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The psychological type profile of Anglican clergymen serving in Northern Ireland:

Closer to Wales than to England?

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**Note to copyeditor**

In light of the number of multi-authored references with Francis as the first author, appeal is made to APA guidance 8.18, whereby:

- references with three authors have been allowed to stand (e.g. Francis, Village, & Voas, 2021)
- references with four or more authors have been abbreviated by retaining the first two authors (e.g. Francis, Whinney, et al., 2011)

Please allow this convention to stand.

### Abstract

This study set out to examine the psychological type profile of Anglican clergymen serving within the Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland. A sample of 85 clergymen completed the Francis Psychological Type Scales. The data demonstrated a group of clergymen who prefer introversion (68%) over extraversion (32%), sensing (67%) over intuition (33%), feeling (60%) over thinking (40%), and judging (82%) over perceiving (18%). The two predominant types among this group of clergymen were ISFJ (25%) and ISTJ (19%). These findings are then set alongside previously published profiles of Anglican clergymen serving in England and Wales. While in England the majority preference on the perceiving process is for intuition, in both Northern Ireland and Wales it is for sensing.

*Keywords:* psychology, religion, psychological type, clergy

## Introduction

Psychological type theory has emerged as a fruitful area for research drawing together insights from practical and empirical theology and from the empirical psychology of religion, as evidenced by the collections of papers edited by Village (2011a) and Lewis (2012, 2015, 2021a, 2021b, 2022). For example, psychological type theory has provided a vocabulary for connecting observation of human individual differences with systematic theology and hermeneutical theory (Francis & Village, 2008) and for examining strengths and weaknesses in styles of religious leadership (Ross & Francis, 2020).

Psychological type theory has its roots in the observations of human behaviour as interpreted by Jung (1971) and has been subsequently refined by the development of a set of instruments designed to operationalise the theory, including the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1978), the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985), and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017). At heart Jung's theory of cognitive functioning distinguished between two core processes, styled the perceiving process and the judging process. These two processes are nested within a theory concerning the nature of psychological energy, styled orientation, and a theory concerning the orientation within which the processes are expressed, styled attitude. A distinctive feature of psychological type theory concerns Jung's fascination with dichotomous contrasts. Unlike other established models of personality, like the Big Five Factor model (Costa & McCrae, 1985) or the Major Three Dimensions model (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975), psychological type theory is concerned with psychological typology not with psychological continua. Each of the four constructs advanced by psychological type theory (perceiving process, judging process, orientations, and attitudes) are recognised through two contrasting expressions.

The perceiving process is concerned with identifying ways in which individuals take in information. For Jung, the perceiving process was described as the irrational process because it was not concerned with data evaluation, but simply with data gathering. In this area, the two contrasting functions are defined as sensing and as intuition. For sensing types, the preferred way of perceiving is through the five senses. Sensing types are motivated by facts, details and information. They build up to the big picture slowly by focusing first on the component parts. They are more comfortable in the present moment rather than in exploring future possibilities. They are realistic and practical people. For intuitive types, the preferred way of perceiving is through their imagination. Intuitive types are motivated by theories, ideas and connections. They begin with the big picture and gradually give attention to the component parts. They are more comfortable planning the future than making do with the present. They are inspirational and visionary people.

The judging process is concerned with identifying ways in which individuals evaluate information. For Jung, the judging process was described as the rational process because it was concerned with data evaluation and with decision making. In this area, the two contrasting functions are defined as thinking and as feeling. For thinking types, the preferred way of judging is through objective analysis and dispassionate logic. They are concerned with the good running of systems and organizations and put such strategic issues first. They are logical and fair-minded people who appeal to the God of justice. For feeling types, the preferred way of judging is through subjective evaluation and personal involvement. They are concerned with the good relationships between people and put such inter-personal issues first. They are humane and warm-hearted people who appeal to the God of mercy.

The orientation is concerned with identifying the sources of psychological energy. In this area, the two contrasting expressions are defined as extraversion and introversion. For extravert types, the source of energy is located in the outer world of people and things.

Extraverts are exhausted by large periods of solitude and silence; and they need to re-energize through the stimulation they receive from people and places. Extraverts are talkative people who feel at home in social contexts. For introvert types, the source of energy is located in the inner world of ideas and reflection. Introverts are exhausted by long periods of social engagements and sounds; and they need to re-energise through the stimulation they receive from their own company and tranquillity.

