops, serving or retired, in the Church of England who completed the Francis Psychological Type Scales. The nine studies of Anglican priests reviewed above found the following proportions of introverts (reported here in the order reviewed above), 57% among men and 54% among women (Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, & Slater, 2007), 64% among men (Francis, Robbins, & Whinney, 2011), 58% among men (Francis, Payne, & Jones, 2001), 69% among men (Francis, Littler, & Robbins, 2010), 65% among men (Payne & Lewis, 2015), 63% among men and 62% among women (Francis & Village, 2012), and 59% among women (Francis, Robbins, & Jones, 2012). Among bishops, however, Francis, Whinney, and Robbins (2013) found that the proportion of introverts fell to 46%.

In the second of these two studies, Voas and Watt (2014), reporting on findings from the Church Growth Research Programme, made the following claim. They wrote that ‘there are strong associations between growth and personality type, but none between growth and attendance on leadership courses’ (p. 50). The point is that Voas and Watt found that the clearest predictor of church growth from among the range of predictor variables at their disposal were scores recorded by the church leader on the extraversion scale. This conclusion

was based on 1,458 completed surveys that included the Francis Psychological Type Scales.

Commenting on this finding, Francis (2016) wrote as follows:

There are two particularly surprising features about this finding. The first feature is that David Voas' work is generally located within the sociology of religion, and sociologists of religion are not noted for employing or promoting psychological theories. The second feature is that this particular finding, although voiced twice in Voas' report, did not make its way into the public summary of key findings from the Church Growth Research Programme published in *From Anecdote to Evidence* (Church of England, 2014). (Francis, 2016, pp. 91-92)

Given the attention drawn to extraversion within Anglican ministry by these two studies reported by Francis, Whinney, and Robbins (2013) and by Voas and Watt (2014), the aim of the present study is to re-examine the data gathered by Voas and Watt (2014) within the Church Growth Research Programme in order to explore whether there are observable patterns within the trend to ordain extraverts into Anglican ministry. In particular the data collected within the Church Growth Research Programme allows the following five research questions to be formulated and related hypotheses to be explored.

The first research question asks whether there is a connection between extraversion and church tradition. There is some evidence from previous research that the Evangelical tradition may be more appealing than the Anglo-Catholic tradition to extraverts (Village, 2013). Our hypothesis is that, if the Church of England were recruiting a larger proportion of Evangelicals into ministry, this may increase the proportion of extraverts serving in ministry.

The second research question asks whether there is a connection between extraversion and the Charismatic Movement. There is some evidence from previous research that extraverts may find the charismatic tradition more appealing than introverts (Louden & Francis, 2001). Our hypothesis is that, if the Church of England were recruiting a larger

proportion of Charismatics into ministry, this may increase the proportion of extraverts serving in ministry.

The third research question asks whether there is a connection between extraversion and sex. There is some evidence to suggest that in the general population women are more likely to prefer extraversion than men (Kendall, 1998). Our hypothesis is that, if the Church of England were recruiting a larger proportion of women into ministry, this may increase the proportion of extraverts serving in ministry.

The fourth research question asks whether the Church of England has continued to recruit the same proportion of extraverts into ministry over time, or whether there has been a significant turn toward extraversion over time. This research question needs to distinguish between two variables: year of ordination and age at ordination. At present there is no previous research to guide our hypothesis on this issue.

The fifth research question asks whether, independently of the effects of evangelicals, charismatics, and women serving in ministry, the Church of England may be recruiting more extraverts into ministry. Our hypothesis is that, if the Church of England is (implicitly or explicitly) changing the criteria of its selection process in order to affirm more extraverted candidates for ministry, this would be visible after controlling for church tradition, charismatic preference and sex differences.

Method

Sample

The database was created as part of the Church of England's church growth research programme (Church of England, 2014) from an online survey of churches (Voas & Watt, 2014). The current analysis is based on 1,372 stipendiary clergy who were aged 70 or under and who had full data for all the variables used in the analysis.

