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Article Title: Attitude Toward Homosexuality among Anglicans in England: the Effects of Theological Orientation and Personality

Year of publication: 2008

Link to published version:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/092229308X310740>

Publisher statement: None

Running head: ATTITUDE TOWARD HOMOSEXUALITY

ATTITUDE TOWARD HOMOSEXUALITY AMONG ANGLICANS IN
ENGLAND: THE EFFECTS OF THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION AND
PERSONALITY

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ATTITUDE TOWARD HOMOSEXUALITY AMONG ANGLICANS IN ENGLAND: THE EFFECTS OF THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION AND PERSONALITY

Summary

Disapproval of homosexuality (homonegativity) was assessed using a four-item summated scale in a sample of 7,295 readers of the *Church Times* who were regular worshippers at Anglican churches in England. The theological orientation of respondents was assessed on three scales measuring preference for liberal or conservative, catholic or evangelical, and charismatic or non-charismatic expressions of faith. Individual differences in personality were assessed using the abbreviated form of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (EPQR-A). Scores on the homonegativity scale were generally high, indicating disapproval of same-sex intercourse, of same-sex marriage and of the ordination or consecration of practising homosexuals. After allowing for sex and age, the main predictors of homonegativity were the three measures of individual theological orientation, with each having an independent and additive effect. All four scales of the EPQR-A predicted homonegativity to some extent, but the most important relationships were a negative correlation with the psychoticism scale and a positive correlation with the lie scale. In liberal catholic and broad churches, it appeared that those who were psychologically most susceptible to social conditioning were most likely to be homonegative, but this was not so in conservative evangelical churches.

Keywords:

Anglicanism, conditionability, EPQ, homonegativity, homosexuality, individual differences, church tradition.

Introduction

Attitudes toward homosexuality have become increasingly tolerant in Western societies over the last few decades (Avery et al. 2007; Crockett and Voas 2003; Loftus 2001; Steffens and Wagner 2004). The growing acceptance of homosexuality in Britain has been documented by Crockett and Voas (2003) using the data from the British Social Attitudes and British Household Panel surveys from 1983 to 2000. Over this period, the proportion of the population that believed sexual relations between two adults of the same sex are always wrong fell from around 50% to 37%. There were marked differences with sex and age: men and older people being generally more disapproving than women or younger people. These findings mirror those found in other surveys (Hayes 1995; Johnson et al. 1997; Kite and Whitley 1996) suggesting that sex and age are stable predictors of attitudes toward homosexuality in most populations.

These changes have led to diversity and disputes in many church denominations, where traditional prohibitions on homosexual behaviour clash with more liberal views (Bates 2004; Church of England 1991; Coulton 2005; Guy 2006; Petersen 1998; Yip and Keenan 2004). Opinion is divided as to whether the growing acceptance of homosexuality in society at large should be adopted or rejected by Christians. For some it represents a capitulation to sinful permissiveness; for others it is a welcome response to an overdue social acceptance of fundamental differences in individual sexual preferences.

Recent examples of the clash between civil and ecclesiastical norms in Britain have stemmed from the introduction of laws designed to give homosexuals equal rights with heterosexuals. The Civil Partnership Act (2004), which came into force in England in December 2005, permitted civil partnerships between same-sex couples and gave them the same rights as heterosexual married couples in areas such as tax, social security, inheritance and workplace benefits. Although many churches welcomed the clarification of status because it addressed issues of fairness and justice, some Christians were concerned that the legislation would undermine traditional heterosexual marriage. Although the Act explicitly states that civil partnership is not marriage, some argued that this legislation was de facto creating same-sex marriages (Church of England 2005; Goddard 2005). The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations, which came into force in the UK in April 2007, made discrimination in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation unlawful.

Again, although welcomed by many denominations on the grounds of justice and fairness, these regulations sparked a debate on how far churches, Christian charities or Christian-run businesses should be made to accept behaviour from clients that they might consider fundamentally immoral (Bates 2007; Campbell 2006; Church of England 2005; Woodward and Bates 2007).

