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Author(s): Leslie J. Francis, Mandy Robbins and Laura Murray

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Running head: Psychological type and religious orientation

Psychological type and religious orientation:

Do introverts and extraverts go to church for different reasons?

Leslie J. Francis* and Mandy Robbins

The University of Warwick, UK

and

Laura Murray

Bangor University, UK

*Corresponding author. Tel: 024 7652 2539
e-mail: leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk

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Summary

This study set out to profile an Anglican congregation in the south of England in terms of religious orientation, assessed by the New Indices of Religious Orientation, and in terms of psychological type, assessed by the Francis Psychological Type Scales, in order to test the hypothesis that motivation for church attendance (religious orientation) is related to personality (psychological type). The data demonstrated that this congregation (N = 65) displayed clear preferences for judging (72%) over perceiving (28%) and for sensing (62%) over intuition (39%), slight preference for extraversion (54%) over introversion (46%) and a fairly close balance between feeling (51%) and thinking (49%), and included attenders who reflected all three religious orientations: intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest. Moreover, extraverts recorded significantly higher scores than introverts on the measure of extrinsic religiosity, while introverts recorded significantly higher scores than extraverts on the measure of intrinsic religiosity, demonstrating a link between psychological type and religious orientation.

Psychological type and religious orientation:

Do introverts and extraverts go to church for different reasons?

The intention of the present paper is to draw together two significant strands of research within the psychology of religion which have not previously been sufficiently integrated. The first strand concerns the definition and operationalisation of religious orientations, while the second strand concerns the application of Jungian psychological type theory to examine individual differences in religiosity.

The notion of religious orientations has its roots in the pioneering work of Gordon Allport (see Allport, 1966; Allport & Ross, 1967) and attempts to clarify different ways in which religious people express, experience, and motivate their religiosity. In his original work Allport distinguished between two basic orientations which he characterised as intrinsic religiosity and as extrinsic religiosity. According to Allport, an extrinsic religious orientation is largely utilitarian, useful for granting safety, social standing, solace and social support. An intrinsic religious orientation, on the other hand, regards faith as a supreme value in its own right, infusing the whole of life with distinctive purpose and meaning. To these two established religious orientations, Batson (1976) and Batson and Ventis (1982) added a third orientation which they characterised as quest religiosity. According to Batson, a quest religious orientation embraces complexity, doubt, tentativeness, and honesty in facing existential questions. In the New Indices of Religious Orientation (NIRO), Francis (2007) provided new operational forms of these three established constructs of intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest religious orientations in an attempt to improve on earlier instruments. It is reasonable to hypothesise that many church congregations will embrace individuals who display different religious orientations and are attending that same church for somewhat different reasons.

The notion of psychological type has its roots in the pioneering work of Carl Jung (1971) and attempts to clarify individual differences in terms of two orientations (introversion and extraversion), two perceiving processes (sensing and intuition), two judging processes (thinking and feeling) and two attitudes toward the outer world (judging and perceiving). According to Jung's theory: introverts are energised by the inner world of ideas, while extraverts are energised by the outer world of people and things; sensors are concerned with facts, with information and with the present reality, while intuitives are concerned with ideas, with theories and with future possibilities; thinkers are concerned with truth, justice, and objectivity, while feelers are concerned with harmony, peace, and subjectivity; judges prefer closure and a structured outer world, while perceivers retain spontaneity, flexibility, and openness. Recognised measures of psychological type are provided by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985), the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1978), and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005). This notion of psychological type has provided a fertile source for practical theology (Osborn & Osborn, 1991; Duncan, 1993) and for the psychology of religion (Francis, 2005).

Although the notion of religious orientation has been brought into dialogue with other psychological models of personality (see Saroglou, 2002), the potential dialogue between religious orientation and psychological type has remained largely unexplored. In an exploratory study Francis and Ross (2000) invited a sample of 64 active adult Catholic churchgoers to complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) together with the six-item measure of quest religiosity proposed by Batson and Ventis (1982). Their data found no significant differences in the quest scores recorded by introverts or extraverts, by sensors or intuitives, by thinkers or feelers, and by judges and perceivers. This study did not, however, include measures of intrinsic religiosity or extrinsic religiosity.