Instruments

The dependent variable, the extraversion score, was assessed by the Francis Psychological Types Scales (FPTS), which have been widely used among Anglican clergy and show good psychometric properties (Francis, 2005; Francis, Robbins, & Craig, 2011; Village, 2011, 2013; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017). Cronbach reliability in this sample was .83. The main predictor variable was year of ordination (as a deacon), used as a continuous variable in regression, but categorised for display purposes in <1980, 1980s, 1990s, and >1999. Control variables were sex (1 = male, 2 = female), age at ordination (in years), church tradition and Charismaticism. The latter two constructs were measured on seven-point bi-polar scales anchored respectively by the phrases ‘Anglo-Catholic’ versus ‘Evangelical’ and ‘Not Charismatic’ versus ‘Charismatic’. These constructs have been shown to be useful ways of assessing ecclesial positions found within the Anglican Church in the UK (Randall, 2005; Village, 2012, 2013). Church tradition scores were categorised as Anglo-Catholic (1-2), Broad church (3-5) or Evangelical (6-7) and used to create the dummy variables Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical. Charismaticism scores were categorized as Not Charismatic (1-5) or Charismatic (6-7) and used to create the dummy variable Charismatic.

Analysis

Changes in predictor variables with year of ordination were examined using frequency tables. The main analysis consisted of fitting a series of hierarchical linear regression models with extraversion score as the dependent variable. Year of ordination was added first and then control variables added to see if they changed the effect of year of ordination. Sex and age at ordination were added to reflect the growth in women’s ordinations over the last few decades and the tendency to ordain older people over the same period. Church tradition and Charismaticism were added to reflect possible changes in the proportion of ordinands from different ecclesial traditions over time.

Results

- insert table 1 about here -

The clergy in the sample were overwhelmingly male; mean (SD) age was 53.3 (8.1), with around 70% being aged 50 or older (table 1), which is in line with the profile of full-time stipendiary clergy in the Church of England (Church of England, 2013). The preference for Introversion (56%) over Extraversion (44%), was also in line with other studies of Church of England stipendiary clergy (Francis et al., 2007). Just under 60% had been ordained since 1990, and the mean (SD) age at ordination was 34.5 (8.3) years, with around 23% being over 40 when they were ordained.

- insert table 2 about here -

There were significant associations between all predictor variables and year in which individuals in the sample were ordained (table 2). These changes may have resulted from a range of different factors such as changes in the frequency of ordaining different sorts of people over time, differential rates of loss from the ministry, or both. The proportion of women ordained in more recent cohorts increased dramatically, which almost certainly reflects the changing in legislation that allowed women to become priests from 1994. The increase in age at ordination might reflect the trend to ordain older people, but would also be affected by the loss to retirement of older clergy from cohorts ordained before the 1990s. Changes in church tradition suggested fewer ordinations of Anglo-Catholics, and more ordinations of those from broad-church backgrounds in recent years. The rise in growth of Charismatics among more recent cohorts may reflect the growing influence of the Charismatic Movement in the Church of England in recent years.

- insert table 3 about here -

Bivariate correlations (table 3) showed extraversion was positively correlated with year of ordination, Evangelicalism and Charismaticism, negatively correlated with Anglo-Catholicism, but uncorrelated with either sex or age at ordination. Ordaining fewer Anglo-

Catholics and more Evangelicals or Charismatics might be the cause for the increase in extraversion among more recently ordained cohorts.