The Anglican Communion has found the issue of homosexuality particularly difficult (Bates 2004). The traditional and stated position of the Anglican Church has been to accept the fact of homosexual orientation but reject homosexual practice, as expressed in resolution 1.10 on *Human Sexuality* of the 1998 Lambeth Conference. This 'homophile' view is sometimes stated as 'loving the sinner but hating the sin'. This position is now seen as unduly conservative in some quarters, with a growing number of churchgoers believing that both homosexual orientation and practice are not sinful and therefore acceptable, at least among laity. There has, however, been a widespread and fierce debate about the acceptability or otherwise of allowing practising homosexuals to be priests or bishops (Atherstone 2004; Bates 2004; Eames 2004; Markham 2007).

The debate over allowing homosexuals to be priests surfaced some years ago in Anglicanism with the writings of liberals such as John Shelby Spong in the USA (Spong 1988) and emerged in wider debate in the Church of England in the 1980s (Bates 2004; Church of England 1991; Hill 1994; Machin 1998: 224-5). The debate has become centred on the consecration of openly-gay priests to the episcopate. The consecration of Gene Robinson, a practising homosexual, by the Episcopal Church of the United States in 2003 exacerbated growing tensions within the world-wide Anglican Communion over this issue that continues to threaten its unity and coherence. In England, an attempt in the same year by the then bishop of Oxford, Richard Harries, to promote to the episcopate the Reverend Canon Jeffery John (who had publicly owned a long-term and stable same-sex relationship) led to a sharp debate within the diocese and the Church of England at large, resulting in a withdrawal of the nomination.

The disagreements in the Church of England are linked to differences in theological orientations that are associated with different church traditions. The history of the denomination has involved a series of complex interactions with Catholicism, Protestantism and Pentecostalism, so that the Church of England now includes many different expressions of Anglicanism (Hylson-Smith 1989, 1993;

Randall 2005; Scotland 2003). The Anglo-catholic wing traces its origins to the first half of the nineteenth century, when a group of academics and clergymen centred in Oxford published a series of tracts, giving rise to their description as ‘Tractarians’. Anglo-catholic theology has developed in a number of different directions since then, but common features include a stress on the ritualistic and sacramental nature of church life. Anglo-catholics uphold grace received through the sacraments, confession and reconciliation, the importance of ritual and the Eucharistic rites. The Evangelical wing traces its origins to the widespread evangelical revival of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Anglican Evangelicals, in common with other Protestant denominations, stress the importance of the bible and preaching, and are less concerned with ritual. They uphold biblical authority, personal conversion, justification by grace received through faith and the preaching ministry. Alongside these two wings of the church are those who are sometimes referred to as ‘broad church’ or ‘traditional Anglicans’, whose worship and practice shows some elements of the other two traditions.

Pentecostalism entered the Anglican Church in England from the 1970s through the growth of the Charismatic Movement (Hocken 1997; Scotland 2003), which stresses the activity of the Holy Spirit in gifting and guiding the church. Although the movement has had a widespread influence on the Church of England, it has been most obvious among evangelicals, and many charismatic congregations have evangelical roots. There is no single expression of being ‘non-charismatic’; instead Anglicans across England show varying extents of charismaticism.

Operating alongside these traditions is a distinction between those who are generally more conservative and those who are generally more liberal in terms of doctrinal and moral beliefs. Liberalism in the Church of England is often traced to the work of Charles Gore and the collection of essays *Lux Mundi* published in 1889 (Nichols 1993; Randall 2005). This was an attempt to embrace the findings of critical biblical scholarship and the rising tide of scientific discoveries that challenged ancient and orthodox belief. Liberals represent those who seek religious revelation and authority primarily in reason (Daniel 1968; Nichols 1993; Randall 2005), and who therefore tend to play down the miraculous elements of faith. Liberalism includes beliefs such as the symbolic nature of biblical texts, religious pluralism and a stress on the structural sins of global or political injustice rather than personal moral failings. Conservatives, on the other hand, draw mainly on tradition as their source of

revelation and authority. There is a stress on upholding creedal formulas, the inspiration and authority of the bible and personal morality. Although liberalism is usually associated with Anglo-catholicism, and conservatism with Evangelicalism, liberals and conservatives can be found in all the various traditions in the Church of England.