The attitude (often more fully expressed as the ‘attitude toward the outer world’) is concerned with identifying which of the two processes (judging or perceiving) individuals prefer to use in the outer world. In this area, the two contrasting expressions are defined by the name of the preferred process, either judging or perceiving. For judging types, their preferred judging function (either thinking or feeling) is employed in their outer world. Because their outer world is where the rational, evaluating, judging or decision-making process is deployed, judging types appear to others to be well-organized decisive people. For perceiving types, their preferred perceiving function (either sensing or intuition) is employed in their outer world. Because their outer world is where the irrational, data gathering process is deployed, perceiving types appear to others to be laid-back, flexible, even disorganized people.

Since the early 2000s a connected series of independent but interrelated studies has begun to assemble a composite picture of the psychological type profile of religious professionals working within a variety of church traditions within the UK, including Anglican clergy serving in the Church of England (Francis, Craig, et al., 2007; Francis, Robbins, et al., 2010; Village, 2011b; Francis, Robbins, & Whinney, 2011; Francis & Holmes, 2011; Francis, Robbins, & Jones, 2012; Francis & Village, 2012; Village 2013; Francis & Smith, 2018; Francis, Village, & Voas, 2021; Rutledge, 2021), Anglican clergy serving in the Church in Wales (Francis, Payne, & Jones, 2001; Francis, Littler, & Robbins,

2010; Payne & Lewis, 2015), Anglican seminarians (Francis, Craig, & Butler, 2007), Apostolic Network leaders (Kay, et al., 2011), Baptist ministers (Garland & Village, 2022), Bible College students (Francis, Penson, & Jones, 2001; Kay & Francis, 2008; Kay, et al., 2008), Evangelical church leaders (Francis & Robbins, 2002; Craig, Francis, & Robbins, 2004; Francis, Craig, et al., 2005), Free Church Ministers (Francis, Whinney, et al., 2011), missionary personnel (Craig, Horsfall, & Francis, 2005), Methodist circuit ministers (Burton et al., 2010; Francis, Haley, & McKenna, 2023), Newfrontiers lead elders (Francis, Gubb, & Robbins, 2009), Roman Catholic priests (Craig et al., 2006; Francis & Village, 2022), Salvation Army Officers (ap Siôn & Francis, 2022), United Reformed Church ministers (Lewis et al., 2022), and youth ministers (Francis, Nash, et al., 2007).

Two main conclusions emerge from these studies. The first conclusion is that the psychological type profiles of clergymen and clergywomen differ significantly from the population norms generated from men and women in the UK by Kendall (1998). The second conclusion is that there are significant differences between different groups of clergy and religious leaders, varying according to denominational affiliation and according to church traditions or styles of believing. One of the most fascinating comparisons to emerge from this set of studies concerns the difference in profile recorded by Anglican clergymen serving in the Church of England and Anglican clergy serving in the Church in Wales. Here are two Churches within the same Anglican Communion separated only by the permeable boundary along Offa's Dyke.

Three studies have reported on the psychological type profile of Anglican clergymen serving in the Church in Wales: Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001) drew on data from 427 clergymen, Francis, Littler, and Robbins (2010) drew on data from 231 clergymen, and Payne and Lewis (2015) drew on data from 268 clergymen. These three studies can then be set alongside two studies that have reported on the psychological type profile of Anglican



clergymen serving in the Church of England: Francis, Craig, et al. (2007) drew on data from 626 clergymen, and Francis, Robbins, et al. (2010) drew on data from 622 clergymen. In terms of the orientations, the attitudes, and the judging process, clergymen from England and Wales recorded similar profiles, but in terms of the perceiving process the two groups emerged quite differently.

In terms of the orientations, all five studies demonstrated a clear preference for introversion: in Wales 59% according to Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001) and 69% according to Francis, Littler, and Robbins (2010), and 65% according to Payne and Lewis (2015), and in England 57% according to Francis, Craig, et al. (2007) and 64% according to Francis, Robbins, et al. (2010). Clergy who prefer introversion display distinctive strengths in ministry. They may be energised by private study and by periods of solitary preparation, by one-to-one encounters in counselling and in spiritual direction, by contemplative prayer and reflection, and by focusing deeply on interior spiritual issues. On the other hand, clergy who prefer introversion may be drained by some of the public aspects of ministry, such as attending social events, speaking in public (especially when required to be spontaneous or interactive), talking with strangers as part of evangelism or parish visiting, and assuming a high profile within the parish. Anglican ministry in Wales and England alike is shaped by the quiet reflective spirituality characteristic of a preference for introversion.

