PAPER FOR ANTWERP

Faith and Volunteering in the UK: spiritual capital as a key driver for Christian engagement in civil society.

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ABSTRACT

In the context of a communitarian discourse under the New Labour government (1997-2010) the theoretical concept of social capital as developed by Putnam (1995,2000) was influential on policy in welfare and community development. Faith communities, particularly those in ethnically and religious diverse urban areas diverse were recognised as banks of social capital which could as it were be invested for the public good in areas such as urban regeneration, social welfare and especially after September 2001 in community cohesion and national security. Since 2010 under the Coalition government headed by David Cameron the notion of "the Big Society" has been central in policy discourse. Under both governments, voluntary groups, including faith based congregations and charities have been urged to play a more significant role in community work and social welfare, and the "volunteer" is portrayed as the archetypal good citizen. Debates continue as to whether this offers a genuine space for religion to make a contribution in the public sphere and//or whether it is the state seeking to control and exploit the voluntary and faith sectors, in part as a cynical cost cutting exercise. (Williams, 2010; Ekklesia 2010).

In developing the debate on the relationship between faith and social capital Baker and colleagues at the William Temple Foundation drawing on Bourdieu's (1986) work on different forms of capital have introduced notions of "religious" and "spiritual capital". In this paper it is argued that when considering volunteering in such a theoretical framework, both religious organisations and the state benefit from the inputs of unpaid labour of people with diverse motivations. These can range from the religious or largely altruistic, to those with instrumental motives around education and employability and those whose unpaid labour was to some extent coerced by statutory agencies (and therefore stretch most normal definitions of volunteering. However, in the case of evangelical Christian believers it can be shown that high levels of spiritual capital are linked to a high likelihood of voluntary service and civic engagement, albeit with some of the effect explicable by factors of gender, age, ethnicity and educational levels. Here the paper draws on empirical evidence from recent UK official surveys and reports which cover faith and volunteering, and on recently published research commissioned by the Evangelical Alliance

The paper is also informed by qualitative reflections on the author's long term involvement in faith based social action and his recent role as manager of a community centre attached to a Christian Church building in a city in the North of England. In delivering a programme of social care and community service activities reaching homeless and elderly people, the centre relied heavily not only on faithful members of the local church but also on "volunteers" from the local community who demonstrated little explicit spiritual capital.. This blurred example suggests it is useful to consider two contrasting ideal types of Christian social action, the first which is mission focussed and based on high spiritual capital, while the second is more pragmatic, more focussed on mobilising economic and social resources, and more concerned with sustaining the church as institution and its ability to provide social services in local communities. This second type places more emphasis on religious capital as defined by Baker and WTF colleagues.

KEY WORDS: volunteering, social capital, religion, welfare

Introduction

In the context of a communitarian discourse under the New Labour government (1997-2010) the theoretical concept of social capital as developed by Putnam (1995, 2000) was influential on policy in welfare and community development. Faith communities, particularly those in ethnically and religious diverse urban areas diverse were recognised as banks of social capital which could as it were be invested for the public good in areas such as urban regeneration, social welfare and especially after September 2001 in community cohesion and national security. Since 2010 under the Coalition government headed by David Cameron the notion of "the Big Society" has been central in policy discourse. Under both governments, voluntary groups, including faith based congregations and charities have been urged to play a more significant role in community work and social welfare, and the "volunteer" is portrayed as the archetypal good citizen. Debates continue as to whether this offers a genuine space for religion to make a contribution in the public sphere and//or whether it is the state seeking to control and exploit the voluntary and faith sectors, in part as a cynical cost cutting exercise. (Williams, 2010; Ekklesia 2010, Faithworks (2010).).

There is a sense in which churches have been labouring in pursuit of the Big Society long before the term was invented. Recognising this, the Evangelical Alliance, (who claim to represent a constituency which is the most resilient form of Christianity in the UK with well over one million churchgoers, or 40% of the worshipping Christians) has sought to support and strengthen such involvement, under the slogan "Big Society – Kingdom opportunity". Evangelical thinking (in the UK at least) would not endorse any thought that the political programme of any government is identical or even congruent with the priorities of the Kingdom of God. Indeed it is recognised that there are times and issues where a critical and prophetic role of speaking truth to power is required. However, evangelicals see opportunities for Christian mission through these forms of community involvement, and more fundamentally that in an imperfect society which bears all the scars of human sinfulness there is an ongoing Christian duty to care for neighbours, to seek to do good and to work for the peace and welfare of the communities in which we live. And in a period where inequality and discontent appears to be growing, where common moral values are hard to find, and where the state and society as a whole seems reluctant to finance many of the aspects of welfare that were established in the second half of the 20th Century, the call to be involved in these ways appears stronger than ever.