There are two aspects of psychological type theory which may be of particular

relevance in exploring the relationship between personality and religious orientation. The first aspect concerns the Jungian notion of psychological orientation, distinguishing between introversion and extraversion as two very different energy sources. Introverts are energised by the inner world, while extraverts are energised by the outer world. Close examination of the items designed to assess intrinsic orientation, say in the NIRO proposed by Francis (2007), tend to suggest individuals who are energised by the inner world of their personal religious experience. Close examination of the items designed to assess extrinsic orientation, in the same instrument, tends to suggest individuals who rely to a somewhat greater extent on the external energising stimulation of their local congregation. The second aspect concerns the Jungian notion of the perceiving process, distinguishing between sensing and intuition as two very different ways of reading the world. Sensors prefer facts and certainty, while intuitives prefer theories and possibilities. Close examination of the items designed to assess quest orientation, say in the NIRO proposed by Francis (2007), tends to suggest individuals who sit more comfortably with an intuitive preference than with a sensing preference.

Against this background, the aim of the present paper is threefold: to profile one Anglican congregation in terms of religious orientation; to profile the same congregation in terms of Jungian psychological type; and to examine the relationship between psychological type and religious orientation within that congregation.

Method

Procedure

At the main Sunday morning service the whole congregation in one Anglican church in the South of England was invited to complete the questionnaire after the sermon. The majority of attenders accepted the invitation.

Instruments

Religious orientation was assessed by the New Indices of Religious Orientation (Francis, 2007). This instrument proposes three nine-item scales of intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and quest religiosity. Each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale: agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly. Francis (2007) reported the following alpha coefficients for these scales: extrinsic, .84; intrinsic, .91; quest, .85.

Psychological type was assessed by the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005). This instrument proposes four ten-item scales to distinguish between: introversion and extraversion, sensing and intuition, thinking and feeling, and judging and perceiving. Each item proposes a forced choice between two contrasting options. In a recent study, Francis, Village, Robbins, and Ineson (2007) reported the following alpha coefficients for these scales: EI, .81; SN, .74; TF, .72; JP, .79.

Sample

The sample (N = 65) comprised 42% males and 58% females. Nearly half (46%) were aged between 40 to 69 years of age, 35% were under the age of 40, and 19% were aged 70 or over. Nearly three-quarters (74%) attend church weekly, while 14% attend at least once a month, 9% attend six times a year and 3% attend once a year.

Results

The four scales generated by the Francis Psychological Type scales produced the following alpha co-efficients (Cronbach, 1951) introversion and extraversion, .85; sensing and intuition, .74; thinking and feeling, .73; judging and perceiving, .80. The psychological type literature has developed a highly distinctive way for presenting type-related statistics through the type table. This format has been employed in table 1 to ensure comparability

- insert table 1 about here -

with that wider literature. These data demonstrate that the Anglican congregation surveyed preferred extraversion (54%) over introversion (46%), sensing (62%) over intuition (39%), feeling (51%) over thinking (49%) and judging (72%) over perceiving (28%).

The three scales generated by the New Indices of Religious Orientation generated the following alpha coefficients: intrinsic religiosity, .87; extrinsic religiosity, .73; quest religiosity, .69. Table 2 presents the item rest-of-test correlations for these three scales (as a

- insert table 2 about here -

further indication of internal consistency reliability) together with the item endorsement, expressed as the product of the agree strongly and agree responses.

Table 3 presents the correlations between the three indices of religious orientation

- insert table 3 about here -

(intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest) and the four continuous scale scores underpinning psychological type (with high scoring poles defined as extraversion, intuition, thinking, and judging). In respect of the two specific hypotheses advanced by the present study these data demonstrate: that introverts record higher scores on intrinsic religiosity while extraverts record higher scores on extrinsic religiosity; and that there is no significant relationship between the perceiving process (sensing and intuition) and quest religiosity. In other words, the first hypothesis was supported by the finding that psychological orientation is a significant predictor of individual differences in intrinsic religiosity and in extrinsic religiosity. The second hypothesis was not supported by the finding that the perceiving process was not a significant predictor of individual differences in quest religiosity.