To locate a person's theological orientation in the Church of England therefore requires three independent but related measures: liberal versus conservative, Anglo-catholic versus evangelical, and the extent of charismaticism (Randall 2005: 56-63). Theological orientation is likely to be a strong predictor of views on homosexuality, with the most negative attitudes being associated with conservative evangelicals and the most positive with liberal catholics.

Theological orientation offers one way of explaining the variation in attitude toward homosexuality in the Church of England. Another possible influence could be related to psychology rather than theology. The interaction between changing attitudes towards homosexuality in society at large and the complex patterns of church tradition or theological orientation have led to conflicting pressures on members of the Church of England. On the one hand, there is pressure to accept the liberal societal norm; on the other hand there is pressure to retain the conservative norms of some church traditions. In these circumstances, the stance adopted by particular churchgoers may depend partly on their susceptibility to accept social norms. This suggests that models of personality that predict the degree to which someone is generally likely to be conditioned to social norms may have some predictive power on attitudes toward homosexuality. One such model that has been widely used in studies of social conditionability is Eysenck's three-dimensional model of personality.

Conditionability and Personality

Psychologists use the term 'social conditionability' to refer to an individual's propensity to take on the behavioural and social mores of those around them. Individuals with high social conditionability are those who adjust their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in response to pressures to adopt a particular pattern of social expectation. Individuals with low conditionability will tend to be unresponsive to such pressure. Hans Eysenck (1960; 1964) proposed a 'biosocial' model whereby genetically controlled individual differences in personality might be one factor that

influences conditionability and hence antisocial behaviour. Applied more generally, the theory predicts that behaviour and attitudes are products of an individual's disposition to conditionability and the particular social context in which they are located.

Eysenck's trait-based model of personality (Eysenck and Eysenck 1985) has been used in a number of studies of conditionability. In its original form, as operationalized in the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI: Eysenck and Eysenck 1964), Eysenck's model comprised two orthogonal, higher-order dimensions, defined at the high-scoring poles as extraversion (E) and neuroticism (N). Later, a third dimension was added, defined at the high-scoring pole as psychoticism (P). The three-dimensional model was originally operationalized in the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ: Eysenck and Eysenck 1975), and subsequently modified in the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (EPQR: Eysenck et al. 1985).

In the original conceptualization by Eysenck and Eysenck (1964), the extraversion scale was a measure of sociability and impulsiveness. Those with high scores tend to be sociable individuals who frequently interact with others, have many friends and who prefer being in groups rather than being alone. Extraverts are also likely to be risk-takers who act spontaneously and who are carefree and easy-going. Those with low scores are considered to be more introverted, and will tend to demonstrate the opposite characteristics.

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

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

These last two scales carry clear assumptions of ‘normality’, because high scores indicate people with emotional or mental disorders. This may incline subjects to reduce their scores by giving socially acceptable answers rather than accurate ones. For this reason the EPQ and EPQR include a lie scale (L) that measures the extent to which people tend to offer socially acceptable answers. The scale consists of items referring to unlikely but socially desirable acts and to likely but socially undesirable acts.

The EPQR has been shortened (EPQR-S: Eysenck et al. 1985) and further abbreviated (EPQR-A: Francis et al. 1992). The family of instruments have been applied across a range of cultures and in specific sub-populations, including religious denominations and clergy. There is a well established sex difference in scores, with women generally recording higher neuroticism scores, and lower psychoticism scores, than men (Francis 1993, 1997; Shevlin et al. 2002). Age effects have also been frequently reported, with older people generally showing lower scores for extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism and higher scores on the lie scale (Eysenck and Eysenck 1975; Haapasalo 1990; Loehlin and Martin 2001; Viken et al. 1994).

The relationship between the four scales of the EPQ and conditionability is complex and has been investigated mainly in relation to antisocial or criminal behaviour. In its original two-dimensional form, Eysenck’s (1967) model assumed that extraversion was associated with low cortical arousal that in turn reduced the effect of external stimuli, thereby leading to extraverts being less easily conditioned than introverts. Eysenck also suggested that the high levels of neuroticism would amplify the effect of extraversion, so that those with low E and N scores would be the most likely to respond to socializing influences. Others suggested that it is those with high E and low N (i.e. stable extraverts) who are most likely to show low conditionability (Lane 1987).

