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Civic Engagement in Britain: The Role of Religion and Inclusive Values

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Abstract

The relationship between religion and volunteering is well documented (Putnam and Campbell, 2010; Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006), and a prevalent hypothesis for the association is that the effect of religion is mediated through religious social networks. However, research on this relationship has largely been conducted on majority Christian populations in the United States and Europe. In this study, we use two data sets, the European Values Study (1999–2008) and the Ethnic Minority British Election Survey (2010) to examine this relationship in Britain on the general population and ethnic minority population, respectively. The results suggest that religion increases volunteering primarily through bonding rather than bridging social networks. We also find that in non-Christian religions, solitary and collective religious rituals may both have an effect on civic participation, but whereas the effect of service attendance is mediated through bonding social networks, the effect of prayer is mediated more through bridging networks. Finally, values of individual autonomy and generalized trust are associated with non-religious, but not religious, participation, suggesting an alternative secular ethos of civic engagement.

Introduction

The relationship between religion and civic prosocial behaviour is well documented (Becker and Dhingra, 2001; Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006; Putnam and Campbell, 2010). However, the mechanisms for the relationship are not well understood. Britain is an interesting case to explore what role religion plays for civic life in an at once secularized and multireligious context. According to the European Values Study (EVS) 2007, only 55 per cent of the British, compared with 76 per cent of the overall sample, affiliate with a religion, and 12.5 per cent attend religious services weekly compared with a 17.6 per cent European average. Since the 1970s, immigration has increased the number of Muslims, Sikhs, and

Hindus as well as transforming the Christian population of Britain. In the 2011 Census of England and Wales, 19.5 per cent reported an ethnicity other than White British and 8.4 per cent reported having a non-Christian religion (ONS, 2012). Like in many other countries in Europe, changes in the ethnic and religious composition of the population has stimulated debate both about how to promote active citizenship among ethnic minorities and how to promote interethnic social interaction. Compared with many other countries in Western Europe, however, there has been ‘considerable and progressive’ (Foner and Alba, 2008: p. 385) accommodation to the cultural practices of religious minorities in the UK. Since the 1990s, ‘faith groups’ have increasingly

been involved as governance partners to promote civic participation and community cohesion (Dinham and Shaw, 2012). An interesting question in this regard is whether religion has an integrating or segregating effect on immigrants and ethnic minorities.

One indication of the relationship between religion and civic prosocial behaviour is that many charities and voluntary organizations are run by religious groups or institutions. According to Ruiter and De Graaf (2006: p. 197) 46 per cent of all volunteering reported in the World Values Survey, 1981–2001 was done for religious organizations. However, this cannot account for the whole relationship between religiosity and volunteering. Finding that people who are involved in religious volunteering are almost 3.6 times as likely to volunteer for non-religious causes Ruiter and De Graaf (2006: p. 204) suggest that more general civic engagement might be a ‘spillover effect’ from the social networks, skills and values gained from religious volunteering.

One possible reason for the relationship is that prosociality in general, and volunteering in particular, is included in the norms and values imparted through religious teachings, which are internalized and followed by adherents (Einolf, 2011). For example, Wuthnow (1991) found that volunteers were significantly more likely to know the Christian parable of the Good Samaritan. Another possibility is that religious communities provide social networks and resources, which enable and encourage volunteering among people with a variety of motivations and sources for their prosocial values and attitudes (Wuthnow, 1991; Becker and Dinghra, 2001; Putnam and Campbell, 2010). While this ‘social network hypothesis’ has been the favoured explanation in American and European survey research, some find that internal experiences of religiosity also provide significant motivations for volunteering (Einolf, 2011), and this may be particularly important in non-Christian religions where private worship has a more central role (Carabain and Bekkers, 2012). In either case, we would expect religion to be associated with volunteering behaviour beyond religious associational membership and activity.

Based on this literature we expect that:

Hypothesis 1: Religiosity is positively associated with membership and volunteering in both religious and non-religious organizations.

In their study of religion in the United States, Putnam and Campbell (2010) found that religion is associated with civic participation, but that the relationship could be almost entirely explained by social networks. Specifically, how many friends someone has in the same

church is a more reliable predictor of civic engagement than how often they attend church services themselves (Putnam and Campbell, 2010). The importance of the social connections gained through congregations has been documented by Wuthnow (1991) and Becker and Dinghra (2001), whose studies indicate that civic engagement is motivated by close friendship ties and emotional commitment to the community, rather than the salience of religious beliefs. The association between individual levels of belief or devotion and prosociality is much less clear (Galen, 2012: p. 893).

An alternative interpretation is that religious services stimulate prosocial behaviour through norms and rituals. Durkheim (1897/2006) posited that the more integrated people are into a group, the more strongly they comply with the group norms. He also saw participation in collective ritual as an indication of an individual’s integration into a group. To the extent that prosocial and civic engagement are norms in religious societies, we would expect that the more integrated, i.e. more participating, members of a religious group would exhibit more such behaviour than passive affiliates (Reitsma, Scheepers and Te Grotenhuis, 2006: p. 349). Religious moral tales are often ritualized so they can be experienced repeatedly and become both socially and cognitively internalized (Whitehouse, 2000). Worship of the divine can take individual as well as collective forms, however. In contrast to service attendance, prayer and meditation are often performed in solitude, and are not regarded as indicative of integration into the religious community (Reitsma, Scheepers and Te Grotenhuis, 2006: p. 350). If it is the ritual performance of religious belief itself that has an effect on prosocial behaviour, then we should expect solitary worship to have the same effect as collective worship. In contrast, if it can be explained predominantly by social networks or social norms, then collective worship should have a stronger effect. Based on the social network hypothesis we make the following prediction:

Hypothesis 2: Civic engagement is positively associated with religious service attendance, but not private prayer.

Putnam (2000) distinguishes between *bridging* and *bonding* social capital. Religious groups, like all organized communities, may facilitate the creation of friendships and network ties, or what Putnam calls ‘bonding social capital’. Secondly, an altruistic ethos and traditions of volunteering may connect people from different social backgrounds (Wuthnow, 2003: p. 436) and thus create ‘bridging social capital’. The distinction between bridging and bonding could have implications for ethnic and religious integration. Immigrants who

only join ethnic organizations, Uslaner and Conley (2003) argue, do not increase their general civic engagement, and might even reduce their participation in the larger community. Religious organizations, while sometimes ethnically diverse, may similarly fail to promote relations with a largely secular majority population (Foner and Alba, 2008). A counterargument would be that for recently arrived immigrants, religious and ethnic organizations could provide the skills and knowledge to navigate the wider civil society (Bloemraad, 2006: pp. 677–678; Portes, Escobar and Arana, 2008). As Portes and Zhou's (1993) study of second generation immigrants in the United States shows, even for ethnic minorities born and raised in the host society, engagement with co-ethnics may foster, rather than hinder, civic integration provided the ethnic community has the necessary resources.