- insert table 4 about here -

Multiple regression showed year of ordination was positively correlated with average extraversion scores, suggesting more extraverts among more recently ordained cohorts (model 1, table 4). Adding sex in model 2 and age at ordination in model 3 enhanced the effect of year of ordination on extraversion, but neither variables were themselves correlated with extraversion. Changes in the proportion of women and proportion of older people among ordinands did not seem to explain the increase in extraversion in more recently ordained cohorts. The same was true for the church tradition variables: even if Anglo-Catholics were more introverted than clergy from other traditions, their decline in recent cohorts would not explain the increase in extraversion. Adding Charismaticism (model 6) showed that the rise in this group may partly have explained the increase in extraversion, but year of ordination remained significant. It seemed that something other than changes in the sex, age at ordination or church traction of ordinands may have been causing an average increase in extraversion among more recently ordained cohorts.

Discussion

A series of studies charting the psychological type profile of Anglican clergy in England and Wales has drawn attention to the over-representation of introverts within ordained ministry. Two recent studies, however, have challenged the Church of England to re-evaluate the potential importance of recruiting more extraverts into ordained ministry. The first challenge was placed by the study of the psychological type profile of bishops published by Francis, Whinney, and Robbins (2013). If the Church of England is committed to ordaining a higher proportion of extraverts to episcopal ministry, there may be advantages in ensuring that extraverts are more adequately represented among Anglican priests from among

whom bishops are chosen. The second challenge was placed by the study of church growth published by Voas and Watt (2014). If the Church of England is committed to promoting church growth, as extraverts generate higher growth than introverts, there may be advantages in selecting more extraverts for ordained ministry. Against this background, the present study reanalysed data collected for the Church Growth Research Programme to explore whether there are particular patterns within the trend to ordain extraverts within the Church of England. In particular five research questions were addressed.

The first research question asks whether there is a connection between extraversion and church tradition. Earlier research has suggested that the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England may be more attractive to introverts than the Evangelical wing (Village, 2013). The correlation matrix suggests that this is indeed the case. There are more introverts among Anglo-Catholics and more extraverts among Evangelicals. Moreover, over time there has been a tendency for fewer ordinands to be recruited from the Anglo-Catholic wing. Consequently this decline in ordinands from the Anglo-Catholic tradition could predict a turn toward extraversion in Anglican ministry.

The second research question asks whether there is a connection between extraversion and the Charismatic Movement. There is some evidence to suggest that extraverts may find the charismatic tradition more appealing than introverts (Louden & Francis, 2001). The correlation matrix suggests that this is indeed the case. There are more extraverts among charismatic clergy. Moreover, over time there has been a tendency for more ordinands to be recruited from the charismatic tradition. Consequently this growth in ordinands from the charismatic tradition could predict a turn toward extraversion in Anglican ministry.

The third research question asks whether there is a connection between extraversion and sex differences, given the finding that there is a higher proportion of extraverts among women than among men in the general population (Kendall, 1998). The correlation matrix,

however, suggests that there is no significant association between sex and extraversion among Anglican clergy. Thus, although there has been a significant growth in the numbers of women presenting for ordained ministry over time, this trend could not predict a turn toward extraversion in Anglican ministry.

The fourth research question asks whether the Church of England has continued to recruit the same proportions of extraverts into ministry over time, or whether there has been a significant turn toward extraversion. To address this question, the present analyses tested the association between extraverts and two other factors: the year of ordination, and age at ordination. The correlation matrix suggests that the age at ordination was not significantly associated with extraversion. However, the decade in which ordination took place was significantly associated with extraversion. Over time the Church of England has been ordaining a (slightly) higher proportion of extraverts. There has indeed been a turn toward extraversion among Anglican clergy since the 1970s and 1980s.

The fifth research question asks whether any turn toward extraversion among Anglican clergy over recent decades can be explained entirely by the recruitment of fewer Anglo-Catholics and the recruitment of more charismatics. The regression model demonstrates that, while the charismatic preference remains significant within the regression model, church orientation and the influence of the charismatic tradition do not account for all the variance explained by the year of ordination. This important finding suggests that there must be other factors at work as well.