In the revised, three-dimensional model of personality it is psychoticism, rather than extraversion, that emerges as fundamental to conditionability. The reason for this change is well documented by Francis (1992), and hinges on the way in which the lower-order trait of impulsivity was transferred from Eysenck’s original operationalization of extraversion to his later operationalization of psychoticism. Impulsivity has been identified by a number of studies as central to the prediction of

individual differences in conditionability. Moreover, the psychoticism scale has been shown to relate to antisocial and criminal behaviour (Eysenck and Eysenck 1976), which may relate to the debilitating effects of psychotic behaviour on normal socialization. The P scale may indicate low conditionability because it is a measure of behaviour that is 'nonconformist, odd and unorthodox' (Eysenck and Eysenck 1976: 169). At less extreme levels, higher P scores indicate a lack of empathy with, or responsiveness to, other people that might produce a resistance to social conditioning.

Although originally considered a simple measure of the extent to which respondents might have 'faked good' in responses to the other scales, lie-scale scores are now thought to be a measure of social conformity or lack of self-insight (Eysenck and Eysenck 1976: 168; Francis et al. 2000). Those with high scores are more likely to adopt the norms and patterns of their particular social group than those with low scores. The neuroticism and psychoticism scales contain items that can be seen as socially undesirable, so negative correlations between these two scales and the lie scale have been used to indicate evidence of people projecting a positive persona in their answers. Of the two scales, the neuroticism-lie scale correlation is probably most indicative of this sort of behaviour (Francis et al. 2000).

Correlations between attitudes toward homosexuality and EPQ scores could arise in a cross-sectional study for several reasons that are not necessarily related to conditionability. A number of studies have linked general measures of religiosity (such as frequency of prayer, church attendance, or attitude toward Christianity) to scores on the Eysenck dimensions. Such studies have led to a widespread consensus that religiosity in general is associated with low P scores, but is unrelated to N, E or L scores (Francis 2005). Religiosity, as measured by church attendance, has also been shown to be related to attitudes towards homosexuality. Crocket and Voas (2003) found that in Britain from 1983 to 2000, disapproval of homosexuality declined from 61% to 49% among regular church attendees, from 46% to 33% among non-attendees and from 52% to 32% among occasional attendees. This suggests a growing divergence among churchgoers, with those who attend occasionally now seeming to have similar views to non-attendees. If negative attitudes toward homosexuality (homonegativity) are associated with religious belief, then correlations with Eysenck scales could arise indirectly through correlations with general religiosity unless there is some attempt to control for this in a cross-sectional survey.

This paper examines correlates of beliefs about homosexuality collected by the Church Times Survey of 2001 (Francis et al. 2005). The aim is to use multivariate analysis of a large sample of regular church attendees to partial out the effects of religiosity, age and sex to test if theological orientation and conditionability, as measured by the EPQR-A, can independently predict homonegativity.

Method

The Church Times Survey

The *Church Times* is the main newspaper of the Church of England, with a circulation of around 33,000. In 2001 it published a four-page questionnaire in two editions of the paper spanning the end of March and beginning of April. The questionnaire was designed to assess a wide range of opinions, attitudes and beliefs for a cross section of English Anglicans, and the main results have been reported by Francis, Robbins and Astley (Francis et al. 2005). This study uses the same sub-sample of the database as in the initial report, that is, 8104 responses from respondents who lived in England and who attended an Anglican church at least twice a month. The sample in this study is slightly higher because it includes 100 questionnaires that were returned too late to be included in the initial analysis. The sample represents 93.4% of the 8677 completed questionnaires that were returned.

Assessing belief about homosexuality

The Church Times Survey included four Likert-type items referring to homosexuality (Table 1). They were designed to relate to issues of importance to Anglicans at the time, that is same-sex marriage and the ordination of practising homosexuals.