Nevertheless, religion may be less suited for promoting generalized social trust and bridging social capital across ethnic or religious groups. Several scholars have suggested that religion evolved as a way of increasing in-group cooperative behaviour in the face of external threats, thus increasing group survival (Wilson, 2002; Haidt, 2012). In a number of studies reviewed by Jost *et al.* (2003), ethnocentrism and religiosity are both strongly correlated with measures of conservatism and traditionalism, such as Altemeyer's (1981) Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale. In an economic game experiment with members of religious and non-religious organizations, Paciotti *et al.* (2011: p. 300) found that religion was 'not a strong force to explain generosity, trust and cooperation among individuals paired within unknown social networks'. This lack of a relationship may be an effect of the same tendency for group identification and loyalty that makes religion a promoter of bonding social capital and within-group trust. Critiquing the established link between religion and prosociality, Galen (2012: p. 885) points out that 'religiosity appears to be associated with increased generosity but is also marked by ingroup bias'.

Hypothesis 3: Religion increases civic engagement through ethnic and religious bonding, but not bridging, social networks.

Religion, whether measured by service attendance, belief, or the influence of religious institutions in social life, has been declining in Britain, as in many other European countries, for the past hundred years (Voas and Crockett, 2005: p. 17). This raises the question of what the impact of secularization will be on civic engagement. One possibility is that religious decline will

be accompanied by a similar decline in civic engagement. Another possibility is the appearance of alternative avenues towards prosocial behaviour, political activism, and social community. McAndrew and Voas (2014) show that even if immigrant religiosity is associated with civic engagement, successive generations of immigrants are both less religious than their parents and more civically involved.

Inglehart and Welzel (2005) found that civic and democratic values are strongly associated with self-expression values, which emphasize subjective well-being above traditional family values, religion, and nationality. The rise of such values, they argue, 'is linked with higher levels of political action, focused on making elites more responsive to popular demands' (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 294). In other words, placing individual autonomy over collective values provides an incentive to civic participation (Sønderskov, 2011).

Trust may also be an important factor in the relationship between religion and civic engagement. Generalized trust is associated with bridging social capital, namely, social relations with people who are different on important socio-demographic indicators such as social class and ethnicity. Particularized trust, in contrast, depends on bonding social capital, as particularized trusters place confidence only in people they know or consider to be like themselves. Using data from a Dutch 4-year panel study, Bekkers (2012) found the relationship between volunteering and trust could be entirely accounted for by selection effects, with low trusters being less likely to join and stay members of voluntary organizations. Analysing the World Value Survey, 2000, Sønderskov (2011) similarly found that generalized social trust increases the likelihood of passive associational membership in all except professional and religious organizations.

Because generalized trust and individual autonomy values are positively associated with civic participation, and negatively associated with religion (Paciotti *et al.*, 2011: p. 300; Galen, 2012: p. 885), the question is how we can explain the positive relationship between religion and volunteering. The key to the puzzle may lie in the distinction between bridging and bonding social networks. If religion is most associated with *bonding* social capital, a decline of religion could potentially encourage or be part of a process that increases generalized social trust, autonomy values, and *bridging* social capital. While Putnam (2000) argued that individualization would lead to a decline of community involvement, it could in fact, following Inglehart and Welzel (2005) and Sønderskov (2011), contribute to other, less bonded

forms of social and political participation. Thus, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 4: Individual autonomy values and generalized trust are positively associated with non-religious, but not religious, civic engagement

Data

Two surveys are used to analyse the general population and ethnic minority population in Britain. The EVS has four waves: in 1981, 1990, 1999, and 2008. The latest wave included approximately 70,000 respondents from 46 countries. The analysis for this article is conducted on the latest two waves in Great Britain, namely, 1999 ($N = 1000$) and 2008 ($N = 1549$), pooled to ensure a large sample while restricting the analysis to a recent period. The EVS includes a number of items concerning religion and values, in addition to questions about volunteering and membership of associations.

The Ethnic Minority British Election Survey (EMBES), conducted in 2010, has 2,787 respondents, all from visible ethnic minorities in Great Britain (524 Black Africans, 597 Black Caribbeans, 587 Indians, 668 Pakistanis, and 270 Bangladeshis). The size of the sample, the range of items, and the high quality of the sampling make this data set especially useful for a study of minority participation. The questionnaire was available in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu, as well as English, thus reaching respondents whose English language skills would otherwise prevent them from participating. This survey enables comparisons between minority religions in Britain whose numbers in national population sample surveys are normally too small to analyse in detail. The sample contains 1,149 Muslims, 684 Christians, 316 Hindus, and 230 Sikhs, as well as 282 with no religion. Further, it is particularly suitable for researching questions about ethnic and religious bonding and bridging social capital, as it asks about the ethnic and religious composition of voluntary associations.

Religion, Individualism, and Generalized Trust

In our analysis of the EVS, we use outcome variables from two questions. In the first, respondents were asked which voluntary organizations they belong to out of a list of 15, which including charities, church and religious organizations, trade unions, political parties, sports clubs, and cultural activities. The second question presented respondents with the same list organizational

types, and asked which, if any, they were currently doing unpaid voluntary work for. A list of all variables with question wording and descriptive statistics can be found in [Supplementary Table S1](#).

In the pooled sample of the 1999 and 2008 waves of the EVS, 41.5 per cent of the British sample belonged to at least one organization, while 29.8 per cent volunteered for at least one. A total of 9.4 per cent belonged to a church or religious organization, while 6 per cent volunteered for one. This contrasts with 39.4 per cent and 28.3 per cent belonging to and volunteering for other types of organizations. The distinction is not perfect because it is possible that a charitable organization run by a religious institution will have been coded as 'youth work', 'health', or 'social welfare'. Nonetheless, analysing the religious organizations separately gives an indication of whether the civic activity of religious respondents can be accounted for by their explicitly religious involvement. The bivariate associations (Spearman's rho) between non-religious and religious involvement were positive and significant both for membership ($\rho = 0.258$, $P < 0.001$) and volunteering ($\rho = 0.259$, $P < 0.001$).