Discussion and conclusion

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the data presented by this study of one

Anglican church in the south of England: concerning the psychological type profile of the congregation; concerning the religious orientations or motivations of the individual members of the congregation; and concerning the inter-relationship between psychological type and religious orientation.

In terms of psychological type profile, this Anglican congregation reflects the type profile of the United Kingdom population as a whole as reported by Kendall (1998) in terms of the balance between extraverts and introverts and between thinkers and feelers. In the United Kingdom population 52% prefer extraversion and so do 54% of the congregation. In the United Kingdom population 54% prefer feeling and so do 51% of the congregation. In terms of the other two areas, however, this Anglican congregation differs from the United Kingdom population as a whole. While just 24% of the United Kingdom population prefer intuition, the proportion rises to 39% of the congregation. While 42% of the United Kingdom population prefer perceiving, the proportion falls to 28% of the congregation. This over-representation of intuitives and under-representation of perceivers is consistent with the findings of Francis, Duncan, Craig, and Luffman (2004) who reported on 327 participants in five Anglican congregations. The content of the Anglican liturgy seems to appeal to and to attract intuitives (who are drawn to ideas, big visions, and future possibilities), but at the same time the firm structure of the Anglican liturgy seems to deter and alienate perceivers (who rejoice in spontaneity, flexibility and openness).

In terms of religious orientation, this Anglican congregation draws a broad range of individuals whose religious motivation embraces characteristics of intrinsic, extrinsic and quest orientations. Intrinsic religiosity is reflected in the following markers: 77% of the congregation go to church because it helps them to feel close to God; and 63% try hard to carry their religion over into all their other dealings in life. Extrinsic religiosity is reflected in the following markers: 49% of the congregation give as a key reason for their interest in

church that it is a pleasant social activity; and 37% say that, while they believe in their religion, there are more important things in their life. Quest religiosity is reflected in the following markers: 62% of the congregation value their religious doubts and uncertainties; and for 51% questions are more important to their religious faith than are answers. These statistics confirm the basic thesis of religious orientation theory that the three orientations are not mutually exclusive and that individuals blend in their own lives levels of all three orientations (Batson & Ventis, 1982).

In terms of the inter-relationship between psychological type and religious orientation, the data confirm that there is a significant link between preferences for introversion and extraversion and levels of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. According to the data, introverts record higher scores on intrinsic religiosity while extraverts record higher scores on extrinsic religiosity. In other words, introverts and extraverts may tend to go to church for somewhat different reasons.

There are clear limitations with the present study given that it has been based on just one Anglican congregation in the south of England. The findings are, however, sufficiently intriguing to be worthy of replication and extension both among a larger number of Anglican congregations and among congregations of other denominations.

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Table 1 Type distribution for an Anglican congregation