Participants were asked to respond to each item on a five-point scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. Items were scored such that disapproval of homosexuality (homonegativity) scored high and acceptance scored low, and the sum of the four items was used as the dependent variable. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Independent variables

Respondents were asked to give their sex (1 = male, 2 = female) and age. Age was categorized by decade with 1 = < 40, 2 = 40s, 3 = 50s, 4 = 60s, 5 = 70s and 6 = > 79. The questionnaire included the EPQR-A (Francis et al. 1992) which had six items for each scale: extraversion (E), neuroticism (N), psychoticism (P) and lie (L). The E, N and L scores were used untransformed. However, P scores were heavily skewed, with

82% of the respondents scoring zero, which is common in this sort of sample (Ferrando 2003; Francis 1992). P scores were therefore recoded on a scale of 0-2, with 2 representing all scores greater than 1.

Theological orientation was measured using three separate seven-point semantic differential scales where the poles were anchored by liberal versus conservative, catholic versus evangelical, and not charismatic versus charismatic. The liberal-conservative and catholic-evangelical scores were recoded into five-point scales by combining the two extreme scores in each case. Results for the charismatic scale suggested all scores on the 'not charismatic' end of the scale referred to the same thing, so this scale was reduced to a three-point scale with 1 = lowest and 3 = highest charismatic rating. These three scales are referred to by their high-score indicators: conservative, evangelical and charismatic. Respondents were also asked to rate the tradition of the church they attended on the same scales, and responses to the conservative and evangelical scales were used to identify attendees of liberal catholic (scored less than 3 on both scales), conservative evangelical (scored more than 3 on both scales) and broad church (all others) congregations.

Analysis

Hierarchical multivariate linear regression analysis was used to partial out the effects of sex and age before testing the relationships of EPQR-A scores and theological orientation on homonegativity. Sex, age and theological orientation were entered in blocks 1, 2 and 3 respectively, followed by EPQR-A scores, which were entered stepwise. The criterion for entry was set at $p < 0.001$ because of the high sample size. After excluding those who had missing values in any of the variables under analysis, the sample size was 7295.

Results

The homonegativity scale

Responses to the four scale items suggested a generally conservative response (Table 1), with 23.1% ($n = 7295$) scoring the maximum of 20 and only 2.7% scoring the minimum of four. The four items were one-dimensional on factor analysis, and showed high internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .93). The most disapproved item related to same-sex marriage, followed by the consecration of practising homosexuals to the episcopate. The items referring to same-sex intercourse and the ordination of practising homosexuals had the lowest homonegativity scores. The norm for this

population thus seemed to be homonegativity, so people with low conditionability would be expected to have lower homonegative scores than average.

[Table 1 about here]

Correlation of dependent and independent variables

The relationship of EPQR-A scales to sex were partly as predicted from previous studies, with women scoring higher on E, higher on L and lower on P. Unusually, women scored lower on N, but the sex difference was not significant (Table 2). Older people had lower E, N and P scores and higher L scores. There were also relationships with theological orientation: men were generally more conservative and less charismatic than women, but there was no relationship on the catholic-evangelical scale. Older people tended to be more conservative and less evangelical or charismatic. These relationships may have arisen from the nature of the sample, and indicated that sex and age effects needed to be allowed for before comparing homonegativity with theological orientation or EPQR-A scores. None of the correlations between the independent variables were greater than .8, suggesting there was unlikely to be a problem with collinearity among the independent variables (Licht 1995).

[Table 2 about here]

Multiple regression of homonegativity scores

After allowing for the effects of sex and age, the most significant predictor of homonegativity was conservative theological orientation (Table 3). After allowing for the effect of conservatism, evangelicalism also had a highly significant effect on homonegativity. This suggests that evangelical disapproval of homosexuality may be more than simply a product of moral conservatism. Those who scored themselves as positively charismatic were also more likely to disapprove of homosexuality, even after allowing for the effects of other two church traditions. So even though charismatics were more likely to be conservative and evangelical, there seemed to be some other reason why they were generally against homosexuality.

[Table 3 about here]

After allowing for church tradition, the two Eysenck scales that had the most significant effects on homonegativity were the lie scale and psychoticism. Those who scored high on L or low on P were more likely to disapprove of homosexuality. Neuroticism and extraversion were both negatively correlated with homonegativity

after allowing for the other variables, but their effect size was very small and they were not added to the model if the criterion for entry was set at $p < 0.01$.