Evangelical Christians since the movement bearing the name emerged in the 18th Century have been noted for their activism, in preaching and spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth, and also in their work for social reform and charitable care. In the 19th Century great public figures such as William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury led the struggles to abolish slavery and child labour, and with others such as Barnardo, Muller and William and Catherine Booth were involved in founding charitable organisations covering every conceivable form of human need. In the 20th Century commitment to social involvement was more patchy as some feared that the social gospel could divert

people away from the foundational truths about eternal salvation. Yet by the end of the century a more holistic approach was again re-emerging with the establishment of organisations such as TEAR fund, and the wide acceptance across the evangelical world of the Lausanne Covenant of 1974, drafted by a group which included the highly influential John Stott who died in 2011. Across the centuries little of this would have been possible without the support and active involvement of millions of faithful evangelical Christians. Our research suggests that this tradition of active evangelicalism is alive and well, and continuing to make a significant impact on the life and welfare of British society in the 21st Century.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to look at the research evidence about these forms of social involvement with particular reference to evangelical Christians. What is the extent and nature of their contribution through their social labour to the stock of social capital across the UK? Is there anything distinctive about it in comparison with the contribution of the general population, or with that of other forms of Christianity or other faith communities? Can we trace significant differences between different social and denominational groups within the evangelical community? What is the relationship between their concern for social capital and their other legitimate concerns as believers for religious and spiritual capital development? Drawing on original survey research carried out by and for the Evangelical Alliance and presenting this alongside other published data for the general population we will attempt to paint a picture based on evidence, and discuss the issues raised for church and society. Finally we will reflect on the messy practice of Christian social involvement and volunteering, in the context of reflections on practice in the author's recent work as manager of a community and social action centre managed by a local church belonging to an Evangelical denomination. This is covered more extensively in a recently published paper (Smith 2011).

Theoretical Framework : Social and other forms of Capital

It has become commonplace in recent policy debates about volunteering, citizenship and civil society to talk about social capital, usually following the framework suggested by Putnam (1995, 2000). The usual argument is that voluntary action within civil society increases the stock of social capital and is to be regarded as a public good. There are of course some critical voices in the debates who introduce modified concepts and theories (Bourdieu , 1986, Portes 1998) while others dismiss the concept as meaningless. (Fine 2010) . Putnam understands social capital as a good thing and defines and attempts to measure it largely as a property of communities and whole societies. The social and political concern that arises centres on (sometimes contested) evidence presented by Putnam that social capital is declining over recent decades to the detriment of the common good. In the midst of arguments about secularisation and the clear decline of the popularity of organised religion in Europe it is clear that faith communities (however inadequately defined – Dinham (2011) and politically co-opted by the state – Champam & Lowndes 2008) remain a significant locus for social capital formation, and any decline in active membership is not as serious as that experienced by secular associations such as political parties and Trade Unions… - (Davie 2002))

More recently Putnam has refined the concept by distinguishing bonding (intra community), bridging (cross community) and linking (socially vertical) forms. In contrast Bourdieu sees social capital as abstract property acquired by individuals or groups or networks of individuals, which can be used to competitive advantage in securing economic resources, status and power. Bourdieu also considers other forms of capital, such as cultural, human and religious capitals.

As the present author has argued elsewhere (Smith 2001, 2002,) although social capital is poorly defined and intrinsically impossible to measure, the concept does have a value as a useful metaphor, which has a resonance with popular debates about contemporary communities. However in the context of the dominance of global market economics and their application to welfare services it does seem significant, if not a little disturbing, that relationships in the community, based on Putnam's trinity of "trust, networks and norms", and the Christian virtues of altruism, mutuality and solidarity with the marginalised, have been transformed using the language and metaphor of "capital".

In recent work at the William Temple Foundation (WTF) the author with Chris Baker and other colleagues have been widening the debate by developing theories of religious and spiritual capital. (Baker and Skinner, (2006); Baker & Smith 2011) These forms of capital are seen as distinct but complementary dimensions to the well established concept of social capital (in its various bonding, bridging and linking modes). In particular we propose that spiritual capital in individuals comprises a theological or spiritual worldview, values and vision for the future expressed in and mediated by activities such as prayer and worship. It is this that motivates believer to make a practical and generous contribution to society. Such generosity is often located and mediated in a context of significant religious capital. We use this term to describe the practical contribution that faith groups (as institutions) make to society through the use of a building, volunteers, paid community workers, faith based social networks and activities for particular age or interest groups.