What is clear from the data is that the Church of England is managing a significant trend over time to ordain more extraverts. This could mean that a higher number of extraverts are presenting themselves as candidates for ordination, or it could mean that the Church of England is (implicitly or explicitly) changing the criteria of its selection process in order to affirm more extraverted candidates for ordination.

Conclusion

The present study set out to examine a database profiling the psychological type characteristics of Church of England clergy organised as part of the Church Growth Programme. In light of one of the core findings established in the original analyses of these data by Voas and Watt (2014) that extraversion is associated with church growth, the present study explored a range of predictors associated with extraversion among Anglican clergy. The key (and unexpected) finding from these analyses is that the Church of England has presided over a (slight) trend to ordain a higher proportion of extraverts throughout the 1980s into the 2000s.

The identification of this trend raises the question as to whether or not it reflects an explicit turn in church policy as reflected in the selection criteria for ordained ministry. So far we have not identified any specific call for the recruitment of more extraverts into ordained ministry similar to calls that have wished to prioritise young vocations or vocations among ethnic minority communities. However, a Church committed to inclusivity may wish to recognise that psychological characteristics like introversion and extraversion may be as core to shaping an inclusive church as physical characteristics like age, sex, and ethnicity. The fact that psychological characteristics may seem less visible and more covert may prove no good reason for undervaluing their presence. Perhaps selection procedures that monitor the visible individual differences of sex, age, and ethnicity may wish to widen the sense of responsible avoidance of unrecognised discrimination by introducing psychological type profiling into the purview of concern for equality and discrimination.

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Table 1

Profile of the sample

	<i>N</i> = 1372	%
Orientation	Extraversion	44.2
	Introversion	55.8
Sex	Male	79.7
	Female	20.3
Age	< 40	6.7
	40s	22.6
	50s	45.1
	60s	25.5
	70s	0.1
Year deaconed	<1980	9.6
	1980s	25.8
	1990s	32.0
	>1999	32.6
Age at Ordination	<40	76.6
	40+	23.4
Church tradition	Anglo-Catholic	28.6
	Broadchurch	38.5
	Evangelical	32.9
Charismatic	No	76.5
	Yes	23.5

Table 2

Changes in relation to year of ordination

	Ordained deacon:				χ^2
	<1980	1980s	1990s	>1999	
<i>N</i> =	132	354	439	447	
Female	0%	5%	19%	40%	194.9
Age at ordination >40	0%	1%	21%	50%	322.9
Anglo-Catholic	42%	34%	27%	22%	26.0
Broadchurch	31%	36%	34%	47%	21.5
Evangelical	27%	30%	40%	31%	13.9
Charismatic	15%	20%	25%	27%	12.2

Note: Table shows the percentage of each category according to the period of ordination. Changes over time were tested using Chi-squared analysis on frequencies in or not in the category, with 3 degrees of freedom. All changes are significant at $p < .001$ or less.

Table 3

Correlation matrix

		8	7	6	5	4	3	2
1	Year ordained	.10***	.10***	.04	.09**	-.14***	.63***	.37***
2	Sex	-.01	-.01	-.15***	.20***	-.05*	.45***	-
3	Age at Ordination	.01	.04	-.04	.15***	-.12***	-	
4	Anglo-Catholic	-.05*	-.22***	-.44***	-.50***	-		
5	Broadchurch	-.02	-.22***	-.55***	-			
6	Evangelical	.08**	.44***	-				
7	Charismatic	.14***	-					
8	Extraversion	-						

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 4

Hierarchical Multiple linear regression of Extraversion scores

	Model					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ordination year	.095***	.113***	.148***	.143***	.139***	.129***
Sex		-.048	-.031	-.031	-.020	-.024
Age at ordination			-.065	-.068	-.064	-.063
Anglo-Catholic				-.043	-.017	-.015
Evangelical					.058	.006
Charismatic						.118***
Adjusted R^2	.009	.010	.011	.012	.014	.025
Change R^2	.009***	.002	.002	.002	.003	.011***

Note. *** $p < .001$