Four variables are used to measure religion in the EVS: religious affiliation with either a Christian or Non-Christian religion, religious service attendance, frequency of prayer outside of religious services, and thinking religion is important in one's life. Examining the bivariate relationships, we find that religious affiliates, frequent attenders, people who pray regularly, and those who say religion is important in their lives are much more likely than the less religious to both belong to organizations and volunteer for them. Even when excluding explicitly religious organizations, 45.3 per cent of those who attend religious services at least once a month volunteer, compared with 24.2 per cent of the rest of the British population ($X^2 = 86.059$, $P < 0.001$).

To measure individual autonomy values, a scale was created from a set of questions where respondents were presented with controversial or illegal acts, such as abortion, cheating on taxes, and drug use, and asked whether they could be justified on a 10-point scale from 1 (never) to 10 (always). A factor analysis (Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin rotation) on 14 items had a solution of two factors. The first, accounting for 30 per cent of the variance (Eigenvalue 4.12), had high loadings (>0.5) on homosexuality, prostitution, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, and suicide. Attitudes to these questions have changed greatly in Europe since the 1950s, and can be considered a measure of the extent to which the respondent values individual autonomy and individual protection from harm and injustice over traditional

norms of purity and sanctity of life (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Haidt, 2012: p. 152). For simplification, a combined measure, 'justifying autonomy', was created as the respondent's mean score on all the six items, which had high internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.835$). The second factor was a dimension of self-interest versus social norms.¹ Generalized trust is measured by the standard question with a forced response between replying that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful. Being more trusting has a positive bivariate relationship with autonomy values ($r = 0.150$, $P < 0.001$).

We also control for socio-demographic variables. Women are more religious than men in Britain (Voas and Crockett, 2005: pp. 23–24), and there may be gender differences in volunteering due to gender norms and integration in the labour market (Musick and Wilson, 2008: pp. 184–191). Because older cohorts are more religious (Voas and Crockett, 2005) and voluntary activity could vary over the life course, age is included as a control variable. We also include age squared because the relationship could be curvilinear (Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006: p. 198). Education has previously been found to be related to both associational membership (Sønderskov, 2011: p. 427) and volunteering (Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006: p. 200; Musick and Wilson, 2008: p. 122), and is included in the models as the highest level of completed education.

Religious and Non-religious Membership and Volunteering

To examine the effect of religion and autonomy on civic engagement, we measure religious and non-religious membership and religious and non-religious volunteering separately. Table 1 shows a logistic regression analysis on membership or belonging to one or more voluntary organizations. Model 2 controls for membership in religious and non-religious organizations, respectively, as belonging to some voluntary organizations can affect belonging to others through social networks, socialization effects, or selection effects.² Because comparisons of coefficients across nested logit models are problematic, the validity of all findings reported here have been tested and confirmed using the Karlson, Holm and Breen (2012) (KHB) decomposition method for nested non-linear probability models, which decomposes the direct and indirect (mediated) effects (Supplementary Table S2).

For non-religious membership, the first model shows that both religious service attendance and religion's importance in the respondent's life have significant positive

associations with belonging to voluntary organizations, even when they do not have an explicitly religious purpose. When controlling for membership in religious organizations in Model 2, however, service attendance is no longer significant. Prayer is not significant in either model, supporting Hypothesis 2.³ The large coefficient for religious membership on non-religious membership offers some support for the social network hypothesis, which suggests that the effect of religion on general civic engagement is accounted for by social interactions in congregations and religious organizations (Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006; Putnam and Campbell, 2010). An additional test in a KHB model shows that the change in the coefficients for religious variables are due to confounding effects with organizational membership and not simply a reduction of the error variance (Karlson, Holm and Breen, 2012; see Supplementary Table S2). However, the coefficient of religion's importance in life, while reduced, remains significant in the second model, suggesting that religiosity has an additional independent relationship with voluntary memberships even when accounting for religious organizational networks, supporting Hypothesis 1. In addition, the second model suggests that when holding religious memberships constant, non-Christians are less likely than both Christians and the non-affiliated to belong to non-religious organizations.⁴

Non-religious organizational membership is also associated with generalized trust and individual autonomy values. This supports Hypothesis 4 and suggests that 'secular' moral values and attitudes can also have a positive effect on civic engagement. Belonging to church or religious organizations, in contrast, can be predicted almost entirely by religiosity and belonging to other voluntary organizations. The coefficient of Christian affiliation is only slightly reduced when introducing non-religious organizational membership in the second model, and the coefficient of non-Christian affiliation and prayer is increased (Supplementary Table S2). This suggests that the relationship between religiosity and religious organizational membership is not explained by a general tendency to belong to associations.

In Table 2, the same set of specifications is used, with volunteering now the outcome variable. Here, Model 2 controls for both religious and non-religious membership, as both are considered likely to increase volunteering in general. As with membership, religious service attendance is positively associated with non-religious volunteering. Moreover, Model 2 shows that while belonging to non-religious organizations is strongly and positively associated with non-religious volunteering, belonging to religious organizations has a *negative* association with volunteering for non-religious

Table 1. Logistic regression on membership in voluntary organizations

	Non-religious membership M1			Non-religious membership M2			Religious membership M1			Religious membership M2		
	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Constant	-4.225**	0.411	0.015	-4.073**	0.420	0.017	-8.168**	0.877	0.000	-8.009**	0.913	0.000
EVS Wave 4	0.443**	0.106	1.557	0.289**	0.108	1.335	1.542**	0.229	4.672	1.440**	0.241	4.219
Sex (Female)	-0.270**	0.098	0.763	-0.277**	0.100	0.758	0.105	0.194	1.111	0.113	0.201	1.119
Age	0.050**	0.015	1.052	0.057**	0.015	1.059	-0.016	0.027	0.984	-0.040	0.029	0.961
Age Squared	0.000**	0.000	1.000	-0.001**	0.000	0.999	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
Education	0.298**	0.026	1.347	0.291**	0.027	1.338	0.165**	0.048	1.18	0.069	0.051	1.071
Christian	0.129	0.115	1.138	0.062	0.116	1.064	1.061**	0.321	2.889	0.974**	0.325	2.648
Non-Christian religion	-0.355	0.207	0.701	-0.506*	0.218	0.603	0.855*	0.384	2.352	1.054**	0.393	2.868
Religious service attendance	0.146**	0.045	1.157	0.044	0.048	1.045	0.571**	0.075	1.77	0.543**	0.077	1.722
Prayer	0.013	0.031	1.013	0.004	0.032	1.004	0.101	0.057	1.106	0.134*	0.060	1.143
Religion important in life	0.195**	0.070	1.215	0.172*	0.071	1.187	0.441**	0.148	1.554	0.409**	0.155	1.506
Generalized trust	0.208*	0.101	1.232	0.225*	0.103	1.252	-0.153	0.190	0.858	-0.279	0.200	0.757
Justify autonomy	0.094**	0.025	1.099	0.102**	0.025	1.107	-0.023	0.050	0.977	-0.036	0.053	0.965
Religious membership				1.688**	0.207	5.407						
Non-religious membership										1.792**	0.218	6.003
-2 Log likelihood	2580.617			2506.203			835.126			758.182		
Cox & Snell R Square	0.144			0.172			0.213			0.240		
Nagelkerke R Square	0.195			0.234			0.461			0.520		
N	2198			2198			2198			2198		