What seems to be rarely discussed however, is the concept of the labour or work that goes into the formation of social (or other forms of) capital. Much of this labour on which the non economic forms of capital is founded is offered without consideration of reward and is certainly unremunerated in monetary terms. A google search on the term "social labour" is not very revealing. There are some uses of the term by Marx and his followers but largely in the sense of co-operation in organised work. There is also a suggestion in the Wikipedia article on Bourdieu http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Bourdieu that he used the term with reference to the efforts parents make in securing the education which enhances the cultural capital and eventually economic capital of their offspring. However, it is clear to anyone with a passing acquaintance with local churches and other

faith communities that members of such group expend huge amounts of effort an energy on behalf of the religious organisation to which they belong. This may consist of practical physical labour devoted to the maintenance of a place of worship, of religious labour aimed and sustaining and improving the programme of collective religious activities (e.g. through preaching, teaching, musical ministry, church administration) , or spiritual labour focused on developing personal growth (through prayer, Bible study and other spiritual disciplines). But there is also social labour, some of it directed internally in the organization (through spending type building fellowship, caring for one another and resolving conflict in the church), and some of it outward facing to the wider community, for example through church community development programmes, through caring pastoral work to neighbours, and through the commitment of believers to paid and unpaid roles in schools, hospitals, voluntary organizations, community groups and local politics. Most recently there has been evidence of significant involvement by churches in community clean up operations following the disturbances and frenzy of arson, criminal damage and looting in several English cities in August 2011.(see http://www.eauk.org/articles/church-responds-to-national-riots.cfm)

Nor is it a simple matter to describe the relationship between unpaid labour and volunteering. Volunteering can be defined most simply following (Davis Smith, 1998) as "any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment." However, a 40 page working paper published by the Institute of Volunteering Research (Ellis-Paine, Hill and Rochester 2010) suggests that a multidimensional framework is necessary in order to account for the complexity of practices and understandings among voluntary organizations, volunteers, the public and policy makers. It is important to note (following Cameron 1999), there may be a distinction of status between volunteers in secular organizations and projects and church members who serve but who would not usually describe themselves as volunteers.

Our Research Process

In 2010, as an initiative of the Evangelical Alliance in the UK, over 17,000 people connected in some way with evangelical churches and networks completed a questionnaire about their beliefs, religious practices, opinions on political and moral questions and on their involvement and activism in the community. Over 12,500 of them defined themselves as Evangelical Christians. Paper questionnaires were distributed at major Christian events and festivals, and through a sample of Evangelical Alliance member churches across the UK. A summary report of this research was published in January 2011 and can be downloaded from http://www.eauk.org/snapshot/read.cfm

Subsequently a research panel, recruited in the first place from the 17,000 has been asked to take part in online surveys three or four times each year, with each wave of the survey concentrating on a specific theme or topic known to be of interest to the Alliance and/or its member organisations and churches. In the first online survey conducted around

Easter 2011 over 1150 people responded, in the second wave carried out in August 2011 over 1160 replies were analysed.

Because there is no reliable general data on the demographic makeup of the Evangelical community in the UK it is intrinsically impossible to assess whether our sample of respondents is fully representative of the population in question.[2] There is a good gender balance and a wide range of geographical and denominational coverage. The average age of the sample may appear rather high (though this could simply reflect the demographics of Christian congregations), while ethnic minorities are probably under-represented as they form an increasingly significant and growing proportion of the faith communities, especially in the metropolitan areas. We know that our respondents are on average highly educated, and especially for the online surveys draw on people who operate confidently in the information society. Again we may simply be reflecting the constituency as it has long been the case that belonging to churches, especially of the evangelical variety is not a common practice in white working class and deprived communities. However, because of the large numbers of people involved and the diversity of the constituency covered by the Evangelical Alliance's networks we believe the data is robust and reliable.

Data presented below is based on analysis of frequency tables and cross-tabulations run on the data using the PSPP open source software package. Where appropriate statistical significance tests such as Chi square were applied to test group differences. In a few instances more advanced statistical techniques such as factor analysis and multiple regression were employed to give us further insights on patterns in the data. However, these are not referred to in any detail here.

Faith that works… what the baseline survey reveals..

The headline finding from the baseline survey is that 81% of evangelical Christians do some form of voluntary work serving the wider community with their church at least once a year and that 37% do so at least once a week. Those respondents who did not define themselves as evangelicals show statistically significant lower rates of volunteering…(for example only 70% of those who said they were Christian but not evangelical and only 60% of those who did not claim to be Christians doing any such work). This compares with a baseline figure for the general population as reported from the 2007 government citizenship survey of 39.2% who were involved in formal volunteering in the previous 12 months. See Table 5 for a breakdown of these figures.+-

[2] In the analysis of the baseline survey presented in the summary or snapshot report various weighting models were tested in order to compensate for suspected biases in the sampling. However because the comparisons between weighted and unweighted samples generally produced minimal differences, because we have no reliable demographic profile of the evangelical community and because in this paper we are more interested in looking at variation within the evangelical sample than extrapolating to the evangelical population as a whole, we have analysed only the raw unweighted data.