In terms of attitude, all five studies demonstrated a clear preference for judging: in Wales 68% according to Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001), 78% according to Francis, Littler, and Robbins (2010), and 78% according to Payne and Lewis (2015), and in England 68% according to Francis, Craig, et al. (2007) and 73% according to Francis, Robbins, et al. (2010). Clergy who prefer judging display distinctive strengths in ministry. They may be inspired by taking care of organisational matters, both in their own life and in the life of the parish, by arranging services and events well in advance, by maintaining efficient

administrative systems, and by managing local affairs. On the other hand, clergy who prefer judging may be less able to cope with some other aspects of ministry, such as the need for thinking on their feet, responding effectively to unanticipated crises, and adapting to changing situations. Anglican ministry in Wales and England alike is shaped by clear organisation and structure, features characteristic of a preference for judging.

In terms of the judging process, all five studies demonstrated a clear preference for feeling: in Wales 69% according to Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001), 55% according to Francis, Littler, and Robbins (2010) and 68% according to Payne and Lewis (2015), and in England 54% according to Francis, Craig, et al. (2007) and 56% according to Francis, Robbins, et al. (2010). Clergy who prefer feeling display distinctive strengths in ministry. They may be particularly good at spending time caring for others through visiting, counselling or pastoral care, supporting and empathising with those in need, and emphasising the importance of interpersonal values in Christian teaching, such as love, harmony, peace, and compassion. On the other hand, clergy who prefer feeling may be less equipped to deal with some other aspects of ministry, such as having to look at problems objectively and logically, the need to make tough decisions which affect other people's lives, the need to be critical when necessary, and dealing with troublesome people. Anglican ministry in Wales and England alike is shaped by an emphasis on pastoral care and by a love for harmony inspired by allegiance to the God of mercy.

However, a very different picture emerged in terms of the perceiving process. The three studies conducted in Wales demonstrated a clear preference for sensing: 57% according to Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001), 64% according to Francis, Littler, and Robbins (2010), and 57% according to Payne and Lewis (2015). The two studies conducted in England demonstrate a clear preference for intuition: 62% according to Francis, Craig, et al. (2007) and 67% according to Francis, Robbins, et al. (2010). Sensing types and intuitive types bring

somewhat different strengths to ministry. With ministry leadership shaped by a predominance of intuitive types, the Church of England is a Church that may promote change and development in church structure, church order, liturgy and teaching. The leadership may encourage an open, enquiring and more liberal approach to faith. Within ministry leadership shaped by a predominance of sensing types, the Church in Wales is a Church that may be more reluctant to promote change and development in church structures, church order, liturgy and teaching. The leadership may encourage a stronger commitment to tradition and a more conservative approach to faith and to liturgy. In terms of the perceiving process, the Anglican Churches in England and Wales may present a very different public face for ministry.

### **Research aim**

Against this background, the aim of the present study is to place alongside the existing data concerning the psychological type profile of Anglican clergymen serving in the Church of England and in the Church of Wales new data concerning the psychological type profile of Anglican clergymen serving in Northern Ireland within the Church of Ireland.

## **Method**

### **Procedure**

All licensed clergy serving in parochial ministry in Northern Ireland within the Church of Ireland were emailed an invitation to participate in an online survey hosted on the Qualtrics platform at York St John University. From the 185 clergymen thus emailed, 85 completed the relevant measures of which the present paper was based, giving a response rate of 46%.

### **Participants**

Of the 85 clergymen who participated in the project, 8 were under the age of forty, 13 were in their forties, 28 in their fifties, 31 in their sixties, and 5 in their seventies.

### **Instrument**

*Psychological type* was assessed by the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS: Francis, 2005; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017). This is a 40-item instrument comprising four sets of 10 forced-choice items related to each of the four components of psychological type: orientation (extraversion or introversion), perceiving process (sensing or intuition), judging process (thinking or feeling), and attitude toward the outer world (judging or perceiving). Recent studies have demonstrated that this instrument functions well in church-related contexts. For example, Francis, Craig, and Hall (2008) reported alpha coefficients of .83 for the extraversion – introversion scale, .76 for the sensing – intuition scale, .73 for the thinking – feeling scale, and .79 for the judging – perceiving scale. Participants were asked for each pair of characteristics to check the ‘box next to that characteristic which is closer to the real you, even if you feel both characteristics apply to you. Tick the characteristics that reflect the real you, even if other people see you differently’.