The significant effects of L and P scores suggested that this might be an effect related to social conditionability. People with high L scores in church contexts might be those who are more likely to acquiesce to the 'group norm' (Francis et al. 2000). If this was so, this positive correlation between homonegativity and the lie scale should be strongest among those attending churches that strongly disapprove of homosexuality and reversed or weaker in those attending churches where homosexuality is accepted. To test this, the same multiple regression model was applied separately to groups attending churches of different traditions.

Mean L scores were slightly higher among those from broad churches (2.67, $SD = 1.76$, $n = 4686$) than those from liberal catholic (2.45, $SD = 1.71$, $n = 1583$) or conservative evangelical churches (2.40, $SD = 1.76$, $n = 1026$), but the latter two were not significantly different. Contrary to expectations, the correlation between homonegativity and L scores scale remained in the liberal and broad churches, but disappeared in conservative churches (Table 4). This seemed to be due to the uniformly high homonegativity scores in the latter churches, which also remained high in men and women and across the age range.

[Table 4 about here]

Further evidence that individual difference in social acquiescence might operate in liberal or broad, but not evangelical, congregations were the correlations between the N and L scales, which were negative and significant for those attending liberal ($r = -.08$, $df = 1578$, $p < 0.01$) or broad churches ($r = -.07$, $df = 4672$, $p < 0.001$) but positive and not significant in evangelical churches ($r < .01$, $df = 1025$, ns).

Discussion

The results show that both theological orientation and personality predicted homonegativity in this large sample of Anglicans from England. The three aspects of theological orientation accounted for more of the variance in homonegativity than did any of the Eysenck scales of personality. Of the three orientations, the liberal-conservative axis was the best single predictor of homonegativity. Theological conservatism is partly (but not exclusively) defined by moral conservatism, so the

latter was likely to be strongly associated with traditional disapproval of homosexuality. Liberalism represents a particular way of understanding the nature of the bible (Village 2005, 2007) that opens the possibility of symbolic interpretation and a stress of moral principles rather than moral rules. This theological approach makes it possible for liberals view homosexuality as acceptable if it reflects the principles of friendship, faithfulness and love, even if it runs counter to the literal sense of particular parts of scripture and practice of received tradition. Conservatism, on the other hand, holds firmly to revelation received through scripture and tradition, and is suspicious of revelation that seems to stem mainly from human development rather than divine intervention. In this view, homosexuality represents an attempt to replace divine ordinance with human sinfulness.

The significant effects of evangelicalism (versus catholicism) and charismaticism remained after allowing for conservatism, suggesting that beliefs associated with these theological positions offer additional reasons for rejecting homosexuality, other than a general moral conservatism. Both catholics and evangelicals in the Church of England have traditionally been opposed to the idea that homosexual practice is compatible with Christian discipleship, and it might be expected that those who fell at either end of this scale would have higher than average homonegative attitudes. However, this was not so, and the results suggested a more homopositive tradition among Anglo-catholics than among broad-church members or evangelicals. This may be because of the nature of the Anglo-catholic tradition, with a stress on priestly celibacy, ritual and vestments, that may offer emotional and aesthetic appeal to homosexual men (Hilliard 1982). It may also be that the correlation is driven by a specific rejection of homosexuality by evangelicals related to their views on the bible. The greater weight given to the authority of the bible by evangelicals in the Church of England (Village 2005a) means that they give more credence to those biblical injunctions that prohibit homosexual relationships. If so, the homonegative views expressed in this study represent a degree of reasoned or principled objection based on particular beliefs. Charismatics in the Church of England tend to be even more biblically conservative than non-charismatic evangelicals (Village 2005b ; 2007) and this may explain the additional effect of charismatic belief after allowing for evangelicalism.

The overall effect size of the Eysenck scales on the homonegativity score was small compared with the effects of theological orientation. However, the fact that both

psychoticism and the lie scale had statistically significant effects on homonegativity in a sample of uniformly frequent church attendees, even after allowing for the effects of sex, age and theological orientation, suggests there was a genuine relationship that demands explanation. The widespread correlations between general religiosity and psychoticism (negative) and lie scores (positive) might explain the relationship if those generally 'more religious' in this sample were also more likely to disapprove of homosexuality, to be less tough-minded and more inclined to 'fake good' on the lie scale. However, this sample was selected to have a uniformly high church attendance, and it seems unlikely that the correlations observed were entirely an indirect effect of general religiosity.