However, because the before becoming too enthusiastic about these findings we need to consider some issues about the meaning of the term volunteering and the terms in which questions were asked and may have been interpreted by respondents.

In the Evangelical Alliance baseline survey the five main questions about volunteering were:

> *How often do you:*
>
> > *Work as a volunteer for your church in an activity that serves the local community?*
> > *Work as a volunteer for a Christian organization?*
> > *Work as a volunteer for a non-Christian organization?*
>
> *Typically, how many hours a week do you volunteer in activities that serve/benefit the local community, and not just your church?*
>
> *It is a Christian's duty to volunteer in activities that serve the local community.*

There are, perhaps inevitably, some questions about the interpretation of these questions by respondents. In particular different people could have a different understandings of the term "serves the local community", as some may believe intercessory prayer does this just as much as feeding the homeless. However, the intention behind and most likely interpretation of this term is to focus on externally directed labour that builds broad social capital, rather than church directed work that enhances religious and spiritual capital.

The overall picture is clear:

- Over 80% of evangelical respondents say they volunteer at least once a year in a church activity serving the community and over 37% do this at least once every week. The corresponding figures on this question for 3595 non evangelical Christians in the survey were 70% and 26% and for the 920 non Christians 60% and 24%.
- 52% say they volunteer for a Christian organization at least once a year, and about 21% do this at least once every week. It is interesting that more people work daily for a Christian organization than for their church, suggesting that they are more or less full time volunteers, for example on a gap year or in retirement. The corresponding figures on this question for non evangelical Christians in the survey were 40% and 14.5% and for the non Christians 38% and 14%.
- 32% say they volunteer for a non-Christian organization at least once a year, and about 11% do this at least once every week. The corresponding figures on this question for non evangelical Christians in the survey were 33% and 12% and for the non Christians 31% and 10%. The differences in volunteering rates for secular organizations between evangelicals and other are not significant which seems to suggest that almost all the additional volunteering by evangelicals can be accounted for by their deeper involvement in active churches and the world of explicitly Christian organizations around it.

- While two thirds of the evangelical respondents who spend some unpaid time serving the community in some way 50% offer four hours or less each week while almost one in ten offer seven or more hours.
- 87% of the evangelical respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *"It is a Christian's duty to volunteer in activities that serve the local community."*

These figures suggest a highly significant contribution to the welfare of society is made by evangelicals. However, they also highlight the importance of the local church as a base for evangelicals' unpaid labour. Perhaps this is because it is the place where they feel most comfortable, and aligned with the ethos of the organization, perhaps it is because the church presents multiple needs and opportunities for volunteers that are easy to engage with. Perhaps also as the most significant community of interest in their lives, the local church fellowship shares a strong implicit norm towards internal volunteering, or sometimes subtle (or perhaps not so subtle) moral pressure by asking for people "to help out in this important ministry". The statistics also suggest that while the contribution of evangelicals to the work of the wider or secular voluntary sector is far from negligible, it remains the case that they favour or prioritise work within the where religious values are shared and more explicitly expressed. It may well be a consequence of a theology of holiness which involves separation from the wider world which is seen as intrinsically sinful. Such patterns of involvement are likely to strengthen religious capital in the churches and Christian organizations and promote strong bonding forms of social capital within the Christian community. But they may restrict the growth of bridging and linking social capital through weaker but fruitful links with people and institutions that are different from themselves.

We can therefore pose the question whether this tendency to remain within the "cocoon" of the Christian world gives a negative impression to outsider and to some extent limits the potential influence of evangelicals in society at large, including the potential for evangelism through strong and extensive community networks.

Table 1 shows the responses to these questions from the 12593 respondents in the survey who defined themselves as evangelical Christians.

Table 1

Value Label	Work as a volunteer for your church in an activity that serves the community		Work as a volunteer for a Christian organisation		Work as a volunteer for a non Christian organisation	
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
daily	451	3.78	510	4.42	151	1.36
a few times a week	1622	13.59	876	7.59	352	3.18
once a week	2384	19.97	1112	9.64	706	6.38
once a fortnight	722	6.05	363	3.15	237	2.14
about once a month	1506	12.62	799	6.92	564	5.1
a few times a year	2412	20.21	1512	13.1	998	9.02
once a year	566	4.74	875	7.58	531	4.8
hardly ever or never	2273	19.04	5491	47.59	7529	68.02
	657	Missing	1055	Missing	1525	Missing
Total	12593	100	12593	100	12593	100

Table 2 Hours given..

Typically, how many hours a week do you volunteer in activities that serve/benefit the local community, and not just your church?

Value Label	Frequency	Valid Percent
none	3852	32.99
2 or fewer	3779	32.36
3 or 4	2209	18.92
5 or 6	724	6.2
7 or 8	388	3.32
9 or more	726	6.22
	915	Missing
Total	12593	100

Table 3

It is a Christian's duty to volunteer in activities that serve the local community.