Note: EVS 1999–2008 Great Britain, * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$.

Table 2. Logistic regression on volunteering

	Non-religious volunteering M1			Non-religious volunteering M2			Religious volunteering M1			Religious volunteering M2		
	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Constant	-3.574**	0.462	0.028	-3.559**	0.548	0.028	-9.844**	1.191	0.000	-8.585**	1.270	0.000
EVS Wave 4	-1.526**	0.117	0.217	-2.565**	0.174	0.077	0.097	0.242	1.101	-1.835**	0.380	0.160
Sex (female)	-0.149	0.109	0.861	-0.069	0.127	0.933	-0.043	0.234	0.958	-0.168	0.261	0.846
Age	0.059**	0.017	1.061	0.050*	0.020	1.051	0.070*	0.035	1.072	0.068	0.038	1.070
Age Squared	-0.001**	0.000	0.999	0.000**	0.000	1.000	-0.001	0.000	0.999	-0.001	0.000	0.999
Education	0.226**	0.029	1.254	0.105**	0.034	1.111	0.092	0.056	1.097	-0.016	0.065	0.984
Christian	-0.284*	0.130	0.753	-0.378*	0.152	0.685	-0.477	0.340	0.621	-1.059**	0.389	0.347
Non-Christian religion	-0.546*	0.223	0.579	-0.472	0.258	0.624	-0.715	0.404	0.489	-0.843	0.444	0.430
Religious service attendance	0.290**	0.049	1.337	0.355**	0.059	1.426	0.904**	0.115	2.469	0.764**	0.123	2.147
Prayer	0.026	0.034	1.027	0.034	0.040	1.035	0.060	0.082	1.061	0.027	0.086	1.027
Religion important in life	0.144	0.077	1.155	0.099	0.091	1.104	0.619**	0.209	1.857	0.604*	0.236	1.830
Generalized trust	0.284*	0.113	1.328	0.219	0.132	1.244	0.285	0.225	1.330	0.358	0.255	1.431
Justify autonomy	0.061*	0.028	1.063	-0.007	0.033	0.993	-0.029	0.062	0.971	-0.016	0.067	0.984
Non-religious membership				3.246**	0.177	25.692				0.890**	0.287	2.436
Religious membership				-0.998**	0.223	0.369				2.940**	0.385	18.917
-2 Log likelihood	2189.537			1655.379			565.192			457.441		
Cox & Snell R Square	0.161			0.343			0.182			0.221		
Nagelkerke R Square	0.233			0.496			0.495			0.601		
N	2197			2197			2197			2197		

Note: EVS 1999-2008 Great Britain, * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$.

organizations. However, the coefficient for service attendance increases in the second model, indicating that the positive relationship between attendance and volunteering is direct, and not mediated via organizational membership. In contrast, prayer and religion's importance in life has no statistically significant effect.

Justifying autonomy and generalized trust both have positive associations with non-religious volunteering, but their non-significance in the second model indicates that their effect is on membership in associations, which in turn predict volunteering. For religious volunteering, as with membership, religiosity explains most of the variation. In Model 1, religious service attendance and religion's importance in life both have large positive coefficients. However, religious affiliation and prayer are not significant. This again suggests that people who identify with a religion are no more likely to volunteer for religious organizations than non-religious people when controlling for religious service attendance and membership in religious organizations.

Taken together, the results from Tables 1 and 2 offer support for Hypothesis 1. Religion is associated with both religious and non-religious membership and volunteering. However, most of the associations between religion and volunteering are likely to be mediated by religious organizational membership and collective religious practice, offering support for Hypothesis 2 and the social network explanation for religion's association with volunteering. The results also show that religious affiliation by itself does not predict either membership or volunteering in organizations other than those which are explicitly religious.

The results offer limited support for Hypothesis 4, that individual autonomy values and generalized trust are associated with non-religious civic engagement. Justifying autonomy and generalized trust were associated with non-religious membership and non-religious volunteering.⁵ This suggests that moral values, in addition to social network membership, matter for civic engagement. As these values have negative associations with religiosity and only have clear positive associations with non-religious civic engagement, the results also indicate that they represent an alternative 'non-religious' pathway to civic engagement. Certainly, the direction of causality could in principle go both ways. It is possible that organizational membership *generates* inclusive values. However, previous research indicates that these are more likely prior value orientations (Sønderskov, 2011; Bekkers, 2012), which are increased in these organizations by a combination of initial self-selection followed by value convergence within the groups (Hooghe, 2003).

Religious Minorities and Civic Participation

The previous analysis, based on a general sample of the British population, shows that the association between religion and civic engagement is primarily channelled through religious organizations and religious activity. In this section we explore whether this relationship is the same for ethnic minorities, who are on the whole both more religious than the ethnic majority population and more socially marginalized.

This also raises the question of whether religion has an integrating or segregating role for ethnic minorities. In other words, does religion among minorities only affect volunteering through *bonding social capital* within religious and ethnic networks, and does it discourage *bridging social capital* through more general voluntary organizations? The EMBES' question regarding organizational composition allows us to examine this question (Hypothesis 3). Moreover, as all the data are from ethnic minorities, this analysis will also examine whether the differential effect of Christian and non-Christian affiliation persist when ethnic minority status is held constant. Finally, it enables an exploration of any other differences between major religious traditions including the effect of collective and private worship, respectively, to test Hypothesis 2 on a multireligious sample.