An alternative suggestion is that those who are generally more conditionable (indicated by a high L score) are likely to be more disapproving of homosexuality than those who are more able to resist such pressure. This might also explain the relationship with psychoticism, where 'tender-minded' respondents (i.e. those with low P scores) had generally higher homonegativity scores than 'tough-minded' respondents. In this sample, 'high' P scores were still quite low, and were probably an indication of low conditionability rather than any psychopathy. The negative correlations between homonegativity and both E and N scores are in line Eysenck's early idea that high E and N indicate low conditionability. However, the effect size was negligible and these variables did not seem to be significant predictors of social acquiescence in this sample.

This susceptibility was not, apparently, linked to the strength of social pressure from church congregations because those in conservative evangelical churches, where homonegativity was highest, showed no correlation between homonegativity and the lie scale and no negative correlation between the L and N scores. There is evidence from studies among clergy that negative correlations between L and N scores indicate a tendency for those who have high conditionability (indicated by high L score) to project a personality that is most acceptable among churchgoers (i.e. a low rather than high neuroticism score) (Francis et al. 2000). People in conservative evangelical churches in this study did not seem vulnerable to this sort of pressure, and seemed less susceptible to social acquiescence. In other church traditions there was some evidence that those most susceptible to social acquiescence had higher homonegativity scores than expected for the churches they attended.

This difference in response between church traditions has some parallels with findings from other studies that indicate evangelical Anglicans may be generally immune to psychological or social factors that shape beliefs in other traditions. For example, Village (2005c) showed that biblical literalism declined with increased educational experience among Anglo-catholics and broad-church members, but not among evangelicals. This might be seen by some to represent an unthinking intransigence, but it could also betoken a principled commitment to particular beliefs about the nature of scripture (Village 2007). *Church Times* readers are mostly liberal or broad-church catholics, and there were rather few respondents in this survey who fell into the most conservative evangelical category. Work with larger samples of this tradition using a more homonegative scale might show if some people in these churches are also susceptible to social acquiescence. Nonetheless, the difference between groups in this sample is striking, and perhaps offers a deeper explanation of the fault lines in Anglicanism identified through the Church Times Survey by Francis, Robbins and Astley (2005).

Homonegativity among churchgoers is likely to be shaped by a range of different pressures that are themselves changing rapidly in Britain and the Western world. The general decline in homonegativity in society at large has left many churchgoers faced with competing social pressure from a more liberal society and a more traditional church community (Crockett and Voas 2003). This study suggests that in most churches it is those who are most resistant to social conditionability generally who are most likely to deviate from this intra-church norm and therefore be more approving of homosexuality. In conservative evangelical churches, however, social conditionability may have little effect and all members maintain similar beliefs. This may arise because of powerful community pressure to conform that overrides any personality traits that might lessen social conditionability. This is unlikely in Anglican churches, and evidence from elsewhere suggests that uniformity of belief in congregations may be the secondary effect of the association of like-minded people (Village 2007: chapter 7). Instead it may represent attitudes that are consciously shaped by belief and therefore not easily swayed by changes in society at large.

The items in the homonegativity scale were produced to fit into a large questionnaire that was sent to a range of Anglicans in 2001. The results suggest that although the items related to relevant and valid issues about homosexuality for the

target group, there was some 'saturation' of the scale, which produced a positive skew to the scores. Respondents were generally conservative in their views on homosexuality, so similar scales in the future would need to contain items that would test even higher levels of disapproval. These might include objections to any form of homosexual practice or orientation. The opposite might be true for scales designed to operate in secular populations, where liberal opinions are more frequent and less blatantly negative items are needed to produce reliable scales (Morrison and Morrison 2002). Future work on homonegativity among Anglicans could investigate in more detail the reasons for holding particular views, and whether this is related to conservatism in general or biblical conservatism in particular.