Value Label	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
agree a lot	6922	57.05	57.05
agree a little	3607	29.73	86.77
unsure	556	4.58	
disagree a little	669	5.51	
disagree a lot	380	3.13	
	459	Missing	
Total	12593	100	

Who volunteers most?

In order to clarify which types of evangelical Christian are most likely to serve the community as volunteers we ran crosstabulations of the three questions about volunteering (with categories combined and simplified) and the attitude statement about it being a Christian duty, against demographic factors such as gender, age, household income, membership of a black majority church and spiritual capital variables such as (self reported) daily prayer and bible reading. Testing the significance for each crosstabulation (using Chi Square) indicated there were significant differences in almost every case.

Gender; For volunteering within a church context women (46%) were more likely than men (39%) to be regularly involved (defined as at least once a fortnight). This was also the case in regular volunteering for a secular organisation (14% of women v 12% of men). However for regular volunteering in Christian organisations the picture was rather different with a small (just statistically significant) greater involvement of men. (25%) v women (24%). On the attitude statement 60% of women compared with 52% of men strongly agreed.

Age.. Age group had a significant and similar effect on patterns of volunteering in all three contexts. The chances of being a regular volunteer were greatest for the 65-74 year olds, (50% for church based volunteering) and lowest for the 35-44 year olds (40%) who are much more likely to be under time pressure through employment and raising families.. Under 25s fell between the extremes (44% regular volunteers in the church setting). Rates of regular volunteering for the other two contexts were lower, but the broad age related pattern was the same. There was little significant age variation for the attitude statement.

Income; For simplicity household income was combined into three categories for analysis and this showed that there were significant and similar differences for all three contexts of volunteering and for the view that such service is a Christian duty. Broadly speaking the richer respondents were less likely than those of modest means to give unpaid labour to serve the community. (Maybe it is difficult to serve God and Mammon!). For example 49% of evangelical respondents with a household income of £20k or under were regular volunteers in their church setting, compared with 36% of those with incomes of £50k and over. One important element in the explanation is that retired people tend to have lower incomes and more time on their hands than those who are in lucrative full time employment.

Black majority Church Members : were significantly less likely than average to be regular volunteers serving the community through their church. (36%) compared with 43% overall while and 27% said they hardly ever or never did so compared with 19% overall. However they were more likely than average to volunteer for a Christian organisation (only 42% said they rarely or never did so compared with 48% overall). There was very little difference in rates of volunteering for non Christian organisations (around 31% of BMC members and of the whole sample did this at least once a year, though there were fewer BMC members who gave up lots of time for such groups). On the other hand over 75% of BMC members strongly agreed such service was a Christian's duty, well above the overall average of 56%. This is quite a complex pattern of difference and it would be dangerous to draw too many conclusions other than that there are different cultural and theological norms about the relationship of church and society and different demographic and employment patterns which may limit availability for voluntary work among BMC members.

Spiritual capital as a driver of volunteering

The concept of spiritual capital can be critiqued as vague and ill defined, especially in a contemporary European context of growing religious diversity, the decline of institutional religion, the questioning of religious authorities, and the growth of individualistic, self referential and often syncretistic (or pick and mix) spiritualities (Guest 2007). The evangelical sub culture is not immune from these trends as debates about charismatic and Pentecostal spirituality, Biblical interpretation, female church leadership and "emerging" churches illustrate. In order to operationalise the concept for use as an independent variable in our analysis we suggest that most Evangelicals will take it for granted that the most "spiritual" people are those who pray a lot, read the Bible frequently, and are regular in attendance at worship in their local church congregation. Joining a small group for bible study, prayer and fellowship is also a sign of commitment and occasional fasting if anything is taken as a marker of the "really spiritual" person. Using these indicators, about which questions were asked in the survey it is possible to assess the levels of spiritual capital among our sample.

Overall the respondents were highly observant in terms of their religion. Over 95% claimed they attended a church service at least weekly, 58.5% attended a small group meeting or home group at least weekly, 84% claimed they prayed with others at least weekly, and 40% that they fasted from food at least once a year. 77% said they prayed daily alone and 49% that they read or listened to the Bible daily.

To test whether the hypothesis that more intensely committed Christians were more likely to serve the community unpaid we examined whether those who claimed to read

the bible daily (just under half of the evangelicals) and pray daily (about three quarters of the evangelical respondents) had different likelihoods of volunteering. This proved to be the case for church based volunteering where 46% of those who pray daily and 48% of those who read the Bible daily served at least fortnightly compared with the average of 43%. Similar significant differences could be seen for volunteering in Christian organisations and on the attitude statement. However, for regular volunteering in secular organisations the differences were very small (13.7% of daily bible readers compared with 13.1% of the whole evangelical sample). These figures would suggest that higher levels of spiritual capital are associated with a greater propensity to serve, but that they may also tend to keep people's active involvement within the Christian sub culture.