In the EMBES survey, respondents were asked whether they had volunteered over the past few years. They were also asked whether they had participated in *an ethnic or cultural association or club* and *any other kind of association or club* in the past 12 months. Those who answered yes to 'any other association' were then asked how many members of that association were from the same ethnic or religious group as themselves. To measure bridging and bonding associations, this variable was recoded to distinguish between associations where the respondent's ethnic or religious group was in minority (less than half) or majority (about half or more) (Supplementary Table S1). The 'ethnic or cultural associations' were also added to this variable as a type of bonding association, even if people who participated in these were not asked to specify their ethnic or religious composition. According to this operationalization, 39.3 per cent of the EMBES respondents belong to a bonding organization, whereas 10.2 per cent belong to a bridging one. It should be noted that the question does not specify whether it is the respondent's religion or ethnicity or both that is shared with other members. In other words, those in bonding associations may be 'bridging' across *either* religious or ethnic gaps, but not both at the same time.

Tables 3 and 4 show the results of the logistic regressions on participation in bridging and bonding voluntary organizations, respectively. Model 1 controls for socio-demographic variables and religious affiliation. As education appeared to have a non-linear relationship with the outcome variables, it was included via a set of separate dummy variables for each highest degree attained, with no education as the reference category. Because some ethnic minorities may prefer to interact in bonding associations to speak their own language, a variable was included on whether English is the main language the respondent speaks at home. British citizenship was also included as a measure of formal civic integration (Bloemraad, 2006). Four religious affiliations

(Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh) are included, with 'No religion' as the reference category. Buddhists, Jews, and those reporting other religious affiliations were not included in the analysis owing to their small numbers. We have not controlled for ethnicity in this model, as it is too strongly associated with religious group to separate their effects.⁶

Model 2 includes an additional set of variables measuring religiosity, attitudes, and values, as well as area-level characteristics. Religion was measured as thinking religion is very or extremely important in one's life, weekly or occasional attendance (with no attendance as the reference category) and a dichotomous variable of daily prayer or meditation. Generalized trust was

Table 3. Logistic regression on "bridging" participation

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Bridging organizations: participation in organizations where R's ethnicity or religion is in minority									
Constant	-3.241**	0.654	0.039	-3.566**	0.764	0.028	-3.466**	0.798	0.031
Sex (Female)	0.131	0.137	1.140	0.070	0.144	1.072	0.064	0.152	1.066
Age	0.064*	0.031	1.067	0.063*	0.032	1.065	0.055	0.033	1.057
Age ²	-0.001*	0.000	0.999	-0.001	0.000	0.999	-0.001*	0.000	0.999
Below a-level	0.374	0.295	1.453	0.431	0.298	1.538	0.502	0.306	1.652
A-level or equivalent	0.732*	0.289	2.079	0.659*	0.294	1.932	0.826**	0.303	2.284
Vocational qualification	0.648*	0.274	1.911	0.552*	0.278	1.737	0.815**	0.283	2.259
University degree	0.833**	0.273	2.300	0.722*	0.280	2.059	0.880**	0.285	2.411
Postgraduate degree	1.257**	0.299	3.514	1.098**	0.308	2.997	1.304**	0.318	3.685
Language not English	-0.431*	0.169	0.650	-0.282	0.173	0.754	-0.368*	0.181	0.692
British citizen	0.218	0.191	1.244	0.146	0.198	1.157	0.232	0.205	1.261
Christian	-0.499*	0.207	0.607	-0.042	0.286	0.959	-0.255	0.300	0.775
Muslim	-0.845**	0.208	0.430	-0.327	0.294	0.721	-0.588	0.304	0.556
Hindu	-0.814**	0.279	0.443	-0.575	0.320	0.562	-0.655	0.334	0.520
Sikh	-0.473	0.278	0.623	-0.232	0.339	0.793	-0.199	0.351	0.820
Religion important				-0.328	0.215	0.721	-0.362	0.228	0.696
Attend occasionally				-0.068	0.207	0.935	0.316	0.219	1.372
Attend weekly				-0.643**	0.219	0.526	-0.337	0.230	0.714
Pray daily				0.342	0.180	1.407	0.597**	0.193	1.817
Generalized trust				-0.094	0.142	0.910	0.012	0.150	1.012
Experienced discrimination				0.195	0.143	1.216	0.321*	0.149	1.378
Satisfaction with democracy				0.013	0.087	1.013	-0.038	0.091	0.963
Interest in politics				0.225**	0.068	1.253	0.295**	0.070	1.343
% Non-White in area				-1.194**	0.377	0.303	-1.254**	0.387	0.285
Area deprivation				0.000	0.003	1.000	-0.003	0.003	0.997
Participation bonding org							-2.142**	0.211	0.117
-2 Log likelihood	1553.318			1503.471			1355.85		
Cox & Snell R square	0.035			0.055			0.110		
Nagelkerke R square	0.073			0.112			0.226		
N	2471			2471			2471		

Note: EMBES 2010, * $P < 0.005$; ** $P < 0.001$.