N = 65, + = 1% of *N*

The Sixteen Complete Types				Dichotomous Preferences		
ISTJ <i>n</i> = 14 (21.5%) +++++ +++++ +++++ +++++ ++	ISFJ <i>n</i> = 9 (13.8%) +++++ +++++ +++++	INFJ <i>n</i> = 2 (3.1%) +++	INTJ <i>n</i> = 2 (3.1%) +++	E	<i>n</i> = 35	(53.8%)
				I	<i>n</i> = 30	(46.2%)
				S	<i>n</i> = 40	(61.5%)
				N	<i>n</i> = 25	(38.5%)
				T	<i>n</i> = 32	(49.2%)
				F	<i>n</i> = 33	(50.8%)
				J	<i>n</i> = 47	(72.3%)
				P	<i>n</i> = 18	(27.7%)
The Sixteen Complete Types				Pairs and Temperaments		
ISTP <i>n</i> = 1 (1.5%) ++	ISFP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	INFP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	INTP <i>n</i> = 2 (3.1%) +++	IJ	<i>n</i> = 27	(41.5%)
				IP	<i>n</i> = 3	(4.6%)
				EP	<i>n</i> = 15	(23.1%)
				EJ	<i>n</i> = 20	(30.8%)
				ST	<i>n</i> = 23	(35.4%)
				SF	<i>n</i> = 17	(26.2%)
				NF	<i>n</i> = 16	(24.6%)
				NT	<i>n</i> = 9	(13.8%)
ESTP <i>n</i> = 2 (3.1%) +++	ESFP <i>n</i> = 3 (4.6%) +++++	ENFP <i>n</i> = 7 (10.8%) +++++ +++++ +	ENTP <i>n</i> = 3 (4.6%) +++++	SJ	<i>n</i> = 34	(52.3%)
				SP	<i>n</i> = 6	(9.2%)
				NP	<i>n</i> = 12	(18.5%)
				NJ	<i>n</i> = 13	(20.0%)
				TJ	<i>n</i> = 24	(36.9%)
				TP	<i>n</i> = 8	(12.3%)
				FP	<i>n</i> = 10	(15.4%)
				FJ	<i>n</i> = 23	(35.4%)
ESTJ <i>n</i> = 6 (9.2%) +++++ +++++	ESFJ <i>n</i> = 5 (7.7%) +++++ +++	ENFJ <i>n</i> = 7 (10.8%) +++++ +++++ +	ENTJ <i>n</i> = 2 (3.1%) +++	IN	<i>n</i> = 6	(9.2%)
				EN	<i>n</i> = 19	(29.2%)
				IS	<i>n</i> = 24	(36.9%)
				ES	<i>n</i> = 16	(24.6%)
				ET	<i>n</i> = 13	(20.0%)
				EF	<i>n</i> = 22	(33.8%)
				IF	<i>n</i> = 11	(16.9%)
				IT	<i>n</i> = 19	(29.2%)

Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types		
	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%
E-TJ	8	12.3	I-TP	3	4.6	Dt. T	11	16.9
E-FJ	12	18.5	I-FP	0	0.0	Dt. F	12	18.5
ES-P	5	7.7	IS-J	23	35.4	Dt. S	28	43.1
EN-P	10	15.4	IN-J	4	6.2	Dt. N	14	21.5

L. J. Francis, M. Robbins and L. Murray

Psychological type and religious orientation: Do introverts and extraverts go to church for different reasons?

Table 2 Religious orientations: item rest of test correlations and item endorsements

	r	agree %
<i>Intrinsic religiosity</i>		
I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life	.62	63
I pray chiefly because it deepens my relationship with God	.79	66
The church is most important to me as a place to share fellowship with other Christians	.48	74
I pray at home because it helps me to be aware of God's presence	.72	71
My religious beliefs really shape my whole approach to life	.74	69
I often read books about prayers and the spiritual life	.53	34
I go to church because it helps me to feel close to God	.58	77
I allow almost nothing to prevent me from going to church on Sundays	.57	48
My religious beliefs really shape the way I treat other people	.45	82
<i>Extrinsic religiosity</i>		
A key reason for my interest in church is that it is a pleasant social activity	.53	49
What prayer offers me most is comfort when sorrow or misfortune strike	.25	55
I pray chiefly because it makes me feel better	.40	45
One reason for me going to church is that it helps to establish me in the community	.56	28
Occasionally I compromise my religious beliefs to protect my social and economic wellbeing	.19	42
While I believe in my religion, there are more important things in my life	.50	37
One reason for me praying is that it helps me to gain relief and protection	.29	35
I go to church because it helps me to feel at home in my neighbourhood	.53	35
While I am a religious person I do not let religion influence my daily life	.42	28
<i>Quest religiosity</i>		
There are many religious issues on which my views are still changing	.37	62
I am constantly questioning my religious beliefs	.55	45
As I grow and change, I expect my religion to grow and change as well	.43	63
For me doubting is an important part of what it means to be religious	.37	48
I was driven to ask religious questions by a growing awareness of the tensions in my world	.38	42
I value my religious doubts and uncertainties	.25	62
My life experiences have led me to rethink my religious beliefs	.39	52
Questions are more important to my religious faith than are answers	.30	51
Religion only became very important for me when I began to ask questions	.28	28

Table 3 Correlations between psychological type and religious orientations

	Extraversion	Intuition	Thinking	Feeling
Intrinsic orientation	-.40***	-.17	-.01	+.34**
Extrinsic orientation	+.28*	.03	-.10	-.20
Quest orientation	-.01	.09	-.05	-.12

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