Of the respondents who volunteered at least weekly in a church activity serving the wider community

- 39% also volunteered at least weekly for a Christian organization, 29% less often and 32% never

- 16% also volunteered at least weekly for a secular organization, 23% less often and 60% never

These extremely active multiple volunteers are more likely than non volunteers to report weekly or greater church attendance, daily personal prayer, daily Bible reading, to be female, to be in their 50s or 60s, and to be in the lower income bands.

Finally we also looked at the possibility that our data might give support to Putnam and Campbells findings reported in "American Grace" that home group participation is the best predictor of volunteering in the secular community. Our data does tend to offer some confirmation. While 19.4% of those who attend a home group at least once a fortnight, also volunteer for a non Christian organisation at least once a month, compared with 14.10% of those who do not attend so often. Furthermore in preliminary analysis the correlations between home group attendance and volunteering are higher than for praying, reading the Bible and attending church.

There are of course some correlations between the variables we have examined, for example it is likely that over 65s will have a lower income, be more likely to be females (as men on average experience failing health and death at an earlier stage). Older people may also have more time and a cultural/religious background which favours more disciplined spirituality. The black community on the other hand is known to have a younger age profile than average. An initial exploration with some multiple regression analysis (which we do not report in detail for reasons of space) suggests that variables based on spiritual capital indicators play the most important part in predicting who will be an active volunteer, that age and lower income also have a significant effect, but that gender and belonging to a Black Majority church play little part in the equation.. There is evidence therefore to support the suggestion that the more higher a person's spiritual capital or the more zealous they are in their faith, as they reach mature years, and

provided they are not in the higher income brackets, the more likely they are to give substantial amounts of time and unpaid labour in serving their community.

Supplementary findings from the panel survey

In the online panel survey conducted over the Easter period in 2011 1151 respondents answered a battery of questions about faith and practice including a section of questions which relate to the overall theme of social capital and civic involvement. The summary report on this survey "Does Belief Touch Society" is available as a pdf file from the Evangelical Alliance website http://www.eauk.org/snapshot/read.cfm
and depicts a Christian community where traditional orthodox belief holds firm, where religious practice linked with the Easter season remains strong (though perhaps declining over the generations) and where social and political awareness and involvement is remarkably high.

We wanted to gather more information about the engagement of Christians in society so asked people whether they were involved in various areas of public life. No one among our sample was (or admitted to being) a Member of Parliament. However, nearly 1% said they were local councillors (compared to 0.04% nationally), and 0.78% Magistrates compared to (0.06% nationally). Among the councillors and magistrates it was significant that none were under 35.

An amazing 24.5% (282 people) said they were trustees of charities (compared to 2.2% nationally. Detailed analysis of supplementary information where given shows, that a significant proportion (62 people) were able to say they were charity trustees by virtue of the fact that they were on church councils or the equivalent. Nonetheless respondents held many trustee positions (in 21 cases more than one) in both Christian (65) and secular based (36) charities. Charity trustees were significantly more likely to be university educated, over 55 and twice as likely to be men than women. Pentecostals and our category of miscellaneous "other" Protestant denominations were less likely than average to serve in these roles than for example Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists and Members of "New" Charismatic churches..

Over 100 people in the sample (nearly 9%) were school governors (compared to 0.7% nationally). School governors were significantly more likely to be over 35, to be male and to come from Anglican, Methodist, Other Protestant denominations, RC, or emerging churches, while there were none from the Church of Scotland (is this a difference in national systems of education?)

Nearly 4% were members of a political party (compared to 1.3% nationally). Members of political parties were four times more likely to be male (8% of respondents) than female(2%). Of those who declared their allegiance 10 were Labour, 5 Liberal democrat, 3 Conservative, 2 Scottish National Party and 1 Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalist). This may suggest that evangelicals who are activists are more likely to be left of centre

(although the baseline survey suggested the largest proportion of votes - approx 40% would go to the Conservatives).

Trade Union membership stood at 18.5% a figure that is roughly the same as national membership for the working age population. However as our sample contained many retired and non employed people the proportion was actually much higher than average. Membership was slightly but not significantly more frequent among women, significantly more frequent among 35-55 year olds than in other age groups, and (surprisingly perhaps) more frequent among university educated respondents than others. The most frequently named trade union was Unison – local government officers (37), followed by NUT - teachers (21), NASUWT - teachers (18), UNITE (12), RCN - nurses (10,) and ATL - teachers and lecturers (10). This suggests a strong representation in the educational, health and general public services sectors which tend to be more highly unionized.. While a number of Trade Unionists expressed reluctance about their membership and stressed they were not militant and almost equal number said they were stewards or local officers in their union.