Table 4. Logistic regression on “bonding” participation

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Constant	−0.984**	0.352	0.374	−1.597**	0.424	0.203	−1.564**	0.438	0.209
Sex (Female)	−0.134	0.086	0.874	−0.083	0.092	0.920	−0.077	0.095	0.926
Age	−0.028	0.015	0.972	−0.036*	0.015	0.965	−0.033*	0.016	0.967
Age ²	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1
Below a-level	0.457**	0.153	1.580	0.418**	0.158	1.520	0.467**	0.162	1.595
A-level or equivalent	0.673**	0.157	1.960	0.539**	0.163	1.714	0.634**	0.167	1.885
Vocational qualification	0.861**	0.145	2.365	0.751**	0.152	2.120	0.828**	0.156	2.288
University degree	0.452**	0.148	1.572	0.252	0.155	1.286	0.323*	0.159	1.381
Postgraduate degree	0.497**	0.181	1.644	0.345	0.190	1.412	0.505*	0.196	1.658
Language not English	−0.029	0.098	0.972	−0.087	0.104	0.917	−0.112	0.107	0.894
British citizen	0.333**	0.117	1.395	0.310*	0.124	1.363	0.365**	0.128	1.441
Christian	0.682**	0.162	1.977	−0.536*	0.227	0.585	−0.581	0.235	0.559
Muslim	0.371*	0.159	1.449	−0.705**	0.228	0.494	−0.815**	0.237	0.443
Hindu	0.931**	0.192	2.538	0.037	0.237	1.038	−0.080	0.245	0.923
Sikh	1.294**	0.201	3.649	0.188	0.253	1.207	0.167	0.263	1.182
Religion important				0.189	0.152	1.208	0.153	0.157	1.165
Attend occasionally				0.909**	0.151	2.481	0.954**	0.155	2.595
Attend weekly				0.905**	0.149	2.472	0.864**	0.152	2.372
Pray daily				0.506**	0.111	1.658	0.604**	0.115	1.829
Generalized trust				0.061	0.090	1.063	0.055	0.093	1.056
Experienced discrimination				0.427**	0.095	1.533	0.494**	0.099	1.639
Satisfaction with democracy				−0.102	0.057	0.903	−0.120*	0.059	0.887
Interest in politics				0.214**	0.043	1.239	0.258**	0.045	1.294
% Non-White in area				0.004	0.222	1.004	−0.156	0.228	0.855
Area deprivation				−0.006**	0.002	0.994	−0.007**	0.002	0.993
Participation bridging org							−2.168**	0.211	0.114
−2 Log likelihood	3181.227			3022.361			2872.038		
Cox & Snell R square	0.048			0.108			0.161		
Nagelkerke R square	0.065			0.146			0.217		
N	2471			2471			2471		

Note: EMBES 2010, * $P < 0.005$; ** $P < 0.001$.

measured by the same standard question as in the EVS. Experience of discrimination in the past 5 years, satisfaction with British democracy, and general interest in politics were also included as control variables, as these were considered potential motivators for civic engagement. This model also includes variables characterizing the respondent’s local area (Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs) for England and Wales, and Data Zones (DZs) for Scotland), as we assume that most people volunteer in the same area that they live in. The percentage of the population with a non-White ethnicity gives a rough indication of the area’s ethnic composition, which could account for why some people associate more with co-ethnics than others. A measure of local

area deprivation was included as the percentile rank on the index of multiple deprivation.⁷ This measure is associated with low community stability, and has previously been found to be negatively associated with volunteering (Musick and Wilson, 2008: pp. 324–325). Finally, Model 3 also controls for participation in ‘bonding’ or ‘bridging’ organizations, respectively, to measure the extent to which different forms of civic engagement affect each other.

Table 3 reports results from a logistic regression on participation in bridging voluntary organizations—that is, organizations where less than half of the members are of the same religion or ethnicity as the respondent. Model 1 shows that Christians, Muslims, and Hindus

are all less likely than the non-religious to participate in bridging organizations. However, when controlling for religiosity in Model 2, these associations are no longer significant. Instead, they seem to be accounted for largely by weekly service attendance, which also has a negative association with participation. In Model 3, participation in bonding organizations is also negatively associated with participation in bridging organizations. When controlling for this, there is a positive coefficient for daily prayer. The results indicate that most of the effect of affiliation is mediated by ritual behaviour, but that while public worship reduces the likelihood of bridging participation, private worship increases it.

Table 4 shows a similar set of specifications, this time predicting participation in bonding organizations, that is, ethnic organizations, or organizations where at least half the members have the same religion or ethnicity as the respondent. The most striking result in the first model is that religious affiliation, which was found to be negatively associated with bridging, is positively associated with bonding participation. All those with religious affiliations are more likely than those with no religion to participate in bonding associations. Both occasional and weekly attendance is associated with participation in religious or ethnic organizations, but the 'importance of religion' variable is not significant at all. Daily prayer is significant, but the coefficient is notably smaller than those for attendance. In other words, these findings support Hypothesis 3, that religion is associated with bonding, but not bridging social networks. In line with the social network hypothesis (Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006, Putnam and Campbell, 2010), the results also suggest that such participation is increased through the social rituals of religion, rather than affiliation or the salience of religious beliefs, thus partly supporting Hypothesis 2.

The final logistic regression model, with volunteering in the past few years as the outcome variable, is shown in Table 5. The model contains the same variables as in the previous ones (Tables 3 and 4), but in addition, interaction effects are included in Model 2, to test whether religious service attendance has different consequences for the different religious groups. In Model 3 we control for both bonding and bridging participation.

In the first model we find that of the religious groups, only Christians are significantly more likely to volunteer, compared with the non-religious, when controlling for age, education, and English language. When controlling for religious attendance and prayer, which are highly significant, the effect of affiliation disappears. The importance of religion to the respondent, on the other hand, is not significant.

The interactions effect between Muslim and weekly attendance is negative, indicating a weak effect of attendance for Muslims. The marginal effects shown in Figure 1 illustrate this more clearly: weekly attendance appears to make a considerable difference for Christians, but not for Muslims. It should also be noted that non-attending Muslims volunteer considerably more than non-attending Christians. Weekly attendance is not a requirement for women in Islam, and religious commitment may be expressed in other ways. In a separate analysis on the Muslim population (not shown here) we find that prayer five times a day was significantly associated with volunteering in much the same way as attendance for Christians. These findings challenge explanations that rely solely on social networks, as we have no reason to believe that this sort of solitary worship, explicitly defined as taking place 'on your own' (Supplementary Table S1), is a network-building activity. What it seems to support instead is an explanation that stresses the importance of ritual for group identity, commitment, and internalization of social norms even if the ritual is performed without the presence of other group members. Combined with the results from Tables 3 and 4, it further suggests that solitary and collective religious rituals both have an effect on participation, but prayer is mediated more through bridging, and attendance more through bonding. Hypothesis 2 is thus only partially supported for ethnic and religious minorities, suggesting that previous findings about the unique importance of collective ritual may have been too reliant on data from Christian populations to be generalizable across different religious traditions.

Those who have experienced discrimination and those dissatisfied with democracy are also more likely to participate, particularly in bonding associations. This could either be a causal effect, those who participate become more aware of issues to be dissatisfied with, or a selection effect, those who have bad experiences have more interest in becoming engaged. In line with previous literature it does suggest that association with co-ethnics and co-religionists may hold particular appeal for those who feel excluded from mainstream channels of civic engagement (Portes and Zhou, 1993: p. 96).

Discussion: Two pathways to Civic Engagement

The results from both the general British population (EVS) and the ethnic minority population (EMBES) indicate that there are both bridging and bonding pathways to civic engagement, and that religion has a differential association with these two forms of participation.