### **Data analysis**

The research literature concerning the empirical investigation of psychological type has developed a highly distinctive method for analyzing, handling, and displaying statistical data in the form of ‘type tables’. This convention has been adopted in the following presentation in order to integrate these new data within the established literature and to provide all the detail necessary for secondary analysis and further interpretation within the rich theoretical framework afforded by psychological type. Type tables have been designed to provide information about the sixteen discrete psychological types, about the four dichotomous preferences, about the six sets of pairs and temperaments, about the dominant types, and about the introverted and extraverted Jungian types. Commentary on this table will, however, be restricted to those aspects of the data strictly relevant to the research question.

### **Results**

- insert table 1 about here -

Table 1 presents the type distribution for the 85 Anglican clergymen serving within the Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland who participated in the survey. These data confirm that clergymen serving within the Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland prefer introversion (68%) over extraversion (32%), sensing (67%) over intuition (33%), feeling (60%) over thinking (40%), and judging (82%) over perceiving (18%). The strongest dominant function is sensing (44%), followed by feeling (27%), intuition (17%), and thinking (13%). The two most strongly represented types were ISFJ (25%) and ISTJ (19%).

### Discussion and conclusion

The aim of the present study was to build on five earlier studies concerned with mapping the psychological type profile of Anglican clergymen, two conducted in England (Francis, Craig, et al., 2007; Francis, Robbins, et al., 2010), and three conducted in Wales (Francis, Payne, & Jones, 2001; Francis, Littler, & Robbins, 2010; Payne & Lewis, 2015), by providing new data on the psychological type profile of Anglican clergymen serving within the Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland. Four main conclusions emerge from these new data.

First, in all three locations, the ministry exercised by Anglican clergymen is shaped by a preference for introversion where the emphasis may be placed on the inward spiritual journey. Introverted clergy may be energised by many aspects of ministry, such as private study and preparation, one-to-one encounters in counselling and in spiritual direction, silent prayer and reflection, and focusing deeply on interior issues. On the other hand, introverted clergy may be drained by other aspects of ministry, such as attending social events, speaking in public (especially without preparation), talking with strangers, and assuming a high public profile.

Second, in all three locations, the ministry exercised by Anglican clergymen is shaped by a preference for applying their preferred judging function in the outside world where the

emphasis may be placed on order and stability. Clergy who prefer judging may be energised by many aspects of ministry, such as arranging services and events well in advance, maintaining efficient and effective administrative systems, and managing local affairs. On the other hand, clergy who prefer judging may be drained by other aspects of ministry, such as the need to think on their feet, responding to unanticipated crises, and adapting to changing situations.

Third, in all three locations, the ministry exercised by Anglican clergymen is shaped by a preference for feeling. Clergy who prefer feeling may be energised by many aspects of ministry, such as giving time to pastoral care, supporting and empathising with those in need, and placing value on love, harmony, peace, and compassion. On the other hand, clergy who prefer feeling may be drained by other aspects of ministry, such as having to analyse problems objectively and logically, managing conflict and disagreement, and making tough decisions which impact the lives of people.

Fourth, in terms of the perceiving process, the public face of the ministry shaped by Anglican clergymen looks different in Wales and Northern Ireland from how it looks in England. In Wales and Northern Ireland the ministry exercised by Anglican clergymen is shaped by a preference for sensing, while in England it is shaped by a preference for intuition. The differences in leadership style between intuitive types and sensing types may be quite profound, and such differences may lead to quite different experiences for church members. Studies of Anglican congregations, both in Wales and in England show a very strong preference for sensing (Francis, Robbins, et al., 2007; Francis, Robbins, & Craig, 2011; Francis & Robbins, 2012) and for this reason leaders who prefer sensing may find themselves in closer sympathy with the members of their congregations than is the case for leaders who prefer intuition.

With ministry shaped by a preference for intuition, the Church of England may be more active in promoting change and development at the local level. In such a church the clergy may run ahead of the laity, leave the regular churchgoers frustrated by the pace of change and experimentation, and confuse the large body of occasional churchgoers who turn up at Christmas only to find that the form of service has changed and few of the familiar landmarks remain to nurture them back into the faith with which they once felt both familiar and comfortable. With ministry shaped by a preference for sensing, the Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland may be more reluctant to promote change at the local level. In such a church, the clergy may drag behind those regular churchgoers who have had a taste of experimentation in the wider Anglican Church, and alienate occasional attenders who seek innovation in marriage services and funeral services connecting with contemporary culture.