While the nature of our sample and the online method of carrying out this research may have over-represented people who are more likely to be active in the public sphere, the results represent a huge investment of unpaid time and energy by evangelical Christians in the voluntary and community sector, in education and health services, in politics, and in the Trade Union movement. This is to a large extent in addition to the work they undertake in their paid employment and in the life of the local churches. These evangelicals certainly cannot be accused of withdrawing from the world but have taken seriously the call to be salt and light in wider society. Further research would be needed to assess how effectively they undertake such tasks, the issues and problems they face in these roles and how well they are equipped and supported theologically and practically by the churches to which they belong.

Table 4

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Local Councillor	Yes	11	0.96
Other elected political post	Yes	3	0.26
Magistrate	Yes	9	0.78
School governor	Yes	101	8.77
Trustee of a charity	Yes	282	24.5
Member of a political party	Yes	45	3.91
Trade Union Membership	Yes	213	18.51
Total N of respondents		1151	100

Comparison with some "official" survey findings

The Evangelical Alliance 21st Century Evangelicals Research programme is one of the first substantial surveys to explicitly examine the link between spiritual capital (or religious beliefs and practices) with social capital (expressed as the likelihood of offering voluntary service). There are however, a number of official surveys which ask some relevant questions on this topic of a fully representative sample of the UK population.

In an attempt to look at some evidence, and test the validity of the hypothesis that faith adds value to voluntary action, back in 2006 at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' research conference I presented a paper based on some secondary analysis of data on volunteering from the Home Office Citizenship Surveys of 2001 & 2003 and the BHPS 9th wave (1999) and the 1994 PSI survey of ethnic minorities. (Smith 2006). I posed the question about whether it was possible to discern if people with a religious faith were more or less likely to volunteer i.e. offer unpaid labour in formal organisations or informal settings, than people who said they had little or no religious faith.

The question is of course a complex one as it depends on how one defines and sets about measuring every item in a complex equation. Furthermore when working on secondary analysis of large survey data sets one is at the mercy of the original researchers in terms of the questions they have chosen to ask, or not ask, and the terminology and categories they have used in the questionnaire. Much government and academic research while methodologically robust and claiming to be objective, rarely understands the religious context sufficiently well to ask the in depth questions that would throw light on such claims or hypotheses. Indeed very few surveys in the UK with a relevance to volunteering, use more than two questions about faith, the first on religious affiliation and the second attempting to assess strength of commitment, either in terms of regular participation in worship, or a binary split between those who say they are practising or not practising, or a self assessment about the importance of faith or religious identity. In a multi-ethnic multi-faith setting the cultural meanings and norms attached to concepts of religion, faith commitment, belief and ritual, as well as those around charity and voluntary service are extremely diverse, and impossible to reduce to standardised survey questions and variables.

A superficial analysis (as presented in the main reports of the surveys and summarised in NCVO 2007) suggests that respondents who are Jewish, Christian, Buddhist or of no religion were more likely than average to be involved in formal volunteering, while Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims are less likely than average to be involved in this way.

However, after some complex statistical analysis (involving logistical regression techniques) my key conclusions were

- religious **affiliation** as such appears to have no significant effect on volunteering rates when class related variables, ethnicity, age, gender and variables relating to integration into the local neighbourhood are taken into account.

- However, those **who report their religious identity as important** or **who have been recent or regular attenders at worship** are significantly more likely to report formal volunteering in a group context. This effect is particularly noticeable among Christians

More recent data from the 2007 citizenship survey (DCLG 2008), seems to show similar patterns. This UK government survey covers a sample of over 14,000 respondents

Table 5

2007 Citizenship survey Formal volunteering in last 12 months by religious practice

	whether practising religion	Formal volunteering in last 12 months		Total
		No	Yes	
practising Christian	Count	1772	1819	3591
	%	49.3%	50.7%	100.0%
practising Buddhist	Count	37	30	67
	%	55.2%	44.8%	100.0%
practising Hindu	Count	377	174	551
	%	68.4%	31.6%	100.0%
practising Jew	Count	10	17	27
	%	37.0%	63.0%	100.0%
practising Muslim	Count	1032	397	1429
	%	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
practising Sikh	Count	171	71	242
	%	70.7%	29.3%	100.0%
practicing other religion	Count	108	114	222
	%	48.6%	51.4%	100.0%
Not practising	Count	4014	2219	6233
	%	64.4%	35.6%	100.0%
No religion	Count	1020	662	1682
	%	60.6%	39.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	8541	5503	14044
	%	60.8%	39.2%	100.0%

and includes a booster sample to ensure substantial numbers of ethnic and religious minorities were interviewed.. Table 5 for example shows a cross-tabulation of formal volunteering in the last 12 months (based on the questions of the form "Have you done any unpaid work or given help to any organisation?") against practising adherents of several major religions. Practising Jewish respondents show the highest rates of formal volunteering (63% although sample numbers are very small), followed by (practising adherents of) "other" religions (which would include such faiths as Bahai, Jain, Pagan etc.) at over 51%, Christianity at just over 50%, and Buddhism (45%). Those of no religion show rates near the average (39%), with those not practising a religion (35%),

together with practising Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims showing below average rates (around or below 30%). These patterns across different religions broadly hold for other questions tapping formal volunteering in the last month and frequency of volunteering as well as for informal unpaid help to non kin.