Table 5. Logistic regression on volunteering

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Constant	-0.337	0.346	0.714	-1.024*	0.420	0.359	-1.489**	0.453	0.226
Sex (Female)	-0.177*	0.085	0.838	-0.189*	0.094	0.828	-0.207*	0.101	0.813
Age	-0.049**	0.014	0.952	-0.061**	0.015	0.941	-0.059**	0.016	0.943
Age ²	0.000**	0.000	1.000	0.001**	0.000	1.001	0.001**	0.000	1.001
Below a-level	0.303*	0.152	1.354	0.300	0.157	1.350	0.140	0.169	1.150
A-level or equivalent	0.890**	0.155	2.436	0.781**	0.161	2.183	0.608**	0.173	1.837
Vocational qualification	0.798**	0.144	2.222	0.637**	0.150	1.892	0.386*	0.162	1.470
University degree	0.863**	0.146	2.371	0.624**	0.153	1.866	0.520**	0.165	1.682
Postgraduate degree	0.863**	0.178	2.369	0.605**	0.188	1.832	0.381	0.203	1.464
Language not English	-0.202*	0.097	0.817	-0.204*	0.103	0.815	-0.168	0.111	0.846
British citizen	0.667**	0.118	1.948	0.689**	0.125	1.992	0.627**	0.133	1.873
Christian	0.540**	0.154	1.716	-0.309	0.234	0.734	-0.107	0.254	0.898
Muslim	0.118	0.150	1.125	-0.157	0.225	0.855	0.168	0.244	1.182
Hindu	0.276	0.186	1.318	-0.157	0.236	0.855	-0.128	0.256	0.880
Sikh	0.409	0.195	1.506	-0.271	0.275	0.762	-0.146	0.297	0.864
Religion important				0.002	0.151	1.002	-0.034	0.164	0.967
Attend occasionally				0.394**	0.145	1.483	0.111	0.158	1.118
Attend weekly				0.836**	0.219	2.307	0.717**	0.237	2.048
Pray daily				0.469**	0.111	1.598	0.294*	0.119	1.342
Generalized trust				0.188*	0.090	1.207	0.207*	0.097	1.231
Experienced discrimination				0.506**	0.094	1.659	0.384**	0.101	1.467
Satisfaction with democracy				-0.097	0.057	0.908	-0.064	0.061	0.938
Interest in politics				0.294**	0.043	1.341	0.215**	0.046	1.240
% Non-White in area				-0.498*	0.220	0.608	-0.402	0.237	0.669
Area deprivation				-0.004	0.002	0.996	-0.002	0.002	0.998
Weekly attendance*Muslim				-0.672**	0.235	0.510	-0.753**	0.254	0.471
Weekly attendance*Hindu				-0.209	0.330	0.811	0.035	0.357	1.036
Weekly attendance*Sikh				-0.096	0.351	0.909	-0.508	0.375	0.602
Participation bonding org							1.615**	0.102	5.028
Participation bridging org							1.779**	0.165	5.922
-2 Log likelihood	3218.113			3058.893			2730.022		
Cox & Snell R Square	0.063			0.122			0.232		
Nagelkerke R Square	0.084			0.163			0.310		
N	2471			2471			2471		

Note: EMBES 2010, * $P < 0.005$; ** $P < 0.001$.

To summarize the findings, each of the hypotheses are addressed in turn.

Hypothesis 1, that religiosity is positively associated with both religious and non-religious civic engagement, was broadly supported in the EVS models, even when controlling for education, socioeconomic factors, values, and attitudes. Nonetheless, the EMBES data show that religious affiliation, mediated through service attendance, is negatively associated with civic engagement in groups where the respondent's religious or ethnic group

is in minority, suggesting that religiosity and religious activity is not conducive to all forms of civic engagement.

Hypothesis 2, that religion increases civic engagement through collective, but not private, ritual was also supported in the EVS, but only partially supported in the EMBES. In the EVS, the effect of religion is mediated through religious service attendance and the importance of religion, but not prayer. In the EMBES, private worship was positively associated with all forms of

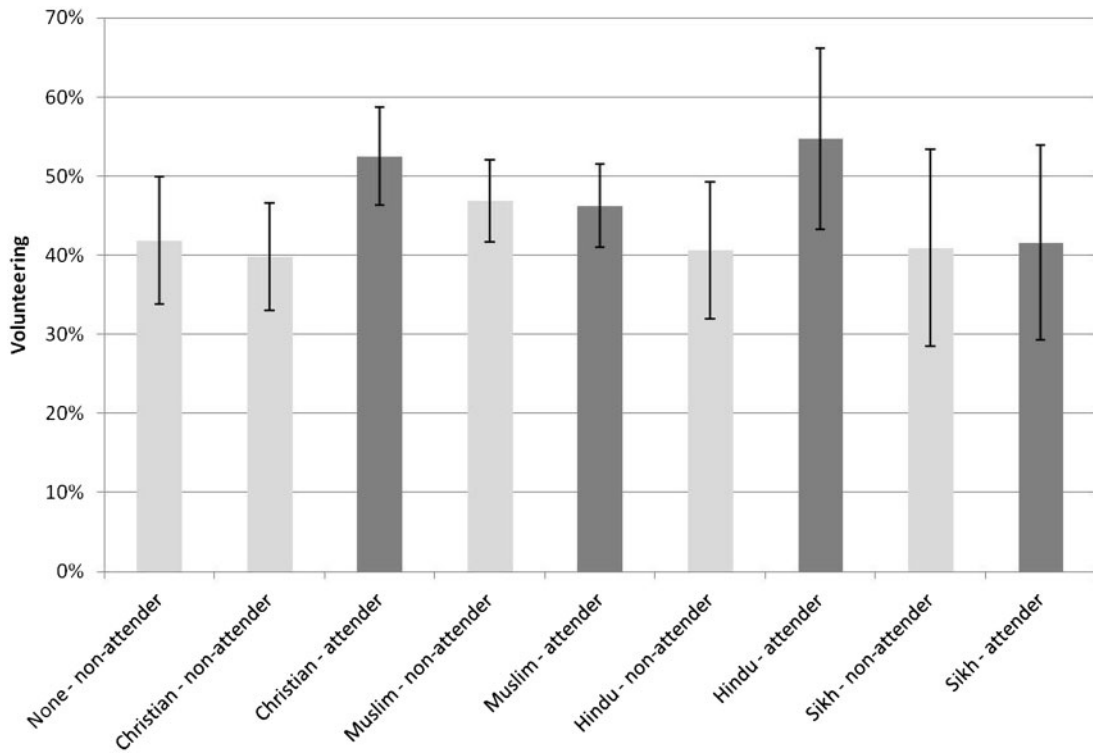


Figure 1 Predicted Volunteering (volunteered in the past few years) by religious affiliation and attendance. Average Marginal Effects with 95% CI, EMBES 2010 (N:2471)