Table 1: Items in the homonegativity scale

| Percentage of replies (<i>n</i> = 7295) | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------|------------|-----|--------------------|
| | Disagree % | Not certain % | Agree % | IRC | Mean (SD) score |
| It is wrong for people of same gender to have sex together | 28 | 17 | 56 | .90 | 3.51 (1.36) |
| Homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another* | 71 | 16 | 14 | .89 | 3.95 (1.18) |
| I am in favour of the ordination of practising homosexuals as priests* | 54 | 20 | 26 | .77 | 3.53 (1.36) |
| I am in favour of the ordination of practising homosexuals as bishops* | 60 | 18 | 22 | .76 | 3.69 (1.36) |

Note. Cronbach's alpha = .93. IRC = Item Rest Correlation. * These items were reverse scored.

Table 2: Correlation matrix for independent and dependent variables

| | Char | Evan | Con | L | P | N | E | Age | Sex |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Homonegativity | .130 ^{***} | .271 ^{***} | .518 ^{***} | .126 ^{***} | -.105 ^{***} | -.068 ^{***} | -.070 ^{***} | .217 ^{***} | -.039 ^{***} |
| Sex | .027 [*] | .012 | -.042 ^{***} | .116 ^{***} | -.129 ^{***} | -.015 | .038 ^{***} | .025 [*] | - |
| Age | -.173 ^{***} | -.102 ^{***} | .051 ^{***} | .251 ^{***} | -.133 ^{***} | -.109 ^{***} | -.087 ^{***} | - | |
| Extraversion | .062 ^{***} | .010 | -.057 ^{***} | -.045 ^{***} | .032 ^{**} | -.162 ^{***} | - | | |
| Neuroticism | -.028 [*] | -.076 ^{***} | -.012 | -.059 ^{***} | .042 ^{***} | - | | | |
| Psychoticism | -.023 [*] | -.057 ^{***} | -.046 ^{**} | -.079 ^{***} | - | | | | |
| Lie scale | -.056 ^{***} | -.047 ^{***} | .057 ^{***} | - | | | | | |
| Conservative | .051 ^{***} | .216 ^{***} | - | | | | | | |
| Evangelical | .324 ^{***} | - | | | | | | | |
| Charismatic | - | | | | | | | | |

Note. $N = 7295$. * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$; otherwise not significant.

Table 3: Hierarchical multiple regression of the homonegativity score

| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β |
|--------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| Step 1 | | | |
| Constant | 15.24 | .17 | |
| Sex | -.38 | .11 | -.04** |
| Step 2 | | | |
| Constant | 12.51 | .22 | |
| Sex | -.43 | .11 | -.05*** |
| Age | .78 | .04 | .22*** |
| Step 3 | | | |
| Constant | 5.87 | .23 | |
| Sex | -.29 | .09 | -.03** |
| Age | .81 | .03 | .23*** |
| Conservative | 1.45 | .03 | .47*** |
| Evangelical | .52 | .03 | .16*** |
| Charismatic | .77 | .08 | .09*** |
| Step 4 | | | |
| Constant | 6.04 | .24 | |
| Sex | -.41 | .09 | -.04*** |
| Age | .73 | .04 | .21*** |
| Conservative | 1.44 | .03 | .46*** |
| Evangelical | .52 | .03 | .16*** |
| Charismatic | .77 | .08 | .09*** |
| Lie scale | .17 | .03 | .06*** |
| Psychoticism | -.46 | .10 | -.05*** |

Note. Sex, age and theological orientation variables entered in Steps 1, 2 and 3, with remaining variables entered stepwise in Step 4, with $p < 0.01$ for entry. ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 4: Regression of homonegativity on psychoticism and lie scales by church tradition

| | Tradition of church attended | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| | Liberal catholic <i>n</i> = 1578 β | Broad <i>n</i> = 4672 β | Conservative evangelical <i>n</i> = 1025 β |
| Psychoticism | -.06* | -.07*** | -.06* |
| Lie scale | .11*** | .07*** | -.00 |

Note. β = standardized regression coefficient after allowing for the effects of sex, age and theological orientation. * = $p < 0.05$; *** = $p < 0.001$, otherwise not significant.

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