In summary one might conclude from the official survey data that people most likely to engage in regular formal volunteering within an organisational setting are white, middle aged, affluent, educated and settled in a local community. Within this context there does seem to be some evidence that such people who have an active faith and involvement in a Christian or Jewish congregation are more likely than non-believers or people of other minority faiths (who are also disproportionately members of ethno-linguistic minorities) to be volunteers in the sense captured by surveys. But the evidence from the surveys is far from conclusive, especially in regard to the question of whether faith (spiritual capital) or belonging to an organised religious community (religious capital) can be seen as the most significant factor in motivating people to offer unpaid labour in social welfare settings.

Conclusion: the evangelical contribution to volunteering and to social capital in the UK.

1. The evidence both from official surveys and from the Evangelical Alliance surveys suggests that actively committed Christians are far more likely than the average citizen to give their time in unpaid service to churches and the wider community. This undoubtedly makes a disproportionate contribution to social capital or what in Catholic theology would be termed "the common good" at the national level. The tradition of Evangelical social activism in Britain appears to be alive and well, and in its broad concerns for human flourishing and social justice is far from the monolithic "moral majority" conservatism with which it is often stereotyped..
2. It appears from the Evangelical Alliance surveys that people with high levels of spiritual capital, measured by self reported Scripture reading, private prayer, church and home group attendance are the most likely to give freely of their time and energy. While older, middle income, women are in general terms most likely to volunteer there are some areas such as committee membership and party political activity where men predominate. Despite the difficulty of disentangling some of the demographic variables from the spiritual ones and of making a clear distinction between the effect of religious belonging as opposed to believing there is some support for the hypothesis that active faith is associated with and contributes to the formation of religious and social capital.
3. The greatest proportion of volunteering by evangelicals is devoted to programmes managed by local church congregations, or by Christian organisations associated with them. In this context spiritual capital motivates the giving of labour, in the incubator of the trust, networks and norms of a faith community. The primary aims may be to contribute to the religious capital of the churches where volunteers are members, and only secondarily to social capital in the wider

> community. However many evangelical Christians also find motivation, time and energy to contribute to the community through secular organisations, and many of the church projects are designed to serve or empower, rather than to convert or recruit local communities. It should also be noted that many projects and community initiatives such as the one described in detail in my paper based on my practice as a volunteer manger in a Christian community centre (Smith 2011) are blurred environments. In such settings Christian and non-Christian volunteers, members of the church that mange the project and members of other churches, people motivated to altruism by their faith and people with instrumental motivations such as career development work together without pay to provide social welfare outcomes for the community as a whole.

Finally the survey material and wider experience in the world of faith based social action that there are two contrasting ideal types of volunteering in the contemporary Christian world. The first resonates well with an evangelical world view and theology in which individual conversion, faith commitment and discipleship within a particular congregation is central, and demands high levels of spiritual capital, mission focus and evangelical outreach. Social capital, corporate bonding (sometimes with sectarian boundaries) and human wellbeing tend to emerge from this individualistic approach. The second resonates better with the viewpoint of institutional church and charitable or voluntary sector of civil society. It majors on religious capital as a resource, gathers and mobilises resources from wherever they may be found (including the state), works on bureaucratic or managerial principles, and offers charity, social capital resources and wellbeing through and to individuals regardless of their faith commitment or personal level of spiritual capital.

The main challenge for those operating within the first type (which is a more natural milieu for most Evangelicals) is whether it is possible to engage meaningfully with the systems, regulatory frameworks, structures and institutions of wider society, especially where secular assumptions hold sway, and when sometimes there is distinct scepticism about, or even hostility towards religious world views and motivations. In the second model (more familiar to the institutional and established churches which struggle for survival in the midst of continuing secularisation processes) the first challenge is to engage with individuals holistically and organically rather than mechanically and instrumentally. This involves recognizing the spiritual dimension of human life, and maximising the potential of spiritual capital and the motivations it brings to volunteers and paid staff for serving the common good. Secondly religious institutions can only survive if they recruit and involve enough members to sustain their institutional existence. There is little chance they can succeed in this unless they engage with and co-opt the contemporary popular living forms of spiritual capital already available in contemporary society. Among these Evangelicalism, with its close association with the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements is one of the most vibrant forms of faith in the UK today.

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