engagement, whereas religious service attendance was only positively associated with participation in bonding organizations where at least half the members share the respondent's ethnicity or religion. Interaction effects and marginal effects also showed that attendance had a stronger association with volunteering for those with a Christian affiliation than for Muslims. The results suggest that in non-Christian religions, solitary and collective religious rituals may both have an effect on civic participation, but whereas the effect of service attendance is mediated through bonding social networks, the effect of prayer is mediated more through bridging networks. This challenges the generalizability of the hypothesis that social networks account for most of the relationship between religion and civic engagement (Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006; Putnam and Campbell, 2010). There are at least two possible explanations. Firstly, there may be something inherent in the religious ritual practice, aside from bringing people together, which motivates civic engagement. Whitehouse (2000: p. 13) argues that through regular re-enactment of the religious narrative, rituals not only affirm tradition but also create a sense of belonging to the community. It is

possible that even rituals performed in solitude have the effect of norm integration (Durkheim, 1897/2006) by reaffirming group identity and internalizing a religious ethos of charity. On the other hand, it is also possible that people who regularly worship by themselves are merely displaying a personality characteristic or a prior commitment to their faith (Wuthnow, 1991), which is not enhanced by the ritual itself. Finally it is possible that volunteering inspires increased prayer, for example, through encountering more people in need. Whatever the mechanism of the association, the results suggest that at least for minority populations in the UK social networks cannot account for the whole relationship between religion and civic engagement.

Hypothesis 3, that religion increases civic engagement through ethnic and religious bonding, but not bridging social networks, was also supported. In the EMBES, although all measures of religiosity were positively associated with volunteering in general, they were only positively associated with participation in bonding organizations where at least half on the members were of the same ethnicity or religion as the respondent. Both affiliation and attendance were negatively associated

with bridging participation, where the respondent's religion or ethnicity was in minority. Moreover, while there was a positive association between religious and non-religious associations in the general sample, there was a negative association between bonding and bridging organizations in the ethnic minority sample. While this may be due to different measures in the two surveys (religious purpose of organization vs. ethno-religious composition), it does appear that ethnic and religious minority organizations may be especially unlikely to promote other types of organizational involvement (Uslaner and Conley, 2003).

Hypothesis 4, that individual autonomy values and generalized trust are positively associated with non-religious, but not religious civic engagement, is also broadly supported. Justifying homosexuality, abortion, divorce, and other behaviours, which indicate support for values of individual autonomy over traditional norms, was associated with both membership and volunteering for non-religious, but not religious, organizations. Similarly, generalized trust was associated with non-religious membership and non-religious volunteering. The results suggest that these values may be indicative of a non-religious 'ethos' of civic participation.

These findings raise three points for discussion and further research. Firstly, the results indicate that if civic participation *per se* is a policy goal, then we can be relatively satisfied: there is a relatively high percentage of volunteers and civically engaged members of society from all the major religions in Britain, and there are pathways through which both non-religious and religious people of various faiths and values systems get involved. If the goal is integration and inclusiveness, however, as some of the social capital literature implies, then the current forms of civic participation may not provide the best ways to achieve it. The results show that people are much more likely to get involved with 'people similar to themselves' (Uslaner and Brown, 2005: p. 873), and this may be particularly the case for ethnic minorities and actively religious people.

Secondly, this raises the question of what the possible alternatives are. If people are more likely to associate with co-ethnics and co-religionists through bonding networks, and if generalized trust is a stable value (Uslaner and Brown, 2005; Bekkers, 2012), religion may be a way for low trusters to get involved in their community. As research from the United States and Canada indicates, ethnic community organizations may even promote political and civic integration in the long run (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Bloemraad, 2006; Portes, Escobar and Arana, 2008). If this is the case, how can more inclusive organizations, which are not based on

religion or ethnic group, create a similar 'safe space' for people who otherwise would not associate? Thirdly, we need to ask in what way civic participation represents a social good. According to Inglehart and Welzel (2005: pp. 254–255) volunteering is not generally associated with democracy, and could just as well signal political dissatisfaction and lack of public service provision. The benefits of voluntary participation will most likely vary depending on the country's traditions and welfare systems, but as these findings indicate, increased voluntary participation *could* result in people bonding together in ethnic or religious groups. If the primary aim is to bring diverse people together, policy focus should be on promotion of generalized social trust and inclusive values through education and economic equality.

Notes

- 1 A measure based on the second factor was excluded from the analysis as the coefficients were not statistically significant in any of the models.
- 2 Generalized trust and justifying autonomy were included in the first models, as excluding them does not change the coefficients of either the socio-demographic or religion variables.
- 3 The three religion measures in the EVS are strongly correlated with each other (Pearson's $R > 0.6$, < 0.7). Excluding one variable at a time does not significantly alter the remaining coefficients, but they are slightly larger when the others are not included.
- 4 The different coefficients for different religious affiliations could be due to the larger proportion of people from ethnic minorities within the non-Christian group. This cannot be tested directly as the question about ethnicity was not asked in the EVS.
- 5 In an alternative model not shown here, there is a small, but negative, interaction effect of justifying autonomy with religious attendance on both volunteering ($B = -0.038$, $SE: 0.016$) and membership ($B = -0.034$, $SE: 0.016$) in all organizations, while religious attendance and autonomy on membership remained significant and positive. This suggests that the association with autonomy values is stronger the less often the respondent attends religious services.
- 6 In an alternative model, ethnicity was included with no significant results. When including ethnicity and not religious affiliation, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Black Caribbeans were less likely to volunteer than Indians and Black Africans, but only before controlling for religiosity, values, and area characteristics. The model had the same fit as the preferred model with religious affiliation.

7 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines indicators on economic, social, and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for neighbourhoods (LSOAS in England and Wales and DZs in Scotland). The IMD varies between England, Wales, and Scotland, but as the sample only contains 81 respondents from Wales and Scotland, the percentile rank on the multiple deprivation indices were combined into a single variable.

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Supplementary Data

[Supplementary data](#) are available at *ESR* online.

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