### **Limitations**

There remain a number of limitations with the present study that need to be addressed by future research. First, while the profiles for England and Wales have been based on multiple studies, as yet only one study has been conducted in Northern Ireland. Second, in view of the small number of participants from Northern Ireland ( $N = 85$ ) statistical significance testing has not been employed in this descriptive study. A larger number of participants would be required to make effective use of statistical significance testing within type tables (McCaulley, 1985). Third, while the Church of Ireland embraces both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, comparable data have not yet been accessed in the Republic of Ireland. Fourth, this comparative study has concentrated only on clergymen. While there are now sufficient data from clergywomen in the Church of England to provide the basis for such comparison, this is not yet the case for Anglican clergywomen serving in Wales or Northern Ireland.

### **Ethical approval**

Ethical approval was granted by the Research Ethics Committee for the School of Humanities, Religion and Philosophy at York St John University (approval code: HUM-RS-AV-05-22-02). All participants had to affirm they were 18 or over and give their informed consent by ticking a box that gave access to the rest of the survey.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.



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Table 1

*Type distribution for Anglican clergymen serving in Northern Ireland*

The Sixteen Complete Types				Dichotomous Preferences			
ISTJ <i>n</i> = 16 (18.8%) +++++ +++++ +++++ +++++	ISFJ <i>n</i> = 21 (24.7%) +++++	INFJ <i>n</i> = 6 (7.1%) +++++	INTJ <i>n</i> = 4 (4.7%) +++++	E	<i>n</i> = 27	(31.8%)	
				I	<i>n</i> = 58	(68.2%)	
				S	<i>n</i> = 57	(67.1%)	
				N	<i>n</i> = 28	(32.9%)	
				T	<i>n</i> = 34	(40.0%)	
				F	<i>n</i> = 51	(60.0%)	
				J	<i>n</i> = 70	(82.4%)	
				P	<i>n</i> = 15	(17.6%)	
ISTP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	ISFP <i>n</i> = 1 (1.2%) +	INFP <i>n</i> = 8 (9.4%) +++++ ++++	INTP <i>n</i> = 2 (2.4%) ++	Pairs and Temperaments			
				IJ	<i>n</i> = 47	(55.3%)	
				IP	<i>n</i> = 11	(12.9%)	
				EP	<i>n</i> = 4	(4.7%)	
				EJ	<i>n</i> = 23	(27.1%)	
				ST	<i>n</i> = 25	(29.4%)	
				SF	<i>n</i> = 32	(37.6%)	
				NF	<i>n</i> = 19	(22.4%)	
				NT	<i>n</i> = 9	(10.6%)	
ESTP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	ESFP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	ENFP <i>n</i> = 1 (1.1%) +	ENTP <i>n</i> = 3 (3.5%) ++++	SJ	<i>n</i> = 56	(65.9%)	
				SP	<i>n</i> = 1	(1.2%)	
				NP	<i>n</i> = 14	(16.5%)	
				NJ	<i>n</i> = 14	(16.5%)	
				TJ	<i>n</i> = 29	(34.1%)	
				TP	<i>n</i> = 5	(5.9%)	
				FP	<i>n</i> = 10	(11.8%)	
				FJ	<i>n</i> = 41	(48.2%)	
ESTJ <i>n</i> = 9 (10.6%) +++++ +++++ +	ESFJ <i>n</i> = 10 (11.8%) +++++ +++++ ++	ENFJ <i>n</i> = 4 (4.7%) +++++	ENTJ <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	IN	<i>n</i> = 20	(23.5%)	
				EN	<i>n</i> = 8	(9.4%)	
				IS	<i>n</i> = 38	(44.7%)	
				ES	<i>n</i> = 19	(22.4%)	
				ET	<i>n</i> = 12	(14.1%)	
				EF	<i>n</i> = 15	(17.6%)	
				IF	<i>n</i> = 36	(42.4%)	
				IT	<i>n</i> = 22	(25.9%)	
Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types	
	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%		
E-TJ	9	10.6	I-TP	2	2.4	Dt.T	11 12.9
E-FJ	14	16.5	I-FP	9	10.6	Dt.F	23 27.1
ES-P	0	0.0	IS-J	37	43.5	Dt.S	37 43.5
EN-P	4	4.7	IN-J	10	11.8	Dt.N	14 16.5

Note: *N* = 85 (NB: + = 1% of *N*)